

AN OBSERVATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRACTITIONERS OF
EXPANDED ORGASM:

AN INVESTIGATION OF AN EFFECTIVE, POWERFUL, AND ACCESSIBLE PATH TO
TRANSCENDENT STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by
Patricia H. Taylor

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Transpersonal Psychology
International University of Professional Studies

Maui, Hawaii, 2000

COPYRIGHT PAGE

© 2000
Patricia Huntington Taylor
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

SIGNATURE APPROVAL PAGE

The Dissertation of Patricia H. Taylor
Is approved and is acceptable in quality and form.

Academic Dean

Committee Chairperson

Committee Member

International University of Professional Studies

Maui, 2000

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

An Observational and Comparative Study of

Practitioners of Expanded Orgasm:

An Investigation of an Effective, Powerful, and Accessible Path to

Transcendent States of Consciousness

By

Patricia H. Taylor

Doctor of Philosophy in Transpersonal Psychology

International University of Professional Studies

Maui, 2000

The problem under investigation. Since long before recorded history, humans have longed to transcend their everyday circumstances and emotional states. This longing has led to a proliferation of ways to attain *transcendent states of consciousness* (TSC). A review of the literature about TSC shows two fundamentally different kinds of paths to

TSC—the Chain of Being Model (CBM), represented by Ken Wilber’s work, and the Holotropic Model (HM), represented by the work of Stanislov Grof. A major difference between the models is that CBM paths view transcendence as ascending a hierarchy and eschewing the physical, while HM paths incorporate the body. All paths to TSC have lacked *accessibility* for the ordinary person. The present work introduces *Expanded Orgasm* (EO) as an effective, powerful and accessible path to TSC, examining EO in its historical context. A thorough review of the literature of TSC and sacred sexuality shows that EO has not been formally evaluated as a path to TSC. A study was therefore designed to describe EO practitioners’ experiences along the four dimensions of human experience—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

Subjects. Forty-four subjects (22 male and 22 female) who responded to an e-mailed invitation to participate in a confidential survey of practices and experiences related to EO, and who were selected as appropriate subjects based upon responses to a description of expanded orgasmic practice.

Methods. A convenience sample of 44 subjects met all study criteria. Subjects’ responses to a survey created by the author were tallied and descriptive statistics applied to each item. Items included demographics, characteristics of regular and expanded orgasmic practices, and Likert scale ratings of various items appropriate to the four dimensions of experience. Five core dimensions were selected for comparison: gender, number of EO partners in the past year (0-5 vs. 6+), years engaged in EO (< 10 vs. 10+), favorite method of achieving EO (manual stimulation vs. intercourse), and use of breathing to enhance EO (< half the time vs. half or more of the time).

Findings. Mean age of first EO experience was identical between genders (39.7 years). Mean frequency of EO was also identical between genders (4.4 times/week). Mean time spent in EO was 54 minutes (shortest 0.2 – 60 minutes; longest 0.3 – 156 hours). Most participants experienced EO with a partner. *Physical concomitants:* The group reported changes in sensory perception more than half the time, increased awareness of physical processes most of the time, and “working through blocked physical energies” about half the time. *Emotional concomitants:* changes in emotions were very frequent, especially for positive emotions. Feelings of love for others and self were very common during EO. *Mental concomitants:* Participants reported changes in thought processes about half the time, including expansion of viewpoint to include that of the partner. *Spiritual concomitants:* Participants reported experiencing life-changing guidance about half the time, and used EO to explore existential topics more than half the time. Psychospiritual birth and death were occasional experiences. Practitioners claimed to experience themselves as a participant in divine creation more than half the time, and as being on a path to divine realization or merging with the Divine more than half the time. Along the five comparative axes, there was remarkable similarity in experience between sub-groups. *Gender:* Men were likelier to experience EO through intercourse (47% of the time for men, 25.4% for women, $p < 0.01$). Women were more likely to experience an expanded viewpoint that included its opposite (F Likert 3.3, M 2.6, $p < 0.01$) and to confront and release negative memories (F 2.7, M 1.8, $p < 0.05$). Men were likelier to experience being on a path to divine realization (M 4.4, F 3.8, $p < 0.05$). *Number of partners:* There were very few significant differences in the sub-groups. *Number of years:* Those with < 10 years were likelier than those with 10 or more years to

experience a reality with no sense of time (3.9 vs. 3.0, $p < 0.05$), meeting the Divine (3.6 vs. 2.2, $p < 0.05$), and improved feelings about themselves (4.6 vs. 4.2, $p < 0.05$).

Favorite method: Those whose favorite method of achieving EO was intercourse were likelier than those who favored manual stimulation to report experiencing guidance in EO (4.2 vs. 3.1), loss of personal boundaries (4.1 vs. 3.1), a sense of perfection mirroring that of the Divine (4.3 vs. 3.3), out-of-body experiences (3.0 vs. 1.9), meeting the Divine (3.8 vs. 2.7) and Divine realization (4.5 vs. 3.5) (all $p < 0.05$). *Use of breathing:* Frequent breath-users, compared to less frequent, were likelier to achieve EO with intercourse (42.2% of the time vs. 23.5%, $p < 0.05$), and to report being on a path of Divine Realization (Likert 4.4 vs. 3.5, $p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: According to literature review and reports of its practitioners, EO should be considered a valid and accessible path to TSC. Its home is closer to that of HM than to CBM because it incorporates physical experience. A pilot, descriptive study of practitioners showed a remarkable uniformity of experience in terms of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions. EO deserves further study both as a phenomenon and as a path to transcendence.

This Dissertation explores the nature, variety, and classification of transcendent experiences and finds a home for Expanded Orgasm as a valid and accessible path to TSC.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiii
Chapter One - PROBLEM FORMULATION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Study	7
The importance of transcendent experiences	7
Review of Transpersonal Models of Consciousness.....	8
Review of Eastern Contributions to the Study of Orgasm	10
Review of Western Contributions to the Study of Orgasm	10
Review of Other Pathways to Transcendence.....	11
Review of Paradigms of Psychology.....	11
Current Attitudes about Expanded Orgasm	12
Significance of this research.....	12
Significance of Expanded Orgasm	14
Statement of the Problem	18
Statement of the Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	19
Purpose and Brief Method of the Study	22
Scope and Limitations of this Study	23

Chapter Two – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: LITERATURE REVIEW	24
Evaluating Transcendent States of Consciousness	25
Transcendent Consciousness Defined	26
Ken Wilber’s Unotropic Spectrum of Consciousness,	29
Stanislav Grof’s Holotropic Model of Consciousness	36
Comparison of Wilber Versus Grof’s Models of TSC	41
R.M. Bucke: Direct observation of people experiencing transcendence.....	43
Spiritual Mind/Body paradigms.....	46
Tantra.....	46
Taoist Nei Tan.....	60
The Kabbalah	65
The Holographic Paradigm.....	67
Eastern Contributions to the Study of Orgasm	78
Kundalini as Energy Accessible through Sex.....	79
Sexual methods of Raising Kundalini	82
Enlightenment Following Orgasm and Ejaculation	87
Male/female Relationships.....	88
Summary.....	89
Western Contributions to the Study of Orgasm.....	89
Physical Basis of Orgasm	89
Orgasms Defined by Climax.....	95
The Andocentric Model of Sexuality and Orgasm.....	100
Orgasm and the Brain.....	103

Sexual Fitness.....	104
Limited vs. Expanded Definition of Orgasm.....	105
Altered States as a result of EO.....	106
Western Psychological Contributions to Orgasm.....	107
The Historical Influence of Patriarchal Values.....	116
Christianity as an Influence.....	117
Philosophic Prejudices Against Positive Sexuality.....	124
Cultural Prejudices About Positive Sexuality.....	126
Study of Sexuality as Omitted in Transpersonal Psychology.....	128
Other Pathways to Transcendence.....	130
The Imaginal Realm.....	131
Dream States.....	133
Sex and Love.....	135
Near Death Experiences.....	136
Sacred Trance States.....	140
Meditation.....	142
Subud.....	144
Kundalini Awakening.....	144
Three Paradigms of Spiritual Psychology.....	150
The Theistic Paradigm.....	151
The Acosmic Paradigm.....	153
The Holotropic Paradigm.....	155
Current Attitudes About Expanded Orgasm.....	157

Summing Up: Background to the Study.....	162
Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODS.....	164
Research Design.....	168
Research Hypotheses and Questions.....	170
Pathway is powerful.....	174
Hypotheses.....	175
Subjects.....	176
Instrumentation.....	177
Data Collection Procedures.....	179
Data Analysis Procedures.....	180
Chapter 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....	182
The Subjects.....	182
Research Questions.....	184
General Research Questions.....	184
Specific Research Questions Validating EO as A Valid Path to Transcendence.....	189
Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.5).....	195
Research Hypotheses.....	195
Chapter 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	199
Summary.....	199
Problem.....	199
Method.....	202
Results.....	204
Discussion.....	209

Brief Summary of Findings and Significance.....	218
Recommendations for Future Research.....	219
Implications for the Field of Inquiry	221
EO as an Ontologically-based System.....	222
Properties of EO as a Holotropic State.....	224
Implications for Individual Therapy.....	230
Social/Planetary Implications	242
Generating a New Contextual Framework	244
Honoring of the Feminine as well as Masculine.....	247
Conclusion	249
FOOTNOTES.....	263
REFERENCES.....	265
APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT.....	276

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1.	Comparative Models of Transcendence.....	250
2.	The Seven Major Chakras.....	250
3.	The Vajrayana Chakra System.....	251
4.	Inclusion Criteria for Study.....	252
5.	Data Collection Categories and Illustrative Questions.....	254
6.	Descriptive Statistics.....	257
7.	Comparative Statistics.....	261

Chapter One - PROBLEM FORMULATION

Introduction

From before recorded history, people have yearned to transcend their ordinary circumstances and experiences. Yet, for most people, such transcendence has been supposed to require some sort of intermediation – a sanctioned person or environment that possessed the requisite transforming power. It has not been supposed that “ordinary” people can access transcendent states of consciousness (TSC).

Can ordinary people access TSC? It is the purpose of this Dissertation to describe one specific method—utilized by ordinary people – that reliably grants access to transcendent states. This method of transcendence is Expanded Orgasm (EO). In addition, we will “give EO a home” in our fund of knowledge about the nature of transcendence and pathways to it. EO will be established as an authentic path to transcendence by reviewing what is known about transcendence and its attainment, and by analysis of a study of a substantial sample of EO practitioners.

It is worthwhile to introduce Expanded Orgasm immediately (a term coined by the author of this Study). Let us examine what a participant and certain experts have said about the state. This brief window into EO will serve as a marker for our introduction to consciousness, transcendence, orgasm, and the conceptual context for the Study.

EO is a practice of spreading genitally derived pleasurable sexual energy progressively through the entire physical, mental, emotional and spiritual spheres of experience.

Practitioners of Expanded Orgasm report entering transcendent states not normally associated with regular (“climactic”) sex and orgasm. Anecdotal evidence

abounds to testify to the accessibility, effectiveness, and power of EO as a gateway to TSC.

Here is one woman's report on her experience:

There was an energy field. We were obviously feeling the same thing. Without any words being spoken, it was as though we recognized one another, not merely from the objective point of view, but as though we were one entity, or one field. There was no obstruction or delineation between us. My heart felt like it had burst open. I felt total bodily surrender, an openness...it felt as if my whole body would open to a universal field.... It was like a thrill or waves of energy. I felt exhilarated in my body. I guess you could say it was wave after wave of blissful sensation, but I had remained totally surrendered... Everything [was] being stimulated, every nerve in the body [was] being amped or overloaded. I finally realized I could transcend myself. I could go beyond this limitation I thought was always going to be there. There was also this deep love for my husband, but also of him not being limited to who I perceived him to be. (Sokol, Dee, 1989, p. 119, reporting on the account of a client, Ruth, and her husband).

Mantak Chia, a well-known and advocate of Taoist extended orgasmic practices, describes the effects available to men practicing a Taoist variant of EO as

A continual rolling expansion of the orgasm throughout the whole body, prolonging inward orgasm to a half hour; one hour; two hours, or longer in a gradual, but ultimately greatly heightened ecstasy. You can enjoy this form of sexual love indefinitely without paying for your pleasure with your life force. The sperm energy is channeled into the warm current of the Macrocosmic Orbit. The warm current is transmuted into mental power and this power or soul is finally transmuted into the highest manifestation, which is pure spirit. (Chia, 1993)

The targeted goal of Taoist practiced is stated clearly: the transformation of sexual energy into spiritual ends, i.e., using the very personal activity of sex for transpersonal ends, to create an immortal body.

While Chia is an undisputed master of these practices, he admits that he has not yet experienced the final stage of embodiment in an Immortal Body, though "he finds it well documented "in the thousand volume Taoist canon, including the names of many individuals who reached this state." (Nitschke, 1995, p. 134)

Countless others have also written about the ways and means by which sexual energy can be harnessed, through orgasm, for personal transcendence and spiritual growth. Margo Anand, for example, has set out to furnish contemporary readers with explicit instructions on how to achieve meditation via sexual ecstasy.

Here she describes a technique she calls the “Wave of Bliss” (Anand, 1989). She tells us,

This position is very powerful. It allows partners to generate sexual arousal while containing this energy within their bodies. This contained energy triggers the [orgasmic] Streaming Reflex, and as the energy streams upward through the Inner Flute, it awakens the Ecstatic Response.... Riding the Wave unites all the polarities, male and female, positive and negative, sexual and spiritual.... This position is also extremely healing for the heart. It promotes deep intimacy. This facilitates a sense of... letting go, protecting each other, trusting. These qualities in turn generate a sense of love and caring that carried on a subtle mood throughout your daily life. (p. 387)

Anand then quotes an ancient scripture describing the opening of the higher levels of the Inner Flute that result from this practice. According to the Sarchakra-Nirupana, this is how channeled energy is experienced:

She is beautiful, like a chain of lightning, and fine, like a lotus fiber, and shines in the minds of sages. She is extremely subtle, the awaker of pure knowledge, the embodiment of all bliss, whose true nature is pure consciousness. (p. 407)

Such anecdotes and teachings suggest that orgasm has been used to achieve transcendent states of consciousness in various cultures. The promises are indeed powerful, and the implications of such promises, if true, are immense. However, beyond the writings of a relatively few individuals and the claims of great teachers, relatively little is known, or verified, about the practice of extended and expanded orgasmic practices.

Such information as reported in these stories provides powerful motivation to engage in further studies of expanded orgasmic states. Regarding EO in relation to transcendence, it is reasonable to propose the following questions:

1. There are many techniques that purport to describe expanded (or extended, or out-of-ordinary) orgasmic states. *Can Expanded Orgasm (EO) be clearly and operationally defined so that we can study the effects of a standardized EO, knowing that everyone in a study is referring to the same phenomenon?*

2. *Is EO a valid path to transcendence? And, can transcendence be clearly and operationally defined, so that we can determine whether EO is in fact a valid pathway?*

3. *Is EO an accessible, effective and powerful method for giving ordinary people access to transcendent pathways?*

For a transcendence-producing method to be “accessible” means that it can be created with a minimum of cost, change of location, and change in lifestyle (diet, exercise, etc.). The breathing exercise focused on lengthening the out breath, for example, in order to promote relaxation, is as accessible as one’s abilities to stand, sit or lie down and place full attention on their breath.

For a transcendence-producing method to be “effective” means that if faithfully followed it can reliably do what it promises to do for the great majority of practitioners, barring complicating circumstances. Sacred music, for example, is a dependable vehicle of altering consciousness. Almost all major religions have developed sacred music to elevate its followers into states that allow them to feel closer to the Divine.

For a transcendence-producing method to be “powerful” means that its impact extends well beyond an initial period of altered consciousness. This impact motivates the

person to reorient their lives in ways that produce what are often referred to as transformative experiences such as integration, love, compassion, understanding, and inner peace. A *near-death experience* is a classic example. Long after the experience, many people report that they have radically revised their priorities in life, usually to place more focus on love and appreciation of the present moment. (Ring, 1984, pp. 163-164) Ring cites case after case of near-death experiences as causing a generalized awakening of higher human potential.

How lasting are the purported beneficial effects of entering these transcendent states via Expanded Orgasm? If we discover, for example, that the effects last no longer than the experience, then their value is clearly not nearly as great as if the effects are found to last significantly longer. At the extreme, this technique is capable of creating life-altering experiences such as love, mind/body integration, and spiritual transcendence. Clearly as the impact of these techniques grows, so does its value.

The criteria of effectiveness, accessibility, and power are significant, because very few of the paths to transcendence contain all three of these. Most transcendent pathways--such as meditation, chanting, breathing, and yoga--work for some people, some of the time. Out of all the various practices, almost none involve the entire body, mind, emotional being, and spirit simultaneously. EO is unique in that it is the only practice that draws energy up from a person's root core of being (the genital-sacral area) and spreads it through the entire physical body, as well as mind, emotions, and spirit.

These other practices are to some extent at least partially exclusionary of important spheres of human experience. Chanting, for example, (for most people)

involves the mind, and the voice, and the breath, but certainly not the genitals. Finally, while chanting is a powerful path to TSC for some (including the author of this dissertation), it is not a compelling path for the great number of ordinary persons. Of all the methods of transcendence, few have the biologically compelling roots that EO has. Some will want to meditate or chant or drum; others will not. But almost everyone will want to have sex at some point in his or her life. Hence there is an opportunity of accessibility for EO that makes it special among opportunities to transcend.

In addressing these questions, we propose:

- To define EO and give it a conceptual home in the conversation and literature about transcendence of consciousness
- To verify its existence and describe its experiences and sequellae by surveying in a structured and statistically valid way people who practice Expanded Orgasm in the real world.
- To quantify and qualify how it is being used and what benefits are being realized from its practice.
- To confirm the fact that Expanded Orgasm can be used as a valid, effective and powerful means for ordinary people to achieve transcendence.

If in fact, the survey evidence does reveal that ordinary people can use EO to achieve enduring transcendent states, we further hope, in this study:

- To inspire ordinary people to use this method.
- To inspire further research in this field by exploring how further study could expand upon and enrich the results of this Study.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to justifying the Study by examining the importance of transcendent experiences, the kinds of paths available to attain TSC, the significance of sex and orgasm in terms of paths to TSC, and the need to address EO as a legitimate path to the extremely highly valued human experience of transcendence.

Background of the Study

The importance of transcendent experiences

Since the beginning of written history, and undoubtedly long before, men and women have been fascinated by the phenomenon of consciousness in its many forms. The Bible, for example, begins with a story of a man and a woman happily living in innocence (and presumably in, or close to, a state of unified consciousness) until they ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. As a consequence of eating the fruit, they found themselves cast from the garden, naked and ashamed. Metaphorically, whereas “before the bite” they were essentially unaware of their unique status as individual human beings, afterwards, “after the bite”, they were aware of their separate identities, as well their separation from God. In that moment their suffering began. Now, there come to be a “before” state of consciousness, an “after” state, and a memory, in the “after,” of the “before,” which is what we read about today in *Genesis*.

This theme of the “sin (or pain) of separation” (which is another way of defining the advent of a dual consciousness) is a repeated theme among the world’s religions. Spiritual philosophies and mystical traditions such as Vedanta, Buddhism, Taoism, Sufism, Gnosticism, and many other spiritual systems have described in great detail these

experiences of divided consciousness and various pathways for once again approaching and accessing a state of wholeness.

We shall discuss the rationale and development behind the drive to transcendence in a later section (chapter two); here suffice it to say that there is within each of us a compelling and ongoing experience of “splitness” that drives us to seek to reconcile our sense of disconnectedness (or separation) from our undeniable experience of connection with the Whole.

We shall claim that transcendent experiences are important to those who believe that their beings are greater than the directly observable sum of their parts and to those who seek experiences of greater personal wholeness. These experiences often occur at levels not accessible in ordinary states of consciousness. They are literally “outside”, or beyond, the level of the physical realm. Often they are called transpersonal experiences for this reason. While *transpersonal* experiences take us outside our bodies, however, it is only when we have *transcendent* experiences that we can claim to have made contact and complete union with the divine primary consciousness.

Review of Transpersonal Models of Consciousness

One of the goals of this Dissertation is to determine whether EO is a legitimate path to transcendence. If it were, then it would make sense that there would be a conceptual home for it in the literature. There may be reasons why EO has not been included in the general discussion. Some of these potential reasons are discussed later in this chapter.

We examine two models of transpersonal consciousness that present two different approaches to transcendence. Both models are highly regarded in the field of transpersonal psychology. While both assume that *consciousness is primary* (this concept will be defined below), these models diverge in their approach in significant ways.

Ken Wilber's *Spectrum of Consciousness* model, (Wilber, 1993) which follows many great religions in maintaining that the non-dualistic level of pure Mind is the only Reality, represents the first model. We shall also refer to this model as the *Chain-of-Being* model (CBM). Thus, any experience in which the body is an integral part of the transcendent experience can be a transpersonal path, but cannot be considered a true transcendent path. In order to evaluate a fit for EO, we label this type of transcendent experience "body-as-portal".

The second model is Stanislav Grof's Holotropic Consciousness model (HM) (Grof, 1998). He defines transcendent experiences as occurring when people enter *holotropic states*, in which they aim to merge with the divine, either fully, losing their identity completely, or partially, remaining as witnesses to the divine in the process. He has observed in his research many people having transcendent experiences (such as giving birth) that involve the body fully. We label this type of transcendent experience as "body-as-involved".

We will then evaluate which one is a better fit for EO.

Review of spiritual mind/body paradigms

Following the presentation of two paths to transcendence, we then review various spiritual mind/body paradigms, and examine how they compare to EO and where they fit

in the Wilber/Grof schema. Several spiritual paradigms describe pathways to transcendence that involves the body, such as Tantra, Taoism, and the Kabbalah. These paradigms hold that the Divine extends from a state of Oneness into the Manyness. The divine can also be found, therefore, on the plane of manifestation, and as such, in the human body. We also discuss how these paradigms relate to the holographic model of the universe.

Review of Eastern Contributions to the Study of Orgasm

We can't say how or when the practice of EO began. The practice has been described and depicted in statues, and in Tantric and Taoist writings (such as instruction manuals) extending back thousand of years. We survey the literature on these practices, to see what they have said about EO. We note the diversity of ways in which EO has been described and attained in the various writings. We also note where similarities of opinions exist.

Review of Western Contributions to the Study of Orgasm

What is orgasm? Is orgasm purely a physical occurrence? Is it psychological? What have the great thinkers in the Western world had to say on this topic? In order to expand our picture of EO, and its place in the literature on transcendence, we begin by reviewing the physical basis of orgasm. We look at the Masters and Johnson model of "regular" orgasm and contrast our definition of EO with other definitions that have been suggested.

In what ways are orgasms and EO related? Are the models we have in Western thinking adequate to provide us working models of EO? To answer this, we look at what psychologists and therapists such as Freud, Jung, Reich, Lowen, the Brauers, Whipple, and Otto have to say about orgasm, and, where possible, EO.

We then consider factors in the religious, philosophical, and cultural history of Western thinking that have shaped the study of sexuality, orgasm, and EO. The dominant patriarchal attitudes and religious paradigms that classified sex as sinful and less than spiritual have had a strong influence on the opinions people have had held about these issues over time.

Review of Other Pathways to Transcendence

We then review other pathways to transcendence with which we find some similarities to EO, such as Kundalini awakenings, sacred trance states, and near death experiences. We note the degree of bodily involvement associated with each pathway. We demonstrate the similar characteristics of EO with other accepted pathways of transcendence.

Review of Paradigms of Psychology

Here, we review three major paradigms that underlie psychological approaches today. We examine the Christian, Acosmic, and Panentheist models. Each of these models will yield significantly different approaches for evaluating EO. Each possesses different therapeutic approaches as well.

Current Attitudes about Expanded Orgasm

We show that we are living in a period of rapid change. Many of the assumptions held sacred by our parents, churches, and other authorities are coming to be doubted and reexamined by individuals on a widespread and accelerating basis. Further, in light of environmental crises and technological breakthroughs, which have given us as a species a nearly unlimited sense of power, many leaders are making a case for a re-visioning of our worldview. We examine how EO might fit into and support such efforts at re-visioning.

Significance of this research

If it is true that ordinary people can use EO to enter transcendent states, then an additional question follows. Why is the importance of this finding? Is EO a sufficiently authentic and reliable path to transcendence to be of importance? And what are the implications for the academic and therapeutic community?

Much of the significance of EO as a valid path to TSC arises from considering how in today's world the established paths are becoming increasingly less relevant and accessible—especially to the “ordinary” human beings who increasingly need to experience TSC.

We live in a time when dominant customs are diminishing in influence as opportunities for individual choices proliferate. Ever-increasing exposure to multiple viewpoints via media, the Internet, advertising, and so on, create further splits in the psyche which fragment (rather than integrate) our experiences in the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual spheres. With multiple choices available for each behavioral decision, past behavior is increasingly less of a guide to current behavior.

There are negative consequences: expanding belief choices can be destabilizing and lead to more marriages failing, personal alienation, and drug use. According to Kenneth Gergen, a well-known cultural psychologist and historian:

In Western culture, then, we find ourselves confronting a potential chaos of conflict. Each symbolically related subculture becomes increasingly free to claim the right of its rationality, its forms of value, and its patterns of action. How can the resulting chaos be resolved? ... There is no transcendent reality, rationality, or value system with which to rule between competitors. (Gergen, 1991, p. 253)

Modern culture creates us as increasingly fragmented, with a diminishing sense of self and a vanishing sense of an over-arching reality greater than our fragmented selves. The results of this fragmentation (dis-integration) are alienation, depression and a sense of hopelessness. Transcendence—the ultimate integrative experience of reunion with the whole or divine essence—is a potent answer to this conundrum, if and when the benefits of this transcendence can be integrated back into our daily lives.

In transcendent states, we can not only get a potent sense of our connection with the greater whole, but we can access new insights and meanings that enable us to tie together experiences that had appeared to be fragmented. We can get inspiration for the directions in which we can and should be heading in our lives. We can weave together apparently disparate events from our daily lives into a coherent story. And we can see that what might appear to be our own fragmented, “multiple” personalities (as perceived in ordinary consciousness) are significantly and coherently connected at the transcendent level. We can experience directly that there is a transcendent reality, after all, which can provide us with a new and more workable value system.

To the extent that we can both have transcendence experiences, and bring them back to enlighten and enrich our daily lives, we are clearly better off for having had

access to the transcendent state of consciousness. However, while certain integrative techniques, such as singing in a choir, or meditating, are encouraged, sexuality as a transcendent practice has been ignored at best, and worse, castigated as a deviant practice to be avoided. Methods of achieving transpersonal states via any form of sexual practice are routinely absent from discussions of paths to transcendence.

Is EO, a sexual experience, outcast from discussions of transcendence only because we know for certain that it is *not* a path to TSC and therefore unworthy of consideration? We present evidence precisely to the contrary: for millennia, EO has been utilized as a potent avenue to TSC. Why, then, is even the consideration of sex and orgasm so vigorously avoided?

We will contend that EO should be considered a valid path of transcendence, and we will demonstrate the ways in which access to transcendent states via EO brings a wide array of benefits to individuals, partners in relationships, and society as a whole.

Significance of Expanded Orgasm

Expanded Orgasm as a path to transcendence

EO is both a method to achieve a certain state, and an outcome, which is the Expanded Orgasmic state. *We define EO in our Study as an event in which one takes the orgasmic pleasure experienced in the genitals and expands this pleasurefully in all four dimensions of human experience—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.*

Physically, the sensation can be expanded throughout the entire body. Mentally, one can expand the perception of pleasure enjoyed to an unlimited extent. The expansion will also proceed along emotional and spiritual lines as well. (This process is described in

much greater detail in chapter two.) As a result of this expansion, practitioners can train their bodies to enter into orgasmic states lasting for many hours. The time for EO can range from one moment (in which one can mentally allow the sensations to fill the body) to six hours or longer. Men and women can practice EO equally; in men, the orgasm is often separated from the ejaculation response.

Expanded Orgasm as a new domain of inquiry

There is a paucity of literature concerning Expanded Orgasm specifically; however there is a large body of literature relating to sexuality and transformation that is relevant to developing the context necessary to explore Expanded Orgasm as a path to transcendence.

The methods for achieving EO are not well known and thus not widely practiced even by those who may seek out transcendent experiences--sexual, spiritual, or otherwise

It is therefore appropriate to obtain, quantify, and qualify direct anecdotal observations of Expanded Orgasm in practice. We are in the beginning phases of defining and quantifying this work; in fact, we ourselves coined the phrase *Expanded Orgasm*.

Expanded Orgasm can be considered a new domain of inquiry. Past studies of sex and orgasm refer to regular or "climactic" orgasm. Climactic orgasms are the type generally studied by Masters and Johnson, in which there is a peak sexual release with an average of ten to twelve contractions spaced .8 seconds apart, at the apex of the sexual encounter, followed by a detumescent phase of rapidly decreasing arousal. (Masters and Johnson 1988, p. 69)

Reports of consciousness change during climactic orgasm do not sufficiently explain these reported experiences of EO. Since Expanded Orgasm is usually created through contact with a sexual organ, it would normally be considered a sexual activity in our culture, a meeting of a base instinct or drive and not a vehicle for transcendence. Yet, Expanded Orgasm is more than just climactic orgasm; it is a method of accessing higher states of consciousness that includes body, mind, emotion and spirit. Expanded Orgasm reportedly generates relatively unexamined TSC.

Anecdotal reports of ordinary people deriving benefits from EO

The author has had personal experience with EO indicating that it is a valid path to transcendence that fulfills the three criteria of accessibility, power, and effectiveness. Further, she has had the opportunity to hear and examine the personal anecdotes of hundreds of other people who report the same experiences and conclusions. However, despite an abundance of anecdotal evidence, no study has addressed the nature and sequellae of EO.

Broader perspective on significance of EO and this Study

EO is potentially unique, as mentioned earlier, in that it involves one's entire mind/body system in the process. If it is a valid pathway to transcendence, it will have significant implications for transpersonal psychology. Will a new door of perception be available to people? How can EO be used in a healing context? Will EO somehow be helpful to couples in committed relationships? What other implications will be found to

be of value? Following a description of the Study and its results we will digest what we have learned and suggest answers to questions such as these.

The reported benefits of EO, while potentially exciting, have not been empirically documented, according to a thorough literature review. Are these reported benefits verifiable? Is the notion that EO is a path to TSC borne out in real life? If so, in what ways? What research can we find that can enable us to ask the most useful questions upon which to base an empirical study?

A thorough review of the literature potentially relevant to EO was made. Since EO is a process simultaneously occurring at the levels of body, mind, emotion, and spirit, medical, psychological, and spiritual academic journals were reviewed to find mention of current research. The results were largely disappointing.

In the medical journals, research on orgasm related to topics such as dysfunctional sex, interactions between various diseases and orgasm, and the use of drugs and other substances such as hormones to enhance simple orgasm. While there were promising developments in findings related to sexual anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology, no relevant references to Expanded Orgasm, or of the interaction of EO to other dimensions of a human being, could be located. There was some mention of multiple orgasms, or even of physiological extended orgasms, but the concept of Expanded Orgasm has simply not been introduced into the medical literature. Since Expanded Orgasm is an interdisciplinary concept, this development was not too surprising.

In psychological journals we found copious reference to sexuality and its effects on individual behavior and on relationships, but again, the mention of Expanded Orgasm was non-existent.

It was primarily in books that we located any reference to Expanded Orgasm, and even then, it was rare to find demands for further research and study of EO.

Author Michael Sky, in *Sexual Peace*, defines *sexual communion* as “ a personal, psycho-physiological process requiring the learned disciplines of bodily awareness, aroused relaxation, conscious breathing, and especially, control and redirection of the genital orgasm, [which] expands to include the other person--the lover--and the shared experience of total body orgasm. This definition clearly has significant overlapping with our definition of EO. Michael Sky reflects the sentiment of many other writers before him, such as Wilhelm Reich, Alexander Lowen, Mantauk Chia, and Riane Eisler, when he says, “the common human failure to learn and practice the ways of sexual communion has led to a race of pent-up human beings given to impulsive and generally dysfunctional discharges.... There is no greater antidote for these ills than wholehearted sexual communion.” (Sky, 1993, p. 175)

Since research that defines, classifies, and verifies the practice of EO is virtually non-existent, our pilot Study should not only bring the discussion of EO into the transpersonal conversation; it should also pave the way for more research in this field.

Statement of the Problem

The Transcendent State of Consciousness (TSC) has been highly valued and sought after by human beings throughout (and probably before) history. Transcendent experiences are becoming increasingly important today as fragmentation increases in an information-loaded world. While many pathways to TSC have been developed and

taught, few fulfill all three of the following criteria: effectiveness, power, and accessibility.

Sex—a highly accessible and apparently effective path to TSC—has been intentionally excluded by most cultures from the paths to transcendence available to ordinary people. But the exclusion of sex (being as a path, being a primary mind/body/emotion/spirit experience to humans), further impairs to our pursuit of wholeness.

On the other hand, strong anecdotal evidence supports the notion that a special form of sexual practice—Expanded Orgasm—does constitute an effective, powerful, and accessible path to transcendence. This evidence includes references by multiple authors on transcendence and by contemporary people practicing EO who enjoy powerful benefits, including the experience of increased wholeness, compassion, and love for self and others, as well as encountering the Divine.

However, EO is a little studied pathway of transcendence. We need to know more about what EO is, how it is experienced as a path to transcendence, whether it indeed constitutes a valid path to transcendence. And, if EO is found to be a valid path to TSC, we need to understand where in the historical conversation about transcendence it best fits.

Statement of the Research Questions and Hypotheses

In light of the dearth of research on Expanded Orgasm as a path to transcendence, it is appropriate to conduct a pilot study of practitioners of EO to begin to understand more about what EO is and how it is experienced, as well as whether it is indeed an

effective, powerful, and accessible path to transcendence. If the pilot study fulfills our hypothetical presuppositions, we will propose further directions for more rigorous studies of EO as a path to transcendence.

The major research question of this Study was: “Is Expanded Orgasm a valid path of transcendence?” And, *valid path* was defined as being *effective* and *powerful*. Further, we sought to determine whether EO is an *accessible* path of transcendence, though this is not part of the formal Study.

The specific research questions emerged out of considering the specific criteria for a valid path of transcendence (which EO would have to fulfill). The exact research questions—and the Study items used to address them—will be laid out in detail in chapter three.

The general Research Questions (see Appendix +) addressed the subjective physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual contents of the EO experience. The practitioners’ experiences in each of these four dimensions were then compared to their experiences in normal, waking consciousness. The Study then examined the *reported sequellae* of EO in the immediate and longer term. These sequellae included effects on health and well being; personality changes; positive impact on relationships; and enhanced spirituality. Finally the Study addressed the issues of whether practitioners intended to continue their EO practice and whether they considered EO to be a valid spiritual path.

In order to determine whether (from the practitioners’ point of view) EO could be considered to validate EO as a spiritual path, items were selected to address specific components that appear to be universal in authentic pathways to TSC. These items are

delineated more fully in chapter two, and include the viewpoint that consciousness is primary (as opposed to being an epiphenomena of the material world); that it includes a direct mode of knowing; that it provides a methodology to transform one's modes of knowing; that the methodology is reliable in achieving TSC if properly applied; and that the pathway is powerful (its effects sustain after the timeframe of the practice itself).

The Study also examined a coherent group of *Research Hypotheses*. In general, we would expect that—like all traditional paths to transcendence—a remarkable unity of experience and sequellae in the “four dimensions” of experience. If transcendence by its very nature involves a sense of wholeness and integration, and the experience of “Cosmic Consciousness” (which will be defined in chapter two), then this experience should not vary substantially, if authentically experienced. The Study therefore created five axes using parameters that might be expected (a priori) to create significant differences among the sub-groups defined by the parameters (such as gender or number of years practicing EO). If EO does indeed afford an authentic path to TSC, then we would expect no important difference in the dichotomous sub-groups created along each of the five parametric axes.

Therefore, we would expect not to reject the Null Hypotheses (or that any statistically significant differences between dichotomous sub-groups that did appear would be small and of little meaningful significance). The precise Null Hypotheses are laid out in chapter three, but are of the following form:

Sub-groups A and B (e.g. men and women) do not differ in their physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual experiences in EO.

Purpose and Brief Method of the Study

Because no formal study has been conducted of Expanded Orgasm, let alone its authenticity as a path to TSC, the Study described in this Dissertation was a pilot study, conducted using a convenience sample of 44 subjects (equal numbers of men and women). Participants were self-selected from a general mailing if they passed a series of questions about their orgasmic practices.

The subjects were assessed for how they achieved EO, how long they had been practicing EO, and general demographic characteristics. They then answered items about their experiences during and after EO in the four dimensions of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

Descriptive statistics on the subjective experience and sequellae of EO—immediately and in the longer term—were then created to form a profile of the Study participants. Finally, the Research Hypotheses were addressed by creating five parameter-related axes. For each of the five axes, the dichotomous sub-group (such as male/female) means were compared using statistical techniques.

At the Study conclusion, it should be possible to determine—on the convenience sample used—what the experience of EO is like in the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions, and whether EO does indeed fulfill the requirements for a valid path to transcendence.

In brief, then, this Study has the following purposes:

- To learn more about the experiences and sequellae of EO by studying in a structured way people who are known to be using Expanded Orgasm to access TSC and generate transcendent experiences

- To determine whether what is observed about EO qualifies it as an authentic path to transcendence
- To determine where in the spectrum of paths to transcendence (CBM versus HM) EO fits

Scope and Limitations of this Study

This Study focused on men and women who by our definition are currently practicing Expanded Orgasm. In order to qualify for the Study, candidates had to agree that they were practicing what we defined as EO. The Study does not address those who might indeed be using various sexual practices and who do achieve TSC thereby. Nor does this pilot Study attempt to corroborate participants' claims that they practice "authentic" EO by direct observation or questioning of their partners. The participants for this Study were selected as a convenience sample and may not represent EO practitioners in important ways (for example, some people may use EO solely to achieve non-spiritual ends). The scope was limited to people known in some way to the author.

The Study was not randomized, and it is retrospective. Further, it utilized only people already engaged in the practice of EO; instruction in EO was outside the scope.

Chapter Two – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: LITERATURE REVIEW

Let us begin our inquiry of how Expanded Orgasm affects consciousness by defining *consciousness* and *transcendence* and then proposing a framework for our exploration of the relation between them. We will then review the work of several important thinkers who have helped shape the model of consciousness the author used in the Study. It is not the goal of this Dissertation to review the entire literature on the nature of consciousness and how to expand it, but to review those aspects we believe contribute to a simple, inclusive working definition of the Transcendent State of Consciousness (TSC) and its access.

We will begin by reviewing the major models of TSC that will serve as benchmarks against which EO as a path to TSC can be compared. These include Wilber's Chain-of-being Model of Consciousness, Grof's model of Holotropic States, and Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness.

Next, we will review additional medical, psychological, and religious texts related to the topic of orgasm to further develop EO's conceptual context.

Following this exploration of models of TSC and paths to it will be a review of some well-known pathways to TSC such as birth, death, regular and expanded sexuality, Kundalini, and near death experiences. This review will identify the pathways with which we find EO to have certain elements in common. As such, it will help yield a context and a home for EO as a transcendent path in its own right.

We will examine three currently coexisting paradigms of cosmology: Theism, Acosmism, and Panentheism. All three have a definite viewpoint about the relationships of Spirit to matter which lay a foundation for additional viewpoints on the place of EO

within the greater scheme. In addition, each system has resulting therapeutic implications for EO. We determine which paradigm has the best fit, or “home” for EO.

Finally we consider the impact that EO might have at the level of the greater social level, and how EO might be used to advance the positive goals of our evolution personally, and as a society.

Evaluating Transcendent States of Consciousness

In the context of attaining transcendent consciousness, we can examine consciousness in the following useful ways:

1. Whether consciousness is treated as emergent or primary
2. Whether consciousness is said to be heading toward a state of Oneness or unity (*unotropic*) or toward a state of wholeness (*holotropic*)
3. Direct observation or reports of people who appear to have experienced profound transcendent experiences, and what they themselves said about transcendence

Since this Dissertation examines whether EO is a path of transcendence, we only briefly investigate the first question. As explained in the next section, consciousness must be viewed as primary for any kind of transcendence to occur, so we will take that as a given.

We will examine second question by studying two models of transcendence, Wilber’s Spectrum of Consciousness model and Grof’s Holotropic model. In so doing we will be able to create a framework to determine which model is a better fit for EO. Both

models accept consciousness as primary and are considered well-accepted representatives of two markedly (but not entirely) different models of transcendence.

We will examine the third question by citing a classic study of people who have entered, and returned from, transcendent states of consciousness, and comment on how this applies to EO.

Transcendent Consciousness Defined

In order to meaningfully explore the existence, importance and value of transcendent states (of consciousness), we must first delve into what we mean by *consciousness*. Philosophers have used this term in two fundamentally different ways. Each definition supports a profoundly different paradigm about the relationship of consciousness to matter.

The American Heritage Dictionary (Unabridged), 3rd Edition (1992) defines *consciousness* as: “The state or condition of being conscious. A sense of one’s personal or collective identity, especially the complex of attitudes, beliefs and sensitivities, held by or considered characteristic of an individual or a group.” And, *conscious* is defined as “Having an awareness of one’s environment and one’s own existence, sensations and thoughts. Mentally perceptive or alert. Capable of thought, will or perception. Subjectively known or felt.”

These definitions point up a typically Western viewpoint about the relationship between matter and consciousness: consciousness has to do with awareness, particularly self-awareness. This viewpoint goes along with the notion that consciousness is a derivative—what is called an *epiphenomenon*—of the material world. The *material* in

this case includes nerve structure and neuronal electrochemical activity. This “emergent” view of consciousness states that when the material infrastructure (including its interconnections and their inter-communications) is sufficiently complex, consciousness *emerges* as a property. Let us call this viewpoint of the relationship between matter and consciousness *epiphenomenalism*: that matter is primary and consciousness emergent (secondary).

In contradistinction, the generally held Eastern viewpoint sees consciousness as primary and matter as secondary—perhaps not strictly emergent, but as a sort of harmonic or derivative of the primary consciousness. The entire universe, in this view, is aware or conscious. Rather than being a product of the brain, as in epiphenomenalism, consciousness is seen as a ground of being and not a mental “property.”

Because each viewpoint of the relation of consciousness and matter utilizes a fundamentally different definition of consciousness, it is very difficult to reconcile them. Yet reconcile we must, for it is central to the topic of this paper to explore the notion of *transcendence*.

Transcend what? Epiphenomenalism would state that what I claim to be a transcendent state is but a special, very intense instance of whatever biological processes are involved in “regular” conscious awareness: perhaps large quantities of internal electrical communication, perhaps neurotransmitters are released which are rarely utilized, or at least released in seldom-accessed areas of the brain. In this viewpoint, nothing is really transcended.

On the other hand, the *consciousness-as-primary* school sees transcendence as a fundamental shift in “kinds of stuff,” from material to the ground-of-being consciousness.

It is a shift from a limited to a completely unlimited viewpoint, *and* assumes that the unlimited (transcendent) viewpoint does in fact designate an authentic (non-material) reality.

In the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, two distinctly different viewpoints towards both reality and consciousness have emerged over time. In the Western model, an empirical approach dominates. In it, reality can be measured, defined, and ultimately known with enough probing, measurement, reasoning, and analysis. Our five senses, plus the faculty of thought, are all we need to learn all there is to potentially know about the world. From this viewpoint, consciousness itself is a function of the workings of the brain. In order to study it, we need “simply” to learn all we can through the neurosciences and through psychodynamic formulations.

In the Eastern model, physical reality is but one of many potentially infinite realities. We cannot even know all of reality; our five senses limit us dramatically. Consciousness is a primary, all-encompassing reality. A human being’s consciousness is by definition a part of this larger whole reality. As long as the human remains only conscious at the level of his or her individuality, he or she cannot possibly ever know, empirically, about this all-encompassing level of consciousness. As soon as the act of empirical measurement begins to take place, consciousness is divided into two parts: the consciousness of the observer, and the consciousness of the observed. The consciousness of the whole, therefore, has been divided into two, and no longer the unified field.

In the consciousness-as-primary view, transcendence has to do with rising above the world of the material to a greatly enlarged state.

These are several viewpoints on what constitutes transcendent states of consciousness. Central to all viewpoints is that there is an *expansion* of consciousness outside the realms of one's normal, skin-encapsulated boundaries. Individuals come to see that through this expansion they are far more than just a cleverly arranged mass of protoplasm. They discover that they can access more consciousness of the world around them, but also of themselves, and their connection to the world. In all cases, access to these expanded, transcendent states enables a trip to a larger consciousness. It's as if the person can climb to the top of the mountain and get a new perspective on life down in the valley. This enlarged perspective is enormously enriching. Upon return to the valley, the traveler brings those perspectives back and comes to live an enriched life.

What is not agreed upon is the nature of transcendence states. Below we consider two viewpoints, delineated by two writers. Each defines the transcendent state in differing ways. Ken Wilber has as the transcendent state a merging with a state of one Mind; while Stan Grof views the transcendent state as a place of many experiences taking place beyond the narrow boundaries of the individual.

We call the transcendent state arrived at by focusing on arriving at the place of one *unotropic* (heading toward the one); and the transcendent state arrived at by focusing on the state of wholeness *holotropic* (heading towards wholeness.)

Ken Wilber's Unotropic Spectrum of Consciousness,

Ken Wilber (1993) has produced a model of transcendence that reconciles Eastern and Western approaches, *The Spectrum of Consciousness*. This work has been heralded as "the unequivocal classic in the area of transpersonal psychology, and the prominent

reference point for all subsequent attempts at integrating psychology and spirituality.”

(Back cover)

Here are the salient assumptions of the *Spectrum of Consciousness*:

- Consciousness, or Mind, is primary
- This level of primary consciousness, or Mind is Reality (also known as God, Brahmin, Tao, Void, Dharmakaya, and so on, depending on one’s language and religious orientations), where the universe is not split into the categories of seer, and seen.
- There are two modes of knowing: One is through direct (non-dual) experience, and the other is through symbolic, inferential (dual) knowing, as obtained through language
- If we are to know Reality, we must turn to direct, non-dual modes.
- The “I” that lies within each individual is already but a part of the whole; each individual can only define himself through the use of dualistic constructs, each of which enables him to give himself a more refined, specific kind of identity

The levels of the Spectrum appear in the following order, from the deepest, most unitive level of the Spectrum up towards the most shallow.¹

Mind: This is the level of our innermost consciousness, where we are one with the universe, or God, or whatever name you choose to identify this state of reality. Since at this level, all dualisms have been eliminated, even having a witness to the Divine is still subtly dualistic. However, one can experientially merge with the Divine. “Therapies” and “spiritual states” are one and the same and include among others, Vedanta, Taoism, Mahayana Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, and certain forms of Christian mysticism.

The Transpersonal bands: At these supra-individual levels one is not identified fully with the All, yet one's identity is not limited to the boundaries of the individual organism. Here are found Jung's collective unconscious, the transpersonal witness, extrasensory perception, astral projection, out-of-the-body-experiences, plateau experiences, clairaudience, and other such occurrences. The boundary between self and other has not completely crystallized.

