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**SEXUALITY, CAKRAS,  
AND “RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS” :  
synthesising  
a Western psychology and an Eastern philosophy**

by

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(ODNNEA001)

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of  
the degree of  
Master of Arts in Religious Studies.

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**Compulsory Declaration**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced

Signature:

Signed by candidate

Date: 8 February, 2002

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## Abstract

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The hypothesis for this dissertation is that (a) there is an increasing call for something called 'raising consciousness', and (b) sexuality and spirituality are integral to the process. It is, however, argued that sexuality in its relationship with consciousness is incompletely considered in the mainstream of academic and lay discourse; and seems to not be accorded a positive position in the problematic landscape of human affairs. In this investigation, sex, gender, sexpression (the link between the previous two), sexuality, and spirituality are shown to be generally confused and in need of differentiation, and re-integration into a coherent unit. Then the Indian *cakra* system is invoked as a metaphysical embodiment of consciousness raising, in which sexuality plays an animating role. Attention is given to an observed mythopoiesis of the New Age phenomenon in which the *tantric* system of the *cakras* is constantly being used to ground consciousness activities. The argument is then extended to Erik Erikson, a Western developmental psychologist, to demonstrate sexuality and spirituality as hidden but essential components in his theory of the Life Cycle, and, by extension, to psychosocial functioning. Finally, one of the *aṣṭāṅgas* of the *yogasūtras* of the Eastern sage, Patañjali, is evaluated. It is shown that the *yogasūtras*, contrary to popular belief do not advocate ascetism but rather asceticism and it is this that provides a consciousness raising *praxis* for the previous arguments. Additionally, it is demonstrated that both Erikson and Patañjali share complementary paradigms: Erikson provides a modern developmental theoretical base and Patañjali a viable practical method in support. This is especially noticeable when both are viewed through the eyeglass of the *cakras*. The conclusion brings these threads together to propose a conclusion that this dissertation is in fact a work-in-progress but provides a basis for a model for viewing sexuality and spirituality in the context of human functioning; which functioning including such diverse activities as economics, religion, and politics.

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To all these people I extend the greeting,

*namaste*



Neal O'Donnell  
Cape Town

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## Glossary

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<i>ādhibhautika</i>	physical obstruction to spiritual practice
<i>ādhidaivika</i>	genetic ('fate') obstruction to spiritual practice
<i>ādihātmika</i>	self-inflicted obstruction to spiritual practice
<i>ājñā</i>	sixth <i>cakra</i> *; situated in the region of the brow, between the eyes
<i>ālasya</i>	idleness
<i>āsana</i>	third element of <i>yogasūtras</i> * of Patañjali; relates to body exercise and physical control
<i>āśramādharma</i>	duties applicable to the four stages of life - <i>brahmacaryāśrāma</i> *, <i>gṛhastāśrāma</i> *, <i>vānaprasthāśrāma</i> *, <i>sannyāśrāma</i> *
<i>āvidyā</i>	ignorance; lack of wisdom; subject to illusion
<i>ahaṁkara</i>	Ego-principle; faculty of <i>manas</i> * (mind) that effects differentiation
<i>ahaṁkāra</i>	ego-principle; related to 'false' ego of inauthenticity
<i>ahiṁsā</i>	non-violence; sub-element (first) of <i>yama</i> * <i>aṅga</i> *
<i>alabdhabhūmikatva</i>	missing the point; misunderstanding
<i>anavasthi</i>	inability to maintain progress
<i>anavasthitatavāni</i>	lack of perseverance
<i>antarāyāḥ</i>	impediments; obstacles
<i>anāhata</i>	fourth <i>cakra</i> *; situated in the region of the chest
<i>aparigraha</i>	non-covetousness; sub-element (fifth) of <i>yama</i> * <i>aṅga</i> *
<i>ascēsis</i>	discipline; self-control
ascetism	celibacy; asexuality
<i>asteya</i>	non-stealing; sub-element (third) of <i>yama</i> * <i>aṅga</i> *
<i>avirati</i>	sense gratification
<i>aviśeṣa</i>	undefined states of Being; includes <i>ahaṁkara</i> *, alchemical elements (earth, water, fire, air, æther), and physical attributes of sound, pressure, light, liquidity, solidity
<i>aṅgamejayatva</i>	tremors; physical unsteadiness
<i>aṣṭāṅga</i>	eight basic 'limbs' or elements of the <i>yogasūtras</i> * of Patañjali

Being	that part of the individual pertaining to Soul*, Self*, or participation in the Divine
<i>bhagavadgītā</i>	central scriptural text in modern Hinduism; part of the epic known as the <i>mahabharāta</i>
<i>bhrāntidarśana</i>	living in a world of delusion
<i>brahmacarya</i>	truthfulness; sub-element (fourth) of <i>yama* aṅga*</i>
<i>brahmacaryāśrāma</i>	period of being a student, which includes submission to the teacher and celibacy
<i>buddhi</i>	intelligence; a faculty of <i>manas*</i> (mind) which deals with discrimination; also creates <i>gestalt</i>
<i>cakra</i>	wheel, disk; station along the spine containing certain levels or forms of consciousness; see <i>mūlādhārā*</i> , <i>svādīṣṭhāna*</i> , <i>maṇipura*</i> , <i>anāhata*</i> , <i>vishudda*</i> , <i>ājñā*</i>
<i>citta</i>	consciousness; related to <i>puruṣa*</i>
<i>cittaprasādanam</i>	favourable disposition
<i>cittavṛttinirodhaḥ</i>	‘restraining the fluctuations of consciousness’; a pivotal point in the <i>yogasūtras*</i> of Patañjali
coitus	normally reserved for sexual intercourse, but here taken to denote sexual intimacy, ie. all those activities that could lead to orgasm or have orgasm as an end;
<i>daurmanasya</i>	dejection; despair
<i>dhāraṇyā</i>	sixth element of <i>yogasūtras*</i> of Patañjali; relates to developing concentration, perhaps <i>ekāgratā*</i>
<i>dhyāna</i>	seventh element of <i>yogasūtras*</i> of Patañjali; relates to developing the art of meditation
diaphragmatic barrier	constriction along the spiritual path as a result of ego-differentiation; the nexus between existence and Beingness; located in the <i>maṇipura/anāhata</i> junction ( <i>cakras</i> ), adolescence (Erikson), security/belonging transition (Maslow), <i>pratyāhāra</i> (Patañjali)
<i>duḥkha</i>	pain; suffering
<i>ekāgratā</i>	‘one-pointedness’;
epigenetic principle	principle that claims that physical and intellectual abilities emerge when the organism is physically and mentally ready to act with or upon them

<i>eros</i>	life-affirming principle; works in creative tension with <i>thanatos</i> *
Existence	that part of individual which arises as a result of being part of the world; that part that grows with differentiation from the environment; the self
Gender	masculine-feminine traits; Inter-personal interactions; generally related to that of male-female interactions, but here is extended to same-sex in order to include
<i>grhastāśrāma</i>	period of marriage and raising children
HOT consciousness	higher-order-thought consciousness; described by Rocco Gennaro as that thought which is applied to other thought, ie. second- or higher-order thought
<i>isvara pranidhana</i>	surrender of self to the Divine; sub-element of <i>niyama</i> * <i>aṅga</i> *
<i>kaivalya</i>	emancipation; state of aloneness; fourth <i>pāda</i> of <i>yogasūtras</i> of Patañjali
<i>kleṣa</i>	affliction
<i>kuṇḍalīnī</i>	(in classical <i>tantric</i> * theory) feminine principle lying in the <i>mūlādhārā</i> * <i>cakra</i> whose head blocks the central, <i>suṣumṇā</i> *, <i>nadi</i> causing diffusion of energy.
Life Cycle	Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, includes <i>epigenetic principle</i> *
<i>manas</i>	Mind; contains <i>buddhi</i> * and <i>ahaṁkāra</i> *
<i>maṇipura</i>	third <i>cakra</i> *; situated in the region of the solar plexus
<i>mokṣa</i>	liberation or release from <i>cakra</i> * of worldly life
<i>mūlādhārā</i>	first <i>cakra</i> *; in region of preineum
<i>namaste</i>	Indian greeting acknowledging existence of Divine in the Other
<i>niyama</i>	second element of <i>yogasūtras</i> * of Patañjali; comprises five sub-elements - <i>śuca</i> *, <i>santoṣa</i> *, <i>tapas</i> *, <i>svādhyāya</i> *, <i>īśvara pranñidhāna</i> *; relates to practices
<i>pāda</i>	'foot' or chapter of <i>yogasūtras</i> of Patañjali
<i>prakṛti</i>	matter; Nature
<i>pramāda</i>	pride
<i>prāṇāyāma</i>	fourth element of <i>yogasūtras</i> * of Patañjali; relates to breath exercise and control

<i>pratyāhāra</i>	fifth element of <i>yogasūtras*</i> of Patañjali; relates to withdrawal of senses from environment
<i>puruṣa</i>	Soul; original connection with the Divine
<i>sādhaka</i>	one indulging in spiritual practice
<i>sādhana</i>	set of practices; second <i>pāda</i> of <i>yogasūtras</i> of Patañjali
<i>sahasrara</i>	seventh <i>cakra*</i> ; situated in the region of the crown of the head; now more and more not recognised as a <i>cakra, per se</i>
<i>samādhi</i>	eighth element of <i>yogasūtras*</i> of Patañjali; relates to pure contemplation or absorption of consciousness in the Self*; first <i>pāda</i> of <i>yogasūtras</i> of Patañjali
<i>samkhya</i>	a branch of Indian philosophy
<i>samsaya</i>	lingering doubt; indecision
<i>samskāra</i>	subliminal traces of activity in consciousness; memories
<i>sannyāśrāma</i>	period of spiritual preparation for death
<i>santoṣa</i>	contentment; sub-element (second) of <i>niyama* aṅga*</i>
<i>satya</i>	truthfulness; sub-element (second) of <i>yama* aṅga*</i>
<i>śauca</i>	cleanliness; sub-element (first) of <i>niyama* aṅga*</i>
Sex	male-female attributes; Physical attributes of sexuality; also that related to coital-related activities
Sexpression	behaviours expressed; generally erotic* but not necessarily coitus*-related
Sexuality	An integral component of the individual psyche that arises as a result of reactions to embodiment, culture, socialisation, and ethical development
<i>siddhi</i>	spiritual power (clairvoyance, clairaudience, and others)
<i>styāna</i>	lack of interest; sluggishness
<i>svādhyāya</i>	study of Self* and scriptures; sub-element of <i>niyama* aṅga*</i>
<i>svādiṣṭhāna</i>	second <i>cakra*</i> ; situated in the region of the genitalia
<i>śvāsapraśvāsāḥ vikṣepa</i>	irregular breathing
<i>tantra</i>	branch of Indian philosophy and practice ( <i>vajrayāna</i> )
<i>tapas</i>	fervour or zeal; sub-element (third) of <i>niyama* aṅga*</i>
<i>thanatos</i>	life-denying principle; works in creative tension with <i>eros*</i>

<i>vibhūti</i>	powers or properties of yoga; third <i>pāda</i> of <i>yogasūtras</i> of Patañjali
<i>viksepa</i>	distraction
<i>viśeṣa</i>	defined states of Being*; includes five senses and ten sensory organs
<i>vishudda</i>	fifth <i>cakra</i> *; situated in the region of the throat
<i>vānaprasthāśrāma</i>	period of detachment from family (when children have been educated and are preparing to set out on their own)
<i>vṛtti</i>	fluctuations in consciousness
<i>vṛttisamskār</i> <i>āniśamcakram</i>	'wheel or cycle of <i>vṛttis</i> * creating <i>samskaras</i> *
<i>vyādhi</i>	physical disease
<i>yama</i>	first element of <i>yogasūtras</i> * of Patañjali; comprises five sub-elements - <i>ahiṃsā</i> *, <i>satya</i> *, <i>asteya</i> *, <i>brahmacarya</i> *, <i>aparigraha</i> *; relates to attitudes
<i>yogasūtras</i>	collection of aphorisms ( <i>sūtras</i> ) concerning the <i>yoga</i> philosophy; attributed to Patañjali
<i>yogin</i>	yogic adept

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### Notes on the use of Sanskrit

As this dissertation delves into a portion of Indian philosophy there will be the use of some transliteration of words from Sanskrit. In this it has been decided that :

- As there is a variation in transliteration styles in both the popular and academic discourse, spellings given in quoted text will be retained, but my use will try to stay as close as possible to my nascent understanding of the Sanskrit, as gleaned from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sanskritist, Sir Monier Monier-Williams
  - Sanskrit does not employ capitals, this will be continued. The names of persons are not italicised and have leading capitals in the transliteration; unless, that is, it refers to a principle, such as the *śiva* principle which complements the *śakti* principle.
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## Introduction

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The background to this dissertation has a long history and is based on interactions with abused women who were searching for redemption. What started out as routine therapy ended up in something quite different on a number of fronts. Firstly, there was a demand to facilitate an exploration of the psychotherapeutic paradigm in terms of spirituality; much of this being prompted by many of the New Age exhortations being bandied around at that time. A second requirement was that these 'spiritual' exhortations be suitably psychologised in order that they may be better understood. And, thirdly, both trends had to be applied to the reason for the interaction, a bruised sexuality. Hence, this dissertation, an outcome of these long ago interactions, is to be located in the field of psychology of religion, with the focus being sexuality and spirituality. Furthermore, the three elements will be conveyed on a vehicle of 'transcendence' or 'raising consciousness'. In other words, an urge to 'raising consciousness', as opposed to simply coping with sexual abuse, is a motivation for exploring these elements.

Raising consciousness is situated as a gel permeating through the discussion, but it is found that it is not altogether a happy term as it carries a measure of *nirvana*-ic promise, and, what is more, much seems to be projected into a rather leaky basket. Many lay-people working with the idea appear to hold a hypothesis that raising some kind of consciousness will remove the ills of their worlds. Not at all clear in their minds are such issues as : What is it that is being raised? Why is it being raised? If consciousness is in need of raising how did it get to where it is in the first place? and so on. Surely these and other questions can eventually be answered by each individual but it is interesting to note that the most fundamental question - what is consciousness? - is still being debated from a wide variety of perspectives, within the levels of laity, as well as amongst the scientists; people like Francis Crick now claim to hold great promise for 'taming' the 'problem of consciousness' when he claims that it can be approached through the visual system (Crick, 1997). This is not a

platform for scientific discourse as it is actually a ubiquitous wo/man-in-the-street who is overlooking the dissertation. The popular philosophy of this wo/man must, therefore, be accounted for and even used to guide the discourse, simply because the practical and broad-based concern for 'raising consciousness' in a spiritual and sexual sense is within the province of the 'common' person who has little contact, or even understanding of the thrills of cognitive science.

With this setting then one finds that consciousness is "...notoriously difficult to define, first because it refers to heterogeneous phenomena, and second because it is difficult to measure objectively." (Atkinson *et al*:372), and yet awareness of the phenomenon is a central concern with many people who are intent on improving an individual (or even community) quality of life. In the end, though, it would appear that, at the level of that wo/man, it is requisite to begin by clarifying the difference between a consciousness-of-something (like the body, for instance, or a tree) and some 'pure/r' consciousness, perhaps self-reflexive, which includes often in includes a nebulous element called 'intuition' (this process of separation of various levels of consciousness and/or intuition will appear in the discussion on Patañjali). In a spiritual sense, raising consciousness seems to be an elevation of awareness from a level of the mundane to a being-in-some-state of apperception that is possibly broader in scope. In contrast to the problems being experienced in cognitive science in finding a conceptual framework for the term, people involved in the task of improving a quality of life do not have too much hesitation in referring to some amorphous 'Being-ness,' which is associated with a 'raised consciousness,' a connection which, to them, makes sense of existence.

It looks as though people who are looking to the phenomenon for relief of the symptoms of an inauthentic life share two common features - a pervading distrust of the rational process, and a desire to bring a notion of intuition away from the periphery towards a centre-stage of mind-full-ness. A pervasive perspective for them is that rationality is often identified with patriarchy, and that being able to better

access 'intuition' would be a healing manoeuvre of achieving a balance of intuition and rationality. Further, it does appear that there is a differentiation to be made between intuition and inference, in which the former was seen and valued in terms expressed by Lisa Osbeck:

"The distinguishing mark of intuition (whether or not one accepts this as a legitimate phenomenon) is not that it involves unconscious processes but that it provides some form of cognitive acquisition that is *direct*, epistemologically irreducible and unjustifiable (as clearly expressed in depictions of intuition as providing *immediate, self-evident* understanding)." (Osbeck:244, emphases in original)

It is an 'immediate' and 'self-evident' understanding that allows some people to adopt a vision of being researchers of themselves (ie. producers of self-theory, rather than consumers), but with the distinction that primacy is to be given to a hermeneutical circle of *cycles* of interpretation, as Rosemarie Anderson understands transpersonal research (Anderson:online).

To explain all this a little better, Rocco Gennaro perhaps anticipates their 'experiments in truth' when he talks of a HOT (higher-order thought) theory of consciousness. Gennaro argues for levels of consciousness, or being-conscious/aware-of, the basal being that of a "...first order, world-directed state..."(Gennaro:108), that which is most evident in mundane affairs. He then notes that when attention is focussed on a desire (as he puts it, 'to finish this paper') there is a HOT consciousness directed at the consciousness of fingers pushing keys and symbols appearing on the screen of the computer (*ibid*:109). In the end, there develops a hierarchy of HOT's that can be brought to bear on the level at which one finds oneself. In the context of the people who have provided the impetus for this dissertation, however, there is felt to be some impediment or group of impedimenta to developing a sustained HOT that could lead them out of their apparent dilemma; some handicap that precluded access to a valued hierarchy of HOT's, which, by implication, would impact on action.

Just to add to the soup, because it is commonly believed that intuition indicates

contact with the Divine (or, to the 'Jungians,' access to the collective unconscious), the prize is a greater access to an intuitive input, or increasing levels of HOT's which lead eventually to an immediate contribution of the Divine in everyday concerns. It is noted that before this access can be effected there has to be a clearing of the impediment/impedimenta, which, it is reasoned, then allows for more effective higher-order thinking in terms of a rationality predicated by external objects which would facilitate the inclusion of intuitive thought (a more inward-looking activity). So the task ahead must be to establish a methodology that will straighten the path, fill the potholes, and negotiate routes around the brambles of 'pathology'. In the end, raising consciousness is seen as a releasing of energies that would improve apperception.

How to do this was a major constituent of the exploration. A general consensus is that looking for pathological roots is simplistic and, again, in the mode of being suspicious of the patriarchy and so rationality, fraught with the dangers of being off the mark (through, in the perceptions of the common wo/man, application of 'inappropriate' theoretical constructs). This then leads to a re-appraisal of existing constructs. While nowadays many are reading such authors as Carl Jung, Ken Wilber, and, of course, New Age psychologists and other 'enlightened' beings, there is a concomitant impetus to explore other religious traditions, not so much for the 'wisdom' that may or may not be inhere there, but for the mere fact of conducting a spiritual quest (perhaps there is also a smattering of the 'exotic Other' meandering through these efforts).<sup>1</sup> Hence the notion of combining spirituality and psychotherapy becomes an over-riding theme. Of course, there is always that other ingredient, the original reason for stepping out of the comfort zone, so to speak, which being an exploration of a sexuality that is usually post-traumatic. So in the end there is a range of determinants, sexuality, spirituality, psychology, and

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<sup>1</sup> Recently it was noted that a course on Ayurveda (Indian medicine), that is registerable in the same vein as medical and nursing practitioners, was teaching various aspects, notably some common symbols, of the *chakra* system. On enquiry the students were unable to relate the symbols given with the practice of Ayurveda.

consciousness, that are to be brought together by the individual into varying mixes of a hopefully happy outcome of raised consciousness.

In sum, raising consciousness is seen by more and more people as invested in a meaning in life, and as such is an impetus to exploring how it is to be achieved. Included in this is a 'realisation' that a systematic re-evaluation of impressions and prejudices in the domains of sexuality and spirituality becomes obligatory. It is this that comprises the present dissertation, and although consciousness is not to be more fully investigated it will stand in the background, with an omnipresent 'common wo/man' overseeing the discussion. Such discussion is predicated by a hypothesis that in order to raise a consciousness it is necessary to (a) examine and understand one's sexuality, (b) to examine and understand where this sexuality contributes in striving for a joy-full life, (c) what links, if any, there are with spirituality, and (d) what steps may be taken to achieve that life. This is the task ahead, which is set out as follows.

Firstly, chapter one ("Intra-personal nature of sexuality") approaches a difficulty of how to view sexuality and looks at a model which may address the problem. At the outset there is a perceived complication which speaks of a confusion of the roles of sex (such as identification with the body), sexual expression (sexpression, both physical and mental), gender (masculine-feminine discourse), and spirituality. The focus is on the interplay of these factors in identity formation and have nothing to do with power in a sense of Mary Daly, for instance. In this work then, in order to begin to offset perceived contradictions, it will be argued that sexuality, as a core concept, can, in fact, be regarded as an amalgam of all four of the above creating an intra-personal self-identification, which may or may not be symbolically significant, and, further, which is difficult to access. Both points require consideration as loss of symbolic significance, for instance, may indicate functional intrapsychic breakdown, and constraints to meaningful access allows abuse in the unsuspecting. It is intended that with this re-definition sexuality will be released from a genital domain to a

broader life-affirming, in this sense of the *erotic*, sphere of influence. There is, however, generally a difficulty for the individual in visualising the depths of sexuality, which leads to the next part of the hypothesis.

Chapter two (“Sexuality and the *cakras*”) tackles a method for dislodging *theoria* from the mind and bringing it metaphorically into the body. In so doing it is suggested that development of more effective HOT functioning could benefit from a sequential ‘feeling’ of ‘transcendence’; such feelings at times being confirmed by actual physical phenomena encountered during a therapeutic session. At these times (ie. during the consultations) there is often an opportunity to categorise in physical terms unsettling physical sensations that arise in specific body regions as a corollary of the therapy; such categorisation with body images being a manoeuvre which, it is often reported, ultimately assists in cultivating self-understanding. The model proposed here is taken from the Indian *tantric* tradition and is commonly referred to as the *cakras*, or, from another perspective, the *kundalīnī*. Interesting in the introduction of the *cakras* is that there are two clearly separate roads - the disciplined and mystical classical practice of antiquity and, more recently, a largely Western ‘psychological’ fabrication. Curiosity is further aroused when it is found that there is a measure of distortion in much Western interpretation of the classical model. Despite this, however, some New Age authors can be seen to be bringing a useful mythopoiesis to bear on the *cakras*. A mythopoiesis that seems to encourage a wider and deeper participation in the business of ‘raising consciousness.’ Having said this, there is a need to differentiate between perceptions of classical *cakra* theory and that of a Western formulation, and to be clear that in both the *cakras* themselves are theoretical constructs, although, as Ken Wilber argues, there is a reality in the personal experience of the various ‘consciousness’ associated with each *cakra*. Ultimately, then, the purpose for bringing the *cakras* to bear on any form of impulse towards transcendence is to facilitate and illustrate progress or regression - to ground the transcendental process into something as tangible as the body. Moreover, there is another focus of situating sexuality in a hierarchy of consciousness’; a focus that

takes sexuality out of the air and plants it firmly in the soil of Being and Existence (a spectrum to be assembled more fully throughout the discussion). As with the redefinition of sexuality, an introduction of *cakra* theory only goes part way to constructing a theory and praxis of transcendence. Still one needs to begin to understand the valences at play in a lifeline that requires transcendental effort. This is attempted in the next chapter

Chapter three (“Erik Erikson, sexuality, and the *cakras*”) is an outline of how un/healthy development of sexuality can be profitably explained through one developmental psychologist, Erik Erikson. Erikson has been found to be acceptable to those immersed in improving quality of life, often simply because he can be seen to be less ‘misogynistic’ than his mentor, Freud, and less esoteric than Freud’s peer, Jung. Furthermore, some people are able to plan and track their routes out of the conceptual woods in which they live by ‘remembering’ their childhood progress with the aid of the polarities in Erikson’s Life Cycle. It is also found that the Life Cycle is amenable to translation through the *cakras*. Themes of sexuality permeate through Erikson’s work and a combination of the Life Cycle with the *cakras* provides another means for grounding psycho-spiritual work. Additionally, although seen by many religiose as a secular psychologist (and a Freudian, to boot), strong threads of spirituality can be noted in his work. It is argued that finding a correlation between the *cakras* and the Life Cycle in a medium of spirituality is relatively uncomplicated and, it is further argued, intellectually respectable. At the risk of being repetitive, although the hypothesis has come somewhat down the road there is still one question remaining - what does one *do* with this knowledge, how can it be translated into actions that will provide a road out of the woods. There is adequate lighting but a path is still to be forged. This is the subject of the final section of the hypothesis.

Chapter four (“Patañjali, sexuality, and the *cakras*”) provides a strong practical model for beginning the journey. The *yogasūtras* attributed to Patañjali are seen to be a useful guide to achieving a wholesome transcendence devoid of excessive

religiosity. It will be shown that, unfortunately, there is some misunderstanding in the West (fuelled in part by certain ‘*gurus*’ who have taken to proselytising in Western countries) as to quite what the *yogasūtras* represent. This dissertation is concerned with advancing a foundation for a spiritual life, and so in the *cakras*, Erikson, and now in the *yogasūtras* it is the early elements that are the heart of the work. It argued that without any solid grounding in early development any attempts at higher techniques are pointless. A number of ‘re/searchers’, in fact, complain that attempts at ‘peace’ through Eastern meditation too often result in disappointment, and it can be found on closer examination that lack of grounding is often at the root of the discomfort. So referring once again to the suspicion of rationality (mainstream psychotherapy), the suggestion of *ahimsā* or non-violence (the first of Patañjali’s steps) tends to strike a chord with people who have lived a life of physical, mental, even spiritual turbulence. It is argued that this graduated spiritual discipline, *contra* the wisdom of the *gurus* with their meditative exclusivity, is the strength of Patañjali’s text. In other words, the *yogasūtras* clearly instill a realisation that meditation is part of a process and not an isolated activity, *sui generis*, as it were. In addition, it will be found that this formulation of the *aṣṭāṅgas* (originating some two millennia ago) dovetails effectively with a modern Erikson-ian Life Cycle, and is, like Erikson, well explicated by the *cakras*. With this then Patañjali provides an enhanced practical adjunct to the preceding theory. Actually, as will be seen, there is still enough theory in the *yogasūtras* to keep the mind busy.

Finally, having laid out the hypothesis, chapter five (“Summary: sexuality and spirituality”) intends to bring these strands together into what is seen as a cogent whole of *theoria* and *praxis*. In doing this it must be made plain that there is no real attempt at a finality of a conclusion. The subjects covered are immense, convoluted, and contested, and the best that can be hoped for now is to arrive at a conclusion that much more research beckons. In other words, it will be found that this is actually a work-in-progress, and will, it is hoped, continue to be so for many years.

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In summation, the purpose of the exercise in this dissertation is to deconstruct a genitalic view of sexuality and release a principle of psychospiritual creativity or *eros*. By referring to the a lens of the *cakras*, Erikson and Patañjali can be seen to bring the relationship between *eros* and *thanatos*, between life and death, into another light; the relationship being kinder to Existence and those involved. In the end it will be suggested that as this can be seen to be effective with the individual, and, so go one step further in a spurt of anticipation, that as communities are made up of individuals, the same principles can be applied there in exploring new political (in the broader sense) solutions.

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Chapter 1

The Intra-personal Nature of Sexuality

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## Introduction

This chapter provides a philosophical basis for one aspect of achieving transcendence, that of understanding one's own sexuality. Here argument will be presented for a clarification of the terms, sex, gender and sexuality by showing that (a) there is a generalised confusion around the terms and that (b) this confusion leads to an entrenchment of a Western patriarchal denial of the body, the feminine, thereby, it is argued, a psychic imbalance. Moreover, it will be proposed that a healthy appreciation of one's own sexuality is an integral and stabilising energy in the human psyche. In proposing a clarification of the terms it is understood that there may well be a measure of boundary development but steps will be taken to counter with an assertion that they, in fact, form an interconnected whole, in which sexuality is imaged as being encased by the other two. This has the effect of filtering the influences of society and the environment through sex, sexual expression (sexpression) and gender. Sexuality then becomes specifically an intra-personal dimension of influence that is not easily accessible to society (except through the risky route of inference from behaviour and language). Moreover, at a practical level sexuality is also largely inaccessible to the individual him/herself until s/he takes steps to try to understand the dynamics involved. This last will be attended to in later chapters so here it is a question of laying a groundwork.

The next step will be to show that the situation with the concept of spirituality suffers from that a similar cognitive clutter as the other terms and some clarification will be sought here as well. In addition, there is a tendency in Western thinking to invest much effort into keeping spirituality and sexuality apart. I will argue that the two, in fact, are closely aligned and any attempt at delimitation results in acedism of both components. To a great extent sexuality without spirituality degenerates into hedonism and pornography, in it's widest sense, and spirituality without sexuality is a

perpetuation of a patriarchal bias away from psychospiritual integrity, hence the need for a holism such as that promulgated by the still 'fledgling' disciplines of Jungian and transpersonal psychology, both of which still hold proud places on a littoral of psychological thought and praxis (but which can be seen to engender a degree of elitism when talking of psychotherapy or spiritual emergency).

Consequently, I will argue that the dimensions of sex, gender, sexuality and spirituality come together into a whole which is used to negotiate existence even at it's most fundamental levels. This particular exercise is essential as a base to the rest of the dissertation as I will be using the unique constitution of the Indian *cakras* to argue that removing sexuality or spirituality from any equation results in a 'flawed' outcome, an oft-encountered issue in mainstream psychology; it is a polemic which is, I contend, too often uncritically adopted by mainstream religion (very often seen in charismatic or fundamentalist religion, especially but not exclusively that of Christianity). In the next chapter I will show how the *cakras* are a reasonable metaphorical embodiment of spirituality and how they exhibit a pivotal nature of sexuality.

Finally, I will attempt to apply this thinking to a particular segment of life in the *erotic*, the orgasm. I will show that, once again, there are a number of valences and counter-valences that force this part of private life into a rather restricted cognitive zone of the private space. If released to a spiritually functional locality it can be found that the orgasm is actually an important, indeed an essential, transcendental detail in life, in general, and the dyadic life, in particular. The importance of the orgasm, I argue, lies in the quarter of alienation. I will refer to the Biblical myth of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden to show that it involves two dimensions - that of separation from the Divine, and that of separation into a particular embodiment. Both separations are equally consequential but in Western praxis it is the latter that is kept at the centre of a confined attention; the former, separation from the Divine, being treated in a generally unsatisfactory manner. This

focus has the effect of being one-sided therefore ineffective, although, in some cases, it can be seen to be efficient especially if the purposes of the capitalist economy are served.<sup>1</sup>

A lack of a holistic view to sexuality and spirituality can be regarded as a failure, and adjustments must be sought to show that, being foundational to human existence, the combination of two serves to remove stress from existence and brings the individual closer to being-ness and so integrity.

### **Sex, gender and sexuality in a context**

"Sexuality, according to the prevailing attitude of today, is offensive. It is altogether too easy to relegate its significance for human life to oblivion. It can be safely assumed that it will require the work of many generations for sexuality to be taken seriously by official science as well as by the laity. In all probability, it will not be taken seriously until life and death problems compel society itself to consent to the comprehension and mastery of the sexual process and to furnish its protection not only to those who are attempting these tasks but to the undertaking itself. Such a life and death problem is, for example, cancer; another is the psychic pestilence which has made dictatorships possible."(Wilhelm Reich:xxv)

Whenever talking about the nature of sexuality many people tend to imagine either gender or explicit sexual activity or a fuzzy blurring of the two. Although it is emerging now, it is difficult to find material which seriously discusses the possibility that each person is essentially bi-sexual in nature and that there is, in the mature person, a flexibility to move between the twin poles of a masculine-feminine continuum, even that of embodiment, according to the dictates of any given situation. Note, for instance, Paul Maier when he says that "The psychological components of masculinity and femininity represent another basic polarity within the individual; bisexuality is inherent in all beings."(1969:23) Here, although the possibility of a bi-sexual nature of the human is being mooted, there is still a strong tendency for

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<sup>1</sup> I submit that an indicator of alienation from the Divine is demonstrated by an almost universal proclivity for anthropomorphism. I would argue that an attempt to view the divine in human terms implies a 'divine-as-other', hence alienation. Perhaps to be translated in a popular version of classical theism vis-à-vis pantheism or panentheism.

researchers and other writers to restrict themselves to sex or gender. Or, as I have said, a fuzzy blurring of the two, presumably because this is an empirical therefore more tangible area of investigation. Moreover, despite the challenges, there is an affinity for both to be viewed as imperfectly circumscribed areas of separate investigation.<sup>2</sup>

Not only this. The attitude Reich reported above in 1948 seems to persist, in various forms, in recent times, especially in many religious and secular fundamentalist sectors. Possibly the West is so imbued with the strict separation of body and mind that there is little place for merging, diffusion, or even manoeuvring along a continuum in response to demands from external influences. Perhaps also the legacy of the Hebrew patriarchy is such that *eros*, or life-affirming energy, itself must continue to be denied in favour of some eschatology of the future in order to ensure some steady progress of the present.<sup>3</sup>

As an illustration I would offer the following as a random sample of the sort of thinking being propagated today amongst researchers, theologians and laity alike. Tracey Pintchman, with a serious tongue in cheek, tells of a story from the southern Appalachia in which the preacher delivers a diatribe against women's place in the

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<sup>2</sup> Bisexuality also appears in the writings of CG Jung, for instance, with his *anima/animus* hypothesis (see June Singer (1973:203ff) for an explanation of the *conjunctio oppositorum*). It is also an integral component of the Indian philosophy of *tantra* with its emphasis on the joining of *śiva* and *śakti* principles within the individual. It would appear, however, that this thinking fits uncomfortably with Western empiricism which values difference and separation.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that Reich led a chequered career as a result of his approach to sex research, being subjected to media abuse in Norway in the late 1930's, arrest by American police in the early 1940's, and generalised rejection and derision by the psychoanalytic community after his expulsion from Freud's inner circle. Another point to be made here is that Reich could be seen to be a midpoint in a dynamic to better understand the impulse of sex. Before him Lester Ward (1900's) and Havelock Ellis (1920's) had begun to question the gender assumptions of the Western world; Reich was to continue this but added a physiological dimension that was to be successfully brought to some completion by Alexander Lowen and William Masters & Virginia Johnson in the 1960's. The critical work of present neo-feminists, like Paula Cooney, can be seen to be a continuation of the work started by Ward and Ellis. For notes on Lester Ward see Gregory Zilboorg (1973:109) and Ursula King (1989:25)

world - "...a woman's got to stay in her place!" Carl shouted..."(Pintchman:61), - one can wonder if this is, perhaps, not the Carl Porter, described by theologian, Barbera Thierry, (in the TV programme, *Bizarro*) as being 'primitive' in his inclusion and bestial treatment of snakes during church services. Paul Ramsey continues a patriarchal tone in his article asking if we know where our children are. His focus is on teenage pregnancy which for him is a problem as "...sexuality was given for both companionship and for parenting...Parenthood is already inscribed in our creation. *It is God's gift*: this is the meaning of pro-creation..." (Ramsey:18, emphasis added). Amy Schalet, researching attitudes towards teenage sex amongst white, well-educated American and Dutch parents of teenagers, found that the Americans reacted negatively in their relations with their children on the question of adolescent sexuality: "Existing studies confirm that the Dutch parents generally do not regard the *sexuality* of their adolescent children as a problem which they must control... American adults, by contrast, generally oppose and want to control *sex* amongst teenagers." (Schalet 2000:99, emphasis added - note the tendency to make interchangeable use of the words 'sex' and 'sexuality'). A similar finding on the attitudes of American parents is raised by Germaine Greer - a 14 year-old female informs that first-sex was a bore, much to the mother's horror who is trying to portray the wonders and special-ness of the event. Later on the same page Greer derides the sex-educators of her day who wish to *save* children from the "...perils of haphazard sex..."(Greer:216)

Annie Potts, from another direction, surveyed 37 male and female New Zealanders and although it is difficult to discern any firm conclusion she was able to bring out a feature of the orgasmic experience that spoke of some notion of transcendence and unity in this circumscribed category of human experience. Transcendence and unity can be seen as an integral facet of Erik Erikson's concept of post-adolescent Intimacy and a factor in life in general that underpinned Wilhelm Reich's controversial work, so Pott's article holds promise. But in the end, though, her article does tend to

degenerate into the physical plane of the phenomenon of orgasm, as opposed to the phenomenology of the orgasmic experience. She does, however, provide a contrast when she renders an interpretation of the 'hydraulic model of sex' in which she says "...where *sexuality* is viewed as "a biologically *regulated* need or instinct..." (Potts:64) As will be seen later a hypothesis is that while sex *qua* sexpression can possibly be seen to be a 'biologically regulated need or instinct'<sup>4</sup>; sexuality, on the other hand, as appropriated here, is a cognitive (be it conscious or subconscious) process of identification which underpins any postulated 'biological regulation'. It is an identification which is tempered not only by biological attributes but also by factors such as religion, class, ethnicity and so on. Bill Simon & John Gagnon bring out a hypothesis which is being adopted here:

"In Freud's view, libido - the generation of psychosexual energies - should be viewed as a fundamental element of human experience at least beginning with birth and possibly before that. Libido, therefore, is essential, a biological constant to be coped with at all levels of *individual, social, and cultural* development."(1998:online, emphasis added)

It would be well to remember that libido in the context of this dissertation is viewed as an innate principle that animates *eros*, the life-affirmation of human existence. One can read Simon and Gagnon, especially the quoted passage, as informing of an *a priori* energy that is pre-logical or archaic; an energy, mind you, that if left unchecked will introduce dimensions antithetical to order and stability, to nation and progress, which brings us back to the assertion made by Reich in the opening quote, viz. sexuality is offensive. What is more, for various reasons the West is not alone in this matter.

There has, in the Orient, been a consistent call for *brahmacharya* (commonly interpreted as 'ascetism' or denial of the expression of sexuality) by Indian brahmanical 'gurus' and their followers. Joseph Alter notes, and it will appear again in the chapter on Patañjali, that this is not actually inherent in the world of the

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<sup>4</sup> This is a hotly contested subject in the academe, but not necessarily so in popular discourse where bodily configuration plays a major role in the course and quality of gender relations.

Vedanta, but more of a recent reaction to colonialism. He portrays the use of the practice of ascetism by some more militant nineteenth century Indians in developing the strong and virile body (therefore, by extension, mind) which can withstand the ravages of the colonial presence. Something similar can be seen in Mohandas Gandhi's 'experiments with truth' which could be regarded as a result of (a) an ambivalence towards his own sexuality, and which (b) eventuated in a denial of his wife's sexual needs, in favour of broader political gains. Much has been written about Gandhi and his ascetic views but little is being said about the possibility that this great man may not have been as 'spiritual' as many would like to believe (I touch on this again later in the chapter on Patañjali). It would seem that in this post-colonial time there is a new colonialism which includes something of a reversal of roles with the presence of Indian 'sage' missionaries at the centre (America and Europe). These sages can be regarded as having adopted a marketing strategy for their spiritual products which caters well for a Western confusion around sexuality.<sup>5</sup>

Taking another line, in the Islamic world, As'ad AbuKhalil and Abdelwahab Bouhdiba attempt to specifically discuss Muslim 'sexuality'. The former laments the loss to Islam, *vis-à-vis* Muslim, caused by the exclusion of women in an androcentric bias of early days of the religion/state, which is repeated by an apparent resurrection and perhaps intensification of misogyny in modern fundamentalism.<sup>6</sup> This 'unfortunate' state of affairs is again brought out by Jacqueline Greatbatch when discussing the reversals in Muslim feminism brought by the Iranian Revolution in 1978. (Greatbatch:520; see also Alison Graves 1996, and Tamilla Ghodsi 1994) It is easy to read a feminist view of a negation of *eros* into the Iranian 'repressions', but this would be a dangerous exercise as it would discount the experiences and choices

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<sup>5</sup> See Pravrajika Vrajaprana (2000) in her critique of Western appropriation of Indian spirituality and, I argue, sexuality; she is supported by Hugh Urban's (2000) critique of Western New Age 'consumer capitalistic' attitudes towards Tantrism.

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that Islamic sexual identity is, I believe, multi-layered enough to defy any Western bid for essentialisation. It is possible that seen through the peculiar spectacles of the West Islamic sexuality can easily be constructed as something less than what it is.

of Iranian women. This point is brought up to illustrate how, although AbuKhalil skates close to the idea of sexuality held here, he does tend to veer away back to the safer shores of gender and sexpression, leaving the reader with a better idea of Muslim gender relations, especially in some post-colonial Muslim societies, but in the end one derives little explicit idea of what it is to *be* a male or female, ie. their sexualities, in these societies. In other words, one is not able easily to discern factors on sexuality from his narrative.

Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, on the other hand, begins to analyse Islamic sexuality by saying that :

“Sexuality is the reference and its content is a full positivity. Islamic life becomes an alteration and complementarity of the invocation of the divine Word and the exercise of physical love. The dialogue with Being and the dialogue of the sexes punctuate our daily lives. *The social becomes a permanent attempt to integrate the religious and the sexual*” (Bouhdiba:viii, emphasis added)

With this it appears that Bouhdiba is creating another category for sexuality that is a result of attempting to integrate the religious (culture) and the sexual (sexpression), as is being attempted here. But this turns out to not be the case. “The understanding of sexuality would begin therefore *not with the internal demands felt by the individual* and by the community. It would *start from the will of God* as revealed in the Sacred Book.”(Bouhdiba:5, emphasis added) In this then we have another facet, similar to that of Paul Ramsey above, that must impinge on the individual that does not often occur in the secular society - the power of revelation. Although scholars like Bouhdiba would presumably ascribe a special place to revelation, it would be preferred here to include it under a cultural category simply because it is not clear how religious revelation holds any obligation outside of that particular culture. What transpires from a reading of Bouhdiba is that he focuses on sexpression and gender relations with little regard for the individual and his/her sexuality.

Moving now to what women have to say, Elizabeth Horst continues a similar line to AbuKhalil when she notes in her critique of criticism of Erik Erikson: “...as Morgan

and Farber (1982) have argued, that the uniqueness of women's contributions fades as increased social opportunity increases their similarity to men.”(Horst:online)

Mention of the “...uniqueness of women’s contributions...” and “...similarity to men...” brings up Margaret Mead’s argument on a feminist reaction to misogynist socialisation which, I contend, can be seen in varying degrees in today’s Western woman:

“Every delicate detail of the female body may of course be reinterpreted by the culture. The vulva may be stressed as an immediate pleasure giving part of the body, and no longer be recognised as the doorway of a new life. The breasts may be labelled as erotic zones, to be trained and cherished only because they are valuable supplements to love-making, not because they will someday feed children.”(Mead:216)

This passage can be read in two ways. Firstly, it is almost as if Mead, in 1949, was foreseeing a Western experience of a female adoption of an “alpha-bias”<sup>7</sup> with little thought to a societal call for comparative role modelling for the next generation. So, on the one hand, there is a call for women to take a greater public role in society but, on the other, there is evidence that the reason for their ‘coming-out’ of the private realms will be nullified by their adopting an ‘alpha-bias’ and so not bringing with them their ‘special’ qualities, whatever these may be. Edith Sizoo quotes a French male respondent who compounds the issue from another direction: “We are indeed witnessing the fulfilment of Marcuse's critique in 1968: the obvious hyper-sexualisation of our societies (publicity, media, etc.) creates de facto a ‘de-eroticisation’ of the relations between men and women.” (2000:online) Simon Hardy brings out another practical example of a potential in the female alpha-bias when, in his sociological discussion of pornography and feminism, he quotes RW Connel who “...sees the emphasis on pornography, which became axiomatic in the 1980's, as having widened this gap between feminist theory and the pragmatic

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Alpha-bias’ in this context is taken for a masculine trait of dominance, assertion, and/or aggression. When exhibited by the female, it can be seen as an attempt to fight the patriarchy on it’s own terms, without a utilisation of feminine traits. In this sense there is a loss of ‘woman’ in the process.

objective of [gender] equality.”(2000:80, interpolation added) Secondly, there is the obvious conclusion that the feminine form, and parts thereof, becomes objects for use by a male-dominant culture. Once again, though, it can be found that these parts or forms are accepted as such by some women and used to manipulate their relationships in the sense of power-‘sharing’ or acquisition.

Given the tradition of denigration of the material/feminine that seems to buoy the confusion noted above it is not impossible to conclude, in part, that one real reason that sexuality is still offensive is that it has in the deep past been perceived to contain the seeds of destruction for a masculine rationality; rationality being deemed a vital stimulus for a valued material ‘progress’ (this even before the early Christian Fathers brought their particular brand of misogyny and body denial into Western society). The propagation of these seeds (some say they are now genetic in most cultures) must continue if patriarchy is to continue, if ‘progress’ is to be sustained. *Ergo* the furtherance today of ancient attitudes of domination towards Woman and the material world.<sup>8</sup> The next question, of course, is not so much what it is about sexuality that evokes such powerful emotions in Man (in a gendered sense) but is there any way that it can be reformulated in the interests of a balance between *eros* and *thanatos*.

#### **Towards a clarification of terms**

It is useful to begin with a dialogue around certain terms, sex, gender, sexuality, spirituality, in order to arrive at a distinction of how they will be used here. This step is necessary as there is in the literature a wide variety of interpretive nuances attached to them. In addition, the demarcation of terms such as spirituality tend to be contested

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<sup>8</sup> One could wonder if this patriarchal seed-propagation is not well exemplified by the relentless campaign by Western medicine to ‘eradicate disease’. The fact that this campaign is giving way at the seams in present times seems not to diminish the fervour; the medical armamentarium simply becomes more and more sophisticated and expensive - the bottom line being ‘elitism’. Note Oudshoorn’s (1994) argument around the introduction of the market to medical hormonal research strongly contributing to ensuring control of the female body. See Gagnon & Parker (1995:7) for a short discussion on the sex-civilisation and masculine-feminine dichotomies.

at present so clarity on their use here is an imperative.