Wilber associates the following spiritual states with the level of the Transpersonal Bands: Zen- Supra-individual repository bodies; Hinduism: causal bodies

Wilber associates the following therapies with the level of the Transpersonal Bands: Suspension of all dualisms; association with archetypes; holotropic breath work; hypnosis; mindfulness; psychosynthesis; lucid dreaming; and Shamanic journeying.

The Existential level: Here the individual identifies solely with the total psychophysical organism, as it exists in space and time. Distinctions are made between *self* and *other*. This is where rational thought processes begin. Thus, the primary split is a person versus world around him. For example, a child may first experience this split shortly after the mother's breast is somehow unavailable, and comes to realize that he or she is no longer connected to an eternal source of identity, security, and nourishment. At this level, man represses his awareness of his connection to the nondual field.

Wilber associates the following spiritual states with the Existential level: Zen and Vedanta - the subtle body

Wilber associates the following therapies with the Existential level: Healing the split between soma (body) and mind and rendering identity to all facets of the organism; therapies such as Gestalt therapy, bioenergetics; structural integration; and hatha yoga.

The Ego level: Here, one does not identify solely with the psychosomatic organism. Rather, one identifies solely with a mental representation or picture of the total organism. One exists in a body, but not as a body. Now a split occurs between mind and body; a person becomes “his mind”, and relegates his body to something that is not really a part of him. “I am not my body!” the ego will state emphatically. “I am my mind”.

Wilber associates the following spiritual states with this level: Buddhism—home of the intellect. Hindu—ego split from, and thereby trapped in, the gross body. Since pathology occurs where a person’s self image is distorted, Wilber associates the following therapies with this level: Therapies involving contacting the shadow and eventually re-owning it, thereby allowing one’s sense of identity to expand.

The Shadow level: When the individual dissociates those parts of his ego that he does not approve of, what is remaining is the persona. The disembodied parts of the ego are then hidden from his own awareness.

Since the psychological states of the unconscious mind, the psychoanalytical unconscious, cannot go deep enough to include the question of no-minded-ness, Wilber associates the following therapies with the Shadow level: Freudian analysis and analytical psychology.

The Spectrum of Consciousness points out how in a process of *dis-integration*, successive splits in the absolute level of Mind into dualisms increasingly define a person’s identity. At the same time, these splits *up* into greater refinements of identity also involve the conscious mind covering up from its own view that part of the identity that it must eliminate in order to reach the new refinement.

The reverse process of *dis-integration* is *integration*. As we reverse direction and go *down* the Spectrum of Consciousness, we successively reunite levels of splits. Wilber notes,

Because the common thread running throughout each level is the process of dualism, then repression, then projection (to the narrower, higher level of the Spectrum), the therapies of each level also share a common characteristic—they reverse this process (on their particular level) by helping the individual contact the alienated and projected aspects, re-integrate them, and thus “heal”, “make whole”, and “unify” that level.” (Wilber, 1993, p. 267)

Thus, the ego reincorporates the shadow; the existential being reincorporates body, and the transpersonal being reincorporates the connectedness to the rest of the world. At the *lowest* level, the state of integration with Mind, or the One, there is no more pain of separation, since there is no separation of any kind. Individuals may have different experiences of the One: for some it is unbelievable bliss; for others, an unending void, and yet for others, a brilliant pulsating light. In all these cases, however, there is only pure experience of this state, and pure identification with it.

Wilber’s model demonstrates a *linear* progression *down* through the Spectrum to progressively higher levels of consciousness. Each level *down* includes the more narrowly-defined one, and reveals it to be illusory. With each progressive integration, the former split restores the prior unity of the larger level and broadens an individual’s identity. (p. 276)

It is at the level of the transpersonal bands that the individual begins to experience transcendence, that is, non-exclusive identification with the body. The Primary Dualism of the Witness still remains. Thus, the transpersonal bands can only serve as a springboard to the level of Mind. Wilber says, “[These transpersonal levels] are not to be confused with the Mind itself. That is why, in Zen, a student who remains in the peaceful

bliss of the transpersonal self is called a ‘dead-void’ heretic”, and the Tibetan Buddhists refer to it as being “stuck in the kun-gzhi”. In general Mahayana terms, the tainted *alaya-vijnana* has to be smashed through, because it contains the subtle dualistic forms of the *vasanas*, which give rise to the subject-object dualism of the witness vs. the witnessed.” (p. 262).

Since the body (part of the individual at the existential level), is ultimately seen to be illusory on this trek towards the level of pure Mind, only mediation can take us all the way *down* to the Spectrum’s lowest (but broadest) level of Mind.

Wilber asserts that one must go beyond the state of embodiment to *experience* Mind. Mind cannot be *understood*, since any understanding implies the dualistic mode of awareness, which contains a subject (the observer) and an object (the object of observation).

Mind is not really even a “level”; it is our present and ordinary state of consciousness, compatible with every imaginable level or state of consciousness. It is an “all inclusive yet dimensionless reality of which each level represents an illusory deviation.” (p. 286) It must be emphasized that our present, everyday state of consciousness—may it be sad, happy, depressed, ecstatic, agitated, calm, worried or afraid—just that, just as it is, is the Level of Mind. *Brahma* is not a particular experience, level of consciousness, or state of soul; rather it is precisely whatever level one happens to have in the present moment. Any search for it is doomed for failure, since in so doing one must regain dualist awareness.

In *The Spectrum of Consciousness*, Reality is only the Mind. Wilber quotes Vedanta-Ch’an-Taoist master Wei Wu Wei: “What I am—Reality itself--is nothing

objective, nothing that can be seen, felt, touched, heard or thought about.... Thus my thoughts, my mind, my body, my wishes, my hopes, my fears—those are exactly what I am not.” (Wilber, p. 286)

But, according to Wilber,

Our self, our ego, is not even a real subject. Because we can see it and know it objectively, this “subject” is a pseudo-subject and this self is a pseudo-self, a pure case of mistaken identity. Identified with this pseudo-subject, all other objects seem separate from me—thus, the Primary Dualism. (p. 292)

Wilber draws upon the writings of Wei Wu Wei to describe the bondage created by living in this state of illusion (samsara) or bondage:

As long as we think, act, live via an object, or as an object, that is bondage. Working on or through the phenomenal concept known as our “self” is working on or through the very false identification from which we are trying to escape. Surely that is the way in, not the way out? (p. 293)

Drop the illusions, Wilber proposes, and one should discover that nirvana and samsara are one and the same Mind. As to how to achieve this state, Wilber again paraphrases Wu Wei Wu:

Active looking within [Step One] results in seeing nothing [Step Two], and out of this Bodhimandala [i.e., sitting in a place of silence and stillness where enlightenment can erupt] can emerge pure non-objective awareness. (p. 323).

Once one reaches the level of nondual mind, one is in a position to perceive complete identification with the universe. Therapeutically, in so doing, one can also take complete responsibility for everything that happens. One’s actions are the actions of the universe, and vice versa. (p. 324). The individual mind fuses with the will of God, and thus, all problems cease to be problems. One leads a perpetually uncalculated life in the present.

Stanislav Grof's Holotropic Model of Consciousness

Grof, a noted researcher in consciousness studies, has studied non-ordinary states of awareness for over thirty years, beginning with his pioneering work on LSD and proceeding to what he termed holotropic breathwork. Like Wilber, he concludes that consciousness is not a product of the brain, but a primary principle of existence.

Grof (1998, p.5) defines the term *holotropic states* to identify those states of consciousness that enable us to recover and re-experience our wholeness. This composite word *holotropic* literally means, “oriented towards wholeness” or “moving in the direction of wholeness” (from the Greek *holos*, whole, and *trophein*, moving towards or in the direction of something). The guiding notion suggests that in our everyday state of consciousness we are not really whole; we are fragmented and identify with only a small portion of who we are. Holotropic consciousness is transcendent consciousness, which transcends, or rises above, this normal waking level.

Grof found he had to define the psyche very broadly to account for the range of experiences that occur in holotropic states. He adds to the individual psychic state, the *perinatal* and *transpersonal* states. He defines *perinatal* as “a repository of intense physical sensations linked to the trauma of birth... In addition, this domain also contains a rich spectrum of corresponding symbolic images revolving around the issues of birth, sex, death, and violence.” (p. 15) Since these states lie outside the boundaries of the individual psyche, the holotropic state is included in my definition of transcendent states of consciousness (TSC).

The *transpersonal* domain has as its basic characteristic “the experience of transcending the usual personal limitations of the body and the ego”. (p. 15)

Transpersonal experiences vastly expand the sense of personal identity by including elements of the external worlds and other dimensions of reality. One important category of transpersonal experience involves authentic identification with other people, plants, animals, and various other aspects of nature and the cosmos. Another larger group of transpersonal phenomena can be described in terms of the collective unconscious. Absolute consciousness can be experienced as it makes its way from the state of unity to the states of the many or multiplicity (each individual consciousness is a member of the many-states of consciousness).

For Grof sex, birth and death are closely linked psychospiritual events. All three represent important gateways to transcendence and unique opportunities for cosmic reunion. (p. 135) In the unconscious psyche, these three arenas become so deeply interwoven that it is impossible to experience one of them without touching the others.

He notes that a woman having a favorable delivery of a child can have the most powerful sexual experience of her life: “A powerful sexual orgasm in women, as well as men, can occasionally take the form of psychospiritual rebirth”; and that a powerful orgasm can be subjectively experienced as dying (hence the name in French for orgasm of “little death.”). (p. 136) He also notes that “Extended sexual arousal [can] trigger a mystical experience. In the course of [a] ritual event, partners can transcend their everyday identities... and experience a divine union with each other and with the cosmic source.” (p. 153)

Experiential confrontation with birth and death seem to automatically result in spiritual openings. It does not matter whether the confrontation is real or purely symbolic. Since Grof links sex so intimately linked with birth, death, and other extreme forms of

bodily sensation like suffocation and torture, it makes sense that sex, too, has the potential to catapult people into spiritual openings.

The perinatal portion of TSC, then, is the meeting point not only of birth, sex, and death, but also the dividing line between life and death, the individual and the species, and psyche and spirit. Concludes Grof, “Full conscious experience of the contents of this domain of the psyche with good subsequent integration can have far-reaching consequences and lead to spiritual opening and deep personal transformation.” (p. 147)

According to Grof (p. 7), the following changes occur in holotropic states:

- Perceptual changes in sensory areas
- Intense and often unusual emotions
- Profound alterations in thought processes
- Unconventional forms of behavior
- Flooding of images from our personal history and from the collective unconscious
- Visions portraying various aspects of nature, of the cosmos, or of the mythological realms
- Feelings of ecstatic rapture ranging from bliss and heavenly peace, all the way to utter despair and terror
- Orgiastic sexual sensations
- Extreme physical discomfort
- Profound psychological insights concerning our personal history, unconscious dynamics, emotional difficulties, and interpersonal problems

- Extraordinary revelations concerning various aspects of nature and the cosmos that transcend our educational and intellectual background

Here the quest towards greater differentiation has value as well. While *holotropic* is a movement toward greater wholeness, *hylotropic* is defined by Grof as movement toward greater differentiation. Grof defines the toggling back and forth between transpersonal and individual states of consciousness as a kind of “divine play”, known to the Hindus as *lila*. The trip into holotropic states enriches the trip into hylotropic states, and vice versa. Done successfully, this ongoing dance enables its participants to live richer, more loving, more meaningful, and more compassionate lives.

There is a paradox here: We are one, and we are many, and we can eternally dance between the two states. The goal according to Grof is to move between the two in a playfully divine, creative dance. The transcendence is amplified not necessarily by going further up the ladder, but by living an ever more profound dance between the two manifestations of consciousness, the states of increasing wholeness and of increasing differentiation.

As his inclusion of the perinatal domain as a transpersonal domain clearly suggests, it is possible to have transcendent experiences while in physical form, since consciousness is found there, too. In addition, Grof quotes Tantric texts which refer to the belief that the human is a microcosm of the macrocosm and says that under certain conditions, spiritual openings are possible through mature love-making and the advanced Tantric practices such as the suppression of orgasm. (pp. 58, 153) If this is so, then the microcosm-based body itself is a divine manifestation of the macrocosm that spawned it.

Absolute Consciousness, or the Universal Mind, is itself seen by Grof as

An endless cosmic dance, exquisite play, or divine drama. In producing it, the creative principle generates from itself and within itself a countless number of individual images, split units of consciousness, that assume various degrees of relative autonomy and independence. Each of them represents an opportunity for a unique experience, and experiment in consciousness. (p. 100)

To reach Absolute Consciousness in this system is both to reach the end and yet also to reach the beginning of the Divine creative cycle. In the terminology of the Jewish Cabala, according to Grof, “God needs people and people need God.” (p. 213) In other words, in an inextricably deep linkage between the whole and its parts, the whole needs the many, just as the many needs the whole.

We can thus see two levels or models of transcendence emerging from these considerations. First, one can transcend personal boundaries. Then, by engaging in the dance between the holotropic and hylotropic, what is ultimately transcended is neither the world of the many, nor the world of the one. This further transcendence lies in the ability to dance between the two states.

Here then, we find a model of consciousness that not only includes, but requires, an ongoing embodiment (involvement of the physical body as an integral part of the material world—“The Many”) as a part of the ongoing dance of transcendence. Although one might occasionally experience merging with the Divine, one need not ever separate from his or her embodiment to reach transcendence or enjoy its fruits. It is here, then, that we can find a theoretical home for the practice of EO that does not require leaving one’s body in order to transcend.

Comparison of Wilber Versus Grof's Models of TSC

A comparison of Wilber and Grof yields instructive insights. The model presented in *The Spectrum of Consciousness* presents us with a unotropic “Chain-of-Being” model (CBM) in which only the final level (even if it is not really a level, but a state of being) is Reality. All other levels are tainted with the illusion of dualities and are therefore not transcendent. In this model, it is impossible to achieve transcendence through any method that includes the body.

Wilber notes that in the quest for transcendence, any awareness of one's individual self (at the level of body or mind) retains the dualities that keep us from achieving transcendence. The collective unconsciousness represents the closest we come to the non-dual state. (p. 258) Yet,

Even archetypal representation of reality, in the deepest levels of the transpersonal bands closest to Mind, ‘point ‘unerringly [to Mind], but once seen and understood, must not be clung to... They must eventually be bypassed, burned up, [and] destroyed. Savikalpa samadhi [the usually ecstatic state of the collective unconsciousness] must give way to Nirvikalpa samadhi, [the direct experience of Mind,] mythological experience to direct imageless awareness. (p. 260)

In Grof's model, the body plays an important part in access to transcendental states:

In the most dramatic and all-encompassing transpersonal experiences, boundaries seem to dissolve and distinctions between ourselves and other people, objects, or forces disappear. We experience oneness and encounter, or even fully identify with, the creative principle of the universe. Depending on the extent to which we still maintain the sense of our everyday identity, we can experience this encounter either as an awed witness or as the creative force itself... Experiences of cosmic consciousness have been described in many religious traditions (such as Hinduism, Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism, Sufism, and the Kabbalah) throughout history. The basic message is that not only can we experientially connect with the creative principle but each of us, in a sense, is the creative principle. This is possible because all the boundaries in the universe are ultimately illusory, arbitrary, and can therefore be transcended. The best-known expression of this perennial wisdom is the famous statement *Tat tvam asi* (or “Thou art that”), you

are the Godhead, found in the ancient Indian Upanishads. Modern research in non-ordinary states of consciousness has brought strong support for this understanding of human nature, since it shows beyond any doubt that transcendence states of consciousness can be reached by a variety of consciousness-expanding methods. (Grof and Bennett, 1993, pp. 163-4)

Table 1 compares the key features of Wilber's unotropic model with Grof's holotropic model of transcendence. We have taken the unotropic model to represent the major features of Chain-of-Being models (CBM) generally, and the holotropic model to represent major features of the Holotropic Model (HM).

Wilber's definition of transcendence requires Mind only. In Grof's work the body is an integral part of transcendence.

We can make a further distinction on the basis of whether the body is viewed as a portal to (but not an integral part of) the experience of transcendence (*body-as-portal*), or whether the body is integrally involved in the transcendent experience (*body-as-involved*):

Body-as-Portal: includes methods of achieving transcendence that use the body as a jumping off point into transcendent states. Examples would include use of sacramental substances, near-death experiences, and mediation. The body prepares the mind for its journey into disembodiment. Such a view is consistent with Vedanta and some forms of Buddhism.

Body-as-Involved: The body is seen to be an integral part of the experience of transcendence. Examples include chanting, holotropic breath work, trance dancing, and sexually derived experiences, such as the circulation of orgasmic energies through the body, and Expanded Orgasm. This view is more consistent with the emanationist views of Tantra, which will be considered below.

With this distinction in mind, we can conclude that in Wilber's model (CBM), EO will never be a all-inclusive pathway to transcendence, since at some point, the body must be transcended to reach the final (and only true) transcendental experience. At best, the body can be a jumping off or entry point.

In Grof's model (HM), the body is a part of consciousness and therefore capable of being an entry point into transpersonal and thus transcendent states. In fact in the HM, the body cannot be discarded—it is integral to the very experience of TSC. Later in this chapter, we will discuss approaches to orgasm and EO that use both the Portal and Involved methods.

In this section we have defined a model of TSC that includes the possibility of EO as a path. We compared two models within the school of the Perennial Psychology and found a better fit for EO in the holotropic model. We now examine a model of transcendence based on direct observation of those who have attained TSC.

R.M. Bucke: Direct observation of people experiencing transcendence

We have considered two very powerful models for describing transcendental consciousness. Now we turn to an empirically based model. More than a century ago, R.M. Bucke had a powerful spiritual opening at the age of 36. In a few seconds, he learned as much as he had from years of study. He found that the true meaning of his awakening did not reveal itself for many years. He eventually came to understand that this extraordinary event was not an isolated occurrence, or mental aberration, but the emergence of a new faculty, which he called a natural outgrowth of our present level of consciousness. He subsequently studied some of the most well known people in history

whom he believed also had experienced this spiritual awakening: Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Dante, Spinoza, Blake, Balzac, Whitman, and others.

Bucke, in his book *Cosmic Consciousness* (1961), written just over a century ago, describes three levels of consciousness: (a) Simple consciousness, shared by persons and higher level animals, in which there is an awareness of one's physical self and surrounding environment, (b) Self consciousness, the domain of consciousness of the ordinary man, upon which is built everything that makes us distinctly human, and (c) Cosmic consciousness, a level of consciousness "which is as far above self consciousness as that is above simple consciousness." With this form, both simple and self consciousness persist, but added to them is a new faculty, a consciousness of the cosmos, that is, of the life and order of the universe.

Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment or illumination which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence... To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribably feeling of elevation, elation, and joyousness, and a quickening of the moral sense, which is fully as striking and more important both to the individual and to the race than is the enhanced intellectual power. (p. 3)

Having studied the experiences of many people whom he feels have attained Cosmic Consciousness, Bucke gives us a list of qualities indicative of this state (p. 63):

- A sense of immersion in a flame, or rose-colored cloud.
- An immersion in the feelings of joy, assurance, triumph, salvation, an ecstasy far beyond any that belongs to the merely self-conscious life.
- Simultaneously or immediately following, an intellectual illumination that is quite impossible to describe... He sees and knows that the cosmos... is in truth a very living presence... in an infinite ocean of life... that all life is eternal....

that the foundation of the world is the principle of love...and that the happiness of every individual in the long run is absolutely certain.

- Along with moral and intellectual illumination comes a sense of immortality.
- The fear of death vanishes.
- A sense that there is no sin from which one needs to escape.
- An illumination of all this simultaneously, like a “flash of lightning into a dark night, bringing the landscape which has been hidden into clear view”.
- The previous character of the [person] who enters this state is an important element in this case.
- So is the age at which illumination occurs (generally over thirty).
- An added charisma or charm is acquired.
- A change in the appearance of the person.

Bucke states that there are undoubtedly many people who are living in the “twilight” of this full-blown experience, having had some, but not all, of these experiences. He presumes that many of those in this twilight phase will go on to experience total Cosmic Consciousness at some point.

Bucke’s list details some of the characteristics we might look for in determining whether people practicing a path to transcendent are in fact, meeting with success.

Spiritual Mind/Body paradigms

Tantra

History of Tantra

Tantra Yoga is an Eastern spiritual tradition whose roots can be traced back over 20,000 years to fertility objects that match symbols still in use today by Tantric practitioners. (Rawson, 1973) According to Dyczkowski (1987), about the middle of the first millennium A.D., Tantra began to assume a clearly defined, while immensely varied, identity, as vast bodies of Tantric literature began to emerge. A bewildering number of Tantric cults flourished. Pre-Vedantic texts (and dualistic) known as *Agamas*, considered divinely inspired, served as a basis for Tantric scriptures. At this time in India, many gods and goddesses flourished, among them Vishnu, Brahma, Kali, Shiva, Shakti, and Kali. While this multitude of deities would continue to flourish, Shiva and Shakti, the god and goddess of the creative forces, were favored deities of the Tantric followers. (p. 4)

During this fertile religious period, Hindus and Buddhists primarily lived in Kashmir. Hence, Tantric texts were also said to borrow ideas liberally from both Hinduism and Buddhism as well as from the *Agamas*. (Nitschke, 1995, p.158)

Indeed, Tantra, as it evolved, became increasingly a nondual religion. It differentiated itself from other types of Hinduism and Buddhism not so much in its thinking (which is not the Western type of philosophy but more of a psycho-experimental speculation), but in the *sadhana*s, or practices of meditation and ritual, used to point the way to gaining liberation from the illusions of dual world and the cycles of death and

rebirth. It should be considered not a religion or way of reasoning as much as a path of action.

General principles of Tantra

Some Tantrists are “emanationist monists”, or *panentheists*, defined (Kazlev, 1999d) as follows:

Panentheism is the view of Reality according to which the Godhead or Absolute not only includes and is the Cosmos (as in Pantheism) but also transcends it. The Godhead does not reside dualistically or even holistically in the universe as a soul in it but rather monistically *as the universe itself*. Therefore ...the Cosmos is absolutely real and of the essence of the Supreme, as it is the *real* (not illusory) transformation of the Godhead. But the Godhead in its transcendent absolute nature is infinite, eternal, unchanging, etc, and hence it is also beyond the Cosmos. That is the paradox of reality, that the one and same Reality can be both and *equally* unchanging, infinite, eternal, etc and *also* changing, finite etc. This paradox is reconciled through the fact of *emanation*—the One transforms itself into the Many, while not diminishing its status as the One. The best, clearest and most lucid example of this sort of Panentheistic philosophy is the Indian monistic philosophy of Kashmir Saivism.

Other Tantrikas (Tantric practitioners) are *pantheists*. Pantheism is the doctrine that this material world is no different from God, that "all (this is) God". Reality is actually non-other than God, but this is not a harsh external Sky God but a compassionate and even vulnerable Earth Goddess. The universe is the body of God(dess). The ultimate reality is love and compassion. All things are interrelated holistically into a single unity. The polar opposites of mind and body, male and female, persona and shadow, ego and unity are reconciled in the immediate present.

The universe, say these Tantrikas, is not so much rationally knowable but accessible to intuition. One exists in the present moment of here now, in a state of love, compassion, peace and centeredness. “Reality is better known through meditation,

chanting, music and dance then through the intellect, although intellectual knowledge still represents a valid aspect of understanding reality.” (Kazlev, 2000c)

Depending on one’s Tantric panentheist or pantheist beliefs, the Absolute either unfolds or manifests itself into polarities, or opposites. Tantrikas undertake certain experiences that enable them to unify these opposites and thus reconnect, in a sense of oneness, with the divine unbroken whole.

The fundamental opposites are *Shiva*, the male principle, and *Shakti*, the female principle. Tantrikas believe that the world is a manifestation of the Divine; hence, it too, is divine. The focus of Tantric practice is surrendering our preconceptions, which block humans from re-accessing their connection to the Divine, which lies within everyone.

In Buddhist Tantra the male is the passive force and the female is the active; while in Hindu Tantra the male is the active force and the female is the passive. While the Hindu Tantrikas focus on the participation in the creative evolution of the world via this union, the Buddhist Tantrikas focus more on a return to the original unborn unity of emptiness and compassion (Nitschke, 1995, p. 160)

In yogic thought, the human body has divine correlates. The Upanishads provide Tantric philosophy with maps that date back as early as the seventh century B. C. E. For example, the *Brahma-Upanishad* mentions the four "places" occupied by the *purusha* (soul): the navel, heart, throat, and head. Following common tradition, each place is characterized by a particular state of consciousness: the navel (or the eye) waking consciousness, the heart dreamless sleep, the throat dreaming, and the head the "fourth" or transcendent state. (Eliade, 1970, p.128)

A human being has three bodies. The *physical body* is made up of dense matter, can be studied scientifically, and manipulated directly with massage. The *subtle body* is the auric body, home to the body's psychic centers. *The casual body* is the most enduring body. It was the original luminous consciousness out of which the subtle and physical bodies evolved. This immediate envelope is considered the sheath of the soul. It shares a close relationship with the subtle body. (Peay)

Nik Douglas and Penny Slinger, two noted researchers of Tantra, remark that:

He who knows this microcosm of the body and experiences its mysteries truly reaches the highest state. ((Douglas et al. 1979, p. 47) ...If one wishes to advance spiritually, one must work consciously to activate the Subtle Body. Though the basic ingredients and raw energies exist in everyone, they must be focused and channeled consciously. The body, emotions, and mind should all be brought to bear on the conscious evocation of an all-powerful Subtle Body, which can then serve as a source of strength, intelligence, and transcendence. This is one of the most important secrets of the Tantric tradition. ((Douglas et al. 1979, pp. 49-50)

The body, in Tantra, is suffused with life through the existence of *prana*, or life energy. Similar to the Taoist *chi*, bio-energy, the astral light and other terms, prana courses through over 72,000 energetic lines within the body known as *nadis*. As with many ancient religions, the heart was said to be the center of the nadis.

Prana is not considered matter, mind, intelligence or consciousness, but rather an inseparable part of the cosmic energy, *kundalini*, or *Shakti* that resides in all of them. Gopi Krishna, the Indian mystic, tells us: "The term *prana*, as used by authorities on Yoga, signifies both the cosmic life energy and its subtle biological conductor in the body, the two being inseparable." (Krishna, 1967, p. 47)

Chakras are believed by Tantrikas (and many other yoga followers) to be centers of energy exist at certain points within and outside of, but close to, the physical body. They were first mentioned in written communication around the first century B. C. E.

Chakras are often considered non-physical organs that transform raw kundalini energy into more subtle, and useable, forms of energy. Richard Gerber, writing of the vibrational and energetic qualities of healing, says (Gerber, 1988):

From a physiologic (functional) standpoint, the chakras appear to be involved with the flow of higher energies via specific subtle energetic channels into the cellular structure of the physical body. At one level they seem to function as energy transformers, stepping down energy of one form and frequency to a lower level. This energy is, in turn, translated into hormonal, physiologic, and ultimately cellular changes throughout the body. There appear to be at least seven major chakras associated with the physical body. (p. 128)

Chakras are considered centers of pure consciousness (*chaitanya*) and consciousness-power. Gurus often gave disciples a chakra to meditate upon in order to purify the energy in that center, and the associations to that energy. Those seeking more or greater love, for example, would meditate on the *Anahata*.

Tantric tradition postulates seven or more chakras. These are called the *Muladhara* or "Root Support" at the base of the spine with four "petals", the *Swadhishtana* or "Own Abode" at the root of the genitals with six, the *Manipura* or "Fullness of Jewels" at the level of the navel with ten "petals", the *Anahata* or "Unstruck Melody" at the heart-center with twelve, the *Vishuddha* or "Complete Purity" at the throat with sixteen, and finally the *Ajna* or "Guru's Command" at the brow with two "petals". The Crown center, the *Sahasara-Padma* or "Thousand Petalled-Lotus", located at the very top of the head, is technically speaking not a chakra at all, but the summation of all the chakras. The chakras are strung along the central (or *Sushumna*) channel, usually

located at the spine). In the lowest chakra, the *Muladhara*, at the base of the spine, lays the *Kundalini-Shakti*, the latent consciousness-energy, the microcosm of the cosmic creative Shakti.

The *kundalini* is said to be the driving force behind all cosmic phenomenon. When aroused, it can ascend the sushumna, either activating or dissolving (depending on the yogic tradition) each chakra in turn, until it reaches the highest or crown chakra, the Sahasrara, where dwells the Godhead or Supreme Shiva (*Paramashiva*). As the Kundalini-Shakti unites with Paramashiva, the original transcendent equilibrium is restored, and the yogi returns to the state of oneness with the Absolute.

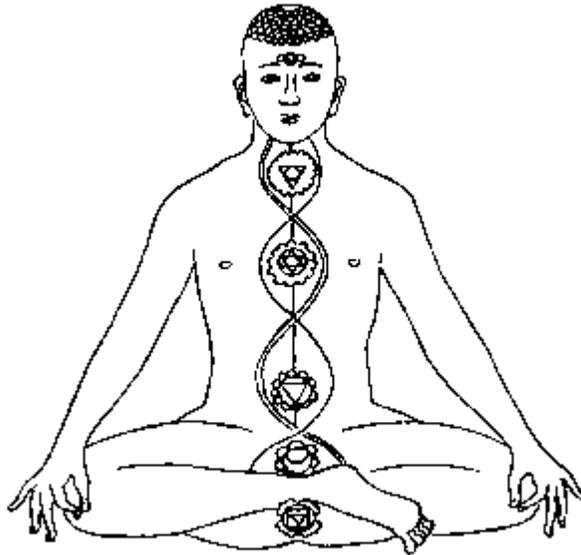
Krishna notes the effects of kundalini arousal on the body:

[Kundalini is] the life energy the source behind propagation and evolution both.” (Krishna, 1974, p. 11)...The upward flow of the reproductive energy is to be understood in its natural form as an altered activity of the cerebro-spinal system and the organs of generation. (p. 12) ...With the awakening of Kundalini, the arrangement [of nerves in the body] suffers a radical alternation affecting the entire nervous system, as a result of which other and more extensive groups of nerves are stirred to activity, leading to the transmission of an enormously enhanced supply of a more concentrated form of pranic radiation into the brain drawn from a vastly increased areas of the body. (p. 47)

The chart in Table 2 shows the correspondences between the major chakras, the supposed location in the body, the tattva (principles, evolutes, or essences), and the senses. In addition to the seven major chakras there are also said to be chakras in the hands, feet, genitals, and so on. A number of other chakras are also often said to occupy places along the spine.

The seven major Chakras are diagrammed in the following picture, as provided by Kazlev. (Kazlev, 2000c)

The Location of Major Chakras in the Human Body



Tantrikas seek to draw the kundalini up from the spine and all the way through the chakra system, into the crown chakra. The methods for doing so vary considerably. The following techniques are used, alone or in combination:

Breathing

Meditation

Postural and other physical exercises

Chanting

Visualization

Initiation by a guru

Sexual practices where the fluids are retained and circulated

Sexual practices in which ejaculation is encouraged

While the kundalini has not yet been directly measured with scientific instruments, there is widespread agreement on its existence based on thousands of years of reported experiences with this vital energy. What is a source of debate is what can and should be done to awaken and sustain this powerful energy. Some Tantric practitioners believe it should be sublimated, and sent up the spine via special yoga practices, instead of out the body, where it will flow during regular sex. Others believe that regular sex awakens kundalini, and that extraordinary sex awakens it even further. We will discuss kundalini separately as a path to transcendence later.

Tantrikas feel that since the world is an expression of divinity, then what is in it must be divine. It too is worthy of worship and should not be renounced. Worship takes place through immersing one's senses ever more deeply into pure experience. The specific practices and rituals prescribed will depend on the branch of Tantra. "White" Tantrikas use sound and pictures as tools for enlightenment; the "Red" Tantra also uses sexual practices, done individually, as a couple, and in groups. We will focus our discussion on the Red Tantric practices, since their inclusion of sexual practices makes them more germane to our inquiry.

Males and females symbolically embody the god and goddess Shiva and Shakti respectively. These two deities represent the primary polar split of oneness into duality; thus, Tantrikas seek to reunite these opposites in their desire to recreate wholeness within themselves.

Over time, elaborate rituals celebrating male and female union led to the development of an extensive body of knowledge and practices concerning orgasm and

Expanded Orgasm. As a result, many practices for expanding and extending orgasm have been developed by Tantrikas. Techniques for doing so include extensive use of breathing, circulating energy throughout one's own energy centers and those of one's partner, visualizations, and the sacralization of all bodily functions and parts.

A person may choose to begin tantric practice with someone of the opposite gender. Then, in advanced Tantric practices, one can learn to merge the male and female energies within oneself to achieve union with the Divine. In such ways, sexual Tantra can be used for the ritual creation and reenactment of the cosmos, of consciousness, and of matter, and for access to the Divine.

Tantra as a tool for transformation

In addition to being a pathway of transcendence, Tantra is also used as a tool for the navigation of the astral realms, and for manifestation of desires in the physical world.

Following is a list of other gains claimed for Tantric practices; (Mumford, 1997):

- 1) *Sex for consciousness expansion:* An orgasm tends to automatically illuminate the nervous system and awaken the Kundalini. Nearly everyone can learn to deepen and prolong orgasm and thereby use it as a springboard to transcendence.
- 2) *Sex for ESP development:* Sexual activity promotes sensory acuity and awareness, converting the whole skin into one extensive, massive, genital organ. Those who learn to open up their five sensory gates through Tantric development will immensely speed their psychic development.

- 3) *Sex for positive thinking*: Sexual arousal, leading to sexual climax, is a key to attitude changing, or self-hypnosis. Correct use (sometimes known as sex magic) will enable the sexually aroused, hyper-suggestible individual to consciously inculcate his or her unconsciousness with life-affirming—rather than life-negating attitudes.

To the Tantrica, then, spiritual sexuality is a holistic, wholeness-embracing pathway, involving one's mind, body, emotions and spirit simultaneously. Its practices clearly give the practitioner access to transcendental states of consciousness. This would clearly be a member of the body-as-involved path to transcendence.

The Kasmiri Saivist tradition

The monistic Kasmiri Saivist tradition is of interest to us primarily because it has a profound, deeply Tantric cosmology that we believe explains the transcendental, spiritual nature of the EO practice better than any other doctrine to date. It is heavily influenced by both Vedantic (non-dual) thinking and the Tantric attitude that both mind and body are divine.

This Saivist school was best defined in the writings of the *Tantriloka*, authored by Abhinavagupta in approximately 1000 A.D. His stature was so great that over time he was deemed a saint. He admittedly drew on the *Agamas* (the pre-Vedic texts containing mostly discussions of rituals) as well as Vedantic texts.

Abhinavagupta considered Shiva the non-dual God. However, Shiva has many aspects. Abhinavagupta tells us, “Shakti should not be conceived as different from Shiva.” (Muller-Ortega, 1989, p. 87) Shiva is also the individual self. He is the

emissional power of creation. He is consciousness resting within itself, that which pervades all things. He is never different, no matter whether he is in differentiated or non-differentiated form.

As Abhinavagupta states,

At the moment in which the consciousness begins to tend toward the different products which make up multiplicity, one has then the initial moment of the will. The cause of this tension as a vibrating of amazement in the intellect, the object of which is the expanding of the whole. The whole is none other than Shiva. (Muller-Ortega, 1989, p.80)

This tension is perceptible in the locus of the Heart. For Abhinavagupta, the Heart, not the Mind, was the center of the individual being. This “heart” is not the anatomical heart. Rather, it is a person’s center; it can include the heart, the bowels, and even the genitals. References are made to the heart as a cave or an abyss, and specifically, to the female genitals, or *yoni*. (p. 113)

As with much of this cosmology, the heart is more of an energetic grouping or location than a specific physical thing. Clearly, this cosmology, with its heart metaphor as the sacred location of the spirit, reflects the wisdom of the older, non-Vedantic traditions, as brought forth in the Agamas. Vedantic theology in contrast reflects a cognitive-intellectual cosmology that places the mind as the repository of the spirit.

The power of the Lord takes on many names and forms. This reflects the viewpoint that God is everywhere, the Supreme Being, and also its manifestation in both light and vibration.

Here, God is at once God, Goddess, and the manifestation of the Divine. God is the dance between the one and the many; he is the context in which the dance occurs, and the energy that drives the dance, as well.

Truly, says Abhinavagupta,

Everything that exists resides within the blessed Lord. Whatever appears within our Heart or leaves the point of our tongue resides, I say, in [Shiva], who is not limited by time, is one with consciousness, and is perpetually united with all the powers. He constitutes a unity which coexists without contradiction with the hundreds of creations and dissolutions, which are manifested by his contraction and expansion, and it is by means of those that he expressed his freedom. This reality of Shiva, therefore, has neither beginning nor end and is luminous with its own light. Its essence is a complete freedom, which consists in perfect independence determined by the fullness of all things. Within itself it embraces all principles, which are in effect identical with it. (p. 86)

Everything is connected to everything else. Notes Abhinavagupta: “My heart ...is composed of the emission of the quivering flashing condition of the union of the Mother and Father, whose body is full, which generates that concealed light which has five faces...”

The Emissional power, the *visarga*, which is also Shakti, is many other things, as well. It is the *Kundalini*, the universal cosmic vibration, and also the actual physical ejaculate. The Saivists practiced a secret ritual, and Abhinavagupta alludes to them briefly:

Those who desire to gain entry in to this Emissional State in all its fullness follow the traditional lineage that teaches, “By means of churning and tasting.” So we see that

The Supreme Light which animates the entire body and which presides over the central “vein” [the *sushumna*], agitated by the wine, garlands, and the season, attains a condition of Emission, and arrives at a state of ecstasy, of bliss, which many not be completely full; but if it is full, is made of the Lord itself. Therefore this Emissional power appears as a single unique power. (p. 135)

This description of the secret ritual is somewhat ambiguous. We aren’t told what “churning and tasting” are, for example. Still, this passage is striking in how easily it could be describing EO as at a state of being, or “condition of Emission.”

References to practices that accurately describe EO abound. According to Mueller,

The power that fuels and continually urges one’s self-transcendence onward is once again, the very nature of Shiva, the *visarga-Shiva*. This process may appear

to necessitate effort and discipline on the part of the practitioner, but it becomes effortless once the practitioner has attuned himself to the *visarga* [Emissional power]...The infinite has managed the impossible task of compressing itself into the finite. It then follows that the realization of the infinite involves a process of decompression, of relaxation of the boundaries and bonds, which tie up the infinite. This may be accomplished by releasing the tight structures of finiteness, and by attuning to the inwardly expansive movement of the *visarga*, which as Kundalini is always operative on the finite self. Then a process of overflowing, or spilling over the walls of the boundaries occurs. (p. 139)

Says Mark Dyczkowski (1978), author of a work on the Spanda Saivist doctrine, “The one universal consciousness, therefore, has three aspects; it is the illuminator, the illumined universe, and the light of knowledge which illumines it. The universe, the light, and self are one.” (p. 63)

Shakti, the highest form of kundalini, called *parakundalini*, represents the all-encompassing fullness of the absolute, the ever-shifting power of awareness actively manifesting as the Circle of Totality. Shiva is the void of absolute consciousness. (p. 119)

The motion of absolute consciousness is a creative one, then, a transition from the uncreated state of being to the created state of becoming. (p. 77) While Shiva represents the goal, Shakti remains the means to the goal and is equally important. It is only through Spanda’s vibrational power that we can recognize our identity with Shiva. (p. 103)

The merging of these two energies in one being is said to created a “mixed point” which is the seed known as the sun of consciousness, known as the Lord of Passion. He is the Self worshipped by yogis as the highest reality and the form or body of the absolute as the sexual embrace of Shiva and Shakti. (p.103)

The Saivists saw a person as divinely cast in the image of God. This person was not separated into mind, emotions, spirit, and body, (as it is prevalent viewpoints today), but was a whole, energetic system. Every part of this person, including the orgasmic fluids

and genitals, was not only sacred, but a powerful representation of the divine creative forces that was also a part of all other parts of the world. To experience this divine nature, one need only to relax the boundaries of daily living, and immerse oneself in the divine essence, or Kundalini, a birthright found at one's core. Thus we see in Saivist thought the inclusion of all material manifestations in the highest state of being.

Tibetan Tantra

Vajrayana metaphysics, like Indian Tantra, is a hybrid affair: a coming together of Indian Tantrism, Mahayana Buddhism, and aboriginal shamanism—the Bon tradition—of Tibet itself. Like other groups, the Vajrayanists postulated a subtle or iconographic body, made up of *chakras*, *nadis*, and subtle winds (*vayu*). And like their Indian counterparts they worked on manipulating the forces of this subtle body through yoga in order to attain spiritual enlightenment. However, instead of the later seven-*chakra* model, they retain an earlier four-*chakra* schema of navel, heart, throat, and head centers.

Table 3 shows the Vajrayana chakra system in schematic.

Instead of Kundalini, reference is made to the red and white subtle "drops" in the navel and head chakras respectively, although sometimes other drops are mentioned as well. Through the dissolution of these drops, and of the various subtle winds, in the central channel, one attains transcendent awareness. This happens not only during advanced yoga, but also at the time of death; and constitutes the phenomenon known as the "Clear Light".

There are a number of other important differences to Indian Tantra as well. The Indian Tantrikas believe the Kundalini starts from the base chakra and progresses up.

The Tibetan Tantrikas start from the head, which is the "lowest" level of consciousness (body, waking consciousness, wrathful deities), and progress down to the heart, which is the highest level of consciousness.

While Indian Tantrikas awaken kundalini through specific breathing practices and yoga-postures, Vajrayana Tantrikas manipulate the vital force through the mind and concentration. One learns to master the activation of the inner winds (prana) through intense visualization of deities.

The corollary of the kundalini fire in Vajrayana is the Tumo (literally "fierce woman"). As Tibetan Tantrikas practice intense visualization of deities and concentration upon the "lower tip" (the minor chakra at the tip of the sex-organ), the winds (prana) are drawn into the lower opening of the central channel (sushumna), producing an intense heat, called *tumo*. M.A. Kazlev tells us,

The *tumo*-heat causes the drops to melt and enter the central channel. The red "female" drops in the navel chakra ascends to the heart chakra, while the white drops in the crown chakra descend to the same chakra. The bliss of the drops flowing in the central channel is said to be a hundred times greater than that of orgasm. The drops, moving up or down the central channel, finally enter the "indestructible drop" in the heart chakra, so called because it is said to be drop that passes from life-time to life-time, taking with it the "very subtle mind" and "very subtle wind". (Kazlev, 2000d)

As a result, one who masters the *tumo* rises in an "illusory body", and at death, remains in full consciousness in the illusory body. In so doing, one attains Buddhahood. (Cozort, 1999)

Taoist Nei Tan

The Tao is an ancient system based on the awareness of opposites that emerge out of a fundamental unified ground of being, known as the *Tao*, or way. Because it existed before the creation of the universe Tao is thought of as its generating force. The Tao, like

light, seeks to be both wave and particle, and the Taoist constantly contemplates the relations between the macrocosm and the microcosm. The Tao wavers between being both knowable and unknowable. The two interpretations are said to be necessarily confused because they share the common characteristic of transcending the senses.

(Kazlev, 1999f)

The *yin* and *yang* were constructed by Taoists as polar opposites representing the way the fundamental ground of being was broken into dualities as it entered our conscious minds and diverted us from accessing our true, undivided connection and identification with the Divine. Male and female are classic interpretations of this primary division of the unbroken reality into yin and yang.

Taoism revered the unadulterated laws of pure nature (the Tao) and gave equal status to both male and female principles. Lao Tzu, called the father of the Tao by some, searched to recover the ancient roots of this philosophy. This philosophy professed that the way to live was the way back to the unspoiled, natural living patterns that people understood in the past. We can find in the *Tao Te Ching*, the central classic of Taoism said to be authored by Lao Tzu, a celebration of the prehistoric vulva as the primordial icon of the cosmos:

The valley spirit never dies;
We call it the mysterious female;
The gates of the mysterious female;
There we call the roots of Heaven and Earth.
Subtle yet everlasting! It seems to exist.
In being used, it is not exhausted.

Thompson (1996a) provides a comprehensive review of Taoism as part of man's evolution of consciousness. He contrasts the Taoist reverence for the vulva with an

attitude about the phallus in which it is being used, and being fully exhausted in being used.

In the Tao we see many images of flow and process, of softness and subtlety, of reversal in which that which is completely empty holds the essence of life. (p. 255) Once again, we see the ebb and flow between opposites that so characterizes the non-dualistic (usually Eastern) spiritual philosophies.

Like many other ancient religions, the Tao went underground as the more patriarchal teachings of Confucianism gained ground in China. (Thompson, 1996a, p.247) Nonetheless, Taoist thought developed as thinkers continued to add on to Lao Tzu's treatises over time. Taoist religion acquired beliefs systems pertaining to physical immortality, alchemy, breath control and hygiene (internal alchemy). The religion spawned several different schools emphasizing various aspects of the basic Taoist principles.

Yogic transformation of the vital force emerged as a Taoist tradition. This tradition was called "inner alchemy," because it used alchemical metaphors and purported to be a quest for immortality. It is this esoteric Taoism that is the native Chinese counterpart to Indian and Tibetan Tantra and western Qabalah.

The Taoist Nei Tan school spawned a series of physical exercises, Tai Chi, Chi Kung, and Nei Kung, Nei Kung, or "inner breath" exercises, meant to develop the body's own subtle energy and awaken subtle body energies using pure awareness. Practitioners of Nei Tan linked the physical body with emotions, thoughts, individual soul, and universal spirit.

The universal life force in the Tao is the *chi*, meaning vital essence, air, breath, wind, and so forth. Although difficult to define, it is said to be the activating energy of the universe. (Collinge, 1998, p. 31) According to Mantauk and Maneewan Chia, world-renowned teachers in the school of Nei Tan,

[Chi] can be neither created nor destroyed. Instead, chi transforms itself and reappears in new states of existence. All states of existence, therefore, are temporary manifestations of Chi, especially those of physical matter. It is the source of all movement in the universe. The motions of the stars and planets, the radiation from the sun, and the patterns of our thoughts and emotions occur because of chi. (Chia, 1993, pp. 31-32)

Chi also binds everything together. It enters living things to give them life, and leaves living things when they die.

There are said to be many different kinds of chi, ranging from dense to fine and even subtle, but all types of chi are the universal chi, manifesting in various forms. One is born with universal chi, asserts this philosophy; and chi should be re-circulated and not lost, wherever possible. One can acquire additional cosmic chi through eating, sex, and other interactions.

The Chias note,

In Chinese thought, human beings are a microcosm of the universe, and it also flows thorough humans. ...In [Nei Tan] we begin the process of spiritual exploration within the laboratory of our own body and mind. The highest goal of Taoist Inner Alchemy is to transform our cells to unite with Cosmic (Higher Self) Energy and become immortal cosmic cells of the universe. (Chia, pp. 33-34)

Once again, we find a fractal cosmology that uses sexuality as a path to transcendence. The interplay of yin and yang elements are represented, and celebrated, in sexual union, as well as experienced and united within each person.

Chia, who teaches the sexual arts, says there are two pillars to this practice: conservation and transformation. The man's ejaculate is said to contain his sacred life

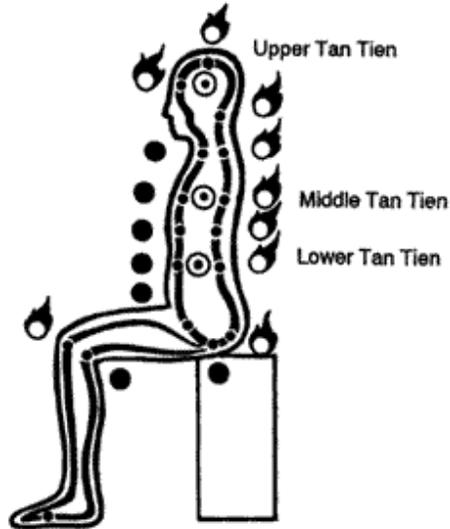
force . As he ages, he will therefore promote his energy and chances for immortality by withholding this ejaculation and turning it inward. Women lose little sexual life energy through orgasm (instead losing it through menstruation and childbirth) so it is not as important for them to conserve liquids during orgasm.

Still both men and women learn to transform the sexual *jing* into *chi*, which is the body's sacred life energy, through drawing the energy into the microcosmic orbit of the body, a loop that circulates up the spine and down the front of the body.

In performing these practices, both men and women transform the nature of their orgasms from an outward-directed, genital experience, into a inward-directed, upward experience that promotes not only love and bonding between partners, but great spiritual development as well. Practitioners learn to release negative energy and cultivate positive energy. Since the sexual energy can take on the positive values of the organs it nourishes during this practice and expand it manifold, an individual can come to develop a passionate love for all creation. Says Chia,

With practice, we can raise our virtues from an ordinary level to the transcendent level of those of a saint or immortal. This is the highest purpose to which we can direct our sexual energy—the goal of enlightenment. (p. 379)

Circulation of the sacred Chi via the Microcosmic Orbit (from Chia, 1993, p. 38)

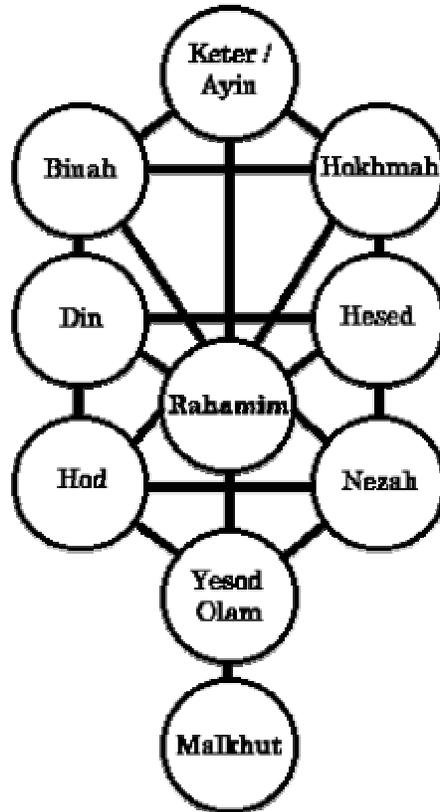


The Kabbalah

The Kabbalah is an esoteric Jewish mystical doctrine. The Kabbalist claims that by devoting himself to understanding the *Sefirot*, one arrives at an understanding of, and an approach to, the nature of God.

The *Ten Sefirot*, or “emanations” or "enumerations", form the very heart of all Kabbalistic theology and theosophy. The Sefirot are the ten archetypal attributes or characteristics of the Godhead. A distinction is made in Kabbalah between the unknowable Godhead, the En Sof or "infinite", and the knowable qualities of God, represented by the sefirot. (Kazlev, 2000a). Following is a diagram of the Sefirot from traditional sources brought forward by Kazlev (2000a):

The Sefirot of the Kabbalah



There numerous interpretations and meanings attached to each of the ten Sefirot. Kabbalistic metaphysics largely revolves around endless speculation on the nature of the ten Sefirot, their relation to each other and to the cosmos and the human soul. Below are a few of these representations of Sefirot elements of “The Tree of Life”:

1. *Keter* - the "supreme crown" of God
2. *Hokmah* - the "wisdom" of God; also the yang or male polarity
3. *Binah* - the "intelligence" of God; also the female or yin polarity
4. *Hesed* - the "greatness" or "love" of God; the right arm
5. *Din* - the "power" or "judgment" of God; the left arm
6. *Tifaret* - the "compassion" or "beauty" of God; the spine or torso
7. *Netzah* - the "lasting endurance" of God; the right leg
8. *Hod* - the "majesty" of God; left leg
9. *Yesod* - the "righteous one" or "foundation of the world"; also the male phallus
10. *Malkut* or the *Shekhinah* - the "kingdom" of God, the indwelling divinity of the community of Israel; through this humans can experience the Divine; also said to be the mouth, or female genitals.

God in His essence, *En Sof*, is unknowable. It is only through the Sefirot that God becomes knowable. Yet the Sefirot—the *attributes* of God—are still believed to be one with, and inseparable from, the En Sof or *essence* of God. They should not be thought of as mediating stages between the Absolute and Creation, but rather as phases of manifestation of and in Divinity itself; equivalent to the Christian triune or three-in-one God.

The Kabbalists held a strongly emanationist position. The En Sof emanates the first sefirah, Keter, which in turn emanates the next one, Hokmah, and so on, down to the lowest sefirah Malkhut.

Each lower world contains the same sefirotic configuration as the one that preceded it, so each lower level is a lower image of the preceding World. As explained by Kazlev, the ten Sefirot, the ten archetypal attributes of God, are thus repeated in each World or plane of existence, thus producing a fractal cosmology wherein each part mirrors the whole.

Here then is another system of thought in which the body can be said to be a divine manifestation. The Kabbalah, like the Tantra and the Tao, is also a fractal cosmology, in which the Divine is literally distributed throughout all. In such models, no separation between mind and body can be said to exist.

The Holographic Paradigm

The holographic paradigm of consciousness was developed in the West initially by Karl Pribram and David Bohm during second half of the twentieth century.

Bohm, who initially achieved fame as Einstein's colleague, and author of a classic text on quantum physics, theorized that the universe (or all information about everything in the universe) is structured like a hologram. The essential property of a hologram is that it creates an illusion that things are located where they are not. As a virtual image, a viewed hologram has no dimension (though it appears to). Also, in holographic realities, the information of the whole is stored in the every part. Thus, if you were to take a holographic picture of a scene, and cut it into many smaller pieces, you would still get the picture of the scene on each smaller part.

Michael Talbot, (Talbot, 1992) who has written extensively about the implications of a universe characterized by holographic information storage, explains that Bohm came to understand that the hologram presented a new way of understanding *order*. Bohm asserted that underlying the scenery of our daily lives is a deeper order, a vast and more primary level of existence that gives birth to all the objects and appearances of our physical world in much the same way that holographic film gives birth to a hologram. More specifically, this deeper order is undifferentiated, and the worldly order to which it gives rise is differentiated into observable objects (matter), energies, and awareness (or consciousness). The deeper level of reality he called the *implicate* (or folded) order. Our differentiated level of existence he termed the *explicate* (or unfolded) order. (Talbot, p. 46) The universe is the result of countless foldings and unfoldings between these two orders.

This theoretical structure has generated speculations about the nature of consciousness. According to Bohm the apparent separateness of consciousness and matter is something like an illusion, or more precisely an artifact that occurs only after

both have unfolded in the explicate world of objects and sequential time. The “consciousness” that is said to exist in the unfolded (explicate) order is awareness in the ordinary sense of consciousness-of-an-object. In the implicate order, there is no division between mind and matter, because the implicate order is undifferentiated. (Talbot, p. 79)

Under this interpretation of Bohm’s construct, what can be said to be “primary”? The explicate order arises from the “unfolding” of the implicate, but this does not render the implicate as primary, because the implicate order is not creating the explicate as a created object; rather the two orders are co-existent; unfolding and folding are continuously occurring. On the other hand, it is clear that Bohm considers the implicate order to be the ground of all being. Perhaps it would make sense to assert that in this system of thought, the undifferentiated and matter/energy/consciousness are co-primary. Both mind (as consciousness-capable-of-having-an-object) and matter/energy would appear to remain manifestations of the even deeper order of the implicate. Thus, “the material world can contain within its warp and weft the innermost processes of consciousness. Such is the nature of the deep connectivity that exists between all things in a holographic universe.” (Talbot, p. 81)

This somewhat confusing framework becomes clear upon relating it to certain implications of quantum theory, as reviewed by physicist Wolf (1994) and Talbot (1992). In the late nineteenth century, increasingly sophisticated measurements were unable to account for the behavior of electromagnetic energy (such as light) under certain conditions. Depending on the way in which the energy’s travels were observed, the experimental results could be explained only if electromagnetic energy was a wave, on one hand, or a particle, on the other. Clearly, light could not be both a particle and a wave

simultaneously, because the former occupies a very small, discreet and definite portion of space, while the latter is very spread out and is best described by a function defining the probability of being able to make an observation of the light in a given location. If light is particulate it should behave in one way (with absolute certainty of being or not being observed at a given time and location); if waveform, in a very different way (as a probability function).

Early quantum physicists, such as Planck and Shrodinger, developed a model of the physical universe at very small dimensions (at a sub-atomic scale) that implied that the outcome of an experiment (such as whether light passes through one of a pair of slits in a barrier) couldn't be known with certainty until it is *observed*. Until the observation (or measurement) is made, a given outcome can only be specified as a probability, and all possible outcomes relative to that experiment have some probability. For example, the exact location of a particle in space cannot be known with certainty until an observation is made; until the observation, all locations are associated with some probability. The location of the particle pre-measurement could be said to be “smeared out” over vast regions of space, and “collapsed” upon observation.

But observation or measurement requires an observer—that is, consciousness. And this is consciousness capable of having an object: consciousness in the usual sense of the word. It is this ordinary variety of consciousness that “collapses” the smeared-out wave (probability) function into the precisely locatable particle.

Some physicists have taken these observations into a realm that touches deeply on our present considerations. (Nicholas Herbert, personal communication) Thus, consciousness-capable-of-having-an-object—along with matter and energy—is part of

Bohm's explicate order, and consciousness in this sense is associated with a particulate ontology. Bohm's implicate order is analogized to a wave ontology, indeterminate and undifferentiated. This implicate wave ontology is considered to be the "pure" consciousness of the Chain-of-Being unotropic model. Such consciousness is undifferentiated and has no object.

This group of physicists and others assert that analogically, or even literally, the wave and the particle represent (or are) the two kinds of consciousness. In this way of thinking, the wave-consciousness state is a state of utter surrender, of flow, of being (rather than looking at) things. In a high-energy state, the wave-consciousness state is ecstatic; certainly it is free of judgment, measuring, assessing, or comparison.

When the implicate, enfolded, wave-consciousness unfolds (through an observation, judgment or assessment) into the explicate realm, wave "collapses" into particle.

This conceptual framework has increasingly entered Western ways of thinking. While the holographic paradigm is clearly not accepted by all physicists as an accurate portrayal of reality (due to the quintessential impossibility of observing the implicate order—it can only be surrendered to), it has nonetheless excited transpersonal psychologists and thinkers who make direct comparisons between this theory and great spiritual traditions of the world. The work of Jung, Grof, and others makes new sense when viewed in the context of this framework. All information is holographically stored because it all is the unfolded form of the implicate order, with its ultimate level of connectivity.

This framework is remarkably consistent with the quantum approach that underlies much of the Saivist thinking: the *all* is contained in the parts, and the parts are contained in the *all*. And the *all* is a part of something greater than itself, inextricably linked to its parts, in order to exist. This level exists outside the normal time and space dimensions.

Holotropic transpersonal psychology

Entry into holotropic states can occur in a myriad of ways—through ecstatic trance dancing, holotropic breathwork, active forms of meditation, sacramental substances, near death experiences, and, of course, and through sacred sexual practices as well as through EO. Connection to the Divine may occur spontaneously, and without great effort.

If information is stored holographically and if consciousness is also holographic, then holography as a way of knowing (epistemology) perfectly matches holotropy as a way of being (ontology), assuming the implicate/explicate order model of reality discussed in the previous section.

It is of key importance in the holotropic paradigm that *one spends time in the state itself*, so one can discover and navigate the deep and even transcendental experiences available in that state. The orientation is on *process*, not goals.

Bache, who writes eloquently about the psychological implications of holotropic states, points out that for deep change in the psyche to occur, it is not enough to simply have an extraordinary experience—one must have a container large enough to hold these experiences in conscious awareness and for engaging them completely until they exhaust

themselves—both during the session itself and in one’s life between sessions. In other words, transcendent experiences must be both experienced (in the holotropic state) and then brought back and integrated into normal waking life. (Bache, 2000, p.10) As noted earlier, Grof makes a similar point in describing the importance of the dance between hylotropic and holotropic states.

Bache notes what is distinctive about the therapeutic use of [holotropic] states:

- The completely internalized set, free of outward distractions and totally focused within;
- Conditions that intensify the unconsciousness and encourage the unrestricted experience of whatever surfaces;
- Holding that point of engagement long enough and frequently enough for the patterns to come completely into awareness, reach a critical threshold, and then dissolve entirely;
- The systematic integration of these experiences into one’s physical, mental, emotional, and social existence.

(p. 11)

Grof developed the term *COEX*, or “system of condensed experience”. A COEX might include significant emotional experiences from this life, past lives, and even from archetypal experiences such as those discussed in myths. Holographic consciousness could be used to explain synchronicities, the paranormal, and other mysteries of consciousness not accessible through any other model.

Holotropic therapy does not categorize some experiences as “better” than others. For example, it does not label causal body (formless transcendent) experiences superior

to subtle body (archetypal) ones; it simply allows the person in a holotropic state to grow from the experiences that do occur on his or her inner radar. It is our editing and judgment that excludes us from appreciating and understanding all of what is given to us experientially in that state. All holotropic experiences are can be embraced and valued as part of a path of healing and growth.

Says Bache,

In the beginning, these new experiences simply “stretch” one’s sense of self-identity, but when the envelope of experience has been stretched many times in many directions, sooner or later, it must give way. It simply becomes impossible to continue to define oneself by the experiences one is not having at this present moment when one discovers within oneself the capacity to enter into any of the experiences under the right circumstances. (p. 259)

Recalling the discussion of “quantum consciousness” in the previous section, at the quantum level, wave becomes particle only upon observation. Until then, the particulate exists only as potential in a probabilistic ocean of potential. One’s “identity” can therefore dance between being either a condensed (observed and experienced) particle or an expansive wave.

A similarity occurs toggling back and forth between ordinary and holotropic consciousness. As one gains repeated access to the holotropic state of consciousness, one develops an increasing awareness of their connection to the whole; the little “I” disappears. Eventually, through the repeated dance of identity between the small “I” and the big “I” the whole metaphor of identity “explodes”.

Says Bache (p. 260), “If I were to say what this individuality consists of, I would say that, distilled to its essence, it seems to be the *capacity for continuously integrated experience.*”

In extreme states of extraordinary consciousness, one goes beyond the point of remembering what happened, and cannot therefore integrate the experience back in ordinary life. The value of entering holotropic states, therefore, lies with one's ability to toggle back and forth, such that the wisdom, bliss, meaning, and other gems uncovered in the holotropic state raise our entire level and experience of consciousness.

The goal here is *integrated transcendence*, then, and not simply transcendence upon which one reaches the top of the ladder. As the toggling process unfolds over time, their *breadth* of commerce with Being expands simultaneously with the *height* of one's individuality. In other words, the deeper they immerse themselves into the wavelike Ground Being, the greater their individuality becomes. (Bache, p. 266)

Here is a new vision of transpersonal psychological process. As described by Bache, the goal is not to *transcend* in the sense of reaching the top of a mountain and remaining there; the goal is to develop an ever-stronger internal sense of self, such that one can also routinely explore and integrate transcendent states of consciousness without fragmenting.

This interpretation of the transcendent experience is not new. Kabbalist, Taoists, and Tantrikas have employed a holographic model of consciousness for centuries.

About entering holotropic states, the great Tantra master Bhagwan Rajneesh, points out how easy it is to toggle between the ordinary and holotropic states. "There is not need even of a master—you can just go out and surrender to the sky. *You know how to surrender*, that's all.... the divinity is revealed through surrender." (Rajneesh, 1983, pp. 136-7)

Once in the holotropic state, the ontological process is what matters. One inhabits this place for a period of time. Referring to the holotropic state achieved while making love, he says, “While in love, you must not be—only love, only loving. Become loving! Caressing your beloved or your lover, become the caress. ...Forget the ego completely; dissolve it into the act. Move into the act so deeply that the actor is no more.” (Rajneesh, p 28)

What then is the nature of this state? Is it truly a divine state? Rajneesh says, Either the world is holy or the world is unholy. There is no middle path ...Tantra says everything is holy... It is the deepest non-dual standpoint, if we can call it a standpoint. It is not, because any standpoint is bound to be dual. [Tantra] is not against anything...it is a felt unity, a lived unity. (p. 15-16.)

If information is stored and consciousness operates holographically, we can get a much better explanation for events such as EO that occur in transpersonal realms. In addition to transcendent experiences, transformative ones such as synchronicities, telepathy, the fusion of souls, sex magic, and other events suddenly become real events that can enrich our experiences of life.

To the extent that we experience transcendence, or unmediated “access to the Divine,” in holotropic states, we can experience in much shorter periods of time what others have said would take years or even lifetimes to experience.

All this brings home just how much we live in our small, little “I”, ordinary waking consciousness, while access to the rich holotropic world of insights and meaning is intimately close by, waiting for our entry. Our paradigms give us one set of meanings, and a structure with which to think. And yet, they are also our blinders, determining in advance what it is that we have the possibility of seeing and experiencing.

In the Tibetan Chakra system, all four bodies can be brought to operate at once when bringing the inner winds up the central channel: (1) the waking body; (2) the speech, dreaming; (3) the sleeping mind, and...(4) then there is a blank, representing the whole. There is no exclusion of any part of the consciousness.

The holographic model of TSC asks: What if we could learn to activate all these areas of our minds, simultaneously, such that we might be in a waking, sleeping, dreaming, and undivided state, all at once, completely conscious, and able to control the direction in which we took our thoughts?

Some writers and adepts in holotropic TSC ask us to imagine further that we are in a holographic universe. Some say that the future is predetermined; others say that we can at least sketch out a future via our observations, and interact with our sketches in order to refine them. In either case, they say, imagine interacting with the future, so that it could be refined in the present, and successively shaped.

Imagine, again, the little “I” interacting with the consciousness-at-large bigger “I”, so that the little “I”, too, is being successively refined. Such are the hallmarks of an *autopoietic system*. Bache comments on this in saying,

With practice, one learns how to let go and lose coherence at one level, and then recover it in a completely new arena. It is the repeated recovery of coherence within ever deepening experiential fields that drives my sense that *even as the self dies [to the smaller identity], a deeper form of individuality is being liberated*. ...From my present perspective I believe that it is not individuality itself that is the illusion but one sense of being isolated from the whole. (Bache, p. 264)

Bache calls the resulting identity *post-egoic*, and compares it to the description of autopoietic structures discussed by John Briggs and David Peat in *Turbulent Mirrors*.

Quoting Briggs and Peat,

Autopoietic structures are forms of open systems that are self-renewing, highly autonomous, and have separate identifies, and yet are also inextricably embedded

in and merged with their environments. Furthermore, contrary to what we might expect, autopoietic structures achieve greater autonomy not by severing their ties to their environment but by actually increasing them. (Bache, p. 264)

Eastern Contributions to the Study of Orgasm

Esoteric eastern spiritual practices such as Tantra and Taoism have contained, under their broad umbrellas, subgroups that used sexuality as a valid path to transcendence. Each such group formulated varying rules about the philosophy and proper practices of sex, some of which are in direct opposition to other sets of rules. While in Tantric Buddhism, for example, the male is the active principle and the female is the passive principle, in Tantric Hinduism, these assignments are reversed.

Since EO is defined in loose terms, our definition covers almost any kind of practice in which sexual energy is expanded from the genitals throughout the rest of the body. Therefore, rather than comment on each of the innumerable group's ideologies, we will outline the various broad issues associated with orgasm in relation to Eastern-derived practices.

The kundalini is generally considered the sacred, procreative life force that resides (usually untapped) at the base of each person's sacrum. All traditions agree that this force lies at the base of the spine, generally unawakened. An awakening is viewed as a powerful event that sends the kundalini up the spine and to the top of the head. At this point, it either goes outside the head or circulates down the front of the body.

Both the Taoist and the Hindus claim that the gonads continually generate the semen, invigorating our psycho-mental life through the agency of subtle energy. The Hindus called this energy *ojas*. It is the product of a process of continuous transmutation that occurs in the genitals when the semen is preserved.

Although the traditional works on Yoga are more concerned with the male Yogi than the female Yogini, ojas is a force that is not unique to men. Women, too, can preserve their sexual charge and transmute it for higher purposes. (Feuerstein, 1989, p. 95)

Due to the promise of the kundalini to awaken man's (and woman's) natural creative genius, there is a universal desire among many mystical adepts to try to awaken the kundalini, despite the great risks that are said to accompany a poorly prepared ascent.

Kundalini as Energy Accessible through Sex

Following we discuss the major methodologies used by Tantric and Taoist practitioners to practice forms of Expanded Orgasm and transcendent sex.

Kundalini raised through sexual practices

Some schools of mysticism teach that the kundalini *is* the sexual energy. According to Jonn Mumford (Mumford, 2000), "Tantra [believes] that all sexual experience automatically arouses kundalini, and hence, a deep spiritual state will ensue from conscious recognition of this process." (p. 27)

He continues:

All sexual experiences automatically arouse Kundalini, and hence a deep spiritual state will ensue from conscious recognition of this process. The woman's body represents the psychic tube Ida, and is a natural channel for negative (*apanic*) Moon (*chandra*) energy. The man's body functions as Pingala, a psychic conduit for positive (*pranic*) Sun (*surya*) power. At the moment of orgasm, two bodies fuse momentarily on a psychic plane, and the energy of this fusion is focused in the middle channel, the Sushumna. The ascent of Kundalini commences, accompanied by the mutual opening of the chakras, or autonomic nerve plexuses, to each participant. One subjective result and test of successful Tantric intercourse

is an aftermath of psychedelic visions and color swirls, indicative of the overflow of the unconsciousness (Kundalini) onto conscious planes. (pp. 28-9)

Some women ejaculate an actual fluid while others don't. In either case, women emit an "inexhaustible supply of lunar energy" which a man can absorb when his *lingam* (penis) is inside her *yoni* (vagina). (Douglas et al., 1979, p. 289)

Kundalini raised through sublimation

Some Tantrikas hold that the kundalini is sexual energy that has been transmuted. This potent energy should be sublimated in the process of being directed up the body instead of out the body. According to Rosalyn Bruyere,

In the exercised of celibacy among the eastern religious sects, the kundalini is not shut down. The flow that originates in the earth and rises upwards is not denied. However, the choice is made not to exchange energy with another but instead to conserve it for the purpose of achieving an experience of the Deity. (Bruyere, p. 176)

Advanced Tantrikas often seek to marry the essences of male and female within themselves, and send the kundalini energy up their Sushumna through various Tantric practices.

Kundalini (as chi) re-circulated through the body

The Taoists convert sexual energy (*jing*) into *chi*, (which is the closest they get to a direct comparison to the kundalini), draw it up the back of the body. Then, avoiding ejaculation, they recirculate it down the front of the body, and send it into an ongoing loop. Many Tantrikas also believe that the circulation of the sacred fluids occurs during the retention of the male ejaculate. In both approaches, the female is not encouraged to withhold her fluids, which are said to be sacred and often worshipped by the male.

Kundalini as a force, where sex is not mentioned

Still other schools, including some Tantric schools of kundalini yoga, raise the kundalini in other ways. Yogi Bhajan, world-famous leader of the Kundalini Yoga 3HO organization, advocates raising the kundalini through chanting mantras, breathing and posture. He notes the connection between the kundalini and orgasm in passing. “Raising kundalini is very much like experiencing orgasm. We have been told by some female yogis that raising Kundalini is very much like experiencing orgasm.” Non-sexual kundalini seems to match descriptions of kundalini offered by those experiencing it via sex:

Some experience heat along the spine and others see it as a brilliant light. It is described as spiraling up the spine by some, and as shooting straight up the spine by others. Whatever the individual perception, it is definitely a delightful sensation, often attended by extraordinary phenomena [and] exalted consciousness. (Kundalini Research Foundation)

Finally, in our culture, we see reference to the kundalini completely divorced from any reference to sexual energy, or sexuality. In the book *Subtle Energy: Awakening to the Unseen Forces in Our Lives*, William Collinge (Collinge, 1998) says, “Kundalini is the primal energy described as the energy in yogic theory that rises from the base of our spine and is associated with the opening of our chakras and the expansion of consciousness.” (p.230) Not once, in four pages of discussion, is the association to sexual energy mentioned.

Sexual methods of Raising Kundalini

Again, there are many methods involved, depending on the various approaches adopted towards what is to be done with the precious fluids of sex.

Prolonging the time before climax

Prolonging the period before orgasm is a recurrent theme, that also describes the practice of building EO:

During the preliminary stages of Love-making, both the Lingam and Yoni expand and sexual tension is built up, awaiting release through orgasm. The slower and gentler the love-movements, the more intense the pleasure sensations. Sexual climax is approached as the tension/pleasure interface causes both the Lingam and Yoni to manifest a series of contractions. These contractions begin in the sexual region and extend throughout the whole body; they create a heightened urge to achieve release through orgasm. Thus, expansion and contraction are the two main factors that bring one to the high experience of sexual climax and are at the beginning of all creation. (Douglas et al. 1979)

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh describes the valley orgasm (another word for EO) as the practice in which the following principle is essential: “At the start of sexual union keep attentive on the fire in the beginning, and, so continuing, avoid the embers in the end.” (p. 49) For Rajneesh, refraining from ejaculation is not a matter of control, but of surrender and relaxation.

When you are overflowing, don't think in terms of release. Remain with this overflowing energy. Don't seek ejaculation. Forget it. Forget it completely! Be whole in this warm beginning.... Remain in the present...Enjoy the meeting of two bodies, two souls, and merge into each other...melt into each other...You can prolong the act for a very long time. Without ejaculation, without throwing energy out, it becomes a meditation. And through it you become whole. Through it your split personality is no more split—it is bridged....If you are not in a hurry to finish the act, the act by and by becomes less and less sexual and more and more spiritual. Sex organs also melt into each other. A deep, silent communion happens between two body energies, and then you can remain for hours together...Don't

think. Remain with the moment, deeply merged. It becomes an ecstasy, a samadhi. (Rajneesh, 1983, p. 50-52)

Breathing

For some Tantrikas and Taoists, breathing plays an essential role. Again, Douglas and Slinger tell us,

There are many secret breathing techniques associated with the control of sexuality... The *complete breath* of conscious inhalation, retention, and exhalation, drawing in from the lower abdomen, aids conscious control over all body functions; the retention phase is particularly linked to control over involuntary orgasm.

...If one consciously mimics the normal breathing of a person who is approaching sexual climax, the passions will automatically be stirred up." Other kinds of breathing also are discussed here, such as cooling breath, heating breath, and womb breathing. (p.147)

Still, the authors point out,

Though an individual can bring about some degree of transformation of sexual energy alone by the correct practice of Hatha Yoga and creative mediation, it is not comparable to the sexual energy that can be brought about by a couple completing each other through successive heights of ecstasy. That is why it is said that though Yogis can advance far on their own, for them to break through into immortality they must seek to complete themselves with consorts. (p. 147)

The *Cobra breath* or *Firebreath* orgasm is a solo, non-sexual breathing practice that is used to raise the orgasmic energy. In this practice, one breathes air into the chakras successively, starting with the root chakra and working higher. With each breath, the practitioner holds the breath, imagining it to activate the chakra. Both the inhale and exhale should be powerful. When the breath has reached all the way to the crown chakra, the person will generate an orgasmic response in the brain. Some have even felt that this practice can awaken the kundalini. (Footnote 3)

Under the topic of Sacred Trance States the concept of Holotropic breathwork will be discussed. This practice also uses heavy breathing to enter a holotropic state. It is

possible that the two mechanisms are quite similar, even though the Holotropic breathwork does not specifically ask practitioners to focus on the chakras.

Engaging all the chakras

A number of Tantric and Taoist practices recommend full engagement of as much of the body as possible during lovemaking. Each body part corresponds to a particular chakra; as this body part is activated, the entire body becomes more fully enlivened. Thus, the throat chakra is engaged and energized when sound is made; the third eye chakra is engaged and energized through eye gazing; and so on.

All these movements feed into the central location of orgasm, which is the brain. Bruyere (1991) reminds us that orgasm occurs here.

Orgasm requires an open and expanded state. It does not occur in the first chakra; kundalini energy must travel up nearly the entire chakra system to the third eye in order to stimulate the neurotransmitters in the brain responsible for the experience of orgasm. This requires an abundance of energy [greater than] the usual amount necessary to sustain us through out daily activities.

...Sexuality allows every living being to know that there is “other” and that mergence with that other is possible; that all of us can attain, even briefly, One Mind.

The quality of this mergence is dependent on how much energy we can hold in our system. The oriental sexual practice of *Kamasutra* is designed to access this greater energy. [Here] the partners open the feeder systems in the legs, the arms, the jaws, and above the ears, and, if the technique is mastered, the hundred or so secondary chakras in the body are also opened. This makes an enormous amount of energy available to the couple. (p. 172)

Undulation

Bruyere, like many other Tantrikas, places a high value on movement as part of the orgasmic experience. Motion is said to get the kundalini energy moving. She comments,

For orgasm to occur, one must first learn to master the undulating movement of the kundalini energy. One must know when to move or push the energy and when to surrender, when to release and when to pull the partner's energy.... Besides the obligation to give, there is the obligation to surrender. In sexual intimacy, without [both]...there is no true exchange and therefore no orgasm. (Bruyere, p 173)

Shaking

Rajneesh encourages both the man and the woman to allow their bodies to shake and vibrate.

Shaking is just wonderful because when you shake in your sexual act, the energy start flowing all over the body, the energy vibrates all over the body. Every cell of the body is involved then. Every cell becomes alive....(Rajneesh, 1983, p. 56)
...Don't stand aloof! Be the shaking, become the shaking. Forget everything...become the shaking itself. ...you will be part of an existential force...,a part of the whole cosmos....That moment is of great creation. You are dissolved as solid bodies. You have become liquid, flowing into each other. The mind is lost. The division is lost. You have a oneness...non-duality. (p. 59)

Stillness

Yet other Tantric practices diverge. Some Tantrikas adhere to the Tantric wisdom that say, *let it go...let it all go!* There is no reason to hang onto anything if eternity exists. And, since the body is only layers of invisible energy in form, at the core is the divine energy. There is nothing one needs to do except release the mental and physical bonds that we created in order to be functional in everyday life. Those bonds, developed in childhood when we learned to restrain our instinctual selves, often turned into involuntary blocks as we grew into adulthood.

The Tantra training here requires the receiver to melt away those bonds and blocks by becoming increasing still while taking in greater and greater amounts of pleasure. The resulting orgasm is known as a *Total Surrender Orgasm (TSO)*. Like other

disciplines, it can take years to train the body to take in increasing amounts of pleasure. In time, however, the TSO method is said to enable the practitioner to create powerful “freeways” or nerve channels connecting the orgasmic energies from all parts of the body to the brain. (The author of this Dissertation teaches this type of Tantra.)

Streaming

In further practices, people learn to unleash the vibratory undercurrent that lies buried at all times within them. Anand (1989) calls this practice “Streaming”. In this practice,

You learn to welcome various kinds of vibrations and let them happen until they are felt as highly pleasurable. The result is a sense of being cleansed and relaxed. ...Having learned how to trigger the streaming reflex, you then learn to contain the energy, relax into it, and expand it. This is the fundamental secret of High Sex: Ecstasy happens to you when you learn the art of staying relaxed and aware in high states of sexual or nonsexual arousal. You can experience this state with or without a partner, for long periods of time. (pp. 28-9)

Immersion into Unconditional Bliss and Pleasure

Miranda Shaw is a scholar of Tantric Buddhism. Writing about the Buddhist Tantrikas, Shaw (1992) notes that “Sensory, bodily bliss—“human pleasure”—is the dynamic motion that leads the Tantrika out of the mundane realm and into the transcendent realms of experience. Shaw quotes Sahajayoginicitā, a famous female Buddhist Tantrika author of her period,

Human pleasure, with its identifiable characteristics,
Is the very thing that,
When its characteristics are removed,
Turns into spiritual ecstasy,
Free from conceptual thought,
The very essence of self-arising wisdom.

(Shaw, 1992, p. 188)

One should not avoid pleasure on this path, says Sahajayoginikota, but cultivate it, and channel it. In so doing, the mind can finally rest in the realm of ultimate, unconditional bliss.

Solo orgasmic practice

We have already mentioned that Tantric adepts often seek to unify the polar opposites of male and female within themselves, often by visualizing the flows of energy from the Ida (Female, left side nerve channel) and the Pingala (male, right side channel) through the Sushumna, or central nerve pathway up the spine. A well-known technique described by Margo Anand is the *Inner Flute* mentioned in chapter one. This well-known practice goes back thousands of years. Anand says, “the advanced mediator, learning the art of self-rejuvenation, visualizes a nerve canal running from a point between his legs to the top of his head. (Anand, 1989, p. 170)

This acceptance of solo practices allows for men and women to masturbate as part of their Tantric and Taoist path. Many teachers actively encourage their students to practice alone to develop their capacities to channel orgasm to the fullest, whether alone or with partners.

Enlightenment Following Orgasm and Ejaculation

Some approaches to using orgasm as a vehicle for transcendence encourage ejaculation. Gunther Nitschke, writing in *The Silent Orgasm*, advocates that partners

engage in uninhibited, “mindless” sex that engages all parts of their bodies, minds, hearts and souls. For Nitschke, the orgasm serves to engage the body in a state of connectedness and tension-releasing abandon. Still, in this body-as-portal model, it is the precious moments after orgasm, lasting up to a half an hour or more, in which transcendent states are available. (Nitschke, pp. 143-146)

Male/female Relationships

All forms of manual sexual contact, intercourse, oral sex, and even anal sex represent polarities that combined form the sacred union of opposites. All manner of advice proliferate. Very little has been written about gay Tantric sex, although given “live and let live” attitude at the core of Tantra, it is most certainly could be an entire branch. A quick trip to the Internet confirms the existence of many listings found under the inquiry for gay Tantra.

Shaw quotes Sahajayoginicitanta as she opens her text with an affirmation of gendered embodiment, both male and female. She notes that her first statement on the topic is breathtakingly double-edged stroke that denies the intimacy of gender—in a classic Mahayana move—and at the same time endows gender with metaphysical roots extending deep into ultimate reality, which is a more characteristically Tantric insight. She agrees that the inner spirit may be nondual or nongendered, but nonetheless:

In order that one may realize one’s inner self
Which is spontaneous (sahaja), naturally pure, and nondual,
The inner self manifests here as man and woman.
One’s own self, creative by nature,
Enacts reality through bodily expressions.
(Shaw, 1992, p. 183)

Summary

A number of Tantric and Taoists techniques have been presented. Some techniques are clearly contradictory to others: some say ejaculate, some say don't. Some say be active during lovemaking, some advise be still. Some say control is important, others say, "Just let go and let the body find its divine state naturally, which it will, with enough relaxation."

In some areas there was agreement. Key concepts that appear frequently in Tantric/Taoist practices are the notion of prolonging the experience, going for process rather than goal, relaxation, mutual connection between partners, circulating the divine energy through the body, and including as much of the body as possible during the experience.

Western Contributions to the Study of Orgasm

Physical Basis of Orgasm

The Masters and Johnson model

Regular Orgasm, also called *climax*, is a physiological state of heightened sexual excitement and gratification that is followed by relaxation of sexual tensions and the body's muscles. A feeling of sudden, intense, and brief pleasure marks it.

William Masters and Virginia Johnson have written a description of the orgasmic process in *Sex and Human Loving*. They describe the physiologic and psychological changes that have served a highly regarded Western text on orgasmic physiology since its original publication in 1982. The following is paraphrased from this text.

There are two physical changes the body must undergo to experience orgasm. The first is *vasocongestion*, the pooling of blood in the breasts and genitals. This causes the body feels warm to the touch, a flush of color of the breasts and genitals, and vaginal lubrication. The second is *myotonia* or neuromuscular tension, the build up of energy in the nerves and muscles of the entire body. Myotonia is experienced everywhere in the body, not just in the genitals. It is not a "bad tension" as much as it is a buildup of energy in the nerves. Strong myotonia may be experienced as the feeling of bodily fullness or tightness prior to orgasm. This tightness, when strong enough, can prevent someone from going over the edge, that is, having a climax. (Masters and Johnson, p. 58)

Master and Johnson decompose the sexual response cycle into four phases, Excitement, Plateau, Orgasm, and Resolution. A person isn't likely to be aware of their body experiencing each individual phase. They duly note that the fact that the amount of time a person spends in each phase, and even the order in which they experience them, may vary from one time to another.

During the *Excitement phase*, the body prepares to have sex. The vagina begins to lubricate. The genitals and nipples swell for both men and women. There is a marked increase in sexual tension.

During the *Plateau phase*, the body prepares for orgasm. The area of sensitivity for a woman expands, so that the stimulation of the labia and mons will also bring about pleasurable clitoral sensations. Vasocongestive swelling continues to increase, enlarging genitals, breast, and nipple sizes. The heart rate, blood pressure, and speed of breathing also increase. Occasionally, men will leak a little pre-seminal fluid as well.

During the *Orgasm phase*, women experience simultaneous muscular contractions in the uterus, vagina, and anal sphincter. The last few contractions are intense and close together (.8 seconds apart). A mild orgasm may have three contractions, while an intense one may have ten to fifteen contractions. (Masters and Johnson, p. 69)

Orgasms for men, unlike women, occur in two distinct phases. In the first stage, a series of contractions forces semen into the bulb of the urethra. The man experiences ejaculatory inevitability, that is, the feeling that the orgasm can't be stopped. In the second stage, contractions in the urethra and penis, combined with those of the prostate, cause ejaculation to spurt out of the tip of the penis. The spacing in time of the contractions for men will be the same as for women—0.8 seconds apart. After the first three or four contractions in the penis, the intervals between contractions become longer and the intensity tapers off.

Male orgasm and ejaculation are not the same thing. *Orgasm* refers to the sudden rhythmic muscular contractions in the pelvic region and elsewhere that release muscular tension and provide the accompanying mental sensations. *Ejaculation* refers to the release of semen. Orgasm without ejaculation is common among boys and in men who have some kind of illness.

Orgasm lasts for a few seconds (normally not over ten); continued stimulation can produce additional orgasms in females. In brief, after one orgasm males become unresponsive to sexual stimulation and cannot begin to build up another excitement phase until some period of time has elapsed, but females are physically capable of repeated orgasms without the intervening "rest period" required by males. During the orgasmic

phase, there are high levels of myotonia evident throughout the body that may cause the face to frown or the hands and feet to cramp. The entire body may become rigid.

Masters and Johnson discuss some controversies surrounding orgasm (which all happen to refer to female orgasm). First, they question the assumption initially made by Freud that women are capable of having more than one kind of orgasm. Physiologically, they assert, “all female orgasms follow the same reflex response patterns, no matter what the source of sexual stimulation.” (p.73) Women may still perceive that different areas of stimulation, such as the nipples or underside of the clitoris (known as the G-spot), produce what appears as a different sensation.

They also mention the controversy about women’s abilities to experience orgasm from coital stimulation alone. This will be covered more fully in the section entitled *The Androcentric Model of Sexuality and Orgasm*.

The *Resolution phase* marks the return to the unaroused state. Males and females again show marked differences. Women have the ability to be multi-orgasmic, while men usually have a refractory period during which further orgasm is physiologically impossible. In both cases, once the orgasmic sensations are over, blood leaves the pelvic region. The breath and heart beat return to normal. Masters and Johnson also note that in addition to vascular and muscular stimulation, various hormones are secreted during sexual arousal.

To place EO in its proper context, we conclude our review of the basic medical model of orgasm provided by Masters and Johnson. We consider more specifically, orgasms defined by climax, as defined in terms of length of orgasmic time (Single, Multiple, or Extended) and also spatially (Expanded).

The Otto model

Not everyone agrees with the assertion put forth by Masters and Johnson that all female orgasms are clitoral. Herbert Otto (Otto, 1999) offers a scathing rebuke of their analysis. “Masters and Johnson’s research is so flawed by methodological errors and slipshod reporting that it fails to meet customary standards—and their own—for assessment.” (p. 67)

Otto notes that women—and men—can experience orgasm anywhere in their body and mind. Non-genital parts of the body can experience orgasms—nipples, anus, curve of the neck, face—really anywhere the woman has allowed or trained herself to feel orgasmic sensations. He states that men are capable of six distinct kinds of orgasm (penile, prostatic, anal, breast, mouth, and mental), while women can have seven (clitoral, cervical, vaginal, breast, mouth, anal, and mental). Both men and woman, Otto asserts, are capable of experiencing fusion orgasms, too, blending one or more kinds of separate orgasms.

We have seen that according to the fundamental models of transcendence, in order to experience TSC, one can enter the One (unotropic states), or the Whole (holotropic states) which in this case would be like the fusion orgasm, or can even dance between the two kinds of states. Otto’s carefully researched and documented data on orgasm suggests that orgasm is completely capable of replicating this dance of experience.

Otto’s work is reminiscent of the Saivite philosophy that distributes consciousness everywhere. It is in stillness; it is in action; it is in Shiva; in Shakti, and in the dance. It is in the undifferentiated one, and also in the stones, and people, and thoughts of people.

Mirroring this is orgasmic experience as capable of being distributed throughout large areas of the body.

In EO, orgasm is felt everywhere. It is in the genitals, muscles, the nervous system, the heart, the mind, the emotions, the hormones, the skin, the breath, and the visual imagery. If one cares to agree with the observation of Tantric practitioners, the orgasm is even the space beyond a person's physical body, going into the subtle body and spirit.

If orgasm is truly a genitally derived experience, then it makes sense that sensations from the genitals are directly responsible for generating the pleasure that one feels during orgasm. Otto has demonstrated in his research evidence that people report feeling orgasms emerging from a variety of physical locations in the body and even the mind.

The Whipple model

Recent research findings by Beverly Whipple and colleagues confirm Otto's assertion that orgasm is indeed more than just a genital phenomenon that is then transmitted to the brain and other parts of the body. Whipple studied whether orgasm could be induced by mental imagery alone. (Whipple, Ogden, and Komisaruk, 1992)

Whipple et al found that imagery-induced orgasm has a profound impact on the entire body.

Orgasm [in women] from self-induced imagery or genital self stimulation generated significant increases in systolic blood pressure, heart rate, pupil diameter, pain detection threshold, and pain tolerance threshold over resting control conditions. ...The increases in the self-induced imagery orgasm condition were comparable in magnitude to those in the genital self-stimulation produced orgasm condition. On this basis we state that physical genital stimulation is not

necessary to produce a state that is reported to be an orgasm and that a reassessment of the nature of orgasm is warranted. (Whipple, et al. 1992 abstract)

The implications of this study for ours are as follows. First, if orgasm can occur completely in the mind, then perhaps it is possible that even in the body-as-portal model of transcendence it would be possible to achieve transcendent states. Second, that orgasm can occur in the mind only is evidence to support the holographic nature of consciousness. In such a model, we are orgasmic beings. To have had one orgasm is to have the ability to reaccess this state at future points of time. Indeed, this is perhaps what Osho, the great mystic knew, when he said that one need only have an orgasm once. After that, a person can return again and again to this state of being.

Whipple's group's study did not indicate that subjects went into expanded orgasmic states, nor did it reveal whether any of them had transcendent experiences. Nonetheless, it suggests a future area of research: If in fact, people can reaccess EO states at will, such a skill might emerge as a powerful means of stress reduction and additional pleasure creation, as well as be an source of creativity and health-giving vitality.

Orgasms Defined by Climax

We will now classify orgasm by its type, in terms of the length of time and number of climaxes reached in one discreet session. In so doing, we will define more precisely our definition of EO.

Regular orgasm

This is an orgasm in which climax is the experience. The climax is usually a series of 10-12 contractions over several seconds. Climax is commonly called “going over the edge”. It is generally well defined by the Masters and Johnson model above.

Multiple orgasm

Multiple Orgasms are a series of Regular Orgasms experienced over a short time. Usually there is only a partial letdown after each orgasm or climax, before climbing up again, to go over another peak. The peaks are experienced at about the same level of intensity. For men, multiple orgasms occur in one of two ways. First, if a man can separate his ejaculation response from his orgasmic response, he can train himself to have orgasms without ejaculation. With training, some men can go days, weeks, or even years, having this contraction-without-ejaculation variety of multiple orgasms. Some men, though rare, can have two or more orgasms in rapid succession, thus avoiding the refractory period altogether. (Dunn and Trost, 1989).

With multiple orgasm, each orgasm is said to feel about the same than the previous one After the climax, the intensity of sensation and arousal drops from where he or she was during the climax, but not all the way, before climbing back up into the peak state of arousal. With multiple orgasms, the number is limited only by the number desired, and by bodily training to hold this kind of experience.

Extended orgasm

Extended Orgasm is a single orgasm that maintains the level of pleasurable sensation at or very near climax over a period longer than the 20 seconds of Regular Orgasm. The climax is often rounded or like a plateau. While one does need to practice to build up the length of extended orgasm, no limit has been observed; more than one hour is not unusual. Donna and Alan Brauer, M.D., who have researched, written about, and taught extended orgasm extensively, call single orgasms Stage I orgasms, and multiple orgasm Stage II orgasms. They divide Stage III (extended) orgasms, into two phases for women. The first phase is characterized by the push-out contractions of the deep pelvic muscles of the uterus and back of the vagina. These alternate periodically with squeeze contractions of the outer vaginal muscles. The term “blended” refers to the blending of the squeeze and the push-out sex muscle responses. These pushouts during extended orgasm are slower and longer-lasting cycles than the bursts of squeeze contractions of Stage I and Stage II orgasms. (Brauer and Brauer, 1990, p. 105)

The Brauers go on to say,

In Phase 2, extended orgasmic response is sometimes referred to subjectively by women who experience it as being on an orgasmic track, or being “immobilized by pleasure.” To the woman, this phase feels timeless. She feels as if she is on a track of continuous and smoothly rising pleasure. Like a meditative state, the feeling is of an altered state of consciousness—floating without effort... Continuously climbing, she has no sensation of effort. This experience can last from several minutes to a half an hour or more...After a woman has enjoyed a few minutes of second phase extended orgasm, she may need less stimulation to maintain the continuous climb. The orgasmic process becomes more self-sustaining. Light rhythmic stimulation of the vagina alone usually sufficient to maintain prolonged blended orgasmic contractions. Orgasmic contractions can continue sometimes for thirty seconds or more with no stimulation at all.”... We would add that women who regularly experience extended orgasm function better than ever, whatever their responsibilities. And they’re healthier, more relaxed, less irritable, and much happier. (pp. 107-108)

In discussing men's extended orgasm, the Brauers state that men must learn to "control the rate of his climbing arousal as he nears the emission phase of his orgasm. Repeated multiple peaking, involving "stop and start" or "fast and slow" stimulation can lead into extended emission phase. The usual three to five second emission phase is prolonged I time. At first this extension is merely as second or two. With continued practice, it can be extended to many seconds, many minutes, even thirty minutes or more." (p. 111)

A man can train himself to experience multiple non-ejaculatory peaks. With enough of them (say fifteen or more) in close succession, they may become blended into a continuous-emission phase orgasm.