**Sex and Gender:** The first two, sex and gender, in their strictest senses are not really a focus of this dissertation, although paradoxically are included in the overall conception of sexuality. This comment is made in the context of their being regarded as closely aligned with biological and cultural differences. Sex, with sexpression, is actually taken to be related to both biological difference as well as coital performance and the activities surrounding that subject, activities that have a discernable result of some kind, be it pleasure, tension release, procreation, or, as we will see later, some transcendental state. On the one hand, sex is a subject of body types that allows biologists and other scientists to classify people; an activity that is useful to the scientist but is, it would be argued, only of interest in the mature adult in the narrow domains of sexual-preference choice and the various sexually associated disorders (such as prostatitis, vaginitis, and oligorrhoea). The other aspect is that of coition which is a genital activity associated with physical sexpression. This observation is made in a belief, developed in a psychotherapeutic milieu, that sexpression is much wider than just sex and/or coition; it includes scripted cues given in situations which do not lead to coition and yet still have erotic or sexual qualities. In this vein then, physical sexpression is a part of a spectrum linking sex and gender. In this sense, for example, in the physically mature but emotionally immature adult, because of its obviousness and an accompanied instrumental focus on the genitalia, sex can be given prominence in a gender relation of dominance and submission *vis-à-vis* equality. A prominence, that due to unsophisticated tendencies towards generalisation, can lead to power disparities.

Although the boundaries are permeable and fuzzy, gender, on the other hand, is delimited here to those activities which are associated with the broader politics of inter-personal relationships between men and women, a relational sexpression. It is well to bear in mind that this hypothesis applies equally well to the homosexual or same-sex domain in that physical configuration is only part of the relationship. This

is not to denigrate the role of embodiment, but rather to ensure that gender *qua* relationship between feminine and masculine is not subsumed under embodiment. A link between Robin Horton and his argument that African traditional 'religion' cannot be equated with Western religion but Western science, with Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty's formulation that the penis is not complemented in the female by the vulva or, more specifically, the vagina, but with the breasts is noteworthy in this argument. O'Flaherty holds "...that milk (rather than uterine blood) is the female equivalent of seed, milk is a directly creative fluid (as well as a nourishing fluid) in the mythology." (O'Flaherty:43; for a psychiatric perspective, see Lowen 1965:55) The import of this Copernican shift is that gender *qua* a straight comparison of the genitalia is misplaced and probably based on archaic scientific paradigms. The potential of complementarity between the sexes is made possible by comparing O'Flaherty's apples with apples - semen with breast milk.<sup>9</sup> The shift allows gender to be lifted to slightly more abstract realms.

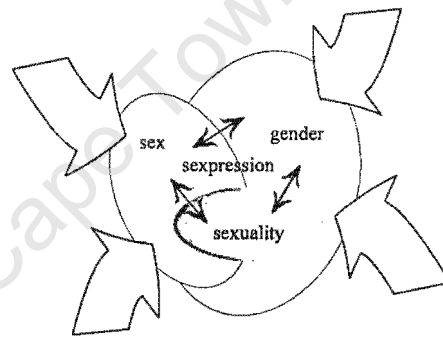
Until this distinction is more fully investigated, comprehended and accepted within the context of the dyad the boundaries between sex and gender must remain fuzzy and incomplete; the biological sex of a person must still, to some extent, be a culturally imposed determining factor in own- or other-sex relations. It seems that, until cultural paradigms are overcome or modified by the individual, until there is some transcendence above the present simplistic discourse, boys will be boys and girls will be girls and will mis/treat each other accordingly. Further, the prevailing view also contributes to the way a society reacts to a person. Put another way, I would maintain that the presence of a certain configuration of genitalia in the child will prompt society (initially the parents) to act out certain scripts, so that while the child for a time is not able to give meaning to distinguishing between sexes it

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<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that gender-ing also entails a relationship with own-body. Part of the situatedness along the various continua is how one sees or feels one's body. This, however, is outside the scope of this work, and so must be recognised and prominently pigeon-holed.

eventually incorporates certain culturally-induced inter-personal difference behaviours that are largely sex-determined. It is these behaviours, and more importantly the reactions of the child to them, that contribute strongly to the creation of a sense of sexuality in the individual.

**Sexuality:** The 1933 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary enlightens thus: “1. The quality of being sexual or having sex. 2. Possession of sexual powers, or capability of sexual feelings. 3. Recognition of or preoccupation with what is sexual; pl (*nonce-use*), allusions to sexual matters. 4. Appearance distinctive of sex.”(IX:582) The Collins English Dictionary follows a similar line, showing that little has changed: “1. The state or quality of being sexual. 2. Preoccupation with or involvement in sexual matters. 3. The possession of sexual potency.”(2000:1409) Noticeable is that the seventh edition (1982) of the Concise Oxford Dictionary omits the term altogether. With a restricted ideation surrounding the term there



**Figure 1 :** Relationship between sexpression, gender and sexuality

are two principle routes that could be considered when dealing with the subject of sexuality - either create some neologism, thus adding to the deluge of new terms being introduced to academic discourse, or simply adopt on a particular interpretation of an existing term. It is the latter course that will be taken now for the purposes of this dissertation.

In order to counter the difference exaggeration evident in much of present discourse and attempt some stability to the subject in this text (see, for instance, Christine

Downing<sup>10</sup>), Fig.1 seeks to integrate the three concepts of sex, gender and sexuality into an interrelated whole. Jane Ussher and Julie Mooney-Somers, talking about lesbian experience, write:

“The results of this study demonstrate that in a cultural context where heterosexuality is still the norm, the positioning of feelings towards another woman as sexual desire is a complex process which has to be understood at a *material, discursive and an intra-psychic* level... We cannot separate out one of these levels of analysis from the others; they are all interrelated...” (Ussher and Mooney-Somers:196, emphasis added)

I believe that these authors are speaking for a similar situation to what is being argued here - with an addition. Sexuality, being the innermost and least accessible of

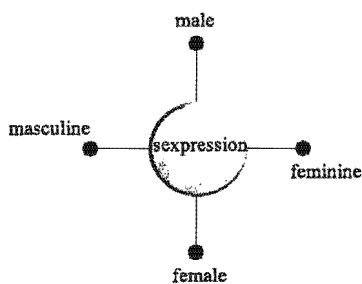


Figure 2: Configuration of the androgyne

the four continua, superimposes but is contained within the ‘borders’ of gender and sex, both of which have external borders abutting the world that are measurable to some extent. The internal arrows of the figure denote the interactions between the three, ie. the influence from sexuality to gender, and to sex. It is the conscious and unconscious interaction between sex and gender that gives rise to sexpression in it’s myriad forms. The larger arrows serve to remind that

there is considerable influence from the material and cultural environments. In the end, the inaccessibility of sexuality is reflected on two fronts: the realisation of the individual as to quite what his/her sexuality represents, and thus the ability of society to immediately interface with the sexuality of the individual. It is this that is of concern.

Henceforth, for the sake of some clarity, sexuality is translated as an intra-personal

<sup>10</sup> Downing argues that “The gender system exaggerates differences and fails to create stable categories... The two-column model suggests that being assertive and being rational necessarily go together, that being self-confident and being vulnerable are necessarily incompatible. At most the system would allow that *we might be on consciously, the other unconsciously*.”(Downing:30, emphasis added) I would differ on the role of the differences, and is a dilemma of sexuality to be explored shortly with that of the conscious and unconscious.

matrix through which an individual human relates to his/her environment. Jeffrey Weeks alludes to this process:

“I am suggesting that what we define as ‘sexuality’ is an historical construction, which brings together a host of different biological and mental possibilities - gender identity, bodily differences, reproductive capacities, needs, desires and fantasies - which need not be linked together, and in other cultures have not been...”(quoted in Karin Lützen:21)

As a definition this can be seen to be something of a confusion of attributes; what is more, it is difficult to see why they ‘...need not be linked...’ It is argued here that sexuality is in need of some simplification, without, however, any loss of Weeks various ‘possibilities’. As such, then, the subject is taken to comprise three dimensions; namely, (a) a sexed embodiment, (b) living in a certain gendered culture, and (c) holding certain moral or ethical attitudes. Put into a tentative description, sexuality is seen as an intra-personal set of bi-polar continua connecting embodiment with clusters of traits associated with attributes of being masculine or feminine (see Fig. 2 - the moral-ethical spectrum will be added shortly).<sup>11</sup> In other words, in this primary construction there are two dimensions: the personal embodiment and the interpersonal gendered relationships. These poles each represent certain characteristics, a melding of which creates an identity, a location from which to view the world, which is manifested as narrative in sexpression. Self-placement in the matrix could be predicated by a number of events, such as indiscriminate acceptance of socialisation (‘I am a man, *therefore*. I watch rugby and drink beer like my mates, like my dad and his dad’), perhaps some intuitive response to development of a core persona (as is found in a number of people of a homosexual orientation who insist they ‘naturally’ feel that way), or a conscious decision to adopt certain characteristics, as in some personality-modelling involving significant-others.

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<sup>11</sup> The attributes of masculine and feminine are usually expressed in two-column lists of antitheses. While some would see these as being fixed that is not the intention here. Rather it is a situation of having these attributes as guidelines in the logical sense (‘I cannot be aggressive and quiescent at the same time’). In other words, being male does not ensure aggression, by the same token being female does not necessarily equate with being quiescent

Individual sexuality *qua* placement along these spectra can be said to lie at the base of an un/healthy self-concept, at that of a self-/gratifying erotic activity between partners, un/healthy relationships between men and women in general (in this sense, I maintain that same-sex relationships can also be included, in which case it may be useful to enclose male/female in quotes - more investigation required), and, to follow the transpersonal environmentalists (and, for that matter, the later Erikson), the quality of relationship between the individual and her/his environment (by simple extrapolation this last is proposed on the basis that the environment can, in the sexually maladroit, be ab/used as an Other in much the same way as a partner). This foundationalism will be enlarged somewhat in the section dealing with the *cakras*. For the moment, though, the basic ethos is, following Christine Downing, to explore the poetics rather than the politics of the subjects of sex, gender, and sexuality: "...in exploring the ways we humans imagine sexual difference and what longings and fears these various images betray."(Downing:34)

**Illustrating the paradigm:** To begin to ease this more to the fore I offer the following diagrams as illustration. These diagrams are value-free in intention; they neither indicate any construction of gender asymmetry, nor underpin or propagate forms of power. They are simply theoretical constructs that may point towards ways of viewing the *is* of a person, irrespective of a reifying influence of theories of enculturation, socialisation and other factors. Referring back to the Introduction and

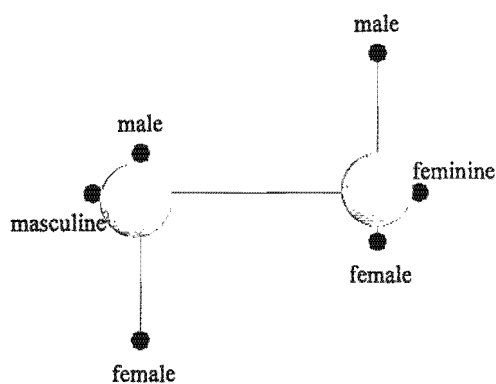


Figure 3: heterosexual socialisation

the comments about where much of this hypothesis is derived, creating these diagrams in individual cases in a clinical setting has tended to exhibit an individual flexibility that arises from an availability of human choice, both conscious and unconscious. The emergent identity, a result of an idiosyncratic life-experience in

the world, is unique to the person, and, what is more, a point on a space/time-line. Moreover, as with a position propagated by Symbolic Interactionism, there is a constant change to this identity as a series of personal 'life-experiments' yield more and more information (Longmore:online; see also Laumann & Gagnon (:190ff) for a discussion on the interaction between cultural scenarios, and interpersonal and intrapsychic scripts); changes which include how the body is viewed.<sup>12</sup>

This does not mean that there is little continuity. A core persona is said to develop early in life but is constantly augmented or refined over time as scripts are added and/or modified in keeping with the dictates of the situation. The range of ancillary scripts that interact with the core indicates the level of flexibility of the personal style. The less the range of appropriate scripting the greater the inflexibility, which suggests that there will be an increased number of times when behaviour is inappropriate to the situation. This point will be covered in greater detail later in the dissertation.

In the full diagram these two dimensions are represented on a horizontal plane, but, for the moment, the vertical line represents the embodiment of either male or female along a continuum, and the horizontal that of the gender continuum of masculine and feminine traits. The former is a relatively stable dimension that tends, to some extent, to be biologically determined. The question of physical determination is not as coagulate as generally assumed. Nelly Oudshoorn (1994) and Carol Worthman (1995) show that, even though there are genital differences and medical science would argue for hormonal determination, the situation is in fact very fluid. So much so that there can be movement towards or away from a genital/hormonal interpretation of the male/female continuum. It is accordingly not unusual to find that some females are 'naturally' hirsute with deep voices and some males have a

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<sup>12</sup> The 'body is viewed' factor is highlighted by the transsexual who has a particular view of the body in relation to a desired gender identity.(Longmore:online; see also the discussion on 'Yvonne Cook', a male trans-dresser who dates a female trans-dresser, by Weeks:37)

‘natural’ breast development (gynaecomastia) and little beard development. Hence even at a ‘natural’ level there is movement along the physical continuum.

Oudshoorn, in particular, points out that much of the confusion around sex and sexuality is due to the genitalia being the focus of early scientific conceptions of sex categorisation; vulva = female, penis = male, and the two cannot change. Later, with the introduction of hormonal research, it was found that sex cannot be quite so reified (Oudshoorn:6ff, 145). Now with investigations into transsexuality the situation on sexual categorisation is becoming increasingly blurred.

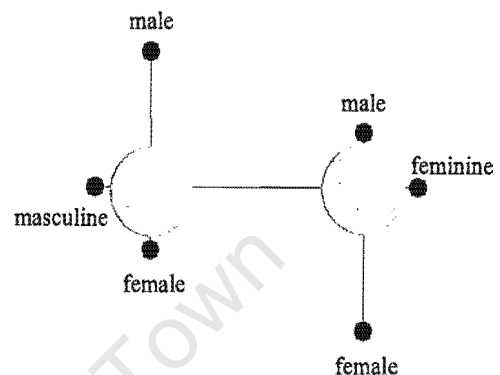


Figure 4: some choices of sex expression preference

With this the notion of ‘natural’ determination is being given to culture while investigations into genetic determination are being pursued.

This now leads to the second continuum - the gendered clusters of traits attributed to masculine/feminine poles. In this dissertation, gender is seen as arising from a combination of the biologic and the cultural but is skewed towards cultural factors around the biological, consequently there is the well-documented table of traits arranged under the bifurcation of masculine and feminine. Once again, however, there is flexibility, although in this dimension flexibility is more marked in the integrated person. To a greater extent than with sex, flexibility is a matter of choice, either conscious or unconscious, on the part of the individual in that the mores of the group can be rejected or modified in favour of individual preference. This is not restricted to the realm of homosexuality; even within the heterosexual dyad male ‘caring’ and female ‘abstraction’ can be seen to be appropriate alternative responses. It is to be restated that flexibility along this continuum is a sign of a mature adult. Inflexibility is a gesture of a stasis at a level of psychic development of the child or adolescent where the poles of the continua are seen as enduring ideological absolutes,

and the mindset enters the realms of Erikson's notion of pathological clinging to ideologies of adolescence.

Before delving deeper into this view of sexuality it is necessary to take one step further and postulate that sexuality, as an intra-personal dimension, ushers in the polemic of spirituality.

**Spirituality:** In a similar vein to the muddled confusion of the terms, sexuality, gender, and sex, there seems to be a proclivity to using spirituality conjointly with religion and a variety of other related terms. Stuart Rose, for one, states that the term seems to be a "...neat catch all, intimating a certain something without necessarily revealing much about what it contains." (Rose:193; see also Sharma (1998) and King (1989:6) on this ambivalence) Although one could be sceptical about his use of 'religiosity' he does confirm the present hypothesis that there is considerable ambivalence regarding the meaning of spirituality. King, in fact, adds to this by pointing out how spirituality is too often linked with an ascetic stance, separate from the secular world (1989:5). Rose, however, as a result of his survey of various religious leaders from a range of traditions, did manage to arrive at three criteria for determining what spirituality may mean (certainly in the context of American society at the time of his research): firstly, there is no need for religious affiliation but there is some form of experience encompassing the 'numinous or matters of ultimate concern'; secondly, there is some type of practice required; and, thirdly, there is a diffusion of altruism (or 'love') in any activities (Rose:204) King, again, expands on this but also provides ground for contradiction: whereas Rose's conclusion, especially in point one, could be tainted by exclusivism and intangibility, King maintains that "...it is something which permeates all human activities and experiences rather than being additional to them." (King:5). She then goes on to say that this quality is integral to human development, be it individual or societal, implying some correlation with the Freudian libido, a point which may be strongly denied by Rose's Western subjects. Threading through both discourses, however, is

the elevation of spirituality to poorly-oxygenated levels of abstraction, reminiscent of body-denial practices of yore which gave exclusive rights to something called 'spirit'.

It is this direction of spirit-exclusivism that concerns us here as it is argued that there is a close relationship between spirituality and sexuality, between the sacred and the profane, between spirit and body. This will be expanded during the discussion of the *cakras* so for the moment it is sufficient to go a step beyond Rose and approach King by bringing both terms closer to the individual. Contended is that it is pointless to talk of the subject outside of individual experience and personal psychology. As with King, it is possible to mark spirituality as a fundamental attribute of Being, therefore independent, yet interpenetrating, of the social world. If there is such a thing as 'soul' then spirituality would be those emanations that result from the individual soul's state of Being, ie. Being-ness. In other words, although empirically mediated through the agency of the body, spirituality has a dimension of its own that is not predicated by mundane interests, such as religious or other practice (adherence to a 'practice' does not necessarily indicate spirituality - it could be the result of a compulsive neurosis in some form of religiosity). In this the finding of Rose that there is some measure of requisite altruism connotes a measure of rational input (perhaps liberal theology) by his respondents. In fact, Rose's act of reducing the responses to three statements is problematic as it removes vital evidence, such as allusions to the libido, if they were there, that is. Now his research becomes mundane and focussed more on existence than on Being (this bi-polarity will come to light later in the chapter of Erikson). In many ways, as is being argued through the experience of Jungian and transpersonal psychology, *contra* any altruistic inclinations, spirituality is intimately concerned with a paradox of opposition, a bane of Man's rationality.

Paradoxically, paradox appears in the strangest places. See, for instance, Tanya Foltz' short paper on goddess spirituality and recovery from substance abuse in which she reports a pre-rational and immediate objection on the part of some women to the dictates of the Alcoholic Anonymous movement. Although reading between the lines

is a risky business, it appears that paradox appears in these women's unexplained rejection of the ethos and *praxis* of AA as it applied to them. Their spirituality, *contra* their rationality, rejected the obvious and generally accepted source of substance abuse 'healing', demanding another approach which included securing their sexuality. In their case the exploration embraced a 'women-only' goddess spirituality, an impulse which speaks not only of universality (the experience of Woman, for instance) but also of the particularity of being able to speak of own experience. There is some indication in Foltz' article that the paradox for these women was that they 'chose' a route that is not generally designed for the alcoholic and yet catered for the need. And these women seem to have been intuitively drawn to that option. Again, for a study on a recent paradox, *śri* Ramakrishna of Calcutta, see Kelley Ann Raab (1995) who provides a broad ranging bibliography dealing with this enigmatic man who, as Jeffrey Kripal (1995) maintains, had both 'saintly' and 'homosexual' tendencies. While Helen Lee, like Rose, argues for interdependence and social concerns, almost as 'pre-conditions' (Lee:470), this does not necessarily have to be the case. In the present patriarchal environs there is also a justification, at times, for spirituality to be narcissistic as a stepping-stone to fulfilment.

In terms of the philosophy of the Indian *bhagavadgītā*, for instance, this narcissism is perfectly acceptable. The principle actor, Arjuna, has 'social concerns' for the impending slaughter of his relatives by his hand, an action that would be deemed by Brahman society in general to be a cause of breakdown of Indian society. His mentor, Kṛṣṇa, argues that the sentiment is counter-spiritual. In this case the dictum, 'one can be cruel to be kind', is justified in cosmic (spiritual) terms of *dharma* (duty), specifically his own *dharma* as a *kṣatriya* (member of the warrior class), not quite narcissism in the usual sense but certainly the Ego (in the classical Vedic sense of personal *dharma*) before society. It would appear that the factors of interdependence and social concerns that attract Lee are at a more subtle level than she (and, for that matter, Rose's respondents) envisages.

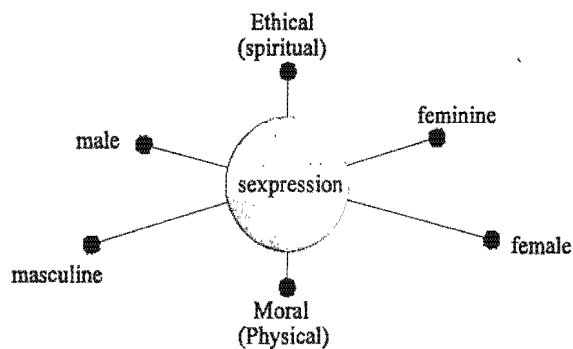


Figure 5: adding the spiritual plane

It is in this subtlety that the link with sexuality begins to take form. Being argued here is that just as sexuality is a positioning by the individual on the continua of embodiment and cultural traits, so it would also be suggested this is shot through with a weave of a

sense of the numinous, the spirit of spirituality (see Fig.5). Another way to view this is to regard the polarities as moral-ethical (an argument for this spectrum is presented in the discussion on Erikson). This spectrum is an ethical spirit that urges a mutuality (detachment) in intimacy, a moral principle that allows (discourages) a giving and receiving in a dyad, an acceptance (rejection) of the other promoting a unique climate for caring for the next generation, and so on. Because it is deeply inherent in the *erotic* (life-affirmation), acceptance of the other is not restricted to a sexual dyad, it is extended to cater for any situation in which two people or groups of people are in interaction.

From here a position is taken that, as with sexuality, spirituality is a deeply personal, un-communicable core, to which individual existence is an contrapuntal appurtenance . It is one of the Jungian set of factors, the archetype, which contributes to a contrasexual element within the psyche (Singer:205).<sup>13</sup> As such, psychologists and society at large can only infer a state of spirituality from behavioural and

<sup>13</sup> As an example of this, those sensitive to the experiences of *kundalīnī* and *cakra* manipulation will note occurrences in all manner of places. One unexpected source, the Muslim writer, Alifa Rifaat, tells a story of a young Middle Eastern wife who enters a period of lovemaking with a '*djinn*' (Rifaat 2000). There is little to say whether the '*djinn*' is human or spirit. Either way the story can be read as a spiritual or primal experience. The way the story is told, in fact, is not very different to that which psychiatrist, Lee Sannella, could report from his Kundalini Institute. Furthermore, there is nothing to indicate that Rifaat is cogniscent of the *kundalīnī* or any other such structure. If this is the case then her writing on the subject may suggest a universality of this type of experience.

exhibited script expressions, and like most inferences the input can be misinterpreted. Additionally, it is not reified, although does tend towards some constancy (perhaps persistence would be a better choice of word) until dialectical, meaningful change takes place. In this paradoxicality Christine Downing provides a description of sexuality that could be applied equally to spirituality:

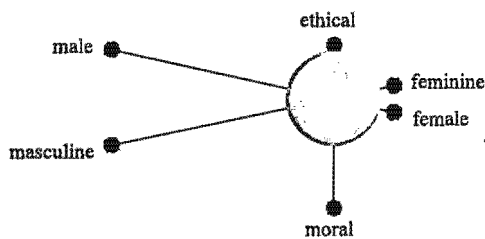
“My sense is that discovering our own sexuality [spirituality] requires not only listening to our bodies but to our dreams and fantasies. And these may reveal a sexuality [spirituality] frightening in its polyvalence and its voracity, its inclusion of rage and violence.”  
(Downing:96, interpolations added)

Chapter 11 of the *bhagavadgītā*, Kṛṣṇa’s exposition of his god-self, is an example of the fearful aspect of spirituality, and transpersonal psychotherapy is replete with examples of the terrors encountered in an integrative process. One wonders if the Biblical Book of Revelation is not a sanitised version of John’s experience of something like chapter 11 of the *bhagavadgītā*. I dare say that the interpolations added to Downing above are valid and that her description can be applied to both sexuality and spirituality. Taking a lead from psychiatrist, Alexander Lowen, who states that

“The sexual approach is oriented towards pleasure rather than satisfaction. Satisfaction implies a goal-directed effort...In the absence of a total commitment to the sexual act and *to the person who is one’s partner*, a satisfactory experience cannot be expected.”(Lowen:228, emphasis added)

I would argue that without spirituality, which is conjectured to introduce erotic attitudes of Other-affirmation, into relationships sexuality, so creativity, so *eros*, is sterile. In this affirmation of the other, characterised by Lowen’s pleasurable coital and gender relations, spirituality can be captured by ethical-moral polarities. In line with Erikson’s argument (see later) that morality is associated with the child and the super-conscious and ethicality approaches cognitive maturity, it can be said that spirituality is best epitomised by this spectrum. It is only when the terrors of the super-conscious (with its surfeit of social proscriptions) are tempered by an ability to view a situation in its essence that true spirituality is demonstrated. So, in order to

experience pleasure with an other one needs to affirm the other; similarly, in order to affirm the other, one needs to position oneself towards an ethical end of an ethical-moral spectrum. As will be seen in the other chapters, in order to position oneself with an ethical stance one needs to affirm one's sexuality. A circular argument that is shot through with paradox, but a circularity that will be justified in the near future.

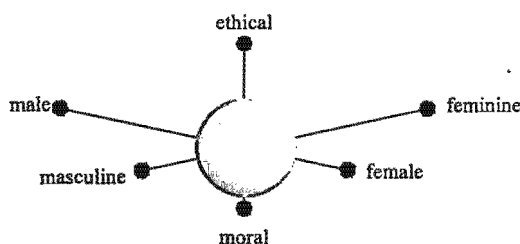


**Figure 6 :** ethical female with a propensity towards the feminine

In summary, sexuality has been appropriated to apply to that part of the psyche which provides a matrix of choice along three dimensions: embodiment (male-female), contrasexual traits (masculine-feminine) and spirituality (ethical-moral). The structure of sexuality now includes three continua:

- *male-female* indicating embodiment and physical coital performance (physical sexpression),
- *masculine-feminine*, gender traits that guide relationships (relational sexpression), be they same-sex or between the sexes, and
- *ethical-moral*, the level of spiritual development of the individual.

It is at a point in this matrix that the individual situates her/himself in relating to an



**Figure 7 :** moralistic female with tendency towards the masculine

encountered environment. Once again it is asserted that there is little in the matrix to support the present power debates being conducted by some feminists, it is an *is* in a relationship. Focus here is on the continua as being merely that - continua - not reified dichotomous polarities. There

is, in fact, a fluid potential allowing for conscious or unconscious choices in reaction to situations. In other words, the resulting identity along the three spectra is an indicator of un/health. Figures 6 & 7 indicate two possibilities in the same person, illustrating the principle of flexibility. It can be assumed, as a hypothesis, that if there is any fixity along any of the dimensions, life becomes narrow and so stressful. As a possible scenario - if the configuration of Fig. 7 was to become fixed in a 'naturally' heterosexual female, she would be restricted to submissive males which would be a source of dissonance if and when a shift was attempted towards the feminine (in a 'raising of consciousness', for instance). This is taken from a case study where a 48-year old female wanted to experience submission on a sexual level but had brow-beaten her husband for 'too long'; the situation created a tension that required creative approaches towards mutuality.

This chapter, then, is concerned with creating a workable hypothesis on sexuality that could contribute to the psychospiritual well-being of the individual who is prepared to make the attempt to understand an interplay of the dimensions. I would now investigate one aspect of *eros* - the orgasm - in the light of the above. More particularly, I will associate it with the polemic of psychospiritual alienation.

### **The eudemonics of coitus in psychospiritual alienation**

Annie Potts article above raises an interesting question that can exemplify the terminological predicament being explored: is the orgasm merely a release of libidinal tension, as many mainstream and popular psychologists would have it, or is there something more to the matter? In one section Potts picks up a discussion point raised by one of her female interviewees which introduces another dimension into this thesis:

"While traditional psychoanalytical and sexological discourse privilege orgasm respectively as the target of a sexual drive, or the end point of a 'natural' sexual rhythm or cycle, existential humanist and New Age discourses maintain a (mystical) orgasmic focus. The significance of orgasm, according to these philosophies, is associated *with its potential to alter or enhance consciousness*, to offer a 'peak' experience, and self-transcendence." (Potts:62, emphasis

added)

There is some indication that what is referred to as self-transcendence is further explained, but also contradicted, by Marilyn Ferguson in her opus on the New Age: "Intimacy is prized for its *shared* psychic intensity and transformative possibilities, of which sex is only part - and often a latent part." (Ferguson:437, emphasis added) On the one hand, Potts interviewee refers, in New Age terms, to the transcendental and individual potential of orgasm within a context of sexual intimacy, albeit usually, but not necessarily, in the dyadic relationship, whereas Ferguson's research seems to indicate something a little different, that of a less-orgasmic mutuality. Common to both lines seems to be the necessity of an Other, which, in turn, implies an interactional, negotiated dimension to the phenomenon. Potts respondent's approach is disparaged by Germaine Greer who provides hard-hitting prose in attacking the 'popular religion of sexuality' in which the orgasm dominates the relationship:

"The state of being orgasmic is sometimes described as being *out of touch with oneself*, a revealing phrase, for it gives away the basic self-centredness of the whole cult, or *not into one's body*, which in turn reveals the drawing away of the individual's attention from the external world of politics and social activity." (Greer:201, own emphasis)

In the midst of this to-ing and fro-ing there is still a question around the actual investigation into a transcendental nature of the orgasm, perhaps the problem is more in the desire-for than in the phenomenon of transcendence. There is still another difficulty, though.

In a pragmatic vein and harking back to comments made in the Introduction, one needs to ask the purpose of transcendence, or 'peak' experiences, or even enhanced consciousness. There is a danger in associating these factors to the orgasmic phenomenon, which being that it can now become an egocentric source of escape from the material reality, with a concomitant diminution of negotiation; an end in itself, as is implied by Greer. The orgasm, in this situation, then becomes the focus of the whole affair and so becomes demeaned as there is a question to be placed on the means. The partner (or, in the case of autoeroticism, oneself) becomes by implication

devalued by becoming an object in the process. Further, there is a potential for justifying promiscuous behaviour; justification being in the interests of some nebulous idea of empowerment, transcendence, or, at least, the apprehending of peak experiences, as has been implied in accusations against sexual 'gurus' like the late Rajneesh.

Hence the route being taken now changes to one of questioning the purpose of transcendence, or achieving 'peak' experiences. Transcendence in itself does seem to be a pointless if, for instance, it involves denial of the material reality in which the body is situated, ie. if it implies a search for an escape mechanism from the contingencies of the embodied life. In other words, there does seem to be a trend towards a conception of a transcendence that facilitates an evasion of the responsibilities that inhere in existence, in participating in the existential space. Downing dismisses the affair on the grounds that this escape entails a regression to an assumed prelinguistic, pregendered existence. As I understand her argument, she is saying that if one is gendered, albeit linguistically, then trying to 'transcend' the facticity of this state of being is impossible (Downing:35). Further, in order to meaningfully, not to mention effectively, transcend something it seems one does need to ensure some means for maintaining a state of transembodiment, which at the best of times still tends to be interrupted by what some people timorously refer to as a 'call of nature'; in other words, a broader embodiment will eventually impinge with a return to material reality. The difficulty is, of course, confounded by a meaningful and transcendental orgasm being generally associated with a partner, which pragmatically entails a measure of negotiated cooperation from an other. The sheer transience of this notion of embodied nexus, then, casts a shadow on the applicability of the orgasm to transcendence, or, even, peak experience.

Returning to the paradox, the sceptical tone above is only part of the story and is intended to reflect a scepticism of a popular (and uncritical) perception of the transcendental potential of the orgasm. In fact, the polemic is not in the phenomenon

of the orgasm itself but in the quality of the dyad in which orgasm is experienced. It is argued, because negotiation is deemed an essential component in orgasmic behaviour, that confining orgasm to genitality is thanatotic; it is, therefore, concluded that until it can be released from this imposition transcendence is a mirage. Thus, in a promiscuous search for orgasmic transcendence scepticism is justified. But in Fromm's sense of a giving and receiving loving dyad, orgasm has a distinct role that has transcendental properties.

**Associating orgasm with alienation:** In an attempt to reconstitute the transcendence figure in orgasm the notion is re-interpreted to move beyond, while including, the body, towards perhaps the world of the ideal. If, for instance, one is trying to psychically (some would say spiritually) transcend gendered difference, then one can ask if difference is being rejected or something else. If so what is this 'else'. Looking further afield for an answer, a clue is offered by Wilhelm Reich:

“Schizophrenia only shows, in a grotesque degree, a condition which characterizes man of today quite generally; *the average human being of today has lost contact with his real nature, with his biological core, and experiences it as hostile and alien. He must of necessity hate anybody who tries to bring him into contact with it.*” (Reich:24, emphasis added)

Perhaps then it is not the body, or even a situation, that is being transcended but one or more alienations; with Reich the alienation is from 'his real self.' Erich Fromm gives further space to the problem from another perspective:

“Just as Freud's concept of love is a description of the experience of the patriarchal male in terms of nineteenth-century capitalism, Sullivan's description refers to the experience of the alienated, marketing personality of the twentieth century. It is a description of an 'egotism *à deux*', of two people pooling their common interests, and standing together against a hostile and alienated world.”(Fromm:80 and 74ff)

There have been others who have expounded on this theme, some of whom, like Fromm, have described the disorder of alienation as being analogical to the Biblical expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Two considerations can be extracted from the Adamic myth: the expulsion incorporates a separation from or a loss of communion with the Divine, and, secondly, takes the form of an introduction

of dimorphism. In other words, the expulsion speaks of two areas of metaphysical alienation: that of a state of separation from the Divine as a result of embodiment in general, and the other being a state of separation from personal integrity or wholeness as a result of gendered embodiment, ie. being in a male or female body is only half of being (see also Downing:35; note Jane Smith & Yvonne Haddad (1982) in their argument around an Islamic 'Eve' in which tones of gendered alienation can be discerned).

Taking the first hypothesis - separation from the Divine - it will be postulated in the section on Erik Erikson's Life Cycle that there is a certain integrity of Being-ness present in the neonate that is gradually and perhaps systematically cramped by the exigencies of existence during the journey through infancy, childhood and adolescence<sup>14</sup>. The process of learning to be a part of the material existence, of being socialised into living 'harmoniously' with others, entails in some part a denial of Self. The 'I' and 'we' gradually becomes de/reconstructed to a 'me' and 'you' of separated, alienated existence. Moreover, and more ominously, throughout infancy and childhood the task is to learn to manipulate tools, starting with mouth, hands and legs, then spoons, and so on. But in the infantile mind other humans are also tools. Unfortunately, if the perception is not modified (a side-effect of a misreading of the early Benjamin Spock, for example) this peculiar infantility will continue as a paradigm or background to future interpersonal interactions in which manipulation is the order of the day.

So the 'I' that began the journey, the 'I' that is comfortable with his/her environment gradually becomes separated, detaches itself, is detached, from the comfort of that environment and stands alone. Aloneness *per se* has no value as it is possible to be alone and content. It does, however, take on worth, usually negative, when the incursions made by existence negate, or rather disregard (the effect is the same)

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<sup>14</sup> See also John Nelson (1994), especially the section on the *mūlādhāra* cakra.

significant amounts of Being by forcibly interjecting societal fears<sup>15</sup>. This is interpreted as a situation characterised by an 'external locus of control'; when the sensory world or that of significant-others markedly supersedes or gains precedence over the internal world of feeling and intuition. What is more, there are significant compulsions to 'be in control' (normally rationally) of the situation. In other words, self precedes Self, existence precedes essence.

Again, it is held that aloneness tends to become problematic when it is embroiled in the second factor of alienation, that of being in a sexed body. An observation offered for this difficulty is that being gendered is non-whole, to be half of a potential; this lack of whole-ness, however, is not a factor in the worldview of the child who leans towards androgyny. It gradually seeps into consciousness as society enforces the differentiation, and later becomes problematic when gender identification is reified to shun movement along the continua; ie. when being-oneself is subsumed by cultural taboos and proscriptions. In keeping with the sentiments of the feminist camp, it is not the sexed body alone that creates the feeling of half-ness but the existential socialisation of the person who occupies the sexed body. In other words, being gendered is to be placed by grandparents, parents, peers, and others into an area that contains an existential programming of a particular mode of estrangement along lines underpinned by physical and cultural configurations.

This is not to depreciate biological difference; it has some bearing on the matter. The joys and pains of pregnancy, for instance, as is the experience of being vaginally penetrated are not experiences afforded most males. Being penetrated and penetrating are distinct experiences that are not easily interchangeable between the sexes. Hence there are certain mutually exclusive experiences that contribute to an aura of

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<sup>15</sup> See Francis Terrell et al (2000) regarding children being forced to mistrust to counter the possibility of being abducted, raped, abused.

exclusion from the Other to create difference.<sup>16</sup> It is an aura that will evoke fascination in the sensitive (the 'ethical'), but will be missed in the unsophisticated who are engaged in self-promotion (the 'moral').<sup>17</sup>

This is not to say that alienation is a generalised negation. Responses to embodiment *qua* separation from the Divine and *qua* being gendered are highly individualised but whatever the case both separations must be encountered and resolved if any integrity or wholeness is to be achieved at all.

Gendered embodiment is most keenly felt upon puberty when the child-like hypotheses on sexual difference are challenged by newly emerging feelings of desire. The procreative faculties inherent in these new feelings and happenings are generally understood, however imperfectly, by the adolescent. Daunting is the how-to-go-about achieving a situation in which desire is appropriately situated. The old lack-of-interest-in-procreation, almost androgynous, easiness between the sexes that was part of childhood is now challenged by an eruption of breasts and beards. A lack of wholeness that is alienation-within-the-body now begins to make its presence most keenly felt; it can be said that part of the price of adolescence is a simultaneous raising of sexual and gendered consciousness into the realms of sexpression. Adolescence then brings a new challenge in the form of an alienation that is initially a result of a keenly felt dimorphism. Hidden behind this, though, is the oft unrecognised or denied alienation from the Divine, which with dimorphism can be recognised in adolescent existential *angst* or anxiety; a non-resolution of which lies

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<sup>16</sup> I am trying hard here to be aware of the male homosexual experience of anal penetration. The situation is different for the female homosexual who lacks a penetrative organ with which to experience penetration so has to resort to other measures, if penetration is necessary. This is a tricky subject requiring great sensitivity. This subject can, however, be put to one side for the moment as it is more properly the province of sexpression

<sup>17</sup> In a way, this is shown by Freud's difficulty in accepting that the young girl had any eroticism apart from the clitoris. One wonders if this dictate doesn't emanate from his inability to be sexually involved with his wife from about 1897 (Roazen:13-4, Reich:59n) hence being unable to successfully empathise with his female patients.

at the base of many of our present societal ills, as psychotherapists are at pains to inform. It is but one short step to note that the loss of consciousness, the *petit-mort*, of a negotiated orgasm is a step towards transcending the losses of dimorphism.

**Genitality and alienation:** Now raises the spectre of genitality. As I have said earlier the question of procreation in the normal course of events is not an issue, even people with low intelligence quotients are able to pro-create with remarkable facility. So the discussion now moves to the use of one's genitality to overcome the *angst* raised by separateness. Arvind Sharma sums up one realisation to the road of transcendence via genitality with:

“The mental world possesses a quality, that of immateriality, which it does not share with the physical world. This raises the possibility that the spiritual world may also possess some as yet undetermined quality which it may not share with the mental world. Nevertheless, in order to experience it one may have to start with the mental world, *just as one had to start with the physical world to experience the mental world.*”(1998:online, emphasis added)

This experiential route of the physical before the mental before the spiritual will be re-visited when dealing with the *cakras* and Patañjali. At this juncture I wish to tease out a possibility, in some agreement with Annie Potts New Age respondent, that non-narcissistic orgasmic behaviour may be a spiritual process that can lead to personal integration.

Assuming the ideal of healthy *angst*-reducing orgasmic behaviour as the culmination of a pleasurable meeting of two people, in theory this meeting allows for each partner to find in the other facets that are weaker in his or her own persona. Or, to work less from a position of lack, both partners bring together traits that create a new whole on the meeting, in much the same way as the birth of a child brings a new life in both the facticity of the creation of the child, and in the mutuality this particular facticity encourages in the parents.<sup>18</sup> In fact, however, it is not usually as simple as this. In a return to the earlier scepticism, each meeting brings with it the background noise of

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<sup>18</sup> See Ursula King (:77) where she quotes Penelope Washbourn's assertion on the way men and women need children as a source of self-revelation, a step beyond genitality.

each journey, background noise that requires an effort of erotic mutuality to flush. Hence, orgasmic behaviour, *on its own*, being but a short moment (or, for the lucky few, a series of short moments) is a poor method for overcoming existential *angst*. This is not to say that many people will not attempt this route. In doing this, though, they are merely broadcasting the degree of divine and gendered separateness being experienced, wrapped as a gift in what the Indian philosophers call *māyā* (veil of illusion or confusion) or *āvidya* (spiritual ignorance). For the moment I am not concerned with the negative aspects of sexual behaviour but rather with the ideal of coitus and thus orgasm as being a powerful potential for achieving union with oneself and a Divine.

For this we now have to turn to the ideas set out by Erich Fromm in his short work, *The Art of Loving*. Fromm takes another tack when explaining alienation. He maintains that the

“The unity achieved in productive work is not interpersonal; the unity achieved in orgasmic fusion is transitory; the unity achieved by conformity is only pseudo-unity. Hence they are only partial answers to the problem of existence. The full answer lies in the achievement of interpersonal union, of fusion with another person, in *love*.”(Fromm:22, emphasis in original)

His assertion of "...fusion with another person, in love..." correlates well with Erikson's stage of Intimacy in that existence in the material body reaches a limit at adolescence, after which it needs to find a re-integration with Being. As Fromm says "...love is union under the condition of *preserving one's integrity*, one's individuality."(24, emphasis in original) Although this is not quite the same sense as my hypothesis it eventually amounts to a similar argument. Fromm seems to be saying that there is a drive for 'union' inherent in the human condition. He does warn, though, that union excludes loss of personal integrity. Adding to this, where there is such a loss it is not union but perpetuation of the alienation, probably in the form of child-like dependency. Certainly, orgasmic behaviour in this circumstance is narcissistic and self- and other-destructive.

In adolescence it is suddenly found that new biological urges churn existence; urges deny the shelter of the family, create a feeling of aloneness, and consequently compel personal integration. And a to-be-with-another is felt intuitively. A quandary, of course, is a misconception of orgasm as a pinnacle of fusion, transcendence, or peak experience that pervades society (here I refer back to the quotation from Germaine Greer, p37). Hence one of the stronger valences directing the adolescent is to achieve orgasm, at times at great cost to an other.<sup>19</sup> With all this, in the end, if one is to deconstruct the primacy given to orgasm as a tool for transcendence it must be replaced with something of import. It is suggested that this replacement is not too far away, lying in the quality of the dyadic relationship. With a see-saw effect, the higher this quality the lower the alienation, which can also be decoded to read a diminished incitement to overtly orgasmic behaviour.

Without a rereading of the dyadic interface, what may start out as experimentation in an existential world of adolescence can in a dysfunctional environment conclude in enhanced alienation (requiring intervention). But, in a spirit of a mutually enriching understanding of an ideal, genitality can be transformed into a rich source of integration and wholeness. In the end, an indicator of wholeness, integrity, maturity can be a pliability of attitudinal movement along the three spectra of sexuality as the partners in the dyad find intra-psychic movements leading to less and less dissonances in the coital relationship.

Finally, a word from Erikson :

“...the total fact of finding, via the climactic turmoil of the orgasm, a supreme experience of the mutual regulation of two beings in some way takes the edge off the hostilities and potential rages, caused by the oppositeness of male and female, of fact and fancy, of love and hate. Satisfactory sex relations thus make sex less obsessive, overcompensation less necessary, sadistic controls superfluous.”(Erikson:257)

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<sup>19</sup> This is graphically illustrated in Larry Clark’s film, *Kids* (1995), in which the AIDS problem is explored through adolescent sexuality of pure pathological genitality.

In other words, hidden in here is a link between spirituality and sexuality. Quite how the link works is open to conjecture and, in some, a measure of fantasy. The important point is that it exists and is available to be acted upon and a unifying vehicle is the orgasm. More on integrity in the following chapters.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued and shown that there is some measure of confusion around the use of such terms as sex, gender, sexuality, and spirituality. I have tried to bring some clarity to the issue by separating the terms along certain dimensions. Then I brought them together into a model in which sexuality was deemed to be an intra-personal set of three dimensions which influences the way an individual views life and environment. As such sexuality influences and is influenced by the choices that an individual makes with regards where s/he stands in relation to existence in an embodied world.

To this another determinant, that of spirituality, has been added, in a form of an ethical-moral continuum. *Contra* some present thinking, spirituality has been restricted to an innate aspect of human being-ness, standing in opposition to existence. This argument will be enlarged in subsequent chapters but as a baseline in this chapter spirituality has been brought into a companionate relation with sexuality. It has been intended, by underscoring this consanguinity, to have the effect of sacralising the secular, or, in other words, of bringing the secular away from some oppositional realm into close and beneficial approximation with the sacred. Hence, where sexuality *viz-à-viz* sex is frequently restricted to a domain of genitivity, this chapter has sought to expand the sphere of influence to an all-round life-affirming *eroticism*. Adding to this argument, the peculiar state of the phenomenon of orgasm was introduced as an example of how a link between sexuality and spirituality can be sought as a vehicle for transcendence.

Until now, though, much of the argument has been relatively abstract and difficult to apply to the world of experience. In order to correct this possible deficiency in the argument so far, a step in another direction is needed. This is an investigation of a model of embodied spirituality found in Indian philosophy, the system of the *cakras*. Drawing this model into the picture will have the effect, it is hoped, of conveying the *spiritual gestalt* from an amorphous swirl to something that can be readily identified - the own-body. More especially, the paradigm will help to demonstrate the centrality of sexuality in the psychospiritual make-up of personality.

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Chapter 2  
Sexuality and the *cakras*

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## Introduction

Discussion of topics such as sexuality and spirituality do, in some ways, tend to become bogged down in a plethora of words with few tangible images. This is especially so in the clinical, or even academic situation where communication is dominated by verbal discourse. In attempting to address this possible both the previous discussion will be brought closer to the body by investigating a prospect for viewing sexuality and spirituality as a series of states (generally of consciousness) linked with parts of the body. The convention to be used is known as the Indian *cakra* system. Adopting this as a means for envisioning spirituality allows the individual an opportunity to 'visualise' (or make tangible within his/her own body) the roles various components of spirituality play in life and where sexuality lies in relation to the whole. Additionally, as the system is set out in a tiered form it also allows the Western mind to 'plan' spiritual unfoldment in an easily acceptable hierarchical paradigm. Quite how this hierarchy is approached is a fundamental tribulation in both human relationships and, especially in a clinical setting of assisting others to find what they want in the spiritual dimension.

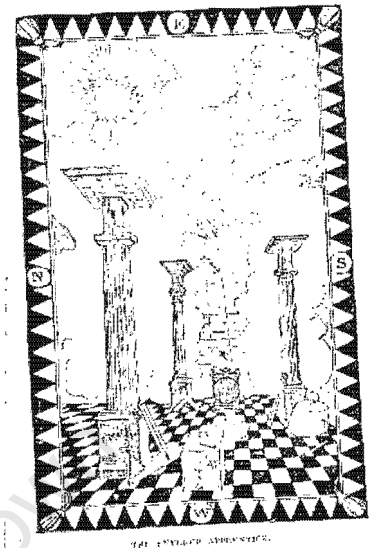
One further purpose for investigating the *cakras* (and an underlying cosmology) is to alert the reader to the protean possibilities native to ideals other than those of the West: ideals that may serve to overcome the scission between theory and praxis of 'correcting the limited condition of the human being.' Once alerted it is then hoped that a spirit of candour, of awe will be evoked. Awe, as will be seen in Erikson and Patañjali (even in science, for that matter), is important, if only because it can be seen as an indicator of trust, one of the rudiments of an effective poetics of erotic inter- and intra-personal relationships:

“...awe and wonder are alternate names for devotion, respect, appreciation. In the context of this response to the world, our behaviour and relationships reflect, quite naturally the general posture of openness, of candor. There is an absence of contrivance or manipulation. In short, we act with non-attachment.”(Paul Mundschenk 1987:23)

The act of considering other cosmologies is seen to be awe-animating in the open-minded. Moreover, a path to spiritual development, be it specifically spiritual or specifically secular or an eclectic pastiche, if not lit by a sense of wonder transforms the journey into work, in the modern pejorative sense, into an activity beset by temporaneousness, devoid of creativity, and besieged by an embroilment of conflicting subjective and objective attitudes (Gopalan 1987:4-5). Another way to view this is to note that there are basically two reactions to progress - awe or fear. The former allows for an attitude of challenge to be invoked in facing the future, an attitude that if tempered with a judicious scepticism creates a passage of learning; the latter generally invokes avoidance behaviour and is thus antithetical to improvement, self or otherwise. The latter, it is said in some business circles, also precludes seeing the possibility in another view, idea, or suggestion. There is a challenge, it is argued here, in seeing the unusual in the usual.

An example of an ‘alerting’ function can be seen in a reinterpretation of some of the symbols that abound in various corners of human interaction. As an instance, justification for drawing on the *cakras* as a model for discourse does not have to be a novel esoteric exercise. It is possible that the model in one form or another exists already in the many recesses of Western thought. As one case in point, the movement known as Freemasonry has a wide variety of symbols with which the Masonic ethos is transmitted to and amongst initiates and members. In the various ‘degrees’ or discrete stages of Masonic progression there is usually one item that depicts the symbols appropriate to the degree of the moment. Of interest here is that of the First Degree. There are a number of artistic impressions that exist in the many

Lodges around the world but each contains certain common elements. Of these, according, at least, to the researches of this author, there is always a ladder on which is depicted the 'virtues' of Faith, Hope and Charity (see figure 1 - symbols are, respectively, cross, anchor and hand holding a cup). It is usual in modern Masonic circles to take this order of the symbols as a given; in other words, Faith provides the Hope that strengthens or gives rise to Charity, culminating in the 'improved man' (in figure 1, depicted by the star). Historically, however, this order has not always been the case. Before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were 'Rituals' (booklets formulating the various ritual practices) produced in England, ie. pertaining to the English rite, where the order was represented as Charity preceded Hope, which gave rise to Faith. This reversal is, in fact, important in what follows, especially in relation to the graduations of the *cakras*. As will be seen later, the New Age theorists and Patañjali begin psychospiritual redemption by examining relationships with the Other, a sort of Charity. But first the basic image of the ladder.



**Figure 1:** Masonic 1<sup>st</sup> Degree symbols

*The Text Book of Freemasonry*. 1881.  
London: Reeves and Turner

To some observers (like Kirk MacNulty, 1991) the placement of these symbols on a ladder (generally regarded as 'Jacob's Ladder') reaching from the floor towards a star in the 'sky', is significant in depicting a graded transcendence of the individual. MacNulty, taking a Jungian perspective and using biblical/Masonic terminology, argues that the sides of the ladder characterize the masculine and feminine principles, the 'law of duality', which when held together by the rungs of 'interaction' facilitate a transcendence. In other words, without the maintenance of a construction of masculine and feminine *in interaction* the individual must remain on

the floor of the profane.<sup>1</sup> The assumptions and constructions of the ladder and the virtues placed thereon, as will be seen later, can arguably be seen as an epitome of the *cakras* and synonymous with the model arranged by Patañjali; it would also be argued that Erikson has a similar ethos in his insistence of interaction between the polarities of his Life Cycle. The point being made here is that there does seem to be a similarity in many parts of life, waiting to be discovered by those who have been alerted to awe.

In the spirit of all this, this chapter sets out to complete four tasks in the design of the intellectual framework of the whole venture. Firstly, in order to better understand the *cakras* it is helpful to look at a philosophical base for the system. In this case a cosmology, rooted mainly in *sāṃkhya* philosophy, that can effortlessly be discovered in the *yogasūtras* of Patañjali and the *bhagavadgītā*. This view of the cosmogenesis of the human individual will be shown later to be a reverse order of the *cakras* and will be extracted out of, or read into Erik Erikson's schema, and consequently is promising of understanding the human condition from the spiritual standpoint of Erikson and other Western developmental psychologists. Secondly, the *cakras* will then be briefly and loosely located in a particular context, the Indian tradition of *tantra*, which will help bring clarity to the bi-polar nature of the human psyche (*tantra* is actually an enormous subject that could not be covered in depth in this forum). Thirdly, if life is taken from the selected elements of this viewpoint it is hypothesized that it is then relatively easy to understand the need for transcendence *qua* developmentally rising above a particular psychic condition. It is argued that

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<sup>1</sup> MacNulty (:18) uses the dualities of 'Moses (the Prophet) and Solomon (the Lawgiver)' and 'St John the Baptist (mid-Summer) and St John the Evangelist (mid-Winter)' to describe what can be argued as the polarities on a masculine and feminine continuum. Although he does not specifically mention the 'in interaction' aspect mentioned here the omission does not seriously effect the argument that the polarities must be balanced in order to experience benefit (see later in Erikson).

transcendence has little to do with escaping from the exigencies of life, or from the embodied state. It is more of a Jungian strategy of consciously integrating the poles of the psyche into a workable whole. JC Chatterji refers to "...an attempt to correct the limited condition of the human being."(Chatterji:xxi). Fourthly, the traditional *tantric* praxis attached to the 'raising of the *kuṣṭhal...n...*' through the *cakras* in attaining transcendence, does not find a comfortable fit with Western cognitive life; resulting from this is an array of modifications when *tantric* practices are appropriated by the West. The array is wide with some being scarcely intelligible in contrast to the original intention and others being more faithful in attempting a synthesis with a Western mindset. It is argued that some Western authors are attempting a pragmatic or less-esoteric interpretation of the *cakra* methodology that makes the system accessible to a wider audience, both in the East and West. This chapter then is a prelude to examining the work of some psychologists who have displayed an innate feel for this approach transcendence.

#### **An overview of an Indian cosmology**

The reason for entering into this metaphysical world of Being is that before offering an alternative to any present approaches to transcendence from Western science and religion it is useful to take heed of the grounding of the alternative. It is in the spirit of a complementarity of Western Scientific and religious theoretical constructs in which this offering is made; more precisely it is in a perceived spirit of complementarity of West and East that this grounding of an alternative is explored. Moreover, as will be seen throughout the dissertation, it is contended that there is a seemingly natural 'feel' for these particular metaphysical and cosmological analyses lying innate in Erikson's writings.

The diagram used to illustrate this compilation of ideas derives from an unpublished

construction acquired from a devotee of the late Swami Nisreyasananda, of the Ramakrishna Mission, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (see appendix 1).<sup>2</sup> This chart bears similarities to the constructions presented by BKS Iyengar (1993), both drawing inspiration from the *yogasūtras* of Patañjali. Although there are omissions<sup>3</sup>, the Swami's diagram is the clearer of the two in terms that postulate that life is an emanation from the Divine and as such will be used as a basis for the following discussion.

Elucidation is also provided with occasional extracts from the text known as the *bhagavadgītā*. This document was constructed as a dialogue between a Divine-incarnation, known as Kṛṣṇa, and his friend, Arjuna.<sup>4</sup> The *bhagavadgītā* is particularly useful in this enterprise as it is said to deal with a *sāmkhyān* approach to the cosmology (Marcaurelle:125, n9; Chatterji:10, 49), and in recent times it has come to be regarded as being a central guiding-force to Indian practices of *dharma* or righteousness/righteous duty. Additionally, in the West the *bhagavadgītā* is being increasingly adopted in some circles as a replacement for, and in others as an adjunct to the Biblical structure of Western spiritual investigation.

Indian cosmology, in general, speculates on and differentiates between states of

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<sup>2</sup> This diagram has not, to my knowledge, been published, having been used, I am told, to illustrate the late Swami's teaching sessions. I have redrawn his original for clarity, retaining all his elements..

<sup>3</sup> The model offered by Nisreyasananda is by no means complete. He, for instance, does not include an important element - *citta* or consciousness. The importance of the concept is portrayed in the phrase, *satcitanand*, which refers to the divine attributes of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, attributes highly prized by the serious student of spiritual transcendence in many traditions.

<sup>4</sup> Note that there is little concern for the historical Kṛṣṇa or Arjuna but with what is being said in the texts and how this can be applied to a technologically orientated and basically alienated society (if the sales of psychiatric and New Age tranquillisers can be regarded as an indication of alienation).

Being. In a manner similar, some say, to quantum physics<sup>5</sup> but of necessity in its antiquity more imaginary. Much of the similarity is derived from the postulate that the base of Being is energy, similar in character to that of electro-magnetism, the energy changing in quality as it approaches or retreats from various forms of matter. In cosmological alchemy, fire energy is of a 'lighter' character than water, which is 'lighter' than rock, and so on (in the this context 'lighter' indicates a finer frequency and/or amplitude). The schema provides an image of purity in association with fineness of frequency. In other words, the closer the association with matter the coarser the vibration or frequency, or conversely, as often postulated, the closer to the Divine the finer the frequency/amplitude. Of import, though, is that it appears that 'living' organisms can have a variety of energy systems. As André Padoux explains, the human body, ostensibly made of matter<sup>6</sup> therefore evidently restricted in its energy system, also has other energetic systems. So an aspect of this philosophy is that there is a subtle body that is part of the physical body, and which lies at "...the root of and links together physiological and psychological processes."(Padoux 1986:4). The physical body is tuned to sensory detection, but not so the subtle, many holding that here is an extra-sensory facility (some labeling this 'intuition'); hence, it seems, a controversy has raged around the idea of an existence of energy systems other than those available to measurement. Subtle bodies, however, are said to be recorded in Kirlian photography and could be equated with the hidden forces such as those, for instance, demonstrated by magnetic influences on iron filings. It would appear that the human system can be seen to be composed of multiple layers of energetic activity, some obvious and

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<sup>5</sup> See Fritjof Capra (1975, 1976) for his views of the remarkable similarities between modern physics and Eastern mysticism.

<sup>6</sup> Capra informs that "...mass is nothing but a form of energy, that every object has energy stored in its mass."(1976:25).

others hidden or more subtle.

**Participation in the Divine:** This now leads to a broad categorization of the cosmos in which the human finds him/herself. It is important to state at this juncture that this is not an attempt to represent reality as-it-is, but more to seek to propose a cognitive construct with which the individual, including those with less sophistication, would be able to work with their reality. To begin with, it is worth noting that the Indian philosophers differentiated between the three basic states of Being - *brahman* (the Divine), *puruṣa* (loosely defined as Spirit), and *prakṛti* (Nature). There is, however, no real division between the three; it is said to be more a position of the latter two being emanations of *brahman*. In the image *brahman* proceeds to *puruṣa* which then extends to *prakṛti*. Kṛṣṇa alludes to this in the following *sūtras* in the *bhagavadgītā*:

And whatever things there be, of the nature of Sattva, Rajas or Tamas - know them to proceed from Me; still I am not in them, they are in me (7:12)

Know that Prakriti and Purusha are both without beginning; and know that all modifications and qualities (Gunas) are born of Prakriti. (13:19)<sup>7</sup>

From these it can be assumed that we are being told that there is a participation of Nature (made up of the qualities, or *gunatattwas*, of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) in the Divine, the pantheism and/or panentheism are being presented for discussion - “I am not in them, they are in me” could support a hypothesis of a neo-Platonist image of Nature being a series of emanations from the Divine.<sup>8</sup> Immanentism with a touch of

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<sup>7</sup> The terms, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, refer to the three basic qualities of Nature corresponding to harmony, action, and torpor, respectively. This seems simplistic but in combination these attributes carry a wide a range of personal manifestations as do, in this context, those of masculine and feminine.

<sup>8</sup> The subject of pantheism and panentheism is a great deal broader than can be discussed here. They are raised to note a loss of relevance classical theism has in this context and to alert the reader to the point that panentheism, with its acceptance of monism, dualism, and plurality, can be seen to be a background to the following discussion on Western and Eastern developmental philosophy.

transcendental potential; much like 'pods' emanating from an amoeba, becoming distinct from the main body but still participating in or being 'fed' by that body. The second clue to the divine nature of *prakṛti* or Nature comes with the first line of the second *sūtra* - "Know that Prakriti and Purusha are both without beginning." The statement could be understood to imply that the timelessness of the Divine is extended to the human-spirit condition; not an easy conception in the light of the dominance of Western scientific views of time/ space. The Swamis's diagram further reflects this participation by embodying the *aviśeṣa/viśeṣa* (undefined and defined states of being) of creation *within* other levels (see appendix 1). Ultimately, the diagram depicts an inclusion of the worldly body in the other-worldly 'body' of the Divine. In other words, the evolution of matter is not a linear motion, one step after another superceding each other away from some point, but is more augmentative; another level growing out of a base of the previous, thus presupposing a continued linkage that permits the possibility of a return. This 'growing out of' can also be seen to be a basis for Erikson's *epigenetic principle*, to be discussed later.

Swami Chidbhavananda explains it slightly differently, that "...prakriti and purusha are not essentially two different entities. The same Reality [*brahman*] enjoys two phases of self-assertion and self-expression... The former phase is Purusha and the latter phase, Prakriti."(Chidbhavananda:698, interpolation added).

JHM Whiteman adds another dimension by introducing a cyclicity to the situation. Firstly, he distinguishes between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as being respectively "...pure selves", non active and spectator-like..." and "...original producing power...". Then he maintains that "The Principle of "Development" or "Manifestation" (*āvirbhāvā*) by which unmanifest (*avyakta*) causes pass into manifest (*vyakta*) effects, and those

effects in turn pass in the unmanifest...”(Whiteman:110).<sup>9</sup> Later he notes (from the *śvetāśvara upaniṣad*) an image of *prakṛti* as “original creative outgoing” and explains *prakṛti* “...as a name for the original tendency or disposition in humanity to “lay hold” (by application, *pradhāna*) of things experienced, so that attributes (*guṇas*) are first “roped in” by the individual, and then must be released by non-attachment and devotion to the Supreme...”(Whiteman:111). From this it is supposed that there is some purpose to the manifestation of *puruṣa* through *prakṛti*. Perhaps this lies in an urge to “lay hold” of the experience of life. Even though this is speculative a desire to experience can be seen in the child and adolescent, especially when seen from Erikson’s perspective, as s/he engages, with wonder or awe, the array of materiality passing before him/her. Once again this is crucial in a retention of re-development of awe in life which underpins a greater spirituality.

**The *guṇas*:** A hermeneutical key to how this cosmology intersects with Western spiritual psychology is the theory of the *guṇas*, ie. *sattva rajas*, and *tamas*. This theory holds that all of creation (although the focus here is on the human aspect of creation) is incorporative of an infinite variety of blends of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, the basic building blocks of *prakṛti*. These categories of existence appear in all manner of thought, from *ayurvedic* medicine to cooking to spirituality.<sup>10</sup> Ajit Mookerjee & Madhu Khanna describe the inter-relationship in this way:

“Sattva (essence) is the ascending or centripetal tendency, a cohesive force directed towards unity and liberation. Rajas (energy) is the revolving tendency, which gives impetus to all creative force. Tamas (mass) is the descending or centripetal tendency, the force which causes

<sup>9</sup> Of interest is that he does not include *avyakta* or *vyakta* in his list of important Sanskrit words. One must assume that there is a correlation with *aviśeṣa* and *viśeṣa* in relation to the un/manifest.

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See, for instance, how Roger Marcaurelle (1987) for an example of how the philosopher Śaṅkara uses the *guṇas* in his hermeneutics of the *bhagavadgītā*.

decomposition and annihilation.” (Mookerjee & Khanna:17)

Perhaps this explanation carries marks of Sigmund Freud’s deliberations on the *eros* and the *thanatos*, the life-affirming and life-denying ‘drives’ (what is missing from Freud is the middle path of *sattva* - but then perhaps he could rather equivocally bring this into an ‘integration’ achieved with a successful psychoanalysis). The *guṣas* are particularly useful in a typology of spiritual development, as it is generally found that an unsophisticate tends to gravitate towards either *rajas* (passion) or *tamas* (inertia), often and alternation between the two presupposing a lack of self-control or self-understanding. An accent in Eastern spiritual development is to learn a more *sattvic* (stable) path between the two. *rajas* and *tamas* are seen as a dipolar basis of a material reality; the former ensuring action and the latter acting as a brake, so to speak; the dipolarity is similar to that of the masculine-feminine of the Chinese yin-yang continua. *sattva*, on the other hand, can be regarded as being outside, or rather between the dipolarity and an initial end for spiritual practice; but the quality is still within the *guṇaic* system so must itself be transcended for true transcendence. As Iyengar illustrates in table form, seminal stages of spiritual practice are heavily imbued with *tamas* and *rajas*, in mixtures and alternations, but eventually with perseverance *sattva* predominates (Iyengar:120). From this it would be claimed that the *tamo-rajas* region is the end of a manifestation of the Divine into the depths of materiality or *prakṛti*, and the urge for a journey towards an order of *sattva* is the beginnings of a struggle to return to the Divine or ‘roots’, so to speak. This could also be envisaged in Whiteman’s cyclic premiss. A return hypothesis is a constant theme in this dissertation as a metaphor for transcendence.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Michel Clasquin of the University of South Africa correctly points out that the return hypothesis is not to be taken as a return to the same roots. In this sense, return to Divine roots must include the experiences that have been collected on the journey through life.

**Progression towards Being:** It is said the classes of the *guṇas* are non-existent in the Divine, represented by *brahman*. It is only when the process of emanation begins that they gradually manifest. Initially there is ‘thought’ in the form of *puruṣa* which is often translated as being Self, or Pure Being (*atman*). Although *puruṣa* is often used in the singular, as a single class, Fernando Tola & Carmen Dragonetti point out that it should be used in the plural, “...*puruṣas* as the *Sāṃkhya* maintains the existence of an infinite number of *puruṣas*, spirits, individual souls.”(1987:xv, also Puligandla:135). At this stage of *brahman* there are no *guṇas* but there is ‘thought’. It is assumed that *puruṣa* constitutes the Jungian ‘personal unconscious’ which is intimately connected to the ‘collective unconscious’. Here *puruṣa* can be equated with the Greek *nous* (in its purest sense) and is said to act as a bridge between God and World. It is also *atman*, the unsullied level of individual being.<sup>12</sup>

When the *guṣas* begin to appear *prakṛti* coalesces initially in a state of equilibrium (*sāmarasya*), a highly desirable state of return for the yogi. At this level all of nature is interrelated as there is, yet, no *guṇa*ic imbalance, therefore distinctiveness. Mark Dyczkowski describes this *sāmarasya* as being in a state of ‘sleep’ (see also Chatterji:47-8). It is the inactive Self, the immutable on the way to the mutations of *prakṛti*. ‘Śiva resides within himself’ is one way this is described and is a popular image of the wisdom (transcendence) that can be attained through an understanding and integration of a divided Self/self via spiritual practice.

**Prologue to individuality:** Only when the emanation is further extended or unfolded (Chatterji:14) is there a change in the equilibrium, which becomes

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<sup>12</sup> It is said in mythology that *puruṣa* was sacrificed by the gods so that his various body parts could be used for creation, hence the image of bridge or intermediary. Sanderson Beck describes the phenomenon as “...the embodied human spirit who is one-fourth creature and three-fourths eternal life in heaven.”(Beck:online)

'disturbed'. Change in Being is probably at the instigation of *prakṛti*, who is the active principle. The disturbance of the composure of the *guṇas* sets the stage for the production of the world of Nature as we know it, and this factor sets conditions for further development by *prakṛti*. This is not to say that *puruṣa* is changed by *prakṛti*. As the emergency drama unfolds *prakṛti* gradually comes into her own, moulding and manipulating, and adding to rather than compromising or even leaving *puruṣa*. It is desirable to be particular on this point as the continued co-existence of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is seminal to an argument for a spiritual dimension to psychotherapy, for instance. Furthermore, it assists in imagining cycles of procession and recession.

Moving on, the term, *hiranyagarbha*, (see appendix 1) can be translated as either 'golden womb' or 'golden egg', both symbolizing fertility. From a *prakṛtic* womb of a 'disturbed' *puruṣa* is born a plurality of seminal beings, associated with 'souls', delving into a manifest world of duality (here again lies an indication of panentheism). Now the Adamic myth, as mentioned in chapter 2, takes on another meaning as the emanation continues its journey away from the source towards an experience of alienation. *Contra* that myth, though, it is not 'God' who 'expels' but a process, that is variously either 'God-willed', 'own-willed', or even just plain 'natural'. The proceeds from *hiranyagarbha* can be seen to be analogous to an expulsion, in the image of a 'birthing', from a Garden of Eden and it is from here that an alienation from the Divine and a dimorphic effect (the double alienation argued in chapter 2) starts to be felt.

**Individuality:** As the *guṇas* separate and begin to settle into a personal Platonic form, individuality begins to dawn (as mentioned earlier, discussion is restricted to the human domain). Now the course of physical form-ation continues through the

spiritual alchemical elements of space, air, fire, etc.<sup>13</sup> to the senses of hearing, touch, sight, etc. to the actual organs serving the senses. These organs have been categorised into those of action (*karmendriyas*) and those of perception (*jñānendriyas*). The evolutionary journey of gross matter nears completion once the organs of an individual physical being have emerged and is complete when these organs have reached a peak in function. Once the peak is passed then there is a physical decline or “recession into the unmanifest...(*tirobhāva*).”(Whiteman:110). This is initially on a physical plane, and only later in life is mental depreciation noticeable.

So during physical development, further individuality is paralleled by the operations of that segment of existence known as mind. In this cosmology, mind (*manas*) issues alongside, albeit at a different rate, to body, and is split into three - *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intelligence), and *ahamkara* (ego).<sup>14</sup> Noteworthy in both Nisreyasananada and Iyengar is that *manas* and *buddhi* are associated with a manifest or distinguishable reality (*viśeṣa*), and *ahamkara* with a non-distinguishable or deeper reality (*aviśeṣa*). This particular categorisation is relevant to Western psychology (which holds that ego is some subset of mind) as mind and intelligence are associated with everyday affairs, and ego, in this context, to some extent determines what quality of persona will be projected in terms of placement along the dimensions of embodiment, gender, etc. as discussed in chapter 2.<sup>15</sup> In

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<sup>13</sup> Reference will be made to these elements in the discussion around the *cakras* and Erikson.

<sup>14</sup> Some would hold that consciousness (*citta*) is included here. There is some difficulty as *citta* is regarded as being broader in application and is seen rather to represent a backdrop to the world-acting functions of mind (*manas*).

<sup>15</sup> Note the contention that sexuality is imperfectly inferred through observation and language. In much the same way by classifying *ahamkara* with *aviśeṣa* there is a suggestion of a similar inaccessibility to sexuality in the profane state.

other words, ego is intimately connected with the process of differentiation required for effective existence in a material world.

Calling on Dyczkowski again, *manas* and *buddhi* are concerned with the sorting of images into discrete segments (*manas*) and perceiving a gestalt (*buddhi*), leaving *ahamkara* with the task of differentiating egoic self from the environment (actually it appears to be a case of self from Self as will be seen later in the discussion) and to a large extent how the individual will conduct her/himself in any given situation.

In this, Dyczkowski makes a further distinction by splitting *ahamkara* into two again. He holds that the individual begins to differentiate self from other through the application of ego: “The ego’s function is to appropriate and personalise experience - to link it together as ‘my own’.” But this is a dicey business due to the presence in potential of a personal or false ego (*ahamkāra* - note the long ‘a’): “...the personal ego falsely identifies the Self with that which is not Self and vice versa... ‘I’ consciousness is of two kinds. One is pure and is Śiva, the light of consciousness reposing in itself. The other is the product of *māyā*. *The pure ego rests on pure consciousness and the impure ego on outer objective forms.*”(Dyczkowski:133, emphasis added). This is the murky world of *māyā*, of control by ‘false’ ego in a fog of *māyā*, that is interpreted here as the end of the range of emanation. Although there are few who have taken up this moot point it does serve a purpose to be explored next.

***māyā* and false consciousness:** In the final part of this overview a theme that meanders through the rest of the work needs to be addressed - that of *māyā* which can be said to give rise to and/or sustain *ahamkara*, or the illusion of reality that allows space for mis-identification away from an authentic Self. As with much translation of the Sanskrit the word *māyā* can variously interpreted according to

context. One of the most powerful of these is 'Divine *mysterious* power' and is often associated with the feminine. Kṛṣṇa, in the *bhagavadgītā*, accepts responsibility for possessing this artifact of human existence.

Verily this divine illusion (Māyā) of Mine, made up of the Gunas, is hard to surmount; but those who take refuge in Me alone, they cross over this illusion. 7:14

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, and by His M□y□ causes all beings to revolve as if mounted on a machine. 18:6

There is a practical complication riding with the interpretation of 'mysterious power.' Although the *sūtras* of the *bhagavadgītā* provide fine thoughts of mysterious power for the devotee or initiate in his/her meditation, it would be argued that they lack a grounding that can significantly reach towards a perhaps more sceptical section of seeking population. In an attempt to show a correspondence between *māyā* and modern psychology, for instance, it would be postulated that the more common interpretation of 'illusion' or 'unreality' would be appropriate; especially if it is linked with the dynamics of socialisation and various '-isms' of ideological attachment.

Getting back to the emanation project, the progress from *puruṣa* to the various organs is just part of the journey. As psychologists, such as Erikson, Maslow, and others, could intimate, the production of an embodied being is only a phase in a spiritual journey. As was demonstrated in chapter 2 coping with embodiment is one thing, integrating culture, through acceptance, rejection, or modification of socialisation, is quite another and now the discussion edges towards the concept of false consciousness.

Kṛṣṇa (with Jesus and Muhammad (his concept of *jihad al-akbar* - 'Greater Task'), for that matter) constantly reiterates the need to detach; not from society *per se*, as some would have it, but from the temporal therefore insecure fruits of society. To go

one step further, detachment does not involve rejection of these fruits, but rather being attached to their ownership. As Dyczkowski has informed, the dilemma arise when the self identifies with the non-self, when the individual succumbs to the attractions of world and indiscriminately allows him/herself to become embroiled in their acquisition by identifying with them. For lasting happiness/pleasure is attained, according to *śaṅkhyan* philosophy, by disentangling the web of illusion (*māyā*), denoted by attachment to materiality, as a prelude to finding the Self which equates with *puruṣa* in the world.<sup>16</sup>

**Summary of a cosmology:** A purpose for introducing this rendition of an Indian cosmology is to create a narrative that could assist in a visualisation of intra-psychic traveling or lack thereof. It is contended that the possibility of the individual person being an emanation, in energetic terms, of some form of Divine Being can be of assistance to those who feel an urge to effectively realign spiritual values. As such, the process is seen in the form of an amoebic pod emerging from a base of the Divine and progressing out into what eventually results in the world (*prakṛti*). There is no loss of connection with the Divine as the process is one of augmentation, rather than replacement or detachment, as a result the individual Being can be seen to be an embodiment within *prakṛti* which has links through *puruṣa* (the Self) to a divine. This is not the end, though, as while the various physical aspects of the individual are formed to their full potential (approximately the age 25-30 years) there is a gradual rising of the mind which continues to forge an existence within *prakṛti*. Mind is then seen to be subjected, as with body, to numerous challenges,

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<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that 'attachment' is not to be restricted to the mundane, it is possible to be pathologically attached to ascetism, for instance, as a personal mode of salvation; in this case the attachment problem could arise from a fear of intimacy/freedom. Attachment to this fear is then a causative factor underpinning that particular need for ascetism. Attachment, therefore, applies to all categories of existence, both spiritual and mundane.

one of which being a return along the line of manifestation to the Divine in response to a transcendental urging. It is in this sense of return on which a spiritual project of transcendence is hinged. In the chapter on Erikson it will be argued that there is a distinction to be made between Being (the emanatory process) and Existence (participation in the world), and it is the assonance/ dissonance between the two that underscores levels of suffering (*duḥkha*) that impel transcendence.

In sum then the purpose of the present chapter is to construct a model of spirituality that is feasible in the world of the aspirant. More specifically, it is to bring out the critical role that sexuality plays in a spiritual model. This line of argument, as was said earlier, is rather abstract. So in order to bring the spiritual impressions closer to the ground, and introduce the motif of sexuality, this broad cosmological overview will now be equated with the embodied spiritual system known as the *cakras*.

### **The Indian *cakra* system - embodied spirituality**

**The speculative nature of the *cakras*:** The *cakras* can be described as an embodied hierarchical spiritual dimension, a schema that can be implemented to facilitate spiritual growth. Having said this it is well to follow psychiatrist John Nelson when he affirms that the model is an ancient system of integrating body, mind, and spirit (Nelson:online). Additionally, there is little evidence for the existence of the *cakras* as identifiable physical entities; they are, in fact, simply "...metaphors for psychological stages of development, both for individual humans and for humanity as a whole." (*ibid*, see also Lillian Silburn 1988:25). Lee Sannella, in an article on the *kuṇḍalinī* caps this situation: "The terms "channel," "widen," "blocks," and so on must be taken metaphorically. They may not refer to actual physical structures, dimensions, and processes, but be only useful analogies for understanding this model of kuṣṭhal...n... action. The actual process is undoubtedly much more subtle

and complex.”(Sannella:102; see also Eliade:233-4 where he doubts attempts (by H. Walter, for instance) to associate *yogic* elements with bodily organs). Again, Georg Feuerstein provides a double argument with some subtleties:

“According to some scholars, notably Agehananda Bharati (1965), such speculations make no sense because the *cakras* are merely “systematic fictions” or “heuristic devices” to aid the process of meditation. While not denying the symbolic component of the *cakra* model, transpersonal psychologist Ken Wilber (in John White, 1979) notes that the *cakras* are real insofar as they are associated with distinct sensations or states of consciousness, just as they appear to be correlated with certain organs.”(Feuerstein, 1990:72)

In the light of these arguments it is the vantage of ‘heuristic device’, especially in the real world of the aspirant, that is being taken here.

Given the speculative nature of the model it has been shown to be highly effective when used for the purpose for which it is designed - a provision of imaginary waystations in the task of raising consciousness from one mode to another or as is commonly interpreted, moving from one somewhat narrow life-view to another that is broader or more inclusive, possibly due to an ‘elevated’ vantage point. While many stops can be made on the way the classical praxis attached to the *cakras* (certainly in the *tantric* methodology) is aimed at eventual merging of the masculine (*śiva*) and feminine (*śakti*) principles, a goal known as liberation or *mokṣa* (equitable with the Jungian mechanism of individuation through the integration of the shadow). Thus the classical role of the *cakras* is seen here to provide an embodied series of foci for the complicated physical workings of a consciousness-elevating practice; these include *mantra* for sound, *mudrā* and *āsana* for touch, breath control in *prānāyāma*, and such (Mookerjee & Khanna:150). Note here the necessity to understand the rudiments of the cosmological schema above which contributes to a motivation for the praxis. Each element of the practice has a purpose within the overall matrix, any part that is neglected makes the exercise null and

void.

The basic component of the system is the *cakra*. The term is translated as ‘wheel’<sup>17</sup> and in the context of this discourse denoted ‘embodied’ stations (*pitha*) at which particular levels of consciousness are encountered. The image of the wheel connotes spinning or revolving when health or purpose are in evidence. Any blockage of a *cakra* is known as a ‘knot’ (*granthi*) which interferes with the ‘spinning’ and is seen to be a causative factor in ill-health, both physical and mental. Lilian Silburn describes the condition of the wheel in the ‘ordinary’ person in whom “...these wheels neither revolve nor vibrate, they form inextricable tangles of coils, called accordingly ‘knots’ (*granthi*), because they ‘knot’ spirit and matter, thus strengthening the sense of ego.”(Silburn:26; see also Mookerjee & Khanna:152). The condition of ‘knotting’ will become clearer later when talking of the lack of differentiation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, which in this context is considered a contribution to suffering, being a result of *āvidyā* or ignorance, a key component of *māyā*.

In line with the energetic speculations above and to further facilitate the construction of the practice the body is seen to have pathways (*nāḍis*, ‘arteries’ and ‘veins’) along which vital energy (*prāṇasakta*, or simply *prāṇa*) flows. In a similar configuration through a large number of points or ganglia dispersed throughout the body which are the *cakras*. Most of these points (which link an estimated 72 000 *nāḍis*) are more

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<sup>17</sup> Georg Feuerstein notes that the term is applied in a wide range of circumstances, such as “...the “wheel of becoming” (*bhava-cakra*), or “round of existence” (*samsāra*)...”(1990:72) amongst others. Anindita Balslev also points that the word *cakra* is also used to denote circularity of afflictions. *Vṛtti saṃskāra anīṣam cakram* denotes a continual regress of the impingement of the fluctuations created by *prakṛti* and the traces left behind in the subconscious as a result of being attached to these *prakṛtic* modifications. This cycle or *cakra* is often grouped under the title of *kleśa* or affliction (Balslev:online)

relevant to the exercise of such healing practices as *acupuncture* and *ayurveda*. In spiritual discourse, however, focus is on a group of cardinal *cakras* aligned to specific points along the spine. These *cakras* have three channels flowing through them, the *idā*, the *piṅgalā*, and a central pathway, the *suṣumṇā*; this last being described by Silburn as a central vein of a leaf "...to which the other ribs connect, for it is this channel that all functions spring forth, and also within it that they come to rest."(Silburn:23, note the feel of emanation and return, even of cyclicity).

Tradition has it that forms of spiritual consciousness reside in potential in the *cakras* and it is only when fed by concentrated energies along the *suṣumṇā*, such energies opening or unknotting the *granthis*, that that segment of consciousness is elevated or refined, and quality of life improved.<sup>18</sup>

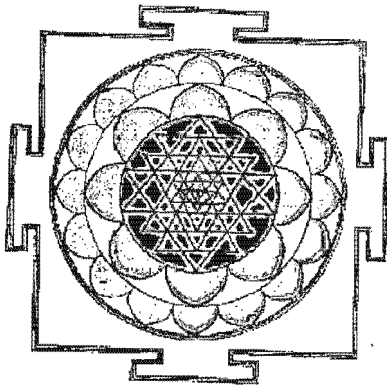
#### **An overview of the classical *cakras***

In order to better explain this it is now time to give a basic outline of the model. This section will be a very basic outline of the *cakras* as they appear in *tantric* or classical form. In the original, the raising of the *kuṇḍalīnī* requires great devotion and asceticism, at times even asceticism, and is bound up in precise rituals. As Jung and Hauer have pointed out the classical esoteric praxis accompanying the *kuṇḍalīnī* philosophy tends to be beyond the scope of Western ability. For the moment, it must suffice to simply outline the basics, focusing more on a Western utilisation later.

Essentially, it seems that the raising of the *kuṇḍalīnī* consciousness requires purgation of mind and body, and meditation on the symbols, sounds, and actions

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<sup>18</sup> Eliade describes the relationship between the *nāḍis* and the *cakras* thus: "Simplifying slightly, we could say that the vital energy, in the form of "breaths," circulating through the *nāḍis* and that the cosmic energy exists, in a latent state, in the *cakras*."(Eliade:237)



**Figure 2:** common depiction of *śrī yantra*

appropriate to the *cakra*. This is usually done under the guidance of a master or teacher, who is an adept and so understands the signs of pro/regress exhibited by the aspirant.

**The *mūlādhārā cakra*:** This is the base *cakra* said to be situated in the perineum between the anus and the genitalia. It is here that the *kuṇḍalīnī* or *śakti*- energy is said to reside (the *kuṇḍalīnī* is held to be synonymous with the feminine energy of *śakti*). *kuṇḍalīnī* is depicted as a

coiled ‘serpent’ whose head blocks the entrance (*brahmādvāra*) of the principle channel, the *suṣumṇā*. The effect of this ‘blocking’ is to restrict energy flow to the *cakras* above, thus keeping consciousness at a primitive level of matter and inertia. In the normal course of events ‘she’ lies dormant in the human frame and it is believed that life is difficult for the individual as ‘her’ blockage means uncontrolled dispersion of life-enhancing energy (*praṇāśakta*). The associated alchemical element of this *cakra* is earth and the colour is usually red; it is identified with “...the cohesive power of gross matter and the elements of inertia, the sense of smell, etc.” (Mookerjee & Khanna:154; also Eliade:241).

In order to assist with the meditative focus and development of the image in the aspirants mind, *tantric* tradition has developed the *yantra* or mystical drawing (see figure 2 for example) which has a number of elements (squares, circles, petals, triangles), each with its own symbolic significance. The aspirant needs to fully understand these significances in order to provide the impetus for continued progress. In the *śrī yantra* there are a number of apex-down triangles (▽) surrounding a central point or *bindu*; this is to represent the ‘sleeping feminine’ whose head has blocked the entrance (*brahmādvāra*) to the *suṣumṇā*. Furthermore,

although this is to depict spiritual inertia and ignorance, on a more practical plane Indian medical experience relates this to the physical by holding that the blockage also entails physical inertia and ‘ignorance’, or simply ill health. It is when this triangle has metaphorically been reversed, through spiritual practice, to an apex-up triangle ( $\Delta$ ) that knowledge, will, and activity start to become evident, and the dissipation of energies, which has been promoting an overt and erratic life, is neutralised, or, rather, becomes gainfully gathered together. “Her sleep is the bondage of the ignorant, making him blindly mistake his body for his true Self...although asleep, she is supporting the life of man and of the world, both having fallen into slumber.” (Silburn:27).<sup>19</sup> This notion of bondage will be brought up later in the discussion of ignorance (*āvidya*).

**The *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*:** Once the spiritual practice has awoken the *kuṇḍalinī* the ritual changes and *mantras* and *yantras* change in order to assist with ‘her’ journey. The *svādiṣṭhāna cakra* lies at the level of the genitalia and has tended to be something of a challenge to the Western mind; the nineteenth century Theosophist, CW Leadbetter, for instance, preferred to place it in the pancreas (perhaps a reflection of some puritanism), and Silburn omits it in her explication of Kashmiri *śaivism*. Water is the alchemical element, the colour is usually orange and the *cakra* governs the sense of taste. Although associated with the genitalia there seems, certainly in Hindu *tantra*, to be little specific reference to sex or sexuality; it would appear to be simply a waystation amongst others, albeit with its own special attributes.

**The *maṇipura cakra*:** is situated in the region of the solar or epigastric plexus

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<sup>19</sup> As an aside, one could wonder if the use of the two triangles is nor reminiscent of or bears some relation to the Jewish ‘Shield of David’ or *Magen David*, which in this context could be interpreted as depicting harmony between or integration of masculine and feminine principles.

(stomach). Elements include the colour yellow and fire, and it is related in to the sense of sight.

**The *anāhata cakra*:** lies in the chest and is popularly known as the 'heart' *cakra*. Alchemy here is extended to green, air, and touch.

**The *viśuddha cakra*:** is associated with the throat or medulla oblongata and includes blue, æther (space), and hearing.

**The *ājñā cakra*:** This is generally viewed as the last of the *cakras* proper. It is associated with the brow, just above the bridge of the nose. It is often seen to be the last of the *cakras* which require spiritual practice for realisation. It is now past the alchemical regions although the colour given is indigo, and it is associated with various cognitive and 'supernatural' faculties or 'powers' (*siddhis*), such as telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition. *Brahminical* explication of a purpose for this *cakra* is that it is the final test of the will of the aspirant for *mokṣa*, the test being to overcome a fascination for the acquisition of or 'false' feeling of power linked to the *siddhis* that arise with the *cakra*. As much as attainment of the of the *guṇa*, *sattva*, *qua* being evenly poised therefore untainted by the other two (*rajas* and *tamas*), is only a step in the right direction, so the attainment of *siddhis* is regarded as an invitation to reject them and move on.

**Summary:** What appears to be a natural impulse to improve one's situation is a thread running through this discussion of the *cakras*. This goal of improvement lies within the methods devised by the various tradition for transformation and each method purports to cater for the needs of the individual seeker. Some, however, are content with an archaic desire for manipulation of the mundane, in the form of magical powers (such, perhaps, as those attributed to the Indian 'saint', Sai Baba, who is reported to produce 'holy dust' to the satisfaction of his devotees), worldly

'boons' (constituting increased health, wealth, or status), or sensory perception (clairvoyance and the like which contributes to power in relationships - often encountered in, but not exclusive to, Western *tantric* practices). It seems that this emphasis on 'spiritual powers' can be seen to be a counter-spiritual or quietistic valence in some of the new religious movements being experienced at the moment. Ultimately, the classical construction and use of the *cakras* is one method for achieving transformation. It is a technique demanding tenacity and an ability to grasp and manipulate intricate details which have come down through the ages in a culture that is in many ways spiritually foreign to that of the West. One of these details is now discussed in order to punctuate one the challenges in adopting a classical *cakraic* practice.

#### **The *cakras* and initiation**

Lying at the base of the *cakra* system is a serious business of transformation through Self-knowledge. This is not, as David Kinsley points out, an escape mechanism which is so easily a trap for the alienated who are content with the acquisition of powers or benefits, but a genuine desire to improve oneself within the culture or society (Kinsley:51). It is in this that the use of the *cakras* can generally be related to *tantric* practice in the *sādhaka* uses images associated with parts of the body, "...in the hope of awakening in oneself the reality that it [the image] represents." (...ibid, interpolation added). Bolstering the imagining is the knowledge that the active picturing of certain images is a technique for focussing on the Divine, away from the mundane. In this way, eventually achieving transcendence.

A major bearing in this process is that it does seem to be for indiscriminate distribution. Although some 'knowledge' leaks out to the general population the deeper refinements are 'reserved' for initiates:

“*Dikṣā* [initiation] becomes of utmost importance in *Tantricism*: a special initiation is necessary for anyone who wishes to enter the Tantric way. It is open to all without distinction of caste or sex, but even a Brahmin has to apply for it, otherwise he is not entitled to take part in the Tantric *mysteries*.” (Klostermaier, 1994:285, interpolation and emphasis added).

It is worth noting here the use of the mechanism of ‘initiation’ into ‘mysteries’.

Accepted as a common practice in esoteric pursuits, initiation can become much opposed and challenged in some vocal Western quarters; some saying, for instance, that it is ‘elitist’ thus contravening a ‘human right’ to ‘know’.<sup>20</sup> It is unfortunately possible that much of the opposition to initiation and mystery finds support in a Western lack of respect for the Other, which precedes an offhand arrogation of cultural artifacts, including knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

Whilst there may be some merit in this ‘human rights’ approach in that deconstruction of some ‘mysteries’ might bring out valuable information, it is possible that a relentless drive to ‘expose the hidden’ by ingeniose may deteriorate into a situation of mediocrity as proponents of ‘transparency’ find themselves unable to get beyond the superficial elements of the tradition; the barrier to the deeper levels being a willingness to undergo the ordeals concomitant with initiation. Bearers of a ‘wisdom’ seem to resist attempts to divulge esoteric components of a practice by only giving up small and generalised portions of their knowledge during interrogation. But then again there is a suggestion that many of the mysteries seem to carry an experiential wisdom which can only be unearthed by the individual, who, as Eliade informs, places him/herself in the care and guidance of a guide (Eliade:6,

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<sup>20</sup> See David Lawrence (1991) reviewing how Lillian Silburn brought together bits of her *tantric* practice to create her book, *Energy of the Depths*.

<sup>21</sup> It would seem that certain radical groupings in new religious movements are either particularly suspicious of traditions that do not conform with their vision of the Good (the Greek *agathon*), some charismatic Christians, for instance, or are searching for philosophies and/or practices that will complete their vision of the Good. Either way there is a menace of selective incorporation.

165) and is awe-fully prepared to accept the consequences of the discipline. Finally, initiation could indicate a setting out on a journey of discovery, a commitment to a sloughing off of unwanted psychic material and so to an emergence of a new person. It is probable that the 'wisdom' inherent in an esoteric tradition is a delicate mix of personal experiential and leader-led rationale, a point missed by many antagonists and protagonists who too often emphasise one or the other. Such thinking could be illustrated by a rationalistic environment that assumes wisdom to be cerebral. In the end mysteries then are not mysterious in themselves but are found to be so by an individual who wears the spectacles of *āvidya* or ignorance.

Evidence of such uncritical arrogation of Other information can be found in one of the larger proponents of *kunḍalīnī* yoga, an ill-defined and enigmatic grouping called the 'New Age'; it is a group some scholars charge with being given to borrowing from other cultures with little regard to what they are borrowing or how it is to be used (see Donaldson, 1999; Rountree, 2001, for instances). It is this ostensibly haphazard borrowing by the West that is to be discussed in the next section on the *kunḍalīnī* and *cakras*.

### **The *cakras* and the West**

Having conducted a mini-survey of a view of the Indian version of the *cakra* system, one now needs to ask how it has been adopted, as surely it has been, by Western spiritual practitioners and other interested parties. One could also ask how effective this incorporation in the West has been. Finally, has anything been lost or gained in the transfer from East to West.

The first point that should be made is that the *cakras* are generally associated with a *tantric* tradition, which, according to Chintaharan Chakravarti (1930), has

antediluvian roots, being found in seminal forms in the *ṛgveda* (generally regarded as the earliest of the Indian 'scriptures'). More specifically the *cakra* system surfaced into something like that found today in the middle of the first millennium CE and was gradually refined by various schools of thought and experience over the succeeding centuries. From this it can be assumed that the practices resulting from this activity brought some good over time, and that the refinements of the multifarious 'schools' had accumulated a value that would sustain them over the centuries.