During extended orgasm, a man learns to control ejaculatory inevitability: His levels of arousal will consciously increase. He'll experience that stimulation as increasingly pleasurable and he'll be able to accept more of it longer without ejaculating. He'll still be using some ejaculatory control techniques himself—breathing, sex muscle exercises, switching attention for example. ...He may secrete larger-than-usual amounts of a clear fluid that is more watery than semen. He experiences a state of being pleasurable immobilized. When he ejaculates, his ejaculatory experiences will probably be more intense and will also last longer. Instead of six to ten contractions, there may be fifteen to twenty or more. (p. 112)

Expanded orgasm

Expanded Orgasm (EO) is more than merely an event. It is a path of expanding both sensual awareness and consciousness while receiving genital stimulation. EO uses a person's own pathways of body, mind, emotion, and spirit to create maximum expansion. The goal (and focus) of receiving Expanded Orgasm is simply to feel as much of that pleasure as possible.

To understand the difference between Expanded and Extended Orgasm, think of filling a container in such a way that *not only does the container become more full, but also where the container itself expands*. The distinguishing expansion is in the sense of space. There is the sense of one's entire body experiencing the orgasm, of reaching for an even larger being in which to put all that orgasmic pleasure. In contrast, Regular Orgasms are felt primarily in the physical domain.

Expanded Orgasm is an added spatial dimension of experience during Regular, Multiple, and Extended Orgasm. A Regular Orgasm, for example, can also be part of an Expanded one. The Expanded experience is felt in the body, mind, emotions, and spirit, all at once. The focus is on the entire experience, and not just going over the edge. One can experience EO immediately after the session begins, or later in the session. EO starts when one becomes aware of the expansion occurring. Consider EO as a domain, a state of being, a realm of consciousness, a condition of feeling everywhere.

When one enters the EO state, two processes occur simultaneously. First one leaves the normal waking state of consciousness, in which the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual states are typically separate. Second, the practitioner enters the EO state, where all parts of the self reconnect into one whole (integrated) experience.

Differences and similarities between climactic, extended and Expanded Orgasm

Extended Orgasms are orgasms in which the length of climax is extended in time beyond the typical climax or Regular Orgasm. An Extended Orgasm very often becomes an Expanded one, as well.

An Expanded Orgasm might be an Extended one; on the other hand, an Expanded Orgasm session might take an hour but the climax time could be relatively brief.

Consider EO in the context of the classic orgasmic model based on Masters and Johnson's four sequential phases of orgasm: Excitement; Plateau; Climax; and Resolution. This model can be applied to regular, multiple, and extended orgasm.

However, in Expanded Orgasm, the phases do not occur sequentially, but simultaneously. Thus, one can become aroused, continue to build arousal while in a plateau state, and even climax, during a plateau.

Climactic (regular) orgasm differs in fundamental ways from Expanded Orgasm. An investigation of these differences (as shown in Table 3) helps grasp the significance of EO.

The Andocentric Model of Sexuality and Orgasm

At a metaphoric level, EO can be said to be a very "feminine" practice, while regular sex can be likened to a masculine practice. Regular sex, in patriarchal societies, is patterned after the drives, tastes, and desires of men, not women. Writes Rachel P. Maines (1999),

The andocentric [male-centered] definition of sex as an activity recognizes three essential steps: preparation for penetration ("foreplay"), penetration, and male orgasm. Sexual activity that does not involve at least the last two has not been popularly or medically (and for that matter, legally) regarded as "the real thing". That more than half of all women, possibly more than 70 percent, do not regularly reach orgasm by means of penetration alone has been brought to our attention by researchers such as Alfred Kinsey and Shere Hite, but the fact was known, if not well publicized, in previous centuries. This majority of women have traditionally been defined as abnormal or "frigid", somehow derelict in their duty to reinforce the androcentric model of satisfactory sex. (p. 5)

Maines convincingly argues that our entire notion of sexuality has been heavily focused through the lens of patriarchal needs, values, and goals. In patriarchal societies,

women's sexuality has been routinely vilified or denied altogether. The female genital mutilation practice is an extreme example of such denial.

In the nineteenth century, the notion that women required sexual gratification for health came into conflict with newer ideas regarding the purity of womanhood. Their sexuality was subsequently reframed as pro-natal "desire for maternity". (Maines, p. 9) The cure for a sexually unsatisfied female became not sexual gratification, but the androcentric solution of intercourse. Masturbation for both women and men was frowned upon, despite the fact that masturbation was the only way many women could achieve sexual release and pleasure.

After Freudian interpretation allowed women to have a sex drive, it becomes pathologized. Women who wanted (or could only achieve) clitoral orgasms were viewed as neurotic and infantile. "That this principle relegated the experience of two-thirds to three-quarters of the female population to a pathological condition was not perceived to be a problem." (Maines, pp. 9-10)

In the 1950's, Alexander Lowen, a supposed champion for the expression of orgasmic energies, recommended against men stimulating women clitorally, because most men would feel the need to bring a woman to climax as a burden. Delaying coitus, he said, might ruin the mood and possibly cause the loss of the man's erection. (p. 113)

In the second half of the century, Masters and Johnson, and others, contributed to the androcentric bias in their scientific research by compromising their research to conform to this bias. Maines notes that

When [Masters and Johnson] chose their sample, they selected only women who regularly reached orgasm in coitus—an error, it is worth noting, not made by their predecessor Alfred Kinsey. That these women were a minority was already

known at the time Masters and Johnson make their study, but it had apparently been decided that these outlets represented normality. (p. 119)

They thus breached the scientific norm, which holds as a principle that the experience of the majority should represent the norm. Furthermore, scientists attacked Shere Hite on the grounds that her samples were self-selected, even though this practice “conformed with nearly every other sample of sexual practices in this country in the past hundred years.” (p. 119)

Seymour Fischer noted (1973) how “is it particularly remarkable how widespread has been the acceptance of assumptions about the ‘more mature’ nature of vaginal arousal in the absence of any empirical evidence to support them” and went on to say that 64 per cent of women respondents preferred clitoral to vaginal stimulations. (p. 297)

Even today, some professionals continue to support the idea that for female orgasm is not as important as male orgasm. A 1984 article by Jeanne Warner (quoted in Maines, 1999) argues for the supremacy of emotional orgasm for women, under the reasoning that the greatest satisfaction for the male should also provide the greatest satisfaction for the female.

By regarding climactic orgasm as the most-valued experience of sex (and one that authenticates the act as being a “good” one), the androcentric view of sexuality is antithetical to EO and the sexual traditions behind it. The relevance of this view—so prevalent in Western culture—to EO, relationships, and transcendence will be explored in chapter five.

Orgasm and the Brain

Bhagwan Rajneesh claimed that one only need experience orgasm once. And once is enough. After that, one can simply return to the memory and recreate the experience. (Rajneesh, 1983, p. 60)

There is an intimate relationship between orgasm and the brain, which goes as follows: the more that one experiences orgasm, the more orgasmic he or she will become. One is, in effect, rewiring and newly wiring the brain circuits that deliver pleasure, ecstasy, and transcendence. Greenwell (1990) reports on this by noting that researcher and psychology James Prescott says, “to experience profound states of consciousness, you’ve got to have the neural equipment. Sensory experience must be integrated into higher brain centers and that requires a cerebellar-limbic-neocortex connection.” He says many people in our culture cannot experience this connection because our cultural preoccupation with anhedonia (joylessness) has stunted our neural pleasure systems.

Greenwell further notes Prescott’s belief that the difference in the cerebellum is responsible for floating, out-of-the-body sensation and the feeling of union in female orgasms.” (Greenwell, p. 108)

Research has indeed investigated how orgasms might be induced in the brain without any genital or other bodily stimulation outside the brain. According to James H. Austin, a neurophysiologist (Austin, 1998),

Electrical stimulations [were shown] to produce sexual thoughts...In later studies, gross chemical stimulations were used [which] gradually led both to sexual arousal and to a state of general hyperarousal...On most occasions, either ACH [acetylcholine] or NE [norepinephrine] began to raise her mood within one or two minutes. Moods peaked after ten to fifteen minutes evolving through a mild euphoria, an increased awareness, a more rapid and more accurate response to questions, and a “sexual motive” state. After another five to ten minutes this sexual state culminated in repeated orgasms....These earlier human studies

suggest that powerful hyperarousal states are accompanied by evolving EEG changes in deeper limbic structures. *Only depth electrodes detect such changes.* The patients' sexual overtones may be relevant to the semierotic flavor which some other persona report during their states of mystical experience. (pp. 169-171)

Sexual Fitness

We thus see the interlinked nature of sexuality and consciousness, and we see the interlinked nature of mind and body. As each develops they help the other qualities to grow. Increased sex feeds the neuronal circuitry of the brain, which in turn makes transcendence experiences more available.

The more sex one has, the more he or she maintains a youthful body capable of having and enjoying sex. Crenshaw writes (1996), "Both men and women who have sex often when they are younger retain the capacity to do so when they are older." One's sexuality therefore needs to be maintained. And, "having intercourse or masturbating with regular frequency is your best sexual insurance policy." Towards that end, she recommends, among other things like cutting down on alcohol, regular and frequent sex (once a week or more); a lot of touching, sexual and non-sexual; and diversity from regular sex to include "a broad smorgasbord of possibilities", and active use of your imagination. (p. 284)

According to Crenshaw, during courtship, the brain is pleurably flooded with phenylethylamine, the same substance found in chocolate. During the seduction phase, the brain gets large doses of dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), which enhance the sensations of erotic desire. During orgasm, the brain is flooded with hormones such as oxytocin and vasopressin. Afterwards, more oxytocin will bathe the participant in a warm glow of feeling loved. She states,

There is good reason to believe that sex lengthens your life span. Certainly there is extensive data to prove that frequent touching extends your life and improves its quality. ...Sex is touching.... Touch exerts its power throughout your system by raising the substances that lengthen your life span—DHEA, oxytocin,

endorphins, growth hormone—and lowering those that can shorten it, like cortisol and adrenaline. Touch lowers your pulse and heart rate, relieves stress, and increases your sense of well-being. (p. 278)

Crenshaw quotes research showing that sex hormones prevent brain aging and atrophy. And, in her final advocacy for a rich sexual life, she notes,

It has always been assumed that if you feel pleasure you smile...According to some psychologists, it might also work the other way around... Dwelling on positive thoughts can also raise your endorphin levels. These are key chemicals for pain relief and perhaps can influence your emotions in other ways. If this is true, you might be able to smile your way to health and happiness. (p. 305)

Since EO makes its practitioners smile quite a bit, we can predict, from this information and other research showing that EO raises endorphins significantly, that EO promotes health, happiness, and overall levels of well being.

Limited vs. Expanded Definition of Orgasm

One of the limitations of Western thinking is its penchant for classifying phenomena neatly into compartments. Western thinking says that orgasm is the product of sexual stimulation, the end result of a series of processes. People hear the word “sex” and rather than hear it as something sacred, or as a part of the body, or “Heart” (as the Saivists call an individual’s entire energetic center) they assign meanings that their parents, society, and other authorities have given them. They reduce orgasm to a small role rather than expand it to its largest. EO offers a far greater vision of both sexuality and human potential.

Fortunately, we—as a society—may be beginning to better consider and understand EO as an energetic phenomenon that pervades the entire human being, and beyond.

Altered States as a result of EO

The Brauers point out that entry into extended orgasmic states clearly comparable to EO states creates a

highly pleasurable state of heightened mental activity...similar to a deep meditative state, with electrical brain activity moving in more synchronous patterns and shifted towards alpha and theta waves, with greater activity in the right side of the brain. (Brauer and Brauer, 1990)

These results compare to those found in deep relaxation and meditation. These are states in which one subjectively feels harmony, peacefulness, and an altered sense of time. The Brauers recognize that extended orgasmic states have a profound effect.

The oceanic mental state that extended orgasmic response induces appear to be similar to states described by religious believers who have had visions of God or universal oneness. This common meditative transformation may explain the associations frequently addressed in world literature between sexuality and spirituality. (p. 113)

In their experience, the effects of being in these states, such as contentment and satisfaction, were equal for men and women. In addition, the periodic anchoring that comes from connecting with another person in extended orgasm can have a beneficial effect that can sweep through your everyday life, strengthening relationships, and enhancing your personal sense of well-being. (p. 115) The couples they worked with reported that the elation that the results from being in extended orgasmic states can last for days at a time.

Rosalyn Bruyere, an internationally known healer and researcher of the chakra systems, adds,

The merge or oneness of sexuality is intended to be a heightened awareness. ...The goal of sexuality is to center and maintain a simultaneous state of deep relaxation and expanded consciousness. ...Orgasm is the sense of being a single organism, a single cell. The ideal of sexual intimacy is to stay in that single-celled

feeling, that heightened state of consciousness, for as long as possible. (Bruyere, 1991, p. 174)

Western Psychological Contributions to Orgasm

Freud

Sigmund Freud is generally credited for developing the architecture, concepts, and practice of psychoanalysis. Practicing in late nineteenth century Vienna, his thinking emerged during a time when Positivism, a determinist and mechanist approach, was the predominant scientific mode of inquiry.

In his early years, Freud broke with the Positivist practices of the day to develop *self-analysis*, in which he used such practices as free-association and dream analysis to analyze the sources of his own neuroses. His was not the analysis of the physical basis of mental problems, but of the workings of the unconscious mind. Rather than a mechanistic model, Freud saw the drama of the mind developing along themes, associations, and metaphor. He defined the terms *conscious* and *unconscious minds*, placing at the heart of the unconscious mind of the adult the child who lies within.

Freud believed that in psychoanalysis, the child's secret passion for the mother became linked with sexual development, and became the source of his or her later neuroses. Over time, other sexual fantasies also emerged in the child's mind, for example a girl's envy of boy's penis, and a boy's desire to replace his father as his mother's lover. Because such fantasies are unacceptable, they must be repressed to the level of the unconscious mind, or be sublimated (transformed into a socially acceptable behavior, such as heroism or hard work). Thus, sexuality was portrayed as a drive that is usually cast down to the level of the shadow in Wilber's Spectrum of Consciousness.

Freud developed an elaborate model that explained how the libido, or sexual drive, influences a person throughout life. He discussed both “normal” and abnormal development. His labels clearly reflected the Victorian thinking in which he was embedded. Any type of sexual deviance, such as bisexuality or homosexuality, was considered the neurotic outcome of sexual repression. Normal men and women were those who as adults found the natural outlet of their sexuality to be heterosexual intercourse. Any other form of sexual satisfaction, including clitoral stimulation to orgasm, was considered abnormal.

Freud also labeled women’s vaginal orgasms “mature”, and clitoral orgasms “immature”. Women who were unable to achieve vaginal orgasm were thus considered immature and not fully developed psychosexually. Many women were considered neurotic or pushed into psychoanalysis because of this view. (Masters and Johnson, pp. 72-73)

In summary, Freud brought to the forefront the notion of sexuality and orgasm as a psychological (mental plus emotional)—as well as physical—phenomenon. He promoted the notion of “normal” sexual expression and that sexuality ought to be sublimated for the sake of social good. His views on women reinforced a patriarchal attitude about women that classified their orgasms against a phallogocentric standard, and against which many women fell short. This viewpoint remained unchallenged for many years and was most certainly the source of much unnecessary insecurity and unexplored sexual possibilities for women. Vast numbers of women were labeled frigid and undoubtedly many marriages suffered needlessly as a result. Writers of Freud’s time, such as Havelock Ellis, writing in 1910, cited frigidity rates in women of between 66 and

75 percent. Maines notes, “these numbers are suggestively similar to Shere Hite’s late 1970’s figures for women who do not regularly reach coitus in intercourse. (Maines, p. 61)

Jung

Jung’s influence is second only to Sigmund Freud’s in the brief history of human psychoanalysis. (Jung, 1998) He and Freud worked closely for several years, but eventually split on the role of sexuality in human neuroses. While Freud focused on the role of sexuality in the formulation of one’s personality, Jung developed his own theories of analytical psychology and the ‘collective unconscious’ shared by all human minds.

Jung’s concept of the libido differs from that of Freud. While Freud felt that the libido was primarily a sexual energy, Jung felt the libido was just pure *energy*—the same kind of energy one would find in physics. (Wolf, 1994, p. 51) Further, *energy* could not be divided; psychic energy was no different than physical energy.

Like Freud, Jung dealt with the central relationship between the conscious and unconscious. He later distinguished between *the personal unconscious* (the repressed feelings and thoughts developed during an individual's life together with unfolded life possibilities and much more), and *the collective unconscious* (inherited feelings, thoughts, "instincts" and memories shared by all humanity). The collective unconscious was to Jung made up of what he termed *archetypes*. Archetypes are inherent, instinctual and primordial images and symbols accessed by all human beings, and which often find an outer expression in religion, art, mythology, folk and fairy tales, astrology and the like. Whereas initially, Jung felt that the archetypes were biological in origin, he later revised

this view, and began to view them as instances of a metaphysical, universal mind.

(Kazlev, 1999c)

In Jung's understanding, spiritual growth requires an immersion in the sea of the unconsciousness, commenting that in all mystery rites, there is an initiation, a baptism, and a descent into water. The way of higher development leads through water, the immersion into our own depths.

While Jung did not work much with libido, he did work with the Eastern concept of kundalini. Kundalini yoga presented Jung with a model for the developmental phases of higher consciousness, and he interpreted its symbols in terms of the process of individuation.

According to Dr. J. Marvin Spiegelman as quoted by Hyatt (1996), Jung... suggests that the Kundalini is that which makes you go on the greatest adventures. It is, itself, a symbol for the divine urge. It is the 'lady' for the Knight, and the anima for the man. It can be a spark, a fear, a neurosis, anything which indicates that a greater will than our own intervenes in our life.

All the forgoing sounds very unique and individual, yet Jung asserts that this is no personal task. No, it is impersonal; the energy itself is transpersonal and if we awaken it, we must be careful not to identify with it lest we suffer inflation. It happens to us as much as we cultivate it. Once more, than paradox becomes manifest: the Divine is unconscious, we are unconsciousness, of it; we awaken it, it awakens and the sorting out process begins.

Jung's work unified many aspects of eastern and western approaches to psychology. His work was also a significant forerunner of quantum physics and holographic consciousness.

Jung defined and developed the notion of *synchronicity* in the early 1920s, defining the term as "a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is involved." (Jung, 1960) Another way of looking at synchronicity is events connected by *meaning rather than by causality*. Synchronicity is the non-causal order that can exist in the human psyche. This notion foreshadows Bohm's

yet-to-be-developed view of a holographic universe. With synchronicity, simultaneous events occur in the manifest, explicate order due to the existence of an unseen implicate order. With this work he introduced quantum concepts, at a time when the Western mechanical model of the universe was still prevalent.

Jung, with the help of physicist Wolfgang Pauli, refined his work on synchronicity in 1952 to coincide even more closely with the advances in physics. Fred Allen Wolf, another physicist, describes this model below:

If we draw a cross on a paper with the vertical line representing the connection from one end, labeled “indestructible energy”, to the other end, tabbed the space time continuum, and the horizontal line representing the “connection” from the left end, marked causality, to the right end, entitled synchronicity, we will have the schema shown in our Figure [as a cross], satisfying on the one hand the postulates of eth new physicals, and on the other those of psychology.

...Energy and space-time are ways to describe the “out there” [objective] experience. They are convenient frameworks in which we ware entitled to see the connection between events. Events that have the same energy cannot be described with certainly within space-time [due to the Heisenberg principle of uncertainty.]

...The space-time and energy are complementary descriptors of events, and in a similar manner synchronicity and causality re complementary to each other. They deal, just as energy and space-time do, with events. These events are marked by their psychic component as well as their physical component. Here is the crux of the matter: our Western consciousness has taken as meaningful only those events hat are labeled causal. By losing track of or dismissing this other dimension of meaningfulness, we actually become unconscious of much of the universe. (Wolf, pp. 56-7)

This holotropic state has rules and structure that are in many ways in direct opposition to those that we live by in ordinary space-time. While in space-time, we navigate by location in time and space. What we did in the past helps us navigate where to go and how we will get to our next destination in the future.

In the holographic model of consciousness, where energy and synchronicity are the ruling principle, time and space are not limitations. We navigate where we wish to go by our feelings.

Wolf notes the essential difference between the two kinds of knowing as represented by the two sides of the cross:

The left hand side [of space-time and causality] corresponds to what we would call memory—the linking up of events that are not occurring now with events that are. This process necessarily takes us out of the here-and-now and into our heads—our intellects, so to speak.

The right hand side is felt. It is not thought about. It cannot be experienced this way. It is a feeling that gives rise to knowing without thinking. It is a recognition that things are as they are. It is a realization of a deep connection that can immediately be broken by logical dictate. It is affective and emotional rather than intellectual. To the extent that we say left-hand-side events become deathlike as a result of analysis, right-hand-side events become alive as a result of experience—coming to our senses. Learning a new thing creates this feeling. Falling in love does, too. ...[It] is [also] the synchronous right-hand-side that plays a role in the experience in dreams. (Wolf, p. 58)

Recall that Ken Wilber places the personal unconsciousness with the level of the shadow, the repressed portion of the ego, and places the collective unconsciousness at the level of the transpersonal bands. Here they are, at best, only a jumping off point for transcendence, which for Wilber must be access to the nondual level of Mind. “These archetypes are simultaneously the deepest pointers to the organismic consciousness and the first corrupters of organismic consciousness.” (Wilber, 1993, p. 260)

For Grof transcendence can occur in holotropic states, even while one remains bodily involved. For Grof, synchronistic events are particularly frequent in the lives of those who experience holotropic states. Since synchronicities give us new ways of accessing knowledge (by linking events together via meaning rather than causality) tapping into a more synchronistic life gives an entirely new dimension of perspective. Grof notes, “It also has been the experience of many people that when they become involved in a project inspired from the transpersonal realms of the psyche, remarkable synchronicities tend to occur and make their work surprisingly easy. “ (Grof, 1998, p. 96)

In summary, Jung's contribution to our understanding of sexuality was his broadening of the concept of libido to cover energy in general, not only sexual energy. Linking East and West approaches, he opened the conversation for transpersonal psychology by developing the observation of a holographic paradigm of information storage.

Reich

Wilhelm Reich was another associate of Freud's. While Jung diverged from Freud to pursue more metaphysical dimensions of consciousness, Reich pursued the study of sexuality in greater detail, believing that Freud was falling far short in his investigation and understanding of the nature and influence of sexuality.

Like Freud, to Reich sexuality was indeed repressed and the cause of subsequent neurosis. Rather than the neurosis manifesting in personality traits, however, Reich saw the repressed energy as becoming locked in the body as well, creating psychosomatic blocks.

Says Reich,

Nature and culture, instinct and morality, sexuality and achievement become incompatible as a result of the split in the human structure. The unity and congruity of culture and nature, work and love, morality and sexuality, longer for from time immemorial, will remain a dream as long as man continues to condemn the biological demand for nature (orgastic) sexual gratification. (p. 8)

To Reich, sexuality and anxiety were functions of the organism operating in opposite directions of pleasurable expansion and anxious contraction. The sexual process was then the expansive process of biological pleasure. If the lack of orgasm created symptoms of anxiety, neurosis and bodily blockages, or "armoring", it could also be used

to cure such symptoms. However, few adults were capable of generating the energy necessary to experience the genital gratification necessary to resolve such problems.

Reich traced all problems to sexual frustration.

Genital energy was bound, concealed, and disguised in many places and in myriad ways. ...And, every seemingly arbitrary destructive action is a reaction of the organism to the frustration of a gratification of a vital need, especially a sexual need. (p. 153-4)

Reich went on to link his theories of sexual frustration and redemption to the greater issues of social justice and politics. As a result, his message, already challenging to the post-Victorian sensibilities of the 1920's, became perceived of as even more of a threat. He was persecuted and chased from country to country. Nonetheless, he continued developing his theories. He pioneered methods of working with the body to reduce blockages. He was among the first to link the mind and body together in this fashion. His work would have fit neatly into Wilber's existential band of the Spectrum, in which mind and body are seen as one unit.

In later years, Reich departed from his strict adherence to orgasm as the solution to the problems stemming from repressed sexual energy. He endeavored to find a universal energy, or *orgone*, that permeated not only sex but also all of life itself. He was therefore one of the first scientists to try to measure the chi, or prana, and perhaps even the kundalini. Unfortunately, these experiments have remained to this day inconclusive.

In summary, Reich embraced the positive value of the libido and orgasmic energy. Unlike Freud, he believed sexual and orgasmic energy should be released, rather than repressed. By exploring mind, emotions, and body as an integrated unit he opened the door to discover a body-as-involved path to transcendence.

Lowen

Alexander Lowen, a student of Reich's, continued with Reich's work with the orgasm reflex and the blocks created by repressing one's sexual nature.

Rather than working with the orgasm itself, Lowen, like Reich, developed exercises that one could do in order to free oneself of those blockages. He developed a mind/body therapy known as Bioenergetics, which rested on the simple existential principle that each person *is* his body. Lowen wrote, in *Bioenergetics*

No person exists apart from the living body in which he has his existence and through which he expresses himself and relates to the world around him.... Mind, spirit and soul are aspects of every living body. If you are your body and your body is you then it expresses who you are. ... The emotions are bodily events; they are literally movements or motions within the body that generally result in some outward action. Anger produces a tension... and a flushed face, clenched fists, and snarling mouth... Affection and love produce a softening of all the features, plus a suffusion of warmth in the skin and eyes.... Sadness has a melting look, as if the person were about to break down into tears. (Lowen, 1975, p. 54)

Lowen also believed that the primary biological orientation of life is toward pleasure and away from pain. He defines the feeling of pleasure as the perception of an expansive movement in the body—opening up, reaching out, and making contact. Closing off, withdrawing, holding in or holding back is not experienced as pleasure and may actually be experienced as pain or anxiety. (p. 138)

This is of interest to our research. Because in EO one is in a highly expanded state according to Lowen, one would therefore expect it to be a state in which mostly positive feelings are felt as opposed to negative ones.

In summary, Lowen furthered Reich's integrated approach to healing and transcendence.

The Historical Influence of Patriarchal Values

We have compelling evidence that at some earlier point in our history, matriarchal, partnership-based societies in which relations between men and women occurred on more equal grounds were overthrown. Several works extensively document the theories that at some point, today's patriarchal structures of domination did not exist. Such work is based on both archeological evidence and ancient texts. Eisler (1995), Thompson (1996a), Sky (1993), Gumbutas (1992), Feuerstein (1992) and others document this event in great detail.

Says Feuerstein (1992) "At the dawn of history, God was a *she*—or so it appears. Our Paleolithic forebears, thirty or more millennia ago, conceived of Nature or the Divine as a cosmic female." (p. 45) However,

For reasons that are still not completely understood, male and female principles become severed from one another after the flowering the great civilizations of the East—not only in art by in life. Many historians connect this disjunction with the elevated social status of the male in nomadic communities. It was these aggressive pastoralists who, about the middle of the second millennium, B.C., began to invade the territories of, and triumph over, the sedentary peoples of India, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean.... The pastoralists brought in their own mythologies and religious beliefs with them and in their view it was not the Goddess but the male God who reigned supreme. (p. 62)

Cultural historian William Irwin Thompson observes (1996a),

The transformation of human culture from a matriarchal custom to a patriarchal power is remorselessly universal. Somewhere around 2000 B.C.E., the remnants of the prehistoric matristic cultures begin to be eliminated in new religions, new cosmologies, new ritualistic works of literature. (p. 194)

In this overthrow, male-oriented values of work, war, and pain-orientation were imposed on everybody at all levels of society. Such viewpoints served to deepen the sense of that the mind and body were separate entities, often at war with one another.

Eisler (1995) tells us that it was not only women but also men who were profoundly affected by this switch from matriarchal to patriarchal values:

The bodies of all women, and most men, came to be viewed in terms of the needs and desires with those with the greatest power to hurt, and thus exercise control over the bodies of others...The [resulting] view of the female body as merely male property also profoundly affected the social construction of both female and male sexuality. Because if the [female] body was there only serve the [male]—to give it care, pleasure and offspring—this not only provided a basic template for all superior-inferior rankings; it also imposed a particular view of how the bodies of women and men should relate in their most intimate sexual relationships. And, this view, which once again we are still struggling with today, was that both women and sex are “naturally” to be controlled by men. (p. 165)

As a result, while many of the world’s great religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity bequeathed timeless and immoral wisdom, in the social arena, widespread chauvinism against women predominated. Positive views of sexuality as a cocreative, sacred expression of the Divine, celebrated by men and women as equals, were cast into a collective shadow where they has remained until most recently.

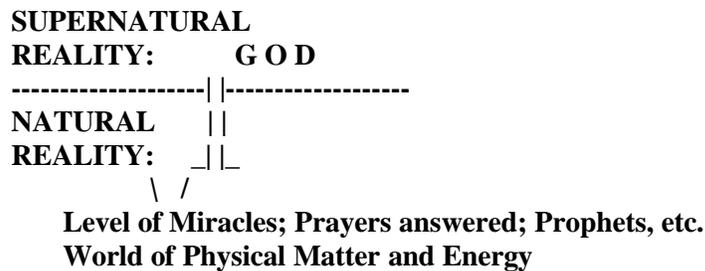
The practice of EO thrives in a cultural milieu in which sexuality is viewed as a positive, life-affirming activity. Sadly, in these societies, sacred, Tantric sexuality was forced underground, and kept alive only by cults. We can see why the practice of EO did not become widespread.

Christianity as an Influence

Since we live in predominantly Christian society, our understanding of EO will require at least a brief mention of the theology in which our culture in relation to orgasm and EO is steeped.

Christianity is a monotheistic religion. Its cosmology holds that there is a God, or “higher power,” who is both personalized and said to in control of the events happening on Earth, or in a mystical way, viewed as the all-embracing Godhead. God is the creator of everything in existence (Theism). Yet in Christianity one is neither God, nor a part of God.

Diagrammed, the relation between supernatural reality (God) and natural reality (everything else) looks like this (Kazlev, 1999b):



Christians purport to base their view of reality on the teachings of Christ himself. Some say Christ espoused views similar to those found in the Kabbalah. (Kazlev, 2000c) Recall that the Kabbalah is an emanationist philosophy that says that God is in everything.

Others label Jesus as a Gnostic. Gnostics believe that people have a divine capacity within themselves and that they can come to understand that the Kingdom of God is already upon the earth.

Christianity promotes the concept of personal redemption or salvation through faith in a messiah—Jesus Christ. Believers are asked to have faith, rather than perform actions like yoga or meditation that would lead to transcendence or enlightenment. Salvation is said to come as a result of God revealing Himself completely through Jesus.

Positive aspects of Christianity

All of what we know of Jesus comes from stories others have told about him. Thomas, said by some scholars to be one of the most important historical sources for knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth that exists outside of the Bible, tells the following story about Jesus:

According to the Gospel of Thomas as reported by Biblical scholars Patterson and Meyer (1994), Jesus said to his disciples,

[You shall we enter the kingdom of heaven] when you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you will enter [the kingdom].

While today he is usually called the “Son of God,” Jesus was said to have referred to himself as “Son of Man,” that is, the offspring of humanity. John White points out, “His mission and his teaching have at their heart the development of a new and higher state of consciousness on a species-wide basis.” He notes that the title of Christ can be translated as meaning “perfected” or “enlightened”. While Christ was supposedly a human being historically, he represents an eternal transpersonal condition of being to which we must all someday come. He did not ask others to worship him but to follow him. He asked his followers to learn from him, and follow his example of living a God-centered, compassionate life, as we were Jesus ourself. He sought to duplicate himself by creating many Jesuses in his wake. He taught, “The kingdom is within us. Divinity is our birthright [and] our inheritance.” And, through the miracle of incarnation and resurrection, he taught, “not that Jesus was a human like us but that *we are gods like him*—or at least have the potential to be.” (White, 1974, pp. 125-127)

In other words, we all have the God-given potential to enter the Kingdom of God. By following him, we can heal our sin of separation, and once again become whole and holy.

Christ showed us a higher state of being and called upon us to make this state a reality for ourselves. White notes that “Heaven is union with God, hell is separation from God, and the difference is not measured in miles but in surrender of ego and self-centeredness.” (p. 128)

According to the legend of Christ, he was crucified by the Roman state for being an overly influential religious heretic. He died on the cross, forgiving the Romans in the process, and informing his followers that he was dying for all the sins of mankind. From that point on, all who believed in him and were “saved” would be able to enter the kingdom of heaven.

For all Christ’s gifts to humanity, a positive view of sexuality was not among them. Mary Magdalene represents the woman closest to Christ; she was a courtesan who was forgiven for her sins by Christ, and the first to witness his resurrection. Rumors that they were lovers have never been substantiated. Finally, after his death, she followed a life of contemplation. Thus, much of the imagery associated with Christ, however powerful and moving, does not especially involve the body.

However, according to White, the original baptism was an experience of near drowning, where the person was held under water to a point near death. White concludes that the purpose of this form of baptism was to create a near-death experience (the implications of these experiences on TSC will be explored later in this chapter). In this early cult, followers were encouraged to have their own (un-intermediated) mystical

“born-again” experience of awakening to the Divine that appears to have involved entrance into a holotropic state.

The negative influence of the Christian doctrine

The Christian Doctrine was a body of knowledge that was formulated and shaped significantly in the few hundred years following the death of Christ. As the Christian church grew from being a non-dominant religion (and therefore was no longer regarded as a cult), it became the official body of knowledge representing the greatest number of Christians. It does not necessarily represent the viewpoints of any one individual or sub-dominant Christian sect.

The official Christian Church doctrine, then, is the credo that has been historically (and politically) shaped since the early decades after Christ and lives on today and represents the greatest numbers of believers worldwide. And, whether or not one personally agrees with this doctrine, this thinking pervades Western culture. Its messages have infiltrated our schools, our media, and our politics, and therefore, the mass consciousnesses. It has shaped our thinking profoundly, even where we might openly disagree with its approach.

According to Christian doctrine, man is born in a state of sin, separated from God, irredeemably imperfect, and incapable of saving himself through his own efforts. One can be “saved” by dedicating his or her life to the worship of Jesus Christ. Even once someone has found salvation, through faith they are not divine, but remain imperfect. According to St. Augustine, a highly regarded and influential Christian philosopher in *City of God* (as cited in Eisler, 1995):

God, the author of all natures but not of their defects, created man good; but man, corrupt by choice and condemned by justice, has produced a progeny that is both corrupt and condemned. For, we all existed in that one man, since, taken together, we were the one man who fell into sin through the woman who was made out of him before sin existed. Although the specific form by which each of us was to live was not yet created and assigned, our nature was already present in the see [semen] from which we were to spring. And because this nature has been soiled by sin and doomed to death and justly condemned, no man was to be born of man in any other condition.

As Eisler reports, in the Christian hierarchy, the locus par excellence of sin is sex.

She wrote,

The Church proclaimed women a constant danger to men, and enacted edict after edict to 'protect' men from women's sexuality through the most incredibly repressive and brutal means. It was the Church that invalidated the marriages of priests and even forbidding priests to live with mothers and sisters and forbidding a woman to enter a place where a priest was staying. And it was the Church that launched the Christian witch-hunts, some of which left some towns almost without any female population. (p. 204) ... The Church's constant association of sex not with pleasure but with eternal punishment and pain was not only a way of alienating men from women, and thus justifying and maintaining male dominance; it also served to alienate men from their own bodies, their own emotions, and above all, their human need for loving connection. (p. 205)

Eisler notes that the Church has further inflicted damage by labeling men's sexual urges as natural, while women's sexuality was cause to brand them for life as harlots.

Such a view of sexuality equates sex with violence and domination, not expansion and pleasure. Sadly, in the process both men and women as well have paid the price.

Sexuality for both men and women has become distorted and stunted.

Yet other forces prevent an exploration of sexuality or orgasm in Christianity. Women and men are not portrayed positively as sexual beings. Christ was supposedly celibate. We do not usually see him a strong, powerful male, but as a martyr hanging from a cross. For centuries clergy were required to be celibate. Women are positively portrayed in Christian tradition as either virgins or mothers. The ideal woman, Mary, was both a virgin and a mother, a feat mortal women cannot replicate. Our first mother was

said to be Eve, and it is due to her listening to a snake (possibly her sexuality, her intuition, or her inner wisdom) that all of mankind was banished from the Garden and forever doomed to live out lives of pain and suffering.

Faith and acts of good deeds are the means by which one atones “having been born in original sin”, that is, mortal, and by which one can hope to one day get closer to God.

For Christian theology, the body is not only *not* spiritual; it is an evil distraction from spiritual endeavors.

Clearly there are times when the body can lead us away from a spiritual path. Addictions of all sorts can be said to do this, and one can be addicted to sex. However, the body has shown that it can also be a doorway to divine states, and there is nowhere to allow for this event in the Christian theology.

Pleasure is considered sinful in many Christian subgroups today, which ban not only activities as masturbation and premarital sex, but also dancing, coffee, and music. EO, with its pleasure-giving qualities, would seem to be no exception to this worldview. It would also be a threatening one to the Christian chain of intermediaries who maintain that their presence is required in order for a person to have access to the Divine.

This type of Christian thinking helps to explain yet another reason why EO has not been seriously considered in our culture as a path to transcendence. In EO, the body is viewed as a divine vessel, carrying a divine essence that can be awakened and spread through the body. This very principle would be labeled heretical, sinful, and even evil by the classical interpretation of Christian doctrine.

Today many Christians are rethinking their allegiance to strict Christian doctrine. Men and women are now challenging many Church policies, such as the role of women in the Church and the rights women have over their own bodies. As a result, today, more than ever before, EO may have the chance to be discovered in the light of revised and more tolerant attitudes.

Philosophic Prejudices Against Positive Sexuality

Considerable prejudice still exists against women, who are in much of Western philosophy believed to be less capable of men in experiencing spiritual states. Aristotle started from the premise that the soul has two parts, the rational and the irrational. He believed the rational should govern the irrational. Since women were considered more irrational than men, it was logical that men should govern them. This mapping of gender onto worldview had the following implications:

The Platonic influence exclude the feminine from the process of mind; actions of mind, and knowing, become the province of the masculine.... Irrational forces (such as fortune) became associated with the feminine... In the Western mind, "like nature herself, women had considerable powers, but they were not controllable. A drive to understand nature became a metaphoric battle between an understanding of mechanics on the one hand, and a repression of women and nature on the other. (Haste, 1994, p. 175)

Ken Wilber talks about the "Great Hierarchy" of consciousness that has existed as "the official dominant philosophy, East and West, for most of mankind". (Wilber, 1996, p. 247) (A holarchy is a series of nested or enfolded dimensions. The simplest model is "earth, human, and sky". A slightly more complex model is "matter, body, mind, soul, spirit.") Wilber's model reflects the Christian hierarchy of values. Since the body is closer to the bottom, it is less spiritual than the items closer to spirit, which is at the top.

Hierarchy means “sacred rule”. Fritjof Capra, the noted physicist, writes, It was originally the rule of the pope over the archbishops and the bishops and priest, and ...probably the rule of God over the archangels, and so on.... And now we have human hierarchies...in which the higher levels dominate the lower ones. They are hierarchies of power and control. Although there is relative autonomy and freedom at various levels, the power flows from the top to the bottom.... Now it’s also interesting culturally and historically that hierarchical systems are characteristic of patriarchal control. A hierarchy is something associated with male consciousness.”) ... The way in which we divide reality is illusory and relative. True to quantum sensibilities, patterns of matter reflect patterns of mind, and whatever we look at depends on our concepts. Capra suggests that in keeping with what we know about nature through quantum physics, it makes far more sense to think of *increasing levels of complexity* rather than hierarchy. (Capra, pp. 238-239)

Hierarchical enthusiasts like to organize life into patterns of subordinates, equals, and dominants; they also like viewing the world in terms of time-based cause and effect. Ken Wilber, for example, acknowledges that the self-created world of time and space is that of samsara (illusion). (Wilber, 1990, p. 121) Soon afterwards, however, while discussing the changes a rising kundalini is said to make in one’s body, he asks “The dilemma: Is the higher consciousness the *result* of chemical changes or the *cause* of them? If the latter, then physiological changes are totally irrelevant to spiritual pursuits.” (p. 130)

Clearly, when physical and spiritual (as well as mental and emotional) energies are seen to co-exist in the first place, all changes are *co-created in dynamic and systemic*

processes. His question, similar to that of “which came first, the chicken or the egg?”, seems contradictory to his earlier statement, simplistic, and a diversion from more powerful avenues of investigation.

This prejudicial, hierarchal, non-systems way of thinking has thus been successfully challenged in postmodern physics and other fields. However, it remains strong in the minds of the many who believe that people are superior to nature (and have the right to do with it as they wish), men are superior to women, and that neither men nor women contain the Divine within themselves.

EO is a powerful holistic practice. Whether alone or with a partner, in it, one unifies the polar energies of both male and female. Clearly, where female characteristics are considered as inferior, people will not be strongly motivated to incorporate these energies. Additionally, EO requires the receiver to surrender to the more feminine principle of pleasure. Where surrender is viewed not as a noble action but as a sign of defeat, one will have a hard time practicing EO properly.

Cultural Prejudices About Positive Sexuality

Sexuality is a bodily function. Every man and woman alive today is here because their parents and all their forebears had sexual relations with a member of the opposite sex. Men and women have strong biological drives impelling them to have sex. In the process, a transcendent state, albeit usually brief, can readily be achieved. No other path to transcendence is so easily and compellingly pursued.

Even sexuality that is considered in the ordinary range of human experience has long been understood to generate transcendent states. Fuerstein (1992) surveys a vast

number of spiritual traditions through history, going back at least 20,000 years to the erotic cults of the Great Mother. Proceeding to the present, he discusses (among others) Greek, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Chinese, Hebrew Christian, Islamic, Indian, Chinese, and American practices of sacred sexuality.

He defines the practice of sacred sexuality as:

Recovering the bliss and delight beyond pleasure, the immortal energy locked within our bodies, about embracing the imponderable mystery of existence. [It is] also about love, not merely the positive feeling between intimates, but an overwhelming reverence for all embodied life. Through sacred sex, we directly participate in the vastness of being, it fills us with wonder and stillness. (Taken from the front book flap)

For these very reasons, sacred sexual practices were considered a threat to mainstream societies. Practices of sacred sexuality throughout the last five thousand years have been mostly limited to highly secretive societies.

Because sexuality is so powerful at the personal level, the ways we view our bodies, what we do with our bodies, and who has the power to decide both, have intensely political implications. According to Riane Eisler,

How we image the relations between bodies, and most critically, how we experience these relationships in our own bodies—is not only a metaphor for politics in the most basic sense of the way power is defined and exercised. It is how we first unconsciously learn, and continually reenact, the way our human bodies are supposed to relate in all relationships, in both what has been traditionally defined as the public and private spheres. (Eisler, p. 164)

Because sexual activities promise to offer individuals unmediated access to transcendent states, such activity has been spiritually denigrated in order to force people to seek intermediaries to help them access the Divine. Sex, (as well as the body in general) is taught to be sinful, lustful, and unholy.

Such negative programming around sex only fostered the sense of fragmentation in any individual who happened to enjoy sex and experience transcendence in the

process. Such a person would be forced to wonder whether to trust themselves, or those in authority who condemned these experiences. Undoubtedly, many people simply buried these contradictory and positive findings about sex in their subconscious, or otherwise punished themselves.

Today, many people reject the singular viewpoint of sex as a dangerous force to be avoided and controlled. This questioning of the role of sex is concurrent with major questioning of all patriarchal and authoritative value systems in Western society. People are learning about sex-positive experiences and interpretations, and seeking to be their own judge about their sexuality. As such people choose to reconcile their sexuality with other parts of their body/mind experience, integration, rather than dis-integration, will occur.

Study of Sexuality as Omitted in Transpersonal Psychology

Charles Tart

Charles Tart, a pioneer in consciousness research, addresses the topic of sexuality as a path of transcendence. He does admit, “Consciousness during orgasm can be a discreet state quite separable in more than a quantitative way from the sexual state of consciousness preceding it.” (Tart, 1989, p. 203) He does not however tend to feel that the sexual state itself is a valid pathway to transcendence, saying, instead, that due to the emotional attachments generated during sexual relating, “it may be difficult to learn aspects of enlightenment within the sexual state, because it is so exceptionally powerful.”

Tart does allow that sexual states may allow us to recognize issues of emotional process not so obvious in their original contexts. Perhaps if his view examined the

holotropic model more carefully, he would have come to the conclusion that orgasm can in fact lead to a transcendent state.

John White

In a major compendium of transpersonal thinking, sex and orgasm have been routinely. John White (1974) writes:

Transpersonal psychology is a major psychological approach to the study of man that aims at man's ultimate development as individuals and as a species. Its scope is far greater than simply promoting a return from unhealthiness to normality. Included in its study are a wide range of concerns: cosmic consciousness, transcendence of the self, ecstasy, peak experiences, self-actualization, universal values, maximum sensory awareness, and interpersonal encounter, spiritual disciplines, and the sacralization of everyday life. (p. 7)

Nowhere in this seminal work on consciousness are sex and orgasm mentioned, although EO does bring about many of the qualities referred to in this list above.

Recent transpersonal anthology

Similarly, in a more recent compendium, we find a plethora of topics, many of which might be considered outside mainstream thinking. Clinical issues, consciousness, development of consciousness via various pathways, ecology and global issues, the history of transpersonal psychology, lucid dreaming, meditation, philosophy, psychedelics, transpersonally oriented schools, relationship, near-death experiences, religion, science, somatics, and psychiatry are all discussed in this context. According to John E. Macke, in the Forward to a transpersonal anthology (Walsh and Vaughn, eds. 1993),

The transpersonal vision offers the possibility of a different future for humankind and other living creatures. Through a deeper exploration of ourselves and their worlds in which we participate, transpersonal psychology enables human beings to discover their inseparability from all life and their appropriate place in the great chain-of-being. Central to this unfolding awareness is the rediscovery of the power of ancient methods of achieving altered states of consciousness, such as meditation, yoga, Shamanic journeys, and the judicious use of psychedelic plants. New methods of self-exploration, such as the Grof holotropic breastwork method and modified forms of hypnosis, enable many people to experience realms of the unconscious and of the mythic and spiritual universes from which we have cut ourselves off. Transpersonal psychology certainly has therapeutic applications. But its greater focus is upon healing, transformation, personal growth, and spiritual opening.

Again, while authors plentifully discuss consciousness-generating activities in both holotropic and chain-of-being models of transcendence, no author mentions the subjects of sex or orgasm.

The results above represent, to date, the norm. EO is routinely excluded in literature on transpersonal psychology. There are several possible reasons for the omission of sexuality in both historical and contemporary writings on transcendence:

- (a) The study of sexuality is not considered important enough, perhaps because it is usually a very brief experience.
- (b) EO is not well known enough to be included
- (c) Patriarchal and socio-political powers-that-be have feared that inclusion of EO would be misleading, or otherwise disruptive, to the current status quo. (This will be discussed later.)

Other Pathways to Transcendence

Because one enters EO by expanding outward their experience of orgasm, EO is an ontologic state—one characterized not by knowing, but by a way of being. In that

state, people report a variety of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual experiences--some of which they claim bring them into a transcendent state.

Let us now turn our attention toward other practices that also claim to carry the practitioner into TSC. We will also begin by examining states that are said to be *transformative* rather than *transcendent*. Such states may be precursor to transcendence states.

The Imaginal Realm

The imaginal realm is another word for altered states of perception (or perhaps of perception of alternate realities). Shamans, gurus, and astral adventurers worldwide and throughout the course of history have practiced the art of traveling to other “dimensions” to access these other worlds or planes of reality. While such travel may at times lead to transcendence, at other times the experience is either an interesting adventure or an experience of transformation.

According to Grof, as we enter into the imaginal realms of holotropic states,

We are literally flooded with remarkable new information on a variety of subjects. We can reach profound psychological insights concerning our personal history, unconscious dynamics, emotional difficulties, and interpersonal problems. We can also experience extraordinary revelations concerning various aspects of nature and the cosmos that transcend our educational and intellectual background. By far the most interesting insights that become available in holotropic states revolve around philosophical, metaphysical, and spiritual issues. (Grof, 1998 p. 7)

A number of methods can be used to access the imaginal realm. These states can be induced in a number of ways: for example shamanic techniques, such as drumming, rattling, sounds of bells and gongs, chanting, rhythmic dancing, changes of breathing, and cultivation of special forms of awareness. Other access tools include extended social and

sensory isolation, fasting, sleep deprivation, and even drastic physical interventions such as bloodletting, powerful laxatives and purgatives, and infliction of severe pain. A particularly effective technology of the sacred has been ritual use of psychedelic plants and substances. (Grof, p. 7)

This description explains why sex magic—the practice of using the orgasmic state for declaring intentions and experiencing visions—has been so widely practiced in Tantra. By performing rituals of visualization, tantricas tap into the imaginal realms of holotropic states.

For example, in one such Tantric Buddhist practice, spiritual consorts perform a mediation preceding their practice of sexual yoga:

Envision the beings of the three realms [subterranean, terrestrial, celestial] and the mandala and all of them as enjoying great bliss. Having experienced bliss, the heroes and heroines of the three outer realms dissolve...then, having entered the central channel between the eyebrows, the elixir descends, pervading the four chakras. Then oneself and the Vajravaraḥi melt in brand bliss. (Shaw, 1992, p. 164)

Next, the yogi and yogini themselves enter into the sacrifice:

At the place where the tops of the sexual organs touch, or ‘kiss’ in Tantric metaphor, the drops of sexual fluid mix and intermingle, creating the ultimate liberation... The drops of sexual fluid intermingle and melt, inaugurating each partner’s successful gathering of the inner winds into the central psychic channel... Regardless of where the inner hearth is realized, the real fire is understood to be the higher form of consciousness that devours any lesser forms that are fed into it or sacrificed for its sake. (p. 165)

The profound intensification of the imaginative faculty in Tantric states explains why fantasies in the EO states seem so real.

Dream States

In the normal dreaming state, one normally has neither transcendent experiences or experiences in which the body is significantly involved. However, our observations about ordinary dreaming states may reflect our lack of knowledge more than an accurate understanding.

James Hillman, a world-famous Jungian psychologist, writes in his commentary on Gopi Krishna's *Kundalini*, of the connection between sexual states and dream states:

There is probably a great deal more to the interrelation of dreaming and *sexual excitation* than we today understand.... Recent research shows penile erections synchronous with dreams. In general, during periods of dreaming there is erection; during periods of non-dreaming, there is detumescence. The experimenters speculate that the same biological system may be responsible for both activities. We would call this system the psychoid level. (Jung, 1969a)

Lucid dreaming on the other hand takes one into a holotropic state of consciousness. This variety of dreaming is said to offer an opportunity for people to access the holographic model of knowing. The lucid dreamer is aware that he or she is dreaming—in a sense, wakes up inside the dream. They are both sleeping and yet conscious while dreaming. According to Tarthang Tulku, a well-known Tibetan sage, the lucid dream is beneficial for changing attitudes, becoming more flexible, and bringing forward new dimensions of reality. (Wolf, 1994, p. 191)

Tibetans have long practiced Dream Yoga in order to learn how to dream anything into existence in their dreams. This ability also taught them to realize the illusory nature of both the waking and dreaming worlds.

The practice of lucid dreaming requires an ability to activate one's brain to support a heightened degree of periods of REM (Rapid Eye Movement), an activity, without which the lucid state cannot be supported. (Wolf, p. 194)

Wolf posits that lucid dreams are “time resolved holograms...a series of holograms following each other as the dream unfolds.” (p.195) Holograms can produce either virtual or real images. Ordinary dreams produce what are analogous to virtual images, which are images that arise from another image (rather than from the object itself), and which therefore seem somewhat blurry, and not as “real”. Virtual images cannot be focused.

Real images are sharp and capable of being focused. Wolf feels lucid dreams are made from converging real images of the hologram, which is why they seem so real and three-dimensional. Thus, during these dreams, “the sense of presence is focused. One is aware of the distinction between self and the dream environment. ...One can be awake in the dream experience.” (Wolf, p. 215)

Lucid dreams enable a person to enter the holotropic state and explore data not normally available in normal waking consciousness. One can ask such questions as to the true nature of one’s identity, one’s purpose in life, and so on. In this state, access to synchronicities will provide new interpretations to events in our daily life.

Arnold Mindell, working in the area of dreams and their relation to physical bodily symptoms, developed the concept of the *dreambody*. This is both a dream and a body at the same time. Wolf notes that the dreambody can be related to the physical body as the probability field has to the particle. (Footnote 4)

If this is true, then, since the dreambody is the field that tends to manifest as the body according to intents and purposes, it would follow that intent and purpose is also at work in the field of all physical matter. Practices known as “waking dreaming” encourage

the person, in a waking state, to examine dreams and reconcile information and meaning found there with realities in normal waking life.

Based on what has been said about it in the literature, and from anecdotal reports, the EO state may have many similarities to the description of the lucid dream state. At times, the practitioner will feel that he or she is both in another world, very different from normal waking states, and yet directing a creative fantasy or exploring the universe very consciously and purposefully.

Sex and Love

Like birth and death, the powerful and universal experience of sex can be an access point into holotropic states. In the moment of orgasm one's body prepares to create new life and perpetuate one's being throughout time. If birth and death yield such profound entries into holotropic states, it makes sense that "a powerful sexual orgasm in women, as well as men, can occasionally take the form of psychospiritual rebirth." (Grof, p.136) Grof notes that "extended sexual arousal [can] trigger also a mystical experience. In the course of [a] ritual event, partners can transcend their everyday identities... and experience a divine union with each other and with the cosmic source." (p. 153)

Literature on the transcendent nature of "ordinary" sex abounds. Some authors mention orgasm as a moment of TSC; other literature, like that celebrating romantic love as a path to transcendence, never mention orgasm.

George Leonard, for example, waxes rhapsodic about "erotic love" without any mention of orgasm.

For me the erotic encounter is ecstatic in the dictionary sense of the word. It takes me out of my set position, my stasis. It permits me the unique freedom of

stripping away every mask, every façade that I usually present to the world, and of existing for a while in that state of pure being where there is no expectation and no judgment. ... There are no sexual problems; there is no sexual technique. I am as a god; whatever happens.... To try to force arousal during a dry spell is to shut out the cloudbursts of passion that in all likelihood will follow. For even during the lull of physical passion, the light of our joining is in my lover's eyes. Under every conceivable sky, we remain connected—to one another and to all things. (Leonard, 1989, pp. 79-81)

While this encounter is erotic and includes sex, Leonard feels our societal definition of sex is too small a word to describe the erotic encounter in its fullness and power. Thus, he hopes someday soon to celebrate the end of sex [as it is presently societally defined], and its replacement with the beginnings of a radically repersonalized, fully erotic society.

At its finest, Leonard sees this erotic, loving state as “a powerful collective consensual reality which will eventually join us in a family as wide as all humankind that can laugh together, weep together, and share the common ecstasy.” (Leonard, pp. 79-81)

Near Death Experiences

Near-death experiences, or NDEs, have long been known to create transcendent experiences. Wolf believes that an NDE may be a type of exceptionally powerful lucid dream. He points out that in an NDE the experience is so profound that NDErs (those who have had near death experiences) unanimously report that while they know the experience was an inner experience, it was not a dream. They describe that the dream as more real than present. (Wolf, p. 255)

In NDE, a person almost dies; in fact, often, the person is said to have died, and to have subsequently returned from the dead. While the causes of near-death may range from a medical illness or accident to a Kundalini awakening, the outcomes of those

reporting NDEs remain quite similar. (Ring, 1984, pp. 45, 231) A significant percentage of people returning from NDE report having undergone such diverse experiences as seeing their lives flash before them in a matter of seconds, entrance down a tunnel, seeing a light at the other end, and hearing noises like a buzzing or the sound of wind. At the end of the tunnel, they have often met a loving being who was willing to talk to them. Often, in that conversation, the person was encouraged to return to life, to live out his or her destiny.

Ring, a well-known researcher of NDEs, notes:

The NDE is essentially a spiritual experience that serves as a catalyst for spiritual awakening and development. Moreover, the spiritual development that unfolds following an NDE tends to take a particular form. Finally, as a by-product of this spiritual development, NDErs tend to manifest a variety of psychic abilities afterward that are an inherent part of their transformation. (Ring, p.51)

Essentially, Ring noticed that people who have successfully integrated this experience into their lives have transformed their consciousness and often their lives profoundly. They are no longer the person they were before the NDE. As a result of leaving their bodies, and going into the light, they have returned as people who are quite different in orientation and priorities. These people display many of the characteristics of enlightened beings described by R.M. Bucke in *Cosmic Consciousness*.

John White (1974) portrays a type of person called *Homo Noeticus*, who has the following characteristics:

- Their changed psychology is based on expression on feeling, not suppression
- Their motivation is cooperative and loving, not competitive and aggressive
- Their logic is multilevel/integrated/simultaneous, not linear/sequential/either or

- Their sense of identity is embracing-collective, not isolated-individual
- Their psychic abilities are used for benevolent and ethical purposes, not harmful and immoral ones
- The conventional ways of society don't satisfy them.
- The search for new ways of living and new institutions concerns them
- They seek a culture founded on a higher consciousness based on love and wisdom, a culture that fulfills the perennial philosophy.

Ring admits that this description “accords pretty well with the portrait he has drawn for NDErs, especially those who seem to have integrated their experience most successfully.” (Ring, p. 256)

According to the body-as-portal representation, NDEs might appear to be an extreme situation in which a person becomes disembodied as they undergo a transcendent experience. However, not everyone shares this body-as-portal NDE viewpoint. While NDEs seem to logically represent an experience of leaving the body due to the approach of death, they may be an exceptionally powerful entry into a holotropic state. Ring also feels that what occurs during an NDE “has inherently nothing to do with death or with the transition to death.” (Bache, 2000, p.111)

Bache, a professor of religion who has worked closely with Grof's methodologies for many years, argues that NDEs represent another instance of entry into an ontological, perinatal domain entry into an ontological, perinatal domain. Bache agrees with Ring, and says “nearly dying is but a trigger that catapults persons with some consistency into higher states of consciousness that can also be cultivated through any number of consciousness expanding techniques.” (p. 111) He further observes:

Near-death episodes are short, intense, and usually unrepeated immersions into states of consciousness that lie far beyond sensory consciousness. They appear to give us snapshots of another world... A deep NDE is an exceptional state of awareness marked by intense hyperclarity. NDErs take in much more information in a period of time than is possible in an ordinary state of consciousness.... Other NDErs ...have experiences that were equally legitimate to [theirs] but that are not metaphysically compatible with their own. (Bache, pp. 106-8).

This implies that these people are experiencing not some absolute level of higher reality, but their own holotropic, perinatal domain, as it has been shaped by their own personal experiences. In keeping with the holographic nature of this domain, people with multiple NDEs, admittedly rare occurrences, tend to pick up in the following experience where they left off in the preceding one. (pp. 107-8) The NDE, then, is providing access into the transpersonal domain. Its intensity determines the quality of experience for the NDEr.

Frightening occurrences are relatively rare, accounting for only one percent of all reported cases. The passage through to transcendence occurs most frequently. "When someone experiences a transcendent NDE, they have been catapulted through the labyrinth [of the perinatal level] and end up beyond it." (Bache, p. 112)

Of special note for Bache are the implications for the collective realm of the transpersonal consciousness. He believes that when people have powerful holotropic experiences such as NDEs that take them deeper into the perinatal realm (as opposed to through this realm to the transpersonal) individuals open to *the species-mind*. (Footnote 5)

Sacred Trance States

Because the former grew out of the latter, two types of trance states will be reviewed here together: Holotropic Breathwork and LSD psychotherapy. Holotropic breathwork is a powerful method that Stanislav Grof developed when LSD psychotherapy became illegal in the United States. It is a powerful method for evoking nonordinary states of consciousness without the use of psychedelic substances. In Holotropic Breathwork, participants engage in deeper breathing and bodywork while listening to emotionally evocative loud music, in order to activate and engage the deep psyche.

Bache, who has worked extensively with both of these practices, lumps the two together as two forms of holotropic states, concluding, with Grof, that “The triggers used to activate the deep psyche differ, but the dynamics and potentials that emerge are the same, and reflect the same innate structures and capacities of consciousness.” (Bache, p. 9)

Bache clearly describes the architecture of the states produced by LSD psychotherapy and Holotropic breathwork in the language of holographic information processing:

In both methods the aim is to powerfully stimulate that unconsciousness, to amplify its patterns bringing them fully into conscious awareness, and then to engage them fully, experiencing completely whatever the patterns are. ... The same patterns will keep showing up in a variety of forms until a climax of expression is reached—some inner gestalt is consciously realized or integrated, and the psyche is then free to flow into more expansive forms of awareness. If the process is repeated many times, deeper and more elemental patterns begin to emerge. However basic or irreducible these patterns are, they can be dissolved by undefended engagement. Once they are dissolved, new worlds of experience will open. (Bache, p.9)

According to both Grof and Bache, then, one goes into the holotropic state, and while there, allows whatever material to arise that wants to arise. The person's own inner radar will identify the personal issues appropriate for that person to investigate. Over time, as issues are identified, experienced, and resolved, healings at the individual and collective karmic level can take place.

Bache firmly emphasized the mind-and-body nature of such experiences.

Though I have been speaking of [these states] as states of *consciousness*, it is important to emphasize that they are also states of *body*. These states profoundly impact one's physical and subtle energy systems, for wherever one's mind goes, the body necessarily follows. Furthermore, to give the mind primacy here may be putting the car before the horse, for these states are being elicited through physical mechanisms—either ingesting a psychoactive substance or hyperventilating for a long period of time. In both instances, it is the body, which holds the key that opens the treasure chest of the mind. Therefore, one could say that for these methods the rule is—where one's body goes, one's mind necessarily follows. While I will continue to use the vocabulary of consciousness...this is not a complete account.... A more complete account would give greater attention to the fact that these states at every stage are being negotiated and integrated somatically as well as mentally. It is important to keep this fact in front of us at all times if we are to avoid interpreting psychedelic therapy in terms that emphasize the dynamics of...leaving the body behind and fleeing into the transcendent divine rather than waking up inside the immanent divine. (Bache, pp. 13-14)

Bache believes that these experiences, like NDEs, when explored over time not only help to heal the individual psyche, but the planetary one as well. As will be examined in chapter five, this is a promising field of endeavor for use of these trance states.

Bache wonders:

If matter has new properties when pushed far beyond its equilibrium state, might not the same be true of mind? I want to suggest that the global eco-crisis may push the field of the species-mind so hard that it too may draw forth new structures from itself, structures that reflect inherent capacities for higher degrees of self-organization. ... If this were to happen, synergistic tendencies that are latent within the species-mind may become manifest...Synchronicities may increase. Realities that are unconscious to all but a few may become available to many. The ground of "common sense" may shift as the floor of the collective unconsciousness rises to awareness. (Bache, p. 243)

Meditation

There are forms of meditation, which, while they might necessarily involve the body, do not focus on the involvement of the body as a core element of the experience. As already stated, Wilber champions meditation as the major way to engage in transpersonal experiences.

Meditation is normally viewed as an experience of successively using the mind to enter the deeper levels of Mind. This strategy implies a lessening association with the duality associated with the body. Still, even in traditional Zen mediation (*Zazen*), physical experiences occur.

Flashes of visions (or *makyo*, as this is labeled in *Zazen*), body numbness, involuntary movements and jerks, reduced sexual interest (or spontaneous sexual arousal), and reduced appetite area all responses that some people experience in meditation which may well correlate with increased endorphin levels. The released opiates produced are sending messages to the brain that are interpreted as positive and one experiences spontaneous pleasure and contentment with what is. (Greenwell, 1990, p 112)

And finally, in the end, what happens to the enlightened Zen meditator? An old saying tells us, “Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.” No one is less present (or diminished) on the physical plane.

However, not all mediation is the same. Some forms of mediation do intentionally engage the body.

In Taoist Nei Tan, for example, *Wu Chi* is considered the heavenly energy. When *Wu Chi*, or openness, becomes spirit, spirit becomes *Chi*, and *Chi* becomes form. These Taoists believed that by accessing the heavenly realm, one could learn to achieve immortality, which is a purer and holier place, attained either after death, or by traveling to a dimension impervious to profane vibrations. To attain this immortality, the impure

aspects of one's body, Chi, and consciousness must be brought under control and awakened to its heavenly connections.

Shen (consciousness, spirit, thoughts, and emotions—considered to be Heaven) is viewed in this system as residing in the heart rather than the brain, and refers to the body, emotions, and spirit as well as to the organs and other systems of the body. In a holographic cosmology reminiscent of Saivism, *Shen* is also our original spirit, connected to Wu Chi as light rays are connected to the sun.

Activating the energy throughout the entire body via the Microcosmic Orbit described earlier performs the Wu Chi mediation. Energy is brought down from Heaven, through the Governor channel, and circulated throughout the body. It is an intense practice that fills the body with a radiant, glowing energy. (Chia, 1994, p. 426)

Adi Da (also known as Da Free John), another world-renowned spiritual adept, describes the heart as the waking, sleeping, and subtle states of consciousness, as well as being the state of deep sleep. The heart is synonymous with the Divine Being:

The heart is the seat of the three conventional states of egoic awareness” the waking state, associated with the left side of the psychic heart; the state of dreaming and subtle awareness, associated with the middle or psychic heart; and the state of deep sleep, associated root of consciousness and Eogity on the right side of the heart. ...Divine Self-Realization is associated with the opening of the primal psychophysical seat of Consciousness and attention in the right side of the heart. One who is awake as Consciousness (even in the Witness-position) becomes sensitive to the Current of Spiritual Energy associated with that location in the Chest, and he or she feels the mind, or attention, falling to its point of location there. (Da Free John, p. 704)

Adi Da, after discussing many mediation practices, reveals in his most advanced practices, the yoga of non-meditation. Having united the luminous awareness of mediation with the Divine Love-Bliss, which appeared spontaneously, the realizer is

permanently established in the Divine Domain. (This achievement, known as *Divine Translation*, may or may not come in one lifetime of practice.)

The way of the Heart is not especially a matter of perceiving the visible divine star (as an apparently objective vision). Rather, it is fundamentally a matter of relaxing (or relinquishing) the body-mind and all of its conditional relations into “the Bright”...This *spontaneously* (and not strategically) produces the signs of divine transfiguration...and the utter transcendence of the tendency to contract, rather than to shine. (Da Free John, p. 657) [Capital letters in the original text have been removed for easier reading]

Thus, while some forms of meditation encourage one to “leave their body” in order to know God, other forms allow for physical energy and other physical awareness to be a part of the transcendent experience.

Subud

The Subud practices of Indonesia teach that for each person, enlightenment will be a different experience. Followers gather together to practice the *latihan*, which roughly translated, means training or exercise, their unique forms of worship. In the gathering rooms, some will dance, whirl, shake, rattle or roll, while others may choose to just sit there. According to Roseanna Sawrey-Cookson (1995),

Experiences in the *latihan* vary enormously. It is different for everyone, and for each person at different times. In the beginning it usually takes the form of physical movement and sounds. This is the normal outer manifestation of the touch of the Power of God, similar to the manner in which a musical instrument will sound and vibrate when played by a human being. As time goes on the experiences often become subtler and more refined. *Latihan* is known as a powerful process for awakening a strong powerful energy said to be comparable to the kundalini.

Kundalini Awakening

The kundalini is a subtle energy, not directly measurable in ordinary physical terms. Nonetheless, in recent years there have been concerted efforts to define and measure the kundalini scientifically. The Kundalini Research Foundation, founded by the Indian mystic Gopi Krishna, has spearheaded a great body of such research.

They report that

The kundalini paradigm hypothesizes that the operation of a psychosomatic evolutionary mechanism in the human frame, sometimes called *kundalini*, is responsible for genius, creative expression, psychical perception, and other paranormal phenomena, when its workings are benign, and insanity when the mechanism goes awry. (Kundalini Research Foundation, 2000)

As mentioned earlier, some Tantric texts assert that the kundalini is best awakened with Tantric sex practices. Other Yogas, such as Siddha yoga, seek to redirect the kundalini away from sexual practices, especially excessive ones. They feel the kundalini is best awakened by the grace of a kundalini-activated guru.

No one has directly measured or quantified the kundalini, so, as of yet, all we have are an impressive storehouse of theoretical constructs and anecdotal evidence. Regardless of the beliefs about how to raise this energy, all are clear that when this energy is raised, the person will potentially undergo any number of transcendent experiences.

Often, in what is known as a *full-body awakening*, the kundalini travels from its supposed base in the spine up the spine and into the crown of the head, piercing the crown chakra. In such cases, one tastes enlightenment so powerful that Ken Ring, the noted researcher of near-death experiences, lists Kundalini awakening as a valid cause of NDE.

In full kundalini awakenings, *what* is experienced is significantly similar to what many NDErs report from their experiences. And more than that: The aftereffects of these deep kundalini awakenings seem to lead to individual transformations and personal world views essentially indistinguishable from those found in NDErs. (Ring, 1994, p. 231)

Gopi Krishna was an Indian not associated with any specific Indian spiritual lineage, who one day in 1937 while meditating, underwent a full kundalini awakening. “My heart began to beat wildly...I felt myself wavering...Suddenly, with a roar like that of a waterfall, I felt a stream of liquid light entering my brain through my spinal chord” (Krishna, 1967, p 12) Taken by surprise, Krishna retains intense concentration on the experience:

The illumination grew brighter and brighter, the roaring louder. I experienced a rocking sensation and then felt myself slipping out of my body, entirely enveloped by a halo of light. It is impossible to describe the experience accurately. I felt the point of consciousness that was myself, growing wider, surrounded by the waves of light. It grew wider and wider, spreading outward while the body, normally the immediate object of its perception, appeared to have receded into the distance until I became entirely unconscious of it. I was now all consciousness, without any outline, without any idea of a corporeal appendage, without any feeling or sensation coming from the senses, immersed in a sea of light simultaneously conscious and aware of every point, spread out, as it were, in all directions without any barrier or material obstruction. I was no longer myself, or to be more accurate, no longer as I knew myself to be, a small point of awareness confined in a body, but instead was a vast circle of consciousness in which the body was but a point, bathed in light and in a state of exaltation impossible to describe. After some time, the duration of which I could not judge, the circle began to narrow down; I felt myself contracting, becoming smaller and smaller, until I again became dimly conscious of my body, then more clearly.

In this work, Krishna strongly emphasizes the need to include the body in the process of the awakening. James Hillman, a noted Jungian psychologist, comments on Krishna’s comments throughout Gopi Krishna’s volume. Hillman comments, “Alteration of consciousness does not leave the body out. ...If the body is the carrier of consciousness, then it, too, must be altered.” (Krishna, 1967,

p. 97) Gopi Krishna initially responded to these physical alterations with fear (in a way that reminds us of a possible trip through the perinatal matrix described so eloquently by Grof.) Hillman continues,

It seems as if there is a deep animal fear, a kind of biological resistance, to these changes, as if the body would rather not leave the paths of its instinctual ancestry.... Perhaps [Krishna's symptoms] have to do with the fear of change and thus represents the conflicts caused by the new man coming into the old vessel of the body. (p. 97)

Hillman continues in his comments.

A major change in the body concerns sexuality. A reorganization of the sexual impulse would seem required for every transition in planes of consciousness. Initiation rites at puberty, and marriage rites, as well as vows of chastity...all point to the importance of sexual changes in connection with changes in states of being. (p. 98)

Hillman's point out that holy men have long been known not for their lesser sexual powers but for their greater ones.

The 'holy man' as 'greater personality' implies the endowment of greater sexuality; therefore, the transformation of it raises all sorts of problems, answers to which have been formulated in various esoteric techniques and disciplines, West and East, of which chastity and the *ritual copulation of the Tantric maithuna* would be opposite poles of the same archetypal formulation. (p. 99)

The transformative power of sexuality lies on one's ability to take it beyond the level of an ego-centered experience.

It is not my sex and my orgasm; it is a force that flows through me, a force of play, joy, and creation. By separating the personal out of it, one can listen to it, obey or deny it, note its fluctuations and intentions—all of which means relating to it objectively. (p. 99)

Gopi Krishna reports that the kundalini, in normal people, rises slowly, from generation, such that people in the future embody ever more of its powers. However, when the kundalini is roused rapidly,

It reacts strongly on the parent organism, effecting...a marvelous transformation of the nervous system and the brain, resulting in the manifestation of a superior type of consciousness, which will be the

common inheritance of man in the distant future. This mechanism, known as Kundalini, is the real cause of all genuine spiritual and psychic phenomena, the biological basis of evolution and development of personality, the secret origin of all esoteric and occult doctrines, the master key to the unsolved mystery of creation, the inexhaustible source of philosophy, art and science, and the fountainhead of all religious faiths, past, present, and future. (p. 176)

For Krishna, wise and learned men have for millennia erred in feeling that the ascent to higher planes of consciousness can be separated from bodily experience. Ultimately, while he does not say so in these words, Krishna's view of kundalini portrays a holotropic state and a holographic universe. He asks whether man will ever be able to toggle between the two states of consciousness:

The transcendental state may be nothing more than a fleeting glimpse of a tiny fragment of the superconscious world illumined by the rays of a stupendous unvisualisable sun in the same manner as with our normal vision we see but a tiny portion of the gigantic physical universe around us. Since the body is the vehicle and the mind the product of the radiation filtering through it, animating its countless cells like a living electric current, vivifying the sensitive brain matter to a far greater pitch of vital activity than any other region, the whole machine can exhibit only a limited range of consciousness depending on the capacity of the brain and the efficiency of various organs and parts composing it.

Because of the drastic restrictions laid on his sensual equipment and the extremely narrow bounds of his mental orbit, the average man...is utterly unable to form even dimly a conception of a deathless, incorporeal conscious Energy of infinite volume, penetrative power, and mobility.... The question to be answered is whether this transition from one sphere of consciousness to another can be affected and whether there are any authentic instances of it during recent times. (p. 128)

Krishna emphatically argues that the answer is yes, and the techniques are to be found in reading the esoteric literature and manuals of yoga. Almost all the methods for gained visionary experience or supersensory perception—concentration, breathing exercises, posture, prayer, fasting, ascetism, and the like—affect both the organic frame and the mind.” (p.130) Krishna's life work

culminated in a search for the biological processes by which the change can be brought about.

For Krishna, as well as others (such as Muktananda, 1983, and Ring, 1994) writing about the experience of kundalini, reference is often made to the experience of being born again as a result of the awakening.

Hillman comments on Krishna,
The intensive prolonged introversion of one's libido, the devoted love which one lavishes upon one's own psychic life, the joyful acceptance of all biological desire and sexual excitation as belonging to and furthering the process going on in the psychic, imaginative world, endowing one's own genitals with the sanctity of a God—all this is meant by the union of crown and seed. The actual moment of the inner conjunction is said to be comparable to orgasm. From this comes the divine child, the second birth of the new man. (p. 178, Kundalini)

Rosalyn Bruyere says, at a personal level,

Whether it is within the act of mergence in sexuality, or by means of the rising kundalini of sexual initiation, the purpose of first chakra and first chakra energies is awareness—awareness not only of our own life force as it moves through us, but an awareness of our connection to the Force that creates and maintains life throughout the entire universe. As the chakra that allows us this awareness, this first center is the main chakra in which our karmic journey begins...As the energies move up from the feet throughout the kundalini center and up the spine, it is this center that determines whether or not we can stay conscious long enough to understand the point—the lesson—of whatever is occurring.

Until this kundalini center is more open, some of the changes we want cannot be manifested because we simply run out of energy. How much energy we have affects how well we can change, how well we can learn our karmic lessons, how quickly and effectively we can move through our karmic patterns and bring our souls ever closer to their evolutionary goal. (Bruyere, 1991, p 178)

Gopi Krishna reflects the sentiments of many in voicing his hopes for a worldwide level of consciousness transformation. In his view, this will arise once technologies for deliberate, widespread raising of the kundalini energy is understood. The consequences of this development will be powerful.

The knowledge of this mighty mechanism of *kundalini*, and of the expanded states of consciousness developed by it, brings us to the threshold of other momentous discoveries of life and mind. This stupendous nature of the world of consciousness that lies hidden from us in the normal state becomes at once perceptible. This leads to a reappraisal of the cosmos. (Krishna, 1984, p.177)
Krishna believes this awakening worldwide will happen.

It is to be gained, not in a hypothetical heaven, but here on earth, in the organic frame of man. It is the sublime state of beatitude that is promised in every holy scripture of mankind.” (Krishna, 1984, p. 197-8) In this future, even the ideas of “Resurrection”, “Liberation”, and “Salvation” will find fulfillment in a dramatic way. What we now experience or know of clairvoyance, astral projection, telepathy, premonition, or prophesy, are but faint glimpses of a future enormously extended state of consciousness. (p. 198)

There is yet another reason, then, why the kundalini phenomenon may be of great interest. The kundalini is widely recognized as an evolutionary force. To the extent that the kundalini is concomitant with EO practices, then we might readily assume that the practice of EO also has the potential to be an evolutionary, as well as a transcendent, pathway. This possibility will be further explored in chapter five.

Three Paradigms of Spiritual Psychology

The paradigms undergirding three spiritual systems’ assumptions about God, mind, and body demonstrate how these systems approach transcendence. Comparing and contrasting key components of these paradigms illuminates where the true home of EO lies. Since the paradigms determine the associated “correct” attitudes one should hold

about the body, mind, and transcendence, we will also look at the psychological ramifications of each system.

For each of the paradigms representing these spiritual systems—Christian Theism, Acosmism, and Holotropism—we will examine an appropriate metaphor, and viewpoints concerning God and man; interpersonality (how individuals relate to each other); man and woman; consciousness and matter; present and future orientation; the nature of transcendence; therapeutic implications, and global/social implications.

The Theistic Paradigm

Theism is the belief that the world is an extremely complex (though one governed by laws) object created by a Being external to its creation, and that that Being (God) continues to take an interest in His creation.

Christian theism is based on dualities between God and Self, and between God and Creation. In the Christian-doctrine system, humans can only be “saved” by faith, but can never be spiritual beings until death offers a chance at heaven. Under the Christian theistic paradigm transcendence is certainly not something that can happen in an ecstatic experience, or by accident, as in an NDE.

Metaphor

- The watch (as a mechanistic, created entity)

God vs. man

- God, and only God, is divine; man can never be divine (because the Creator is separate from His creation)
- At best, man can save himself from eternal damnation by accepting Jesus as his savior, and being “born again”, though he will never be divine while in the flesh

Person to person

- An individual is fundamentally separate from others and therefore always must build bridges to cover the gaps in communication caused by separateness
- It is nearly inevitable that this separateness will cause power struggles in situations of intimacy

Man vs. woman

- In the chain-of-being, men are “closer to God” than women; this tends to engender chauvinistic attitudes, behavior, and social structures

Consciousness vs. matter

- Consciousness is primary
- Bodies are less sacred than the mind (mind is above matter in the chain-of-being)
- Sexuality is sinful unless done for purposes of procreation (this is not a quality of theism *per se*, but tends to prevail in Christian theism)
- Attention on the body (especially pleasurable) will lead a person away from spirituality

Future vs. present orientation

- Because the next life is viewed as more important than this one, goals are more important than the journey taken to reach them
- Real gratification is therefore something to be experienced in the future, only if life has been lived according to a set of rules (which in most Christian systems is virtually impossible).

Transcendence

- This life is not the real one and not as important as the one associated with the afterlife (which will, of course, be trillions of years longer).

Therapeutic implications

- People must heal the “sin” that necessarily results from being born into a mortal, physical body, and that was inherited from the original sin performed in the Garden of Eden.
- In Christian theism, therapy cannot bring one to an authentic transpersonal experience. Therapy therefore is utilized to heal secular problems, such as those caused by the inevitable power struggle that results from us as individuals being essentially separate from others. Conventional Western insight or analysis-oriented approaches apply.
- Since knowledge is based on cause and effect, one looks for historical causes to solve present problems.

Global/social impact

- The Earth is matter, and as such, subservient to God and Mankind; it is socially acceptable to assert dominion over it, and even destroy it.

Clearly, in this paradigm, EO will not thrive. First, EO does not fit a chain-of-being model of transcendence. Second, the literature and anecdotal reports on EO suggest that its practitioners can actually reach the Divine (which is inimical to theistic thought). Theism tends to produce hierarchical social and political systems in which those at the top believe they benefit from suppressing this type of information. EO would be viewed as a distraction from spiritual pursuits, if not actually sinful.

The Acosmic Paradigm

According to Wilber (Wilber, 1982), “The Perennial Philosophy has as its core the notion of *advaita*.” (p. 249) Advaita is part of a belief system known as *acosmism*, which has been defined as follows:

Acosmism... denies the reality of the universe, seeing it as ultimately illusory, (the suffix "a-" in Greek meaning negation; like "un-" in English), and only the infinite Unmanifest Absolute as Real. This philosophy begins with the recognition that there is only one Reality, which is infinite, non-dual, blissful, etc. Yet the phenomenal reality of which we are normally aware is none of these things; it is in fact just the opposite: i.e. dualistic, finite, full of suffering and pain, and so on. And since the Absolute is the only reality that means that everything that is not-Absolute cannot be real. Thus, according to this viewpoint, the phenomenal dualistic world is ultimately an illusion ("Maya" to use the technical Indian term), irrespective of the apparent reality it possesses at the mundane or empirical level.” (Kazlev, 1999a)

Wilber’s doctrines suggest that human males are closer to God than females.

These views are typical for the patriarchal religions, both Eastern and Western. The chain-of-being extends even to the sexes of our species:

Precisely because women tend to remain attached to personal and conventional relationships, they find it harder to reach the postconventional and universal stages in their own female developmentMen, being less personally attached to sociocentric relationships, find it easier to take a universal and postconventional “big picture” view, and thus more men make it into the universal, postconventional moral stages than do women....The central conclusion, in all cases, is thatthe communion self [which women typify] needs just as much work, sometimes more, as the agentic self [which men typify]...[in order to] stand open to the radiance of the Divine. Women, just like men, face years, often decades, of blood, sweat and tears, and toil, in order to claim their birthright.” (Rothberg and Kelly, 1998, pp. 353-4)

As in this statement, the implicit value judgment that men are closer to God than women is often found in religions which value mind over body. As has already been discussed, this viewpoint has dominated the non-Tantric Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism for millennia.

Note also the belief that transcendence can only occur after years, if not decades, of hard labor. TSC could not occur quickly, regularly, suddenly, or by accident, as with an NDE.

In order to find the appropriate psychological therapy, one must go to the appropriate level of the Spectrum to match the problem with the solution. Here, a problem occurring at the level of the personal shadow is not to be treated in the same way that a problem of mind/body integration is to be treated. And, the transpersonal bands are levels of awareness not to explore as much as to pass through on the way to the ultimate unmanifest reality.

The following implications emerge from this approach:

Metaphor

- The ladder

God vs. man

- Only the Absolute Unmanifest Reality is real; everything else is an illusion

Person vs. person

- People appear to be separate but this is an illusion

Man vs. woman

- In patriarchal instantiations of acosmism, attitudes value men over women. However, a chain-of-being is not a core attribute of acosmism, nor does the reality of a chain-of-being necessarily imply that men are “higher” than women.

Consciousness vs. matter

- Consciousness is primary
- The body is an illusion (mind is being fooled).
- Attention on the body as being real will lead the person away from pursuit of the optimal goal of transcending the body

Future vs. present orientation

- What is important is reaching the goal of pure Mind. The future is more important than the present.
- The goal is to achieve liberation from the cycles of death and rebirth, so that one doesn't have to keep returning to the physical plane.

Transcendence

- Transcendence takes years, if not lifetimes to achieve.
- The collective unconsciousness, and imaginal realm of the transpersonal bands, are not valuable repositories of information as they are points to be passed through on the way to pure Mind.

Therapeutic implications

- Use the appropriate Western approaches to psychotherapy to resolve perceived splits at the higher-level bands.
- Use meditation to resolve the perceived splits at the lower level bands.
- Work at the lower levels of the Spectrum (closer to pure Mind) are more ‘evolved.’
- Working at issues at other levels of the Spectrum cannot solve issues that occur at one level of the Spectrum; they are quite different issues.

Global/social impact

- Emphasis is on reaching highest level of Mind, rather than on integrating wisdom and taking it back into the world.
- Because the acosmic goal is to end the cycle of birth and re-birth, acosmic paths tend to emphasize the importance of personal enlightenment (or returning in the enlightened state until all are enlightened), rather than on improving life on earth.

Like Christian Theism, the acosmic paradigm is not a good match for EO. First, EO thrives in an environment in which the body is considered an integral part of a path to Divine realization. The body is not left behind in EO and holotropic models in general. Second, EO is a misfit in hierarchical models to TSC. Third, Western psychotherapeutic approaches are not congruent with EO because they do not embrace sexuality as integral to full realization of one’s potential. It is however, better suited to EO than the purely theistic Christian paradigm due to its acknowledgement of the existence of transpersonal bands and its assertion that humans can (at least in principle) achieve Divine realization.

The Holotropic Paradigm

Nei Tan Taoism and Tantra are the current homes of most of the practice of EO. They are respectively the pantheist and the panentheistic philosophies.

In both systems, one uses sexuality to enter a state of consciousness that unfolds over time. Experience in that state is the goal; when this process was undertaken, transcendence could ensue. We have found these body-as-involved states of consciousness to agree with Grof’s definition of holotropic states.

Since *holotropic* means “orienting towards wholeness”, it indicates a state of consciousness other than our ordinary waking consciousness—which is by nature linear and fragmented. In ordinary waking states, one could easily have a Theist or even Acosmic view, and still also access holotropic states. The holotropic model does not exclude the others. It adds on another dimension.

Following are psychological implications associated with this holotropic paradigm:

Metaphor

- The dance

God vs. man

- God is everywhere and/or in everything
- One does not need an intermediary to access the Divine.

Person vs. person

- We can perceive ourselves as both separate individuals and as connected to a greater whole

Man vs. woman

- Both men and women are equally divine.
- Each person contains within themselves both male and female qualities.

Consciousness vs. matter

- Consciousness, matter, and energy may be co-primary at the explicate level
- Everything in matter is part of the divine cosmos.
- A person’s body parts and body functions are also divine.
- The earth is experienced as sacred and another embodiment of the Divine.

Future vs. present orientation.

- Process is more important than outcome.
- Accordingly, there is strong present-moment orientation.

Transcendence

- One can experience their own divinity.
- Blissfulness, loss of ego, playfulness, lack of subject-object dualism, and forgetfulness of self are all elements on the spiritual path.
- One toggles between ordinary waking consciousness and holotropic consciousness with the goal of integration.
- Strong sense of identity developed as a result of repeated visits into holotropic states.

Therapeutic implications

- In holotropic states, events can be linked together by meaning rather than causality; many meanings can coexist simultaneously.

- One is freed from the history as a limiting factor for what is possible to be in one's imagination, and what is possible to be and achieve in the future.
- One develops a greater sense of power to change themselves and their surrounding environment.

Global/social Impact

- Individual healing experiences in holotropic states can affect, and change the very fabric of, the collective unconsciousness.
- Access to holotropic states can occur very quickly.
- Access to holotropic states is available to large numbers of people.
- Access to broader stores of information may give us the information we need to solve the problems created at the level of ordinary consciousness.
- Wisdom, knowledge, compassion, and understanding experienced in holotropic states are brought back to earth and put to use for social change.
- Emphasis is on grounding the information obtained in the holotropic states, so that we are not encouraged to escape the earth (though death), but to create Heaven on Earth.

Current Attitudes About Expanded Orgasm

Everywhere we can find calls invoking those of us who can save mankind from the numerous evils and perils of the late twentieth century to do so. We live in a time where many of the central tenets of our culture are undergoing major revision.

In a sense, the polarity between the unotropic (ladder) and holotropic (dance) approaches to consciousness reflects the very dialectic of male and female principles. As Thompson (1996b) points out,

The natural rhythm of the male is a phallic one of rise and fall.... The male embodies the mystery of death; his climactic phallus seems to say it all. We come out of matter, and we are simply many little pieces broken off from the One; as fragments we can only hope to lead a fragmentary life until the One takes us back in death. The Great Mother is no simple notion from primitive religion, but an idea in a complex mythology that become demythologized and secularized...but not changed. The female is the unlimited, eternal and continuing principle. (p.128)

Today, then, as many call for new ways and thought patterns to end the fragmentation and disconnection at level of life, we see renewed calls for a return of

feminine principles. These calls, by implication, are also calls for a renewed exploration of the types of consciousness inherent in embodied, holotropic states such as EO.

According to Thompson,

Unfortunately for all of us living in Christendom, ...Christianity has lost the specific knowledge of how to progress from illumination through initiation to enlightenment. The yogic techniques were only alive in other traditions, such as the Kabbalah, ... Tibetan Tantra, and Taoist alchemy. This loss is the tragedy of the West. (p. 240)

We are, however, now shifting from “an international culture of economically competing and warring industrial nation-states to a biospheric cultural ecology of noetic polities”. The rate of change for our contemporary cultural transformation is so rapid and so intense that it is occurring, not over millennia or even decades, but over the space of an individual’s lifetime.

Thompson writes,

The individual life and consciousness is now constitutive of the dynamic of planetary transformation. Our consciousness is now actually part of the phase-space of the new noetic polity...The quantum physicists have told us that this intimate relationship between mind and matter is true for the microcosm of elementary particles, so we should suspect that it is even more dynamically perceivably for the macrocosm of our global cultural evolution. (p. 244)

He further notes,

The project of our time is not one of simply moving from one elitist mathematical mentality to another—say from Newtonian mechanics to chaos dynamics—but of moving from one culture in to another. This new culture involves the recovery of the feminine; [and the] the deconstruction of the patriarchy. (pp. 261-2)

Thompson sees enlightenment as requiring a concomitant *physical* experience.

Thompson cautions that too many shamans and mystics promise a version of enlightenment that looks more like a thrill-seeking trip into the astral planes. Our fascination with the Internet and virtual reality corresponds to such trips into the Tibetan astral plane of the *Bardo*. He says,

I see this condition as a tragedy and not a farce because in all the great spiritual traditions of the world, there is the recognition that when we have become enlightened, the transformation occurs in the physical body.

In the process of enlightenment, the astral plane, that glorious world or imaginative perception and deception, is consumed in a light that dissolves all imagery and mediated forms of knowing. ...The New Jerusalem descends of its own transcendent power. In this consummation of evolution, the astral is totally taken up, absorbed, burned, and eliminated. (Thompson, 1996a, pp. 227-231)

Put simply, writers such as Thompson are saying that personal enlightenment will influence the condition of the planetary mind—and, that this enlightenment must have an essential physical component. This enlightenment is one that brings people in closer connection with the grounding of the planet, not farther into the reaches of the astral plane.

Bache finds similarly a need to return to a transcendence that is physically embodied. He feels that as we enter into the hylotropic/holotropic dance, and experience our individual karmic wounds, we heal the collective wounds of our planetary psyche. One cannot separate one's self from the ground of being from which he or she as an individual emerges. We are all both warp and weft of this collective fabric. We will evolve as a species by increasingly confronting our personal/collective wounds in holotropic states. In so doing, the species-mind as a whole will shift and resolve the karmic forces that threaten our very extinction if left unmet.

The more we experience consciousness and reality in holotropic states, the more difficult it will be to ignore their reality. Increasingly, the realm of the little separate ego will recognize as equally real the bigger sense in which the individual is connected to the whole of reality. As we do so, we will reincorporate more and more of what we learn in holotropic states and bring this learning with us into our daily lives.

Ultimately, as Bache (2000) puts it,

Our true challenge is to transform our embodied existence in such a way that this way may become our continuous conscious experience. If the goal is not to escape but greater Presence, then we see more clearly how important it is that there be a strong and well-developed individuality to anchor that Presence. Not an isolated individuality, as isolation is the very antithesis of the Divine Embrace, but a strong center of integrated awareness, a point where Creator and Creation meet. ... This [resulting] divine marriage of Individuality and Essential Ground, of the Masculine and Feminine, of samsara and nirvana, is the dawn that humanity's [current] dark night [of the soul] is driving toward. (pp. 277-278)

This is in direct contrast with the goal of transcendence discussed by Wilber in *Spectrum of Consciousness*. Here, transcendence is a directly personal affair; one achieves a peace of mind. Problems cease to be problems. One gets to the place where the question ceases to be asked. This place is none other than the dimensionless point called 'Now'. "It is in this Now-moment of active attention that the question—any question—ceases to arise—and just that is its ultimate solution. (p. 325) ... Transcendence does not return anything to the greater planetary consciousness. The final stage of transcendence is appears to be an apex of disembodiment.

Wilber concludes *Spectrum* with these final last-page thoughts:

To awaken from Now, is to suffer the death of the futureless present. "Now wonder that man is terrified." says Kierkegaard, "for between man and Truth lies mortification." Nevertheless, in the words of St. Gregory, "No one gets so much of God as the man who is thoroughly dead."