The *cakras* were brought to the West in a variety of forms as a result of a 'scientific' investigation of Indian religion by Orientalists, members of colonising powers, and other interested parties. This is particularly so in the case, as an example, of the quasi-religious organisation of Theosophy, which, in the nineteenth century, began investigating the possible contributions that Oriental philosophy and practice could make to that of the West. But others before this include Georg Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Henry Thoreau, who all noted a place for Oriental sacred texts but seem not to have been involved in their proliferation in Europe or the US. At the beginning of the twentieth century sustained enquiry with some influence on at least an academic level was conducted by scholars such as Sir John Woodroffe, a High Court judge in India who used the pseudonym 'Arthur Avalon', and the German missionary and later Indologist, Wilhelm Hauer. The latter at one stage (in the early 1930's) collaborated closely with the psychologist, CG Jung, in developing a series of seminars specifically aimed at the subject of the *kundalīnī* and the significance of the *cakras*; these seminars have value as an attempt to create a cogent, for that time, Western Approach to the subject. Since then Western scholarly interest in the subject has been moderate, until the third quarter of the twentieth century when there was a burgeoning of fascination at a more popular level. The result of this is

now an array of interpretations by a considerable number of people, mostly but not exclusively outside of the academe, who have a varying interest in the system for as many reasons. By the same token, a broadening of the interest base has led to a wider reading of the more serious scholars of *kundalīnī*.

Thus it would seem, at first glance, that appropriation is problematic. In the first place, a somewhat haphazard borrowing of elements could amount to little of enduring merit for what seems to be a refined culture of spirituality. Jung, in his seminars, was sceptical about the ability of the Western mind to be able to identify effectively with Eastern philosophy; with regards to spiritual development he is reported to have said:

“Our lack of direction borders on psychic anarchy”...”There are many different kinds of yoga and Europeans often become hypnotized by it, but it is essentially Eastern, no European had the necessary patience and it is not right for him...The more we study yoga, the more we realize how far it is from us: a European can only imitate it and what he requires by this is of no real interest.”(Shamdasani:xxviii and xxx, respectively)

Although some adepts and religious leaders would hold that the practices are settled and relatively fixed this would not necessarily be the case in truth. It is possible that the incursions by the West may be bringing something new and of value to the brew; if only that the model is made more accessible to more people who have a genuine, even if Western, interest in the matter of spiritual development.

One group, however, made up especially of feminists of one persuasion or another, seems to be interested in the concept of embodied spirituality and has attempted to incorporate some vision of the *cakras* into their worldview of combating the patriarchy, an incorporation that has some promise of a relative functionality in Western terms, A dip into some of the many books constantly being produced by this group reveals a personalised pseudo-scientific view that would contribute more

to urban myth than any enduring form of knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Having said this, though, personal experience within this group indicates that the 'urban mythopoiesis' may have some short-term benefit. Thus in keeping this discourse to within the realm of 'raising consciousness' it is worthwhile to briefly discuss the contribution of these New Age 'theorists'. One argument for this would be that the scientific and academic discourse today has a tendency to be elevated beyond the ability of the laity to grasp (after all, laity is the one area from which many serious seekers appear). As such the popular theorist can be seen to have a substantial sway within this community; in subtle ways more so than the trained professional. Hence the diversion at this juncture for a brief examination of the movement.

#### Issues associated with New Age theorists

Some researchers into the phenomenon of the New Age agree that it is an amorphous, "...extraordinary mish-mash of ideas, a positive ferment of beliefs having little obvious connection with each other." (Paul Heelas:2, quoting Peter Lemesurier).<sup>23</sup> There are, however, certain common features, one of which is pertinent to this work - the primacy of healing in many of their activities (Chrissie

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<sup>22</sup> Having made these points there is some wonderful scholarship emanating from the West, a small selection is used here. A point must be made, though, that much of this is beyond the scope of understanding of the laity, and, it might be said, of a not insignificant group of 'clerics' (pundits and swamis), especially, paradoxically, it seems those well-versed in the intricacies of ritual. More work needs to be done with this apparent irony, but there are indications that the 'clerics', especially those who work in the Western countries, appear to be aligned with one or another religious grouping, an alignment that carries allegiances which may stultify personal research.

<sup>23</sup> Note that Wouter Hanegraaf, quoting Cristoph Bochinger, points out that there is less of a movement, and more of a syndrome: "...Bochinger observes (correctly) that the peculiar speech jargon of the 'New Age' scene does not necessarily reflect a consistent intellectual system; he adds that his initial goal...[was]...to investigate the processes which have led to the creation of the 'New Age' syndrome." (Hanegraaf, 1996:378, emphasis in original).

Steyn, 1994:43). Participants talk of self-healing, woman healing, planet healing, and so on, which has given rise to a plethora of methods for achieving a sense of transformation (*ibid*:286-293). Permeating through this enterprise is a premiss that “The above therapies [reflexology, homoeopathy, visualised prayer, and the like] are all regarded as valuable in the intermediate stages of healing, but to effect true transformation further spiritual exercises are believed to be necessary.” (*ibid*:293, interpolation added). This is where the New Age movement shows some promise in the broader arena - their sensitivity to the need for transformation, accompanied by creative practical attempts to achieve this, places them in what could be a unique position in community life. But these impulses are not peculiar to the New Age. In South Africa Steyn remarks that there are parallels with, for instance, the African Initiated Churches. In terms of approaches to healing, although there are differences, Steyn remarks:

“Interesting as these similarities and differences are, the question which remains unanswered is why these totally different movements should exhibit so many similarities. One has its origin in the Western esoteric tradition and the other is a hybrid with African traditional religion and Christianity as its two constituent components. With such diverse origins it is remarkable that they show such close parallels.” (Steyn, 1996:online, see also 1994:7).

Primarily one possible flaw appears. In her analysis of the two groups Steyn says that in both cases the conditions presented for ‘healing’ are dealt with in such a way that there is little change to society-at-large. By this is meant that there is a tendency for the participating individual to become passive, to become accepting of a prescribed ‘destiny’:

“Concomitantly the reintegration phase transpires on terms dictated by society itself and therefore society is not changed. It is thus clear that by individualising problems, they are also depoliticised.”(Steyn, 1996:online)

Heelas makes similar conclusions:

“And instead of bright well-educated younger people seeking to become leaders of society, and so moving into positions where they can “really” make a difference, the criticism is that their ‘politics’ is of a privatised kind; a mere ‘politics’ of indulgent experience.”(Heelas:202)

In terms of the African Initiated Churches one could offer a possible interpretation of these accusations; being that the purpose for going to the prophet/pastor is precisely to counter the helplessness being encountered by certain actors in the population in the socio-political arena. That the frustration being experienced as a result of having few resources for being in control of a personal situation is neutralised by the ‘healing’ offered by the church. In other words, the psychosocial developmental conditions which ordain a less than desirable psychospiritual space for the individual are addressed in some way by the pastors in the African Initiated Churches, but, perhaps unfortunately, with a real possibility of a side-effect of quietism arising from their approach to healing. It seems that this is a result of a concentration on the individual in relation to the environment, and not, as many activists would prefer, on the environment in relation to the individual. In other words, it seems that the individual is persuaded to accept his/her environment as a given and to seek relief within the church. Heelas, speaking through Peter Berger, talks of “...the de-institutionalised [from a perceived traditional African society] ‘homeless mind’ - suffering from ‘a permanent identity crisis’...is ‘conversion prone’...”(Heelas:143, interpolation added). Although Heelas is referring to the New Age it is but a short step to see a reference to the place of the African Initiated Church.

Noteworthy in this, though, is that “... the African Initiated Churches cater to the poorest of the poor...” (Steyn, 1996:online). Hence a point that could be made is that in tending to be connected with the lower ends of the socio-economic strata the

African Initiated Churches are instrumental in ensuring a certain measure of order within these ranks of society. The healing thus in the form of 'acceptance' of the status quo can be seen to be reducing levels of conflict and political agency. This is done within these communities by bringing the individual into close proximity with neighbours within a 'healing' matrix of inter-dependent relationships (a *mūlādhārā* syndrome, as will be seen shortly).

The situation changes for the New Age group. Practitioners and supporters in this sector cater to an "...almost always white and financially comfortable..." socioeconomic class (Steyn, 1996:online; also Robert Fuller, 1992). Now the motivating circumstances are different. There seems to be a shift in focus which takes the form of a need in some to withdraw from society, either on their own or into 'communities' of like-minded people, or, in others, a need to exercise a will to personal power, in a Nietzsche-ian sense. So far then there are possible similarities with the African Initiated Churches. But whereas it would seem that the latter cater to the present social and economic deficiencies which engender impotence, New Age activity is said to grow more out of a reaction to change, more specifically a possible inability to contribute to or be seen to contribute to beneficial change (Heelas:222).<sup>24</sup> Steyn refers to a common New Age aphorism, "all is exactly as it should be", and notes that this "...allows the individual to resign from actively

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<sup>24</sup> This can often be noted in the numbers of people who are seen to regularly attend all manner of workshops, seminars, and other events, and interact very superficially with the others; ie. there does not appear to be any significant connection with the others. These people appear, in fact, to live in a state of cognitive withdrawal whilst exhibiting physical participation, an apparent ontological confusion. It is interesting to note that increasing numbers of people in the movement are showing signs of aggression, reduced transparency, or guardedness when questioned on their belief systems, claiming a right to exclude 'undesirable' elements from their 'space'. Hence, although there could be a collective passivity, this is not necessarily the case at an individual level (own unpublished enquiry).

facing the problems of the world with a clear conscience..." (Steyn, 1994:313-4). Heelas is a little more specific on motivation: "The idea, then, is that the failure of 1960s activism to bring about a new social order helped fuel 1970s interest in that other alternative, the world that lies within. If one cannot change corrupt society, at least one can change oneself." (Heelas:142).

So it is possible to note indications that this particular situation can also have a quieting effect on participants. Noticeable in the New Age phenomenon is the large numbers of women involved, as well as increasing numbers of men who are sensitive to women's issues, which may, in view of the present, at times acrimonious, struggle for equality for women and other marginalised groupings, be a clue to the effect of peace-seeking avoidance behaviour, so possible passivity with regards to communal political participation. Also noticeable in Steyn's study of the syndrome in South Africa is a disposition to shift 'responsibility' from self-within-the-world to abstracted and universalised influences; such ill-defined attitudes as 'positive thinking,' 'unconditional love,' and 'forgiveness' being proposed as sufficient for discharging personal political responsibility (Steyn:237-255).<sup>25</sup> The framework is captured by Heelas:

"A related reason, now in the words of Donald Stone (1976), is that 'Rather than taking direct action to change the political structures or setting up an exemplary countersociety, members of these [Human Potential] groups seek to transcend the oppressiveness of culture by transforming themselves as individuals.'" (Heelas:224, n4)

One can detect further similarities here with the African Initiated Churches. Such similarities lead to another facet of the syndrome that in one way shows a possible

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<sup>25</sup> It is worth noting that as New Age membership is not standardised this sort of comment can be challenged. One does, however, find a proclivity to accepting the possible deficiencies of the status quo whilst 'working from within.' (Heelas:142).

spurning of the valences of modernity and on another a willingness to seek other ways of Being. A dialogue between a New Age author and one of the detractors could be offered as an illustration of this.

Phil Mole is an ardent sceptic of the New Age movement and provides a mixed argument against popular author, Caroline Myss, a 'medical intuitive'. Mole contends that Myss cannot be taken seriously as, despite "...the exquisite sensitivity of modern instruments...", there is no empirical evidence to support her work (Mole:online). The charge is made as Myss asserts that the present level of development of scientific measurement, particularly so with regards to the use of medical testing, is not able to validate what she claims to be able to do - intuitive medical diagnostics (Myss, 1993:16-17, also 1996:10). From this point the argument tends to become a little abstract. On one hand, Myss would reply that she is able 'intuitively' to find a disease 'in the making' and that the 'energy' being accessed by her is not accessible to modern, affordable instrumentation. On another hand, to stand by Mole, there is only anecdotal experience, as related in the form of 'case studies' in her books, which would allow some merit to this assertion. It is significant that Myss has made little plausible attempt (even in the form, for instance, of double-blind trials) to generate some figure of validation. In a sense, she is right as the cost of investigating her paradigm is out of the reach of most, but then it can be said that she is playing with 'faith' and naïvete.

This is an important issue raised by Mole that can be directed at significant numbers of New Age healing 'gurus' and practitioners. Although the philosophies and techniques presented can be said to have merit (if one is to accept the anecdotal evidence as being plausible) there is little attempt on the part of the practitioners to engage in a more rigorous investigation of their beliefs; including perhaps ethical ramifications of being paid for 'services' underwritten by unsubstantiated and so

questionable claims (personal inquiry, see also Heelas:208-9). There is a reticence to accrue a deeper personal understanding which would contribute to a broader understanding of the New Age healing phenomenon being presented. Myss actually is, in some ways, perhaps little further down the road from the days of Louise Hay (1984), for instance. Hay, whose book, *You can heal your life*, was a best seller for a number of years and has some interesting correlations between a number of disease processes and 'underlying' mental pathologies (for examples, see Steyn:290). The treatment offered comes in the form of specific affirmations which Hay, and her followers, believes will either provide relief or healing. But there has no real attempt to validate these correlations; even the possibility of following up on people known to use the method is regarded with disdain. Hay, and now Myss, simply bypass or ignore the possibility of scientific validation of her notions. Subsequent authors/practitioners seem to have followed in that stead, and wholeheartedly but uncritically espouse the paradigm.<sup>26</sup>

Myss, however, does claim some desire to work more closely with the medical profession - "I cannot help feeling that medical intuitives will eventually become essential members of health care teams, both in this country and around the world." (Myss, 1996:11, also 8-9). But as Mole demonstrates there is little that she or her partner, C Norman Shealy, a medical practitioner, are doing to realise this dream (apart from organising costly workshops on how to realise an 'innate' intuitive ability to decipher the symbolic language of the medical intuitive). In the end, there

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<sup>26</sup> Actually there is little new to this view on the use of affirmations for healing. Much of this New Age 'philosophy' can be found in the hypotheses of Franz Mesmer, Emmanuel Swedenborg, and others like William James (Fuller, 1992:online). Not forgetting, of course, the prayer-affirmations of the established religions. It would appear that Hay was able to codify and extend them to cater for a post-modern society - a highly lucrative exercise, it might be added. Hay does not make any references to this history.

is little to help the ordinary client, let alone the sympathetic scientist, to understand and replicate the process; it is possible that any healing is simply left to faith.

Fortunately for Myss, the client is white, middle and upper-class and well educated, a set of factors that do possible open the way for this sort of self-indulgence; they are also a set of factors that eliminate large sections of many communities from any benefit.

It is argued that in the world of this mostly white and financially comfortable client, already sensitised to the New Age methodology, any need for validation may not be an important factor, but in the worlds of the sick poor and those caring for them validation is essential for a perpetuation and improvement of the technique. From this it could be said that much of the New Age movement, people like Myss, Judith, Hay, and Sharamon & Baginski, are delinquent in not allowing the less fortunate and vulnerable sectors of society access to their 'wisdom'. It is perhaps this discarding of any reasonable scientific methodology in their work and 'insistence' on faith or obfuscation that could contribute to a particular quietism of non-confrontational acceptance.

Coming to the end of this section, Chrissie Steyn says that "...the findings of this study seem to endorse the theories of Weber and Troeltsch who proposed that experiential religion leads to social quietism." (Steyn, 1996:online). Perhaps it could be a little more than this. The beginnings of my own research into the New Age phenomenon in two coastal cities<sup>27</sup> indicates the possibility that there are other, psychospiritual, issues at stake. As mentioned above, the preponderance of women of all ages in the movement could suggest that certain power dynamics are involved,

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<sup>27</sup> This inquiry has been ongoing on a participant observation basis for the past 8 years and will be reported in another forum.

the major conflict being to find ways to manage personal reactions to the patriarchy in personal and social life. Espousing 'alternative' or 'complementary' medicine as a healing ethos, thus spurning a perceived masculine-dominated scientific medicine, is one facet of the phenomenon. Again, it can be seen as a genuine attempt to introduce a feminine principle into the health of the person. From this any attempt to 'scientifically' investigate any New Age modality is often met with the two common objections mentioned by Mole, viz. "...mainstream medicine is cold-spirited and trivialises the patient's power to heal, while holistic medicine is gentle and celebrates autonomy in the face of sickness." and "...holistic medicine has its own methodology and standards, and should not be subject to the rigid appraisal afforded mainstream medicine." (Both Mole:online). It would be suggested that whilst disdain is a reasonable starting point for any new counter-cultural venture there does come a time when culture and counter-culture must meet in order that a broader understanding may be achieved; especially if the counter-culture syndrome shows signs of becoming increasingly pervasive. In a way, though, it is possible that Hay, Myss, and others, may, perhaps inadvertently, be contributing to a beginnings of a shift to closing the gap between the New Age and more scientific methodologies.

Finally, when it comes to notions around the *cakras* that are being propagated by New Age theorists there is little indication as to where they have developed their ideas. Examination of bibliographies in their books shows a tendency to refer to other New Age writers who refer to similar, if not the same writers in their bibliographies (Myss' 1993 opus has no bibliography although she refers to others in her text). Only Anodea Judith makes some real effort to read outside the New Age literature. Hence there is some suggestion that the mythopoiesis has a mark at the moment of an in-house exclusive group, generating its own 'mysteries'.

### The value of the New Age movement

Having outlined some difficulties which even the most sympathetic of wills must confront, there are some features of the movement that need positive discussion, particularly in the light of a consistent popular use by the New Age of the *cakra* system.

Following the collapse of the promise of science as the saviour of mankind, especially subsequent to the 'awe' of the atomic 1950s, and also as a response to the remarkable rate of change in evidence at the moment, there has been a marked movement back to spiritual matters (see Hanegraaf, 2000; Fuller, 1992). In some areas this has been in the form of a religious fundamentalist incursion into society as can be seen by the proliferation of Christian charismatic movements, Muslim moves towards an 'Islamic' state, and even a recent rise of a more hard-line Indian religiosity. In other areas, this is characterised by a rise of a New Age movement which, although not new, has attracted some attention in recent years. Deep within the ethos of the movement is the perceived need for healing, generally of self but this is, in the literature at least, extended to the community and so the environment. Although Chrissie Steyn doubts the effectiveness of the claimed 'caring for the environment' (Steyn, 1996:online) it may be that these are still early days; other issues such as intimacy and generativity may still need to be addressed first.

It would appear, however, that the counter-culture aspect of the New Age movement is directly related to a desire for a higher profile for spirituality (or ethicality) *contra* religion (or morality). This is an important distinction in this context as will be seen later. In contrast to the perceived excesses of a 'religion' of science, in terms of the focus on explaining nature, the movement seems to be more concerned with somehow bringing about a balance which will counter an 'ecocide', as Michael

Shermer (1997:online) describes the 'rape' of natural resources in the history of mankind. Part of the ecocide is seen as being, amongst the human species, the rape of the feminine, children and the elderly. With this in mind it is possible that an expanding consciousness of damage is to be one benefit from the activities of the New Age adherents.

Secondly, it would appear that, despite accusations from some of an indiscriminate 'pastiche'-like appropriation of cultural symbols (Donaldson:682), there is a mythopoiesis that purports to provide some healing for those unfortunate enough to be involved. This myth-making is often involved at varying degrees of intensity in a goddess (or, in some areas, just plain woman-) spirituality that is gaining momentum in many regions of the world. As Angelika Lemieux says: "The Goddess movement is both iconoclastic and myth-making, for even while it tries to unseat masculine god symbols, it is set on a course of remythologising the Western religions consciousness." (Lemieux, 1992:30). While some are intent on "...the slow execution of Christ and Yahweh..." (Naomi Goldenburg, quoted in Lemieux:*ibid*), others, perhaps like Myss, are more interested in manipulating existing symbols, notably within the field of the feminine, in such a way as to remythologise approaches to healing. A prevailing thrust of this is to circumvent a strict objectivity of a scientific medicine that is often implicated in a promotion of chemical and psychological dependency. An effect of this activity is that some so-called 'alternative' therapeutic techniques, like chiropractic and homoeopathy, have begun to take on a new aura of respectability after decades of being forced to languish on the fringes. A New Age philosophy seems to have provided some space for these techniques to begin to shift from having to justify their existence to being recognised in their own right as a healing of some kind.

Hence, putting aside doubts regarding methodology, it does seem that New Age

practitioners are to some extent broadening the bases for individual choices of healing. Although at present their activities are restricted to certain societal groupings it is possible that their activities are finding support amongst newer medical and para-medical professionals and so the effects are beginning to permeate to other areas of society.<sup>28</sup> Not a small part of the ideas being promoted contain conceptions of the Indian *cakra* ideation. It is this that is to be discussed next.

### Three presentations of the *cakras* in the New Age

In essence the New Age as a broad phenomenon is facilitating Western paradigm shifts in the care of the self, an approach Heelas calls 'self-spirituality'.<sup>29</sup> In many ways it seems to be an intuitive impetus that is generating the shifts, which, as intuition is taken to be personalised, rather signifies a haphazard experiential style of development. The presentation of the *cakras* is one example of this.

As mentioned above the appropriation of the cultural artefacts from other cultures by the proponents of the New Age has come under fire for an apparent lack of respect for the articles (see Cynthia Eller, 2000; Laura Donaldson, 1999; Angelika Lemieux, 1992) but it is the effects of this appropriation that are to be considered now. In the next section the use of the *cakras* will be discussed in the light of how they are being used in the Western search for meaning.

Three authors have been chosen for this discussion; the choice being made on the

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<sup>28</sup> In the Western Cape region of South Africa there are at least 7 general practitioners, registered as doctors with the Medical and Dental Council, who regularly use homoeopathy and/or acupuncture. Some are even referring patients to aromatherapists and reflexologists, amongst other new therapies. It has been reported that clinical and counselling psychologists are following suit.

<sup>29</sup> The term 'self-spirituality' is interesting in that it could connote either 'spirituality of the Self', as Heelas intends it, or 'do-it-yourself' spirituality, a facet that is not uncommon in the New Age.

basis of ease of availability of their books in the public and university libraries. All three deal with the *cakra* system in their own way and each of them, as will be seen, have very definite views on the *cakras* and their attributes. The three are Anodea Judith, Shalila Sharamon & Bodo Baginski, and Caroline Myss. Follows is a brief discussion of some lines of thought from each author as reflected in their books.

Two points come to mind when reading the books and looking at the charts that appear in them: (a) the sheer volume of detail supplied, and (b) the lack of references as to where and how the details originate. These points tend to make reading difficult and can lead to some confusion within the text and across texts. For instance, Myss holds that the adrenals are associated with the third *cakra* (Myss, 1996; see appendix 4, Chakra 3, 'physical dysfunctions') and nowhere in the chapter does she mention the adrenals again.

This seemingly small point becomes problematic when one finds that Anodea Judith includes the adrenals under 'glands' in her list of 'symbols and correspondences' under the first *cakra* being "...primarily concerned with survival." (Judith, 1987:67) - some basic knowledge of adrenal function would allow Judith's connection to be made between the adrenals and the *mūlādhārā cakra*; but, by the same token, human anatomy shows the adrenals and *mūlādhārā cakra* to be in close proximity so Myss may also be right - in the end, however, there is no small measure of confusion in this matter, and often the answer boils down to some personal 'truth' accessible only to the author. It would seem then that in either case the idea of adding to knowledge is perhaps not important. One can hope that critical mass theory may play a part and eventually enough consensus will be reached amongst the New Age theorists for a reasonably cogent body of theory to emerge.

In short, there is evidence in the books consulted that the purpose and manipulation

of the *cakras*, even in Western forms, is not well-understood by the authors, especially in terms of passing the understanding on to their readers. But then it does not serve any purpose to belabour this point.

Having said this, one point still remains - the earlier comments on the mythopoiesis of new approaches to self, life, and living. Here any misappropriation of the *cakras* could be re-interpreted as a use of an exotic set of terms to better illustrate a point or group thereof, especially in the context of a 'hypnotised' mindset. To return again to earlier comments, this time those of Jung when he talks of the West being 'hypnotised' by the Eastern *kundalīnī*, hypnosis is often employed to open a gap in consciousness for the introduction of something new. In this case, the hypnosis of the West by an 'exotic Other' could be seen as enabling a permeation of reasonably fixed boundaries of consciousness and also serves as a vehicle for an introduction of ideas of Western thinkers, like Erikson, Maslow, even Lawrence Kohlberg, in *their* attempts to effect beneficial change.

### **Towards popular change**

Taking note of the chart of Sharamon & Baginski (appendix 5) it is possible to discern a trend that can give a Western employment of the intention of the *cakras* some credibility. This particular chart accords with a certain theme that runs through the work of Myss and has reflections in Judith, viz. The progression of the human condition through a series of psychospiritual states towards some Being-ness beyond the present limited condition. In other words, there is perhaps a correlation here with the hypothesis that Existence is a dilemma in terms of being part of an emanation from the Divine. It is contended that Erikson offers a trajectory from a dominance of Being-ness in infancy, through to a dominance of Existence in adolescence, and then a return towards Being-ness in the adult but this time in equipoise with Existence.

From another position, Patañjali assumes a dominant Existence and offers a methodology for stepping out of an, some would say, up to a form of sublimity, and the New Age author offers a similar opportunity of realisation of the 'Divine-within'.

To illustrate this better, a possibly synthesis of the three authors is now discussed. As with the overview of the classical rendition of the tradition the discussion will be restricted to the first three *cakras*, as any distortion of the flow of 'energy' through them must be seen to result in an indifferent functioning capacity of those following. Hence, focus must be on the three primary areas with little regard for the others which would remain on the periphery as only imagined or in potential until brought into focus by a successful transmutation of the three below the diaphragm. To use an analogy of education - without a solid primary and secondary education anything that follows is difficult. At this stage emphasis will be on the general vision, and the positively possible; negative or shadow effects will enter the discussion on Erikson and Patañjali.

**The *mūlādhārā cakra* :** To this *cakra* Sharamon & Baginski ascribe a theme of "Primordial life energy and trust. Relationship to the earth and to the material world. Stability, power to achieve." (appendix 5). They also consider a 'basic principle' of "physical will to be" (*ibid*). Judith provides the functions of survival and grounding and the corresponding verb of "I have" (Judith:60). Myss follows suit with the idea that the *mūlādhārā* corresponds to 'the tribe'. As Myss says:

"Archetypally the word *tribe* connotes group identity, group force, group willpower, and group belief patterns... The first chakra grounds us. It is our connection to traditional familial beliefs that support the formation of identity and a sense of belonging to a group of people in a geographic location." (Myss, 1996:103, emphasis in original)

In this sense then it seems that a broad-based sense of diffusion within the family and community is being portrayed; a diffusion that supports the child through the vulnerable years of rudimentary existence and dependence, and is supposed to render a centre from which, in the words of RD Laing, the ontologically secure individual will be able to negotiate the contingencies of Life (Laing:39ff). It is also a diffusion that is to be encountered and resolved by the separation responsibility of *ahamkara* (ego) in negotiating the predicament of Existence. In essence, the individual is a *mūlādhārā* frame tends to become lost in the group.

**The *svādīṣṭhāna cakra* :** Here Sharamon & Baginski shift closer to the person. “Primordial life energy” of the *mūlādhārā* becomes “Primordial feelings, flowing with life, sensuality, eroticism, creativity, awe, and enthusiasm”, and a basic principle of “creative reproduction of being” (appendix 5); Judith agrees with functions of “desire, pleasure, sexuality, procreation” and a corresponding verb of “I feel” (Judith:112); Myss describes second *cakra* Being-ness thus:

“...children start interacting with other children and adults, more independently of their parents and outside the home environment...energy shifts from obeying tribal authority to discovering other relationships that satisfy personal physical needs.” (Myss, 1996:129)

This *cakra* is a central point in this dissertation as it is argued that it is a field of transition between the groundedness and enmeshment of the *mūlādhārā*, and the *maṇipura* with its sense of differentiation in the world. If the journey through the *cakra* is incomplete or restricted in any way, the higher levels are starved of energy (or the energy is deflected or dispersed) and so lack a centred functionality; behaviour that reflects a more primitive or materially-focused bias with a ‘primal’, often individualistic sexual worldview - put another way, an inauthentic Existence/Being interface. It is argued that a sexuality development that promotes flexibility along the spectra proposed in chapter 2 is essential for the opening of this

*cakra*. Any rigid identification with any to the poles associated with sexuality closes or distorts the 'shape' of the lumen and delays expansion and psychic development.

Now, as psychology has taught, it appears that the child begins to differentiate own feelings as distinct from environmental factors; eroticism, sensuality, and creativity at slowly brought to bear of relationships. Unfortunately, the term 'erotic', like 'desire', has in recent decades taken on narrow, almost pornographic, cultural connotations. So looking at the tone of the factors above it could be said that the erotic and desire are on an agenda of reclamation of the New Age feminist; yet quite how this fits in with the fascination that many of these women have for an ascetic brand of Hinduism or Buddhism is yet to be explained.<sup>30</sup> Be this as it may the New Age schema allocates the beginnings of Love, *quia* recognition of the Other, in this *cakra*. The foundation of a later sexual love is laid in an erotic 'joking' round of relationships in this early *cakra*.

Moreover, it is argued that sexual experimentation is essential in the early stages of sexuality development so any constraints imposed on a 'healthy' unfolding of the *cakra* entails a perpetuation of an immature sexual experimentation; not to mention the terrors of morality, especially that morality founded on a male control of the female body. Finally, interference with the proper functioning of this *cakra* implies a suffering created by not being in a position to syntonically interact with the materiality of the *mūlādhārā cakra* hence either of two dangers arise: there is a long-term dominance on physical sexpression and its 'dark side', promiscuity, in any of its myriad forms, or the opposite, a self-induced enforcement of ascetism. Either carries with it alienative suffering in reaction to the mores of a surrounding

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<sup>30</sup> One 25-year old female 'yoga' aspirant informed me that she was going through a period of celibacy so as to, quote, "conserve seed" for her spiritual aspirations. There was no indication of what 'seed' meant away from the abstractions of her teachers.

society.

Needless to say, these hypotheses are not part of the *cakra*; they are simply ramifications that are read into them during the process of constructing this argument. It is with a demonstrative endeavour in mind that the *svādiṣṭhāna* is held to be vital in the spiritual development of the individual, as s/he moves towards differentiation from the environment. As is being constantly argued, the *cakra* is not a waystation to be surmounted on the way to higher things. As each *cakra* and its features are addressed they become part of a continually expanding armamentarium of experiential 'tools' that can be drawn on or further refined in future encounters. Hence, any restriction to growth in this area will entail a reduction of 'tools' available for higher levels of interaction.

**The *maṇipura cakra* :** Moving onto the third *cakra* one finds that the emphasis has become even more individualistic. Sharamon & Baginski bring an alteration to feelings: "Unfolding of one's personality. Assimilation of feelings and experiences, shaping one's being. Influence and power, strength and abundance, wisdom growing out of experience." (appendix 5). Judith reduces this down to will and power with a corresponding verb of "I can" (Judith, 1987:166). Myss, however, brings this together, and sums up the relationship of the three *cakras*, thus:

"It assists us further in the process of individuation, of forming a "self", ego, and personality separate from our inherited identity... Where the first chakra resonates to group or tribal power, and where the second chakra resonates to the flow of power between self and others, the third chakra relates to *our personal power in relation to the external world.*" (Myss, 1996:167, emphasis added)

The *maṇipura cakra* then can be seen as a culmination of an individuation process; one in which the individual differentiates self from environment, and, in the process, from Self. In the ideal there has been a journey out of a state of a Being-ness of

dependent intimate relationships with others to the beginnings of independent relationships. These beginnings are in the form of being able to understand personal temporo-spatial roots, of being able to creatively manipulate relationships (hopefully mutually beneficial), and being able to understand oneself enough to progress further through the barrier of the diaphragm.

With this the *maṣipura cakra* represents the upper level of material Existence. It is the culmination of the work of *aha^kara*, the differentiation of Self from the environment, which includes the 'tribe'. In the normal course of events, many will judge this to be the end of the journey. Some branches of psychology and psychotherapy even promote the notion that a successful detachment characterises healthy psychological integration. With many people this may be the case, but the concern here is for those who are expressing a need to explore places outside of the *manipura cakra*, and, equally, there is concern for the conditions that obstruct this need. It is now hypothesised that section of the journey characterised by the abdominal region of the torso is but part of a larger process, that there is still more that can be achieved. Again, rather than being the acme of intra-personal work to date, the *manipura* actually represents the beginnings of an even more difficult part of the journey.

Symbolically, the abdomen is covered by the diaphragm which encloses it and separates it from the chest, which is equated with the numen. As such the link between the higher and lower *cakras* are not free-flowing and the potential or power for negotiating a crossing of the diaphragmatic juncture is limited.

**A diaphragmatic constriction :** As the discussion is concerned with the counter-valences in the earlier regions of a journey, through or from flagrant materiality, and image of 'impediment of the diaphragm' is useful in developing a *cakraic* spiritual

image to psychological development. To help develop the image of impediment, it is worth noting the anatomy of the diaphragm. It is a broad dome-shaped sheet of muscle through which there is but one aperture allowing communication between thorax and abdomen. In other words, there is one small well circumscribed passage through the wall that defends the thorax from the ravages of the ‘world’ of the abdomen. Hence the image is of a constriction in the path to transcendence. This theme will be enlarged when considering the progression of the individual from childhood to adulthood through adolescence in Erikson’s theoretical structure (as an aside, it can also be noted in Maslow’s progression from Security to Belonging in



**Figure 3:** Diagram of the principle *cakras*, with indication of constriction at the waist.

With respect to Albrecht Dürer

his Hierarchy of Needs). For the moment it can be shown in clinical spiritual practice that the fate of the general population of most cultures is to be restricted to the mundane or shadow aspects of the maṢipura by a blockage in the *mūlādhārā*, thus restrained flow through the *svādiṣṭhāna cakras* (it is this restriction that is represented by the  $\nabla$  triangle configuration in the *yantra* of the former). Moreover, it is the use of this Eastern construction of the *cakras* that is useful in both charting and explaining a dynamics of these blockages to well-being.

To explain, in the case of the maṢipura, restricted energy flow could mean an incomplete or distorted differentiation of self and environment, plus undue reliance on society for support (*mūlādhārā*) with an affiliated penchant for hedonism (especially sexual as in a knotted *svādiṣṭhāna*) or even solipsism. Thus in all three ‘wheels’ energy required for personal ‘progress’ is filtered through the previous level, and any contractions or *granthisation* in the level below results in acedia in the present. Primarily though, the argument being presented is that the *svādiṣṭhāna* can be regarded as the sexual *cakra* (if only but not necessarily because

of its association with the genitalia), the quality of which, in terms of permeability/opacity, has a pivotal or even determining valence on a polyvalent Life in general. The argument being presented is that even when the *mūlādhārā cakra* is open and the vital energies beginning to flow, if the *svādiṣṭhāna* is still blocked by such conflicts as ill-conceived own-definitions of sexuality which oppose personal needs (thus creating or sustaining *granthi*), then the remaining *cakras* are debilitated. It is argued that the possibility that an existence of this link of the 'sexual' *svādiṣṭhāna* of the individual and that of society rather supports a motivation for rethinking and further investigating the place of sexuality in culture and society.

One last point that must be made as it has some bearing on the discussion of Erikson and Patañjali is that this rendering of a New Age perception of the *cakras* develops an image of gradual constriction, which can be best illustrated by a  $\Delta$  following the general line of the body from the pelvis to the waist (see figure 3). This is drawn to denote the psychospiritual shift from the broad base of the tribe to the narrow pinnacle of the differentiated individual. Above the diaphragm the triangle is inverted ( $\nabla$ ) to indicate the opposite, a widening of perception or a broadening of consciousness. Illustrated is the nexus of the region of the *maṇipura/anāhata* which has to be negotiated. Without the necessary energies channeled along the *suṣumṇā* this task becomes a little more than complex. Part of the reason for this is a substantial influence *māyā* exerts of progress. In other words, implied in an incomplete concentration of energy along the *suṣumṇā*, which serves to clear the *granthi* in the *mūlādhārā/svādiṣṭhāna/maṇipura cakras* (and focusses on that one aperture in the diaphragm), is a diffusion of these energies, the effect of which, as has been postulated above, is a less-than-spiritual behavioural style as the person individualises. Thus the diaphragmatic barrier.

As mentioned earlier, this portrayal of metaphysical aspects of spirituality in an embodied form is an attempt to indicate a connectedness between the physical and the spiritual, an experimental shift from a dominance of the *logos*. More specifically, the dilemma of a connectedness between the profane and the sacred is at the transitional moment at the *maṇipura/anāhata* junction.

**Above the diaphragm :** In contrast with the *maṇipura* the *anāhata cakra* is on the other side of the diaphragm and is seen as the introduction to a widening of personal vision, of a broadening of consciousness to include others within the personal space. The sojourn through the first three *cakras* has involved a narrowing of perception from undifferentiated materiality to a differentiated self. If the passage across the diaphragmatic juncture is successful then the triangle reverses marking a perception that incrementally begins to adopt a broader horizon. It could be envisioned as another starting point. Whereas the *mūlādhārā cakra* is the beginning of a detachment from a broader materiality, the *anāhata* is the beginning of an engagement with a broadening spirituality (as will be seen in the next chapter, this is analogous with Erikson's post-adolescent Intimacy in which the Other is seen as a person and not an object of self-gratification). In order to be able to transform from the profane to the spiritual it would seem to be vital, in this paradigm, to withdraw from being enmeshed in a material Existence, to be able to distinguish between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (more of this in the chapter on Patañjali). Moreover, in order to complete the engagement one should be able to re-engage with the material existence by now with the experience or advantage of detachment. Instead of 'needing' an expensive car to establish status, now it is bought because one enjoys driving it - a subtle but important difference.

**Summary :** To round off then, a process of transformation of the individual is pictured in the way depicted in figure 3 above; ie. the three *cakras* of materiality

configured as a triangle in which the influence of the environment or society on the self diminishes as the individual learns to take more and more control of his/her life. As mentioned above the triangular configuration is a useful method for visualising progress through the psychospiritual life. Self is now not necessarily some ethereal abstraction but starts to be firmly embodied within the individual. The value of this manoeuvre is that a relatively simple language can develop that both therapist/'guru' and client/'cela' can share in a pragmatic fashion.

### Conclusion

In this chapter the discussion has been taken through a number of topics, all pertaining to the Indian *cakra* model. Starting with a general overview of some elements of an Indian cosmology it was shown that it is possible to view human Being-ness as an emanation of a Divine 'energy'. This topic is introduced as an attempt to overcome an anthropomorphic view of the Divine popular in the Western psyche, ie. the classical theistic approach. One reason for bringing this into play is a difficulty being experienced in merging spirituality into psychotherapy in the face of a Cartesian Western religious dualism; psychotherapy being seen as one important and effective source of transcendence in the West (a source that is being taken to other cultures by Western trained indigenes). In this context then participation of the human spirit in the Divine (Being-ness as an emanation of the Divine) has been presented as a gist of a bridging action. This is viewed as a panentheist construct which will be encountered in the next two chapters dealing with a psychologist and a sage.

In promoting an emanatory model it was found that the Indian categorisation of mind into three elements, viz. mind (*manas*), intelligence (*buddhi*), and ego (*ahamkara*), brought another dimension to the discussion of transcendence or

raising of consciousness. The three take on definite roles in the spiritual life of the individual; important for the moment is that of ego (*ahamkara*) which, as Dyczkowski shows, includes a lower ego (in other words, a shadow) where self (the sexuality of the individual) is associated through attachment and ignorance or *āvidya* with the mundane. Again this has bearing on the content of the next two chapters, in the form of a Sartre-ian false consciousness of a Laing-ian ontological insecurity. A hypothesis is that the lower ego of *ahamkāra* acts as a drag on progress by deflecting the individual away from striving to identify with the next spiritual developmental step in favour of externalised or immediate profit of some description.

This part of the discussion has been judged as being too abstract although necessary for a less than superficial understanding of spiritual transcendence. So the discussion then moved on to an embodiment of the emanatory initiative - the *cakra* model. The *cakras* developed principally within the Indian *tantric* tradition which, following observations made by Jung in the early 1930s, does not seem to fit well with the Western mind. Lack of fit can be deduced from the articles, such as those quoted above, that are beginning to appear providing sharp critique of the lack of 'respect' being shown by Westerners for cultural artifacts and their philosophical underpinnings. Jung's comments about the West being hypnotised by an aura of Eastern mysticism seems to hold water in the audacious manner in which the *cakra* system, just one of these cultural artifacts, has been adopted for Western purposes.

It is argued, though, that this genre of critique misses an important point - that of mythopoietic evolution. Although the way the *cakras* have been appropriated by the West, starting in the nineteenth century, seems to be piecemeal, there is some evidence of a mode that is appearing in its own right. It would appear that more and more Westerners are beginning to view their spirituality in a less abstract fashion.

As can be seen by the work of psychiatrists like Lee Sannella and John Nelson, there is some indication that the model is being seriously considered by Western practitioners from the scientific school, and is becoming accessible to the laity who are starting to take their spirituality seriously. In addition, people Sharamon & Baginski, Judith, and Myss are interpreting each *cakra* in new ways that doubtlessly find a fit in Western praxis. It can be argued that this new interpretation in the Western style is either 'intuitive' or informed by developmental psychological theory in the style of Erikson. Either way another mythology is emerging that promises both functionality and understandability, and, furthermore, could have cross-cultural implications.

It is this last that is carried forward to the next chapter to find how they merge with the *epigenetic principle* of Erik Erikson's Life Cycle. In this demonstrated will be (a) the pivotal role played by sexuality *qua* interpersonal dimensions in the human compulsion towards raising of consciousness, and (b) how this is a return along the emanatory outpouring of the cosmological course.

It is intended to begin to address a dilemma that appears in most spiritual paths in the West. This being that with all theory that abounds in the Western initiative it requires a measure of scholarship to be able to discern models of causation that are not abusive. It is repeatedly stated in the investigations into the New Age phenomenon that much of that literature makes little effort to empirically ground assertions in solid research. One result is that there tends to be a 'hodge-podge' of impressions abounding on why it is that people are so psychologically different and what challenges face them (Heelas:2; 'hodge-podg'icity is partly illustrated in Judith's chart, appendix 2).

The next step in this work then is to note the part played by sexuality in Erik

Erikson's Life Cycle and bring the New Age formulation of the *cakras* to bear on his model.

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Chapter 3

Erik Erikson, Sexuality, and the *cakras*

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“It is often said in informal psychiatric shoptalk that there is a conspiracy of silence on two important facets of life in diagnostic interviewing and psychotherapy. They are not sex and body functions, which one could expect to remain veiled by a sense of privacy or modesty, but religion and money.” (Malony & Spilka 1991:119)

## Introduction

Part of the impetus behind this investigation is a fascination at the ability of researchers, practitioners, and other writers to split life into compartments which are pronounced to be unrelated; it is an ‘unrelatedness’ that diminishes the value of the thing being compartmentalised. Child and developmental psychologist, Erik Erikson, is definite on this point:

“Our thinking is dominated by this trichotomy [the disciplines of biology, psychology and the social sciences] because only through the inventive methodologies of these disciplines do we have knowledge at all. Unfortunately, however, this knowledge is tied to the conditions under which it was secured: the organism undergoing dissection or examination; the mind surrendered to experiment or interrogation; the social aggregates spread out on statistical tables. In all of these cases, then, a scientific discipline prejudiced the matter under observation *by actively dissolving its total living situation* in order to be able to make an isolated section of it amenable to a set of instruments or concepts.” (*Childhood & Society* (CS):36-7, quoted in Richard Stevens 1983:11; emphasis added)

In the context of this reductive mode of scientific cognition, if it is true that there is a reluctance to engage with attitudes in religion and money, to section these issues to ‘appropriate’ areas, then it can be said that two important areas of access to the sexuality of the patient/client are lost.<sup>1</sup> I have argued in preceding chapters that sexuality is (a) the positioning of the self along three dimensions - embodiment, cultural traits, and the ethical-moral or numinous - and (b) it concerns the erotic *qua* creativity. As such then individual attitudes towards religion and money are key research dimensions when locating an individual or community. In a sense then, the

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<sup>1</sup> Both religion and finance can be seen to be integral to basic levels of psychic functioning. Levels of participation in religious and economic activities are to some extent coloured by levels of trust, will, competence and so on. It is said that they diminish when in proximity to integrity. I will be arguing that these religious and economic activities are linked with sexuality and so vital in the transformation exercise, if only as a hermeneutical key to the individual or community

erotic is, in a Freudian appreciation, life-affirming and expansive, and de-eroticisation as a result of compartmentalisation, therefore, can be deemed thanatotic or counter-productive. It is argued then that attitudes towards religion and money are key indicators of positioning on the three dimensions, therefore any conspiracy of silence would be disadvantageous.

In the face of this there is, however, an insidious propensity for eroticisation that runs through many a discourse. Maloney & Spilka, for instance, briefly discuss the eroticisation of belief (religion), which adds fascination to the compartmentalisation syndrome (Maloney & Spilka:156-7). The clues they provide are usually related to religious attitudes (“...*embraces* a faith and *cherishes* a belief...” and so on) and, in concert with these renditions of belief, I argue that there is a link between sexuality and religiousness; a point supported by Malony & Spilka as they discuss various classical coping devices, as, for instance “*Phobic* reactions may accrue the content of a morbid fear of blaspheming, or *panic* at exposure to allegedly sinful circles in which card-playing, drinking, or dancing occur.”(*ibid*:125, emphases added). These coping devices are necessary in the event of the individual having a poor ego identity which comes as a result of an idiosyncratic interface between ‘who I am’ and ‘who feel I am as after some years in the material world’, even ‘who do I think others think I ought to be’; it is, in short, a syntonic/dystonic interaction between being and existence coming through these expressions. More explicitly, the weaker the sexuality the stronger the likelihood of religiousness (or, more precisely in its extreme form, religiosity) or demands for increased remuneration, greater security; conversely, the stronger the sense of sexuality the stronger the sense of spirituality, and the lower the sense of religiosity, etc.. In other words, a syntonic relationship between sexuality and spirituality reduces the need for religiosity. Needless to say, competent linking of sexuality and spirituality negates a neat process of categorisation.

One of the questions being asked concerns not so much that of the origin of the

phobia (or withdrawal, or denial), but rather what are the ontogenetic conditions that prevail in supporting the phobia in the present. It is a need to investigate the *is* of the situation, to consider the individual reactions to the catalysts encountered on a lifeline to create an existing gestalt of abusiveness or dependency or spitefulness and so on. Rather than taking an essentialist route and search for that external ingredient that caused the present condition, humanists like Erik Erikson, Abraham Maslow, Erich Fromm and Carl Rogers look for as broad a picture as possible which emphasises the reactions of the individual in question.<sup>2</sup> Put another way, they attract and include a diverse set of details, both intra- and extra-personal, with which to paint as complete a picture as possible. In the end, compartmentalisation has a place, one which is often requisite for enhanced understanding, but this is not an end, rather a means; the understanding gained is partial until re-placed into a context with other valences.