Yet this mortification, this Great Death, this total dying to the future by seeing Now-only, is not... "sudden death" at the end of one's life, but "instant death" all through it..."The time of death" remarks T.S. Eliot, "is every moment." Every moment is this moment, for there is no other, and hence in this moment we are always already suffering "instant death", and thus we are always already awakening to that which has no future...and which has no past"...Always, already suffering death. Now, we are always already living eternally. The search is always already over. (p.327)

The grand finale of enlightenment, then? In his final words, (source not credited, p. 327)

Misty rain on Mount Lu,
And waves surging on the River Che,
When you have not yet been there,

Many a regret you surely will have,
But once there and homeward you wend,
How matter of fact things look!
Misty rain on Mount Lu,
And waves surging on the River Che,

Let us examine a point of view about TSC more aligned with that of EO. Returning to empirical observation, R.M. Bucke, author of the empirically based *Cosmic Consciousness*, observed joy as a feature central to those who had experienced transcendence. He writes,

What do those who have passed through the experience [of cosmic consciousness] have to say about it? ...Guatuma says, 'It is the highest happiness.' ... Mahabharata obtains 'Brahmic bliss.' ...Beatrice: 'That which I was seeing seemed to me a smile of the universe, for my inebriation was entering thought the hearing and through the sight. O joy! O ineffable gladness! O life entire of love and of peace! O riches secure without longing... See what Behem says on the same subject: "Earthly language is entirely insufficient to describe what there is of joy, happiness, and loveliness contained in the inner wonders of God." ...Observe Elukhanam's oft-repeated exclamation: 'Joy, always joy' ... And again Edward Carpenter's, "All sorrow finished.' The deep ocean of joy within'. 'Being filled with joy'. 'Singing joy unending' Above all, bear in mind the testimony of Walt Whitman, testimony unvarying...covering forty years of life: 'Wandering, amazed and my own lightness and glee.' 'O the joy of my spirit—it is uncaged—it darts like lightning'. 'I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death.' ...And finally, 'The Ocean filled with joy—the atmosphere of all joy! Joy, joy in freedom, worship, love! Joy in the ecstasy of life: Enough to breathe! Joy, Joy! All over joy.' (Bucke, 1961, p 65)

Bucke, himself a beneficiary of Cosmic Consciousness, gives us his final words, as he concludes, in (approximately) the year 1899:

So will Cosmic Consciousness become more and more universal and appear earlier in the individual life until the race at large will possess this faculty. The same race and not the same; for a Cosmic Conscious race will not be the race which exists today, any more than the present race of men is the same race which existed prior to the evolution of self-consciousness. The simple truth is, that there has been on earth, "appearing at intervals", for thousands of years among ordinary men, the first faint beginnings of another race; walking the earth and breathing another air of which we know little or nothing, but which is, all the same, our

spiritual life, as its absence would be our spiritual death. This new race is in act of being born from us, and in the near future it will occupy and possess the earth. (pp. 317-318)

Does EO contribute to this rise of consciousness? We believe the answer to this question will be found to be an emphatic *yes*.

Summing Up: Background to the Study

This chapter has presented the background to the focus of this Dissertation: a pilot descriptive and comparative study of practitioners of Expanded Orgasm. While one focus of the Study was to examine the experience of EO practitioners, the purpose of this focus was to attempt to determine whether EO is a valid path to TSC.

Accordingly, we reviewed the nature of consciousness, of transcendence, and of pathways to transcendence. We found that there are two major models of what transcendence (and a path to it) is: the chain-of-being, unotropic model represented by Wilber, and the holotropic model, represented by Grof. While the models have something in common, they differ in terms of what they consider the nature of the transcendent state to be, what exactly it is that is transcended, and what is the role of the body/the physical in the experience of transcendence.

Anecdotal, but extensive, evidence suggests that EO is not only an authentic path to transcendence, but that it most likely fits into the holotropic model. However, careful studies (even observational) of EO, and of the transcendent nature of sexuality generally, have been avoided for social and cultural reasons.

We now turn examine the reports of actual practitioners of EO in an attempt to more fully comprehend the actual experience, and to help determine whether the home in

the transcendent models we have assigned it—based on anecdotal evidence—is in agreement with that deduced by actual reports of its practitioners.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODS

This research utilizes a descriptive study research design. Briefly, a convenience sample of participants was chosen. The sole criterion for inclusion as a study participant was self-selection based upon a description of Expanded Orgasm (this description appears in the complete survey in Appendix A). Those who became participants were subjected to a structured series of questions designed to elicit demographic information, as well as general characteristics about their practice of Expanded Orgasm. They were then asked to respond to a series of items designed to more fully describe the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual (“four dimensions”) characteristics and sequellae (immediate and long term) of their experience of EO.

In analyzing the results of the Study, we both described the general and four-dimension characteristics of practitioners, the range of sequellae in the four dimensions, and attempted to compare the experiences and sequellae amongst five dichotomous subsets of practitioners based on easily defined criteria.

This section describes the rationale for the study methodology, the research design (and its justification), the research hypotheses, the subjects, the survey instrument itself, and the procedures for data collection and analysis.

Methodology Rationale

A thorough literature search revealed no previous research on the topic of Expanded Orgasm, though the Tantric literature especially contains descriptions of expanded states of awareness associated with sexual energies or activities. However, these textual descriptions take the form of narratives or travelogues, and not formal research. The research in this dissertation is most comparable to studies of non-climactic

orgasm, such as extended and multiple orgasm. For example, Darling et al studied 805 female nurses, finding that 42.7% of the respondents had experienced multiple orgasms; this study was conducted via a questionnaire and examined both the prevalence of multiple orgasm in this group, and the differences between single- and multi-orgasmic women. A study of multi-orgasmic men by Dunn and Trost similarly employed a questionnaire and was therefore a descriptive study.

In theory, one could study the phenomenon of any type of orgasm, including expanded, in the following ways:

- *Descriptive*, utilizing a questionnaire to categorize the various contents and dimensions of the experience amongst those claiming to have the type of orgasm in question
- *Descriptive/comparative*, again using a questionnaire to look for basic differences in the contents or qualities of the experience based upon easily-definable subsets of the study population (men vs. women or those above and below a certain age, for example)
- *Comparative*, exploring the differences among various dimensions of the experience (or its sequellae) for those who do and do not experience the type of orgasm under study
- *Observational*, in which people claiming to be EO practitioners are observed (perhaps with physiologic monitoring, as has been done for climactic orgasm)

- *Interventional*, assessing the difference among various dimensions of the experience (or its sequellae) before and after learning to experience the type of orgasm under study

Besides the question of the type of study used, the methodology used to set up and perform the study is important.

- In a *pilot study*, a small sample is taken to determine the value and feasibility of a larger further study, as well as to help refine the hypotheses. A pilot study has the advantage of being somewhat easier to set up and execute, but may suffer from non-random sampling (especially when, is often the case, a convenience sample is used).
- In a *formal representative descriptive study*, statistically-valid methods are used to select a random sub-group of the entire population (in this case, the all people who actually do practice EO), and care is taken to avoid the major drawbacks to convenience sampling—the virtual certainty of skewed selection (the sample does not represent the whole population in ways that may impact the conclusions) and confounding variables (for example, an age range might be selected in a convenience sample that systematically skews the results)

This research uses a *descriptive/comparison* methodological approach to explore and tests the research hypotheses. In addition, the present Study uses a convenience sample and self-selection. A pure comparative study was not chosen because the author believed that EO stands in great need of definition. There is no accepted definition of Expanded Orgasm in the literature, or criteria for what constitutes a valid practitioner of EO.

In brief, the population of EO practitioners has never been described, nor has the contents of the EO experience, nor its relation to valid paths of transcendence. These should all be accomplished before undertaking any systematic comparison to other types of orgasms or to developing and measuring the effects of an interventional program. While observation could have been incorporated into this Study, it was elected to first

strive to map the territory, discover what kinds of experiences practitioners do in fact report, and attempt to define and compare the experiences of large sub-groups.

Observation can be incorporated into a further study.

There are several advantages to using the selected methodology. By using a convenience sample, the Study obviates the need for a control group. In addition, as a pilot study intended to describe EO as a phenomenon, it is not necessary to ensure that the entire population of EO practitioners is represented. In fact, without sufficiently understanding the range of EO experiences it would be impossible even to define the EO population. Finally, the research hypotheses are well served by studying a reasonably sized group of self-defined (according to criteria) practitioner group. The study instrument need not be validated because there is no additional, external “gold standard” of validation.

On the other hand, the present approach fails to overcome certain methodological problems. Because it utilizes a convenience sample, the applicability of the results to the larger universe of EO practitioners is in question. Study participants selected in a convenience sample may differ in important ways from other EO practitioners, and the methodology of the Study is unable to detect these differences (and therefore unable to predict how the Study conclusions might differ from those obtained in a representative-sample study). We will also not be able to conclude anything about the characteristics of the EO experience (including its sequellae) as compared to those practicing only other types of orgasms, who are non-orgasmic, or who are engaged in other paths to transcendence. Because this is not an interventional study, we will not be able to

conclude anything about whether EO can be learned, or whether deliberately learned EO has important differences from that described by the study participants.

The two studies of men and women with multiple orgasm cited earlier also utilized convenience samples and therefore suffer from all the same methodological constraints as the current Study. Yet when breaking new ground, descriptive or descriptive/comparative studies using convenience samples are practically *de rigueur*, because the field of inquiry is in fact being defined by these groundbreaking studies.

Research Design

This Study used a *descriptive/comparison* design. The author e-mailed a notice about the nature and purpose of the Study to a large group of acquaintances believed by her to have some interest in orgasm and/or pathways to transcendent states. Those who responded to the e-mail were mailed the Study survey shown in Appendix A. This survey contains the criteria for inclusion in the Study (reproduced in Table 4). Thus, candidates were self-defined as EO practitioners. 44 respondents were accepted into the Study based on self-selection and response before the deadline (March 15, 2000).

The questionnaire included demographic, limited-choice response, and unstructured-response items. For example, demographic items included age, sex, occupation, age of first orgasm, years practicing EO, and number of partners in EO. Limited-choice items assessed the characteristics of the EO experience, and its immediate and longer-term sequellae (see Table 5 for data collection categories and illustrative items). Unstructured-response items allowed the participant to elaborate at will. Except

where not appropriate, all descriptive items were scored in a five-point Likert scale (see Table 5).

The following descriptive statistics were run on the response items for the characteristics and sequellae: number, range, mean, median, and standard deviation.

In order to determine whether there are significant differences in characteristics or sequellae of practicing EO, the population of practitioners was subsetted along five parameters:

- Male vs. female
- Number of EO partners in the past year (0-5 vs. 6 or more)
- Years engaged in EO (less than 10 vs. 10 or more)
- Favorite method of achieving EO (manual vs. intercourse)
- Use of breathing as a way to enhance EO (used less than vs. more than half the time)

These five parameters were chosen to attempt to find possible correlations between certain aspects of the EO experience, or its sequellae, and important characteristics of the practitioner. For example, it is possible that genders experience EO differently, or that EO affects them differently. It might be supposed that people with many EO partners might have different experiences than those with few, or that engaging in EO many years may afford a different experience (or that there might be different long-term sequellae). It is possible that those who prefer manual stimulation to achieve EO might have (or seek) a different kind of experience than those who prefer intercourse. And the use of breathing techniques was selected as a potential differentiator because of

the frequent admonition to employ deliberate breathing techniques in other paths to transcendence, especially Grof's holotropic work and Tantra.

Along each of the five parameters, each of the two sub-groups (for example, men and women) were compared in their mean responses to each of the items measuring some aspect of the experiential qualities of EO, or of its sequellae. The sub-group means were compared using a standard, two-tailed Student's t-test, with a $p < 0.05$ significance level as the criterion for statistical significance. This means that if, for example, $p = 0.01$, and the means of the two sub-groups are different; there is still a 1% chance that the null hypothesis (that the means are really the same) is true.

Within the sub-groups defined by the five parameters, those items with mean differences that achieved statistical significance were then further analyzed for *meaningful significance*. A difference may attain statistical significance but may not be large enough to be meaningful in its context.

Research Hypotheses and Questions

The major research question of this Study was: "Is Expanded Orgasm a valid path of transcendence?" And, *valid path* was defined as being *effective* and *powerful*. Further, we sought to determine whether EO is an *accessible* path of transcendence, though this is not part of the formal Study (see chapter one for definitions of these terms).

The specific research questions emerged out of considering the specific criteria for a valid path of transcendence (which EO would have to fulfill). Summarized below are the core criteria, with corresponding research questions. Following this list is a

complete list of the hypotheses (stated in null form) that we proposed to test in the comparative portion of the Study.

The general Research Questions:

1. What are the physical concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer?
2. What are the emotional concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer?
3. What are the mental concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer?
4. What are the spiritual concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer?
5. In each of the four dimensions (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual), do practitioners have a different experience during EO, compared to normal waking consciousness, and to what extent?
6. In each of the following domains, do (and to what extent) do practitioners experience themselves as:
 - a. Having positive health and well being changes immediately after EO?
 - b. Having positive health and well being changes in the longer term?
 - c. Having personality changes immediately after EO?
 - d. Having personality changes in the longer term?
 - e. Having positive impact on relationships immediately after EO?
 - f. Having positive impact on relationships in the longer term?
 - g. Having enhanced spirituality immediately after EO?
 - h. Having enhanced spirituality in the longer term?
7. Do participants plan to continue to practice EO?
8. Do participants consider EO to be a valid spiritual path?

The following Research Questions would be considered to validate EO as a spiritual path.

Consciousness is viewed as primary

It is reasonable to expect that if consciousness is primary, a variety of changes in thought process might accompany the experience of EO, as has been reported almost universally in paths to transcendence. If this were so, we would expect high scores on items such as:

[26] The experience of being flooded with new information on unconscious dynamics

[27] The experience of expansion of personal viewpoint to include the opposite viewpoint (this concerns the fluidity and experience of arbitrariness of one's personal viewpoint)

[28] The appearance of novel and creative approaches to thinking

Similarly, one might expect that if consciousness is experienced as primary, a similar fluidity of emotional experience ought to occur, as is common in other paths to transcendence. We would therefore expect high responses to such items as:

[29] The experience of intense and unusual emotions

[32] Confronting and releasing memories

[33] Increased love and compassion toward oneself or [34] others

We might also expect the reporting of synchronicities and non-local events:

[46] Experiencing both ordinary and non-ordinary awareness simultaneously

[47] Creating simultaneously at lower levels of consciousness what is being created at the higher levels

[48] Synchronicities

[53] Experiencing out of body experiences

Fundamental to the human experience of consciousness-as-primary is the experience of direct access to the Divine, being a participant in Divine activities, or merging with a higher power, as illustrated in:

[56] Loss of the illusion of spatial separation

[57] Loss of the sense of time

[58] The sense of being on a path of Divine realization

[59] Personal boundaries dissolving and merging with the Divine

[60] Being a witness to the Divine

[61] Identification with cosmic "emptiness" or "the void"

Includes a direct mode of knowing

In a direct mode of knowing, the “split” between knower and known, or matter and consciousness, is resolved. We would therefore expect reports of awareness of other’s points of view, identification with others or with the Divine, as in the items listed under *Consciousness as primary*. Thus, we would expect high scores on items such as:

[27] The experience of expansion of personal viewpoint to include the opposite viewpoint

[29] Experiencing intense emotions

[33] Increased love and compassion toward oneself or [34] others

[35] Increased awareness of mind/body connection (integration)

[36] Working through blocked energies (integration)

[40] The experience of wisdom resulting in an enlarged perspective

[42] Psychospiritual birth and [43] death

[56] Loss of the illusion of spatial separation

[57] Loss of the sense of time

[58] The sense of being on a path of Divine realization

[59] Personal boundaries dissolving and merging with the Divine

[60] Being a witness to the Divine

[61] Identification with cosmic “emptiness” or “the void”

[86] Increased sense of sharing the experience with partner

[87] Sense of perfection in one’s being that mirrors that of the Divine

[89] Merging with the Divine

[90] Meeting the Divine

Provides a methodology to transform modes of knowing

A valid pathway has some methodology for proceeding from the split or dualistic mode of knowing/experiencing to the direct (non-dualistic) mode. This should be validated if we find that respondents consider that they have the experiences of direct knowing more often, or more intensely, during EO than in “normal waking consciousness.” If EO does provide such a methodology, we would expect high scores on the following items:

- [71] Compared to normal consciousness greater mental clarity
- [75] Compared to normal consciousness, greater extra-sensory perception
- [86] Compared to normal consciousness, a greater sense of sharing one experience
- [87] Compared to normal consciousness, a greater sense of perfection in one's being
- [89] Compared to normal consciousness, more merging with the Divine
- [90] Compared to normal consciousness, more meeting the Divine

Methodology is reliable

This is the requirement that the methodology for achieving transcendent states is reliable—that is, if the practitioner “follows the instructions” a transcendent state will be reached. We would expect that, if EO is indeed a valid path to transcendence, practitioners would rank transcendence-related questions (such as those above) with a 4 (true most of the time) or 5 (true all the time).

Pathway is powerful

A valid pathway should be powerful—there is evidence that the realizations, understandings, and awarenesses engendered by the practices of the path persist over time (that they are not limited to the timeframe of the practice and possibly the immediate post-practice period).

Items that test for persistence of the effects of EO (and which we would therefore expect to be scored highly) include:

- [77] Persistence of the contribution of the insights experienced during EO in terms of a positive contribution to the quality of the practitioner's life
- [100] Persistence of positive feelings about oneself
- [101] Persistence of positive personality changes
- [102] Persistence of the sense of fulfillment
- [103] Persistence of experiencing oneself as compassionate
- [104] Persistence of experiencing oneself as more loving
- [110] The report that EO has contributed to one's spirituality over the long term
- [112] The report that the practitioner plans to practice EO for the rest of their life

[113] The report that the practitioner plans to develop their EO practice more than it is at the time of the survey

In addition, we would certainly expect high scores on an item relating to whether the practitioner considered EO a valid spiritual path:

[114] The participant considers EO to be a valid spiritual path.

Hypotheses

In general, we would expect that—like all traditional paths to transcendence—a remarkable unity of experience and sequellae in the “four dimensions.” After all, if the experience of transcendence by its very nature involves resolving of splits, a sense of wholeness and integration, and the experience of Cosmic Consciousness, then this experience should not vary substantially, if authentically experienced!

Therefore, we would expect, in general, *not* to reject the Null Hypothesis in the hypotheses framed below (which are stated in Null form). Further, we would expect that when differences in the means of sub-groups along the five parameters did appear, they should have only statistical, not meaningful, significance. Finally, where we do find significant and meaningful differences, we should expect that they illuminate tangential (rather than essential) aspects of the transcendent experience.

1. Men and women do not differ in their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO
 - a. We would expect not to reject the Null Hypothesis
2. Those with few and those with many EO partners in the past year do not differ in their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO.
 - a. Assuming that respondents are really referring to their EO experiences, rather than sex in general, we would expect not to reject the Null Hypothesis
3. Those engaged in EO 10 or more years do not differ from those engaged less than 10 years with respect to their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO

- a. We would expect not to reject the Null Hypothesis, except that we would expect that those engaged more than 10 years should have stronger or more frequent spiritual experiences and therefore show a significantly larger mean on their Likert scores for those items
- 4. Those whose favorite method of achieving EO is intercourse do not differ from those whose favorite method is manual with respect to their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO.
 - a. We would expect not to reject the Null Hypothesis
- 5. Those who usually or always use breathing as a way to enhance EO do not differ from those who use breathing half the time or less, with respect to their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO.
 - a. Because the deliberate use of breathing tends to bring up intense physical sensations or emotions, or be used as a practice accelerator in many paths to transcendence, we might expect to reject the Null Hypothesis in items relating to intense physical awareness, awareness of intense emotions (positive or negative), and in items relating to encountering the Divine.

Subjects

A convenience sample of adults known to the author was selected for possible inclusion in this pilot study. Those who were selected for an e-mail announcement about the Study were believed by the author to have a high likelihood to be EO practitioners. Those who responded to the e-mail were mailed the complete survey and confidentiality notice. Those who self-selected according to the criteria stated in the survey, and who mailed back their survey by the deadline were selected for statistical analysis. There were 44 respondents—22 men and 22 women.

The age range of the participants was 32-66 years (mean 50.6, SD 7.3). The mean ages for men and women were not significantly different. It was believed that, consistent with statistical studies, at least 30 participants total was necessary to represent the population, assuming that the population of EO practitioners at large was at least substantially like the selected Study group. However, the truth of this assumption is unknown at this time.

For comparative statistics, such as differentiating on mean scores between men and women, it is generally accepted that each sub-group should have at least 30 participants, in order to have a power of 0.8 to detect a 30% difference in the means. This Study did not have 30-member subgroups; however, it was very difficult to find > 60 participants for this type of study using a convenience sample. Nevertheless, because this is a pilot study, the author accepted the risk that some of the conclusions of the Study might be diluted by having an inadequate statistical power.

Instrumentation

The complete survey, including confidentiality notice, is reproduced in Appendix A. There are no instruments available in the literature that assess Expanded Orgasm. Therefore, the author had to develop one that would test the fundamental research question relating EO to transcendent states and also describes the Study population in terms of their experiences during EO. There are similarly no instruments testing for “valid” transcendent states or for “valid” paths to transcendence. However, the literature on transcendence does contain clear descriptions of key elements of paths to transcendence, and the questionnaire was created from these sources in the following manner. Table 5 describes the general headings and sub-headings of the survey.

The survey questionnaire is divided into several parts:

- 1) Collection of personal data
- 2) Experiences of orgasm
- 3) Effects of Expanded Orgasm during the Experience

- 4) “Normal” vs. Expanded Orgasmic States
- 5) Immediate and Long-term Effects
- 6) Other Comments

Sections 1 and 2 gather factual information about the person and their experiences with both regular and Expanded Orgasm. Only people who have had Expanded Orgasm are therefore specifically able to complete the entire questionnaire.

Section 3 specifically seeks to learn what types of transcendental experiences occur during EO. A model incorporating Grof’s definition of holotropic states of consciousness was designed, which included changes in emotions, thought processes, sensory awareness, psychospiritual birth and death processes, contact with archetypal images, and merging with the creative principle and the divine. At the same time, the experiences are ranked, such that experiences associated with a person, in a body, with issues belonging to the levels of shadow and ego, generally begin the questions. The questions end with the higher types of transpersonal states, in the logical order suggested by the *Spectrum of Consciousness*. This ordering assured that we were covering a full range of questions covering the potential types of transpersonal experiences. While the *Spectrum* gave us a logical ordering system, no value judgments were made that one type of experience was “better”, or “more evolved” than another. This lack of value placement reflects the lack of prioritization in Grof’s model. In this model, all types of holotropic experiences are potentially equally invaluable, depending on the person and the experience,

Section 4 compares the subjective normal (waking consciousness) to expanded states of orgasm. Asking respondents to complete Section 3 first enabled all participants to deeply remember and re-experience potential EO states. Having gone through Section 3, all respondents could then compare their EO states, as commonly defined in terms of the potential experiences of this section. As such, we believe the answers in Section 4 reflect a greater consensus about EO states by which normal orgasmic states could be compared. This section enabled us to determine that EO states were in fact different from normal orgasmic states. This assertion is fundamental to the nature of this survey, which specifically is targeting people's experiences in the expanded orgasmic state.

Section 5 seeks to determine the immediate and longer lasting effects of going into EO states. The answers here would help us determine the power (as defined as long lasting effects) of accessing EO states. It also helped us get a look at the way in which EO affects its practitioners.

Section 6 enabled respondents to supply additional comments. Many valuable additional comments supplement the numeric part of the question. While the comments were not immediately used in the resulting statistical analysis, they remain on file and provide additional details and insights into the nature of EO experiences.

Data Collection Procedures

The procedures for locating candidates for the study were described in the Subjects section. An attempt was made to enrich mail-in of surveys by calling or e-mailing those who requested a survey from the original e-mail announcement.

Instructions for administering the survey are best viewed in the survey itself, Appendix A. The participant was instructed to take the survey in private, and specifically assured that confidentiality would be maintained.

All questions in Sections 3, 4, and 5 were given the same five-point Likert response set to promote consistency of scoring and of respondent expectations.

Note again that respondents were allowed to self-select for the Study. No attempt was made to define Expanded Orgasm apart from the subjective definition offered in the survey, nor was there any attempt to observe orgasm in candidates to further screen for appropriate inclusion.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis methodology was described under Research Design. To reiterate, the data were loaded into a spreadsheet using Microsoft Excel 2000. All statistical analyses were done using Excel's embedded statistics package. Separate worksheets were created for the group as a whole, and for each sub-setting by the five parameters mentioned under Research Design. Sub-grouping for each parameter was accomplished using natural criteria: for Gender, Male vs. Female; for the other criteria, the median score was used to divide the groups into roughly equal sizes.

Descriptive statistics were then done on the group as a whole, and on the sub-groups in each of the five parameters. This gave ten sub-groups (two for each of the five parameters). For each item that could be numerically scored, the subgroup means were compared and evaluated for statistical significance using Student's t-test at the commonly-accepted $p < 0.05$ level. A p-value at this level means that there is less than a

five percent chance that the sub-group means are different due to chance alone (and a greater than 95 percent chance that they are really different) in the “actual” population from which the 44-member sample was selected.

Chapter 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section begins with a detailed description of the subjects in terms of their demographics and their experiences in general of Regular and Expanded Orgasm. The results in terms of each of the Research Questions are then presented, followed by the analysis of the Research Hypothesis. The data and analyses are then summarized and re-stated in order to prepare for a coherent Discussion of the results (a more complete presentation of the data will be presented in chapter five).

<i>Abbreviations</i>	
CO	Climactic Orgasm
EO	Expanded orgasm
M	Masculine
F	Feminine
I	Intercourse (as method of achieving EO)
M	Manual (as method of achieving EO)

The Subjects

A description of how the subjects for this Study were selected is presented in chapter three. As shown in Table 6, 44 subjects (22 male and 22 female) participated in the Study. They alone determined whether they were eligible as “practitioners of EO” according to the criteria laid out in the survey instrument.

The age range for the entire group was 32-66 (mean 51, median 52). Men and women had nearly equivalent age ranges (mean 50.6 for men, 48.5 for women, $p = .06$, not statistically significant).

There was a wide range in the *number of EO partners* in the past year (1 to 20), but no significant difference between genders. However, men *first experienced CO* at an

earlier age than women (11.3 vs. 16.5 years, $p < .001$). This has been noted in the literature on sexuality. Yet, the *age at which participants first experienced EO* was the same across men and women (mean 39.7 years), and both men and women experienced EO the same percentage of the time when in orgasm (mean for group, 66.1%). And, *frequency of EO* was the same for both genders: a mean of 4.4 times per week.

Time in EO state: the shortest time in EO varied from 0.2 to 60 minutes (mean 9 minutes SD = 12.1 min, no significant difference between genders). The longest reported times varied from 0.3 to 156 hours (mean 7.2 hr, SD = 23.8 hr, median 3.0 hr). The average reported EO time was 0.9 hr (range 0.02 to 6.0, no significant difference between genders).

Most participants experience EO with a partner. The total group reported experiencing EO with a partner 66.2% of the time they experienced orgasm-- 58.2% for men and 74.4% of women. ($p < .05$)

Methods of achieving EO: in *self-practice*, manual stimulation is more used for the group as a whole than is a device such as a vibrator (57.4% vs. 27.9%), though in the self-stimulation EO, manual stimulation is more preferred by men (80.8%) than by women (34.1%) ($p < .001$). On the other hand, when *with a partner*, 36.0% of the whole group experienced EO with manual stimulation, 21.0% orally, 36.2% with intercourse, and 3.6% with a device. Only for intercourse did the with-partner method differ significantly between sexes, and this is born out by intercourse being overwhelmingly the favored method of achieving EO among men, versus manual stimulation for women. Of 13 participants who gave their "favorite method" as manual, all were women; of 12 who gave their "favorite method" as intercourse, 11 were men.

Research Questions

As stated in chapter three, the over-arching research question of this Study was: “Is Expanded Orgasm a valid path of transcendence?” And, *valid path* was defined as being *effective* and *powerful*.

General Research Questions

Let us begin with the general Research Questions. The data are presented in tabular format in Table 6.

1. ***What are the physical concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer?***

As a whole, the EO group reported changes in sensory perception a little more than half the time (mean Likert = 3.7). EO appears to have potent effects on physical awareness during the experience as well: participants reported increased awareness of physical processes most of the time (4.2), and even experiencing and working through “blocked [physical] energies (2.9). Perhaps this increased awareness of interior physical process is linked to the very frequent awareness of breathing as a link to consciousness (mean Likert = 4.2) and deliberate use of breathing to enhance the EO experience (3.7).

2. ***What are the emotional concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer?***

Participants reported very frequent changes in their emotions: especially intense (mean Likert = 4.1) and positive (4.4) emotions. Negative emotions were far less frequent (1.4). However, the experience of EO appears to facilitate the release of intense memories at least occasionally (2.2). Consistent with EO's ability to release intense and positive emotions, practitioners claimed to feel an increase in love and compassion toward self and others most of the time (mean Likerts, 4.2 and 4.2). A male participant stated, "I can sometimes—usually when with a partner—include another person's point of view, even one I have not understood previously."

3. What are the mental concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer?

Alterations in thought processes or viewpoint were common, experienced half the time. This included the experience of being flooded with "new information on unconscious dynamics," a sense of one's own viewpoint expanding to include the opposite viewpoint, and noticing novel or creative thinking approaches.

4. What are the spiritual concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer?

It is in the spiritual domain that we see the most pronounced experiential expressions during EO. Participants reported experiencing guidance that has changed their perspective of life more than half the time (mean Likert = 3.6) and often use EO to explore existential topics (3.3), psychospiritual birth (2.4) and death (2.1), and unconditional love (3.9). The group also utilizes EO to explore synchronicities and non-

locality about half the time. While less frequent, EO is utilized as a means to explore or experience archetypal images and transcendental experiences (especially in pondering and resolving issues about the meaning of life—mean Likert = 3.1). Even more common are claims that in EO one experiences oneself as a direct participant in the act of Divine creation (3.3) or as participating in a reality beyond space (3.7) or time (4.1). Being on a path of Divine realization was felt to be very common (4.1) in EO, as was a sense of merging with the Divine (3.5) or witnessing the Divine (3.4) or “identifying with the cosmic emptiness” (3.0).

5. In each of the four dimensions (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual), do practitioners have a different experience during EO, compared to normal waking consciousness, and to what extent?

In comparing “normal” versus expanded orgasmic states, participants generally reported feeling more pleasure (mean 4.8), relaxation (4.4), heightened sensations (mean 4.3), increased energy (4.5), temporary pain relief (4.1), energy expanding out of the body (4.4), and deep relaxing abdominal breathing (4.0). In the mental realm, respondents report greater mental clarity (3.9), creativity (3.8), acceptance of self and others (mean Likerts = 4.5 and 4.2), and even greater extra-sensory perception (3.8). They report that over both the immediate and long-term, their EO-inspired insights have contributed to a positive quality of life (mean 4.5 for each of immediate and long-term). Compared to how participants feel “normally,” in EO they tend to experience release of “negative” emotional energies about half the time (3.3), but positive emotional energies much more often (4.2). They claim more of a sense of optimism (4.4), and almost always

experience ecstasy (4.7). Various spiritual effects are experienced, on average, a little more than half the time in EO: for example, more of a sense that the respondent and partner are “one being sharing the same experience” (3.8) or a sense of perfection in their being (3.8), or even of merging with the Divine (3.5).

6. *In each of the following domains, do (and to what extent) do practitioners experience themselves as:*

- a. Having positive health and well being changes immediately after EO?*
- b. Having positive health and well being changes in the longer term?*

Participants described themselves as “feel[ing] that EO had contributed to their health and well being almost all the time, over the immediate term (mean Likert 4.4), as well as over the long term (4.6).

- c. Having personality changes immediately after EO?*
- d. Having personality changes in the longer term?*

Their feelings about themselves improved most of the time both immediately and over the long-term (4.4 and 4.5, respectively); and they claimed to find themselves being a nicer person nearly all the time, again in both immediate and long term time frames (4.4 and 4.4). In both time frames, practitioners claimed being more fulfilled (4.6 and 4.5), compassionate (4.3 and 4.3) and loving (4.5 and 4.5).

- e. Having positive impact on relationships immediately after EO?*
- f. Having positive impact on relationships in the longer term?*

Practitioners noted a strong improvement in interpersonal relationships immediately following EO, and over the long term (4.3 and 4.2). This included a desire to “give back to the giver” after having had EO with a partner (3.9), as well as a sense of being more turned on to one’s partner after receiving EO (4.3).

g. Having enhanced spirituality immediately after EO?

h. Having enhanced spirituality in the longer term?

Participants claimed a strong contribution to spirituality over the immediate and long term (4.2 and 4.3). There is strong agreement among practitioners that EO is a valid spiritual experience (4.7).

7. Do participants plan to continue to practice EO?

Further evidence of the value of EO is seen in participants’ intention to continue to practice EO in both the foreseeable future (4.7) and for the rest of their lives (4.6), and to develop their practice even further than its current level (4.5).

8. Do participants consider EO to be a valid spiritual path?

Participants agreed very strongly (mean Likert 4.5) that they considered EO a valid spiritual path.

Specific Research Questions Validating EO as A Valid Path to Transcendence

The following Research Questions were considered to validate EO as a valid path to transcendence. The rationale behind these questions was discussed in depth in chapter three.

9. Consciousness is viewed as primary

[26] The experience of being flooded with new information on unconscious dynamics.

Participants stated that this was true about half the time (mean Likert 2.9)

[27] The experience of expansion of personal viewpoint to include the opposite viewpoint (this concerns the fluidity and experience of arbitrariness of one's personal viewpoint)

Participants stated that this was true about half the time (mean Likert 3.0)

[28] The appearance of novel and creative approaches to thinking

Participants stated that this was true a little more than half the time (mean Likert 3.3)

[29] The experience of intense and unusual emotions

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 4.1)

[32] Confronting and releasing memories

Participants stated that this was true some of the time (mean Likert 2.2)

[33] Increased love and compassion toward oneself or [34] others

Participants stated that this was true most of the time in both cases (mean Likert 4.2)

[46] Experiencing both ordinary and non-ordinary awareness simultaneously

Participants stated that this was true about half of the time (mean Likert 3.3)

[47] Creating simultaneously at lower levels of consciousness what is being created at the higher levels

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.6)

[48] Synchronicities

Participants stated that this was true about half of the time (mean Likert 2.9)

[53] Experiencing out of body experiences

Participants stated that this was true some of the time (mean Likert 2.3)

[56] Loss of the illusion of spatial separation

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.3)

[57] Loss of the sense of time

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 3.7)

[58] The sense of being on a path of Divine realization

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 4.1)

[59] Personal boundaries dissolving and merging with the Divine

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.5)

[60] Being a witness to the Divine

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.4)

[61] Identification with cosmic “emptiness” or “the void”

Participants stated that this was true half of the time (mean Likert 3.0)

10. Includes a direct mode of knowing

[27] The experience of expansion of personal viewpoint to include the opposite viewpoint

Participants stated that this was true about half the time (mean Likert 3.0)

[29] Experiencing intense emotions

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 4.1)

[33] Increased love and compassion toward oneself or [34] others

Participants stated that this was true most of the time in both cases (mean Likert 4.2)

[35] Increased awareness of mind/body connection (integration)

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 4.2)

[36] Working through blocked energies (integration)

Participants stated that this was true about half of the time (mean Likert 2.9)

[40] The experience of wisdom resulting in an enlarged perspective

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.6)

[42] Psychospiritual birth and [43] death

Participants stated that this was true some of the time (mean Likerts 2.4 and 2.1)

[56] Loss of the illusion of spatial separation

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.3)

[57] Loss of the sense of time

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 3.7)

[58] The sense of being on a path of Divine realization

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 4.1)

[59] Personal boundaries dissolving and merging with the Divine

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.5)

[60] Being a witness to the Divine

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.4)

[61] Identification with cosmic “emptiness” or “the void”

Participants stated that this was true half of the time (mean Likert 3.0)

[86] Increased sense of sharing the experience with partner

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 3.8)

[87] Sense of perfection in one’s being that mirrors that of the Divine

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 3.8)

[89] Merging with the Divine

Participants stated that this was true about half of the time (mean Likert 3.2)

[90] Meeting the Divine

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.4)

11. Provides a methodology to transform modes of knowing

[71] Compared to normal consciousness greater mental clarity

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 3.9)

[75] Compared to normal consciousness, greater extra-sensory perception

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 3.8)

[86] Compared to normal consciousness, a greater sense of sharing one experience

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 3.8)

[87] Compared to normal consciousness, a greater sense of perfection in one's being

Participants stated that this was true most of the time (mean Likert 3.8)

[89] Compared to normal consciousness, more merging with the Divine

Participants stated that this was true about half of the time (mean Likert 3.2)

[90] Compared to normal consciousness, more meeting the Divine

Participants stated that this was true more than half of the time (mean Likert 3.4)

12. Methodology is reliable

We would expect that, if EO is indeed a valid path to transcendence, practitioners would rank transcendence-related questions (such as those above) with a 4 (true most of the time) or 5 (true all the time). This was in fact the case, for the most part (see above), except for the experience that, compared to normal consciousness, the participant was merging with or meeting the Divine. Yet, these items were scored as being true more than half the time.

13. Pathway is powerful

[77] Persistence of the contribution of the insights experienced during EO in terms of a positive contribution to the quality of the practitioner's life

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.5)

[100] Persistence of positive feelings about oneself

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.4)

[101] Persistence of positive personality changes

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.4)

[102] Persistence of the sense of fulfillment

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.6)

[103] Persistence of experiencing oneself as compassionate

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.3)

[104] Persistence of experiencing oneself as more loving

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.7)

[110] The report that EO has contributed to one's spirituality over the long term

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.3)

[112] The report that the practitioner plans to practice EO for the rest of their life

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.6)

[113] The report that the practitioner plans to develop their EO practice more than it is at the time of the survey

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.5)

[114] *The participant considers EO to be a valid spiritual path.*

Participants stated that this was true almost all of the time (mean Likert 4.5)

Research Hypotheses

As stated in the discussion in chapter three, the Research Hypotheses are designed to get at the unity or disparity of experience and sequellae in the “four dimensions” of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual experience.

A. Men and women do not differ in their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO.

As shown in Table 7, men were significantly likelier to experience Regular Orgasm at an earlier age than women (11.3 years vs. 18.0, $p < 0.001$). Women were likelier to experience EO with a partner, compared to men (74.4% of the time, compared to 58.2%, $p < 0.05$), but both sexes were likelier to experience EO with a partner. When with a partner, men were likelier to experience EO with intercourse, compared to with a manual method (47% of the time vs. 25.4% for women, $p 0.01$). It was also men’s favorite method of experiencing EO, whereas women preferred manual stimulation to achieve EO.

Beyond these gender differences in history of achieving Regular and Expanded Orgasm, however, there was a remarkable similarity between men and women in their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual experiences while in EO. In fact, few gender-based differences on the items occurred, and those that did occur—while statistically significant—may have little practical importance. For example, there were small

differences in the means for experiencing an expanded viewpoint that included its opposite (M 2.6 Likert, F 3.3), the likelihood of experiencing intense negative emotions (M 1.1, F 1.6), the likelihood of confronting and releasing memories (M 1.8, F 2.7), and the feeling of being on a path of Divine realization (M 4.4, F 3.8).

B. Those with few and those with many EO partners in the past year do not differ in their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO.

A few items in this subgroup achieved statistical significance. Those who were engaged in EO less than 10 years were likelier to report experiencing a reality with no sense of time (Likert 3.9 vs. 3.0, $p < 0.05$). They were also considerably likelier to report that they met the Divine more than they did in their “normal state” (3.6 vs. 2.2, $p < 0.05$), and somewhat likelier to report that feelings about themselves improved after EO (4.6 vs. 4.2, $p < 0.05$). Thus there was a slight or moderate trend for those newer to EO to report that what they experienced during EO was different from their normal waking consciousness in the spiritual domain but not the other three “dimensions.”

C. Those engaged in EO 10 or more years do not differ from those engaged less than 10 years with respect to their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO.

A few items in this subgroup achieved statistical significance. Those who were engaged in EO less than 10 years were likelier to report experiencing a reality with no sense of time (Likert 3.9 vs. 3.0, $p < 0.05$). They were also considerably likelier to report that they met the Divine more than they did in their “normal state” (3.6 vs. 2.2, $p < 0.05$),

and somewhat likelier to report that feelings about themselves improved after EO (4.6 vs. 4.2, $p < 0.05$). Thus there was a slight or moderate trend for those newer to EO to report that what they experienced during EO was different from their normal waking consciousness in the spiritual domain but not the other three “dimensions.”

D. Those whose favorite method of achieving EO is intercourse do not differ from those whose favorite method is manual with respect to their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO.

Those who reported that their favorite method of achieving EO was intercourse (versus manual), were significantly, and often importantly, likelier to report experiencing guidance or wisdom in EO (Likert for I 4.1, M 3.1). They were also likelier to report loss of personal boundaries (I 4.1, M 3.1), out-of-body experiences (I 3.0, M 1.9), and to experience Divine realization (I 4.5, M 3.5), a sense of perfection in self mirroring the perfection of the Divine (I 4.2, M 3.3) and a sense of perfection in the world mirroring the perfection of the Divine (I 4.2, M 3.2). They also reported improved interpersonal relationships following EO (I 4.7, M 4.2). They were likelier to report meeting the Divine (I 3.81, M 2.7).

However, those whose favored method was manual stimulation were somewhat likelier to state that they intended to continue to develop their practice (I 4.2, M 4.8), though not that they planned to practice EO regularly or for the rest of their lives.

All results above stated to be significant achieved significance at better than the 0.05 level.

E. Those who usually or always use breathing as a way to enhance EO do not differ from those who use breathing half the time or less, with respect to their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experiences in EO.

There were some significant and potentially meaningful differences between the subgroup means on several items for this parameter. Frequent breath-users (F) were likelier to use manual stimulation (as opposed to a device) when alone, compared to infrequent breath-users (I) (F 68.9% of the time, I 32.9%, $p << 0.01$). They were also likelier to achieve EO with intercourse (compared to a manual method) when with a partner (F 42.2% of the time, I 23.5%, $p < 0.05$).

There were small, but statistically significant, trends toward infrequent breath-users finding their viewpoint expanding to include its opposite (Likert I 3.5, F 2.7), experiencing intense negative emotions (Likert I 1.7, F 1.2), and confronting intense memories (Likert I 1.7, F 1.2).

On the other hand, frequent breath-users were likelier to report more awareness of physical processes during EO compared to “normal” consciousness (Likert I 3.9, F 4.4), to feel they were on a path of Divine realization in EO (Likert I 3.5, F 4.4), or to experience meeting the Divine in EO (Likert I 2.8, F 3.7).

Chapter 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents a summary (the research issue investigated, the method used to conduct the investigation, and the findings), a discussion of the significant and nonsignificant findings with an in-depth discussion of each of the findings, and recommendations for further research.

Summary

Problem

Since before recorded history, people have yearned to transcend their ordinary circumstances. The drive to transcend has shown itself in humanity's fascination with various kinds of consciousness-altering plants and drugs, with dreams, with magic, storytelling, shamanic states, meditation, drumming, dancing, and many other practices. Underlying all of these practices was the understanding that transcending ordinary circumstances requires transcending ordinary consciousness, with its limited, ego-bound viewpoint and tendency to attach to need and desire.

While most people have engaged in some practices that bring at least a modicum of transcendent awareness (even if only imbibing alcohol or falling in love), some have engaged intensively in one or more paths that promised transcendence. These few have devoted much or all of their lives in the pursuit of transcendent states of consciousness (TSC), and in fact, it is commonly believed that "authentic" life-changing transcendence does in fact depend upon many hours of daily devotion to one's chosen path.

Yet, ordinary people yearn to experience satisfaction, happiness and peace amidst the changing and uncontrollable circumstances life offers. Can “ordinary” people access TSC as well?

The overarching, generating question of the present research was “Is Expanded Orgasm (EO) a valid and accessible path to transcendence?” The question flowed from a desire to find a compelling, pleasurable method for nearly anyone to engage effectively on a path to transcendence, and repeated observations among the author’s acquaintances that perfectly ordinary people leading a wide spectrum of lifestyles were in fact achieving TSC using EO. Practitioners of EO report going into transcendent states not normally associated with regular (climactic) sex and orgasm; anecdotal evidence abounds to testify to the effectiveness (ability to achieve), power (the long-lastingness)—and the accessibility—of EO as a path to TSC.

Beyond the writings of a few scattered individuals, very little is known or verified about the practice of expanded orgasmic states, the kinds of experiences practitioners have in EO, or the relation of the EO experience to that of transcendence. The current Study is a groundbreaking attempt to understand this phenomenon and how its practitioners experience it, as well as to determine whether EO is a valid and accessible path to transcendence.

EO is unique among paths to transcendence in that it is the only practice that draws energy up from a person’s *root of being* (the genital-sacral area) During the practice of EO, this energy spreads through the entire physical body, and permeates mind, emotion and spirit. The current Study examined whether EO is a “valid” path to transcendence in terms of its effectiveness in bringing its practitioners to states like those

of other valid pathways, and being long lasting in terms of its effects. Clearly, a path that involves sexual activity would be "accessible."

Review of paths to transcendence generally considered or proposed as valid find certain criteria that must be fulfilled: Consciousness must be viewed as primary; the pathway leads to a direct mode of knowing or apperception; it provides a distinct methodology to transform one's ordinary mode of knowing; the methodology is reliable (if the instructions are diligently followed, the results occur); and the pathway is powerful (the results persist over time).

The core research issue investigated by this Study—*is Expanded Orgasm a valid path to transcendence?*—was therefore investigated by studying whether the five criteria for a valid path to transcendence were satisfied amongst its practitioners. In order to further understand the results of studying the fundamental research question, it was considered necessary to first understand *how* EO practitioners do in fact experience EO. Survey questions were therefore designed to explore the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual concomitants of EO from the point of view of the experiencer (these four domains of experience are referred to as "the four dimensions of experience").

Having reported on the EO experience in each of the four dimensions, participants were asked to compare their experience while in EO to normal waking consciousness, again in each of the dimensions. To further delineate the subjective experience of EO, participants were asked about their health and well-being, personality changes, impact on relationships, and spirituality in the immediate and long term. These items were designed to determine whether participants viewed the changes wrought by EO as persisting.

Finally—with the experience of EO extensively explored—the Study turned to the Research Hypothesis: *That EO practitioners do not differ in their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual experiences in EO.* This hypothesis refers to the notion that a valid path to transcendence brings the participant to a “unitary experience”—that because transcendence addresses the One, there is no room for significant variation of the experience. Were we to find significant and meaningful variation in the experience in its four dimensions, we would question the idea that EO is a valid path to transcendence.

In order to study the Research Hypothesis in a meaningful way, the respondents were divided into roughly equal sub-groups along five axes (parameters). The parameters defining these axes were: gender, number of EO partners in the past year (0-5 vs. 6 or more), number of years engaged in the practice of EO (less than 10 vs. 10 or more), favorite method of achieving EO (manual stimulation vs. intercourse), and use of breathing as a way to enhance EO (half the time or less, vs. more than half). These axes were selected in the first four cases because it was believed a priori that they might define sub-groups with significantly different mean scores on some items; the fifth parameter was selected because the literature on transcendence-related practices often mentions the deliberate use of breath as a core or enhancing part of the practice.

Method

Thus, the research problem addressed by this Study was: *Is EO a valid and accessible path to transcendence?* In order to address this over-arching research problem, the Study examined how participants do indeed experience EO—how they practice it, what kinds of experiences they have in the “four dimensions” of experience, what are the

effects in the four dimensions immediately after EO and in the longer term, and whether sub-groups can be defined that have meaningful differences in their experiences (because if there are such sub-groups, that might mean that EO is not a pathway to a unitary transcendent experience).

As more fully described in chapter two, the basic methodology of this Study was a descriptive/comparative survey conducted on a convenience sample. As such, the Study was a pilot study. The impact on the nature of the Study, and the fact that it was a pilot study, will be explored along with the detailed analysis of the findings, to follow. Forty-four participants were self-selected as EO practitioners after a much larger group of candidates was mailed a description of the Study and invitation to participate. The Study survey contained demographic questions, items about the nature of their practice, items about practitioners' experience of EO in the four dimensions of experience (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual), and about the persistence of effects of EO in the immediate and longer term. In order to determine the worth of the Research Hypothesis, five axes were used to compare sub-groups to determine whether EO did or did not give a "unitary" transcendent experience. The mean scores of each pair of sub-groups along the five axes were compared using a Student's t-test in order to determine statistical significance at the 0.05 level. The significantly different sub-group means were then examined in order to resolve the question of whether the differences were indeed meaningful in the context of the Study.

Results

Forty-four subjects self-selected for the Study, with an equal number of men and women (this was not intentional). Consistent with the convenience nature of the sample, the age range was fairly broad but all adults over 32, and the mean ages for men and women were not significantly different. It is of course unknown whether the age range in the current study (32-66) represents a random sample of the entire population of EO practitioners.

While there was a wide range in the *number of EO partners over the preceding year* (1-20), there was no significant difference between genders. And, while men first experienced Regular Orgasm at a significantly earlier age than women (11.3 vs. 16.5 years), the *age at which participants first experienced EO* was the same across genders (mean, 39.7 years). Furthermore, both men and women *experienced EO* the same *percentage of the time when having orgasm* (group mean 66.1% of the time). Mean *frequency of EO* was the same for both genders: 4.4 times per week.

The Study saw a very wide range of time spent in the EO state (the shortest time varied between 0.2 and 60 minutes—mean 9 minutes; the longest times between 0.3 and 156 hours—mean 7.2 hours; and the average reported time between 0.02 and 6.0 hours—mean 0.9 hours).

Most of this Study's participants experienced EO with a partner. Here men were likelier to experience EO alone than women. Participants experience EO when with a partner using both intercourse and manual stimulation. Again when with a partner, men overwhelmingly preferred intercourse and women manual stimulation.

Examining the *physical concomitants* of EO, the group reported changes in sensory perception more than half the time. Participants reported increased awareness of physical processes most of the time and reported working through “blocked physical energies” about half of the time.

The *emotional concomitants* of EO were likewise noteworthy, with very frequent changes in emotions, especially intense ones. As presented in chapter four, these changes were markedly stronger for positive than negative emotions, though the experience of EO did appear to facilitate the “release” of emotions at least occasionally. Practitioners claimed to feel increased love and compassion toward the self and others most of the time.

Participants reported alterations in thought processes (*mental concomitants*) or viewpoint about half the time. This included the experience of being flooded with “new information on unconscious dynamics” and a sense of one’s viewpoint expanding to include its opposite, as well as novel and creative thinking approaches.

Spiritual concomitants of EO were as frequent and marked as those in the other dimensions. This included experiencing guidance that has changed life’s perspective more than half the time, and the use of EO to explore existential topics more than half the time. Psychospiritual birth and death were experienced at least occasionally, and unconditional love was a very frequent experience. While less frequent, EO was utilized as a means to explore or experience archetypal images and transcendental experiences. Very striking were claims of participating in some way with the Divine: more than half the time for experiencing oneself as a direct participant in Divine creation or in a reality

beyond space or time, or being on a path of Divine realization, merging with the Divine or witnessing the Divine or even identifying “with the cosmic emptiness”.

In comparing “normal” versus expanded orgasmic states, participants generally reported feeling considerably more pleasure, relaxation, heightened sensations, increased energy, temporary pain relief, energy expanding out of the body, and deep relaxing abdominal breathing. Similarly in the mental realm there was a marked tendency to report greater mental clarity, creativity, self and other-acceptance and even more extra-sensory perception. Strong scores were reported for improvement in quality of life due to EO-inspired insights—both immediately and in the longer term. Participants also reported quite a bit more release of positive and emotional energies, optimism and ecstasy. Not surprisingly, practitioners felt more spiritual effects half to most of the time, including the practitioner and partner sharing the same experience and a sense of perfection in their being or merging with the Divine.

This Study found the effects in the four dimensions to persist both immediately after EO and in the long term. These beneficial effects included a sense of health and well-being, personality changes, beneficial impact on relationships, and enhanced spirituality. In almost all cases, these effects were strong, as assessed by the Likert scale.

Participants agreed strongly with the items asking whether they plan to continue EO, and whether they consider EO to be a valid spiritual path.

In regard to the specific Research Question of the validity of EO as a path to transcendence, this Study broke “valid path” into five criteria. Each found strong concurrence among the respondents. Items relating to *consciousness being viewed as primary* generally received Likert scores in the 3 (half the time) or 4+ (almost all the

time) range (see chapter four for detailed results). Items related to *includes a direct mode of knowing* similarly received Likert scores in the 3-4+ range, except for psychospiritual birth and death, and even these were scored as occasionally true. Items related to *provides a methodology to transform modes of knowing* were consistently scored as being true more than half the time, though none of the items in this category achieved a Likert of 4. *Methodology is reliable* items were scored as being true more than half the time, and *pathway is powerful* items all received scores well above 4.

Finally, with regard to the *Research Hypothesis*, it was found that there was little significant variation along the five axes investigated, with a few moderate differences in sub-groups. Thus, it was found that men and women do not significantly differ in their physical, emotional, mental or spiritual subjective experiences in EO. As expected, we did find that men generally had their first regular orgasm at an earlier age than women. However, both genders first experienced EO at about the same age. The few gender-based differences in EO that did achieve statistical significance were of minor actual import, with the possible exceptions of men being less likely to find themselves confronting and releasing memories (Likert means 1.8 vs. 2.7) and more likely to feel they were on a path of Divine Realization (Likert means 4.4 vs. 3.8). The former might be explained by a cultural tendency of women to confront their emotional contents, or that they might have more “charge-filled” memories to address, particularly in the sexual or emotional domain. The latter observation very likely correlates with the same split found with the Favorite Method axis: those whose favorite method of achieving EO was intercourse are much likelier to report that they feel they are on a path to Divine realization while in EO. Men are much likelier to report that their favorite method is EO;

therefore, men may be likelier to report they are on a path to Divine realization simply because they may be more likely to utilize intercourse as a method of achieving EO (see below for additional commentary).

Examining the Number of EO Partners axis, those with 0-5 and those with 6 or more EO partners in the past year did not report significantly different experiences in the four dimensions; those differences that did appear seem to be of no great import. Possibly, if “few” partners were defined as only 0 or 1 partner, sub-group differences would appear; however in this relatively small sample, sub-group size would be too discordant to make meaningful statistical comparisons. At the level of the current research, then, number of partners does not appear to determine the contents or quality of the EO experience.

Similarly, the axis of Number of Years of EO Practice does not differentiate the experiences in the four dimensions. However, there were a few notable sub-group differences. Those who were engaged in EO less than 10 years were likelier to report experiencing a reality with no sense of time (Likert 3.9 vs. 3.0). They were also considerably likelier to report that they met the Divine more than they did in their “normal state” (3.6 vs. 2.2). Thus there was a slight or moderate trend for those newer to EO to report that what they experienced during EO was different from their normal waking consciousness in the spiritual domain but not the other three “dimensions.”

It is in the fourth axis, Favorite Method, where we see some notable sub-group differences. Those who reported that their favorite method of achieving EO was intercourse were significantly likelier to report that they to experience guidance or wisdom, loss of personal boundaries, out-of-body experiences, and Divine realization, as

well as a sense of perfection in self and the world mirroring that of the Divine, and meeting the divine. These differences were rather large as well as statistically significant.

In the fifth and final axis—use of Breathing to Enhance EO—there were a few significant and potentially meaningful differences between the sub-groups. Frequent breathers were much likelier to achieve EO with intercourse (compared to a manual method) when doing EO with a partner (42.2% of the time vs. 23.5%). This may relate to the usual use of breathing techniques in tantric conjoined sex, or to the physical and emotional intensity of the experience. Frequent breathers were also likelier to report more awareness of physical processes during EO (when compared to “normal” consciousness) than were less-frequent breathers, and they were much likelier to report feeling they were on a path to Divine realization or to experience meeting the Divine.

Discussion

The 44 subjects self-selected for participation in this Study, by agreeing that they fulfilled the stated criteria for being EO practitioners. Because this was a convenience sample (which is appropriate for pilot studies), we cannot claim that the participants in this Study mirror those in the entire population. In fact, according to our investigation, no study of EO has ever been reported in the literature.

It is worth noting that men and women did not differ in number of EO partners, experience with EO, or frequency of experiencing EO. This might imply that among the participants, at least, EO is such a compelling and accessible method that practitioners tend to pursue it as often as they can (though this specific question was not studied).

Time spent in EO varied widely among participants. While these wide ranges may simply represent individual preference or great intra-person variation, it is also quite possible that participants may be applying different personal criteria for what constitutes a valid EO session. It is difficult to imagine, for example, that a five-minute experience of EO is like that of many hours.

Though not directly addressed in this Study, the experience of EO is probably the same or very similar whether entered via manual stimulation or with a partner. This is because of the very high Likert scores given to most of the items (and with a low variance), and because the method-preference sub-groups did not show many differences on the items (this issue will be explored in more depth later in the Discussion). It is interesting to speculate on the possible reasons men overwhelmingly preferred intercourse (when with a partner) as the way to achieve EO, while women almost all preferred manual stimulation. This may relate both to social conditioning and the observation that most women do not achieve regular orgasm through intercourse due to clitoral anatomy. (Penile penetration and thrusting generally produce little clitoral stimulation for the majority of women; this is even more the case when they are insufficiently vaginally engorged, due to inadequate levels of overall sexual arousal).

It is not surprising that EO practitioners found strong *physical concomitants* to the experience. Orgasm in general is a powerfully physical experience. We would expect a prolonged orgasmic state spread over the entire body to be even more so. It is also well known that deliberate breathing can enhance physical experience, and participants reported very frequent awareness of breathing during EO as well as deliberate use of breathing to enhance their experience. While *emotional concomitants* are not uncommon

in Regular Orgasm, the very frequent association of emotional experience and release with EO is noteworthy. The regular association of EO and experience of intense positive emotions and release of emotions may explain the high frequency of finding increased love for oneself and others among its practitioners. Love and compassion are often cited as earmarks of transcendent experience. Likewise, *mental concomitants* were quite common. It is worth noting the frequency of experiencing one's viewpoint *expanding to include its opposite*—a window into the mental, as well as physical expansion of EO. Losing the attachment to one's own point of view is certainly a key criterion for transcendence.

The reports of *spiritual concomitants* to EO were particularly striking. Participants reported various spiritual experiences, including using EO to explore archetypes, existential topics and psychospiritual birth and death. These were common explorations. The reports of participation with or awareness of or even merging with the Divine are deeply indicative that participants believed they were having spiritual experiences during EO.

Taken together, what do these reports of the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual concomitants to EO mean? All the results in this Study must take into consideration the implications of its methodology. First, a convenience sample was used. It is unknown whether this convenience sample was a representative sample of the general population of people who would, if asked, fulfill the Study's entrance requirements. Certainly, the sample was not a random one. The sample is probably skewed in terms of age, experience with EO, and the value placed upon experiences in each of the four dimensions by the participants. For example, most of the respondents

resided in Northern California—an area known to have a long history of deep involvement in the “human potential movement.” People with high involvement in human potential tend to seek out a variety of experiences that promote increased physical awareness, and which are grounded in a philosophy about the importance of the mind/body connection. It is therefore possible that, compared to the general population of EO practitioners, the participants in this Study tend to value a method of transcendence precisely because it affords them a highly-valued experience: powerful connection with the physical, emotional, and mental dimensions. Further, it is possible that the respondents in this Study are more or less likely to experience expanded states of orgasm as doorways to the spiritual domain. For example, EO practitioners (not in this Study) who generally experience their connection with the Divine through more traditional means might place less value on the spiritual aspects of EO and more on its highly pleasurable physical concomitants.

In fact, very little is known about the “EO practitioner population at large.” This is precisely why this Study must be considered as a pilot study: the first opening of a door to a series of potential studies of EO, its practitioners, and their range of experiences.

In addition, while the experiences of practitioners in this Study can be well characterized, the Study did not address those experiences in Regular Orgasm nor in other paths to transcendence. Therefore it is not possible with this data to form any conclusions about the relative efficacy of EO in achieving experiences in the four dimensions, compared to either Regular EO or to other paths to transcendence. Further comparative studies would be required to determine how the experience of EO compares with that of Regular Orgasm in the four dimensions.

The Study did address the question of whether the experience of EO differs from that of “normal waking consciousness” in each of the four dimensions, and found important differences in terms of pleasure and relaxation, mental clarity, creativity, self-acceptance and experiences generally described by most people as spiritual. Further, these kinds of changes were experienced as occurring both directly after EO and over the longer term. The sense of increased optimism, positive emotional energies, ecstasy, and some sort of experience of the Divine clearly place EO in the category of spiritual or transcendent experience, especially when compared to normal waking consciousness.

The fact that almost all participants strongly agree with the statement that they plan to continue EO for the rest of their lives, and that they themselves consider EO to be a valid spiritual path ratifies that at least subjectively, EO is a valid path to transcendence. However, the fact that someone strongly believes they are having a spiritual (let alone transcendent) experience does not mean that they are in fact having one. While there is no agreed-upon objective set of criteria for an authentic transcendent experience, Bucke’s criteria certainly mirror those of many writers on the subject. Further study should examine the question of whether others consider EO practitioners to meet basic criteria for having had transcendence. This topic will be explored further below.

Again, looking from the standpoint of the Study’s Research Questions specifically related to EO as a valid path to transcendence, EO certainly qualifies, based upon the reports of its practitioners: the path views consciousness as primary; it includes a direct mode of knowing; it provides a methodology to transform modes of knowing; the methodology is reliable; and the pathway is powerful (results persist). While again the Study’s methodology does not permit us to generalize about the results of this Study to

the “general population of EO practitioners,” and is certainly subjective, it does provide a large window into the reality that, at least in the view of its practitioners, EO fulfills all five of the major criteria for a valid path to transcendence.

Finally, with regard to the Research Hypothesis, there is little difference along the five axes in the experience, concomitants, and power of EO. Some gender differences were found in the method of achieving EO—men preferred intercourse and women manual stimulation—but the experience itself was remarkably similar between genders. A similar conclusion can be drawn for the number of EO partners axis. Differences that were statistically significant between the two sub-groups were fairly trivial in terms of number of Likert points.

For the axis defined by length of engagement in EO, there were few differences between the sub-groups. Those most experienced were somewhat more likely to use deliberate breathing regularly to enhance the experience and to state that they experienced two levels of awareness, as well as the perception of being witness to the Divine. Because the great majority of item means did not significantly differ between the sub-groups on this axis, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions. However, it is not unreasonable that those with longer experience of EO might try experimenting with methods to enhance the experience.

Particularly noteworthy was the general finding that the spirituality items gave the same scores for the sub-groups (except the perception of being witness to the Divine). Perhaps the spiritual effects of EO are felt once one is firmly launched in its practice. Age itself was not a factor; the mean ages of those in the two years-of-experience sub-groups did not differ. It might be argued that the cutoff for the sub-groups was set too high;

however, reducing the cutoff to five years would only move five participants to the “more experience” sub-group, which would very likely not affect the outcomes significantly. It is possible that the experience more impressed the “newbies” than the “old hands.” However, if this is the case, then those with only a year or two of experience should be even more impressed. Unfortunately, in our sample, there were insufficient numbers of “new newbies” to draw conclusions.

It would be instructive to study a large enough group with only a few years’ or less experience to attempt to understand the longitudinal evolution of spiritual experience in EO.

Favorite method of achieving EO did define sub-groups with some significant and possibly meaningful differences. There were differences of moderate potential importance in many items considered spiritual, such as experiencing guidance, loss of personal boundaries, out of body experiences, and encounters or merging with the Divine. There may be several explanations for these observations.

First, men overwhelmingly preferred intercourse to achieve EO, while most women preferred manual stimulation. This preference is probably partly cultural, and partly due to the well known fact that most women do not achieve Regular Orgasm from vaginal penetration and thrusting. This is due to the usual high and anterior location of the clitoris, which must be stimulated directly or indirectly for most women to orgasm. While some women can “go over the edge” from stimulation of the Grafenberg Spot, often they have not developed the ability to do so. Thus, women may simply be expressing their preference based on ease of stimulation to Regular Orgasm.

Nevertheless, the data clearly demonstrate that the favorite method significant differences do not parallel the gender differences. Thus, the favorite-method differences appear to be due to method and not to the gender variable. We might speculate that intercourse provides a more involving and connected form of sexual pleasure (because both partners are being genitally stimulated simultaneously, assuming the woman does receive sexual stimulation from penetration and thrusting); perhaps this accounts for the more “spiritual” responses of those who preferred intercourse.

However, we might just as easily wonder if the issue is that the women don’t have partners expert in bringing them to very high states of arousal manually, and that therefore they experience less “compelling” spiritual states. In any case, the differences are rarely pronounced, and while the question should certainly be explored in future research, we should take note that no matter what the favorite method, experiences in the spiritual domain are frequent and lasting.

In order to study the question of whether intensity of physical experience determines the intensity or frequency of spiritual experience in EO, we might create composite physical and spiritual “impact scores” and correlate them. The *physical impact score* would consist of the following items:

- [25] Intensified or altered physical sensations during EO
- [62] More pleasure during EO
- [64] More heightened sensations during EO

Similarly, the *spiritual impact score* would consist of:

- [40] Wisdom and guidance

- [44] Unconditional love
- [45] Loss of boundaries
- [55] Participant in process of universal process of creation
- [56] Loss of illusion of space
- [57] Loss of illusion of time
- [58] On path of Divine Realization
- [59] Merge with Divine
- [60] Witness to Divine

Methodologically, however, constructing these composite scores is problematic for the current Study. First, there are many more items relating to the spiritual dimension than there are to the physical dimension. Therefore the survey, as constructed, is likely to be capable of differentiating a wider range of spiritual experiences than it is able to make distinctions amongst physical experiences. Second, many participants did not answer one or more items in the spiritual dimension. The meaning of a composite score across all participants (which would need to be clearly and consistently defined to calculate a r-value) is therefore indeterminate given this survey. Nevertheless, the question of whether physical intensity of EO correlates with reports of spiritual intensity is an important one and should be the subject of further research.

Frequent Use of Breathing to Enhance EO did show a few notable results in terms of effects in the spiritual domain. The question is which comes first: use of breathing or the experience? It may be that those who regularly use breathing techniques to enhance

EO have a predisposition to use breathing as an integral part of any path to transcendence.

Brief Summary of Findings and Significance

This pilot study utilized a convenience sample. Such studies, like this one, often open important areas of inquiry and point up fruitful directions for future research. However, the results of this Study relate to the experiences and sequellae of Expanded, not Regular Orgasm. And, while we conclude that EO is a valid path to transcendence, the Study did not compare the experiences and sequellae of this to other valid paths to transcendence. Further, we cannot generalize from this Study's results to the population of EO practitioners as a whole.

With these caveats, however, emerges a consistent and powerful picture of the practice of Expanded Orgasm. The similarities of experiences and sequellae across all five axes studied—gender, years of practice, number of EO partners, favorite method, and use of breath enhancement—far outweigh the differences. EO clearly has consistent and potent effects on all four dimensions of human experience—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. And, EO does fulfill our pattern for being a valid path to transcendence.

What do the Study results mean in terms of the larger context of transcendence and pathways to it laid out in chapter two? This question is addressed in the next section.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current Study opens vast and potentially fertile new territory for exploration of transcendence and effective pathways to it, but further studies should address the inherent methodological problems of studies conducted with convenience samples. First, a much larger population may be able to locate important or meaningful differences along the axes we have chosen for this Study—or along new axes that might be detected by data mining techniques such as automated cluster detection or link analysis. For example, we selected a ten-year segmentation for the Years of EO Practice axis. As explained above, perhaps ten years is already highly experienced! The size of the sample of this Study made it statistically meaningless to use a much lower cutoff, such as 1, 2, or 5 years, but larger samples would be able to address this issue well. Perhaps more than two sub-groups in some or all of the axes would create more meaningful distinctions.

Second, we do not know whether the sample taken for this Study is really a random sample of the entire population of EO practitioners, at least in the United States. A future study could address this issue by advertising for participants in a variety of venues, giving volunteers a comprehensive screening, and then select from the remaining pool. Of course, people who volunteer for studies are not necessarily representative of the entire population, but this methodology would be much likelier to represent a random population sample than would the convenience sampling method we selected.

Another methodological issue with the current Study should also be addressed in future research: the criteria for being a “valid” EO practitioner. This Study used self-

selection according to a written-out set of questions. There was no attempt to corroborate self-selection by directed interviews either of the candidate or of significant others. And, we recommend that physically observable criteria for EO be developed so that those selected for participation demonstrate some “objective” criteria for EO. This would increase the uniformity of the Study population.

In addition, a study comparing the parameters of experience and sequellae of orgasm among those who are EO practitioners and those who experience only Regular Orgasm would show the extent to which the parameters were due to sexual activity and/or “regular” orgasm alone. It is important to clearly understand what is due to the “expanded” orgasm experience itself.

With a firm understanding of the experience and sequellae of EO itself in hand, further studies comparing the transcendent experience associated with EO to other kinds of transcendent experiences would open the door to explorations of whether and in what way these transcendent states differ. In the context of the discussion in chapter two, it would be especially important to attempt to understand whether the kinds of transcendent pathways referred to as “unotropic” do in fact produce different kinds of experiences and sequellae than do the holotropic paths, such as EO.

Finally, can we proceed from *observation to intervention*? That is, can EO be taught? Does the EO that is learned differ in important ways from the EO seen in descriptive studies? Does deliberately learned EO constitute a valid path to transcendence? We need to understand how people learn and expand their practice of EO. Does EO need to be learned specifically in the context of it being a path to transcendence in order to be experienced as one?

Implications for the Field of Inquiry

EO is an *ontologically based* therapeutic system. We will present our reasoning for this assertion shortly. First, however, it is important to define and contrast ontologically- and epistemologically-based therapy.

Ontologically-based implies that the content and direction of therapy is determined (or guided) by one's state of being, and that immersion in the state of being (which is TSC, in the case of EO) itself allows one to locate what needs healing, resolution, or integration. As well, this immersion provides the therapeutic direction. It is as if an inner (or larger) wisdom becomes accessible through the ontologic state.

The value of going into holotropic EO states, then, accrues over time. Repeated access allows a deep story to unfold that guides the individual towards greater experiences of meaning and wholeness in their lives. Hence, an ongoing periodic occupation of the EO state maximizes the value of the practice.

Epistemologically-based implies that the content and direction of therapy is determined by what is known (or can become known) and how it is known. Thus, epistemologically-based therapy starts with theoretical presuppositions about the nature of emotional and psychological function and dysfunction. Unlike ontologically-based therapy, epistemologically-based therapy operates within a framework about what happens (or should happen) in the therapeutic journey.

These two therapies are not mutually exclusive. One can *add on* the ontologically-based EO work to the epistemological therapeutic work one is already pursuing.

Alternatively, one might engage in ontologically based therapy, and then decide to add on epistemological therapy.

Epistemologically-based therapies tend to be performed in states of consciousness closely related to normal waking states; ontologically-based therapies are performed in generally quite altered states of consciousness, such as those induced by fasting, shamanic techniques, drugs, breathwork, or EO.

In the following analysis, we make points relevant to any investigation of the therapeutic implications of ontologically based holotropic therapy. We actually don't know and can't realistically speak of those therapeutic implications because we haven't actually attempted to render therapy while in EO states. That would be an excellent subject for future research. Nevertheless, these considerations provide a useful framework for exploring how therapy might take place in EO.

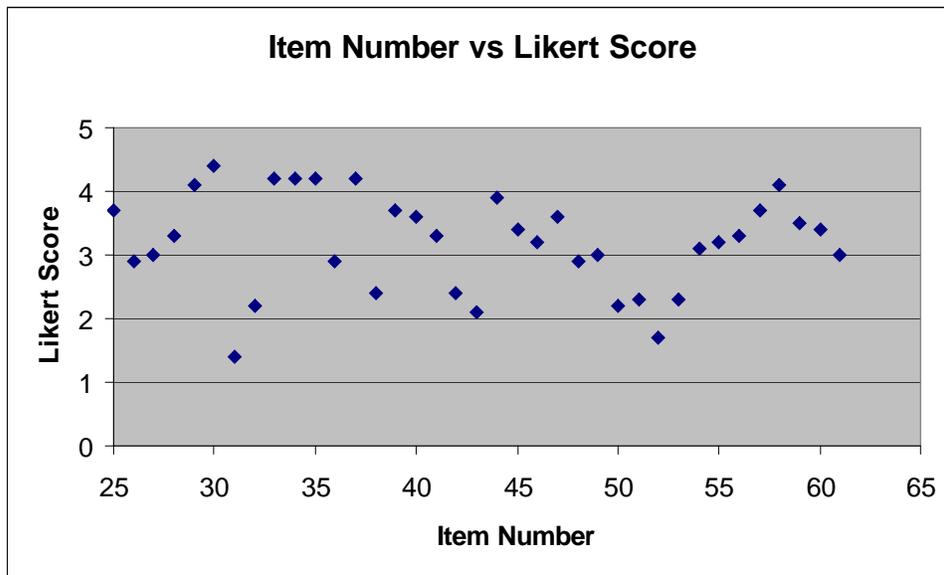
EO as an Ontologically-based System

We conclude that EO best fits with a model of holotropic state of consciousness. Looking at the survey scores it appears that the patterns of distribution fit this model the best. If EO fit a chain-of-being model (CBM), we would expect to observe that there would be a greater frequency of experiences at the lower, less difficult-to-achieve levels. In the CBM model, for example, “changes in sensory perception” should be far easier to achieve than “merging with the Divine” In the holotropic model, experiences would not be ranked, but all equally possible.

The Study's question numbers were ordered so that if the CBM were the case, the “easier to achieve” states of being had the lower numbers, starting with question 25. The

more “difficult to achieve” states were represented by progressively higher numbers, ending in question 62.

Here is what we observed in our Study:



Clearly, in this model, there is no evidence that the “easier” experiences have any greater frequency than the more “challenging” experiences. Rather, we see what seems to be a nearly random distribution of experiences, ranging for the most part from slightly more than some of the time to almost all of the time.

Of note too, is that on average, a wide range of experiences occurred in each session. The average experience was noted to occur approximately half the time. Thus, entry into the EO state served as an entry into a veritable *soup* of profound and extraordinary experiences.

Properties of EO as a Holotropic State

In chapter two were defined, in some detail, characteristics of holotropic states of consciousness. A practitioner of EO could be said to “toggle” or dance between the ordinary state of consciousness, and the holotropic state entered with successful EO.

The most striking way that EO is a therapeutic tool stems from this observation about EO. This holotropic state is an ontological state reflecting a particular epistemology: that of holographic information storage. Recall that in a hologram, information about the whole is stored in every part. In this state, practitioners immerse themselves into *experience*. We posit that the entry into *holotropic* ontology of EO gives access to a *holotropic epistemology*. Following is Grof’s list of changes associated with holotropic states, as shown in chapter two:

- Perceptual changes in sensory areas
- Intense and often unusual emotions
- Profound alterations in thought processes
- Unconventional forms of behavior
- Flooding of images from our personal history and from the collective unconscious
- Visions portraying various aspects of nature, of the cosmos, or of the mythological realms
- Feelings of ecstatic rapture ranging from bliss and heavenly peace, all the way to utter despair and terror
- Orgiastic sexual sensations
- Extreme physical discomfort

- Profound psychological insights concerning our personal history, unconscious dynamics, emotional difficulties, and interpersonal problems.
- Extraordinary revelations concerning various aspects of nature and the cosmos that transcend our educational and intellectual background

As discussed in chapter two, Grof developed the term *COEX*, or “system of condensed experience”. A COEX might include significant emotional experiences from this life, past lives, and even from archetypal experiences such as those discussed in myths. Holographic consciousness could be used to explain synchronicities, the paranormal, and other mysteries of consciousness not accessible through any other model.

Repeating our comments in chapter two, when information is stored holographically, all information can be found in every part. Looked at from the “quantum consciousness” point of view, ordinary reality is collapsed (probability function) waveforms that collapsed as a function of our observation (using individual consciousness). Collapsed waveforms are experienced as particles. Particles are said to contain all the information available in the wave; thus, somehow (not necessarily obvious *how* in ordinary consciousness) the entire world exists in, say, a seed.

Yet, it is important to recognize how ancient the template or architecture of this wisdom really is. Many modern observers say that quantum physics has only validated spiritual knowledge that has existed for thousands of years.

Thus, the holotropic (ontological) and the holographic (epistemological) come together. In EO’s holotropic state we connect via consciousness to all information stored anywhere because that information is already always available in all “*heres*”.

Following we provide two spiritually based texts in order to present a felt, experiential understanding of the holotropic experience to the reader.

The Gnostic Gospel of St. Thomas, purportedly written in approximately the first century A.D., (rejected from inclusion in the official Bible) offers a poetic taste of this holotropic state, with its holographically stored information. Time does not exist, all information through all of what we call time coexists simultaneously as wave and particle, the whole is in all the parts, and the parts comprise the whole. Below are some of the numbered parables that make up this Gospel:

- 4 "For many of the first will be last, and will become a single one."
- 6 "Don't lie, and don't do what you hate, because all things are disclosed before heaven. After all, there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and there is nothing covered up that will remain undisclosed."
- 13 "I am not your teacher. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have tended."
- 50 "If they ask where you come from, say 'We have come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by itself, established [itself], and appeared in their image'...If they ask you, 'What is the evidence of your Father in you?' say to them, 'It is motion and rest.'"
- 61 "If one is whole, one will be filled with light, but if one is divided, one will be filled with darkness."
- 89 "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? Don't you understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside?"
- 108 "Whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me; I myself shall become that person, and the hidden things will be revealed to him."
- 113 "[The kingdom] will not come by watching for it. It will not be said, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' Rather, the Father's kingdom is spread out upon the earth, and people don't see it." (Gospel of Thomas)

Other spiritual descriptions of holographic states are especially vivid in the writing of the Kashmiri Saivists noted in chapter two. Muktananda described the Saivist principles of Spanda (the principle of the wave motion or energy) that were written of over a thousand years ago. Muktananda, in distilling the Spanda scriptures, speaks accurately about the nature of the holotropic state experienced by practitioners of EO (note: the Sanskrit words have been removed):

“My eyelids are fluttering”... “Oil is glistening in a pot”... The word *spanda* is commonly used in these ways. The following are synonyms for *spanda*, or movement explosion, throb, motion, trembling; arising; expansion; flux; and unfolding... This Principle is the deity which is the basis of all knowledge.... It is the Shakti which manifests from Shiva. The word *spanda* means subtle movements of the manifestation of the subtle and pure “I”-consciousness. (Muktananda, 1983, p. 153)

...A period of rest occurs in *spanda* when the inner “I”-consciousness is in an undifferentiated form. (p. 154)

...[*Spanda, a form of Shakti*] gives birth to every visible object that exists in the world. In addition, through the imagination, it even brings into being objects which do not exist at all from the standpoint of direct perception—for example, “a flower in the sky”. (p. 156)

The expansion of *spanda* takes two forms—general and specific. In its general form, it is unity in diversity. In its specific form, it is diversity in unity. The general form of the *spanda Shakti* is the immanent, subtle Consciousness, or prana, which pervades all the innumerable objects of the universe. In its specific form, duality predominates, and the *spanda Shakti* becomes the many unique names, forms, and objects of experience.

Just as one’s senses carry out their work though the power of the conscious *shakti*, the experiencers of *spanda* who have become serene and pure obtain undifferentiated awareness though the power of the *spanda* principle. They become manifest and then merge once again:

An individual is everywhere. He contains all feelings. The entire universe is his form. For his reason, he has the awareness of unity. There are not sounds of meanings which are not Shiva. (p. 162) ...Shiva is beyond limitation of direction, time, and objects. He is beyond limitations of distance, both near and far. Because he cannot be the subject of either subtle or articulated speech, He is indescribable and experienced only from within. (p. 165)

Unwavering awareness [that I am Shiva] constitutes the knowledge of the Self. This is called the state of Bhairavi, which is free from the meshes of thought and the afflictions of doubt. In this state, both the immanent and the transcendent coexist in unity. The immanent aspect consists of the entire universe of matter and conscious beings. The transcendent aspect is supremely pure and changeless. Both aspects are His. (p. 166)

Thus the Saivist ontology, dances between wave and particle, unmanifest and manifest, enfolded and unfolded, implicate and explicate, One and Many.

EO—as viewed both from accounts of its practitioners and from the data in our Study—provides a potent entrée to this dance, as it embraces a path to TSC that is not hierarchical but rather holotropic, leaving no part of the dance undanced.

And then, even inside the state of EO, one toggles between different internal awarenesses. In one EO session, one might have a smorgasbord of experiences: successively entering states such as steady vibration; shaking; stillness; bliss; insight; deep compassion; merging with the divine; throbbing; timelessness; intense breathing; karmic memory; no breathing; and so on.

Tantric reports of EO reveal an always-there underlying motion, ranging from etheric to subtle to electric to strong, like ocean waves. Always there too is the range of insight, from profound stillness, to the awareness of meaning, to a vast oceanic consciousness. Both types of experiences are entered in this state. One learns to seamlessly toggle and dance between the two states. And occasionally, one might even notice both states occurring simultaneously.

This information about EO corroborates elegantly with the Saivists. Muller-Ortega reminds us once more about the amazing power of the *visarga*, or Emissional Power:

The *visarga* is the power that must be harnessed by the tantric *yogin* to continue the arc of manifestation as it doubles back on the journey of return to Shiva. This power may be thought of as an impelling force that at one and the same time continuously pushes everything out into being, and continuously absorbs it all back into Shiva. ... This power of the heart, which is the Goddess... is at once centrifugal, that is, Emissional and expansive, as well as centripetal, that is, absorptive and unitive.

This expansion and contraction forms a kind of “alternating current” of spiritual power which may be tapped by the *yogin* in various ways. The “expansive” mode may be employed for the further manifestation of the desires in the external or subtle worlds, or... for the establishment of the experience of non-duality even in outward perceptions. The “contractive” mode of non-duality

connects the *yogin* to the inwardly ascending force that effortlessly propels the yogin to rest in absorption in his own unbounded original consciousness. Here, the infinitely fast vibration of consciousness allows the re-emergence of ...the state of liberation in this very life. (pp. 125-6)

...The *visarga* may signify the orgasmic expulsion of the life force; or, on the level of the inner tantric yoga, it coincides with the blissful inward force, the kundalini. In each of these environments, the polar, dyadic nature of the *visarga* is clearly at work. (p. 126)...*Visarga* is the creative potency of the Ultimate. Undeniably, this creative potency expresses itself in one of its many manifestations as the force and power of human sexuality. (p. 127)

The dance is available everywhere, at all times, and as near as one's ability to shift one's focus. Rajneesh alluded to this when he quotes this Tantric sutra: "*Even remembering union, without the embrace, the transformation.*" He then comments, "Once you know it, even the partner is not needed. You simply remember the act and enter into it." (Rajneesh, p. 60) Indeed, "this process may appear to necessitate effort, but it becomes effortless once the practitioner has attuned himself to the *visarga*. (Muller-Ortega, p. 139)

This notion of toggling, or dancing between states, explains how EO can happen almost instantly. This explains why, in our survey instructions, we add the following to our definition of EO: "Expanded Orgasm can happen almost immediately after the session begins, though it may occur later in the session, too. It starts when one becomes aware of the expansion occurring." (Direct quote from the Survey in Appendix A). For either the trained EO practitioner or naturally orgasmic person, the softest touch, the smallest whim, or even the slightest breeze can trigger one back into the orgasmic holotropic state.

Implications for Individual Therapy

We now turn to examine some key implications of EO-as-path-to-TSC for individual therapy. People who enter into EO explore an experience of a reality very different from the ordinary

Wholeness and connection

In EO one has frequent access to the undifferentiated state. In terms of our discussion of quantum reality, one can toggle between experiencing themselves either in wave or particle form. That is, they can vibrate between individual and undifferentiated consciousness. This causes powerful experiences of connection to and immersion into a larger whole.

In EO, people report frequent experiences of witnessing, or merging with, the Divine. In addition, as already discussed, therapy using EO would be expected to be ontology-based: The powerful state of being produced by EO would be expected to create integrative experiences.

Creativity

In EO, fantasy and reality do not have the same meaning as in ordinary waking states, since one's experiences seem real, often more real than ordinary ones. Time and space do not exist in the same way, so it is entirely possible to revisit and resolve past events (perhaps even past life events) as well as role-play trajectories and projections. That is, one can (in the EO state of being) fully try on new roles, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors—very much like in lucid dreaming. Thus, people long gone can be contacted

and forgiven; new trains of thought can be explored and even lived out in detail. One can enter the state with a question and simply allow the answers to flow into consciousness. Since one has the ability to access many potential universes, the number of options available for problem solving expand dramatically..

The surprises of the unconsciousness can reveal to us what we don't know that what we don't know. New connections reveal new information about the same subject. One can immerse one's self in the river of synchronistic meaning and simply allow the inner radar to direct him or her to the most important issues to address. One can therefore experience and explore deep levels of creativity inspiration and problem solving.

In EO, people report having a wide range of creative insights. Paradoxes are resolved, new meanings to situations are found, and creativity is enhanced as myriad changes in thought processes are reported.

Identity strengthening

EO is best considered a state that one enters repeatedly. The gains are not necessarily made by a single experience, but through experiences over time. The practitioners in the Study went into EO states on a regular basis, with a frequency that varied from monthly to daily. Here we see the principle of the dance at play. One enters EO, gains the information available in the holotropic state, and returns, conscious of what has happened. Practitioners are therefore engaged in a deep level of ongoing feedback and creative visioning of who they are and how they fit into the greater scheme of things.

In Saivist thought, consciousness is dynamically being created, observed, and refined, in an ongoing cycle. One gets continual feedback about one's self.

“the *visarga* points to the inherently self-referential capacity of consciousness...represent[ing] the freedom of consciousness...it’s most important characteristic. Consciousness is not like a rock crystal that passively reflects all that appears before it. Rather, the freedom and spontaneity present in consciousness allow for a continuous process of self-consciousness as well. ...The finite consciousness doubles back on itself.” (Muller-Ortega, p. 126)

Such repeated exposure to this type of information experienced in this way would be expected to facilitate a more rapid pace of personal growth. Practitioners discover new material about themselves, release pent up emotions and calmly explore viewpoints potentially antithetical to the ones they normally hold. They resolve stuck areas and uncover and investigate new areas of growth. Finally, the increased self-love and compassion that practitioners enjoy should enhance self-esteem.

Pleasure and fulfillment-based thinking

In EO, people predominantly enter into positive, often blissful states. They retain the awareness of this experience immediately, as well as over long term. These repeated experiences of bliss shape their waking lives.

Consider that it is difficult to enter into an EO state with a negative attitude. As most commonly taught, the practice rests solidly upon a foundation of gratitude, mutual respect, and honoring of oneself and one’s partner. Once in EO, additional experiences reinforce the original decision to immerse in a state of gratitude, as profound and usually joyful experiences continue to manifest. A self-reinforcing cycle of positive thinking and feeling leading to positive experiences develops.

A positive new model of sexuality

Let us revisit the discussion of the androcentric model of sex laid out in chapter two. Maines (1999) feels that even today, “in our culture, there have been, and remain, powerful means of negatively reinforcing women’s demands of orgasmic mutuality. A woman’s admitting that coitus does not by itself ring her chimes is in some quarters still a confession of defect.” (p.117)

Western men today are expected to know how to satisfy a woman; if and when he doesn’t, he may feel defective as a lover. Therefore, a strong pressure exists for men and women to be less than truthful about his skills. Sadly, while magazines abound with information on how to give women better orgasms, much of it remains technique-oriented and insufficient, therefore, to give a woman the whole-body-mind-spirit-emotion experience that will deeply gratify her. These skills are rarely taught, and when they are, often focus not on how to deliver better clitoral stimulation, but how to eye-gaze and breathe together. Such classes, often found under the title of Tantra or neo-Tantra, are helpful, but not necessarily sufficient, to do the job of truly training men and women about how to create the kind of women’s orgasms enjoyed during EO. In many ways, the emphasis on non-sexual skills such as breathing are a powerful impetus to becoming more orgasmic through other channels of the body. However, there still is no substitute for the pleasure one feels when skillful genital manipulation is included in with the rest of the experience.

Men too are constrained by the androcentric model of male sexuality. They are not encouraged to masturbate. Since most men do anyway, they engage in a forbidden practice. Thus their first experiences with sex are linked with shame. Often racing against the clock to avoid discovery, or not occupy a bathroom stall too long, they train

themselves to “hurry up and get it over with” as soon as possible. They are not encouraged to take the time to *explore* their own sexuality. Since most men can reach orgasm more easily than women, attention today tends to be on bringing a woman up to speed orgasmically. In the author’s observations, Male extended, expanded, and multiple orgasms are discussed even less frequently than women’s orgasms. Who needs them, one asks. And yet, the issue is not one of need, but of self-exploration, pleasure, and expansion.

The attitudes discussed above about androcentric sex are clearly antithetical to the kind of sex that EO promotes. In EO, sex is a process, a journey with many opportunities for love, pleasure, vulnerability, sharing, trust building, and mutual honoring. In regular sex, too often, the goal is sought at the expense of the process. Participants may feel unsatisfied, even when the male and female have climaxed. Without the endless nuance and discovery afforded by EO, sex can easily become rote, stale, boring, and even somehow degrading.

To this day, then, women fall short of living up to the androcentric standard of male sexuality. Unfortunately, the cost is high for both men and women. Uninformed men and women today probably feel that they are somehow defective in not bringing a woman “satisfaction”, while women feel entitled to such pleasure. Such shortfalls inflict potential needless damage on relationships as well as individual self-esteem.

The androcentric model deprives men, too, of pleasure. When, either through either ignorance or selfishness, they cannot or will not give a woman pleasure, we can only imagine that they are depriving themselves of more than just the rudimentary pleasures themselves. And, since in a patriarchal society men are generally denied access

to pleasure and feeling states allowed women, achieving EO will need to nurture and encourage this “feminine” way of pleasure.

If they are to succeed at EO over the long run, both men and woman must develop and put into practice ongoing personal growth. They must learn increased sensitivity to their partner’s feelings and sensations and the impact of their actions. They must stay focused in present time. They must clean up their relationships in order to finely tune their levels of trust, surrender and control. They must learn to co-create exquisite pleasure. They must even learn to put their egos “at risk”—that is, to receive ongoing feedback about where they have lost their focus of attention or otherwise fallen short of delivering optimal pleasure.

Concurrently with this learning, successful EO practitioners are also engaging and bathing their partners in a steady stream of positive feedback as well. They are hearing and sensing what they did right, and how much pleasure they created in the process.

As individuals practice solo EO, they learn that they are not dependent on another person for sexual gratification. They can be a source of exquisite pleasure for themselves. They develop an unintermediated access to the holotropic state, during which they can access the Divine, learn more about themselves, develop their creativity, and resolve issues of personal concern; they emerge more “whole” and more self-living from such trips into holotropic spaces. And self-loving experienced in EO spills over easily into other areas of life.

Quantum Sexuality

In the context of moving beyond an androcentric model of sexuality, modern therapists are beginning to unfold rigorous new models of sexuality in emotionally committed relationships. These new models are just beginning to be tested in practice.

David Schnarch is breaking new ground in the field of human sexuality. He fuses marital and sex therapy, claiming that the two disciplines, long ago separated, are integrally and even necessarily related. And, in *Passionate Marriage*, he posits a “quantum” model of human orgasmic response as an alternative to the four-stage model of sexual response provided by Masters and Johnson.

He relates his model to quantum physics theory, which studies dynamic variables that specify a system’s behavior. Schnarch’s model looks at how all the variables associated with the act of sex and making love combine to create the arousal needed to bring someone over the edge into the orgasmic state.

According to Schnarch, once people began to have eye-to-eye, frontal sex, desire to be with a partner became an important motivation for sex. Sex was no longer just a mechanical act. Thus, people’s orgasms cannot be understood as simply a mechanistic process.

Having a neocortex is a liability if you want to be a sex machines ...Our neocortex has become an integral part of our sexual functioning. That’s why the meanings you experience during sex strongly determine whether your body functions and how satisfying the functioning is. (Schnarch, 1997, p. 83)

Sexual responsiveness, he asserts, is a composite of the sexual stimulation you receive, which is at once mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual.

The total sexual stimulation you require to reach either your arousal or orgasm stimulation threshold is made up of the sensory (mostly touch) stimulation you’re receiving from your partner plus your feelings and thoughts—feelings and thoughts about what you’re doing, whom you’re doing it with, and what it implies to you. Total stimulation is therefore more than friction on mucous membranes (as it is in more primitive species). And more than friction plus fantasy. (p. 83)

In this model, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and desires, on both parts, determine the outcome of the sexual encounter: “Your partner’s feelings also affect your feelings as well as your sexual functioning and satisfaction. Human sexuality is that subtle.” (p. 87)

The implications for sexual therapy are profound. Schnarch notes that he tends to attract clients who come to see him because they want their sex lives to get better, not because there is some problem to be fixed. Sexual pleasure becomes increasingly desire-based, rather than performance-oriented. The act of giving and receiving EO (in his terminology, at times comparable to *doing* and *being done*) “often takes developing what hasn’t existed before: self-mastery and self-development. That’s why clients feel more self-respect when we’re through.” (p. 286)

This kind of sex takes “personal integrity, because it takes integrity to face the challenge and demands of exploring your sexual potential.” (p. 287)

Schnarch’s work adds greatly to our understanding of sexuality, orgasm, and Expanded Orgasm itself. It makes bold leaps in presenting the human being as an entity that exists in four dimensions, mind, body, emotion, and spirit. He shows how our orgasmic pleasure will be optimized by rigorously confronting the ways in which we can experience more pleasure by continuously examining and confronting ourselves. EO, then, becomes a continuous journey of self- and partner- disclosure and discovery. The juiciness and power emerges organically as this process continually leads them into new worlds of self-awareness, turn-on, and shared passion.

Partner bonding (independent of solving problems)

EO is a state of being; climactic sex is a goal-oriented act. Partners who learn to give and receive EO develop positive relationship skills in the process. They must learn to communicate on an ongoing basis, both verbally and non-verbally. They learn very quickly the value of delivering honest feedback, since it is counterproductive to fake EO.

It is said that couples that play together stay together. EO is a perfect vehicle for couples to enjoy together to create positive, bonding, playful experiences—full of communication, emotion, and love. EO can be a holiday from the processing that, when done to excess, can decimate relationships. Since EO can be practiced frequently, it offers couples the opportunity to develop a history of positively co-created experiences.