I will maintain that this expanded vision is inherent in the work of Erik Erikson whose Life Cycle is the subject of the following. I will consider his Life Cycle from the point of view that sexuality is a central factor in personal development. I will review the various stages of the Life Cycle, concentrating on the first four stages as a basis for the syntonic or dystonic unfolding of the others. Then I will look at two major factors in Erikson's hypothesis – existential concerns and epigenesis – as tools for measuring the state of the individual at any given time. Finally I will show how the Life Cycle correlates with the *cakra* system as a psychophysiological whole, thus will show that the *cakras* can be used as a form of physically visualising the task of spiritualising transcendence.

### Working with Erik Homburger Erikson

Erik H Erikson died in 1994, thus closing a window of opportunity for directly

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<sup>2</sup> As I read Carl Rogers this persuasion is what he refers to as being 'client-centred'.

exploring his views with him. This means that we now have to weed through his various texts and rely on secondary sources for information on how he saw sexuality fitting in with the Life Cycle. Having said this, though, this section is not so much an interrogation of Erikson. It is more an exercise in gleaning thoughts and assertions that will support the hypotheses that sexuality is a vital component in establishing personal identity. With this in mind it is more an exercise of opening a dialogue with the Eriksonian primary and secondary texts to explore the question of sexuality in the Life Cycle schema. It is critical, however, that the narrative be safeguarded against a misappropriation of the texts, such as that seen earlier in the discussion on the New Age use of the *cakras* (and Anodea Judith's possibly simplistic correlation of the *cakras* with the Life Cycle is an example of this danger). It is hoped that this exercise will be seen to contribute to the Eriksonian vision.

### **Biographical resume**

Born in 1902, Erik Erikson began his psychological career after a period of training analysis with Anna Freud in 1927. Although he lacked a backing of academic degrees he was eventually accepted as a regular member into the International Psychoanalytic Society in Vienna.<sup>3</sup> In 1933 he and his wife, Joan, decided to leave an agitated Europe and the family settled in the United States, initially on the East Coast, where he was readily accepted into psychoanalytic circles. Having worked with Anna Freud his specialty was children and it was not long after he immigrated that he was working in circles attached to Harvard and Yale. He moved to California in 1939 and by the end of the '40's was appointed a professor at the University of California, still without any formal degrees (Maier:16; Stevens 1983:8).

After refusing to sign the anti-communist loyalty oath he left California to return to

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<sup>3</sup> Erikson had previously been an art teacher for children of parents who were in Europe undergoing analysis. Through this he was drawn into the Freud circle during his training analysis.

the East Coast<sup>4</sup> and found himself immersed in a broad set of disciplines. During this time he had contacts with a wide range of people like Jean Piaget, Konrad Lorenz and Julian Huxley, like Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict and Gregory Bateson, like Henry Murray and Kurt Lewin (Zock:29; Coles:33) Thus his sphere of influence widened to include “social, philosophical and religious questions” (Zock:28) or, as Maier puts it, he widened his horizon to include a “...synthesis of developmental and social tasks.”(Maier:15; Stevens 1983:6). The peculiarly enquiring cultural climate of the US at the time assisted his move from a Freudian *psychosexual* to a broader *psycho-social* view. Of note here is that Erikson was rarely comfortable with a scientific delimitation and his artistic background predicated a synthetic inclusiveness. Rather than a splitting and isolating he preferred a bringing together and constructing; ultimately, from a delving to see what is wrong to a delving to see what can be done with the present.

It seems Erikson did not intend to enter into the field of psychoanalysis, he was an artist and teacher; he appears to have stumbled into it, so to speak, a case of being where he needed to be at the time and to have simply drifted into the situation. It is certain, though, that once there it was found that he had certain qualities that would carry him forward in the years to come.

### **Erikson and a hypothesis on sexuality**

Although he regarded Sigmund Freud as an intellectual ‘father’ he was not completely in agreement with him. This is borne out, for instance, by his extending Freud’s developmental scheme to include the adult years. Then again, a point pertinent to this work, he also preferred to move in a less-restricted space afforded by

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<sup>4</sup> Note that the West Coast lost the physicist, David Bohm, at about the same time for the same reason. The McCarthy-ism of the early 1950’s, as patriarchy in general, can be explained in Eriksonian ‘psychosexual’ terms as being a regression to unresolved childhood tensions which colour adult worldviews, a point that still demands attention.

a classical Freudianism of the time. He refers, for instance, to the Freudian 'phallicism' as 'genitality', thus, as Hettie Zock claims, allowing for both male and female genital configurations to play an equal role in the perceptions of the developing child (Zock:35). Paul Roazen explains the subtlety and significance of this shift:

"When it comes to Freud's postulation of an oral phase, Erikson would substitute "incorporative"; instead of anality Erikson hypothesises "autonomy"; and conflicts over "initiative" and "guilt" can encompass the Oedipus complex. Erikson therefore speaks of having restated Freud's theory of infantile sexuality. Through his psychosocial terms Erikson hopes to have humanised the so-called biologism of much Freudian theory."(Roazen:57-8)

It is not the case that Roazen is taking Erikson away from any psychosexuality; it is more that Erikson brought in other environmental valences thus creating a broader understanding of the development of sexuality.<sup>5</sup> One of the paradoxes of the artist-Erikson is that whilst maintaining much of Freudian nomenclature, thus seeming to hold a classical stance, he departed from classical analysis by shifting his emphasis from the pathology orientation of Freud's 'id' psychology to that of the 'ego' psychology of "...Heinz Hartmann and his collaborators Ernst Kris and Rudolf Loewenstein" (Zock:52, also CS:91n).

This is an important deflection as it allows, amongst other things, for a progressional transformation of the superego to ethics, without demeaning the place of the superego in the young mind (Zock:56). Roazen (152) shows that Erikson took pains to differentiate between an infantile morality of the superego, on the one hand, and mature ethics, on the other. And it is this point that is taken up in identifying an ethical-moral dimension with spirituality and sexuality. Another psychologist,

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<sup>5</sup> My own work with children, albeit not as extensive as Freud or Erikson, indicates the possibility, in recent years, of a change on the part of children in their attitudes to their genitalia, *ergo* bodies. Though this perception requires further professional investigation, if Freud was right about the Castration Complex there is a note that the young girl of today is fully accepting of her vulva and generally looks forward to breast development (to be 'like Mommy') as a normal and positive part of her life path, hence it seems the terms of the castration complex do not of necessity pertain any more. Quite where the modern girl places herself on the embodiment continuum in terms of cultural traits is an issue that bears further investigation.

Lawrence Kohlberg, would later enlarge on this same theme when he implies, with Erikson, that the superego is indeed a normal child reaction to development of conscience, and that the adult needs to move from the terror of the superego to the freedom of ethical reasoning.

From the point of view of healthy sexuality graduation from superego dominance is crucial as it indicates a freeing of the individual from a childlike externalised superego restriction <sup>6</sup> to a more mature internalised discrimination of the actions required for harmonious gender relations. Again this broadening of ethos is reflected in escaping from 'originology' and concerns for pathological derivations of behaviour (a variety of superego approach) to 'teleology' and intentional progression in development (more of an ethical approach)(Zock:56, and *Insight and Responsibility* (IR):114) <sup>7</sup> The teleological stance became more evident in the late '30's and early '40's when Erikson became increasingly concerned with normative developmental issues, with particular reference to identity in the adolescent (Zock:28). In CS he devotes much space to the concept of identity and takes the unusual tack of discussing the concept in terms of various cultures, including 'traditional' American Indian. In this sense he was moving from the constraints of the Freudian psychosexual approach to that of a wider psycho-social context. Despite his concern for broader issues the question of sexuality is not really lost, it is simply placed into a broader context for the moment.

Unfortunately, Erikson's often imprecise writing style allows those, who are prepared

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<sup>6</sup> I will argue later that this has the effect of creating an inordinate tension in the individual between who s/he is (being) and who society would like him/her to be. This tension needs to be resolved, in favour of being (the Self), in adolescence and early adulthood if the individual is to progress towards generativity and wisdom later. This point is made in contradistinction to the 'self' which we saw in the discussion on *ahamkaru* can become *ahamkara* or misdirected ego activity.

<sup>7</sup> Stevens maintains that Erikson was "...firmly opposed to the fallacy of 'originology' - 'the habitual effort to find "causes" of a man's whole development in his childhood conflicts'. He talks of the 'genetic' approach of psycho-analysis as the 'curse' which too often 'leads us to reconstruct a child's development as if it were nothing but the product of his parents' virtues or vices.'"(Stevens 1983:101)

to deny the central place of sexuality in individual and community affairs, the opportunity to continue with the denial. In itself this is not problematic as the broader issues must be discussed. I argue, though, that working in a way that excludes sexuality leaves too many questions unanswered, and so this facet of life must be again brought to the fore.

### Sexuality in the Life Cycle

Erikson's project of expansion first appeared in a coherent form in his extremely popular book, *Childhood and Society*, in a diagram simply entitled 'Figure 7' (CS:234). The chart, which later became known as the *epigenetic diagram*, encapsulated his early work and became the basis, with additions over time, for much of his later work. The diagram is made up of eight segments each signifying a particular stage or 'crisis' through which an individual metaphorically must pass on the way to maturity. Note that this does not imply passage in time into physical maturity and genitality. It is a psychological maturity that is insinuated. Although the first four of the eight stages mirror much of Freudian theory, material gleaned from forays into areas such as cultural anthropology provided a wider developmental scope than psychoanalysis was able to permit at that time. In the following outline of the stages I wish to show that (a) the major focus of any developmental formulation must be on the early phases as the outcomes, be they syntonic or dystonic, continue to manifest in later life, and (b) sexuality in some form or another is inherent in all the phases.<sup>8</sup> With this in mind, the first five stages of the Life Cycle will now be briefly

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<sup>8</sup> It could be argued that it is not possible for the neonate or infant to be included in the category of sexual being as this implies sexual expression (sexpression). I have argued in chapter 2, however, that this last is only one part of the equation. The fact that caregivers respond in certain ways to the sex of the neonate is already part of the new person's sexuality (along, say, the cultural dimension). Although empirical evidence is lacking there is enough anecdotal demonstration to suggest that even the foetus incorporates attitudinal and verbal cues from caregivers. This could be a factor today as more and more parents are resorting to ante-natal sonar scanning in which the sex of the foetus is noted and parental attitudes are subsequently shaped by this information at the early stage of child development.

considered, while introducing the Being/Existence polarity.

**Stage 1 : Trust vs. Basic Mistrust.** This is the first of the stages and traditionally is restricted to the period birth to about twelve months. It covers the time of breastfeeding (so bonding), toilet training, weaning, and first attempts at locomotion, ie. it is a period of complete dependency and opportunity for transition from the enclosure of the womb to the exploratory enclosure of the world, both physical and cultural. Erikson's focus on existential factors is evident in this early stage of his work when he holds that it is not the "...absolute quantities of food and demonstrations of love, but rather on the *quality* of the maternal relationship." (CS:221, emphasis added) The period, thus, begins a life-long interaction of constantly fluctuating perceptions of inner and outer forces, the beginnings of ego-differentiation (*ahamkara*) between sensations from internal states and those from the external environment. Additionally there are rudimentary processes of letting-go: "The infant's first social achievement, then, is his willingness to let the mother out of sight without undue anxiety or rage, because she has become an inner certainty as well as an outer predictability." (CS:219). A successful negotiation of this stage "...forms the basis in the child for a sense of identity which will later combine a sense of being "all right," of being oneself, and of becoming what other people trust one will become."(CS:221)

A part of this baseline is addressed by Erikson when he covers the polemic of frustration, the quality of which he sees as a factor militating in varying degrees for or against a healthy trust development. Frustration is evident in many interpersonal interactions so Erikson proposes that while, of necessity, parents must need work with prohibitions (against nipple biting, for instance) "...they must...be able to represent to the child a deep, an almost somatic conviction that there is a meaning to what they are doing. Ultimately, children becomes neurotic not from frustrations, but from the lack or loss of societal meaning in these frustrations."(CS:222) As I read this, it is the lack of existential coherence between the prohibition and an inherent

meaning which results in a frustration that belies well-being; it is the non-resolution, or continued existence of incoherence that is the root of many later psychospiritual dysfunctions.

Frustration is tied in with the 'to get' of this stage, a to-get that is a subtle change in circumstances from the intra-uterine situation where there was also a getting but then in a utopian state of symbiosis. Now that the neonate/infant is extra-uterine s/he needs to learn to get in the form of receiving and accepting (*Identity: Youth & Crisis* (IYC):99), a somewhat different modality. Now there is an interaction of mutuality or conflict. Erikson notes:

“The groping and unstable newborn’s organism learns this modality only as he learns to regulate his readiness to “get” with the methods of a mother who, in turn, will permit him to co-ordinate *his means of getting* as she develops and co-ordinates *her means of giving*. But in getting what is given, and in learning to get somebody to do for him what he wishes to have done, the baby also develops the necessary groundwork “to get to be” the giver – that is, to identify with her and eventually to become a giving person.”(IYC:99, emphases added)

If it can be held that the acts of giving and getting<sup>9</sup> are creative (the constructive transfer of energy) and that giving and getting are also erotic acts (Fromm’s giving and getting of sexual fulfilment is a metaphor for a wider application) then it stands to reason that the interaction between the mother and neonate is also a sexual act for both parties (some would say that the quality of body-stroking in adult sexual foreplay is shaped in part by the quality of body stroking by parents).<sup>10</sup> This line of reasoning then leads us to beginning a perception of a centrality of sexuality in both the creation of the child (conception), and in the quality of the care of the neonate as a future sexual being with his/her own sense of sexuality.

Hence, with an assumed total reliance on caregivers and their prejudices, there are

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<sup>9</sup> I am reading Erikson’s ‘getting’ in the same vein as Fromm’s ‘receiving’ (see Fromm 1985:26 for the sexual postulate).

<sup>10</sup> Note that the hormone, oxytocin, that is given off by the anterior pituitary gland to allow flow of breast milk also causes contractions of the uterus, an effect that many lactating women equate with orgasm.

already in the infant the seeds of calm and/or stormy waters ahead. I would propose that these seeds are later expressed in the sexual identification or sexuality of the individual. But more of this later. For the moment I would like to concentrate on the idea that mistrust at this level is not only a mistrust of the social world but that of oneself as a being-in-the-world.

"To the newborn, the outer world with its infinite stimuli can be nothing but a chaos, a chaos of which the sensations from its own body are a part. *Ego and outer world are experienced as a unity*... if now the child experiences a severe shock in this period of orienting himself, the boundaries remain blurred, vague and uncertain. Stimuli from the outer world may then be perceived as inner experiences, or, conversely, inner perceptions may be experienced as coming from the outer world."(Wilhelm Reich:20, emphasis in original)

Assuming the child's interactions with the environment are satisfactory s/he finds that a need to explore is sparked by a new locomotive ability which widens social interactions, especially that of release.

**Stage 2 : Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt.** This next stage incorporates "...experimentation with two simultaneous sets of social modalities: holding on and letting go."(CS:222) Previously the infant was concerned with holding on, especially to breast. The holding on was an initial reaction to the sequence of being totally dependent *in utero*, being expelled, and so having to 'cope' with the 'outside'. Now there is a body gaining in strength and with it comes the ability to take more control of the environment (with crawling, for instance, if Mom disappears, then the crawling allows some measure of control in trying to find her). Additionally, there is also the ability to now begin to explore the environment in many ways, which entails a shift in focus from demanding exclusive rights to caregiver to letting go of them while exploring. Erikson maintains that there is also a heightening awareness of soma as distinct from environment, a factor which assists in the impetus towards exploration. Finally, now is the time that the mother starts to withdraw into pursuits neglected during pregnancy and care of the neonate. Such pursuits include conjugal intimacy which may often be witnessed in some part by the child adding to a growing databank of impressions.(IYC:101)

This, by the way, is not a bounded emergence in the period. The factors just mentioned are continually emerging as the child discovers and is increasingly able to discover his/her environment. So the boundaries between the crises are blurred and there is much advancing and regressing at new attitudes and competencies are realised and contested, asserted and rebuffed, as child and parents continually construct, deconstruct and reconstruct dialectical frontiers.

In the realms of psychic development, the attitudes of the caregiver/s are crucial in allowing the child to choose between a positivity of free-will and freedom of guided exploration or a retreat into previous needs for security. This is a stage of realising the rudiments of discrimination between alternatives: "Outer control at this stage, therefore, must be firmly reassuring... Firmness must protect him against the potential anarchy of his as yet untrained sense of discrimination, his inability to hold on and to let go with discretion." (CS:223) Excessive control at this point, however, results in shame and doubt, the basis of later neuroses particularly those of compulsiveness and perfection.<sup>11</sup> Erikson applies psychoanalytical outcomes to shame and doubt which are vital in understanding the unfortunate choices that individuals make in their lifecycles. As above, in Trust, I would suggest that shame and doubt are more an existential negation of Being than is generally acknowledged. The infant is trying to find a path in the world and is looking for an interface between being-ness and existence (Zock prefers the terms 'existence' and 'psychosocial' and I will argue against this terminological preference later) and if sanctions or prohibitions are excessive emphasis then is placed on an externalised existence to the detriment of the inner being. The importance of this will be seen in the next section.

The objective for this stage is to emerge with a sense of being able to discern when to hold on and when to let go, and to be able to do so with safety and to be able to make

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<sup>11</sup> Excessive control can also be manifested in parental insecurities which predicate a constant need to have the child close by, a constant need to have the child clean and presentable, and so on. In other words, parental insecurities are projected onto the child to the detriment of the latter.

that choice with certainty.<sup>12</sup> Part of this letting go, of course, concerns having to share a parent with the other. And, furthermore, there is another introduction to sexexpression in the sharing of the parental bed. Hence although parental intimacy is difficult in the face of an exploring child the sharing of the parental bed on occasion allows for exploration of bodies; again, adding to the databank.<sup>13</sup> For the parents, of course, this is part and parcel of Generativity.

**Stage 3 : Initiative vs. Guilt.** Eventually the child begins to move beyond mere exploration and starts to act with purpose; s/he begins to initiate. This is the first indication in Erikson's schema of any sexuality. In CS he is still strongly influenced by the Freudian paradigm but refers to this sexuality as 'infantile genitality'(CS:224) and states that:

"Infantile sexuality and incest taboo, castration complex and superego all unite here to bring about that specifically human crisis during which the child must turn from an exclusive, pre-genital attachment to his parents to the slow process of becoming a parent, a carrier of tradition... The *instinct fragments* which before had enhanced the growth of his infantile body and mind now become divided into an *infantile set* which perpetuates the exuberance of growth potentials, and a *parental set* which supports and increases self-observation, self-guidance, and self-punishment." (CS:225, emphasis added)

This Freudian terminology does not detract from the present impetus. Erikson, in the above quote, is interpreted to reflect a state of Being in the phrase 'instinct fragments' which, in Erikson's hypothesis, is transferred to existence by the sorting of the fragments into 'infantile' and 'parental'. This relates to what Zock refers to as psychosocial forces (it is, however, preferred to translate 'instinct fragments' and

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<sup>12</sup> One female 7-year old began developing aggressive tendencies with one rather disconcerting 'habit' of being flatulent at mealtimes; aggressive 'letting-go'. Discussions with the mother indicated a tendency in the past of the parents to admonish the child rather than the behaviour. Subsequently when the girl transgressed the parents explained that the 'letting-go' was offensive to others, but the child was loved. There was a drop in incidence of the behaviour and a week later it happened again upon which she immediately informed the parents that she was loved but they could not stand the smell and there was no further repeat.

<sup>13</sup> Not being allowed on occasion to share the parental bed is seen today as being pathologically secretive intimacy; as being an attempt to continue intimacy to the exclusion of generativity, as a regression.

'infantile/parental sets' into 'Being' and 'existential' respectively). Now is the beginning of an intrusion of the existential necessities of worldly participation into the 'cosmic' beingness that was the condition of the neonate at birth.<sup>14</sup>

The stage provides an opportunity for the little soul to begin to make sense of his material existence without loss of self. As Erikson points out throughout the Life Cycle there are dangers and the one here is that of being thwarted in attempts to initiate action; this thwarting developing a sense of guilt. This merely exacerbates the situation presented above under Autonomy where the child becomes more embroiled in matters of existence with an excessive concomitant loss of self.

**Stage 4 : Industry vs. Inferiority.** With rapidly increasing locomotor ability, especially with regards use of hand/eye coordination, the life task takes on a flavour of 'work', the child becomes busy and is interested in the work of the caregivers, going to some lengths to emulate them. In terms of childhood sexuality Erikson now postulates:

"Before the child, psychologically already a rudimentary parent, can become a biological parent, he must begin to be a worker and potential provider."(CS:226)

"He has mastered the ambulatory field and the organ modes"(CS:227)

and

"...he now learns to win recognition by producing things."(CS:226)

It is important, in my view, to note that this can be regarded as the final stage in the 'apprenticeship' cycle, so to speak. Ideally, the child has been through the mill of entering the material world and learning to cope not only with the use of the body but basic living-with-others skills or socialisation. It has been a journey of discovery and

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<sup>14</sup> This 'cosmic beingness' appeared in 1959 in *Identity and the Life Cycle* and I would hold that this is a clue to Erikson's progression towards a recognition of numinous factors extant in the individual. In other words, the child is not set adrift into a turbulent materiality in a state of *tabula rasa* but does seem to have some form of pre-cognitive being-ness; hence the 'cosmic' of ILC and later work, and a popular concept within the ranks of transpersonal psychology, and the New Age.

emulation of the good and the bad in those around. It has been an emulation (or series of ego boundary experiments) that results in an individual who is satisfactory to both others and self. "His ego boundaries include his tools and skills: the work principle...teaches him the *pleasure* of work completion by steady attention and persevering diligence."(CS:227, emphasis added)

Work is now generally purposeful and attitudes towards the idea of work have begun to gel. The exuberance that went with just-doing as an infant can now be extended to doing-for-a-reason. There is still a tendency to work for the sake of the intrinsic satisfaction of seeing something appear that wasn't there before; of experiencing a knowledge that had previously been an enigma. Ego boundaries are still moving but are now becoming recognisable. The danger is that if there has been a concerted societal assault on Being then the boundaries tend to lack the firm foundation of Being; in addition to becoming impermeable, a sign of existential dominance.

Central to the outcome is, to a large measure, tested behaviours in the field of sexuality. The period until now has included what Erikson calls 'infantile genitality' which I interpret as a recognition by the child that s/he has certain physical characteristics which are simply accepted as being the case, until, that is, superego development takes place. The child knows that there is a particular configuration to his/her body and that there is a fundamental difference between sexes in the area normally covered at most times. The purpose of the characteristic difference can be explained in part by caregiver answers to the inevitable questions, and in part by the child's innate ability to reason with uncanny accuracy by referring to the physical differences between the parents. In addition, the sensitive observer will note the child-like disposition to observe and individually build on the myth that 'I come from mummy's tummy' therefore there is another fundamental functional difference that is merely accepted by the child as a normal but, for the moment, unimportant facet in life.

“If not specifically provoked into precocious manifestation by especially seductive practices or by pointed prohibitions and threats of “cutting it off” or special customs such as sex play in groups of children, it [phallic stage of infantile sexuality] is *apt to lead to no more than a series of peculiarly fascinating experiences* which soon become frightening and pointless enough to be repressed.”(IYC:116, emphasis and interpolation added)

Whilst today there can be difficulty with the idea of the child in an open society repressing his or her infantile sexuality it is the emphasis in the quotation that is germane. Erikson keeps coming back to this theme; note, for instance, when he states that

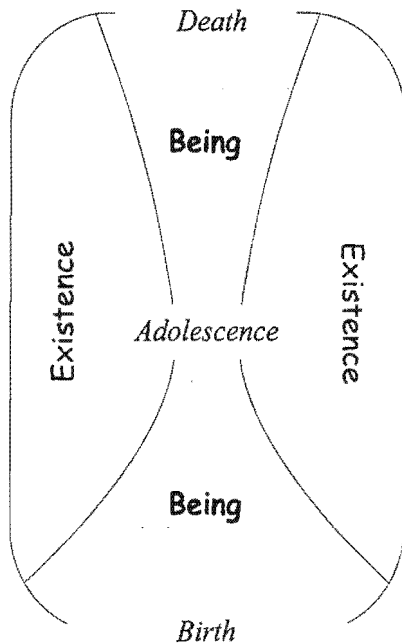
“The child thus develops the prerequisites for masculine or feminine initiative and, above all, some sexual self-images which will become essential ingredients in the positive and negative aspects of future identity.”(IYC:118)

Thus, it can be said that Erikson views childhood as a period of preparation for the principle task ahead – propagation of the species. With this thought he provides a stern warning with regards to this time in the child’s life:

“Naturally, the parental set is at first hand infantile in nature: the fact that human conscience remains partially infantile throughout life is the core of human tragedy. For the superego of the child can be primitive, cruel, and uncompromising, as may be observed in instances where children overcontrol and overconstrict themselves to the point of self-obliteration; where they develop an over-obedience more literal than the one the parent wished to exact; or where they develop deep regressions and lasting resentments because the parents themselves do not seem to live up to the new conscience which they have installed in the child.”(CS:225)

Three impressions arise from this passage. Firstly, this quotation is a theme which Erikson, following Freud, ascribes to the third stage of phallicism. I would argue that Freud’s argument for dormancy is now outdated as children are exposed to more and more sexually explicit images in the media. So the ‘parental set’ manifestation would now continue through late childhood. By associating parental set with superego and acknowledging that superego influences are infantile it is a short argument to the continued development of the parental set into the latency of classical psychoanalysis. Secondly, if there is a sustained grasp of the superego then it seems that Erikson is painting a worse-case scenario when he states that “...conscience remains partially infantile throughout life...”. This infantile nature of conscience is

actually more common than imagined, as many clinicians will attest. This second impression is reference to the life-long partially-infantile nature of conscience.



**Figure 1** : Schematic representation of relationship between Being & Existence through the Life Cycle

Conscience, another name for the superego, is a societal or existential imposition on the Being of the child. If this is the case then one needs to look at the strength of the imposition and the concomitant loss of Being. It is maintained that sexual identification is just one important area of conscience development. I would go further to postulate that many children have a natural ‘feel’ for gender, which is often confuted by superego positioning. In this situation the child is then at odds between listening to him or herself and following the strange (and often, as hinted by Erikson, inconsistent) dictates of significant others. Perhaps for clarity the process permeating through these four stages can be

illustrated by figure 1 in which Being is represented as compressed from a state of ‘cosmic’ numinosity in the neonate until just before adolescence when the dominant mode is existential. It is the ratio of Being/existence in the whole that can be read into Erikson’s developmental schema. As he explains:

“...it is necessary to differentiate between personal identity and ego identity... Ego identity then, in its subjective aspect, is the awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the ego’s synthesizing methods, *the style of one’s individuality*, and that this style coincides with the sameness and continuity of one’s *meaning for significant others* in the immediate community” (IYC:50, his emphasis)

It is this fit between society (personal [Erikson] or existential [NOD] identity) and individual Being (ego [Erikson] or Being [NOD] identity) that is carried through to the next stage which is ushered in with puberty and the arrival of secondary sex characteristics.

**Summary of the first four stages:** It is usual to assume that the neonate arrives in the world in a state of dependency and a clean slate, so to speak. This thinking allows for a view that the purpose of childhood is to start from a point and expand with experience through the various stages till reaching the a broad wisdom of old age. This, however, is an anthropocentric worldview that can be equated with the now largely discredited Cartesian dualism, in which Being (being part of a Divine) is set in clear opposition to Existence (being part of the world). The problem that this raises is explaining a basic spirituality in the child which in many ways may be comparable with that of the integrated adult (an almost cyclical feel). Attempts to explain religiosity have been made by the psychoanalysts (such as Pruyser) but once again this is restricted to terms of existence and valences emanating from the environment.

If one is able to accept that there is more to life than existence then it is possible to note the potential that lies within the mind/body dichotomy is not so much a sensory artifact but perhaps a gradual shift of focus from a self as a Being-in-the-world to a self that has been created by the world, a self-of-the-world. It is the movement from the one to the other that is a challenge of the first four stages – the challenge being to negotiate the demands made by the world in such a way as to be able to recognise self as a Being capable of creating solutions which will promote meaningful existence. Once, however, an externalised or existential focus dominates, Being is alienated from existence, as a consequence of the loss of significant Being-strengths, and the imbalance towards existence becomes a threat with a concomitant range of psychopathologies from which to choose in searching for coping mechanisms.

A constant theme of this reading of Erikson is that of emerging from each stage with a positive sense of trust, will, initiative and industry (with, however, just enough of the negative aspects to maintain a healthy balance) to be able to allow Being and existence to present a meaningful whole. That Erikson talks of a technological bias in the fourth stage is of little consequence to my argument that healthy perception of

sexuality is central to healthy development. The assertion that ‘...he now learns to win recognition by producing things.’ (CS:226 and repeated in IYC:124) is tempered by the perhaps subconscious reiteration that “It is as if he knows and his society knows that now he is psychologically already a rudimentary parent, he must begin to be something of a worker and potential parent before becoming a biological parent” (IYC:123-4). Hence the child’s task of becoming involved in existence has as its goal the flowering of the parental and other existential skills, subsequent to a sustaining and wholesome apprenticeship.

It is argued that purposes of the four stages of childhood are (a) the acquisition of skills necessary for the maintenance of the body which is designed to propagate and care for the next generation of the species, and (b) to do this in a way that Being is not compromised. If the child approaches adolescence, and puberty, with a pathologically existential dominant mode then it can be seen that the way forward becomes problematic.

With the arrival of secondary sex characteristics the apprenticeship is over and now the individual begins the road to a qualification of journeyman/woman. In this analogy, only the journeyman can hope to progress to masters studies of intimacy and generativity if suitably qualified. S/he can, of course, attempt to operate on the apprentices knowledge, but, if we may put it this way, must be relegated to the status of ‘backyard mechanic’.

**Stage 5 : Identity vs. Role diffusion.** Physical changes usher in new perceptions. Now emerges the Janus spectre of, on the level of *soma*, the potential of biological parenthood and the training that is required to attract the ideal mate for this purpose, and (b) the training required to be able to sustain parenthood, of being existentially in a position to be able to care for the future generation. The pressures now being exerted on the individual are such that the “...samenesses and continuities relied on

earlier are questioned again.”(CS:227, IYC:128)<sup>15</sup> Adolescence can be referred to as the age of the philosopher as much of the world in and around is questioned, and the psychosomatic changes provide a platform for a psychedelic theatre of new images demanding attention; not the least of which is the call for a comfortable amalgam of Being and existence.

“This [prospect of identity loss] is unavoidable at a time of life when the body changes its proportions radically, when genital puberty floods body and imagination with all manner of impulses, when intimacy with the other sex approaches and is, on occasion, forced on the young person, and when the immediate future confronts one with too many conflicting possibilities and choices.”(IYC:133, interpolation added)

Erikson tries to bring some order to the psychic pandemonium that is adolescence. Of value is the way that he shows that the issues to be resolved are both rooted in the past and projective into the future. In the chart below the adolescent lessons are correlated with the *epigenetic* polarities to illustrate this point (see Appendix 5)

<i>Adolescent lessons</i>		<i>Epigenetic Polarities</i>
Temporal perspective vs. Time confusion	1	Trust vs. Mistrust
Self-certainty vs. Self-consciousness	2	Autonomy vs. Shame & doubt
Role experimentation vs. Role confusion	3	Initiative vs. Guilt
Apprenticeship vs. Work paralysis	4	Industry vs. Inferiority
IDENTITY vs. IDENTITY CONFUSION		
Sexual polarisation vs. bisexual confusion	6	Intimacy vs. Isolation
Leader- & follower-ship vs. Authority confusion	7	Generativity vs. Stagnation
Ideological commitment vs. Confusion of values	8	Integrity vs. Despair

The point to be made here is that the adolescent is now going to high school where s/he is not the senior any more and so is coerced into revisiting many areas assumed to be completed.

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<sup>15</sup> It is reiterated that the situation of the homosexual community needs special consideration, especially with regards to the place of care of children, and generativity. The adoption of children by lesbian and gay couples is becoming an interesting issue in the courts of many countries, including South Africa.

“In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, adolescents have to re-fight many of the battles of earlier years, even though to do so they must artificially appoint perfectly well-meaning people to play the roles of adversaries; and they are ever ready to install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity.”(CS:261)

As has been deduced from the above, adolescence is a time for re-examining the losses of the past and concomitantly testing bases for the future. It is hypothetically a time of when Being and Existence stand in stark opposition, and beg a search for a common ground for fruitful interaction. It is a time when an external locus of control can lose ground without ‘loss of face,’ so to speak. Carl Jung notes:

“We are all familiar with the source of the problems which arise in the period of youth. For most people it is the demands of life which harshly put an end to the dream of childhood... If he clings to illusions that contradict reality, then problems will surely arise.”(Jung:100)

Clinging to illusions would indicate a lack of space for experimentation which could rebuild past collapses and construct a firm, less impressionable base for the future. The decision to restrict this discourse to these five stages is based on the critical importance of resolution of previous lessons (see chart above) in one way or another in this adolescent period. The contention is that if the crises up till now have been heavily biased towards either of the crisis poles there is little point in looking for relief in, or hoping that life will improve in the future. Erikson notes this with:

“In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, which must now include sexual maturity, some adolescents have to come to grips again with crises of earlier years before they can install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity.” (IYC:128)

Staying with the theme of sexual maturity just mentioned, in the ideal, “To a considerable extent adolescent love is an attempt to arrive at a definition of one’s identity by projecting one’s diffused ego image on another and by seeing it thus reflected and gradually clarified.”(CS:262) In this way then to attempt to bring sense to later crises is superfluous. I would argue that this applies equally to childhood love, and that the adolescent who has been subjected to less-than-meaningful reflections (note the earlier comments regarding frustration) in childhood can find a ‘diffused ego image’ daunting. Furthermore, although Erikson talks of ‘some’ adolescents, I will argue that therapy, in general, and Patañjali, in particular, will

make the assumption that there are few who are able to successfully traverse the course through adolescence, so the object in developing a therapy or spiritual discipline is to assume that this is the case and commence a redemptive strategy from there. Whilst this can be interpreted as being pessimistic I would hold that it is only when the *is* of the present is acknowledged that benefit can be achieved.

With these thoughts I would now turn to two subjects that bear examination before attempting to embody Erikson's *epigenetic principle* with the *cakras* - these to argue that Hettie Zock's analysis of his concerns with the existential can be re-read to support a hypothesis of a Being-existence polarity, bearing in mind that this is synonymous with the ethicality-morality continuum argued for in chapter 2; and then to explore the notion of emanation from the Divine hypothesis presented in chapter 3 in Erikson's Western terms. This then will lay the groundwork for a marriage with the *cakras*.

### **Erikson and existential concerns**

As psychologists (Maslow and Kohlberg, for instance) who work with an Eriksonian developmental layout point out, few people today are able to progress beyond the early stages of intimacy, it is felt that Erikson's stages 6 - 8 (Intimacy - Integrity) can be left aside for the moment. I would now move to clarify somewhat the argument for Erikson's existential concerns and find evidence in his thinking for concrete notions of spirituality.

Arising from Hettie Zock's analysis (particularly Ch3 §3) is an indication that Erikson was drawn to the existential mood of the period. Zock says that the mode was one of reaction against

“...the fragmentation of reality by the cleavage between subject and object, and on a materialistic and deterministic image of man... Reality...cannot be comprehended within a conceptual system, working with abstract notions, departing from cause-effect relationships: human existence cannot be understood by analogy with an object as is the case in the natural sciences.”(Zock:23 - note the quote of Erikson at the beginning of this chapter)

Later in her discussion of *Young Man Luther* (Ch.4, Erikson's psychohistorical exposé of Martin Luther) Zock shows that Erikson emerged from this investigation of Luther with a clear distinction between the existential and psychosocial factors that he found were at play in Luther's strivings for identity: "There [*Young Man Luther*] he distinguishes both existential and psychosocial development. Speaking of the first he uses terms like 'spirit' and 'soul', and speaking of the second, terms like 'mind' and 'psyche'." (Zock:68, interpolation added) By existential, Erikson focuses on the twin problems of the finitude of human existence and redemption (Zock:92 and 69, respectively). Here is where the thesis permeating the thrust of this dissertation begins to diverge from Zock.<sup>16</sup> She holds, for instance, that the psychosocial sphere is proper to psychology and psychotherapy, "...which can offer 'healing insights'..." and that existential concerns are best allocated to religion or world views that "...can 'heal' in the sense of redeem." (both Zock:69) These questions of finitude and redemption actually require deeper interrogation than possible in this forum. It is, nonetheless, argued here that detaching psychotherapy from religion has drained both of much value. It is asserted that from this dichotomising there ensues a distinction between the psychosocial and the existential, ie. a definitive categorisation of the two, that creates an angst that Erikson finds evident in present society. I would hold that neither, as separated entities, are able to do as Zock would hope as they are intimately inter-related and inter-dependent and when separated wither, losing vitality.

To dig a little deeper into the existentialist field, in her discussion of Jean-Paul Sartre, philosopher Mary Warnock explains that:

"...nothingness was a kind of gap or separation which lay between a man and the world, or rather between a man's consciousness and the world of which he was conscious. The second sense of "Nothingness" was that almost of "futility", of the vanishing and evaporating of

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<sup>16</sup> It must be borne in mind that Hettie Zock is concerned with Erikson's contributions to the psychology of religion, which could, I would argue, tend to overlook or ignore a psychology of sexuality/spirituality which is my thesis.

objects in the world. Without an awareness of nothingness in this sense, a man could not begin to move from inauthentic to authentic existence.”(Warnock:93)

From this it can be postulated that, firstly, there is a senselessness in associating with objects in the world (note the short discussion on attachment in the previous chapter, which will be enlarged in the next) simply because of their (and our) impermanence; and, secondly, there is a gap between consciousness (which, I contend, can be translated as Being) and the things of which one is conscious (again, can be translated as Existence). Then, thirdly, closure of the gap can be initiated by an awareness which promotes redemption (of, that is, a meaningful interaction broken by the ‘gap’). To reformulate, the structure of Being and Existence has a functional interdependence which is dichotomised by an emphasis, usually, on the latter, although a similar effect can be noted in an inordinate shift along the spectrum towards Being. Either way, a gap or ‘nothingness’ is created which promotes an inauthentic existence; authenticity being marked by a significant interaction between the two. Awareness, however, of a dystonic present and the prospect of a syntonic future creates a space for regaining authenticity. This, I would posit, is Erikson’s line of reasoning. He states that it is not the ‘positive’ polarity in crisis resolution that is desirable but a ‘middle path’ with enough ‘negative’ to provide a balanced view of the world. I would contend that he is suggesting that the quality of functionality between ‘man’s consciousness’ and the world of objects of which he is conscious that is being emphasised. And this functionality is only possible with elements from both poles in reasonable tension. Equally, without such tension awareness is diminished.

In the end, it is being argued for a subtle shift in meaning of the term, ‘nothingness.’ Rather than have it emerge from an inauthentic existence, it could mean a lack of functionality between the two consciousness’ of Being and Existence. The upshot of the matter is that movement along the spectrum towards either polarity creates an unease, even dis-ease, in a psychospiritual state as a ‘nothingness’ *qua* lack of functionality begins to appear. Put another way, without a bridge between the walls of a

chasm there is a nothingness.

Returning to Zock's splitting of psychotherapy and religion. If we were to apply the above it could be found that an un-ease, or nothingness, or, even, lack of functionality, is again a result, in which functionality is called for by bringing them back into productive tension. Essentially, this is a return to a call for spiritualising therapy, or psychologising spirituality.

Taking another tack, there is again divergence from Zock in her focus on existence as a numinous alter-ego of the psychosociality of life. It does seem that, as with Erikson, she too is influenced by Paul Tillich:

“The Tillichian idea of becoming as a continuous incorporation of ‘non-being’ in ‘being’ is reflected in Erikson’s idea that in each stage a certain positive ration of a basic polarity must be acquired.”(Zock:67)

Richard Stevens, on another hand, casts another light: “From the interplay at each phase emerges a set of qualities which demonstrates the strength of the ego in integrating aspects of *inner life* and the person’s relationship with the *social world*.”(Stevens:56, emphasis added). It could be read that this is a dialectical relationship between Being (the inner life) and existence (relationship with others) which together create a psychosocial tensional matrix. It is a dialectic that manifests in a gradual subsuming of Being by the exuberance of existence in the four early stages of the Life Cycle that must be re-considered (Warnock’s ‘awareness’, or the ‘raising of consciousness’ that lies in the background of this hypothesis) in adolescence and early adulthood if intimacy is to be realised. Intimacy (the surrender to another person) is regarded here as being a precursor to Generativity, which is decoded to include preparation of a new generation. Mature integration is achieved and enjoyed when the crests of these earlier stages have been beneficially negotiated, such joy being possible only with a tensional integration of Being-in-the-world and Existence-in-the-world. Important here is the deflection from “...incorporation of ‘non-Being’ in being...” to another angle - removal of ‘nothingness’ as Existence in

the world successfully dove-tails with Being as a person.

Returning to the questions around finitude and redemption, if attention is re-directed from existence-in-the-world to Being-as-a-person (or, more specifically, a relation between the two) then two vistas can be opened. Firstly, the Cartesian dichotomy between psychotherapy and religion is reduced as both disciplines are capable of intervention, and the boundaries can become increasingly blurred or permeable as a further shift can be effected away from either as an exclusive towards a combination of both in a personal psycho-spirituality, or client-centredness, as Carl Rogers would have it. Crucial is Zock, quoting Stephen Schlein, pointing out that the objective is to emphasise the homoeostatic quality of the organism rather than psychopathology (Zock:50). Secondly, Tillich's 'non-being' then transforms from an indeterminate perception of a potential internal pathology, inducing fear, to existence as a form of 'not being oneself', of living a dysfunctionality between Being and Existence, of being in the thrall of *ahamkāra*, all of which are states that can be rectified.

Inauthenticity or angst can be redeemed, not by accentuating 'non-being', but by the recognition of existence for what it is, how it relates to Being, and what in the relationship spurs the presenting pathology. In this situation then *soma, ego, ethos* become an interplay promoting wholeness and becoming. The former, wholeness, is used here in the manner expressed by Erikson, ie. "As a Gestalt, then, wholeness emphasises a sound, organic, progressive *mutuality* between diversified functions and parts within an entirety, the boundaries of which are open and fluid."(IYC:80-1, emphasis added) It is the mutuality of the *soma, ego, ethos*<sup>17</sup> that is indispensable to a sexuality of embodiment, cultural traits and ethics. Without this mutuality, which begins with that of the mother (need to give) and infant (need to receive), the polarisation between, or, rather, the subsuming of Being by existence becomes entrenched and stupefying. As Erikson says:

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<sup>17</sup> Note the potential of a neat fit between *soma, ego, ethos* with the embodiment, culture and ethicality of the sexuality paradigm.

“Only a relatively “whole” society can vouchsafe to the infant, through the mother, an inner conviction that all the diffuse somatic experiences and all the confusing social cues of early life can be accommodated in a sense of *continuity and sameness which gradually unites in inner and outer world.*”(IYC:82, emphasis added)

It is argued from this discussion that the hypothesis of a Being-existence continuum is well illustrated in Erikson’s thinking. Moreover, it would be this that allows him to be acceptable to the individual who is digging into the discipline of transcendence. Before getting back to this particular subject I would raise one further point which is that of the emanation hypothesis of chapter 3 in which I argued that each individual can be regarded as being a radiation of Divine energy.

### The epigenetic principle as unfolding

Erikson adds to the hypothesis of postpartum spiritual unfolding (emanation) in this way, “...the maturing organism continues to unfold by developing, not new organs, but a prescribed sequence of locomotor, sensory and social *capacities...*”(IYC:93, quoted in Stevens 1983:17, emphasis added) One notion of importance to this dissertation is Erikson’s *epigenetic* principle which can be borrowed to delineate this unfolding or emanating which, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, is not expressly of a physical nature, post-partum<sup>18</sup>, but spiritual and social.<sup>19</sup>

In CS (:61-2) Erikson offers the organic unfurling of the foetus as an analogy for that of psychic attributes. Crucial is his *epigenetic principle* that talks of the potential of stages of psychic activity appearing (a) in a sequence, (b) each emerging at a time appropriate for its implementation, and (c) each building upon or augmenting that

<sup>18</sup> I use the term ‘post-partum’, rather than ‘post-natal’, to emphasise the physicality of the event. The former indicates a step into the world, a parting, which is less evident in the latter term.

<sup>19</sup> This, of course, is not to ignore body change. Further evolution does take place during childhood (it is said that femoral epiphyses, for instance, only close during early adulthood). Being argued here is that psychosocial and cultural events are more to the point and can, with little stretch of the imagination, be argued to effect the changes in the body. Accordingly, the argument here is that once the various organs are formed it is ‘soul-mind’ that determines courses through life worlds, and sexuality *qua* internalised erotics is a base.

preceding. Overt sexual behaviour *qua* intimacy, for instance, generally would not appear before the sequencing of this tripartite set of factors. Referring back to the discussion of the three dimensions of sexuality, intimacy is difficult before the embodiment of secondary sex characteristics (including hormonal activity) at puberty; before the opportunity to align oneself along the masculine-feminine continuum (this contrasted by the positioning demanded by society); before a sense of a self-accepting self emerges. Stevens describes these slightly differently as being the:

“...*somatic process or constitution* (ie., the physiological processes on which behaviour and experience depend), *social context* (ie., the meanings and significances which society provides) and *ego process or identity* (ie., the way a person resolves conflicts and makes sense of him of herself and the situation).”(Stevens:10, emphases in original)

To this I would add that ego process or identity is also reliant on the manner in which the first four psychosocial crises have been resolved. The importance of the concept of the *epigenetic* principle is that developmental emergency is ostensibly an orderly affair, each level manifesting, generally, in response to improvements in the conditions of these tripartite factors. The energy of the next stage does, however, surface irrespective of whether or not, or rather irrespective of how the previous psychological crisis has been resolved; indeed, there is always resolution of a stage without regard for the quality (constructive or delayed) of the resolution within the matrix. In other words, when the body and mind have reached a critical point the impetus towards Competence (Industry v. Inferiority) will surface irrespective of the quality of the resolution of the stages of Will (Initiative vs. Guilt) or Purpose (Autonomy vs. Self-doubt). Non-resolution of previous stages merely means that an emerging stage will be deleteriously effected, perhaps stunted (to use a biological metaphor), and will be held in abeyance for solution in a later stage in life (a phenomenon of regression so often seen in the individual, and can be interpreted as an attempt at resolution). Hence the need for therapy or consciousness-raising in some form or another.

The relevance of this cognitive line to this dissertation is that, although genitality or overt sexual behaviour, *qua* sexual gratification, technically only rises at puberty (stage 5), sexuality *per se* has been encountered in the earlier stages. In terms of mainstream psychology, the child has been socialised into a mould of girl or boy by parents, school and so on. Taken on its own, the socialisation thesis is a pessimistic line, devoid of responsibility. And I would argue that we need delve deeper than this. As will be shown later, the pre-pubertal child tends to act the role of the observing 'psychologist' and will observe, adopt, and/or adapt behaviours exhibited by significant others as part of an existential experimentation idiosyncratic to him/her in a particular space-time continuum.<sup>20</sup> There is, ideally, no call for any gratification in pre-pubertal sexpression, it is an acting out of behaviours observed in order to test, on the one hand, limits of acceptable erotic behaviours and, on the other, testing own erotic competence. With, it is argued, positive erotic valences in the databank creativity in mundane matters is enhanced, and, some, would have it, there is less likelihood of attachment to material artifacts (or physical sexpression *per se*).

Thus sexuality, as a category inclusive of sexpression and gender, can be seen to be an ongoing emergency that does not stop at any one stage but is continually evolving to new levels.

Now one comes to the crux of the matter of unfolding. By combining the unfolding hypothesis (of chapter two) with the argument above (that existence impinges on Being) what emerges is a picture of an individual starting at some stage in non-space/time as thought and moving through the level of *hiranyagarha* ('golden

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<sup>20</sup> One young child reported to me that she had observed her mother 'fighting' with her lover in bed at night. When asked whether there was any screaming she said no and proceeded to deduce that mum and lover actually loved each other. The adult actions were being observed and conclusions internalised. At a later date, the mother reported that this child had taken to climbing into bed with the mother and lover in the mornings and had adopted sleeping positions in relation to the lover similar to those observed in the mother. The mother reported that there was no attempt at any form of gratification as may be expected of a pubertal girl in similar circumstances, in fact conversations were urged by the child; it was more of an exploration of bodily attitudes.

womb’) to the space/time dimension of embodiment proper. In other words, there is a shift in Divine ‘energy’ that results in a drive to materiality. This drive then continues postpartum into the world of Existence which reaches, in an ideal sense, a pinnacle during adolescence when existence is at its greatest hubris, just prior to a re-evaluation of the relationship between Being and existence. Such re-evaluation is, again ideally, the beginning of a return to the Divine and a more spiritual life as urged by the various religions. In turn, the return is marked by a switch from an ego-centric search for ‘meaning’ to an other-centric inclusion of a mate, initially, and widening to an inclusion of children.

### Marrying the *cakras* and the Life Cycle

It may have been noted that figure 1 above (p115) bears some pictorial resemblance to figure 3 of chapter 2 (p93). Both have a schematic similarity to the human body. In the discussion of the New Age in chapter 2 it was argued that the *cakras* start off at a broad base which Caroline Myss calls the tribal *cakra*, then there is the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra* where the scope of relationships narrows. Finally, the *maṇipura cakra* is one of being concerned with self and personal identity. The proposed configuration then is a apex-up triangle,  $\Delta$ , which in bodily terms relates to the hips- to-waist area. The  $\Delta$  is taken to represent that phasing-in of existence which is required in the child to negotiate an amalgam of Being and existence.

Above this  $\Delta$  is the diaphragm which is regarded as being a barrier to the next phase that of spirituality. As mentioned previously this is another investigation in its own right so is only referred to here.

The question now is how does the Life Cycle correlates with this formulation of embodiment. Anodea Judith has made one proposal (see appendix two) but it is argued that this is simplistic, especially as she proposes to add another stage to the Life Cycle. There is little to show that this is warranted; it would appear that it is

more a question of reshaping the Life Cycle to fit some romantic notion of the *cakras*. This does not mean that the entire Judith model is to be discarded. It was shown in the discussion of the NA conception of the *cakras* that there are elements of value.

I would propose that rather than attempting to ‘start at the beginning’ with a direct item-by-item correlation between the *cakras* and the Life Cycle one needs to adopt a functional focus. In this I would suggest that the *maṇipura/anāhata* junction and Adolescence are synonymous and the pivot on which the quality of the future hinges. I proposed in chapter 2 that there is a psychospiritual barrier to a spiritual life implied at the diaphragm. Similarly, adolescence presents a prospective barrier to the future.

In this sense, Erikson’s four pre-adolescent stages cannot be directly linked to the three material *cakras* but operate in parallel and provide an increased understanding of how one arrives at a feeling of *angst*. The *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*, for instance, is popularly regarded as sexual *qua* sexpression. But in the light of the present argument that sexuality develops from early times, and includes sexpression, this would be erroneous. The three NA authors all suggest the erotic as a ‘creative force’, and this can be seen to be meandering through Erikson’s basic polarities. Furthermore, the joy of ‘reproducing oneself’ in the fourth stage of Competence can be merged with the lower end of the *maṇipura cakra*. Although the thought of reproducing could suggest *svādiṣṭhāna* this is not the intention here. Both the *maṇipura* and Competence are invested with a detachment from society in a way that speaks of being able to care-for-self in dealing with the world, of being able to reproduce oneself in physical and cognitive objects. In this endeavour it must be stressed that neither are truly independent of the world; in Competence it is only an ending of an existential ‘apprenticeship’, in the *maṇipura* it is the ending of a separation of *granthi* of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Both have to contend with the test of the *maṇipura/ anāhata* junction and adolescence as an initiation to being effective in an adult world.

In the end, the real correlation between the *cakras* and the Life Cycle is at the diaphragmatic junction (which is seen as an upper end of the *manipura* and a lower end of the *anāhata cakras*) and adolescence. The other elements are useful in explaining each other in a manner similar to the above. Noting the position of the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*, for instance, gives credence to the themes of sexuality that permeates the Life Cycle. In other words, sexuality for Erikson is an ongoing development, but many of the feelings associated with it can be 'felt' in the pelvis. In the aware person frustration (lack of personal control in a relationship of some description) is felt here and recognised as merely an indicator of possible *granthisation* and so a call for appropriate attention. In the less-aware this is interpreted as a call for tension-release with a number of inevitable eventualities.

In fine then, associating the Life Cycle with the *cakras* brings together two complementary models. The former helps to explain a series of valences that contribute to an inauthentic existence, the latter bringing some clarity to various physical phenomena that are associated with such an inauthentic existence. Essentially, I have shown that Erikson argues for a childhood sexuality and the *cakras* tend to bring this into focus.

### Conclusion

This chapter has set out to show that Erik Erikson can be seen to have been inclusive of a theory of sexuality, as formulated in chapter one. The discussion was restricted to the first five stages of the Life Cycle as it is held that until these lessons are adequately addressed by the individual any further progress is stultified. Having discussed these stages with a view to extracting threads of sexuality development it was found that there is a dynamic existing between Being (or consciousness-in) and Existence (consciousness-of). This has been a constant throughout this work so far, so the next task was to validate Erikson's existential concerns, taking Hettie Zock's references as a springboard. In this it was deduced that Erikson was aware of a

tension between Being and Existence, a tension that has to be resolved to a large extent in adolescence and young adulthood (this is also inferred in the significant emphasis Erikson placed on this period in psycho-social development). Next, the emanation-from-Divine postulate in chapter two was shown to exist in the background of the Life-Cycle. The figure on page 115 attests to a metaphoric narrowing of numen-osity by the exigencies of life until the period of adolescence, when there is a redefinition of the mechanism for identity-formation, a redefinition that begins to include the other. In doing this, however, it is surmised that a shift back towards the numinous is fundamental. This, in turn, implies a passage from morality towards ethicality, the third of the dimensions of sexuality. Finally, the Life Cycle was related to the *cakras* where it was shown that importance must be attached to the *manipura/anāhata* junction which correlates well with the period of adolescence. In/ability to successfully negotiate these stages effects later life dramatically.

Relating Erikson to the *cakras* takes us along a road of embodying the Life Cycle and so reducing a number of abstractions. But there is still another dilemma - that of providing further grounding in a route out of a presumed *angst*. This is the subject of the next chapter on the Indian *yogasūtras* of Patañjali. It is intended to show that this model both complements and augments the Life Cycle.

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Chapter 4  
Patañjali, Sexuality, and the *cakras*

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“...Patañjali’s effort, properly speaking, was especially directed to co-ordinating philosophical material - borrowed from *Sāṃkhya* - around technical formulas for concentration, meditation, and ecstasy. Thanks to Patañjali, Yoga, which had been a “mystical” tradition, became a “system of philosophy.”(Mircea Eliade:7-8)

## Introduction

Up till this point the discussion has been largely on an abstract plane. Sexuality has been presented as an intra-personal matrix of along three dimensions and the diagrams were used to indicate an argued-for flexibility along each of the three spectra. The *cakras* have been explicated in a manner that talks of metaphorical structures in the body holding in potential certain magical and transformative qualities. Even Erik Erikson and his Life Cycle, though getting closer to some practical level of *theoria*, still relies largely, like the many readings of *Alice in Wonderland*, on the imagination of the reader for a *praxis* that is applicable to the individual. In the end as they stand at the moment all of these hypotheses are of little significance to those who are looking for a route away from a limited, perhaps unsatisfactory, human condition; especially those who do not have, for whatever reason, the luxury of a teacher. A question that hangs over the discussion is what can be done with the ‘knowledge’ developed so far. For a client to be told at the age of forty five that “s/he is lacking in trust which has resulted in a state of reduced autonomy (dependence), which, in turn, has meant that crucial lessons in adolescence (such as the presenting clinging to an ideology, or an unproductive work ethic, or an unrealistic moralistic worldview) have yet to be resolved” is, at best unhelpful, and, at worst, abusive. Not to say that this is often encountered in the ‘clinical’ setting, it is, though, a commonly implied reinforcement in increasing amounts in popular psychology and a significant section of New Age discourse.<sup>1</sup> I am asserting here that (with others like Maslow and Fromm) Erikson is vital in the understanding of how a

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<sup>1</sup> In my association with the NA it has been found that it is not uncommon, especially in New Age ‘therapeutic’ circles, to be advised to look for some personal deficiency that is being reflected in some undesirable behaviour of intimates. Profound advice that is decontextualised in the hands of the naïve ‘counsellor’.

client comes to be sitting in consultation in the first place, in trying to appreciate the *is* of the client or parishioner, thus setting a backdrop for realistic empathy, between people and for self.<sup>2</sup>

In these considerations there is often a propensity to restrict oneself to the domain of theory, it is all too easy to fall into the trap of concentrating on the power and intellectualism of diagnostics, leaving the difficult job of translating this into therapeutics for later. Actually theory is requisite if one is to begin to understand the dynamics that predicate human functioning, but restriction to a theory can in turn impede the practitioner from attempting to create a *modus operandi* which may include a client- or aspirant-centred flow.<sup>3</sup> Whilst a range of theoretical bases does allow for variations in approach in accordance with the needs of the client/patient there is a risk of loss of creativity and a literal reading of the situation if an ideology or theory is paramount, as in Freudianism, Jungianism, transpersonalism, or even Catholicism, Islamicism, or Ramakrishnaism. Further, in a more patriarchal practice it is not unusual to find that the client is placed in a situation of being dependent on the therapist/priest/ pastor/*guru* for interpretations of personal dynamics, a relationship that often can lead to incursions of transference and counter-transference, an infinite regress into a new dependence.

Thus, with an imposition of a barrier of a theoretical standpoint, there is a double danger of the client/parishioner not being allowed to restructure his/her life according to a dialectical process of negotiation; the client/parishioner being kept within a hierarchical ('leader' dominated) therapeutic milieu for extended periods. Both dangers are today becoming recognised and unacceptable to people who are searching for something more than mainstream psychotherapy or religion can or is offering at present. Moreover, I would argue that there is a budding population who

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<sup>2</sup> An *is* is in contradistinction with the oft-resorted-to originology of the past or some guided exhortation to a future of some description.

<sup>3</sup> The use of diagnostic 'labels' in psychiatry may be just one example of this.

is opting for a do-it-yourself alternative; an alternative that, for a number of reasons - not the least financial, is finding much support in the popular literature. Part of this support is founded on perceptions of the Eastern traditions that are now taking hold in the imaginations of both the do-it-yourselfers and those providing the 'expert' advice and methodology. It is worth noting that there are also a number of religious who are incorporating Eastern philosophy into their practice (an example of this could be the late Bede Griffiths, a Roman Catholic priest).

Two Eastern texts in particular are being vaunted as ultimates in the game called self-transcendence, the *bhagavadgītā* and the *yogasūtras* of Patañjali. Both are popularly regarded as being of ancient origin, a fabricated aura that does much to claim authority in a Western mind that prefers to look backwards for inspiration. Both texts contain themes that seem to be attractive to an apparently alienated and spiritually bankrupt Western mindset. It is unfortunate to note that the human propensity for a mediocrity born of incomplete assumption of ideation is at play in a current propagation of many of these themes, but again fortunately the many layers of meaning being found in the themes are also being subjected to scrutiny by scholars qualified in their unravelling.

With this in mind I would now look to the *yogasūtras* in the hope of exhibiting a plausible therapeutic schema with which those fortunate to have a *guru*/therapist to stand beside them in their journey towards fulfilment; a schema that may be able to circumvent some of the dead-ends encountered by so many in present therapeutic or spiritual practice. In a similar vein it is also possible for the do-it-yourselfer, with some understanding through learning, to have a route map that could smooth the path of unnecessary twists. A third point, one that I hope will add to the debate on the *yogasūtras*, is that it is contended that if Patañjali is read from a Western puritan or other-worldly perspective the question of sexuality, the dominant theme of this dissertation, becomes veiled in obscurantism and similar apologetics. Hence, an outline of my reading of the *yogasūtras* will attempt to tease out a spiritual/

therapeutic schema that will align this Eastern paradigm with a Western Erik Erikson, and while doing this will show that any call for renunciation is actually a recommendation for self-control in the sense of, say, appropriate delay of gratification. Renunciation is seen here as a much broader attribute that is applicable in many facets of the human life, and actually is that which is either missing from a post-modern existence, or is being earnestly sought in such an existence in the name of a return of 'morality'. Finally, I will correlate the early *aṣṭāṅgas* (limbs) of Patañjali's *yogasūtras* with the *cakras* in order to show, in the same vein as that in the chapter on Erikson, how the latter can be used to meaningfully embody the *aṣṭāṅgas* so that progress, or regress, can be gainfully appraised. Doing this also provides a another link between a Western Erikson and an Eastern Patañjali.

#### **A problem of instability**

As has been alluded to in the previous chapters and will be brought out more in this discussion, science as an investigation into phenomena has one serious draw-back when applied to human psychological or spiritual life. Centred in a phenomenal world it is subject to fluctuations inherent in existence. Fluctuations that arise out of new experiences, new information, constantly changing modes of thought and practice. It is precisely this exciting flux of existence that can ensure a life devoid of boredom and stasis, and is the basis for improved understanding of the human condition. Despite this, though, they are still fluctuations which deny many an interested observer, both scientific or lay, a stable course. Unfortunately, it can be seen, for instance, that modern religious practice seems also to be immersed in the fluctuations of experimentation as many new 'churches' appear and disappear, and as the leaders within these churches invent new or re-invent old ways for participating in the power play of attracting a congregation. In some cases there is a flagrant appropriation of techniques taken, at times indiscriminately, from the worlds of business and popular psychology, in the name of religious 'science'. This is not to say that these efforts are misguided in any way. It was pointed out in interview by

one young pastor of a Baptist church that bringing people into the church sets them on the path to 'salvation'. It is certain that he was restricting himself to a standardised Christian soteriology, but the point was made. In the manner of a Freudian slip of the tongue, he could very well have been alluding to a process observed elsewhere whereby some people start a spiritual path by 'joining' in the activities of some church; until, that is, practice and knowledge leads some of them in other directions, often away from that church. In this sense of being a vehicle for initiating a journey, using the fluctuating hypotheses of business and psychology in attracting new parishioners is justified and laudable, and adds to the fascination of a post-modern mood. But a constantly changing strategy can on first encounter be confusing and misconstrued, and often counter-productive by slipping into an alliance with fundamentalism (Martin Riesebrodt, 2000), or, even worse, contribute to a generalised scepticism being directed towards these institutions.

Here it is proposed that space/time be given to consideration of a long-standing spiritual development practice, especially one that is compatible with the burgeoning fabric of an ever-flourishing post-modern existence (attention is given to the possibility of a trap that another theory is being added to the confusion - it is hoped that this would be circumvented by the choice of two well accepted and arguably compatible traditions - Erikson and Patañjali). In a way, compatibility could be one mechanism for validation of the potential effectiveness of the practice. Perhaps one example of a failure to measure up to this test of in/compatibility could be the rise of Skinnerian behaviourism in the middle twentieth century which had to wither away leaving some fragments of knowledge that could still be used.

### **Certain conceptual issues**

Before embarking on this project with the *yogasūtras* it must be made clear that there is no pretension to Sanskrit scholarship. This implies a reliance on secondary sources for translation via the medium of transliteration wherever possible. In order to

overcome the subjective states found in many translations care will be taken to note variations in the use of words and their contexts. Sanskrit is a language that is precise and imprecise at the same time and words like *citta* and *brahmacarya*, for instance, can be variously translated and just as variously used. *citta*,<sup>4</sup> of instance, is at times used for ‘mind’(Whicher, 1995), ‘thought’ (Miller, 1995:xii) or, more usually, ‘consciousness’ (Iyengar, 1993). This facility and flexibility can lead to wide-ranging applications, not all of which, however, are transparent.

A similar argument to that of *citta* can be extended to the word *brahmacarya*. I will continue to argue through this chapter that, although many Westerners prefer to translate this to mean ‘celibacy’, the general tone of the *yogasūtras* is more towards continence of behaviour in general, rather than exclusively sexual continence.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the focus is on erotic behaviour in it’s broadest sense of interpersonal relations. But what is celibacy or continence. The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary

<sup>4</sup> “*Citta* is a technical concept in Buddhist psychology. In the Lañkāvatāra Sūtra, a Mahāyāna Buddhist text, *citta* constitutes the basic concept in the idealistic doctrine that there is no objective reality. Rather, everything is constructed of thought alone (*citta-mātra*).”(Miller:111, n1) Miller later distinguishes between *citi* as consciousness and *citta* as thought. This is unusual but she cites Patañjali IV.34 in which the word ‘*citiśaktiḥ*’ appears denoting the ‘power of pure consciousness’ and then, for instance, I.30 where one encounters *cittavikṣepaḥ* which she then translates as ‘...that distract thought.’ Iyengar, however, stays with the consciousness translation referring to “...oscillating mind causing distractions in the consciousness.”(Iyengar:78). In addition, Whiteman translates *citi* as “(the individual) intelligence, or intelligent being.” (Whiteman:310). Again his transliteration is of interest as he gives “...*vā citiśakter iti*” but the Sanskrit (Iyengar:265) reads वाचितिशक्तिरिति which transliterates as *vācitiśaktiriti* but Iyengar renders this as *vā citiśaktiḥ iti* It does seem that Miller has a singular approach so, while noted for further investigation, it would not find a ready home here.. This little exercise illustrates the value of some knowledge of the Sanskrit.

<sup>5</sup> As an example, Miller translates YS 2:1 as such: “The active performance of yoga involves *ascetic practice*, study of sacred lore, and dedication to the Lord of Yoga.”(Miller:44, emphasis added; see also Eliade:51 who also translates *tapas* as ‘ascetism’, as do Tola & Dragonetti:xiii) As Miller does not provide a transliteration one wonders from where ‘ascetism’ is derived. The transliteration is actually *tapasḥ svādhyāya īśvarapraṇidhānāni kriyāyogaḥ*. The operative word here is *tapas* which is generally taken a zealous-ness, rather than ascetism. Iyengar then translates the aphorism thus: “Burning zeal in practice, self-study and study of scriptures, and surrender to God are the acts of yoga.”(Iyengar:102). To add to the fun, Venkatesananda, in his glossary, provides ‘austerity or simplicity’ for consideration. (Venkatesananda:372). Finally, Whiteman denies that *tapas* can be translated as ascetism - “In the Rig Veda and the principal Upanishads, it means the self-discipline (in general) which must accompany faith (śraddha) in progress along the spiritual Path.”(Whiteman:42)

(1993) explains that the former (celibacy) denotes ‘the state of living unmarried, abstention from sexual intercourse...’ and the latter (continence) as ‘characterised by self-restraint, temperate; sexually self-restrained, chaste...’ To go one step further, the Dictionary supplies a quote from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* to illustrate continence: “My desire all continent impediments would o’bear That oppose my will..” It is this motif of will and restraint, in fact, that I argue, with Ian Whicher<sup>6</sup>, for *brahmacarya* to be re-defined from celibacy to continence, and out of this will arise the idea that inherent in this continence is a control of an untamed, profane will, à la *Macbeth*. I will argue that judicious control is the preferred route for a human life *contra* that of an extreme position of attempted total removal from society, a de-humanised, solitary, and at times arrogant, life through enforced celibacy.

A final point that should be brought up is that, in line with the comment about Sanskrit scholarship above, it is recognised that it is not impossible that the argument to be presented stands in line with any New Age ‘mis’-appropriation of Eastern ideas with their possible lack of respect for the original. I acknowledge this position and would hope that the scholarship mustered in support of the arguments is sound enough to deflect any such reproach, even from Iyengar who warns:

“Ultimately, the yoga system of Patañjali cannot be compared to other traditional or modern structures of thought, knowledge or wisdom. *His work has absolute integrity and permanence and is not to be judged from the outside.* Only the practitioner, if he practices with faith and renounces with love, will discover its truth.”(Iyengar:272, emphasis added)

### Some background to the *yogasūtras*.

**Who was Patañjali:** There is some discussion around quite who wrote the *yogasūtras*. It is generally agreed that they were compiled sometime during the period 200 BCE - 300 CE and it is commonly agreed that someone called Patañjali

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<sup>6</sup> Ian Whicher argues that the term *nirodhah* does not, as is commonly held, imply cessation of the functions of mind (this will be touched on later), but rather control thereof (Whicher:online). In the same vein, I would propose that *brahmacarya* does not involve loss of sexpression, but is more a question of learning appropriate contextualisation.

was the inspiration. It is now mooted that the beginnings of the exposition of the methodology of *yoga* which emerged as this collection of *sūtras* may have been begun by the second century BCE grammarian, Patañjali, but the final product was, in the views of some, by the hands of another Patañjali who was a *yogin*, a *yogic* adept (Tola & Dragonetti:x-xi; Whiteman:4). Hence, it would appear that there have been more than one person involved in the production of what is now the *yogasūtras* of Patañjali, the others being anonymous, working on, adding to, arranging the *yogasūtras*, and today they are, for ease of operation, simply given the common ascription of ‘Patañjali.’

**An overview of the *yogasūtras*** : Authorship is of academic interest, although it is interesting to note that there are instances of ‘Patañjali’ being included in *japa* or prayer in a manner accorded saints. More important is noting the application of the *yogasūtras* to the corpus of practical knowledge that is much debated today. Certain is that the ethos of the *yogasūtras* is as applicable to present quests for escape from the limitations of the human condition as it was two millennia ago; apart from being fixed there is a certain dynamism inherent in the aphorisms that allows for contextualisation. More importantly, I am arguing that it is the structure of the notions as presented that could be vital in a secular-based psychology of the development of self. Again *contra* Iyengar and many other ideologues the present state of Western psychological development brings new lights onto the psychology and philosophy of India with, it is maintained, the result that a greater understanding and equity can be reached in both cultural constructs. The West has an opportunity to spiritualise and the East becomes a touch more ‘scientific’.

#### **The four *pādas* or chapters of the *yogasūtras***

The 195 aphorisms (*sūtras*) of the *yogasūtras* have been grouped into four chapters (*pādas*) with an uneven allocation (51 in the first and 55, 55, and 34 in the others). Below are the elements of a chart of the chapters (as grouped by Barbara Stoler

Miller - see appendix 9 for full chart) as they are accepted today.

<i>pāda</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
1 <i>samādhi</i>	Cessation of Thought and Contemplative Calm	“The first section of the text presents a set of definitions and establishes relations among the different modes of achieving mental tranquillity and spiritual liberation.”(Miller:18)
2 <i>sādhana</i>	The Practice of Yoga	“The second section of the text presents the practical body of Patañjali’s teaching, whose core is the eightfold discipline of yoga ( <i>aṣṭāṅga-yoga</i> ).”(Miller:19)
3 <i>vibhūti</i>	Perfect Discipline and Extraordinary Powers	“The third section is largely devoted to detailing the power one gains by perfecting the practice of yoga. The concentrated energy that accumulates through contemplation and spiritual control gives the yogi’s thought a flexibility that allows it to transcend the constraints of ordinary knowledge and attain limitless powers.”(Miller:19-20)
4 <i>kaivalya</i>	Absolute Freedom	“The warning about the powers of yoga is a prelude to the fourth section of the <i>Yoga Sutra</i> , where Patañjali examines the aspects of thought and action that constitute the final obstacles to absolute spiritual freedom ( <i>kaivalya</i> ).” (Miller:21)

“Although the titles of these section appear in most Sanskrit editions, they were probably not part of the original text but a commentator’s addition. The traditional titles of the first and fourth sections, *samādhi-pāda* and *kaivalya-pāda*, are drawn from keywords in Patañjali’s text, but the titles of the second and third sections, *sādhana-pāda* and *vibhūti-pāda*, are not part of Patañjali’s vocabulary. It is not unlikely, moreover, that the division into four sections is the work of a commentator.”(Miller:111, n27)

In essence the four chapters are graded to present a coherent philosophy of *yoga* extant at the time of original compilation. In a modern age, Miller confesses to being “...intrigued by the startling ways in which Patanjali analysed epistemological problems and by the method of practice he offered to penetrate them.”(Miller:xii), and it is this view of analysis and practice that seems to have maintained the appeal of the text for the past millennium in India and the last hundred or so years in the West. As can be seen from the above, attempts have been made by early compilers to group the aphorisms in such a way as to provide a coherent schema that starts with *samādhi* (putting together) and ending in *kaivalya* (spiritual freedom). Unfortunately, as can be seen in note 4 the debate around the technical aspects of the language and concepts has tended to cloud an essential issue at hand, the road itself. (Miller:xii)

Furthermore, taking note of the not-uncommon bias projected by Iyengar (page 137), it is maintained that, even at a popular level, debate is often muddied by the practice of *guru*-attachment where the pronouncements of an adept are taken as ‘reality’, are guarded, and disputed between traditions (reflections of Erikson’s exposé on the retention in adulthood of adolescent ideological dependence, leading to *pseudospeciation*). In all this the point of Patañjali’s recipe for progress is misted. Also at a popular level and, one might add, that of many a *guru*, is an inordinate focus on the higher levels of the solution, *dhāraṇa* (contemplation), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (contemplation on the Divine). Even so eminent a scholar as Mircea Eliade opens a chapter with :

“The point of departure of Yoga meditation is concentration on a single object... This determined and continuous concentration, called *ekāgratā* (“on a single point”), is obtained by integrating the psychomental flux (*sarvārthatā*, “variously directed, discontinuous, diffused attention”).”(Eliade 1958:47)

His emphasis, in 1958, on *ekāgratā* is still reflected in modern schools of ‘yoga’ and meditation where little acknowledgement is given the earlier *āṅgas* or ‘limbs’ of the hierarchy.<sup>7</sup> The end-product of this view of the *yogasūtras* is that much of their developmental value is overlooked. Aldous Huxley makes a point:

“They [many meditators] forget that it is possible for a man or woman to achieve, during meditation, a high degree of mental concentration and even a kind of subjectively satisfying pseudo-ecstasy, while remaining at bottom an unregenerate ego. It is not an uncommon thing to meet with people who spend hours of each day doing spiritual exercises and who, in the intervals, display as much spite, prejudice, jealousy, greed and silliness as the most ‘unspiritual’ of their neighbours.”(Huxley:109; see also Whicher 1998:online)

This theme of selective practice provides an impetus for much of this dissertation. It is not unusual today to find not a little talk about, and aspiration towards ‘meditation’

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<sup>7</sup> Perhaps one might find here a parallel with the Western approach to *tantric yoga*, where the greater emphasis is on sexual intercourse (*maithuna*) to the exclusion of the other four *pañcatattvas* (the five ‘M’ *akāras* - *matsya* (fish), *māṃsa* (meat), *madya* (intoxicating drink), and *mudrā* (body positions)). Even Eliade devotes great space to *maithuna* with one or two short references to the others (Eliade, 1958). One must assume that the *pañcatattvas* come as an esoteric package and to emphasise one aspect is to break the spell; this perhaps could be equated with emphasising the drinking of the wine in the Catholic Mass with passing references to the Epistle, the Credo, etc..

with little if any being granted the foundations for the practice. Having made this point one would continue by saying that sections in the *yogasūtras* do not concern us here as they are intended for the advanced student (or claimed by those either 'insistent on silliness' or 'hypnotised by the East'). The chapter on *vibhūti*, for instance, deals mainly with the variety of 'powers' that come the way of those *dedicated* to the business of transcendence, a serious business, indeed, requiring a healthy dose of *tapas* or zeal (it should be noted that there are people who naturally possess some 'powers' or *siddhis* - *yogins*, however, point to the special problems these people face until the rest of the psyche has caught-up, so to speak).

As with the chapter on Erikson discussion here will be restricted to the earlier stages as they are more applicable to the broader cross-section of the public and constitute a floorplan on which the liberated self can be erected. In other words, a view has been adopted contrary to the general conception of the primacy of meditation (or sexual congress, in the case of the *tantra*) as a, or the, panacea, and much of the usual discussion on the last four legs of the practice will be omitted.

### The *astāṅgas* of Patañjali

Despite the psychological insights contained in the *yogasūtras* there does not seem to be a real attempt to forge a developmental tone. It is almost as if the profane nature of the *cela* (devotee) or *sādhaka* (aspirant) is taken as a constant; so it is assumed that the new aspirant is in a state of *avidyā* (ignorance). As all people are subjected to the torments and temptations of *ahamkāra*, albeit in unequal distribution, it is merely assumed that all that is necessary is to adopt a programme that will counter the effects of a misplaced ego. It is this reductionism that is seen to be the principal thrust of the eight 'limbs' or *aṣṭāṅgas* of the *yogasūtras*. These are :

- 1            *yama*    moral principles or injunctions
- 2            *niyama*   moral or fixed observances
- 3            *āsana*    postures

4	<i>prāṇāyāma</i>	breath control	
5	<i>pratyāhāra</i>	withdrawal of senses	
6	<i>dhāraṇyā</i>	contemplation	
7	<i>dhyāna</i>	meditation	
8	<i>samādhi</i>	pure contemplation or absorption of consciousness in the self	( <i>yogasūtra</i> II:29)

In the complexity of technical and the naïve approaches of the various levels of scholastic and popular discourses respectively, what is not often emphasised is the progressive nature of the *astāngas*. (Eliade:39) As can be seen from the above list there is a sense of progressing from the basics of attitude change, to control of the body, to that of the breath (which is a fundamental necessity for life), to the higher levels of *ekāgratā* and beyond. If only for the practical reasons of having attained sufficient training in undergoing the painful process of initiating redemption, this last (the level of *ekāgratā* which includes *pratyāhāra* to *samādhi*) is actually meant or reserved for the advanced practitioner. Much as the Westerner, living in a computer-assisted world, yearns for and, in some cases, expects immediate gratification it would appear that, without methodically or diligently going through the *yama - prāṇāyāma* cycle, meditation is something of a chimæra. Swami Yatiswarananda, in 1948, pointed this out:

This concentrated mind will run after sensual enjoyment and all kinds of worldly distractions and objects with a greater intensity for having become concentrated. So if we do not know how to handle it in the right way, it becomes a great danger. It is far better not to have the concentration if one does not attain sublimation and purification at the same time. Therefore the necessity of purity, of non-injury, truthfulness, continence, etc., in thought, word and deed, has to be stressed very much... The concentrated mind, if it is not purified, becomes a veritable demon and creates untold troubles for the spiritual aspirant.” (Yatiswarananda 1963:148, also 1979:210)<sup>8</sup>

Herein lie reflections of the Huxley assertion above. It is being argued that the incremental nature of the *yogasūtras* is such that unless all the *āṅgas* are engaged in a

<sup>8</sup> This daemon is often reported by people who naturally possess certain *siddhis*, such as clairvoyance, which they find a burden until understood and controlled.

systematic, perhaps ‘disciplined’, fashion there can be little expectation of abiding benefit. Included, and pertinent, in this argument, of course, is critique of the overarching focus on ascetism by many Western, and now Indian, practitioners.<sup>9</sup> In much the same way as Erikson would hold that until trust levels are improved there is little sense in attempting to rectify intimacy levels (though certain applications of the Masters and Johnson sex therapy technique may try this), so it is warranted that, until attitudes towards the Other (*yama*) are internalised, meditation, or even, for that matter, the *āsanas* can be disappointing and, even, counter-productive.

### The ethics and observances of *yama* and *niyama*

The first two *aṅgas* of the *astāṅgas* are termed *yama* and *niyama* and each contains five elements, as set out below.

Once again it is not difficult to read a progressive format into this list. *ahimsā*, for instance, is possibly the most important and it is appropriate that it is placed first. If we are to view *ahimsā* in the light of Erikson’s first level of trust, then it is perhaps

<p><i>yama</i> restraint <i>yogasūtra</i> II.30</p>	<p><i>ahimsā</i> non-violence; non-injury <i>satya</i> truthfulness <i>asteya</i> non-stealing <i>brahmacarya</i> continence <i>aparigraha</i> freedom from avarice; non-covetousness</p>	<p><b>cultivation of attitudes:</b></p> <p>“<i>yama</i> is cultivation of social practice, <i>niyama</i> evolves from individual practices necessary to build up the <i>sādhaka</i>’s own character.” (Iyengar:136)</p>
<p><i>niyama</i> observance <i>yogasūtra</i> II.32</p>	<p><i>śauca</i> cleanliness; purity <i>santoṣa</i> contentment <i>tapas</i> religious fervour; zeal <i>svādhyāya</i> study of self; of scriptures <i>īśvara</i> surrender of self to God <i>praṇidhāna</i></p>	

<sup>9</sup> Note that in this particular context ‘Indian’ generally refers to ‘Brahminical’.

reasonable that in order to be able to internalise this virtue one would need to be able to learn (a) to trust oneself to be able to successfully work through a situation in ways that do not include violence, and (b) that trusting that an adoption of this virtue will result in an equitable solution for self and others. In a Western world that has for aeons promoted violence as a resolution to opposition it is perhaps worth considering the virtue as a community religious and political symbol. In addition to this it can be argued that the other four in the *yama* group are predicated by an attitude of non-violence. *satya* can be seen as non-violence in speech, *asteya* as non-violence to others in terms of the articles in their possession, *brahmacarya* as non-violence to physical others, especially in a gendered sense..

In a similar vein, *ahimsā* can also be related to self in the sense that violence to others, in whatever form, is a mirror of self-concept. Development of both *yama* and *niyama* entails an effort to improve one's standing towards oneself and towards the community around, but with a subtle twist. Instead of the acquisition of material artifacts that would appear to exhibit good-standing (acquiescing to illusion or *māyā* in response to media advertising), the injunction is to work with the fluctuations (*vṛttis*) of the self to create an enduring aura of good-standing in which both self and other can participate. It is a behest that is not meant to draw on the world for sustenance but has a self-perpetuating energy of its own. The shift then is one from an external to an internal locus of control. As such then it now becomes the foundation for future spiritual development. Relating this to Erikson's 'middle path' between the polarities at each stage and the interpretation of Warnock's interpretation of 'nothingness', engaging in a development of *yama* must imply a similar finding of a middle path between, for instance, violence and non-violence.

Finally, *ahimsā* can be correlated with Erikson's discussion on frustration. If it is accepted that frustration is a thwarting of desire, which leads to anger, and so on, then to adopt the tenet of non-violence should be seen to be a direct contradiction of this affliction or *kleśa*. In this, to remove frustration from a behavioural style of an

individual is designed to introduce a new enlarged vision of self. Once again, though, to simply embrace the concept without understanding the individual need for it is unfortunate. It can be shown in psychotherapy that there are times when violence is a positive introduction to the road to integrity. In the end, mind you, it is not the violence *per se* but the quality and underlying purpose that is relevant.

### ***brahmacarya* and sexuality**

With this on the table I now move on to sexuality and an argument for a, perhaps Western, reformulation of the term *brahmacarya*.<sup>10</sup> Traditionally it is listed as the fourth in the *yama* listing and is enigmatic at the best of present times.<sup>11</sup> Popular scholarship advertises that it denotes celibacy or ascetism, and, moreover, is a celibacy that is demanded in a spiritual practice, irrespective of stage in life. In a way, this seems to be supported by more serious scholars like Miller and Eliade, not to forget the various swamis and other ‘gurus’.<sup>12</sup> Eliade, though, does require a close reading with regards his linking ‘ascetism’ with *tapas*, for instance. It has been noted above (n5) there appears to be some dissonance in this translation, with other scholars preferring to reserve *tapas* for zeal or, perhaps, single-mindedness. Adding to this confusing tendency, he also refers to *brahmacarya* in the following terms :

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<sup>10</sup> From the viewpoint that the ethos of this dissertation is, to some extent, guided by the needs and concerns of a lay public, I would justify the act of reformulation of some *sanskrit* terms in the interests of those needs. To remain rigidly to the scholastic sense is perhaps counterproductive to the commonweal of the lay public. The intention here is not so much to assault the term itself, but rather to thankfully be able to explore essences that could be extended out towards a greater population.

<sup>11</sup> It is to be assumed in this dissertation that this placement in the rankings by Patañjali is significant. There could be a reason that the attributes of non-violence, truthfulness and non-stealing are placed before any thought of sexuality, and it is proposed here that this is because once the former become a part of the individual psyche sexuality is automatically strengthened and potential dissipation of these energies is put to productive use. In other words, to focus on sexpression before truthfulness is analogous to putting the cart before the horse; even contributing to viewing the Other as an object.

<sup>12</sup> Note Swami Yatiswarananda: “An exception is made in the case of householders, for it is not practical to live a life of perfect continence in married life... Sri Ramakrishna used to say that after the birth of one or two children husband and wife should live like brother and sister. But in order to attain this kind of self-control, both husband and wife should struggle for it right from the beginning.” (Yatiswarananda:195)

“It should, however, be noted that sexual abstinence (*brahmacarya*) is not only refraining from sexual acts but “burning” carnal temptation itself. The instinct must not remain underground, diffused through the subconscious, or be “sublimated” as with the mystics, but simply destroyed, “rooted out” from consciousness and the senses.”(Eliade:50)

It is this hard-line defence of one’s integrity that would be opposed by people like Ian Whicher, who might argue that it would seem strange that a ‘rooting out’ of the erotic impulse is necessary for transcendence, especially in the light of *sūtras* I.33 and 3.24, for instance, which read :

*maitrīkaruṇā muditopekṣānām sukhaduḥkha puṇyāpuṇyaviśayānām bhāvanātaḥ  
cittaprasādanam* (I.33)

*maitryādiṣu balāni* (3.24)

Iyengar translates them as :

“Through cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy, and indifference to pleasure and pain, virtue and vice, respectively, the consciousness becomes favourably disposed, serene and benevolent.”(Iyengar:81 - note Whiteman’s translation on p160 below)

“He gains moral and emotional strength by perfecting friendliness and other virtues towards one and all.”(Iyengar:195)

There doesn’t seem to be a happy fit here between the ascetic who cannot find joy in another (for fear of being tempted) and the tranquillity of thought that Patañjali says enhances a consciousness through being favourably disposed towards others. There is, in fact, some indication that Patañjali was not concerned with sexpression as a source of corruption; note *sūtra* II.3 which reads :

*avidyā asmitā rāga dveṣa abhiniveśaḥ kleśaḥ* (II.3)

which, again, Iyengar renders as :

“The five afflictions which disturb the equilibrium of consciousness are: ignorance or lack of wisdom, ego, pride of the ego or the sense of ‘I’, attachment to pleasure, aversion to pain, fear of death and clinging to life.”(Iyengar:105)

or see the subtle changes in Whiteman’s offering :

“Taints [classified as kinds of] unwisdom, [specifically] self-centredness, drive to attachment, antipathy and malice, and clinging [to ideas and incentives].” (Whiteman:186)

So far there is no reference to any evils of sexual activity, and there is no real

proscription on pleasure. It is rather the ‘attachment’ to pleasure that is being contested. Pleasure *per se* can carry no value until attachment arises. In other words, the phenomenal world is simply a phenomenal world and the so-called enticements are not inherent in the objects themselves but are a sign of an affliction (*kleśa*) of the seer. *yogasūtra* II.17 reads:

*draṣṭṛdrśyayoḥ saṃyogo heyahetuḥ* (II.17)

The cause of pain is the association or identification of the seer (*ātmā*) with the seen (*prakṛti*) and the remedy lies in their dissociation. (Iyengar:117)

In this sense, sexpression as an activity is designed (assuming the presence of a Great Architect) to be pleasurable in the moment, but this becomes lost when the individual replaces concentration of the Divine within the object of pleasure with concentration on the object of pleasure as an object of pleasure, or when the other loses person-ness (personal participation in the divine as exemplified by the Indian greeting, *namaste*, could be another way to describe the former person-ness) and becomes an object for self-gratification. As Iyengar explains, “He tries to remain free by avoiding material *attachment*, in which the objects draw the intelligence like a magnet and the self is enticed into an illusory relationship with the external, seen world, provoking pleasures and pains.” (*ibid*, emphasis added) Again, the problem is not necessarily with the object but the attitude of the observer and it is held that the value of the *yama/niyama aṅgas* is to generate a potential space for an individual to sort through existing impressions with a view to gradually clearing out those that are debilitating in terms of relationships with an Other. Moreover, the space is constructed around the most fundamental of universals, non-violence, non-stealing and so on.

As mentioned previously, if *brahmacarya* is seen as an activity against an ‘evil’, sexpression, then it could be said that there is a measure of violence in ‘rooting’ it out, as Eliade prescribes. Swami Venkatesananda, for one is a little more circumspect with his view on the attribute:

“When your mind, heart and whole being are constantly absorbed in this search for truth, towards enlightenment, then craving does not arise and continence happens. On the other hand,

suppressing all these emotions is dangerous because it is violence, it is untruth, and there is no *brahmacarya* there.”(Venkatesananda:199)

If sexpression is seen in a kinder light then *brahmacarya* could be re-translated as a bringing of this part of sexuality into a perspective of ascesis. In this case, perspectivisation requires or is predicated by the promotion of the faculty of *buddhi* or the discriminative intelligence of the *gestalt*, which of necessity includes acknowledgment of Being-ness of the Other.

Now one would need to differentiate between the dæmon of sexpression *per se* and the dæmon of attachment to sexpression. Once again I would take issue with a 1958 Mircea Eliade when he says that “The word *yoga* serves, in general, to designate any *ascetic technique* and any *method of meditation*.”(Eliade 1058:4, emphasis in original). This may well be an attitude projected over the years but it does not necessarily imply Patañjali’s intention (it is well to bear in mind it is said that Patañjali was collating and codifying *yogic* information in his day, and that much of the discussion on ascetism has modern origins; some say in a colonialism of Christianity). Eliade, in fact, compounds the issue with the introduction of ‘ascesis’ into his debate. Here perhaps is a clue to a less-acedic approach to *brahmacarya*.

Teasing this out a little further it is useful to return to the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1993). Ascesis there denotes ‘the practice of self-discipline’ and is derived from the Greek “*askēsis* exercise or training, f. *askein* to exercise”.

Whereas, ascetic follows the line of “med.L *asceticus* or Gk *askētikos* f. *askētēs* monk, hermit, f. *askein* to exercise...” which denotes “1. practising severe abstinence or austerity, esp. for religious or spiritual reasons...” There does seem to be a subtle difference in approach which can be discerned in Eliade’s text. With the rise of Western psychology there has been a turning of attention away from the *ekāgratā* (one pointedness) of a possessive traditional religion towards a ‘client-centred’ spirituality that is prepared to give cogniscence to the experiences of others. In this sense, the difference between ascesis and ascetism becomes robust with a focus in the former on self-discipline and expression (the process is driven by the individual), and

not necessarily an abstention from the field for what can be somewhat dubious motivations (where the process is driven by an ideology derived from culture). Moreover, *ascesis*, by definition, implies a potential for inclusion of more people from various walks in life into the hoary business of transcendence. More specifically, ascetism projects an aura of exclusivism by rejecting those involved in intimacy and generativity.

It is well to convey that much of the material on sexuality and psychology that is being appraised in this dissertation is of recent production and from a singularly secular quarter. But as mentioned in the Introduction the number of people who are distinguishing between religion and spirituality is multiplying; as are those who are looking beyond scientific medicine, psychiatry, psychology for relief of symptoms, so by the same token attitudes towards sexuality are in a state of flux. With this the approaches towards the topic in religious and spiritual practice of how to cultivate an attitude of asceticism, rather than a blanket ascetism, would bear re-examination.

### **Ignorance as a basis for suffering & *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodah***

*yogasūtra* I.2 reads *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodah* which is generally translated as “yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of consciousness” and is seen here as the seminal *sūtra* of the entire work. It is held in *samkhya* philosophy that the twin realities of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are opposed in that the former has a tendency to be static and unchanging, and the latter is subjected to, even could be the instigator of constant change, giving rise to fluctuations (*vṛttis*) in existence, of which thought is a part.<sup>13</sup> Consciousness *per se* is generally associated with *puruṣa* but must, in the human condition, be plagued with a disadvantage of being bound by *prakṛti* into an endless

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<sup>13</sup> Tola & Dragonetti prefer to interpret *vṛtti* as ‘processes’ (Tola & Dragonetti:3). I am uncomfortable with this as it seems too broad-ranging. It is argued that to restrain (*nirodhaḥ*) the processes of the mind implies also the restraining of discrimination and life-enhancing aspects. Surveying their examples of other translations the idea of movements or fluctuations, or even modifications, seems to be more appropriate. As I see it the taming of the dysfunctional wildness of the profane mind is at issue not the mind itself or its functional processes.

round of distractions (*vikṣepa*) and indecisions (*samśaya*) which impinge on consciousness and leave traces in their wake; these ‘traces’ in turn become buried in the subconscious as subliminal impressions (*samskaras*). In the end, it is said that the *samskaras* drift into the unconscious, certainly the subconscious to become habits. This implies that the more embroiled *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* the more tenuous their ability to become consciously distinct. It is when this distinction happens that the elements pertaining to each can be recognised and valued, leading to harmony. Enmeshing the two, in a state of *āvidya*, for instance, is said to be the cause of a *duḥkha* (pain, distress, sorrow) experienced by the individual in the profane state.<sup>14</sup> The reasoning being that with enmeshment (the *granthisation* encountered in chapter 3) comes loss of vitality (this can often be seen in the ‘enmeshed’ couple who are incapable of independent decision-making). Relating this to the existential paradigm proposed in the previous chapter, one could translate it to mean that the greater the incursions into Being (*puruṣa*) by Existence (*prakṛti*) the greater the potential for psychopathology (*duḥkha*); especially in the case of consciousness being equated with *prakṛti*. *sūtras* I.3 and 4 go some way to bringing this abstraction closer to the situation, and here, as an example of convoluted explanation, I quote in full from Venkatesananda :

*tadā draṣṭuh svarūpe 'vasthānam* (I.3)

“In the light of non-volitional, non-moving and therefore spontaneous and choiceless awareness, the undivided intelligence with its apparent and passing modifications or movements of thought within itself is not confused with nor confined to any of these. Then (when yoga thus happens), the seer - or the homogeneous intelligence which is ignorantly regarded as the separate experiencer of sensations and emotions, and the separate performer of actions - is *not split up into one or the other of the states or modifications of the mind, and exists by itself and as itself.*” (Venkatesananda:12, italics added)

*vṛtti sārūpyam itaratra* (I.4)

At other times, when yoga does not happen and when the mind is busily occupied with the movement, there is a cloud of confusion in the undivided, homogeneous intelligence. In the

<sup>14</sup> It is said that *prakṛti* lacks consciousness just as *puruṣa* lacks activity. In this analysis the closer the alignment to *prakṛti* the less the levels of consciousness. This is not to be confused with a Western approach that speaks of consciousness being equated with being alive, which has more to do with consciousness-of (body states), not pure Consciousness.

shadow of that cloud, there arises false identification or cognition of the movement of the mind-fragment and hence distorted understanding. The single concept or idea or the single movement of thought is mistaken as the totality.” (Venkatesananda:15-16)

Iyengar is a little more economical with his translations, which stay closer to the Sanskrit: “Then, the seer dwells in his own true splendour” and “At other times, the seer identifies with the fluctuating consciousness.” (Iyengar:48-49) Whiteman tends to be a little more specific : “At the time [of checking] there is a ‘standing off’ within the subjective awareness of the experiencer...Otherwise there is ‘identification’ with the involvement.”(Whiteman:164) Important here is Iyengar’s ‘fluctuating consciousness’ of the profane, and Whiteman’s ‘identification with the involvement.’. Venkatesananda does make things clearer in his second commentary - “when the mind is busily occupied with the movement, there is a cloud of confusion in the undivided, homogeneous intelligence.” From this it is deduced then that the *yogasūtras* are concerned with a methodology for clarifying the relationship between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as separate aspects which are in accord only in potential, ie. contain a potential for integrity. In other words, the predicament lies in an identification by the individual with the fluctuations of a *prakṛtic* ‘consciousness’. It is when s/he is able to ‘stand-off’ and discern the situation as a matrix of heterogeneous elements, of which observation is one, that clarity begins to dawn (this refers to a development of Gennaro’s HOT consciousness mentioned in the Introduction). The clarity is not about what is consciousness, as such, but a simpler task of returning it to it’s rightful place; in terms of the *yogasūtras*.

To explain further, in Patañjali’s view this is explained in *sūtras* IV.23 - 25 :

*draṣṭr drśya uparaktam cittam sarvārtham* (IV.23)

“Consciousness, reflected by the seer as well as by the seen, appears to be all-comprehending.”(Iyengar:254)

*tat asaṅkhyeya vāsanābhīḥ citram api parārtham samhatyakaāritvāt* (IV.24)

“Though the fabric of consciousness is interwoven with innumerable desires and subconscious impressions, it exists for the seer on account of its proximity to the seer as well as to the objective world.”(*ibid*:255-256)

*viśeṣadarśinaḥ ātmabhāva bhāvanānivṛttiḥ* (IV.25)

For one who realises the distinction between *citta* and *ātmā*, the sense of separation between the two disappears.”(*ibid*:256-257)<sup>15</sup>

My reading of these three *sūtras*, in their translation, is that consciousness, although not essentially part of *prakṛti*, is, in the profane state, so interwoven by and with her that the situation tends to take on a metaphoric form of a storks nest<sup>16</sup> (‘Though the fabric of consciousness is *interwoven* with innumerable desires and subconscious impressions...’). One reason for the confusion is the ‘...proximity (of impressions) to the seer as well as to the objective world.’ Hence the much advertised need in the *yogasūtras* for detachment (in the form of disentangling and distancing), and it is again argued that it is not a detachment from or renunciation of *prakṛti* herself, but from the confusion brought by the mind’s association of the consciousness of *puruṣa* with the activity of *prakṛti*. Miller seems to capture a variety of lay perplexity that can arise from not being clear on this point :

“However, Patañjali’s worldview differs significantly from that of the Buddhists in his belief in an idealised state of undifferentiated cosmic equilibrium between two enduring primal principles, spirit (*puruṣa*) and material nature (*prakṛti*). In this state, spirit is absolutely distinct from material nature and is free within itself.”(Miller:5)

On reading this translation there does seem to be a contradiction where Miller talks of ‘...undifferentiated cosmic equilibrium...’ and also of spirit being ‘...absolutely distinct...’ from material nature. Then, on another hand, of spirit being free within itself. As Whicher points out it is not nature that is tying spirit to the body of nature but the *avidyā* or ignorance of the individual.

“Vyasa explicitly states that emancipation happens in the mind and does not literally apply to *purusa*, which is by definition already free and therefore has no intrinsic need to be released from the fetters of samsaric existence.”(Whicher 1998:online)

<sup>15</sup> It is not clear how Iyengar manages to juxtaposed *citta* and *ātmā* (consciousness and Self). Perhaps Whiteman is clearer in translating *sūtra* IV.25: “[In the case] of one who perceives the distinctness [of co-mind influences on the personality], there is cessation of the dwelling on self.” (Whiteman:290). Here he refers to knowledge of the effects multiple personalities (now more accepted in psychology as being prevalent in the ‘normal’ individual) have on daily affairs decreases a predilection to focus on self *vis-à-vis* the Other.

<sup>16</sup> It is believed that the European stork’s nest is untidy, unpleasing to the eye, but somehow does the job required. Furthermore it is often built on top of chimney-stacks which restricts the use of that fireplace. An unsatisfactory arrangement to the occupants of the house.

In other words, spirit is free but the individual is bound by illusions of *māyā* to misidentify with *prakṛti*, so giving rise to a delusion of a '*prakṛti* consciousness'. "Afflicted identity is constructed out of and held captive by the root affliction of ignorance (*avidya*) and its various forms of karmic bondage." (Whicher:online - here are reflections of the argument of how *kuṇḍalinī* is kept in bondage in the *mūlādhārā cakra* by an *āvidyic* individual) Elsewhere he further explains:

"Avidya - the root affliction (*klesa*) in Yoga which gives rise to four other afflictions: I-am-ness/egoity (*asmita*), attachment (*raga*), aversion (*dvesa*) and the desire for continuity or fear of death (*abhiniveja*) - is a positive misconstruction of reality which mistakes *purusa* [or consciousness] for prakritic existence."(Whicher:online, interpolation added)

When the stork's nest of *vṛttis* (fluctuations) is untangled by a *nirodhaḥ* (restraint) and there is some understanding of the effect of the *samskaras* (traces of subliminal impressions - possibly Whiteman's 'co-minds' or multiple personalities) accrued to date then *avidyā* is dismantled and 'the seer dwells in his own true splendour.' (*yogasūtra* I.3) and this is the purpose behind *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ*, to allow *prakṛti* to be liberated from the grip of ignorance or *avidyā*. Whicher again:

"It is my contention that *nirodha* denotes an epistemological emphasis and refers to transformation of self-understanding, not the ontological cessation of prakṛtik...rather, *nirodha* involves a progressive expansion of perception which eventually reveals our true identity as *purusa*."(Whicher:online)<sup>17</sup>

To go one step further, it is noticeable that although Patañjali outlines the forms that the *vṛttis* take there is little attempt to clearly discern how they come into being in the first place (I would here repeat a contention above that Patañjali is concerned with the *is* of a situation of the *sādhaka* (aspirant or practitioner) so developmental theory is left to the psychology of others, like Erikson). *sūtra* I.30, however, gives the list of 'obstacles' (*antarāya*) to authentic existence :

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<sup>17</sup> It will be remembered that I proposed in the previous chapter that Erikson's *epigenetic diagram* showed a constriction in the body of life at the waist of adolescence and that there was a gradual widening of perception with the stages of Intimacy, Generativity, and Wisdom as Existence and Being were brought into a workable accord. Within Whicher's narrative I would be casting Being as *puruṣa* and Existence as *prakṛti*.

*vyādhi styāna saṁśaya pramāda ālasya avirati bhrāntidarśana alabdhabhūmikatva  
anavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepāḥ te antarāyāḥ* (I.30)

To which the following are three translations :

“The obstacles that distract thought are disease, apathy, doubt, carelessness, indolence, dissipation, false vision, failure to attain a firm basis in yoga, and restlessness.”(Miller:37)

“These obstacles are disease, inertia, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, indiscipline of the senses, erroneous views, lack of perseverance, and backsliding.”(Iyengar:78)

Sickness, apathy, indecision, negligence, idleness, non-cessation, erratic perception, the absence of initiative, inconstancy - these dispersions (*vikṣepa*) of the mind are the obstacles (*antarāya*).”(Tola &Dragonetti:104)

Iyengar grounds the list by categorising it in the following way which brings some perspective to the discussion :

a.	<i>vyādhi</i>	disease	physical
b.	<i>styāna</i>	lack of interest or sluggishness	
c.	<i>saṁśaya</i>	lingering doubt	mental
d.	<i>pramāda</i>	pride or carelessness	
e.	<i>ālasya</i>	idleness	
f.	<i>avirati</i>	sense gratification	
g.	<i>bhrāntidarśana</i>	living in a world of delusion	intellectual
h.	<i>alabdhabhūmikatva</i>	missing the point <sup>18</sup>	
i.	<i>anavasthitatvāni</i>	lack of perseverance or not being able to hold on to what has been undertaken	spiritual
j.	<i>Anavasthi</i>	inability to maintain the progress attained due to pride or stagnation in practices	

(yogasūtra I.30)

To which are added

a.	<i>duḥkha</i>	pain, unhappiness
b.	<i>daurmanasya</i>	dejection, despair
c.	<i>aṅgamejayatva</i>	physical unsteadiness
d.	<i>śvāsapraśvāsāḥ vikṣepa</i>	irregular breathing

(yogasūtra I.31)

<sup>18</sup>

It is worth noting that for some reason this *antarāyāḥ* is missing from Iyengar’s list.

From this it can be seen that Patañjali has analysed a broad range of afflictions which intrude into human existence. He continues by categorising the obstructions (to integrity) according to "...three types: self-inflicted (*ādhyātmika*), imbalances of elements in the body (*ādhibhautika*) and problems brought about by fate, eg. genetic defects (*ādhidaivika*)."(Iyenger:79) From this last, one can construe that the first is more to do with *āvidya*, whereas the other two are more physically orientated. The physical aspects are common and, outside of abject poverty, easily rectified with redemptive practices, both secular and spiritual; but even then poverty does not preclude transcendence, it merely makes the task a touch more difficult.

Referring back to the first table, 'Lack of interest or sluggishness' is also often associated with poor dietary practices, and dramatic change can be demonstrated simply by rectifying this often in the simplest of ways (one cannot ignore psychosomatic influences here but this requires another forum). Items c. - h. of the first table are a little more trying as they can often be associated with the residue of dysfunctional polarity choices in Life Cycle resolutions. Here is an example of where the development principles outlined by Erikson can be brought in to elucidate. Of interest are the 'spiritual' *antarāyāḥ* (obstacles) in the first table, of which the second table could be included as they appear to be more symptoms than causes. Although Iyengar classifies these *antarāyāḥ* as 'spiritual', knowledge of Erikson's schema shows that they are still rooted in pre-pubertal and adolescent crises, as are the 'mental' and 'intellectual' groups before. Thus bringing Erikson to bear on these *sūtras* extends Patañjali's categorisation and further explicates the problem of *āvidya*.

Moreover, by engaging Erikson's psycho-historical method, one can eventually arrive at a conclusion that one root of many community problems could lie in *āvidya* (possibly as a collective effect of a critical mass of ignorance). Certainly, Patañjali, as interpreted by Iyengar and others, is concerned with *antarāyāḥ* to spiritual practice but those involved with community affairs could too often find his conclusions and

aphorisms applicable there as well. To reiterate, there is a purpose behind *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ*, which need not necessarily be restricted to some nebulous individual spiritual transcendence but can be unfurled to society as a whole. In short, this form of *āvidya* is not amenable only to treatment by education; the latter can, in fact, with today's accent on skills in the workplace, complicate matters by encouraging enmeshment. Patañjali is promoting *theoria* and *praxis* by providing the education of his psychology and encouraging a practical restraint in his early *āṅgas*. This now leads me to a discussion of *brahmacarya*, the so-called sexual component of the method, which is seen as being essential in the education process.

### Sexuality and *brahmacarya*

To get to the purpose of this dissertation, linking *āvidya* and *nirodhaḥ* with *brahmacarya* is essential to the progress of the individual. As mentioned above it is held that *brahmacarya* is a fundamental fraction of the *yama-āṅga*. Additionally, I have already argued that as sexuality is an ongoing development right from early childhood, so in the spiritual sense it can be regarded as perhaps the most basic of all the 'enticements' that *prakṛti* can continually offer an unwitting adult spiritual seeker. Following on from this statement, although the attitude of *ahimsā* can be emphasised as a first step towards redemption, sexuality, *qua* bodily identification and sexpression within a cultural context, is actually supreme in the enticements to become embroiled in *māyā*. Perhaps this is one reason that most brahminical *gurus* will make sure that the aspirant is well-imbued with an aversion to freely enjoying any form of sexpression.

In a way 'aversion' could be supported by *sūtra* II.40 :

*śaucat svāṅgajugupsā parairasamsargah* (II.40)

Here is where one has to be so careful with translations of the text. Miller gives the following:

“Aversion to one’s own body and avoidance of contact with others comes from bodily purification.”(Miller:55)

But Iyengar takes another tack :

“Cleanliness of body and mind develops disinterest in contact with others for self-gratification.”(Iyengar:145)

Piquant is the way Iyengar plays with the meaning of *jugupsā* - using ‘disinterest’ in his main translation he includes “censure, dislike, aversion, being on one’s guard, abhorrence, disgust.” in his translation alternatives (*ibid*). Also, despite his addition of ‘...for self-gratification’ which does not appear in the *sūtra* but perhaps reflects a modern approach, by including other more rigorous meanings in his translation wordlist he leaves the door open for the more abstemious to be mollified (as with so many things Sanskrit there is great latitude for political manoeuvring). Actually, although Miller’s translation may be seen to be possibly influenced by her religious inclinations she does reflect attitudes of the more austere who have a place in certain quarters of the spiritual kingdom where renunciation includes not touching or being touched. It must be understood that renunciation, even for more dubious reasons such as fear of intimacy, is a valid experiment towards liberation.

Without having to account for the libertarians in the spirituality industry, however, the concept of asceticism is not recommended by even the most sober of Western psychologists, or, as will be argued, by Patañjali . It is contended that full appropriate expression of faculties as they arise, according, say, to the *epigenetic principle*, is a healthy road to integration (by appropriate I mean guided expression in the early uncertain stages of emergency, such guidance implying a ‘whole’ society). As has been alluded to above by such as Yatiswarananda and others like Erikson, suppression of *prakṛti* can be dangerous and a painful exercise; the real objective that seems to weave through the *yogasūtras* is not polarisation but integration, not stunting but expansion through constructive understanding, not peripheralisation of perceived *kleṣas* (afflictions) but a Jungian approach of centredness through engagement, rather than denial.

Once again, if sexuality is seen to be integral to the ‘normal’ development of the individual (as proposed in an Eriksonian psychological style) then the discourse on *brahmacarya* needs to be revisited if one is to make sense of the wisdom behind Patañjali. And a suggestion of a link with sexuality and transcendence is hinted at in *sūtra* I.33 (see page 139) where it is held that tranquillity of mind (*cittaprasādanam* - seen as an outcome of *nirodhaḥ*) is assisted by positive interactions with others.

Whiteman is candid on this point :

“Dwelling in this way on *loving fellowship* as a response to others’ welfare, on *loving helpfulness* as a response to their illfare, on *mutual joy* in recognition of their merit, and *dispassion* in recognition of their demerit, promotes tranquillity of mind.”(Whiteman:140, emphasis added)

The first three emphases are seen as being integral to the erotic in it’s broadest sense. To talk of ‘loving’ implies intimate interactions<sup>19</sup> with others and rather precludes a common interpretation of *sūtra* II.40 as aversion to the body. The erotic or acknowledgment of intimacy points to a relationship with the body that has little place for rejection. In this sense *brahmacarya* takes on another meaning. Whiteman brings this more clearly to light when he points out that :

“First comes the world of Agni - which, as we have seen, means the divine form of dedicated self-discipline, in facing the inner contests until some releasing illumination comes. This leads eventually to the *brahmaloka* (divine way of life, equivalent to what was later called *brahmacarya*).”(Whiteman:39, see also :3)

“*Brahmacarya* means, literally, a “divine-going”, and from the earliest times the word was used in the sense of “religious studentship” and all the self-control which should go along with that. At a later stage (among Hindus as opposed to Buddhists) the term was commonly understood to mean sexual chastity in some sense of the term (not necessarily continence or celibacy).”(Whiteman:208)<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> One does need to be specific with these terms. Intimate is seen as being open, transparent, and with interested relations with at least an other. But it is not restricted to this. It is not only an activity or attitude but a relationship. A teacher or priest, in order to be effective, must allow an intimacy with his students or parishioners in promoting mutual caring and understanding.

<sup>20</sup> Note that Joseph Alter raises a point when he says that the rise of ascetism to the popular levels can be rooted in a middle or late nineteenth century Indian reaction to a perceived puritanism of the British Raj (Alter 1994). Abdelwahab Bouhdiba also makes similar allusion with regards to Muslim sexuality (Bouhdiba:231-232)

Thus it is in this light that I would argue that the modern ascetic usage of this term is problematic when associated with *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* in today's rapidly evolving society. I would argue that it is vital that the purpose behind *nirodhaḥ* be accepted as a working through and not a denial or rejection. Actually, there would be a place for some justification for a return to the original usage in order to compliment advances in psychological theory.

### Introducing the *brahmacaryāśrāma*

Following on from Whiteman above and in keeping with a proclivity for understanding through categorisation, I would propose that it could be useful to keep to the fore the *āśrāmas* or stages of life. These are as follows - student life (*brahmacaryāśrāma*), married or householder life which of necessity includes Erikson's Intimacy and Generativity (*gṛhastāśrāma*), learning non-attachment when the children are reaching or have reached the end of their 'apprenticeship' and are moving out of the family circle (*vānaprasthāśrāma*),<sup>21</sup> then finally a detachment from the material aspects of life and spiritual preparation for physical death (*sannyāsāśrāma*). Although it is argued in some ascetic-prone quarters that *brahmacaryāśrāma* is a continuing necessity for the seriously spiritual person (thus replacing the *gṛhastāśrāma* and possibly introducing a sense of exclusivity, as mentioned above) it can also be argued that the *gṛhastāśrāma* is specifically a whole-ising spiritual necessity in that the individual is afforded the opportunity to intimately experience the Other, initially in the form of the partner then that of children, who, it is said, are initiators of adult spiritual growth.<sup>22</sup> I would argue that the ascetic lack of

<sup>21</sup> This, of course, also means emotionally detaching from the children as they mature, and allowing them the freedom to evolve in their own ways.

<sup>22</sup> Penelope Washbourn points out that children represent an opportunity for psychological and spiritual growth for both women and men: "Women *need* children in the same way that men need children, not to be their ultimate fulfilment but to be the possibility for revealing the nature of the mystery of life in its wonders and tragedies. Living in relation to children may be self-revealing as we see ourselves for what we are, accept that knowledge, and find hope in the very ongoingness of life both in ourselves and in our children." (quoted in Ursula King:129).

opportunity for growth-through-generativity produces a being/existence reverberation that often precludes the *cittaprasādanam* (favourable disposition) of *yogasūtra* I.33.

Seen from the perspective of the effect children have on the evolving psyche the philosophy of the *āśrāmas* could be seen to accord with the developmental process of Erikson as he traces the psychoevolution of the ‘whole’ individual through to Integrity. Similarly the problems encountered by the individual in an Eriksonian paradigm can be found in the *yogasūtras* as can be seen from the table on p143, where a similar set of polarities could be extracted. Furthermore, psychohistorical analysis of attitudes of communities, or of people within them can show a propensity towards propagation of *vṛtti saṁskāra anīṣam cakram*, a cycle of *vṛttis* creating *saṁskāras* which in turn give rise to more *vṛttis*, which in turn create.....

(Balslev:online)

Applied to the question of sexuality, this round of obstacles can be read into the ‘tragic’ case of Mahatma Ghandi’s (or Martin Luther, for that matter)<sup>23</sup> approach to his sexuality which has continued to pervade Western thinking on the great man:

“These same principles were the basis of Mahatma Ghandi’s nonviolent campaign against the forces of British colonialism, in which every freedom fighter was to use the *force of truth* (*satyāgraha*) to overcome physical and psychological obstacles. *Ghandi stressed the power of celibacy to focus the energy of the individual.*”(Miller:113, n12, emphasis added; again note Joseph Alter hypothesis on reactions to colonialism)

It is proposed that, if Miller’s assertions are correct, the ‘tragedy’ of Ghandi’s ‘experiments in truth’ was an inability to really consider the needs of intimate others. It is possible that his stressing of the power of celibacy was an misunderstanding on his part of the situation of *brahmacarya* (one similar to that expressed by Yatiswaranda earlier, n11) and a withdrawal of certain creative powers (this argument is mentioned here but is really a topic for another time). It could be seen that his early marriage with the many years of separation from his young wife had a

<sup>23</sup> Both Ghandi and Luther were subjects of psychohistorical reviews by Erikson.

stultifying effect on his own psyche.<sup>24</sup> This mini-discussion must, however, be taken in the context of the times in which he lived with special reference to the many barbarisms and culture gaps that were experienced by the colonial Other. The fact that there was an overall ‘benefit’ of some description to the ‘nation’ does not detract from a hypothesis that Ghandi’s sacrifice of his sexexpression (not to mention his power over the mode of sexual life imposed on his wife) was possibly in vain. His experiments in truth were, in fact, just that - experiments - and, if anything, simply add to the grist of a call to move away from a generalised insistence for celibacy to one of freely interacting with the erotic in an appropriate context, even at a ‘national’ level. Once again I return to a theme that it is not celibacy that is at issue, it is the individual erotic worldview that needs re-examination.

As Whiteman has pointed out the term *brahmacarya* was originally used to denote the period of development up to marriage. In other words, it pertains to that period of life (*āśrāma*) in which the individual is engaged in developing essential existential skills, to the detriment of Being, prior to the search for integration of Being and Existence, as has been shown in the discussion on Erikson. *brahmacarya*, in this sense, includes celibacy, not, it is contended, for the sake of using this ‘power’, this ‘saving seed’ mechanism, to ‘focus energy’ (although this is one way to express a route, which does need qualification) but for the simple reason that the pre-pubertal individual is not interested in overt sexexpression ( in terms of sexual gratification) and a responsible community structure guides the pubertal boy or girl into post-pubertal meaningful sexexpression, which does not interfere with or supercede other responsibilities. Hence there are controls in the beginning, in the form of a development of moral, leading, hopefully, to ethical, reasoning, which are (again hopefully) relaxed on marriage or at least adult-cy. With this as a rather unstable ideal, once again we return to the question of *āvidya*. Whilst celibacy is

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<sup>24</sup> It is also necessary to consider his relationship with his parents, so this argument is not as simple as portrayed here.

inappropriately accentuated, ignorance and *antarāya* must linger if only because a choice to not engage in the full range of life entails a choice to not face the full range of extant *vṛttis*.<sup>25</sup> It is argued that only with an engagement within the full range of experience are there choices capable of dismantling *āvidya*, and promoting the highly-prized *cittaprasādanam* (tranquillity of the mind).

To sum up, it is argued here that *brahmacarya* has little to do with ascetism in the accepted sense, it is more a period of ascesis during which conflicts relating to the erotic, or creative impulse, in the evolutionary process can be resolved to the advantage of the individual and community.

#### ***brahmacarya* in the context of the *cakras***

These choices now lead to the final section of this chapter, a placement of Patañjali and *brahmacarya* into the context of the *cakras*. As has been argued the *cakras* represent a metaphorical embodiment of psychospiritual development and can be used to visualise the task ahead for the spiritual aspirant. In this attempts have been made in brief to juxtapose the classical and modern interpretations of the system, and this will be taken through now to a *cakraic* image of *brahmacarya*.

**In the light of classical theory:** Crucial in the context of this chapter is the classical trope of the *kuṇḍalinī* blocking the *susūmnā*, the central channel of spiritual, therefore life-affirming, energy or principle. With the blockage in place the energy system is misdirected or unproductively diffused with little prospect of recovery. It is this lack of direction and energetic dispersion that is captured by an image of an *āvidya* commonly experienced by the profane. The image is of two parts; a snake

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<sup>25</sup> This is not an easy statement as there are people who ‘naturally’ gravitate to the celibate life, whose ethos is beyond that of the norm of the four *āśramas*; it could be said that they have a natural, an innate, perhaps pre-logical propensity for the *sannyāsāśrama* (the detached life). The distinguishing feature of these people is their high levels of detached intimacy - they are comfortable with people without becoming embroiled in their lives and issues. It is hypothesised that people who are celibate but lack Whiteman’s loving criteria (see p139) are still subjected to *antarāya* despite protestations to the contrary and claims to spirituality.

lying with its head at the entrance of the channel, and the snake being referred to as the 'feminine' of *śakti*. Needless to say, of course, mention has been made of the feminine being the energy of action so the image of a sleeping *śakti* may seem a contradiction in terms. Perhaps this is not necessarily the case. As mentioned chapter 2, to speak of a sleeping *kundalīnī* as if it is an *a priori* 'genetic' defect is to be simplistic; it is to not acknowledge the role of will and choice in the human life. Argued here is that the *kundalīnī* is 'asleep' as a result of the psychic choices of the individual, or, another view, she is kept in an inert state by the *āvidya* of the individual, which emanates from the choices made at the various Eriksonian crises. It is not her nature to block the *susumṇā* but she is plainly responding to a limited or distorted psychic structure of the individual.

Once the *cittavṛttinirodhaḥ* starts to take effect (through, for instance, a successful adoption of *ahimsā*) *kundalīnī* responds accordingly and sequentially, gradually awakens in concert with the conscious and often painful effort of removing personal *āvidya*.<sup>26</sup> Contrary to much popular and some scholarly impressions the shift from the profane to the sacred is a gradual and at times a physically and psychically painful development. Previously mentioned is that *cittavṛttinirodhaḥ* is not a *brahmacaryāśrāma* activity but that of the householder and later. The realisation of the need for *cittavṛttinirodhaḥ* more often than not comes later in life when the *vṛttis* and *antarāya* are painfully evident, hence the *yogasūtras* suitably assume that the adult aspirant is afflicted and in need to redemption. The assumption creates a theatre for the business of the *aṣṭāṅgas*, bearing in mind that these begin with the *yama* group of 'cultivation of attitudes', and especially the assumed jumping-off point of *ahimsā* (it is well to bear in mind here the assertion made in n11 regarding the placement of *brahmacarya* in the *yama* hierarchy). Hence, even in the classical sense,

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<sup>26</sup> This is regularly demonstrated with the use of some of the *avant-garde* techniques of transpersonal psychology and the New Age; techniques such as Rolfing, holotropic breathwork, some forms of hypnotherapy, shiatsu involve bodily manipulation that can evoke 'cellular memory' (as some would explain the bizarre reactions).

*brahmacarya*, *per se*, does not pose a problem, as it will be dealt with in the normal course of events. The events may, and usually do, include dealing with various personalities (Whiteman's 'co-minds' or multiple personalities) which may arise; hence ideally the need for a suitably qualified *guru* or therapist. If the first three elements of *yama* are at play in the daily practice of the *sādhaka* then, as has been mentioned, *brahmacarya* must fall into appropriate perspective and sexuality develops or adjusts along the lines chosen by the individual. Needless to say, the classical method is specialised and not designed for the faint-hearted.

**In the light of modern theory:** As modern theory, on the other hand, develops in the West the *yogasūtras* actually become increasingly visible and accessible, particularly when shown through the Western *cakraic* matrix. Here again the *yama*, with an accent on attitudes towards an Other, applies to both Myss and Sharamon & Baginski in their hypotheses that the *mūlādhārā cakra* applies to the 'tribe', etc.. The profane individual tends to be faced with a concerted and, at times, orchestrated compulsion to indiscriminately believe such myths as the permanence of the impermanent, as the authority of the community, the supremacy of tradition, even the 'goodness of god', etc., all of which are cultural pressures. Conceding to these pressures can account for the sustenance of the *vr̥tti saṁskāra anīśam cakram* (*vr̥ttis* to *saṁskāras* to *vr̥ttis*...) with a centripetal action by 'society' in general, but it must be noted that the action from the individual's perspective is centrifugal as energies are dissipated and fragmented into a number of externally directed courses. Naturally, this propagates a situation of confusion (*āvidya*) whilst the individual lacks personal control. Carl Jung succinctly explains thus: "While man still lives as a herd-being he has not 'things of the spirit' of his own; nor does he need any, save the usual belief in the immortality of the soul."(Jung:202)

As the effects of *yama* and *niyama* take hold within the psyche debilitating influences of society begin to erode, to be replaced by an inner strength, which in the beginning

is not necessarily to be equated with spirituality but simply effort.<sup>27</sup> As the pace of the existential erosion increases, however, the locus of psychic activity gradually swings around 90° to a sense of self-within-the-world, and the roles of *ahimsā*, *asteya*, *satya*, etc. take on increasing clarity. Now there energy is made available for more creative projects. In this, the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra* begins to come into focus and the meaning of sexpression as an intimate participation in the world through interacting with an Other takes on new proportions. As the *kuṇḍalīnī* progresses up the *susūmṇā* (here equated with further erosion of *āvidya* by *nirodhaḥ*) so the compass bearing swings a full 180° and the individual psyche emerges in it's own right at the level of the *maṇipura cakra*. At this stage it would be erroneous to try to equate the various elements of the *aṣṭāṅga* with distinct *cakras*, or even the *yama/niyama* hierarchies as hierarchies proper. In fact it is usual for the early *aṅgas* to be practised in parallel; the danger to the neophyte is that an *aṅga* will be given extraordinary emphasis to the exclusion of the others, as can be seen in many 'yoga' schools. It is thus not the case that one *must* complete one project (an *aṅga*) before beginning the next; it is more a question of understanding that unless one is able to internalise an attitude of *ahimsā* the benefits inherent in *prāṇāyāma* may be minimised. In this sense the *aṣṭāṅga* can be seen to be developmental without this being the intention.

As the Eriksonian system affords understanding of the psychodevelopmental course so the *yogasūtras* provide a method for counteracting the ravages of an overblown incursion by Existence on Being. Again to use the *epigenetic principle*, working within the *aṣṭāṅga* framework allows for a systematic evolution of authentic existence with Being, vis-à-vis existence with Existence. As such, as one is able to modify attitudes towards violence, in the initial phases, it is hoped that truthfulness will emerge as an augmentation, to which, with practice and care, will be added non-

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<sup>27</sup> This statement in many ways contradicts Jiddu Krishnamurti's contested contention that *mokṣa* (release or God-realisation) can be instantaneous.

stealing, and so on in a mushrooming out of the world of pain and sorrow (*duḥkha*) and *kliṣṭavṛtti* (afflicted states of mind).

Similarly to the previously argued inability to directly equate the Life Cycle elements to the *cakras* the *āṅgas* also have a hierarchy of their own. The correlation between the two comes in noting the effects of varying energy states arising from the spiritual practice, which in many cases can be seen in deep psychotherapy.

Analysing the *aṣṭāṅga* in this way, one finds that the first three *cakras*, those below the diaphragmatic barrier, are closely associated the first four *aṣṭāṅgas* in that both groups can be envisioned as preparation for a spiritual life in the *sannyāsāśrāma*. This *āśrāma* is the final stage in life, so using the first four *aṣṭāṅgas* to prepare for this implies that the other four (*pratyāhāra* and the *saṁyama* group of *dhāraṇyā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*) are really meant for later stages in life. Following this line through to some sort of conclusion, now one could consider the first two *āśrāmas* (*brahmacaryāśrāma* or apprenticeship, and *gṛhastāśrāma* or householder) as training grounds or sources of experiential material. Accepting this then would mean that the application of, say, *ahiṁsā* and *satya* to the ‘tribe’ of the *mūlādhārā*, to the erotics of the *svādīṣṭhāna*, to the ego-definition of the *maṇipūra* would, hopefully by the time the children are ready to leave home, result in a Being/Existence interface that allows for ‘withdrawal of the senses’ (*pratyāhāra*) at will.

The argument offered here is that crossing the diaphragm (*pratyāhāra*-ability) can only be fully accomplished with a healthy sense of self, in relation to self and to other, which has emanated out of an appropriate relationship with the erotic, which in turn has won the battle of placing society into a mutually functional relationship.

In order to do this the cultivating of attitudes (*yama*) in conjunction with the promotion of spiritual practice (*niyama*) which is associated with a loving (in the Whiteman sense) association with the body (*āsana*), and, critically, the breath (*prāṇāyāma*) is essential in developing an internal and external well-being (*sukha*).

Such well-being is expected for supra-diaphragmatic states of Being-in-existence *vis-à-vis* existence-in-Being. The routine practice of the *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāma* are directly involved in specific body, therefore self-, control and setting a stage for an emergence of an ability to ‘withdraw the senses’ (*pratyāhāra*) which then, as a matter of course with further effort, allows the individual to transcend human limitations.

*pratyāhāra* then, being interpreted as the switch from the physical and intellectual exercises to the spiritual, is equated with the *manipura/anāhata* junction and Erikson’s Adolescence. It is argued that without a successful *nirodhaḥ* in the preceding levels, such that all are functioning by the time *pratyāhāra* is attempted or epigenetically emerges, concentration or *dhāraṇyā* is pointless, and so on up the line. Hence picturing the *aṣṭāṅgas* in terms of the *cakras*, with a spotlight on the *pratyāhāra/ mūlādhārā-anāhata* junctions, provides a routemap with which progress and direction can be measured. Moreover, by restricting oneself to a parallelling, as opposed to a straight correlating, of the *aṣṭāṅgas* and *cakras* any enticement to directly equating the elements of the two models is circumvented, thus, it is proposed, creating a space for creative thought.

All this, of course, is proposed in the full knowledge that there are dangers of themes of a New Age utopianism emerging. This, however, is not necessarily the case. There is a price to be paid for raising the *kuṇḍalinī*. Firstly, effort, accompanied by a measure of *ekāgratā*, is required to bring *cittavṛttinirodhaḥ* into life; next, the effort has to be sustained. It is not unusual, whether in spiritual practice or psychotherapy, to encounter the temptation to ‘backslide’, as Iyengar would have it (Iyengar:78), and better spiritual teachers/therapists will understand this and allow it to happen as the temptation can be overcome with perseverance and judicious guidance. Thirdly, trust in self is required to be able to adhere to the *yama* injunctions in the face of an increasingly hedonistic and avaricious society.

These comments complete the argument for a review of sexuality in the light of the *yogasūtras* of Patañjali.

## Conclusion

In the last chapter I argued that much *theoria* lacks certain *praxis* and in this chapter I have attempted to show that Patañjali fills this *caesura*. I have argued that the principle contained in the phrase, *yogaḥcittavṛttinirodhaḥ* or ‘restraint of fluctuations in consciousness’, is primary in spiritual practice; I have also alluded to an extension of this into psychotherapy. In examining the *aṣṭāṅgas* (‘eight limbs’) of the Patañjali model it has been argued that it is crucial to note the *yama/niyama aṅgas* as a point of commencement in any attempts to improve quality of a life (this in contrast to a Western preference for ‘meditation’, usually associated with the fifth ‘level’, *dhāraṇyā* (one-pointed concentration or *ekāgratā*)).

In so doing, I have noted that *brahmacarya* is fourth in the list of *yama* elements. Taking this point, it has been shown, *contra* Eliade, for instance, who favours *ekāgratā* and ascetism, that *ahimsā* (non-violence) is the springboard for a drive towards authenticity in life. Without this the remaining elements are ungrounded. Hence one finds that once *ahimsā* begins to take effect, *brahmacarya*, for one, ceases to be an issue. In this case, constant attention to celibacy as a tool for a ‘spiritual’ life becomes spurious. Rather, I would argue there is a need to have a space to freely express the erotic, bearing in mind the pivot of *ahimsā*.

Going a step further, referring to the *āśramas* I set out to show that, in keeping with Erikson’s Intimacy and Generativity, the householder or *gṛhastāśrāma* is a whole-ising period in life, and, further, interference with free-expression in this period, with, for instance, calls for brother-sister marital relationships, may just count as non-spiritual, as something other than spiritual. There must be the caveat though that there are people who seem to be ‘naturally’ celibate, but here the ‘Whiteman rule’ of being able to conduct oneself in ‘loving’ relationships, whilst being celibate, applies. In other words, celibacy without intimacy can be viewed with circumspection as a possible expression of a *kleśa* or psychological affliction, an affliction such as fear of

intimacy.

Finally, Patañjali's *aṣṭāṅgas* were related to the *cakras*. As with Erikson's Life Cycle it was argued that trying to relate each *aṅga* with a *cakra* is erroneous. Preferable was relating *pratyāhāra* or withdrawal of senses with Erikson's adolescent period and *maṇipura/anāhata* junction. The reasoning behind this is that as the Eriksonian pre-adolescent stages were an apprenticeship for adolescence and onwards, so the previous *aṅgas* mentally and physically prepare the *sādhaka* for the contingencies of the spiritual task ahead.

All this rests, of course, on the premiss that Patañjali is not a developmental but more of a practical psychologist, which means that the *aṣṭāṅgas* are designed for the adult who is concerned with spiritualising his/her life, concerned with finding an invigorating Being/existence interface, of effecting a *śiva/śakti* reunion.

The conclusion then is that (a) sexuality, inclusive of sexpression, is an accepted aspect of life in Patañjali's vision of yoga, and (b) that the *yogasūtras* are a useful practical adjunct to the Life Cycle of Erikson, especially if the *cakras* are brought in as a formwork on which to display both sets of elements. With this I now move to the final section of the dissertation in which the various arguments in all the chapters will be brought together as a coherent whole.

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Chapter 5  
Summary : sexuality & spirituality

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### Review of the argument

In the Introduction of this dissertation it was mooted that there is an increasing call for an admission of spiritual elements into psychotherapy, and/or vice versa. Further, it appears that more and more people wish to investigate their sexuality in an attempt to better understand the influences the subject has on their spiritual practices; again, this link can also be reversed as they show interest in the effects of spiritual practice on sexuality. It could, in fact, be possible to follow this out to read that there are also some beginnings at a grass-roots level of a desire to see an introduction of psycho-sexual spirituality in religious practice. This dissertation, which should be seen as a work-in-progress, has, actually, been about all this. By correlating a Western Erikson with an Eastern Patañjali within a context of the *cakras*, argument has been made for a different approach to both psychotherapy and, by implication, religion; more specifically, for more open roles of sexuality and spirituality within these redemptive disciplines. In the end, a methodology is proposed that has in the past borne some fruit in the workplace, albeit with a certain sector of people who were seeking that style of vision. Even with this caveat, though, it is contended that there is little to say that the model is not applicable outside that group - this will have to be further explored in the future. This summary sets out to bring the various strands of the argument together into what is hoped to be a coherent whole.

Chapter 1 ('Introduction') briefly considered the question of 'raising consciousness' and it was found that there is a possibility that the term refers in this setting to a process of learning to enhance what Rocco Gennaro refers to as HOT (higher-order thinking) to any situation in which one finds oneself. In some paradigms, particularly at a more popular level, an elevated level of HOT is seen to include a source of thought referred to as 'intuition'. While the scientific community is beginning to take both consciousness and intuition more seriously, it was accepted that a burgeoning

section of the lay community is looking to intuition, *viz-à-viz* rationality, as an alternative source of inspiration or approach to the contingencies in life. It is taken as read that these communities are suspicious of an over-emphasis on rationality and scientism, hence the exploration of other modes of thought.

It is intriguing that while the HOT is valued it would appear that it is not widely encountered. In fact there is some factor or set of factors that hinder/s effective individual HOT development. As a result of working with ordinary people who were interested in the subject it was found that a common complaint was although there was an awareness that they were observing their own behaviour they were not sure what was being observed as there were so many contradictions. Eventually it was established that the complaint is based on psycho-spiritual impediments arising from idiosyncratic fears born of reactions to cultural and other external influences; not, it is to be noted, from the influences themselves. The purpose then, with these people, was to ascertain why it was that they were not able to engage in higher-order thinking, and, secondly, to ascertain whether or not this is what they were seeking with transcendence. As a 'causation' hypothesis was accepted, the next question was to begin to isolate pivotal points for the production of each group of hindrances.

As mentioned above while working at grass-roots levels sexuality tended to emerge as a key point of dissonance. Chapter 2 ('the Intra-personal nature of sexuality') began to broach the subject from a perceived perception that (a) sexuality is central to many quandaries in life, (b) that it is generally neglected, and/or (c) misunderstood, being confused with sex, sexpression, and gender. This chapter then set out to create a model of sexuality in which it was proposed that sexuality can be separated from the other three and applied to an intra-personal matrix of four dimensions; these being biological sex (male-female), gender (masculine-feminine), an expression of these two (tagged as sexpression), and spirituality (a moral-ethical spectrum). It was argued that sex and gender are reasonably accessible to research, but sexuality, being deeply intra-personal, does not present itself easily for measurement, either to the

researcher or to the subject of the research. Adding to this, there is a propensity on the part of the mature adult to be flexible along the three continua and within the matrix which means that measurements can be contradictory, hindering some research efforts. Following from this fixity along any of the continua could be indicative of immaturity. The tri-dimensional model proposed is not meant as a reified, all-encompassing tool for measurement; rather it is merely a means for understanding a particular situation in space and time, for an individual.

Finally in the chapter, the phenomenon of the orgasm was used as a focus for bringing out some of the complexity of an intra-personal sexuality. Using a few randomly selected texts it was found that there is a penchant to considering orgasm as an acme in coital sexexpression; ie. the phenomenon seems to be generally restricted to genitality. There is, however, some recognition that it could actually be a part of a larger process of inter-personal, particularly gendered, relations, (even, it is suggested, within the setting of the homosexual relationship; but this is another subject that needs bearing in mind but demands another forum). It was argued that the quality of an orgasm is predicated by a mesh of the situatedness of each of the partners. Any dissonance created by idiosyncrasies in the 'stable' relationship requires investigation and correction. Dissonance being, in part, measured by the circumstances and qualities of the orgasmic experience. Ultimately, it was proposed that the orgasm is an attempt to overcome two forms of alienation - that of a separation from the Divine, and that of being embodied which implies being half of something. A purpose in life is to overcome both forms of alienation and the orgasm can be shown to be functionally a more than useful avenue open to the dyad.

In the end, an over-riding objective of the chapter was to redefine sexuality in such a way as to release the term from a genital domain, such unbinding allowing for a participation in a broader life-affirming (translated as *erotic*) sphere of influence. But, in a life-denying, or *thanatotic* culture, how does one justify including sexuality in areas of culture such as economics, or religion, for that matter? Again, there is a

question of how one creates some tangible form with which to illustrate relationships between sexuality and other socio-cultural factors. It was suggested that the Indian system of the *cakras* may prove to be one such construct.

Chapter 3 ('Sexuality and the *cakras*') explored the possibility that the *cakra* system would be able to provide an embodied model for viewing sexuality, especially as it held promise for validating a connection between sexuality and spirituality. In so doing it was intended to argue for sexuality as being a hub to which is attached being bound into a stultifying cultural dependency, on one side, and an autonomy or authenticity of self, on another. In order to appreciate the argument it was deemed expedient to consider a cosmology that would counter a cartesian alienation that is often seen in Western religion, a religious system that impinges, through colonialism, in no small measure on other cultures. The cosmology, adopted or adapted from the Indian *samkhyan* philosophy, proposed a panentheistic model of the individual being an emanation from a Divine source. A diagram, gleaned from the archives of the late *swami* Nisreyasananda, was used to propose a view of the individual as participating in the Divine, as an emanation from that Divine; a view that facilitates an image of an evolution out along a loosely circumscribed path. The path includes the development of physical characteristics as well as those of the mind, which the *swami* shows to be a parallel emanation. A goal facing the exercise was to bring out a contrast or parallel between an original inherent 'energetic' composition, termed Being-ness, and one, assumed post-partum, called Existence.<sup>1</sup> Steps were taken to begin to show that Being-ness is similar to that referred to as 'Self', as in some Eastern and Western texts, and the latter as 'self' (some authors would refer to an 'Ego' and a 'false-ego').

A significant feature of the distinction is that the cosmology can go some way to explaining a need for 'transcendence' mentioned in the Introduction. If transcendence

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'post-partum' has been used here to convey an image of separation from the womb, as opposed to one of 'starting a new life'.

connotes an escape from a situation by, for example, a relocation along a Being/Existence spectrum closer to Being, then there is little to be said. If, however, as has been argued throughout the dissertation, that it implies 'rising' to a new or higher level of Being/Existence functioning (through higher-order thinking, perhaps) then it is possible to note that Being-ness is an *a priori* state against which an edifice of Existence is erected, with both, in the ideal state, working in harmony to provide a productive life in the world. In order to understand this it is necessary to note that Existence is defined as those functions adopted post-partum which facilitate an effective participation in the material world. Hence Being-ness denotes participation in an other- or non-sensory world, perhaps that of the Divine, or the Indian term, *puruṣa*, and Existence denotes participation in a sensory world, that of *prakṛti*. With the juxtaposition of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* it is possible to see that undue emphasis on one or the other can result in 'stress', as the term is used in medical and popular psychological circles today. In other words, it is proposed that stress can be related to an inauthentic life of dominance by either polarity, which in turn can entail a lack of harmony between an inner Being-ness and an external Existence.

This line of argument is illustrated by the *cakra* system in which it is held that the *pranaśakti*, or vitality principle (also termed the *kuṇḍalīnī*), is ensnared in a situation of being separated from a harmonious relationship with her opposite principle, *śiva*. It is when a pathway is cleared through a series of 'knotted' (*granthi*) stations, known as the *cakras*, that a beneficial association of the two principles is ultimately achieved. The facilitation of 'reunion' seems to be the mechanism for transcendence. In this sense, transcendence is not an escape from or denial of the world, as some would insinuate, but takes on more of an increasingly controlled and perceptive participation in the affairs of the world. Put another way, transcendence is a rising-above commonly held and imposed perceptions and values which tend to promote polarity dominance.

The value of the *cakras* as metaphorical constructs in illustrating this mechanism lies

in the structure. It is said there are in excess of 72 000 *cakras* distributed through the body, and each having an effect on an area in the body. In this context, though, emphasis is given to six principal stations allocated to specific places along the spine, starting in the perineum and culminating in the brow (today a seventh at the crown of the head is not regarded as a *granthised* *cakra*, *per se*, but as the culmination of the labour of ensuring a free passage for the *kuṇḍalīnī* through the other *cakras*). A thrust of this section of the dissertation is to begin to investigate the enticements or impressions that contrive to bind an individual to the material planes of existence, so those *cakras* lying at the beginning have been emphasised to the exclusion of the 'higher' levels. The reasoning behind this is that if there is no progress made through these early *cakras* there is little reason to believe that the benefits of the higher stations will manifest in any significant manner. This same reasoning applies to both Erikson's Life Cycle and Patañjali's *aṣṭāṅgas*. In essence, for the purposes of this dissertation it was the *mūlādhārā*, the *svādiṣṭhāna*, and the *maṇipura cakras* (with minor reference to the *anāhata* or 'heart' *cakra*) that were used for illustrative purposes.

In engaging with the *cakras* it was imperative to distinguish between the classical format and a Western appropriation. It was shown that the classical is highly esoteric and, as Carl Jung maintained in the 1930's, not really conducive to application by the general Western mindset. Part of the problem seems to be that the average Westerner lacks the commitment to engage in a practice that is time-consuming, consistently focussed, and potentially Existence-denying (hence a domination of Being). This is not a criticism of the Western approach to life, rather it is meant as a possible factual statement that releases the ethos of the *cakras* from being trapped into an inauthentic Western attempt to emulate Eastern metaphysics and epistemology, to an exclusion of the strengths of that of the West. Having said this, though, there have been what some consider as 'misappropriations' of Oriental culture that are genuine attempts at merging the *cakra* system into Western *praxis*. A measure of work is being done on a

formal academic level, but most of the practical material is emanating from a non-academic sector, of which an interesting component is the New Age.

One useful concept to be derived from the Indian *tantric* tradition is that of the *kuṇḍalīnī*. This is portrayed as a snake lying in some point in the perineum with 'her' head blocking the central channel (*suṣumṇā*) along which life-giving energies should pass. *kuṇḍalīnī* is generally designated as feminine (*śakti*) and potentially active, in comparison to *śiva* at the other end of the channel who remains at rest until merged with *śakti*. Of particular note is that :

- It is a feminine that is being activated (shades of Carl Jung's *anima*). This in contradistinction to commonly held Western belief that it is the male that is active. Whether it is masculine or feminine seems, at the moment, to be irrelevant, except perhaps as a startle to a sleeping imagination, or bounded paradigmatic structure.
- While the *kuṇḍalīnī* can be seen to be blocking the entry to the central channel, it is important to be able to translate this blocking action as a defect on the part of the individual rather than an inherent purpose of the *kuṇḍalīnī*. Once this distinction is made then it is possible to understand a feature of *sāṃkhyan* philosophy that exhibits a de-vitalising facet of the individual nature - that ignorance (*āvidyā*) is a root cause of pain or suffering in the world. When linked to the *kuṇḍalīnī* one then finds the argument presented here, *viz.* *āvidyā* is at the root of worldly distress, raising the *kuṇḍalīnī* eventually relieves this, but 'she' must first be released of the bondage of ignorance (*āvidyā*) imposed by the individual.
- This last is not in essence necessarily a part of the *kuṇḍalīnī* philosophy, although it can arguably be read into it.

The gist of the matter in the context of this dissertation is the notion, taken from classical *cakra* theory, that there is a potential for transcending the human condition inherent in the *mūlādhārā cakra*, the seat of the sleeping *kuṇḍalīnī* which in traditional practice requires initiation and commitment to realise.

As already mentioned Eastern initiation and commitment do not lie well with a Western mindset. Another hindrance to this is the alchemical nature of the process. Understanding the relationships between the *yantras* (mystical drawings), *mantras* (mystical sounds), the significance of the various deities, male and female, and so on, can tend to be daunting to a demythologised and analytical West. What does seem to have happened is that the concept of transcendence potential has been taken up and other, more inclusive ways to manifest it are being sought, especially in New Age circles. While, in terms of the *cakras*, serious problems are encountered with being able to arrive at some measure of consensus on quite what constitutes the conception in New Age metaphysics, some threads of appropriate synthesis with Western psychology/philosophy can be discerned. From this it was found that the three authors briefly examined tended to agree that the three *cakras* under review constituted a course leading from a dependency on socio-cultural factors in the *mūlādhārā* to relative autonomy in existential factors at the level of the *maṇipura*. The middle *cakra*, the *svādiṣṭhāna* (commonly termed the 'sexual' *cakra*), is regarded as requiring especial understanding as it is central to progress between the *mūlādhārā* and the *maṇipura*. It is in this way that the *cakras* can be seen to assist in developing an embodied portrayal of a course of spirituality that is acceptable to the Westerner.

The outcome of this discussion was twofold. Firstly, to accentuate the possibility that there is a mythopoiesis inherent in some New Age discourse, which is certainly giving the system a new meaning that could have significance for many people of many persuasions. Secondly, it was argued that a gradual deviation from being bound to broad socio-cultural domination to a possible freedom of narrower autonomy (depicted as the *kuṇḍalīnī* rising through the *cakras*) created another picture - that of a constriction of Self with the apex being at what was found to be a 'diaphragmatic barrier'. An image of the apex at this particular infra-diaphragmatic point is effective in helping people (especially those who regard the 'heart' as being a seat of love) to

visualise a difficulty in experiencing the love quality they desire. Part of the picture is that for them to love effectively (especially when it comes to some endowment called 'unconditional love' which is frequently mooted as a panacea to an assortment of ills) they are required to negotiate a passage through the diaphragmatic barrier, also known as the *manipura/anāhata* junction. It is held that negotiating this point of compression of Being requires substantial re-aligning of personal attitudes, probably achieved in a classical practice through severely disciplined practice, and, in the modern, through understanding of the countervalences at work in the psyche.

With this it was taken as reasonable to use the *cakras* as an imaginative and 'visual' guide to what is happening in and what is required for spiritual development. But the assumption raised another question, one that was continually posed by many people who are intent on improving the lot of their spirituality and sexuality: How did I get to be stuck in the *mūlādhārā cakra*, for instance, in the first place?

In order to tackle this the discussion returned to the theoretical psychological structures of the West. Chapter 4 ('Erik Erikson, sexuality and the *cakras*') began to answer this type of question by examining some of the work of the psychologist, Erik Erikson, with a view to showing that sexuality and spirituality are inherent in his theoretical model. Restricting the discourse to the pre-pubertal stages of hope, will, purpose and competence, and the adolescent stage of fidelity, it was found that there is a thread of sexuality and spirituality that weaves through his work. Additionally, it was found that the compression of Being at the level of autonomy, suggested above, can also be implied here. It was found that the neonate is very much a part of the environment into which s/he has been born, and is totally reliant on that environment for sustenance (a situation of the *mūlādhārā cakra*). As the child begins to physically and intellectually step out into the environment and develops a sense of differentiation between self and other so there is a concomitant rise in autonomy culminating in the immediately pre-pubertal lesson of Competence (to manipulate self and environment to own ends), a culmination that parallels the factors attributed

to a Western *maṇipura cakra*.

Once again it was shown that, as with the three primary *cakras*, there is a narrowing of worldview as ego differentiation takes effect. In this case, though, it was interpreted that the narrowing effect was an incursion of existential skills factors on Being-ness. In other words, a point that is not easily discerned in the New Age rendition of the *cakras*, but is clearer on reading Erikson, is that as the child engages successfully with the environment and the challenges of living with others, there is a loss of Self, the sole condition of the neonate, in favour of society. Society, through the tool of culture, takes on a dominance that allows little freedom for Being-expression. Furthermore, the loss of Being-expression of the infant is not pathological in the pre-pubertal child as the existential factors or skills gained are essential to being part-of-the-world. Pathology does arise, though, when crisis resolutions of childhood and adolescence are not persuasively settled as an appropriately integrated relationship between Being and Existence. In the process of psycho-spiritual development adolescence is seen as being a crucial period in an individual life; it is seen, certainly by Erikson, as being *the* time when previous experiences are reviewed and re-constituted, and concurrently when foundations for future resolutions are laid. It is in this sense that adolescence is regarded here as being synonymous with the *maṇipura/anāhata* junction of the *cakra* system. Furthermore, the preceding lessons are regarded as being an apprenticeship, so to speak, in existential skills. Thus adolescence is then distinguished as a form of 'journeyman' studies prior to masters researches of intimacy (love) and generativity (care). A reason for the selection of the 'journeyman' analogy is that many people will elect to remain at this level of immaturity, rather than continue the 'enquiry' which will take them to higher levels of function.

Two other factors that arose from the investigation of Erikson were his approach to existentialist concerns, and the principle of *epigenesis* that is integral to his Life Cycle. With regards to the former, it was found that there is reason to believe that

Erikson would not have been averse to the interpretation of a Being-ness/Existence juxtaposition to explain an interface between the sacred and the profane in an individual life. Relying on Hettie Zock, but not necessarily agreeing with her, it was found that there is an element of the hypothesis of Existence confining Being in Erikson's writings. In fact, it was shown that there is cyclical feel when, for instance, in columns f. and g. of the chart in *Life Cycle Completed* (see appendix 8), he contrasts 'cosmic order' and 'numinous' of the infant with 'wisdom' and 'philosophical' in the aged. To go one step further, it can be read that the numinous of the infant is met again in the aged, but with a difference of having added a lifetime of experience. Important here is that in order to achieve wisdom a harmonious interface needs to be found between Being and existence. In other words, in adolescence and soon after when gendered relations are actively engaged a dynamic and dialectical development of an authentic identity is essential if wisdom is to be manifested. A useful part of the equipment that enhances authenticity is a realisation that Being-ness is an integral part of the whole person, and, what is more, would, in health, hold equal prominence with Existence.

In order to understand this better, it is possible to envision the Life Cycle as an unfolding similar to that presented in the cosmology in chapter three. *Id est*, if the 'numinous' character of the child can be considered to be exemplary of an enduring 'participation in the Divine' and that the drive towards technology and formalism is a temporary coping device, then it is but a short jump to note that undue emphasis on skills acquisition in later life, for instance, is to ensure transience in a relentlessly changing environment, with little hope of relief. In short to look to skills acquisition as relief insinuates a denial of 'participation in the Divine' and thus a denial of a part of oneself, again, thus a breeding ground for *āvidya*, and so on and on. To allow this argument to unfurl further is to insist that the *epigenetic* nature of Existence reaches a climax in adolescence when the technological bias of childhood begins to be tempered by a search, not for skills *per se*, but an interface between Being-ness and

Existence that releases the *erotic* towards a creative and so productive utilisation of skills. It is suggested that this attitude towards existence carries a brighter spark of hope than possible in present sociologically biased offerings, such as is found in much socio-political and religious theory.

The argument thus far is that it is possible to redefine sexuality to incorporate many aspects of life. It is argued that without a flexible and clear understanding of the subject a broad spectrum of relationships are flawed. Furthermore, it is argued that spirituality *qua* a moral-ethical dimension is integral to an individual construction of sexuality. In order to understand this it has been shown to be helpful to employ a particular rendition of the *cakraic* system of spiritual developmental stages. Here it is noted that the second stage is that 'sexuality' constitutes a gate and vehicle to further progress. Bearing in mind a theme of the discussion which speaks of augmentation at each Life Cycle resolution or *cakraic de-granthi*-sation. Moreover, it is suggested that an impediment to meaningful spiritual expression is what is termed here as the diaphragmatic barrier. In discussing Erikson it was found that this diaphragmatic barrier can be equated with the period of adolescence; the degree of obstruction being influenced or enhanced by un/fortunate choices made in the crisis resolutions of childhood, which, in turn, affect attempts at a foundation for further lessons in love and parenting. The stuff of such choices being to some extent a product of individual views on non-/participation in the Divine. Promotion of non-participation in the Divine allows for an Existentialist argument for a 'nothingness' arising from an inauthentic life, whereas acceptance of participation in the Divine allows for a nothingness to arise from a hiatus between Being and Existence; a nothing-ness that can be redeemed.

This theoretical grounding of the Self in the world has been noted to be of little value if there is an absence of a concomitant paradigm for redemption. In the light of this assertion Chapter 5 ('Patañjali, sexuality and the *cakras*') is an introduction to the *yogasūtras* commonly attributed to Patañjali, a hypothesis that bears consideration on

a number of points.

Firstly, analysis of the *aṣṭāṅgas* promulgated by the *yogasūtras* indicates that there is a similar configuration to that of the *cakras* and Erikson; that is, there is a central lacuna which in this case is to be found at the level of *pratyāhāra* (or withdrawal of the senses). In a similar vein to the apprenticeship argument in Erikson, this statement is predicated on a successful internalisation and practice of certain preceding tasks. Patañjali created a hierarchy of spiritual development that began with reviewing attitudes towards the Other (*yama* - non-violence, truthfulness, etc.), shifting to restructuring the ways in which day-to-day life is structured (*niyama* - reading scripture, cleanliness, and so on), then to ensuring the body itself is brought under control and loosened (in the vein of psychiatrist, Alexander Lowen) in a simple form of meditation (*āsana* - incorrectly termed 'yoga' in common Western parlance), and, finally, bringing the most vital aspect of physical life, the breath, under control (*prāṇāyāma*). The configuration is deemed to be similar to Erikson and the *cakras* by structuring a perceived compression of attention from interactions with the broader public (again, a *mūlādhārā* situation) to the confines of being, almost narcissistically attentive to the qualities and rhythm of breathing. In this way, the task of withdrawing the senses (*pratyāhāra*) is either facilitated or hindered by the changes in attitude and practice brought about earlier. Either way there is little purpose in attempting meditation or some such until this particular apprenticeship has been completed. In this sense, there is no purpose in discussing meditation until certainly *yama* and *niyama* are fully understood and engaged. As Aldous Huxley pointed out with a British sense of the understatement, any attempt at meditation without proper preparation is verging on 'silliness'.

Patañjali's analysis of a set of encumbrances to the spiritual life is seen to be a set of signs and symptoms which can be linked to Erikson's Life Cycle lessons. On the one hand, Erikson can explain how certain symptoms came about, on another, the symptoms are clearly laid out by Patañjali. This presence of symptoms, however,

indicates that any spiritual activity generated in reaction to them is part of adult life, and redemption is the goal. Reference to these spiritually orientated goals is predicated in an awareness of dissonance; such awareness not normally, it is argued, being evident in the intellectually immature. In a psychospiritual developmental context, though, it is argued that children can be raised in an environment which includes the *yama/niyama/āsana/prāṇāyāma* elements in the hope that their future spiritual life would be enhanced. This, however, would be regarded as dangerous, certainly by Erikson, who maintains that the acquisition of so-called positive poles encountered in his stages, and reflected in Patañjali's *yama*, for instance, are not the desired end. He argues consistently for a 'middle path' which means that trust, for instance, ideally contains enough mistrust to provide a balance between Being and Existence. In this way, exclusive yearning for *ahimsā* (non-violence) is self-destructive if there is little acknowledgement that there are times when some forms of violence are appropriate. Although Patañjali does not provide polarities and his model is based on simple statements of virtues, reference to Erikson brings a moderating light that excludes extremist potentials.

### Conclusion

A purpose of this dissertation has been to explore approaches to sexuality and spirituality that may serve to explain socio-cultural trends from the past as well as those unfolding at present that may contribute towards a 'transcendence' that is becoming a requirement in many people's lives. It has, in fact, been asserted that sexuality is central in human, thus by extension social, functioning. In order to illustrate this a dip was made into the philosophical basket of the East, and the Indian *cakra* system was invoked as a paradigm. In this model sexuality, in the form of the *svādīṣṭhāna cakra*, was firmly postulated as being crucial in spiritual development. Moving back to the West it was found that Erik Erikson also supported a vision of the centrality of sexuality in his explication of the Life Cycle. In addition, it was

found that the *cakra* model equated well with his model. In the end, though, one is still left with the problem of what to do with this information. Here a return to the East was postulated and the *aṣṭāṅgas* of Patañjali were shown to be useful in finding a redemptive role away from the limitations of a purely human existence.

The rocking back and forwards between the West and the East has led to a number of conclusions.

Firstly, despite protestations from certain elements in both West and East sexuality is an essential ingredient in productive human functioning. To disregard it is to remove a significant principle from life. Attempting to return it back to life, however, does, after millenia of abuse, require reviewing the meaning and implications of the term; and to some considerable extent a review of ideologies. For example, to acknowledge a dimorphic existence as a superimposition on an androgenic being-ness is useful in diverting attention from the transience of embodiment to a relative permanence of a spiritual being-ness. If this can be accepted as intellectually respectable then it is suggested that much of the intra-personal stress and strain of life can diminish.

Secondly, it is postulated that the question of intra-personal stress and strain is implicated in a lack of functionality between an inner Being-ness and an outer Existence. Symbolically, the *cakras* characterize a tension between the *mūlādhārā* or socio-physical aspects of life in the perineum, and the *ājñā* or cogno-spiritual aspects in the facial brow. It is said that while these domains are not interacting pain and suffering ensues; Patañjali would have it that it is ignorance that forces the fissure. But when brought together into a harmonious functionality there is a productive and harmonious life in the offing. Erikson's 'middle path' in the crises experienced in the Life Cycle can be interpreted as being a Western indicator of this concept (the *conjunctio mysterium* of Carl Jung has similar connotations). With this there is a hypothesis that if the need for a balanced interaction between sexuality and rationality can be achieved then many of the ills of society could be equitably

addressed. Continued doom is seen to accompany a continued separation of sexuality from life.

Thirdly, crucial to the argument is that sexuality and spirituality are intimately linked to each other. To argue this is to refer back to the *mūlādhārā/ājñā* image above.

Normal functioning is not possible with a separation of the *logos* and the *eros*. As demonstrated by the interpretation of spirituality as a moral-ethical continuum, incorporating it into a matrix with factors such as embodiment and gender gives rise to a situation in which the Other is either person (Divine-participatory) in a state of ethicality or non-person (Divine-excluded) in a state of morality (this argument is taken from Erikson's view that morality reflects the super-consciousness of childhood). Further, as the *eros* is taken to be a life-affirming component of physicality it is the affirmation that is a link with spirituality. An epilogue is that it can be said that spiritualising sexuality affords a loving respect for the Other (in whatever form), and sexualising spirituality creates a loving respect for the Other; both couplings, although seemingly the same, are necessary for a fully functional Existence.

Finally, it can be seen that all three of the above point in the same direction - that of creating functionality between what is normally seen as a dichotomy, the *eros* of life-affirmation and the *thanatos* of life-denial. Both are essential in an existential sense and the quandary is how to create a meeting-place of inclusiveness. The image of *āvidya* (ignorance) that has pervaded the discussion cannot be over-emphasised. This *āvidya* is not a normal life-fundamental; rather, it is created by the circumstances surrounding the development of Existence, and so can be removed. There are a number of experiments that can be enacted in a removal, and it is postulated that the present discussion around understanding the relationship between *eros* and *thanatos* that is a possible first step towards wholeness.

This now leads to some final comments of the dissertation, which, it is reiterated,

must be seen as a part of a work-in-progress.

### **Future prospects for a theory of sexuality and spirituality**

This set of arguments has been based on experiences gained whilst working with individuals who were seeking an alternative to the after-effects of abuse; this last being more widespread than hitherto conceded. So standing in the background throughout the discourse has been the individual. One of the tasks has been to propose a methodological framework in which an individual can hope to gain some form of transcendence from a perceived limited human condition. It is possible, however, to regard expressions of society and culture as essentially a collectivity of individuals. Society can only proclaim those values or behaviours to which a critical mass of the majority subscribe. Placing this simplification into the starting-block does seem to allow for an investigation of society or culture from a perspective of sexuality/spirituality, if it is accepted that sexuality/spirituality is integral to the well-being or not-so-well-being of the individual.

It is postulated that just as Freud examined Moses, and Erikson was able to do something similar with Hitler, Ghandi, Luther, and others, so it is reasonable to be able to analyse leaders within communities in order to extract those existing valences that promote conflict or communion. To begin to examine the sexuality of Britain, say, in the twentieth century may bring out how the various governments of that country were able to treat India, Northern Ireland, Southern Rhodesia, in, some say, a 'shoddy' manner. To consider the sexualities of the Israelis and Palestinians may shed some light on how it is that the latter continue to live in some no small measure of poverty, while their Jewish neighbours claim to be re-claiming the desert. How the residents of Wallacedale in South Africa can demand human rights while the filth generated by their communal living builds up around them.

It is possible that the collective *kundalīnī* in these nations or communities is being

forced by a collective *āvidya* to block a collective *susumṇā*; that basic elements of trust and initiative have been deleted from the collective consciousness by such forces as religion, for instance (here I refer back to Steyn's discussion of the African Initiated Churches). In turn, perhaps this could indicate that the collective psychosocial development is checked at an adolescent or even pre-adolescent level of ideology subscription; that a modern emphasis on misogynistic soteriology is emphasised above a creativity of inclusiveness in an spirituality of an adolescent present. Stepping out afresh, perhaps to attribute the rise in religious fundamentalism to reactions to rates of social change is to ignore Erikson's legalistic 'ritualism' of early childhood or his core pathology of withdrawal in infancy as possible deep critique of the phenomenon. Again, indeed Patañjali's early *aṣṭāṅgas*, taken on their own, could provide a measure of spiritual development of a community or nation, and, even possibly, give some indication of how community or national leaders could find their way out a particular dilemma, such as corruption. In this way it is proposed that this intellectual exercise could be utilised to indicate a level of community psycho-social development; the outcome of which would assist, even, in assessing fitness for office of community and national leaders.

With this line of questioning and dilemma-framing it would be proposed that this work-in-progress be further refined and some of the above contradictions be examined in the hope of hypothetically contributing to the commonweal of some of the people around this author.

In conclusion, attempts have been made to show that (a) sexuality and spirituality are intimately and indissolubly linked, that (b) when this is recognised it is easier to address many of the problems that exist in an individual striving for transcendence, and (c) that once this has been accepted it is but a short step to extrapolating this methodology out to a community that may or may not be engaged in similar attempts at transcendence; although in this last transcendence is usually restricted to the economic, health, and/or security needs (Maslow's first two levels in his Hierarchy of

Needs). With this then it is therefore postulated that progress in human affairs must remain sluggish. It is hoped that with further development this hypothetical model may be applied with benefit to some situations.

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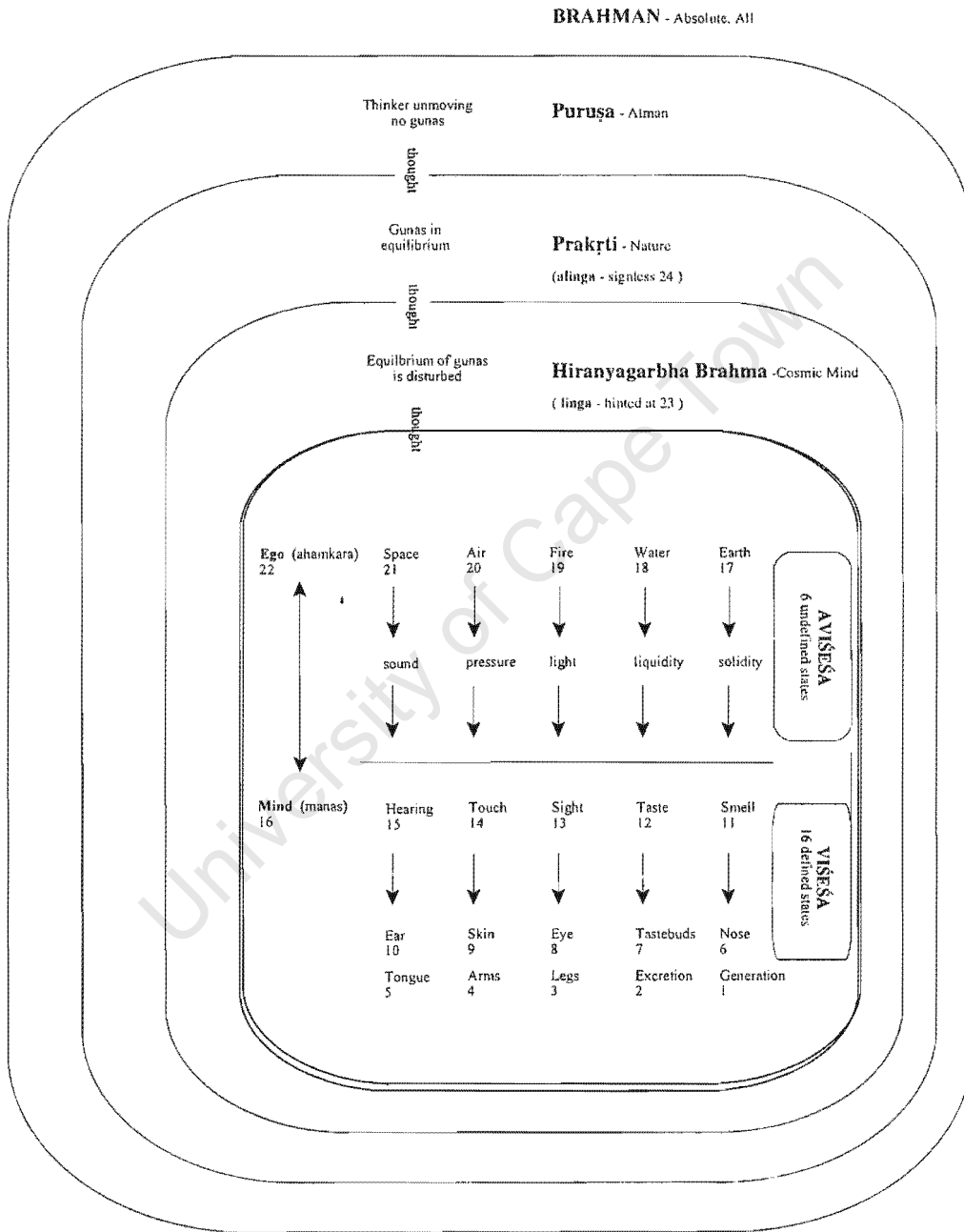
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**Appendices**

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**Appendix 1: Schematic diagram of *gunatattwas* by Swami Nisreyasananda**



### Appendix 2: Anodea Judith - Comparative Theories of Development

(Judith, Anodea. 1996. *Eastern body, Western mind: Psychology and the Chakra System as a path to the Self*. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts, pp 38 - 39)

For the sake of simplicity the rows dealing with Reich/Lowen, Piaget, Wilber, and Psychosynthesis have been omitted. The rest, including notes, are as presented.

Chakra	: 1 - Muladhara	2 - Svadisthana	3 - Manipura	4 - Anahata	5 - Vissudha	6 - Ajna	7 - Sahasrara
Identity	: Physical	Emotional	Ego	Social	Creative	Archetypal	Universal
Age	: Womb to 12 mos.	6 to 24 mos.	18 mos to 3 yrs	3 to 7 years	7 - 12 years	Adolescence	Adulthood
Freud	: Oral	Oral	Anal	Phallic	Latency	Adolescence	Genital
Erikson	: Trust vs Mistrust**	Trust vs Mistrust**	Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt	Initiative vs Guilt	Industry vs Inferiority	Identity vs Role confusion	Intimacy vs Isolation Generativity vs Self-absorption Integrity vs Despair
Maslow	: Physiological	Safety	Belonging*	Self-esteem*	Self-actualisation	Transcendence	Transcendence
Kohlberg	: Punishment/obedience	Instrumental/Hedonism	Good boy/ Nice girl	Law and order	Social contract	Universalism	Universalism

\* This is Maslow's order. To more appropriately reflect the chakras, Self-esteem would correspond to third chakra and Belonging to fourth chakra

\*\* I would add a stage to Erikson, corresponding to chakra 2 called Separation vs. Attachment leaving Trust vs. Mistrust to chakra 1.

**Appendix 3 : Caroline Myss - Energy Anatomy**  
(Myss, Caroline. 1996. *Anatomy of Spirit: the seven stages of power and healing*. London: Bantam)

Chakra	Organs	Mental, emotional issues	Physical dysfunctions
1	Physical body support Base of spine Legs, bones Feet Rectum Immune system	Physical family and group safety and security Ability to provide for life's necessities Ability to stand up for self Feeling at home Social and familial law and order	Chronic lower back pain Sciatica Varicose veins Rectal tumors/cancer Depression Immune-related disorders
2	Sexual organs Large intestine Lower vertebrae Pelvis Appendix Bladder Hip area	Blame and guilt Money and sex Power and control Creativity Ethics and honor in relationships	Chronic lower back pain Sciatica Ob/gyn problems Pelvic low back pain Sexual potency Urinary problems
3	Abdomen Stomach Upper intestines Liver, gallbladder Kidney, pancreas Adrenal glands Spleen Middle spine	Trust Fear and intimidation Self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-respect Care of oneself and others Responsibility for making decisions Sensitivity to criticism Personal honour	Arthritis Gastric or duodenal ulcers Colon/intestinal problems Pancreatitis/diabetes Indigestion, chronic or acute Anorexia or bulimia Liver dysfunction Hepatitis Adrenal dysfunction
4	Heart and circulatory system Lungs Shoulders and arms Ribs/breasts Diaphragm Thymus gland	Love and hatred Resentment and bitterness Grief and anger Self-centredness Loneliness and commitment Forgiveness and compassion Hope and trust	Congestive heart failure Myocardial infarction (heart attack) Mitral valve prolapse Cardiomegaly Asthma/allergy Lung cancer Bronchial pneumonia Upper back, shoulder Breast cancer
5	Throat Thyroid Trachea Neck vertebrae Mouth Teeth and gums Esophagus Parathyroid Hypothalamus	Choice and strength of will Personal expression Following one's dream Using personal power to create Addiction Judgement and criticism Faith and knowledge Capacity to make decisions	Raspy throat Chronic sore throat Mouth ulcers Gum difficulties Tempromandibular joint problems Scoliosis Laryngitis Swollen glands Thyroid problems
6	Brain Nervous system Eyes, ears Nose Pineal gland Pituitary gland	Self-evaluation Truth Intellectual abilities Feelings of adequacy Openness to the ideas of others Ability to learn from experience Emotional intelligence	Brain tumor/haemorrhage/ stroke Neurological disturbances Blindness/deafness Full spinal difficulties Learning disabilities Seizures
7	Muscular system Skeletal system Skin	Ability to trust life Values, ethics, and courage Humanitarianism Selflessness Ability to see the larger pattern Faith and inspiration spirituality and devotion	Energetic disorders Mystical depression Chronic exhaustion that is not linked to a physical disorder Extreme sensitivities to light, sound, and other environmental factors

## Appendix 4 : Sharamon & Baginski - Human Development in the Light of Chakra Teachings

(Sharamon, Shalila & Bodo J. Baginski. 1991. *The chakra handbook*. Wilmot: Lotus Light, pp )

<i>cakra and theme</i>	<i>positive power</i>	<i>basic principle</i>	<i>sensory function and element</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> cakra</b> : Primordial life energy and trust. Relationship to the earth and to the material world. Stability, power to achieve.	stabilising, grounding	physical will to be	Smell – Earth
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> cakra</b> : Primordial feelings, flowing with life, sensuality, eroticism, creativity, awe, and enthusiasm.	purifying, starts things to flow	creative reproduction of being	Taste – Water
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> cakra</b> : Unfolding of one's personality. Assimilation of feelings and experiences, shaping one's being. Influence and power, strength and abundance, wisdom growing out of experience.	transforming, shaping, purifying	shaping of being	Sight – Fire
<b>4<sup>th</sup> cakra</b> : Unfolding of the qualities of the heart, love, compassion, sharing, sincere involvement, selflessness, devotion and healing.	opening, connecting	devotion, self-abandonment	Feeling – Air
<b>5<sup>th</sup> cakra</b> : Communication, creative self-expression, being open. Expanse, independence, inspiration, access to the subtler levels of being.	communicating, transmitting	resonance of being	Hearing – Ether (akasha)
<b>6<sup>th</sup> cakra</b> : Functions of realisation. Intuition, development of the inner senses, mind power, projection of the will, manifestation.	recognising	knowledge of being	All senses including extrasensory perception -
<b>7<sup>th</sup> cakra</b> : Perfection, enlightenment through inner contemplation, Unity with the omnipresent being, universal consciousness	transcending	pure being	

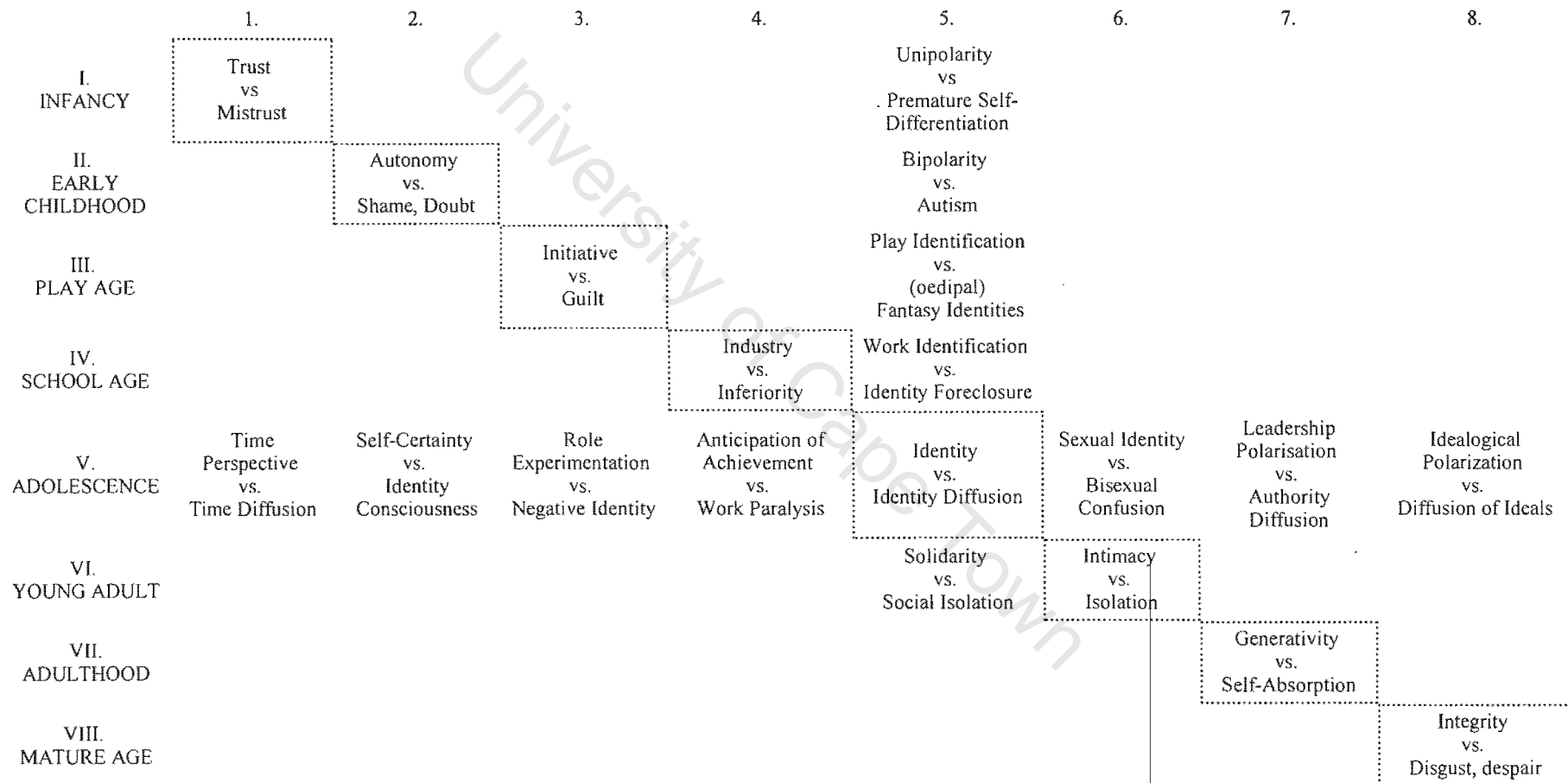
### Appendix 5 : Erik Erikson : The Epigenetic Psycho-Social stages (1950)

Erikson, Erik H. 1968. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: WW Norton

VIII								INTEGRITY vs DESPAIR
VII							GENERATIVITY vs STAGNATION	
VI						INTIMACY vs ISOLATION		
V	Temporal perspective vs Time confusion	Self-certainty vs Self-consciousness	Role experimentation vs Role confusion	Apprenticeship vs Work paralysis	IDENTITY vs IDENTITY CONFUSION	Sexual polarisation vs bisexual confusion	Leader- & follower-ship vs Authority confusion	Ideological commitment vs Confusion of values
IV				INDUSTRY vs INFERIORITY				
III			INITIATIVE vs GUILT					
II		AUTONOMY vs SHAME & DOUBT						
I	TRUST vs MISTRUST							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Note : that, in the row, V, the lessons in the shaded portions 1-4 represent revaluations of the preceding lessons I-IV. Those in the shaded portion 6-8 are preliminary hypotheses that will unravel as adulthood is encountered. Positive resolution of the shaded lessons are necessary for a divine-participating individual who, of necessity in adulthood, is other-centred to be effective. The same lessons can be seen on a community/societal level.

**Appendix 6 : Erik Erikson : The Epigenetic Psycho-Social Stages (1959)**  
 Erikson, Erik H. 1959. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: International Universities Press



### Appendix 7 : Erik Erikson : Life Cycle Attributes (1959)

Erik H Erikson. 1959. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: International University Press

	A	B	C	D	E
	Psychosocial crises	Radius of significant relations	Related elements of social order	Psychosocial modalities	Psychosexual stages
I	Trust vs Mistrust	Maternal person	Cosmic order	To get, To give in return	Oral-Respiratory Sensory-kinaesthetic (Incorporative modes)
II	Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt	Parental persons	'Law and Order'	To hold (on), To let (go)	Anal-Urethral Muscular (Retentive-Eliminative)
III	Initiative vs Guilt	Basic family	Ideal Prototypes	To make (=going after) To 'make like' (=playing)	Infantile-Genital Locomotor (Intrusive, Inclusive)
IV	Industry vs Inferiority	'Neighbourhood', School	Technological Elements	To make things (=completing) To make things together	'Latency'
V	Identity and repudiation vs Identity diffusion	Peer groups and outgroups; Models of leadership	Ideological Perspectives	To be oneself (or not to be) To share being oneself	Puberty
VI	Intimacy and solidarity vs Isolation	Partners in friendship, Sex, Competition, Cooperation	Patterns of Cooperation and Competition	To lose and find oneself in another	Genitality
VII	Generativity vs Self-absorption	Divided labour and Shared household	Currents of Education and Tradition	To make be To take care of	
VIII	Integrity vs Despair	'Mankind', 'My kind'	Wisdom	To be, through having been To face not being	

**Appendix 8 : Erik Erikson : Attributes of the Life Cycle (1982)**  
 Erik H Erikson. 1982. *The Life Cycle Completed: A review*. New York: Norton

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
<i>Stages</i>	<i>Psychosexual Stages and Modes</i>	<i>Psychosocial Crises</i>	<i>Radius of significant relations</i>	<i>Basic Strengths</i>	<i>Core-pathology Basic Antipathies</i>	<i>Related Principles of Social Order</i>	<i>Binding Ritualisations</i>	<i>Ritualism</i>	
I	Infancy	Oral-Respiratory Sensory-kinaesthetic (Incorporative modes)	Trust vs Mistrust	Maternal person	Hope	Withdrawal	Cosmic Order	Numinous	Idolism
II	Early Childhood	Anal-Urethral Muscular (Retentive-Eliminative)	Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt	Parental persons	Will	Compulsion	'Law and Order'	Judicious	Legalism
III	Play Age	Infantile-Genital Locomotor (Intrusive, Inclusive)	Initiative vs Guilt	Basic family	Purpose	Inhibition	Ideal prototypes	Dramatic	Moralism
IV	School Age	'Latency'	Industry vs Inferiority	'Neighbourhood', School	Competence	Inertia	Technological Order	Formal (Technical)	Formalism
V	Adolescence	Puberty	Identity and vs Identity Confusion	Peer groups and outgroups; Models of leadership	Fidelity	Repudiation	Ideological Worldview	Ideological	Totalism
VI	Young Adulthood	Genitality	Intimacy vs Isolation	Partners in friendship, Sex, Competition, Cooperation	Love	Exclusivity	Patterns of Cooperation and Competition	Affiliative	Elitism
VII	Adulthood		Generativity vs Stagnation	Divided labour and Shared household	Care	Rejectivity	Currents of Education and Tradition	Generational	Authoritism
VIII	Old Age		Integrity vs Despair	'Mankind', 'My kind'	Wisdom	Disdain	Wisdom	Philosophical	Dogmatism

## Appendix 9 : Erik Erikson's Psycho-social stages (modified)

Biographical period	Childhood	Adolescence	Adulthood
State of Being	dependency	transition & consolidation	autonomy
Role of Being	psychologist	philosopher	actor
Source/s of growth/stasis	parents, teachers, peers	others, self	Self, others
Polarities OUTCOME Lessons	<p>1. Trust - Mistrust HOPE <i>mutual recognition - autistic isolation</i></p> <p>2. Autonomy - Self-doubt WILL <i>will to be oneself - self-doubt</i></p> <p>3. Initiative - Guilt PURPOSE <i>anticipation of roles - role-inhibition</i></p> <p>4. Industry - Inferiority COMPETENCE <i>task identification - sense of futility</i></p>	<p>5. Identity - Role confusion SELF-RESPECT</p> <p>a. <i>Temporal perspective - Time confusion (1)</i>  b. <i>Self-certainty - Self-consciousness (2)</i>  c. <i>Role experimentation - Role fixation (3)</i>  d. <i>Apprenticeship - Work paralysis (4)</i>  e. <i>Sexual polarisation - Bisexual confusion (6)</i>  f. <i>Leader- &amp; followership - Authority confusion (7)</i>  g. <i>Ideological commitment - Confusion of values (8)</i></p>	<p>6. Intimacy - Isolation LOVE</p> <p>7. Generativity - Stagnation COMMITMENT</p> <p>8. Self-integrity - Self-despair WISDOM</p>

**Note:** The numbers following the lessons in stage 5 (Identity vs Identity confusion) relate to the lessons of stages 1-4. This is the reason that stage 5 has been noted as being the “philosopher” – the adolescent consolidates the lessons gained in childhood into a new set of lessons, thus creating new wisdom. Similarly, the numbers, 6-8 in stage 5 relate to stages 6-8 and represent the groundwork for the lessons of these stages. In other words, the adolescent tends to try to consolidate the experiences of childhood while setting some experimental tones for the future.

### Appendix 10 : Chapters of Patañjali's *yogasūtras*.

(adapted from Miller, Barbara Stoler. 1995. *Yoga, Discipline of Freedom: The Yoga Sutras attributed to Patanjali*. Berkeley, Cal:University of California Press)

<i>pāda</i>	Theme	Sections, according to Miller	<i>sūtras</i>		
<i>samādhi</i>	Cessation of thought and Contemplative Calm	The Nature of Yoga	1-4		
		The Turnings of Thought	5-11		
		Practice and Dispassion	12-16		
		Ways of stopping thought	17-22		
		Dedication to the Lord of Yoga	23-28		
		Overcoming obstacles and Distractions	29-32		
		Tranquillity of thought	33-40		
		Contemplation that bears seeds	41-46		
		Towards seedless contemplation	47-51		
		<i>sādhana</i>	The practice of Yoga	The purpose of Yoga	1-3
Definition of the forces of corruption	4-9				
Removing the forces of corruption	10-16				
The observer and the phenomenal world	17-27				
The limbs of Yogic practice	28-29				
The moral principles and observances	30-34				
The moral principles	35-39				
The observances	40-45				
Posture	46-48				
Breath Control	49-53				
Withdrawal of the senses	54-55				
<i>vibhūti</i>	Perfect discipline and extraordinary powers	Perfect discipline	1-8		
		The transformations of thought and material nature	9-15		
		The powers of extraordinary knowledge	16-20		
		Further powers of perfect discipline	21-34		
		Knowledge of the spirit	35-37		
		Mastery of the physical world	38-45		
		Other powers	46-49		
		The limitations of the powers	50-55		
		<i>kaivalya</i>	Absolute freedom	Transformations of rebirth	1-3
				The transformation of thought	4-6
The transformation of action	7-11				
The reality of material things and the structure of thought	12-17				
Thought and spirit	18-22				
Thought and the observer	23-26				
The cessation of actions and forces of corruption	27-30				
The knowledge that ends in freedom	31-34				

**Appendix 11 : Schema of Patañjali's *yogasūtra*'s (with grouping analysis)**

	<i>aṅga</i>	or Main Group		Subgroup	Grouping analysis	
I	<i>yama</i>	restraint	a.	<i>ahimsā</i> non-violence or non-injury	cultivation of attitudes	
			b.	<i>satya</i> truthfulness		
			c.	<i>asteya</i> non-stealing		
			d.	<b><i>brahmacarya</i></b> continence		
			e.	<i>aparigraha</i> freedom from avarice or non-covetousness		
II	<i>niyama</i>	practice or observance	a.	<i>śauca</i> cleanliness or purity	cultivation of practice	
			b.	<i>santoṣa</i> contentment		
			c.	<i>tapas</i> religious fervour		
			d.	<i>svādhyāya</i> study of sacred scriptures; study of Self		
			e.	<i>īśvara pranidhāna</i> surrender of self to God		
III	<i>āsana</i>	physical/mental control through posture			active combination of attitude through practice	
IV	<i>prāṇāyāma</i>	focus on breath control			concentration - phase 1	
V	<i>pratyahārā</i>	focus on mind control			concentration - phase 2	
VI	<i>dharana</i>	concentration			mind control - phase 1	
VII	<i>dhyāna</i>	meditation			mind control - phase 2	
VIII	<i>samādhi</i>	union of self with cosmic energies			phase 1 of learning to live in a state of divine-participation	
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**NOTE:** the use of the upper and lower cases in the words 'self' (II.5) is to indicate the difference between Self-of-Being that requires study and the self-of-existence that ultimately requires surrender.

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