EO makes one more compassionate and loving towards themselves and others. It adds to the amount of turn-on they feel for their partners sexually, as well. As such, when they do process problems in ordinary waking consciousness, they have a “bank account” of good EO experiences from which to draw to support their communication occurring with greater love and understanding.

Enhanced perspectives about life

Ontology determines epistemology. In other words, the state of being one is in determines what and how one knows while in that state. According to the concept of *state dependent learning*, attitudes and behaviors learned in expanded states are easily accessible with re-entry into such states. The classic example is the regression toward childhood attitudes and behaviors upon visiting, as an adult, one’s parents.

Because the EO state (once learned) is easily re-entered, a holotropic way of thinking and feeling can become a way to practice and reinforce desired new attitudes and behaviors.

Therapeutically, before understanding how to access holotropic states such as EO, we were limited to pursuing the types of therapies mentioned in the *Spectrum of Consciousness*. Therapies would primarily focus on healing splits in consciousness and integrating greater experiences of the whole.

With EO, we have a new domain in which to explore therapeutic content. Rather than focusing on some form of intellectual healing, or loss of one's self entirely, the focus in EO is on experiencing in a far greater reality in which one could choose to design a new life, travel to other possible futures, and so on. Thus EO dramatically expands the possibilities of therapeutic content.

Resolution of Karma

Bache points out that a common feature of holotropic states is a trip through the four perinatal matrices described by Grof. The negative perinatal experiences represent, or relive, the types of birth traumas that occurred, either in real life, one's karmic history, or psychospiritually (with one or more of the above occurring perhaps at once). During the trip through the matrices, one can encounter such life-threatening experiences as suffocation, choking, and being crushed; an inability to breathe; anguish at separation from the primordial womb; fear and terror; lifelike grotesque sexual and demonic imagery; devastation of self and environment; torture; and other unpleasant (to say the least) experiences. The light at the end of the "tunnel" represents the transition from

psychospiritual death to psychospiritual rebirth. Positive perinatal experiences, and the release into the transpersonal realms, can be as joyful and blissful as was the frightening journey into the negative perinatal realms.

In an unusual departure from the perinatal model, our survey respondents did not report a preponderance of frightening perinatal experiences. Almost all these reported experiences were positive ones. “Experiences of psychospiritual death”, and “negative emotional experiences”, were the two lowest-scored items in the series.

Perhaps there is a difference between psychospiritual birth and death, and sex. While birth and death represent entry and exit from the planet, sex represents the potential for creating the entry of new life, in which the body has summoned up all it has to give to this next generation of new life. Perhaps in the divine plan we are wired to be psychically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally and psychically optimized at this moment of great joy. Perhaps, it is as simple as Lowen’s observation that one feels pleasure with the perception of expansive movements in the body such as opening up, reaching out, and making contact. EO may encounter more positive perinatal domains simply because people find it a more pleasurable experience than either birth or death.

One might wonder if EO takes someone to the extreme states that other holotropic experiences lead them to explain the lack of negative perinatal encounters. However, that would lead them towards getting more, not less, stuck in scary portions of the perinatal tunnel. As Bache notes, “When someone experiences a transcendent NDE, they have been catapulted through this labyrinth and end up beyond it. They have not dissolved it but have pierced it to reach the larger reality it screens.” (Bache, 2000, p. 112)

EO appears to be an extremely efficient way of bringing people rapidly through the perinatal bands, and into the transpersonal bands. This represents a promising area of research.

Unmediated source of one's own power, immediately accessible

One can enter an EO state often, and without the help of others. As such, one becomes increasingly aware of their own power to create experiences of their choosing. They do not need to wait a week to get an appointment with a therapist, master, or guru in the event of a sudden desire to enter EO; they don't need to earn a certain amount of income; they don't need to get time off from work; they don't need to win the approval of another. They simply need to arrange a private time and place for themselves. And it's perfectly legal.

Such realities make EO highly accessible to anyone who would like to enter this state. Clearly, the process of personal transformation is accelerated when one is not bound by time, legality, or money.

This lack of need for intermediation may come as a threat to religious clergy and some gurus. Other religious leaders could wisely encourage its followers to gain access to the plethora of spiritual material generated in this state and offer support in integrating it according to specific doctrines. Certainly, such access empowers individuals to further take responsibility for their own lives. And, since it can be entirely unmediated, individuals are free to come to their own conclusions, and not the predetermined conclusions of others.

This access can enhance the value of doctrines chosen by individual in complete freedom. Practitioners can and do use EO to deepen their other spiritual practices.

Personal evolution as the source of genius

If in fact, sexual practices like EO do raise the kundalini, then practitioners are tapping into a far larger source of creative power and inspiration than could possibly be provided by an individual mind/body system.

We cannot say that from the numerical results of our Study the extent to which the kundalini was awakened during EO. What we can notice however is that people did exhibit many of the traits described by Bucke as characteristics of enlightenment. With further study we might be able to know more about whether kundalini is being awakened, and to what extent. Certainly strong experiential evidence suggests that that EO can raise kundalini and certainly many of its adepts believe this to be so.

Social/Planetary Implications

Collective sum of individual actions

Individuals are shaped over time by the sum of their actions. So too is a society shaped by the collective consciousness of its people. Clearly, to the extent that increasing numbers of people begin to enter holotropic states such as EO regularly, our collective consciousness will shift.

It will shift in the direction of the qualities listed above as evidence of individual change. Now we consider some additional ways that, collectively, increasing practice of EO would impact our society and world.

Healing and enhancing the collective unconsciousness

Bache makes it clear that the suffering experienced in holotropic states is not for naught. It is not only that this suffering (confronted successfully and resolved) affects one's personal karma. The resolved suffering feeds into the spatial, currently constructed collective karma of the planet. In becoming recognized and experienced, frightening perinatal trials add to the healing of this karmic debt. He draws on the fractal principle that what appear at the inner level appears at the outer, and vice versa. In true quantum logic, we are inseparable, at some level, from this greater level of collective being.

(Bache, 2000, pp. 166-169)

As noted earlier, most of the experiences reported by practitioners are positive. If negative experiences impact and heal our collective unconsciousness, so too shall positive ones impact and improve the collective force field. It seems plausible to expect that sending ever-greater quantities of fulfillment and pleasure-based thinking, self-esteem, mutual respect, gender equality, appreciation of diversity, open-mindedness, creativity, love, compassion, erotic energy, and other positive qualities will make a profound and enlightening contribution to the energy of the collective ground of being.

Generating a New Contextual Framework

Just as the individual history is rewritten in the EO practitioner's dance between ordinary and holotropic states, so the ability to view, and review, our collective history is enhanced. The very act of rewriting social and global reality from a place of expanded vision will enable us as a planet to open our minds to more solutions to the problems we face today. But it's more than that we will encounter or create more solutions to existing problems. As Einstein said, "The significant problems that we face today cannot be solved by the level of thinking we were at when we created them." We will in fact encounter a new level of "problems," just as wealth creates a higher order of problem for one who was once poor.

As we change, the parameters and paradigms with which we interact with the world around us will necessarily transform as well. EO, as a valid holotropic experience promises to offer us additional opportunities to change ourselves, and the world, by "expanding our problems."

Grof shows this how this process work at the individual and collective perinatal levels of consciousness. He writes from the perspective of using holotropic states to clear out our old pain-oriented and destructive programs by confronting and resolving the turmoil buried in our deep psyches:

An individual who lives under the spell of the [uncomforted and unresolved] perinatal domain of the unconsciousness sees existence from the narrow perspective of myself, my family, my religion, my country. From this point of view, other people, groups, and nations are perceived as competitors, the world as a potential threat, and nature as something that has to be conquered and controlled. On the collective and global scale, this frame generates a philosophy that emphasizes strength, competition, and self-assertion, and glorifies linear progress and unlimited growth.... This ideology and the resulting strategies bring humans into a serious conflict with their nature as biological systems and into dissonance with basic universal laws. (Grof, 1988, p 74)

Fortunately, modern consciousness research has yielded some promising observations. Grof asserts that

People who move psychologically from the dominance of the negative perinatal matrices (the memory of the survival struggle in the birth canal) to that of positive perinatal matrices (memory of nourishing perinatal and postnatal experiences) and of transpersonal domains tend to be deeply transformed by this experience. ...Profound transpersonal experiences then move the individual out of the narrow framework of identification with the body-ego and lead to feeling and thinking in terms of cosmic identity and unity with all creation. (p. 76)

Some of the changes Grof notes are:

- Feelings of great zest and joy
- Capacity to draw great satisfaction from many ordinary situations
- Deep awareness of the spiritual dimension in the universal scheme of things
- Greater enjoyment of the same activities in life
- The quality of life valued more than material achievements
- Levels of aggression are drastically reduced
- Metaphor of life-and-death struggle replaced by that of divine play
- A strong emphasis on the mutually nourishing, symbiotic, and complementary nature of relationships
- An experience of being part of a universal web rather than as separate and isolated individuals
- Thinking at the planetary level rather than at the level of individual interests

Grof poignantly concludes:

Whatever questions or doubts one may have about the feasibility of the strategy [of entering holotropic states to resolve perinatal trauma] as a world-changing force, it could well be our only real chance under the present circumstances. It is difficult to imagine that the crises in the world can be solved with the same attitudes and strategies that were instrumental in its development. And since, in the last analysis, the current global crisis is the product and reflection of the stage of consciousness evolution of humanity, a radical and lasting solution is inconceivable without inner transformation and a move toward global awareness. (p. 77-78)

Societal honoring of sexuality

EO is a practice that brings one's sexuality out of the closet and into the limelight.

In our collective history, we learned that sexuality is a drive that needs to be suppressed

for the good of society. Freud called the suppressed drives the *id* and was unsure himself of what to do with them. Repressed, they had the power to make us neurotic, yet expressed, these dark forces might run rampant, and in so doing, he feared, destroy civilization. The ego was nominated to be the firm policeman of the *id*. Thus we should recognize the *id* but fiercely control it.

Yet, a part of ourselves that is fiercely denied, and cut off from the rest of us, festers and asserts its presence in us by fostering ills such as violence, physical and mental illnesses.

With EO, sexuality has an outlet of expression that brings it into full conscious awareness. In this sense, it is neutralized as a dark and dangerous force, both for us individually and as a society.

EO is pleasurable and even compelling. So much of personal and planetary growth requires us to change our habits, viewpoints, and power orientations with others. Often, these changes are resisted, as people fear they will lose power and pleasure in the process. Even beneficial changes can be hard to adopt. Think of the difficulty U.S. efficiency experts have had in trying to get our corporations and people to convert to the world wide metric system. Habit, laziness and perhaps even short-term greed win out over every economic promise of widespread improvements of efficiency.

Fortunately, a regular practice of EO promises a life filled with increasing levels of joy and connection to others. While growth does involve giving up old ways and habits, at least in this case, the rewards stemming from an EO practice can more than compensate. The effects of having a healthier attitude about sexuality would include greater mental and physical health, less violence, more marital stability, happier children,

and a massive freeing up of energies to be applied to more serious problems facing the U.S. and the world today.

Honoring of the Feminine as well as Masculine

Continuous excursions into EO states reinforce certain positive attitudes. Surrender is sacred; so is control. Men are Shiva; women are Shakti. She is in him, and he is in her. Therefore both must be equally divine.

Today's world cries out for renewed balance as a way to restore planetary equilibrium, just as men and women are seeking to redress the age-old gender imbalances that have compromised their personal experiences.

The feminine archetypal personality, with its emphases on connection and merging, offers a needed avenue of exploration with which to balance the archetypal male drives to build, divide and conquer. As people deeply experience both qualities of male and female principles, a greater respect for both principles promises to emerge.

It is easy to see why patriarchal systems have been threatened by the idea of EO. Clearly, people practicing EO are exiting the model of pain, suffering, domination, servitude, and sexual scarcity into which they were born. They are getting the opportunity to rethink what is meaningful in life at the deepest level, and to put very positive new behaviors into practice.

Finally, since EO is a state of being, rather than a goal, people are getting the opportunity to surrender to a deep state of being—one that seems infinitely populated with experiences of integration and bliss. Overflowing with their own joy from repeated visits to the EO state, practitioners have more to share with others.

The time has come for society to reevaluate its goals and the tradeoffs made in pursuit of goals. Perhaps we have reached a time when we as a society will consider the benefits of EO and decide that its practice will add more value than it is feared to take away.

As EO becomes more widespread, we might expect to see a resulting effect outwards, too. As men and women honor their own bodies, sexuality, and pleasure more, they will become different people. These new people will have new attitudes towards sexuality and towards their place in the world. They will have and express more love, compassion, and connectedness

More vision about possibilities

Creativity has long been associated with altered states of consciousness. James Hughes writes about the creative process (Hughes, 1999) In so doing, he too, describes a kind of dance between two worlds of consciousness taking place.

Creativity is about the use of imagination to transmute the inner world into external reality, and has both an objective, material component and a subjective, invisible component. It begins as an imaginative construct and ends as an external object. Since creativity has, so to speak, a foot in both camps, perhaps it can be the bridge between the worlds of reality and imagination. ... Creative thought involves two different reasoning processes, divergent and convergent.

Divergent reasoning, which is a mental operating system rarely found in ordinary consciousness, is the intellectual ability to bring together two quite different sets of facts or ideas so as to form a new and meaningful synthesis. It has been described as a double minded, transitory state of unstable equilibrium where the balance of both emotion and thought is disturbed. The resultant creative instability takes different forms in science and art.

Convergent thinking is the intellectual ability to logically evaluate, analyze, and choose the best idea from a selection, and to work it into external reality. Both abilities are required for creative output: divergent thinking is essential to the novelty of creative products, while convergent thinking is fundamental to their appropriateness. (p.10)

As our creative faculties are potentially freed by having more access to holotropic states such as EO, we can imagine that the social goals as a whole will be furthered. Leonard Shlain, writing in *Art and Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time, and Light*, for example, has observed a parallel link between the advances of physics and art that extend throughout history. (Shlain, 1991) He has noticed that art often foreshadows advances in science by as far as a century into the future.

Conclusion

Expanded Orgasm is a valid path to transcendence, and is being used to explore transcendent states by many adults. In the sample evaluated for this Study, the experiences and sequellae of practicing EO are remarkably consistent and powerful in the four dimensions of human experience—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. The finding of a valid path to transcendence that essentially includes experiences in all four dimensions implies a model of transcendence that appears to not be explained by conventional models of transcendence as moving-toward-the-(One)-void. Rather, EO is a path toward wholeness and integration. If this research is corroborated, an emerging model of transcendence will be required that includes the conventional model but which goes beyond its One/Many Game.

In addition, and beyond the scope of this Study, EO may have powerful therapeutic benefits at the individual and societal level. The practice of Expanded Orgasm is posited to release kundalini energy and promote powerful states of interpersonal connection. Perhaps its greatest benefit would emerge as a result of the potential collective release of vast reservoirs of kundalini energy on a planetary scale.

Tables

Table 1: Comparative Models of Transcendence

	Unotropic Model	Holotropic Model
What is transcended (common to both models)?	Ego or self-identification	Ego or self-identification
What is transcended (model-specific)?	The Many (transcended to The One)	The One/Many Game
Ultimate state	One, formless, empty	Full, integrated, wholeness, inclusive, connected, able to embrace both Oneness and Manyness
Nature of reality	Chain-of-being; ladder; everything but the “top” is illusion	Fully integrated wholeness; holographic information storage. There is no illusion—everything is equally real, but with various manifestations
Nature of the Many	Illusion	Manifestation
Relation of the body to the experience of transcendence	Body-as-portal	Body-as-involved
Therapeutic implications	There is a therapy for each level of the spectrum (of the chain-of-being). Epistemological.	Moving toward a holotropic state—unveiling the Perfection. Ontological.

Table 2: The Seven Major Chakras

Chakra	Location	Principle	Tattva	Sense
Sahasara	crown	Sat		
Ajna	eyebrows	Cit	Mahat	mind
Visuddhi	throat	Ananda	ether	hearing
Anahata	heart	Vijnana	air	touch
Manipura	navel	Manas	fire	sight
Svadhithana	sex	Prana	water	taste
Muladhara	coccyx	Anna	earth	smell

Table 3: The Vajrayana Chakra System

Chakra	spokes (petals)	location	shape of center	color	body	activity	deities
Mahasukha chakra	32	head	Swabhavika- kaya	Triangular	white	body, waking	Wrathful
Sambhoga chakra	16	throat	circular	red	Sambhoga- kaya	speech, dreaming	Wisdom- holding
Dharma chakra	8	heart	circular	white	Dharma-kaya	mind, sleeping	Peaceful
Nirmana chakra	64	navel	triangular	red	Nirmana- kaya		

Source: <http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/chakras/chakras-Tib.htm>

Table 4. Inclusion Criteria for Study

Definitions

Here we define the terms we are using for the purposes of this Study. It is important that you have a clear understanding of the term “Expanded Orgasm.” We therefore define it, along with other terms describing orgasmic states.

Regular Orgasm:

- An orgasm in which climax is the goal. The climax is usually a series of 10-12 contractions lasting several seconds. This climax is commonly called “going over the edge”.
- The climax feels extremely good, but usually lasts only for a few seconds, and there is often a physical and mental letdown period immediately afterwards. It can be an effective tension release and, of course, it can create a sense of bonding with your partner.
- Multiple Orgasms are a series of Regular Orgasms experienced over a short period of time.
- Extended Orgasms are Regular Orgasms where the length of time spent in climax is longer than the usual several seconds. We discuss it further after we describe Expanded Orgasm.

Expanded Orgasm

- Expanded Orgasm is a path of expanding both sensual awareness and consciousness while receiving genital stimulation. It uses one’s own pathways of body, mind, emotion, and spirit to create maximum expansion opportunities.
- The goal (and focus) of receiving Expanded Orgasm is simply to feel as much of that pleasure as possible.
- Think of filling a container in such a way that not only does the container become more full, *but also where the container itself expands*. The distinguishing expansion is in the *sense of space*. There is the sense of one’s entire body experiencing the orgasm, of reaching for an even larger being in which to put all that orgasmic pleasure. In contrast, Regular Orgasms are felt primarily in the physical domain.
- Expanded Orgasms are an added dimension of experience during Regular, Multiple, and Extended Orgasm. A Regular Orgasm, for example, can also be an Expanded one. The expanded experience is felt in the body, mind, emotions, and spirit, all at once. The focus is on the entire experience, and not just going over the edge.
- Expanded Orgasm can happen almost immediately after the session begins, though it may occur later in the session, too. It starts when one becomes aware of the expansion occurring.

Extended and Expanded Orgasm

- Extended Orgasms are orgasms in which the length of climax is extended. They can last a minute, an hour, or even longer (with training).
- An Extended Orgasm is almost certainly going to be an Expanded one, as well.
- An Expanded Orgasm, in contrast, might be an Extended one; on the other hand, an Expanded Orgasm session might take an hour but the climax time could be relatively brief.
- One can also experience Multiple Extended Orgasms.

Other types of orgasm

- Other kinds of orgasms exist. For example, genital areas may be pleasurably stimulated, but there is no climax; or other areas of the body such as the nipples or ears are stimulated to climax. Orgasm can even occur just by thought alone.

Our definition of orgasm

- For our definition here, for both Regular and Expanded Orgasm, we will mean genital stimulation to climax. The climax can be of any length in time, and either single or multiple. Our key focus is on the sense of *expansion*. We don't wish to invalidate other types of orgasms, we just seek to limit our definition for this survey.
- For men, a climax is not the same thing as an ejaculation. It is possible to have a climax, with its contractions, without ejaculation, and this will be included in allowable types of orgasm in our survey.

Sources of orgasm experience

- For this study, we are accepting information that the receiver of orgasms has collected using any method of choice.
- Such methods may include: intercourse, manual stimulation, oral stimulation, and stimulation with a device, such as a waterhose or vibrator
- We call the people experiencing Expanded Orgasm “receivers” in this study.
- The receiver can refer to orgasms achieved with and without a partner.
- A “session” refers to an orgasmic experience with a clear beginning and end that the receiver chooses to define. It will include genital contact. A session may range from two minutes to three hours...but probably won't exceed these extremes by much.

Table 5: Data Collection Categories and Illustrative Questions

Items in *italics* represent examples of questions in their categories. Unless stated, responses are in Likert format:

- 1 never or hardly ever true
- 2 true sometimes
- 3 true about half the time
- 4 true most of the time
- 5 true all of the time
- n/a no opinion or not applicable

In most cases, each category has more questions than are listed here in this illustration. A complete survey example can be found at the end of this thesis.

Effects of EO during the experience

Changes in sensory perception

Have you experienced tastes, sounds, visions, smells or sensations that are “out of the ordinary”—e. g., highly intensified or otherwise altered?

Changes in your thought process

Have you expanded your viewpoint more to include the opposite viewpoint?

Changes in your emotional process

Have you confronted and released memories that would normally be too intense to even think about?

Increased awareness of yourself as a body/mind unit

Have you experienced identifying and working through blocked energies stored in the body such as pain, tightness, or constrictions?

Have you experimented with deliberate breathing to enhance your experience of EO?

Expanded awareness of the world around you

Have you experienced guidance and wisdom that have changed or enlarged your perspectives of life on earth?

Metaphysical

Have you experienced psychospiritual birth?

Synchronicities and non-local events

Do you experience two levels of consciousness, one the ordinary and the other the non-ordinary?

Archetypal images

Do you experience images of genitals, sexual union, sexual fluids, and so on related to sex, sexuality, and pleasure through images, sounds, or other means?

Transcendental experiences

Have you had out of body experiences, or remote viewing?

Participation in an act of divine creation

In EO, do you experience yourself as a direct participant in the universal process of creation?

Access to the Divine

Do you feel that you have experienced a reality where there is no illusion of a separate space any more?

Contact with the Divine

Have you experienced that, as personal boundaries dissolve, you merge with the Divine?

“Normal” vs. EO states

Compared to how you feel normally, what physical effects do you typically experience during EO?

More pleasure

More increase in energy

More progressively deep and relaxing abdominal breathing

Compared to how you feel normally, what mental effects have you experienced during EO?

Greater clarity

Greater acceptance of others

Greater extra-sensory perception

Compared to how you feel normally, what emotional effects have you experienced during EO?

Release of negative emotional energies

More optimism about your life

Compared to how you feel normally, what spiritual effects have you experienced during EO?

More of a sense that you and your partner are one being sharing the same experience

More merging with the Divine and leaving all sense of self behind

Immediate and long-term effects

Your personality immediately after practicing EO

Have your feelings about yourself improved?

Do you find yourself being a more compassionate person?

Your personality, over the long term

Do you find yourself being a nicer person?

Your relationships

Immediately following EO, do you find your relationship(s) has (have) improved?

Over the long term, do you find your relationship(s) has (have) improved?

Your spirituality

Has your practice of EO contributed to your spirituality over the immediate term?

Your continuing practice plans

Do you plan to practice EO regularly in the foreseeable future?

Other

Would you call EO a bona fide spiritual path?

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

N = 44 (22 men, 22 women)

Please see complete survey for full question text

<i>Parameter</i>	Range	Mean	Median	S. D.
<i>Age</i>	Group: 32-66 yr M: 32-65 F: 33-60	Group: 50.6 M: 52.7 F: 48.5	Group: 52.0 M: 54.0 F: 48.0	Group: 7.3 M: 7.2 F: 4.1
# EO partners past yr	1-20	5.9	5.0	4.9
Age first reg orgasm	4-27	13.9	13.0	5.6
Age first exp orgasm	15.56	39.7	41.0	10.8
% of orgasms that are EO	10-100	66.1	77.5	30.8
Shortest time in EO	0.2-60 min	9.0	3.0	12.1
Longest time in EO	0.3-156 hr	7.2	3.0	23.8
Average time in EO	0.02-6.0 hr	0.9	0.5	1.1
Experienced EO with a partner	0-100%	66.3	75.0	27.1
EO by self via manual stim	0-100%	57.4	60.0	39.0
EO by self via device	0-100%	27.9	7.5	34.0
EO w partner via manual stim	0-99%	36	35.0	26.4
EO w partner via oral stim	0-80%	21.7	15.0	21.4
EO w partner via intercourse	0-100%	36.2	30.0	28.9
EO w partner via device	0-75%	3.9	0	11.7
<i>Changes in Thought Processes</i>				
Flooded w new info on unconscious dynamics?	1-5	2.9	3.0	1.1
Expanded viewpoint to include opposite?	1-5	3.0	3.0	1.1
Noticed creative approaches?	1-5	3.3	3.0	1.2
<i>Changes in Emotional Processes</i>				
Intense emotions?	2-5	4.1	4.0	0.9
Intense positive emotions?	3-5	4.4	4.0	0.6
Intense negative emotions?	1-3	1.4	1.0	0.6
Released memories normally too painful?	1-5	2.2	2.0	13.
Increased love toward self?	1-5	4.2	4.0	1.0
Increased love to others?	1-5	4.2	4.0	0.9

Table 6

<i>Increased Awareness of Self as a Body/Mind Unit</i>				
More awareness of physical processes?	2-5	4.2	4.0	0.8
ID and work through blocked energies, eg pain?	1-5	2.9	3.0	1.3
Breathing link to consciousness?	1-5	4.2	5.0	1.1
Entered “no breathing?”	1-5	2.4	2.0	1.1
Experimented w deliberate breathing to enhance EO?	1-5	3.7	4.0	1.2
<i>Expanded Awareness of World Around You</i>				
Experienced psychospiritual death?	1-5	2.1	2.0	1.2
Experienced unconditional love?	2-5	3.9	4.0	1.1
No boundaries experience?	1-5	3.4	4.0	1.2
Creating at higher and lower levels simultaneously?	1-5	3.6	4.0	1.2
Mind reading, etc?	1-5	2.9	2.5	1.3
Resolved paradoxes?	1-5	3.0	3.0	1.3
<i>Archetypal Images</i>				
Experience images of sex?	1-5	2.2	2.0	1.2
Experience religious images?	1-5	2.3	2.0	1.1
Experience creatures?	1-4	1.7	2.0	0.8
<i>Transcendental Experiences</i>				
Out of body experiences?	1-5	2.3	2.0	1.1
Resolved meaning of life?	1-5	3.1	3.0	1.2
<i>Participation in Act of Divine Creation</i>				
Experience self as participant in Creation?	1-5	3.2	3.0	1.6
<i>Access to the Divine</i>				
Experienced no separate space?	1-5	3.3	3.6	1.3
Experienced no time?	2-5	3.7	4.0	1.1
Are you on path to realization of Divine?	2-5	4.1	4.0	1.0
<i>Contact with Divine</i>				
Merge with Divine?	1-5	3.5	4.0	1.2
Witness to the Divine?	1-5	3.4	3.0	1.2
Identify w “the void?”	1-5	3.0	3.0	1.2

Table 6

<i>Physical Effects Compared to “Normal” – <u>During EO</u></i>				
More pleasure	4-5	4.8	5.0	4.0
More relaxation	1-5	4.4	5.0	0.8
More heightened sensations	2-5	4.3	5.0	0.9
More increased energy	3-5	4.5	5.0	0.7
More temporary pain relief	2-5	4.1	4.0	1.1
More energy beyond body	2-5	4.4	5.0	0.9
More abdominal breathing	1-5	4.0	4.0	1.2
<i>Mental Effects Compared to “Normal” – <u>During EO</u></i>				
Greater clarity	1-5	3.9	4.0	1.1
Greater creativity	2-5	3.8	4.0	0.9
Greater self acceptance	3-5	4.5	5.0	0.7
Greater acceptance of others	3-5	4.2	4.0	0.6
Greater ESP	1-5	3.8	4.0	1.2
Immediate-term contribution to positive quality of life	2-5	4.5	5.0	0.7
Long-term contribution to positive quality of life	1-5	4.5	5.0	0.8
<i>Emotional Effects Compared to “Normal” – <u>During EO</u></i>				
Release negative emotions	1-5	3.3	4.0	0.3
Release positive emotions	2-5	4.2	4.0	0.8
More optimism	2-5	4.4	5.0	0.8
Ecstasy	2-5	4.7	5.0	0.7
<i>Emotional Effects Compared to “Normal” – <u>During EO</u></i>				
You & partner sharing one experience	1-5	3.8	4.0	1.1
Perfection in own being mirroring the Divine	1-5	3.8	4.0	1.2
Sense of perfection in world mirroring Divine	1-5	3.5	4.0	1.2
Merging w Divine not retaining sense of self	1-5	3.2	3.0	1.3
Merging w Divine yet retaining sense of self	1-5	3.4	3.0	1.3

Table 6

<i>Health</i>				
EO contributed to well being over immediate term?	2-5	4.4	5.0	0.8
EO contributed to well being over long term?	2-5	4.6	5.0	0.7
<i>Personality Immediately After EO</i>				
Feeling about self improved	2-5	4.4	4.0	0.7
Nicer person?	3-5	4.4	4.0	0.5
More fulfilled?	4-5	4.6	5.0	0.5
More compassionate?	2-5	4.3	4.0	0.6
More loving?	1-5	4.7	5.0	0.7
<i>Personality Over Long Term</i>				
Feelings about self improved	3-5	4.5	5.0	0.6
Nicer person?	3-5	4.4	5.0	0.7
More fulfilled?	3-5	4.5	5.0	0.6
More compassionate?	2-5	4.3	4.0	0.7
More loving?	3-5	4.5	5.0	0.6
<i>Relationships</i>				
Improved immed after EO?	2-5	4.3	4.0	0.7
Improved long-term?	1-5	4.2	4.0	0.8
More turned on to partner after receiving EO?	1-5	4.3	4.5	1.0
<i>Spirituality</i>				
EO contributed to spirituality immediate term?	2-5	4.2	4.0	0.9
EO contributed to spirituality over long term?	2-5	4.3	5.0	0.9
<i>Continuing Practice Plans</i>				
Plan to practice EO in foreseeable future?	2-5	4.7	5.0	0.6
Plan to practice EO rest of life?	1-5	4.6	5.0	0.8
Plan to develop EO more?	1-5	4.5	5.0	0.9
EO a bona fide spiritual path?	2-5	4.5	5.0	0.8

Table 6

Table 7. Comparative Statistics

N = 44 (22 men, 22 women)

This table shows, in each comparison category, only results that attained statistical significance ($p < 0.05$)

Gender

<i>Men (M) vs. Women (F)</i>		
<i>Parameter</i>	Group Means	Significance
First orgasm—any type, yr	M 11.3 F 18.0	0.001
Experience EO w partner (instead of with self), %	M 58.2 F 74.4	0.046
When w partner, likelihood of experiencing EO by intercourse, %	M 47.0 F 25.4	0.011
Expand viewpoint to include opposite, Likert	M 2.6 F 3.3	0.021
Experience intense negative emotions, Likert	M 1.1 F 1.6	0.023
Confront and release memories during EO, Likert	M 1.8 F 2.7	0.022
Feel on path of Divine realization during EO, Likert	M 4.4 F 3.8	0.048

Number of EO Partners in Past Year

<i>0-5 (Few) vs. 6 or more (Many)</i>		
<i>Parameter</i>	Group Means	Significance
In self-practice, likelihood of using self-stim, %	Few: 46.9 Many 78.5	0.013
Feel increased self love during EO, Likert	Few: 4.5 Many 3.9	0.049
Felt nicer after EO, Likert	Few: 4.6 Many 4.1	0.017
Felt more fulfilled after EO, Likert	Few: 4.7 Many 4.3	0.015

Number of Years Engaged in EO

<i>< 10 vs. 10 or more</i>		
<i>Parameter</i>	Group Means	Significance
Experimented with deliberate breathing to enhance EO experience, Likert	< 10: 3.2 ≥ 10: 4.1	0.023
Experience two levels of awareness, Likert	< 10: 2.7 ≥ 10: 3.5	0.036
Witness to the Divine, Likert	< 10: 2.9 ≥ 10: 3.8	0.022

Favorite Method

Manual (M) vs. Intercourse I)

<i>Parameter</i>	Group Means	Significance
Experienced guidance/wisdom during EO, Likert	I: 4.1 M: 3.1	0.045
Experienced loss of personal boundaries, Likert	I: 4.0 M: 3.1	0.046
Out of body experiences, Likert	I: 3.0 M: 1.9	0.016
Experience Divine realization, Likert	I: 4.5 M: 3.5	0.023
A sense of perfection in self mirroring the perfection of the Divine, Likert	I: 4.2 M: 3.3	0.031
A sense of perfection in self in the world mirroring the perfection of the Divine, Likert	I: 4.2 M: 3.2	0.008
Experienced improved interpersonal relationships following EO, Likert	I: 4.7 M: 4.2	0.045
More meeting the Divine yet retaining awareness of one's individual being, Likert	I: 3.8 M: 2.7	0.026
Likely to continue to develop their practice, Likert	I: 4.2 M: 4.8	0.033

Use of Breathing as a Way to Enhance EO

Half the time or less (infrequent) vs. Usually or always (frequent)

<i>Parameter</i>	Group Means	Significance
Likelihood of using manual stimulation (as opposed to a device) to achieve EO when alone, %	Infrequent: 32.9 Frequent: 68.9	0.003
Likelihood of achieving EO with intercourse when with a partner, %	Infrequent: 23.5 Frequent: 42.2	0.045
Finding their viewpoint expanding to include the opposite viewpoint, Likert	Infrequent: 3.5 Frequent: 2.7	0.017
More likely to experience intense negative emotions during EO (compared to "normal"), Likert	Infrequent: 1.7 Frequent: 1.2	0.017
More likely to confront intense memories, Likert	Infrequent: 1.7 Frequent: 1.2	0.023
More awareness of physical processes, Likert	Infrequent: 3.9 Frequent: 4.4	0.026
Feel on path of Divine realization, Likert	Infrequent: 3.5 Frequent: 4.4	0.009
Experienced meeting the Divine while in EO, Likert	Infrequent: 2.8 Frequent: 3.7	0.041

Table 7

Footnotes

1. This can be confusing. In Wilber's model, one transcends to *higher* levels of consciousness by going *down* the Spectrum. He adopted this model in order to demonstrate the decreasing (lower or narrower) numbers of splits that occurs as one approaches a unitive state. However, since in most places, we commonly discuss transcendence as a process of reaching "higher" consciousness, please keep this special terminology in mind. We italicize Wilber's directions to promote clarity.

2. Saivism's followers rebelled against the rigid caste systems, the discrimination of women, and the notion that only those with money could gain access, via priests, training and education, to God.

For much of the time since its popularity in the last part of the first millennium A.D., Saivism, as well as other forms of Tantra, have been practiced in secret underground rituals. Its practitioners were considered outcastes, for reasons that make as much sense today as they did then. Some of the very core principles of Tantra (the world is divine, men and women are to be equally worshipped, as two poles that together bring enlightenment, and that sex can be sacred), remove the need for religious intermediaries, and even abolish many of the taboos that society uses to control people. It is only recently that Tantra is making a strong resurgence worldwide.

3. Information drawn from personal experiences. Many Tantra teachers will teach this. Bodhi Avanasha is said to teach this in her "Jewel in the Lotus" Tantra." A typical Tantra class recently advertised the beefiest of the Cobra Breath as follows: Safely activate Kundalini; Open your heart to infinite love; Discover how to generate and transmute sexual energy; Discover how to be transcendent and orgasmic simultaneously;

Unfold the Divine in yourself and your partner; Acquire the most powerful techniques available for Evolution, Empowerment and Enlightenment; Transform lovemaking into Divine communion; and Unify your sexual and spiritual selves! (Jade Garden Tantra Center)

4. In much the same way that the quantum wave function that gives the probability of the particle's state can be related to the particle's physical state. Physicists do not deal with physical matter since they have no way of controlling it; instead, they deal with expectancies, tendencies, and probabilities, as if they were fields floating "out there" in space. (Wolf, p. 215-216).

5. The perinatal realm is a realm defined by Grof to be one of four Matrices containing archetypal experiences related to the actual physical birth process. In this realm, one goes through many experiences, which range from terrifying to blissful. The perinatal realm is defined in more detail in Grof. (1998) This species-mind can be conceived of having a massive COEX (Holographic Condensed Experience) system consisting of Meta-Matrices. To the extent individuals tap in to the species-mind during NDEs and other experiences, they heal not only a part of their own individual story, but contribute to the evolution of the planetary consciousness itself. (Bache, 2000, p. 115)

References

- American Heritage Dictionary (Unabridged)*. (3rd ed.). (1992). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Anand, M. (1989). *The art of sexual ecstasy: The path of sacred sexuality for western lovers*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher.
- Austin, James H., M.D. (1998). *Zen and the brain*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bache, C. M. (2000). *Dark night, early dawn: Steps to a deep ecology of mind*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Brauer, A. P., & Brauer, D. J., (1990). *The ESO ecstasy program: Better, safer sexual intimacy and extended orgasmic response*. New York: Warner Books.
- Bruyere, R. (1991). *Wheels of light: Chakras, auras, and the healing energy of the body* (2nd ed.). New York: Fireside Press.
- Bucke, R. M. (1961). *Cosmic consciousness: A study in the evolution of the human mind*. Secaucus, NJ: The First Citadel Press.
- Burrow, B. (March 8, 1999). *Pauli -Jung anticipate psychophysical theory by 50 years*. Available: HTTP: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~psysc/psychoanalytic-studies/msg00153.html>
- (1998). *Carl Jung, psychiatrist*. Available HTTP: <http://www.who2.com/carljung.html>
- Capra, F. *The Tao of physics revisited: A conversation with Fritjof Capra conducted by Renee Weber*. In Wilber, K. (1982). *The holographic paradigm and other paradoxes: Exploring the leading edge of science*, ed. by Ken Wilber, Boulder, CO: Shambhala Press

Chia, M. (1993). *Awaken healing light of the Tao*. Huntington, NY: Healing Tao Books.

Collinge, W. (1998). *Subtle energy: Awakening to the unseen forces in our lives*. New York: Warner Books.

Conger, J. P. (1988). *Jung & Reich: the body as shadow*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Cozort, D. (1999). *Vajrayana Tantric Buddhism*. Available: HTTP: <http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/Buddhism/Vajrayana.htm>

Crenshaw, T. L. (1996). *The alchemy of love and lust: How our sex hormones influence our relationships*. New York: Pocket Books.

Da, Free John (a.k.a. Adi Da) (1991). *The dawn horse testament, new standard edition*. Clearlake, CA: The Dawn Horse Press.

Douglas, N., & Slinger, P. (1979). *Sexual secrets: The alchemy of ecstasy*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books.

Dunn, M. E., & Trost, J. E. (1989). *Male multiple orgasms: a descriptive study*. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 18 (5), 377-387.

Dyczkowski, M. S. G. (1987). *The doctrine of vibration: An analysis of the doctrines and practices of Kashmir Shaivism*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Eisler, R. (1995). *Sacred pleasure: Sex, myth, and the politics of the body- New paths to power and love*. San Francisco: Harper.

Eliade, M. (1970). *Yoga immortality and freedom*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Feuerstein, G. (Ed.). (1989). *Enlightened sexuality: Essays on body-positive sexuality*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Feuerstein, G. (1992). *Sacred sexuality: Living the vision of the erotic spirit*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc.
- Fisher, S. (1973). *The female orgasm: Psychology, physiology, fantasy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gerber, R. (1988). *Vibrational medicine: New choices for healing ourselves*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Bear & Co.
- Gergen, K. (1991). *The saturated self: Dilemmas of identity in contemporary life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Greenwell, B. (1990). *Energies of transformation: A guide to the kundalini process*. Cupertino, CA: Shakti River Press.
- Grof, S. (1988). *Modern consciousness research and human survival*. In S. Grof (Ed.), *Human survival and consciousness evolution*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Grof, S. (1998). *The cosmic game: Explorations of the frontiers of human consciousness*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Grof, S., & Bennet, H. Z. (1993). *The holographic mind: The three levels of human consciousness and how they shape our lives*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Gumbutas, M. (1992). *The gods and goddesses of old Europe, 7000-3500 B.C.* Berkeley: University of California Press
- Haste, H. (1994). *The Sexual metaphor: Men, women and the thinking that makes the difference*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hickey, T. (April 18, 1999). *Mystical elements in early Christianity*. Available
HTTP: http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/christianmysticism/mystic_Christianity.htm

Hughes, J. (1999). *Altered states. Creativity under the influence*. New York: Ivy
Press Limited, 1999

Hyatt, C. (1996). *Secrets of western tantra: The sexuality of the middle path* (2nd
ed.). Tempe, AZ: New Falcon Press.

Jade Garden Tantra Center. Tantric Cobra Breath Workshops. Available: HTTP:
<http://www.jadegardentantra.com/cobrabreath.htm>

Jung, C. G. (1960). Synchronicity: An acausal connecting principle. In *The
collected works of C. G. Jung: vol. 4. The structure and dynamics of the psyche* (R. F. C.
Hull, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kazlev, M A. (1999a). *Acosmism*. Available: HTTP:
<http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/worldviews/acosmism.htm>

Kazlev, M A. (1999b). *Dualism*. Available HTTP:
<http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/worldviews/dualism.htm>

Kazlev, M A. (1999c). *Jung's conception of the collective unconscious*. Available
HTTP: http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/psychology/Jung/collective_unconscious.html

Kazlev, M A. (1999d). *Panentheism*. Available HTTP:
<http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/worldviews/panentheism.html>

Kazlev, M A. (1999e). *Principle of downward causation*. Available: HTTP:
http://www.kheper.auz.com/realities/emanation/downward_causation.htm

Kazlev, M. A. (1999f). *Quietist Taoism*. Available HTTP:
<http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/Taoism/index.html>

- Kazlev, M A. (2000a). *Kabalistic theology: the ten sefirot*. Available HTTP:
<http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/Kabbalah/theology.htm>
- Kazlev, M. A. (2000c). *Mystical elements in early Christianity*. Available: HTTP:
http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/psychology/Jung/collective_unconscious.html
- Kazlev, M A. (2000b). *Pantheism*. Available HTTP:
<http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/worldviews/pantheism.htm>
- Kazlev, M.A. (2000c). *Primary Chakras*.
<http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/chakras/primary.html>
- Kazlev, M.A., (2000d) *Vajrayana Tantric Buddhism*
<http://www.kheper.auz.com/topics/Buddhism/Vajrayana.htm>
- Krishna, G. (1967). *Kundalini: The evolutionary energy in man*. Boulder, CO:
Shambhala.
- Krishna, G. (1984). *Higher consciousness: The evolutionary thrust of kundalini*
(2nd ed.). New York: Kundalini Research Foundation.
- Kundalini Research Foundation. (November 17, 1999). *About the kundalini
paradigm*, Available HTTP:
http://www.renature.com/KRF/about_kundalini_paradigm.html
- Leonard, G. (1989). *Erotic love as surrender*. In Feuerstein, G. (Ed.),
Enlightened sexuality: Essays on body-positive sexuality (pp. 79-81). Freedom, CA: The
Crossing Press.
- Lowen, A. (1975). *Bioenergetics: The revolutionary therapy that uses the
language of the body to heal the problems of the mind*. New York: Penguin.
- Maines, R. (1999). *The technology of orgasm: "Hysteria," the vibrator, and
women's sexual satisfaction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Masters, W. H., Johnson, V. E., & Kolodny, R. (1988). *Masters and Johnson on sex and human loving*: Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Muktananda, Swami. (1983). *Secrets of the Siddhas*. South Fallsburg, NY: SYDA Foundation.

Muller-Ortega, P. E. (1989). *The triadic heart of Siva: Kaula tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the non-dual Saivism of Kashmir*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Mumford, J. (1997). *A chakra & kundalini workbook: Psycho-spiritual techniques for health, rejuvenation, psychic powers, and spiritual realization*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications.

Mumford, J. (2000). *Ecstasy through tantra* (8th ed.). St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications.

Nitschke, G. (1995). *The silent orgasm: From transpersonal to transparent consciousness*. Italy: Taschen

Osborne, R. (1993). *Freud for beginners*. New York: Writers and Readers Publishing Company, Inc.

Otto, H. A. (1999). *Liberated orgasm: The orgasmic revolution*. Silverado, CA: Liberating Creations, Inc.

Patterson, S. & Meyer, M. *The scholars' translation of the Gospel of Thomas*. Available HTTP: <http://www.miseri.edu/users/davies/thomas/Trans.htm>. Cited with permission from: (1994). *The complete Gospels: Annotated scholars version*. (2nd ed.). Polebridge Press.

- Peay, B; *Tantric balancing through massage*. Available: HTTP:
<http://hmt.com/kundalini/tantrabk.html>
- Plotkin, E. (2000). *Four yogas of enlightenment*. New Jersey: Self-published.
- Rajneesh, Bhagwan Shree. (1983). *Tantra, spirituality, and sex* (2nd ed.).
Rajneeshpuram, OR: Rajneesh Foundation International.
- Rawson, P. (1973). *Tantra: the Indian cult of ecstasy*. London: Thames and
Hudson.
- Reich, W. (1973). *The function of the orgasm: Sex-economic problems of
biological energy* (2nd ed.). New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Ring, K. (1984). *Heading toward omega: In search of the meaning of the near
death experience..* New York: Quill Press.
- Rothberg, D. & Kelly, S. (Eds.). (1998). *Ken Wilber in dialog: Conversations
with leading transpersonal thinkers*. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.
- Sawrey-Cookson, R. (1995). *A first introduction to Subud*. Available: HTTP:
<http://www.subudusa.org/intro.htm>
- Schnarch, D. (1997). *Passionate marriage: Love, sex, and intimacy in emotionally
committed relationships*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Shaw, M. (1992). *Passionate enlightenment: Women in tantric Buddhism*.
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Shlain, L. (1991). *Art & physics: Parallel visions in space, time, & light*.
New York: William Morrow and Company.
- Sky, M. (1993). *Sexual peace: Beyond the dominator virus*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear
&Company Publishing.

- Sokol, D. (1989). *Spiritual breakthroughs in sex*. In Feuerstein, G. (Ed.), *Enlightened sexuality: Essays on body-positive sexuality* (p. 119). Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Talbot, M. (1992). *The holographic universe* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper Perennial.
- Tart, C. P. (1989). *Open mind, discriminating mind: Reflections on human possibilities*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Thompson, W. I. (1996). *Artifacts and texts in the evolution of consciousness*. New York: St. Martins Griffin.
- Thompson, W. I. (1996). *The time falling bodies take to light: Mythology, sexuality, and the origins of culture* (2nd ed.). New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Walsh, R., & Vaughn, F. (Eds.). (1993). *Paths beyond ego: The transpersonal vision*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher.
- Whipple, B., & Komisaruk, O. G. (1992). *Physiological correlates of imagery-induced orgasm in women*. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 21(2), 121-133.
- White, J. (Ed.). (1974). *Frontiers of consciousness: The meeting ground between Inner and outer reality*. New York: Julian Press
- Wilber, K. (ed.) (1982). *The holographic paradigm and other paradoxes: exploring the leading edge of science*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Press
- Wilber, K. (1993). *The spectrum of consciousness* (2nd ed.). Wheaton, IL: Quest Books.
- Wilber, K. (1996). *A brief history of everything*, Boston: Shambhala Press.

Wilber, K. (1990). *Are the chakras real?* In J. White, (Ed.), *Kundalini: Evolution and enlightenment*. New York, Paragon House

Wolf, F. A. (1994). *The dreaming universe: A mind-expanding journey into the realm where psyche and physics meet*. New York: Touchstone.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT