

SECTION TEN

MALE VULNERABILITY

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SEED, SEMEN AND PHALLUS : THE ARCHETYPE OF MALE EXISTENCE AND POWER

"How and why do fears of genital loss, shrinkage or sexual weakness take their culturally distinctive forms - and what links them to that broader class of anxieties, both sex and gender related, that are metaphorically termed "castration anxiety" ?

- Kirmayer, 1992.

The archetype of manhood is the symbol of power - power of procreation; power to govern and power to protect. The essence of this power of masculinity is embedded into the vital biological fluid, namely semen and the organ phallus carries the outward expression of his priapic male power. So in mythology and iconography, in the histories of all great civilizations, in their social and religious customs and cultural construct, male sexuality is portrayed as an equivalent to male existence. In the modern-day technological competitive world the socio-political male role expectations also reinforce the age-old myths of masculinity in terms of its phallic strength and semen quality in a more delicate manner. The progressive trend of female role enhancement in the present day society may add a further new dimension of gender conflict in the construct of masculinity cult. It appears from the analysis of ontogenic history of male archetype that sexual disfunction - real or imagined - is not an isolated morbidity, but has a significant historical referential cognitive background. Maleness, masculinity or the feeling of mere male existence is dependent on the perception of one's male attributes, viz. his sexuality or sexual power. The concept of phallus and semen is thus glorified since ancient times in all religions of the world. The present man hence is always, forced to count and recount his male accountability in terms of his sexual attributes. Any supposed deviation from the indexes of male sexual characteristics,

either self-generated or stress-induced (by the social expectations of male role playing) may thus create an all-pervading anxiety which shakes the very basis of 'male being' of an individual. So 'maleness' has to be affirmed in the context of sensitive male sexual parameters; failure of which unfolds a sea-deep sexual anxiety; the expression of which takes the cultural form that varies from society to society.

Culture shapes each dimension of sexual disability according to its indigenous cognitive resources. Against this universal perspective of sexual anxiety, the male psychosexual morbidity has to be conceived and then only one can find a common thread of psychological principle among the Koro in south-east Asia; Shen-K'wei in Taipei, Dhat syndrome in India; Premeha in Sri Lanka; masturbatory illness in Europe, impotency in America; genital loss in Nigeria, penile shrinkage in Israel or venerophobia in England. Kirmayer (1992) discusses this universality of masculine predicament as a root of every gender or sexual anxiety in the present day society :

"Male vulnerability stems from common features of the male role that reinforce the notion of being a big, virile man; a man of wealth, power, sexual potency and social dominance. To cultivate this, many cultures have ideals of manliness that emphasize physical strength and prowess, if not outright aggression, the ability not only to attract but to "conquer" women and sire many children, and the ability to accumulate or control material and social resources through social dominance. The western version of this basic masculine theme is found throughout contemporary advertising for merchandise that signals social status" (p.147).

The biological dimension related to the inherent pleasure imbibed in ejaculation makes the situation of male sexuality more critical and guilt oriented. The myths of semen value related to spiritual morality, procreative potency, health oriented compulsion of semen preservation and phallic strength are the different archetypal male standards, which stand critically in the way of masturbatory pleasure, sexual intercourse or sexual promiscuity of an individual in the context of progressively permissive

human societies. This is a psychobiological paradox and the male with strong beliefs in myths of 'masculine cult' may easily succumb to sexual anxiety with all its concomitant sexual discompensation with diverse psychosexual morbidities even after a trivial transgression, real or supposed, of 'prescribed' sex norms.

The present paper will try to present a coherent transcultural analysis of male sexual cult with a special reference to sexual morbidity to understand the universal perspective of male vulnerability in this context. The whole exercise is aimed to see the different facets of anxiety inherent in the theme of masculinity, from the mytho-historical to the socio-cultural context, in terms of semen value, sexual restraining, phallic power and worship, and female castrator or male fear of the feminine.

SEMEN

Several in-depth cross-cultural anthropological researches have shown that there exists an archetype of semen cult or myth in almost every society, be it the eastern or the western and the primitive or the modern, of the world. Because of sexual ecstasy and pleasure, and potential procreative power inherent in seminal discharge/copulation, semen earns a bipolar value-cognition in the male dominated society since ancient times. The positive pole entertains and accepts the semen value in terms of divinity, virility, creativity, cult of powerful masculinity and vital life fluid while the negative pole marks with disdain and rejection those who lack or are deficient in or spoil this essential and vital fluid thus helping to form a locus of male sexual(-social) anxiety of universal distribution.

This concept of overwhelming symbolical supremacy of semen power has been observed even from the days of primitive civilization when people were dependent simply on soil fertility and hence worshiped the earth as goddess and took every rain-shower to be the semen of their respective supreme god, whether he was called U (Sumerian), Jehova or Jaweh (Hebrew), Zeus (Greek) or Dyauh, the Aryan Father Heaven (India).

The universal similarity in symbolism of semen with nature is well depicted in the two ancient examples from lands that were well apart geo-culturally. The Greek dramatist Aeschylus (525-546 B.C.) wrote :

"The pure Sky yearns passionately to pierce the Earth" and "Rain falls from the bridegroom Sky, impregnating the Earth, and she brings forth her brood for mortal man" (Briffault, 1927) (p.58).

The Indian climate is characterized by monsoons or "Rains" which follow the long summer of devastating heat. The scorched earth deeply absorbs the moisture and a new period of regenerating and life sets in. Rigvedic (collections of hymns and oblatinal verses dating from about 1,500 B.C.) singers applied sexual significance to this spectacular eco-phenomenon. Rain is often

spoken as sperm, seminal fluid (*retah*) which fertilizes the earth. *Parjanya*, the god of rain, is said to deposit the sperm in her like a bull ("*Kanikradad vrsabho jiradanu reto dadhaty osadhisu grabham*" - Rigveda Samhita, III 55, 17, Muir, 1873). The rain god is also called *retodha* or 'begetter' of all plants. He refreshes or satisfies the earth with his sperm ("*parjanya prithivim retasavati*" - Rigveda Samhita, verse 83, 4 : Muir, 1871-73). The act of cosmic production is often described in terms of sexual intercourse of father Heaven (*dyauh*) with mother Earth (*prithivi*). She is moist from impregnation (*garbharasa*) and pierced (*nividdha*) by him (Fiser, 1989). Therefore one can understand why in South Africa and in Australia "women lie in a shower of rain when they desire to conceive" (Briffault, 1927). This symbolism of feminine sexuality and mother Earth is probably captured in the artistic mood of the European painter Andre Masson who has fashioned spacious landscapes out of feminine sexuality in his ink sketch of *Terre Erotique* or *Erotic Land* (Fig.1).

Semen has been regarded as a sacred and vital body fluid since time immemorial. The magical power or healing potency of semen is a well conceived cultural myth in almost every society of the world. Allegro (1972) provides an important historical etymology of the name Jesus in this context :

"The name Jesus/Joshua (the Greek and Hebrew form) means 'the semen that heals' or 'fructifies', the god-juice that gives life. To be smeared with this powerful liquid, above all to absorb it into his body, was to bring the worshipper of the 'Jesus' into living communion with God indeed, to make him divine" (p. 21).

SEMEN VALUE

In Chinese, semen or sexual fluid - the *jing* - is a vital essence present in both sexes. *Jing* maintains a close proportional relation with *qi* (breath, the life energy) and *shen* (the ethereal energy) in healthy state of an individual. The reservoir of *jing* is situated at the base of the brain. During sexual union *jing* is vitalised and the absorption of *jing* of the opposite sex is beneficial



lg.1 : Pen and ink sketch of André Masson : Terre Erotique (Erotic Land).
(Smith, 1974).

Ayurveda teaches that there are seven bodily fluids or substances - all called *dhatu*, each of which is the refined concentrate of the previous one : chyle → blood → flesh → fat → bone → marrow → semen (Zimmerman, 1987). The Sanskrit word '*dhatu*' means 'the vital essence'. Dhat syndrome or 'semen loss' thus is a culture-bound entity in the Indian subcontinent (Wig, 1960). The health promoting aspect of semen is also noted in the *Susruta Samhita* : "a male conceived of scanty paternal semen can attain reproductive capacity only by drinking the semen of another male" (Edwards, 1983).

Kapur (1979) tries to explore the ethnomedical belief of semen value in India and finds that semen is regarded as an essential vital essence, a concentration of which generates 'heat' in the body - a key energy necessary for running of all bodily functions. Head is believed to be the centre of heat in males, while, for females it is the vagina.

Carstairs (1957) provides some ethnographic data from the folk level of the (Western) Indian culture, which state that : "it took 40 days and 40 drops of blood to form one drop of semen, and the head reservoir for semen had a capacity of 20 tolas (6.8 ounces)". Popular Bramhacharya texts stress the importance of semen conservation because of its precious nature : 100 units of blood equal one unit of blood and 100 units of blood in turn make one unit of semen (Kar & Verma, 1978).

In Sri Lankan traditional belief the semen is considered as a very vital fluid for healthy living. Obeyesekere (1976) notes that in Sri Lanka many people select foods for their imagined semen fostering qualities. It is believed that 60 drops of blood equal one drop of semen. This is why many Sri Lankan men drink their own semen after masturbation for increasing vitality.

Sperm Magic

The magical potency of semen/sperm constitutes various medico-religious and social rituals in many traditional and indigenous cultures of the world. The myth of 'sperm magic' is an important indigenous healing ritual observed among the many tribal groups of New Guinea (Cornelissen, 1988). The following list is the account of sperm (semen) use for various purposes among them.

A. Sperm as a divine antidote against evils and diseases:

- 1) rubbing it on one's forehead in order to protect oneself against the spirits of the dead.
- 2) to heal wounds, both by applying it to the wound and by eating it; sometimes a drink is prepared of sperm and coconut milk.
- 3) in fighting epidemics, where every member of the village would eat a little sperm mixed with rasped coconut meat and this mixture would be applied to his/her body by the local shaman.

B. Sperm as a sacred fluid :

- 1) rubbing it into ritual sacrifice.
- 2) rubbing it onto the body during initiation rituals.

C. Sperm as an agent for strength, vigour and fertility :

- 1) eating it baked into sago, as an aphrodisiac and a general strengthening tonic.
- 2) using it as a binding and strengthening agent when colouring the teeth black.
- 3) mixing sperm from a father's masturbation with coconut milk, and giving it to a baby as a strengthening drink.

- 4) enhancing the fertility of coconut and sago plants.

The large supplies of sperm a man regularly needs for all these ritualistic uses are often provided by asking one's wife to have sexual intercourse with other men. The sperm is collected afterwards and often mixed with rasped coconut.

Western Culture

The Western culture also views semen as a vital fluid for health and life. The Western esoteric theory states that "semen consists of (1) the liquor vitae, 'fluid of life', containing the physical seed that it nourishes within the body of the male, and (2) the aura seminalis, or super-physical essence, which has a fiery nature" (Walker, 1977, p.250).

Liquor vitae is a Latin/alchemical term meaning "fluid of life". It is used to designate the wet, physical and biochemical dimension of semen (Camphausen, 1991). Aura seminalis was the term used by European alchemists to denote the metaphysical, electromagnetic and subtle dimension of semen. It is similar to the Indian concept of *Ojas*.

Money et al. (1991) point out that injunctions to conserve the precious semen have a long philosophical history deriving from Biblical proscriptions.

Masturbation, which cause 'spoiling' of semen was regarded in the 18th and 19th Century in the Western medical world as a dangerous disease entity. Engelhardt (1974) in his historical documentlike article "The disease of masturbation : values and the concept of disease" provides a beautiful account of semen-value perception in the western medical community where he states: "The disease of masturbation is an eloquent example of the value-laden nature of science in general and of medicine in particular". Following is a relevant brief note from his article which truly reflects the concept of semen value in the western society.

to health. A continuous transformational chain between food, sex and health is operative in the human body where seven units of the precursor substance yield one unit of the subsequent products (Edwards, 1983) :

FOOD → BLOOD → JING → QI → SHEN

The Taoist medical philosophy states that shen or the kidney is the major site for the storage of jhing (or ching), the seminal essence. If the kidneys are full of jhing, the individual will be healthy and strong. If there is weakness due to excessive loss of jhing, the individual will develop Shen-K'wei syndrome - the vital defect - where his physical and mental states decline (Wen & Wang, 1979).

Another popular Chinese belief at the folk level endorses a great importance to the spermatic fluid because of its invaluable constituents. It asserts that 10 grains of rice form a drop of blood and 10 drops of blood in turn form a drop of spermatic fluid. A man's health can be seriously jeopardized if there is an excessive loss of this vital, nutrient fluid (Gwee, 1963).

These traditional notions are still widely believed within the Taiwanese culture and are supported by traditional Chinese physicians and folk healers. The sex manual "The Art of the Bed Chamber" states that men should prevent emission of semen during intercourse in order not to diminish their limited supply of yang force, i.e. *Ch'i* (Ku-Wu-Chen, 1976).

A very similar concept of semen formation to that of the Chinese is also noted in the Indian culture. The *Susruta Samhita*, a classic of Ayurvedic medicine, also endorses the transformational origin of semen as follows (Zimmer, 1948) : "Blood originates from chyle. Then blood is transformed into flesh. From flesh originates fat; from fat the substance of the bones comes into being. The bones are the source of marrow; from marrow springs semen" (p.184).

Tissot, an eighteenth century Swiss physician, attributed semen loss with venereal disease, prostitution and degeneracy (Paris, 1992). He, in 1758 published his influential work where he maintained that the loss of semen, a vital cerebrospinal substance, was equivalent to the loss of forty times its weight in blood. Semen loss in masturbation was held to be the cause of multiple physical illness e.g. dyspepsia, epilepsy, constrictions of the urethra, impotency, loss of memory, headache, irregular action of the heart and even chronic catarrhal conjunctivitis and blindness (Hagenbach, 1879; Brown, 1866; Hare, 1962) and insanity. It is interesting to note in this context that masturbation was said to be the cause of morphological changes of genital organ of both sexes e.g. elongation of the clitoris and of the labia minora and thinning and decrease in size of the penis (Howe, 1884). Loss of seminal fluid in masturbation was regarded as a dangerous prediction which causes all-round deterioration of an individual :

"From health and vigor, and intelligence and loveliness of character, they (masturbator) became thin and pale and cadaverous; their amiability and loveliness departed and in their stead irritability, moroseness and anger were prominent characteristics... . The child loses its flesh and becomes pale and weak" (Burdem, 1896):

The cognition of pernicious constitutional effect of semen loss was so convincing, even in the medical community, that a post-mortem report of a masturbator in a hospital of Birmingham, England stated in the autopsy report that masturbation :

"..... seems to have acted upon the cord in the same manner as repeated small haemorrhages affect the brain, slowly sapping its energies, until it succumbed soon after the last application of the exhausting influence, probably through the instrumentality of an atrophic process previously induced, as evidenced by the diseased state of the minute vessels" (Jones, 1889; p.170).

Engelhardt (1973) in a very elegant analysis shows that how the cultural construct of semen value as the sole masculine

strength, in the western societies influenced the medical cognition about the masturbation as a diagnostic entity. He thus states :

"Such positions concerning etiology graded over into models in which masturbation's untoward signs and symptoms were viewed as merely the result of guilt and anxiety felt because of particular cultural norms, which norms had no essential basis in biology... ... In short, there was also a model of interpretation which saw the phenomena associated with masturbation as mere adventitious, as due to a particular culture's condemnation of the act This last point of view appears to have gained prominence in the development of thought concerning masturbation as reflected in the shift from the employment of mechanical and surgical therapy in the late 19th Century to the use of more progressive means (i.e., including education that guilt and anxiety were merely relative to certain cultural norms) by the end of the century and the first half of the 20th century" (p.243).

SEMEN RETENTION

In view of the deep faith in the sacred power of, and imbibition of, vital life force in semen, retention of it became a religio-cultural myth from the very early days of civilization. Retention of semen is equated with the concept of masculinity cult - a cult of power, holiness, chastity and longevity - in almost every cultural group of the world.

Chinese Philosophy

In Chinese Taoist philosophy, any ejaculation is considered a loss, or even 'waste', of precious energies. Li Tung Hsuan, a celebrated 17th century Chinese physician advised : "a man should discover and master his own ideal frequency of ejaculation which should not be more than two or three times in ten coitions" (Rawson & Legeza, 1973). Other Chinese medico-philosophical sources also teach that only once in a hundred sexual unions should a man ejaculate, and that older man should have to be careful in retaining their essence of yang.

The Taoist philosophy about the loss of vital energy during male ejaculation stems from the belief that death will ensue once the ching energy is used up (Camphausen, 1991).

Maspero (1937) describes various Chinese Taoist coital rituals for preservation of the vital semen. In *Huo-ho*, the coitus, the man should not reach the point of emitting his seed, and he should bring his seed back (withholding his essence) when the process of ejaculation is about to set in. *Huan-Ch'ing Pu-nao* is the Chinese name for a special sexual exercise by which the semen is returned and the essence acts to reintegrate the centres of the brain. All Taoist adepts follow the oft-repeated advice : "penetrate only without emitting" (Gulik, 1951).

Gulik (1951) in a very analytical way discusses the main tenets of traditional Chinese sexual ethics :

"... the ancient Chinese arrived, via philosophical considerations, at the erroneous conclusion that while man's semen is strictly limited in quantity, woman is an inexhaustible receptacle of Yin essence .

Sexual intercourse was considered to have a two-fold aim. Primarily, the sexual act was to achieve the woman's conceiving, so that she would give birth to sons to continue the family. Secondly the sexual act was to strengthen the man's vitality by making him absorb the woman's Yin essence, while at the same time the woman would derive physical benefit from the stirring of her latent Yin nature...

It follows that the man was supposed to ejaculate only on those days when the woman was most likely to conceive... On all other days the man was to strive to let the woman reach orgasm without himself emitting semen. In this way the man would benefit by every coitus because the Yin essence of the woman, at its apex during the orgasm, strengthens his vital power, while the woman's Yin essence is stirred and intensified so as to promote the chance of her conceiving when, on a subsequent occasion, the man would allow himself to reach orgasm...

...just before reaching the climax the man should restrain himself either by mental discipline or such physical means as compressing the seminal duct with his fingers. Then his Yang essence, intensified through the contact with Yin, will "flow upwards" along the spinal column, and fortify his system ... If man thus limits his emissions to the days when the woman is liable to conceive, his loss of Yang essence on those occasions will be compensated by the obtaining of children perfect in body and mind.

The above basic thoughts explain the ancient Chinese attitude to all phenomena of sex ... Self-abuse for a male is emphatically forbidden, for this implies complete loss of semen. In the case of women, however, self-satisfaction and sapphism are viewed with tolerance, since woman's Yin supply is considered unlimited in quantity. Penilinctio is permitted, but only as a preliminary or accessory of the sexual union; it should never result in the man's ejaculating ... Cunnilinctio practiced by a man is approved as a means of obtaining the Yin essence, and frequently referred to..." (P.6-8)

Coitus Reservatus, a mode of sexual union, has thus gained a wide publicity in various cultural groups who believe in the practice of restoration of seminal fluid. Here the man refrains from ejaculation during coitus. Ben Udhri (Arabic; "sons of virginity") is an Arab/Bedouin tribe, the members of which practise and advocate coitus reservatus. Imask, an Arabic term for "retention", is used to designate a set of techniques to achieve prolonged erection and coition by means of repeated coitus interruptus and retention of semen.

Amplexus Reservatus is a technical erotic term used by the Catholic church for a sexual practice in which both man and woman have sexual union, not aimed at procreation, without ejaculation. Lowndes-Sevely (1989) reports an account of the 1952 Irish Ecclesiastical Record, an official publication of the Vatican, where a warning was given to all those writers who have "praised and recommended" the practice of Amplexus Reservatus "in an unreserved and shamelessly detailed manner".

Relevant to the context of sexual techniques (with semen retention) for spiritual observance, **Karezza** is a notable example. This was coined by an American physician Alice Bunker Stockham (died 1912) and an occultist T.L. Harris (1823-1906). Dr. Stockham's 1896 book 'Karezza' is subtitled 'An ethics of Marriage' where she advises that both male and female should charge each other with desire but must refrain from orgasms and/or ejaculation, unless they want to conceive. During the time of intermission the partners exchange "spiritual fluids", which, she maintained, would mean youthfulness, prolongation of life and increased vitality. John Humphrey Noyes (died 1886), an American religious leader and member of a group known as the 'Perfectionists', founded in 1841 the Oneida Community in New York state. He coined the term 'Male Continence', for intercourse without ejaculation for achieving spiritual height and insights of mystical intensity.

Virya in Indian Context

Ancient Hindu texts preach the vow of *Bramhacharya* or celibacy which states that sexual abuse or semen abuse can lead to nervous prostration and also have an deleterious effect on the mental faculties including intelligence and character. Thus the general advice and caution is not to waste vital nervous energy but to save it by restricting one's sexual activity. This age-old esoteric teaching states the theory of *ojas* and *ojas-sakti* (sperm power) concerning the dictum related to health and sexual ethics. "The seed is dynamic energy which has to be converted into spiritual energy" (*ojas*) and it is mandatory for, "He who seeks divine realization with true zeal should observe strict chastity" (Evola, 1991, p.218). Virya or spiritual manhood is a precious social male model in the Indian culture and is parallelly connected with the *ojas* or subtle force imbibed in the seed or semen. The age-old tradition of blessing a young male runs "Viryaban bhava" (be full of virya or seed) and "Iiaushman bhava" (be of long life). The inherent cognition this reflects is that if semen is lost or wasted, this results in death and if withheld and conserved,

it leads to long life. A man who can restrain this passion of semen loss achieves a transcendental manhood - the highest form of manhood that is ascetic (Evola, 1991).

It is believed that the seed contains the metaphysical life force or spiritual energy. The yoga teaches different methods for the transforming this sexual force or ojas to male archetypes. Two male principles are thus envisaged : the spiritual (divine or *divya*) and the heroic types (*virya*). A variant form of sexual energy is mentioned in the Tibetan adaptation of yoga where *tum-mo* or "mystical heat" is spoken of as energy that can also produce extranormal phenomena of physical and physiological nature (Evans-Wentz, 1935).

The Tantrik philosophy of bisexuality endorses that the female part i.e. the Goddess or primordial *Shakti* is present within the man in the form of an elementary force as 'Kundalini' ("she who is wrapped"). By yogic exercise one can awaken the Kundalini or unite with the inner female without recourse to another individual of the opposite sex. In this very context of 'endogenous' union of spiritual significance, the use of the vital force of seed or *virya* is mandatory. The text speaks of a saving of the force of the seed, the *virya* by exercising 'backward' flow (*Ujjana-sadhna*) and then by directing an "upward" flow (*urdhvaretas*) towards the brain - the ultimate plane of fusion of vital energy of Kundalini. These practices are also mentioned in the Upanishadas. In the Dhyana-bindu-Upanishad we read : "He in whose body the seed remains need not fear death" and in Chandilya-Upanishad : "Either we succeed in overcoming the *bindu* or the yoga fails", *bindu* being the force of the seed or *virya* (Das Gupta, 1946).

A good number of Tantrik texts e.g. Hathayogapradipika, the Goraksha-samhita, the songs of Khana (a legendary lady prophet having remarkable wisdom) and the Subhashita-samgraha, stress the immense importance of reservation of seed or semen, even during coitus, as a precondition for longevity and vitality. It instructs that when in the process of coitus the *bindu* or seed is about to be injected into the women, it must be forced by means of an extreme will power to reascend. The yogi who with-

holds his seed in this way overcomes death. There is a striking similarity in this practice of the seed-holding phenomenon between Hindu Tantrik and Taoist teachings, viz. manual action in Chinese Taoism and the use of auxiliary strangulation of penis in the Hindu work, during coitus. Even the extensively worshipped *Shivalingam*, the idol of Lord Shiva (the Great Creator) depicts the implicit message of seed-retention in its erect phallus, which projects from the yoni and maintains the priapic stature because of the seed holding.

Male Anxiety of Being : Semen Anxiety

The relationship of semen to spiritual and physical health is a universal corporeal myth in all cultural groups of the world. Almost all major religions place extraordinary stress on this biological fluid, so much so that the semen is glorified as a sacred and omnipotent component of male's psycho-social attributes. This cognition has an age-old history and is marked with varied influences of magico-religious philosophies and ethnomedical conceptions. Thus semen constitutes the most vital spectrum of masculinity cult throughout the world. The history of male domination in the society, of male role in procreation and protection and the vis-a-vis cultural expectations throughout the ages make the semen a crucial psycho-socio-biological index of masculinity. Semen index thus becomes an existential myth to the psycho-social development of masculinity in the society.

Semen loss, in any form, is thus equated with diminishing masculinity. Anxiety due to loss of semen or semen-morbidity (even alleged mortality !) is therefore a universal phenomenon observed in all societies. The present discussion will be restricted to a brief account of some major cultural belief patterns concerning semen-loss anxiety.

Chinese Culture

Discussion on the Chinese Taoist semen doctrine in the previous chapter is indicative of the varied forms of semen anxieties and the supposed cures by various sexual

rituals and semen retention techniques. Shen-K'wei syndrome is a specific Chinese disease term for the morbid state of semen loss. It is regarded as a culture-bound illness of the orient (Haslam, 1980). The clinical presentation includes : marked anxiety, multiple psychosomatic distress ranging from backache, dizziness, fatigue, insomnia and general malaise with a frequent history of sexual difficulties (premature ejaculation/impotence) centring around a strong conviction of an excessive semen loss from frequent intercourse or masturbation or nocturnal emissions. Yap (1965a) working with Cantonese patients in Hong Kong reported Shen-K'wei as a neurasthenic state associated with sexual excess and multiple somatic, even vague, symptoms. Tseng (1973) describes Shen-K'wei as follows :

"Since semen is thought to be the essence of energy and the excretion of it is believed to result in a loss of vital energy, nocturnal ejaculation is an illness attributed to poor mental control over sexual desire. This misconception has an effect upon young men today who fear that due to excessive nocturnal ejaculation they may suffer from vital insufficiency or neurasthenia" (p.573).

Indian Culture

The Indian counterpart of this semen morbidity is the Dhat syndrome, a culture-bound symptom complex, characterized by severe anxiety, hypochondriacal features and persistent preoccupation with the morbid perception that there is excessive loss of semen by nocturnal emissions or through urine or faeces (Wig, 1960; Akhtar, 1988). Malhotra & Wig (1975) state :

"A large segment of the general public from all socioeconomic classes believed that semen loss is harmful. Seminal fluid is considered an elixir of life both in the physical and in the mystical sense. Its preservation guarantees health, longevity and supernatural powers" (p.519).

This belief system has a deep root in the holy scriptures of Indian medical classics, viz. Sushruta Samhita (1938) and Carak Samhita (1949), which condemn all types of orgasms because they involve semen loss (Wise, 1840; Carstairs, 1956). Interestingly Charaka Samhita describes the malady of 'dhatu' (semen) loss (Behere & Natraj, 1984) as follows : *Shukrameha* or spermaturia, in which patient passes semen resembling urine or urine mixed with semen, *Sitamcha* or phosphaturia in which patient gets frequent micturation, the urine being exceedingly sweet and cold, and *Suklamaha* or white urine where the patient passes urine having white colour like that of pasted flour. Shiva Samhita - another epic of Hindu mythology says, "The falling of seed (sperm) leads towards death, the keeping of one's seed is life. Hence with all his power should a man hold his seed" (Volin & Phalan, 1967). Ayurveda, the treatise of Indian indigenous medicine, maintains that health depends on balancing the proper level of *sukra* (vital essence) of semen (Leslie, 1977; Obeyesekere, 1976). So semen conservation is an important advice in all Ayurvedic texts. It is believed that masturbation and nocturnal emissions, to which young men are more susceptible, are capable of depleting the vital essence semen, causing physical and mental illness. Sexual over-activity, because of its semen depletion potential, is discouraged. (Bottero, 1991).

Sri Lankan Culture

Obeyesekere (1976) describes a similar syndrome from Sri Lanka, called 'prameha'. It is also thought to be due to loss of 'dhatu' or semen - the vital human component. Twenty types of diseases relating to prameha are described and symptoms include passing of semen in the urine, nocturnal emissions, watering of the eyes, giddiness and various body aches. Significantly, swelling of the joints is said to occur if prameha is not treated. The symptoms are said to be the same in both the sexes since Sri Lankans believe that females also secrete semen, and the symptoms here are a white discharge.

**Indian
Subcontinent**

This syndrome of semen-loss anxiety in various psychosomatic forms is also prevalent in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan (Wig, 1984; Clyne, 1964). It is now easily understood how deeply these sexual beliefs are culturally ingrained and thence by their multi-modal myth-potential colours the spectrum of masculinity, inclusive of its morbid concerns of masturbation (guilt) and potency (disorders).

**Western
Society**

Kirmayer (1992) shows how ideas about semen-conservation and sexual restraint are an important part of Western religious, moral and medical traditions - all of which have a deep psychodynamic link with sexual anxiety. He states :

"Throughout western esoteric religious and medical traditions, there are recurrent notions of semen as containing energy. Hence, its accumulation through sexual restraint is seen as a means of storing up power and sexual excess is a road to weakness and dissolution" (p.140).

Hall (1991) in his attempts of historical tracings of European medicine finds that the aspect of semen value, both in terms of sexual restraint and in the dire consequence of sexual excess, is a prominent theme. In his book, 'The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Youth, Adult Age and Advanced Life' (first published in 1857), he recounts the history of the medical investigation of male sexual anxiety from the Victoria era to the twentieth century. It was believed that sexual overindulgence either through masturbation or through marital intercourse may cause the wasting diseases of spermatorrhoea. Spermatorrhoea (involuntary seminal emission either during sleep or in awakened state) was believed to cause disability and madness. Schatzman (1974) in his historical accounting of male sexuality in the nineteenth century provides a fascinating list of distresses/disabilities and illnesses

of over fifty types that were thought to be caused by masturbation. The illnesses ranged from sexual dysfunction to insanity, from bacterial infection to cancer !

Skultans (1979) in his book "English Madness, Ideas of Insanity : 1580-1890", shows the prevalent western belief of masturbation as a dangerous habit. During the early nineteenth century European medicine developed two new diagnostic entities : spermatorrhea or excessive loss of sperm and masturbational insanity. He cites several historical documents which preach the idea of sinfulness in masturbation e.g. 'Onania or the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution' by an anonymous clergyman (1710 A.D.); "A Practical Treatise on the Diseases of Testis" by Curling (1856) and several others.

The Onamia of 1710 states :

"Self-pollution is that unnatural practice by which persons of either sex may defile their own bodies without the assistance of others, whilst yielding to filthy imaginations they endeavour to imitate and procure to themselves, that sensation which God has ordained to attend the carnal commerce of the two sexes, for the continuance of our species" (p.1).

Lallemand (1874), the French physician and specialist on spermatorrhea, describes masturbation as : "A disease that degrades man, poisons the happiness of his best days, and ravages society".

Seminal loss constituted a distinct syndrome in the nineteenth century Europe. Most of the medical writers on the subject agreed on the causes of spermatorrhoea, which include : constipation, worms, gonorrhoea, heat, highly seasoned food, alcohol, sexual preoccupation and over indulgence in sexual intercourse. David Skae (1863), a Scottish physician who first identified a particular type of mental illness, which he termed 'masturbatory insanity', formulated a character profile of the masturbator as follows :

" that vice produces a group of symptoms which are quite characteristic, and easily recognised, and give to the cases a special

natural history. The peculiar imbecility and shy habits of the very youthful victim, the suspicion and fear, and dread, and suicidal impulses, the palpitations and scared look, and feeble body of the older offenders, passing gradually into dementia or fatuity, with other characteristic features familiar to all of you, which I do not stop to enlarge on, all combine to stamp this as a natural order or family" (p.315).

Maudsley (1868) in one of his early papers on masturbation, published in the Journal of Mental Science, regarded masturbatory activity with the abhorrence due to a form of moral degeneracy. Later in his book 'The Pathology of Mind' (1879) he reconsiders masturbation as a product of bad inheritance over which the patient has little control.

It is interesting to note here the situation in the United States. Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the U.S. Declaration of Independence and father of the American Psychiatry, noted in 1830 that "undue or a promiscuous intercourse with the female sex, or ... onanism ... produces seminal weakness, impotence" (P.347). Tissot (1764) mentioned a book of 1730 (its 18th edition) which indicates masturbation as inducing insanity, blindness and impotency. The 1945 version of the United States Boy Scout Manual warned young males against "wasting their vital fluid" (Green, 1981).

These background conceptions and attitudes towards male sexuality in the Western societies have an important psychodynamic influence on the present day male sexual orientations and thus "anxiety about masturbation, the size of sexual organs and adequacy of sexual performance continue to be common male concerns and the target of interventions in primary care and sexual dysfunction clinics" (Kirmayer, 1992).

PHALLIC WORSHIP

The phallus is a natural symbol, both an icon and an index, of masculine identity (Rancour-Laferriere, 1985). In the history of religions the phallus is worshipped as a cult of male power, fertility and pandemic begetter manhood (Evola, 1991). It is an apotropaic symbol representing the masculine creative principle, the procreative, generative forces of nature and the human race; the function and potency of the Creator, the stream of life (Cooper, 1993). Ithyphallic figures represent the imparting of life to man and nature; fertility; potency and procreation. Phallic symbols are the *linga*, the Hindu aniconic representation of Lord Siva as Creator of the Universe; the pillar, obelisk or anything piercing or penetrating such as the sword, lance and arrow. The phallus was used in Egyptian and Graeco-Roman cemeteries as a symbol of resurrection and renewal of life.

The phallic symbol expresses the dual aspect of male archetype, viz. the priapic representation of male power as also the principle of transcendental, magical or supernatural manhood (Wyly, 1989). Monick (1989), in his masterly analysis of the theme of phallic power and castration fear since the earliest period of human civilization (Fig.1), shows how a bio-psycho-social triangle concerning the phallus has been created, mythologically represented and culturally accepted as the prototype of a primordial being of male with his inherent sexual anxiety (due to a supposed loss of phallus) in all the cultures of the world. This triangle (Fig.2) at the biological level consists of phallus as the anatomical pivot, the other two vertices being the male power or strength and creation. In the psychological level, phallus acts as the pivotal point of male sexual or gender identity, the mysticisms of regeneration and of transcendence being the other two vertices. Examples of the former can be seen in Greek and Roman sculpture and the latter in various forms in the myth, mythology and iconography of the major religions of the world.

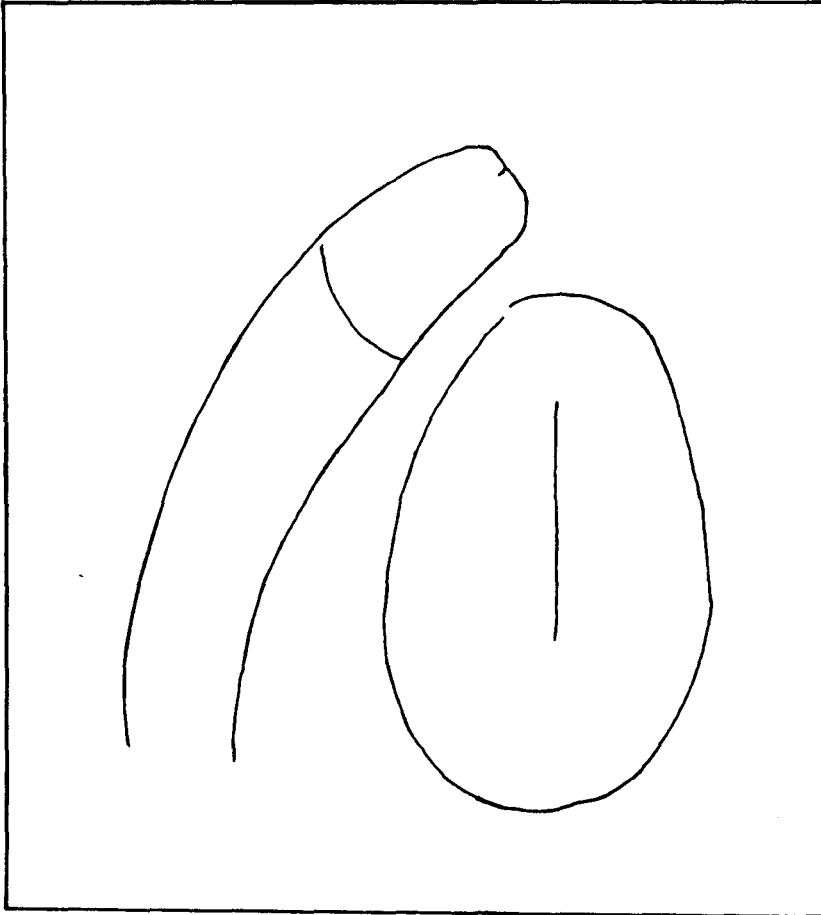
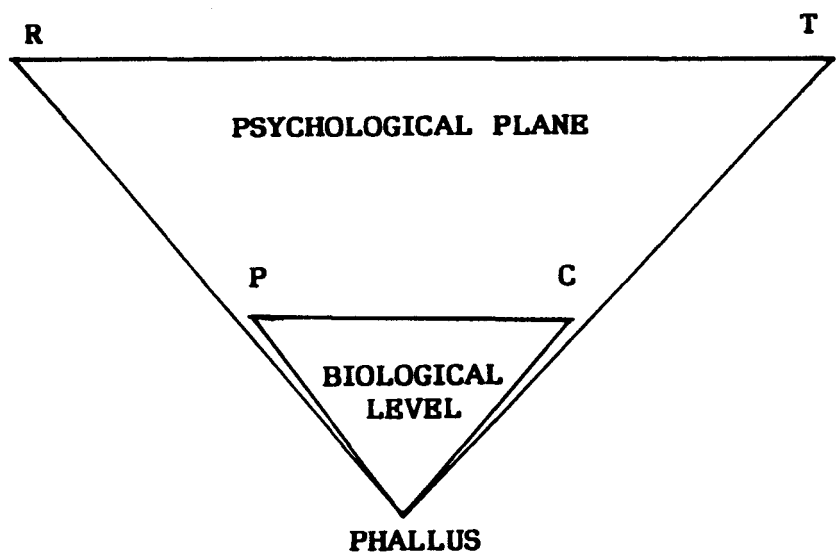


Fig.1. Phallic worship : Wall engravings, dated to c. 15,000 B.C., in the cave Les Combarelles, nearby Les Eyzies, France (Monick, 1989).



P = Power	R = Regeneration
C = Creation	T = Transcendence

Fig.2. Biopsychological theme of Phallic Identity.

The present discussion is not devoted to the study of mytho-history of phallic symbolisms or worship but is concerned with the universality of phallic cult in order to recognize a general referential perspective of the phallic symbol as the male archetype upon which the seed of male sexual anxiety is sowed. Kirmayer (1992) thus aptly states :

"The loss or diminution of phallic power then is both a biological and symbolic attack on masculine identity. The castrated man has lost his powers of creation, connection and transcendence. The conjunction of phallus, power and creation helps to explain the centrality of images of castration in mythology" (p 142).

In the following pages a brief account of phallic worship among the notable religious sects of the world is given to bring out the mythical as well as cultural importance of phallic power as a symbol of masculine identity.

THAILAND

Tap-tun is a Far-Eastern goddess whose temples in Bangkok are virtually stacked with images of phallus (made from wood/stone) for worship. Thai people customarily wear phallic amulets called *palad khik* or "representative phallus". The smaller ones are worn on the body and the longer ones displayed in temples or shrines.

JAPAN

Matsuri : It is a common term for a variety of Shino festivals held throughout Japan. It is a type of fertility festival during which worshippers carry huge phalli through the town and eat or offer to the deities, or both. Sweets are made in the form of smaller phalli. Married women in this celebration pray for another child. Megaliths depicting phallic worship is also found in Japan (Fig.3).

Sarutahiko : It is the Japanese phallic god, "walking penis", a deity before whom all evil creatures and demons shrink with fear and from whom they flee.

Ema : It is a type of wooden prayer tablets, that are placed at shrines by Shinto (a Chinese term for an indigenous, nature-oriented Japanese religion, the main deity of which is the goddess Amaterasu) worshippers, which feature male or female genitals as the expression of phallic (Fig.4) or yoni worship.

INDIA

Shivalinga : Lord Shiva is the Indian male creative principle, worshipped widely among the non-Islamic population of the Indian subcontinent in the form of lingam (penis). Lingam is a Sanskrit term of reverence for the statues and images of Shiva's genital organ. Everywhere in cities, towns and villages of India and Nepal one sees small or large stone statues of 'Shivalingam', either in the temple or under a Baal tree (*Aegle marmelos*), a sacred tree, whose leaves are used for worshipping Shiva and other gods and whose dried wood is used for holy fire in religious rituals. Shiva is known under many names e.g. Mahadeva, Vairab, Nandi, Nataraj, Ekalinga, Banalinga or Trilinga. In India the usual image of Shivalingam is represented together with its female equivalent, the yoni (vagina) and such an image is called yonilinga (Fig.5). This sacred symbol is worshipped with great religious enthusiasm and vigour. People touch and kiss the statue. Fresh flowers, rice, fruits are offered and the neatly applied ochre powder testifies to the living religious practice of phallic worship. There are quite a few well known and famous places of pilgrimage dedicated to lord Shiva situated in India and Nepal where millions of rupees are being spent daily for worship rituals. These are, to name a few, the great Viswanath temple at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh; the Tarakeswar temple in West Bengal; the Somnath temple in Gujarat; the Brehadeswar temple at Tanjor, Tamil Nadu, the Matangeshvara temple of Khajuraha, Madhya



Fig.3. Japanese Megaliths of fertility-oriented Phallic (and Yoni) worship (Camphausen, 1991).

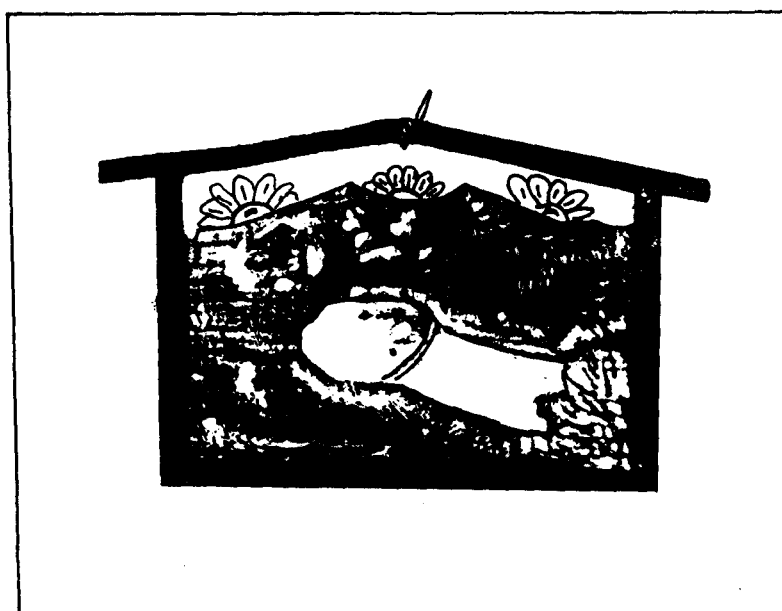


Fig.4. Prayer tablet of Japanese Ema, offered at Shinto sanctuaries. (Camphausen, 1991).

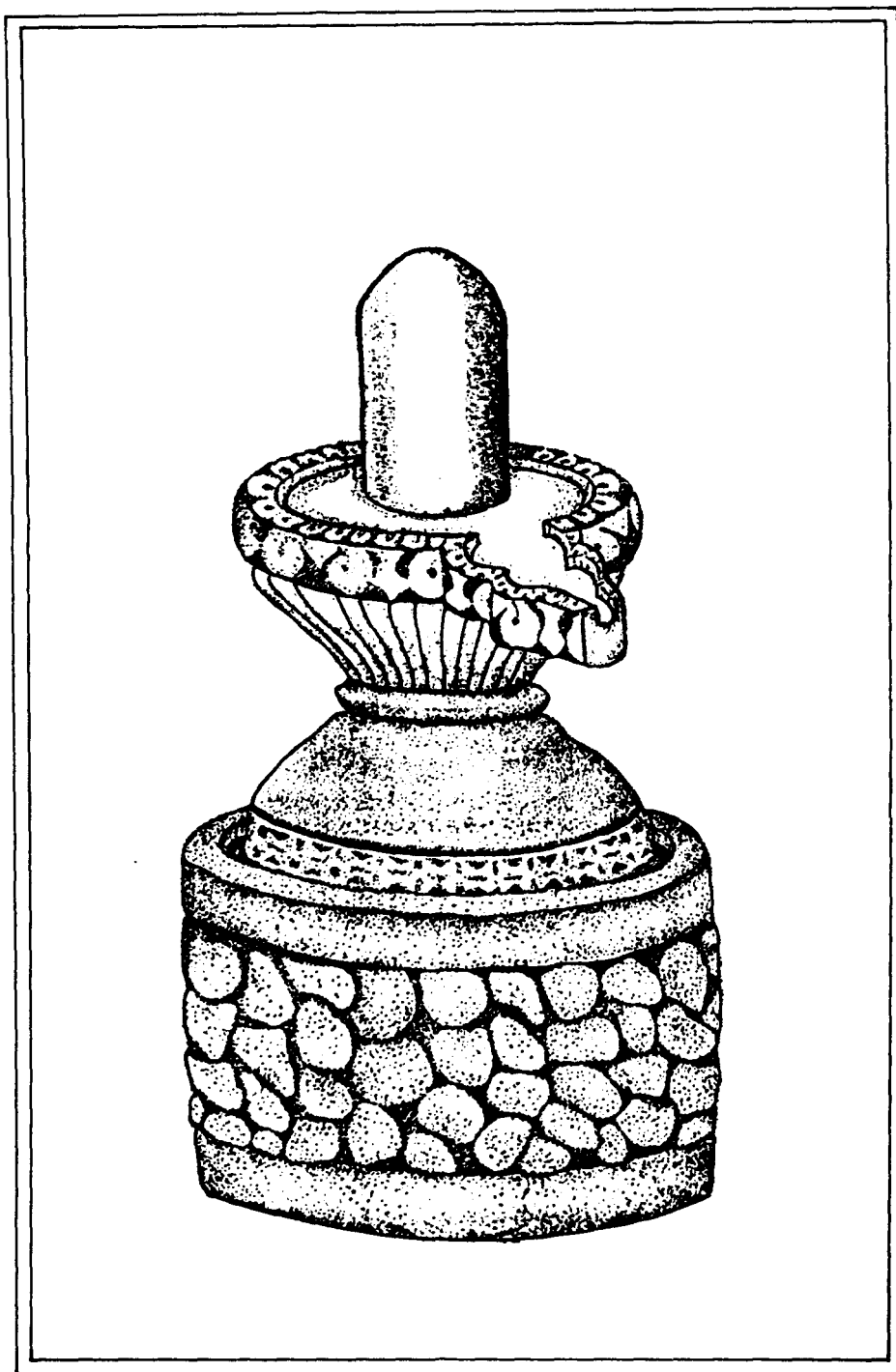


Fig.5. Yonilinga, a symbol of union and unification.

Pradesh (which contains an erect lingam two and a half metres tall and one metre in diameter) and the Pasupatinath temple at Katmandu, Nepal. These are the various names of Lord Shiva. The cave temple of Amarnath in Kashmir houses the lingam of Shiva modelled by nature herself in the form of stalagnite of ice more than three metres long (Fig.6). The religious festivals of sacred marriage between Shiva and Parvati (the female deity for *Shakti* or strength) is a carnival-like celebration observed as "Shiva-ratri", 'the night of the Lord' in the spring season with great festivity all over India. Worship of 'shiva-linga' is a very sacred ritual among adolescent girls for the sake of finding a 'mainly' husband in the future.

EGYPT

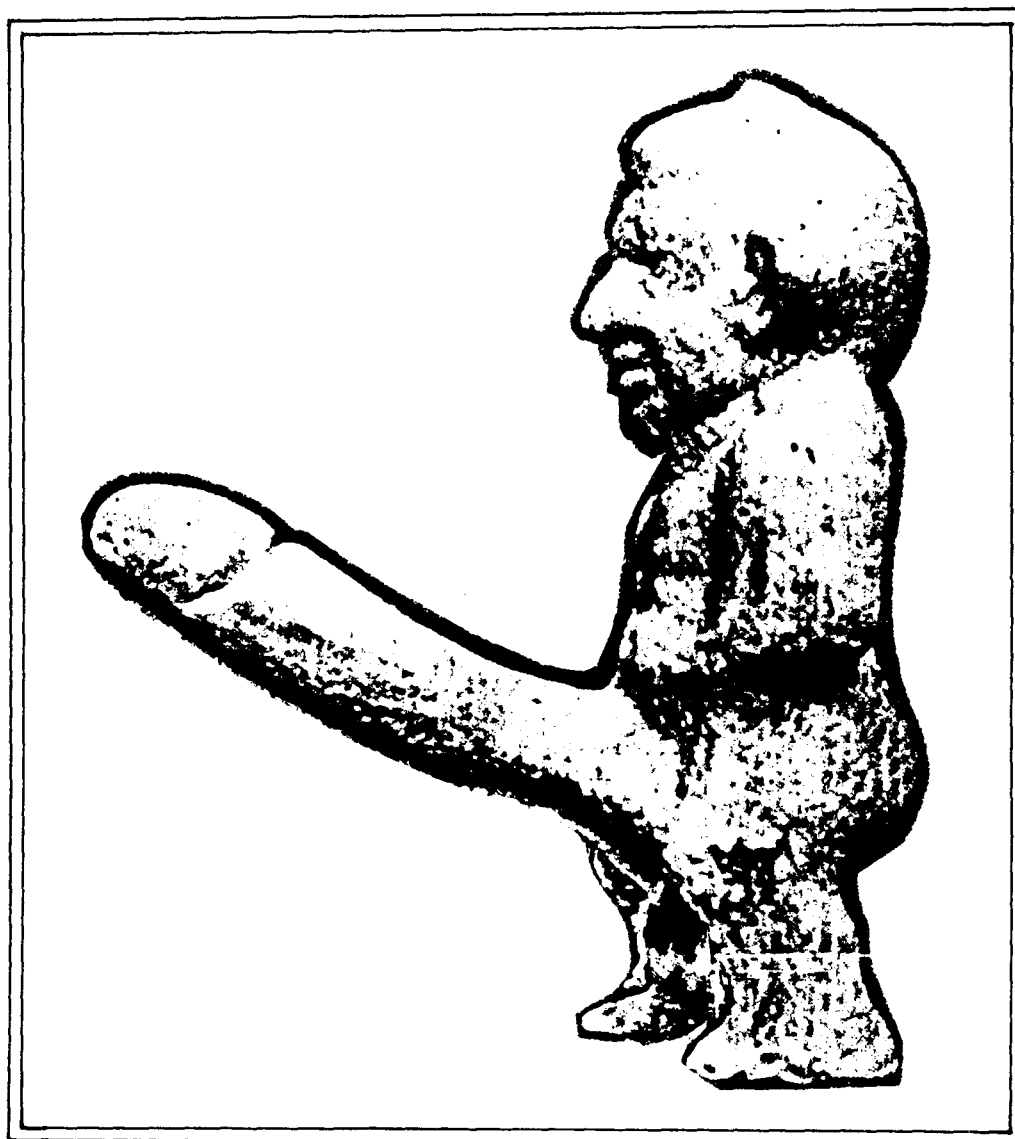
Phallic worship was practised in the holy temples of Karnak, Thebes and Heliopols until the fourth century.

Osiris : He is the most important Egyptian ithyphallic god famous for his myth of dismemberment in which phallic symbolism plays a major role. Ithyphallic is a technical term to indicate certain deities with an erect phallus. Prominent among such are the Egyptian Min (fertility god shown on murals and in statues with an oversized erect phallus); the Greek god Ben (Fig.7) and the Greek and Roman god Priapus, after whose name the clinical term priapism is given to the pathological state of sustained erect penis.

The ithyphallic god Osiris (Fig.8) symbolized, not fertility, birth and death linked to procreation, but resurrection from the dead. An inscription beside the figure of a dead man reads : "O god who sprang from the phallus, stretch your arms to me "(Evola, 1991). Another such reads : "O Phallus arising to slaughter those who rebel against the sun god ! By virtue of your phallus I am stronger than the strong and mightier than the mighty "(Mereshkowski, 1927). In various statues and representations, Osiris himself holds, or points to, his penis (Fig.9), alluding to his resurrection as a prototype for his worshippers.

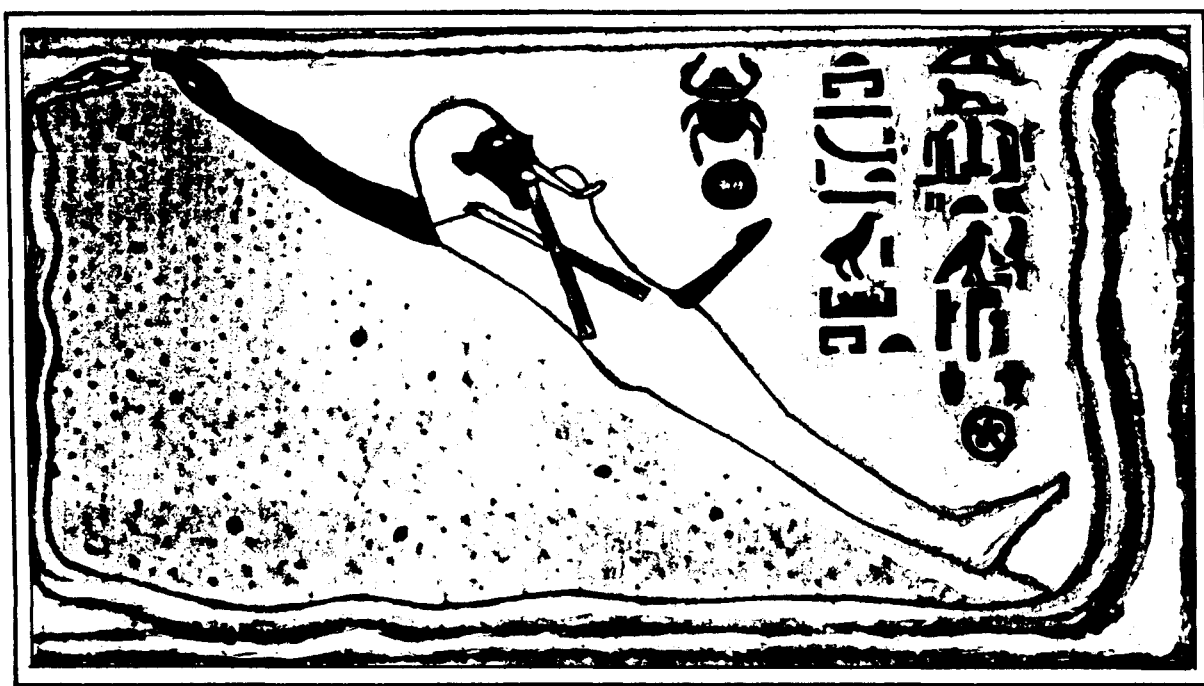


Fig.6. The sacred lingam of natural ice in the Amarnath cave, Eastern Kashmir, India. (Camphausen, 1991).



The ithyphallic god Ben at the Museum of Ephesus,
Greece. (Camphausen, 1991).

Fig.7.



The Egyptian god Osiris in an ithyphallic stance.
 Egyptian Museum, Cairo. (Camphausen, 1991).

Fig.8.



Fig.9. The god Osiris taking the phallic oath (British Museum, London). (Camphausen, 1991).

EUROPE

In southern Europe, Priapus is a widely worshipped deity. In the countryside and in small public chapels his statues are regularly worshipped by his female devotees. In case of diminishing sexual desire or disabilities like venereal disease or impotency or other affliction of the genitals, people would offer replica of their "private parts" (made from wax, wood or marble) to the god Priapus for cure. In many sects, his priests enjoy the "duty, privilege and obligation in the defloration of his young female worshipper's" (Keuls, 1985).

The percentage of Priapus is noteworthy insofar as the mythical reference of phallic worship and sexuality is concerned. Dionysus is the Greek god of ecstasy, trance, wine and sexuality. He was born from the thigh (a code for the phallus) of Zeus. His cult is also worshipped as Bacchus in Rome. Phallophoria is a festival of phallic worship held on the Greek island of Rhodes in honour of the god Dionysus.

The cult of Aphrodite is even more fascinating from the view point of mythical anthropology. Aphrodite (Greek : "desire/intercourse") is basically a Greek/European deity, who was born from the sperm of the last ejaculate of the dying god Uranos (as he was being castrated by his son Cronos), and most of her psychological and cultural attributes are reflections of the primal associations with love, desire, sexuality and ecstasy, the last often in connection with opium and other mind altering drugs. The term 'Aphrodisiac' is coined after her to designate a variety of substances that stimulate sexual desire or enhance sexual activity. The mythical figure of 'Hermaphrodite' is the combination of god Hermes and goddess Aphrodite.

Bacchus, is an ancient Roman god of wine and erotic ecstasy, whose association with the goat, licentious festivals is well known. The name is linguistically derived from the Sumerian word *balag Ush*, which means "erect penis" (Camphausen, 1991).

The Egyptian tradition regarding Osiris is a fascinating example of phallic myth :

" we find the myth of Osiris, the primordial god, who was torn to pieces. The various parts of his body were found and were part together again (by his sister, wife and lover Isis); however, his phallus was never found. This dismembering symbolizes the passage from the world of the One to that of manifold natures and individual existence. In the latter world, the primordial being in man tends to be recomposed. But still man lacks the phallus, not that of physical manhood but that of transcendental manhood and of creative, divine, and magical power. He will find it and become whole only as an initiate or as a "being made into Osiris" (Evola, 1991, p.147).

ISRAEL

The tradition of the early Hebrews in swearing their oaths by placing one hand on the other's penis is linked with the theme of mighty phallus. This practice, amazingly, is also depicted in Biblical prayer : "Put I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh" (Genesis 24 : 2-3, 47, 29).

The thigh is often used as a symbol of the phallus, hence creative power, procreation and strength (Cooper, 1993). In Egypt the thigh of the bull or hippopotamus is 'the phallic leg of Set'. Dionysos emerged from the thigh of Zeus.

GREECE

Priapus :The most notable Greek phallic god, son of Aphrodite and Dionysus, is regarded as the personification of the male sexual impulse and drive. He is probably the most celebrated among the phallic deities and is usually depicted in ithyphallic stance and with unusually large genitals (Camphausen, 1991).

ENGLAND

Giant of Cerne Abbas : It is a first century B.C. earth sculpture in Dorset, England, depicting the fertility god Hercules. The huge ithyphallic figure, cut into the hillside, is 60 metres tall with a phallus of about 12 metres length (Fig.10). Local women, who wish to conceive, are known to sleep on the phallus overnight (Camphausen, 1991). Once every seven years a ritual cleaning of the giant is done on May Eve with great festivity.

Maypole Dances : It is a part of fertility festivals connected with phallic worship. Maypole games and dances are still held in rural parts of Europe. The Maypole is a phallic symbol. In pre-Christian or early-Christian times, the dances originally ended with a general orgy or with a search of young women by male youths, with fertilizing sexual unions in the fields (Camphausen, 1991).

FRANCE

Menhir : It is a megalithic stone, a representation of the phallic creative force. Such Menhirs can be found all over Europe, but the largest collection is found in Carnac, France (Fig.11). Traditionally it is believed that sexual union within a wide of Menhir stone is a "unfailing remedy" for barrenness (Camphausen, 1991). Prominent among many local rituals is the visit of young couples to a Menhir where they should touch the stone with their genitals. This sacred and magical touch would assure the man of the birth of a male child and the woman of her husband's fidelity. To achieve pregnancy women in the Brittany region of France used to eat a little of the dust surrounding their town's phallic statue.



Fig.10. The Giant of Cerne Abbas (first century B.C.), Dorset, England, (Camphausen, 1991).



Fig.11. A phallic Menhir at Filitosa, Corsica, France (Camphausen, 1991).

ITALY

The walls of ancient Italian towns were marked with phallus to evoke a magical protective force for its inhabitants. The use of phallus as an amulet was widespread among the ancient Romans to protect against ill luck and harmful spell (Evola, 1991). In many cultural groups the worship of the "holy member" during carnival is observed till today.

MALE FEAR OF THE FEMALE

- **VAGINA AS MYSTIC & VULNERABLE**
- **WOMEN AND WITCHCRAFT**
- **FEMALE CASTRATOR : SEDUCTION AND
GENITAL LOSS OR DEATH**

MALE FEAR OF THE FEMALE

It is a matter of great surprise, as one documents the female role or conceptualization from the early ages of human civilization, that various perilious myths and male enmity have been attributed to females. One such glaring example is the role assigned in the Bibel to Eve as the deceptor of innocent Adam. Early philosophers, out of their feelings of male dominance or fear of female dominance (!), projected the theme of "female dangerousness" as a threat to male survival on this earth. At least three biological phenomena are regarded as mysterious and of occult significance, viz. menstruation, child bearing capacity and morphologic receptivity (for male organ and semen) of vagina in sexual union.

This discussion does not go into the details of each factor. Thus some salient points regarding the theme of 'female dangerousness' from the viewpoint of male sexual anxiety will be focussed.

Evola (1991) provides a fascinating historical document where menstruation is regarded as an occult female substance with potentials for harming males, specially his sexual attributes and power, in almost all the notable religions of the world.

"... This influence is able to paralyze everything sacred and strikes at the most profound nucleus of manhood. Thus, the Laws of Manu (Hinduism) state that the knowledge, strength, force, might, and vital energy of a man who lies with a menstruating woman disappear wholly. North American Indians believe that the presence of a woman in that state can sap the power of a holy man. In Rome, virgins acting as vestals had to suspend their task during their menstrual period; among the Medes, Persians, and Bactrians, menstruating women were isolated from holy elements and especially from fire; among Greeks of the Orthodox Church women in that condition were forbidden to communicate and to kiss the icons in church. In certain parts of

Japan as well, they are strictly prohibited from visiting the temples and praying to the gods and the good spirits; Among the Hebrews even the death penalty was contemplated in certain instances for men who joined themselves in the flesh with a menstruating woman, and for Zoroastrians this was a sin for which there was no remission. The Islamic code of Sidi Khebil said : "He who touches aa woman during her menses to satisfy his own pleasure losses the force and tranquility of the spirit". An old English rhyme, ... says : "O menstruating woman, thou'rt a fiend/From whom all nature should be closely screened !"

".... Menstrual blood has played a part in the magic of incantations and love potions as well as in witchcraft. In medieval Europe its use in certain potions was said to have the power to make people idiots and hypochondriacs or, in other cases, to create mania and catalepsy ... When mixed with wine, it was supposed to make people walk in their sleep or go crazy with love. The "superstition" is still widespread that when a man was made, unawares, to carry the menstrual blood of a woman on his person, it would bind him irrevocably to her. Accordingly to the gypsies, menstrual blood mixed with certain drinks provokes a loss of control that can cause a man to become alcoholic; they also believe that women who celebrate the Sabba on the "Mountain of the Moon" confirm their pact with the Devil every seven years by means of their menstrual blood... the link between the substance of woman, through her menses, and the world of nocturnal ... magic is significant, as are the psychically arousing and disintegrating influences (p.149)".

Man has depicted woman as the principle of impurity and bearer of a mysterious energy because of her rhythmic biological bleeding. Jaki, a Persian menstruation spirit and female demon who is said to influence to do evil deeds, testifies to the occult forces seen as inherent in menstrual blood (Camphausen, 1991).

Evola (1991) shows how the two basic female types, everlasting archetypes of human lover and human mother, are perceived since early times, which he terms as the Aphrodite and the Demeter type respectively. The concept of Demeter type has an evolutionary significance in the history of mankind. Once the human culture changed its basic pattern of life from nomadic hunting and gathering to a more settled way of agrarian communities and village life, there arose a stronger need to aid Mother Nature and magically influence the deities in charge of vegetation. In the Western world this concept of mother aspect of femininity was witnessed as early as the late Paleolithic age, which continued into the Neolithic age and took shape in the pre-Hellenic mother goddesses. It reappeared in a southern strip that began at the Pyrenees, passed through the Aegean civilization, to Egypt and Mesopotamia and reached pre-Aryan India and Polynesia (Mosso, 1909). The theme of fertility is displayed as a naturalistic tradition and hence projected into the goddess that fosters the origin of life. So, many of the ancient idols consist of many-breasted goddesses (Fig.1) and of naked female images with their legs apart to exhibit the sexual organ, projecting the mysterious magical energy, the fertility aspect of the primordial Genetrix or Mother (Fig.2). In some primitive cultures the same theme is expressed in a stylized linear design of the womb and sexual organ, namely in the upside-down triangle where a line at the lower vertex shows the beginning of the vulvar cleft (Fig.3). This design acted as a symbol of a magical force intended to fertilize, and at the same time, to frighten and ward off those persons who were not allowed to draw near (Evola, 1991).

The Great Mother or Mother goddess is the archetypal feminine; the origin of all life; the *primum mobile* and the ultimate plenum. She is the Queen of Heaven, Mother of God, the Keeper of the Keys of fertility and the gates of birth, death and rebirth (Cooper, 1993). She has the dual nature of creator and destroyer and is both nourisher, protector, provider of warmth and shelter, and the terrible force of dissolution, devouring and death-dealing; she is the creator and nourisher of life and its grave.

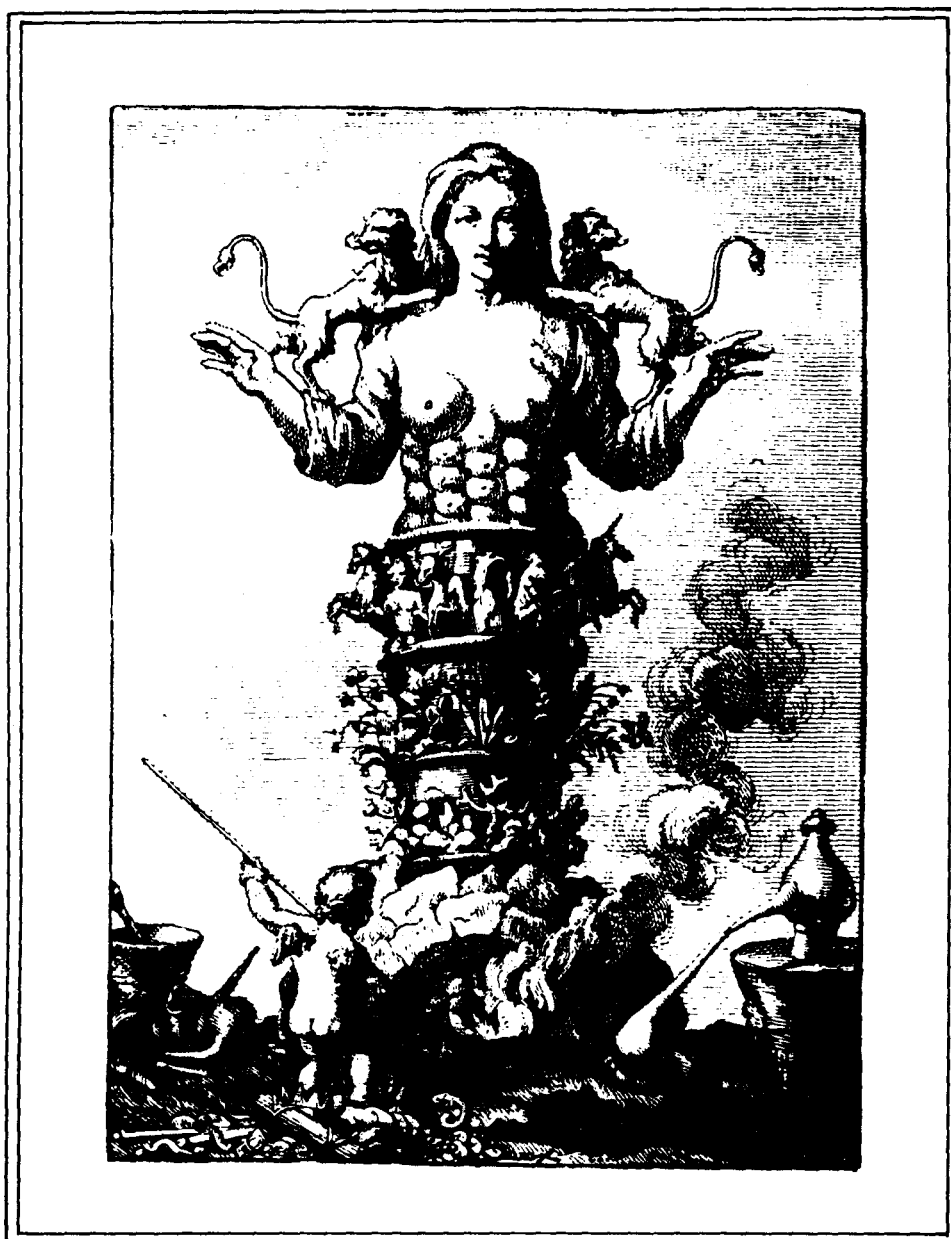


Fig.1. Ephesian Artemis : The many-breasted ancient near Eastern and Greek goddess of fertility and sexuality. 18 century engraving, Stockholm, 1712 (Camphausen, 1991).



Fig.2. Adya-Sakti, the Ultimate Ground, genetrix of All Things : 11th century, India (Mookherjee & Khanna, 1989).

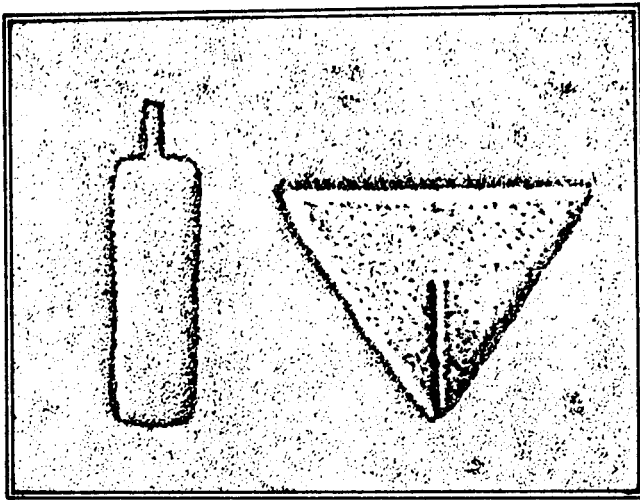


Fig.3. Symbols for man and woman in early Sumerian writing (Camphausen, 1991).

Cooper (1993) describes the mythological significance of the Great Mother in respect to her terrible or devouring aspect :

"Mythologically she is the Virgin Mother, the Mother of God, and bears a male and is begotten by her son-lover, or by the spirit or he will; she is both the Bride and Mother of God and the Mater Dolorosa, mourning the death of her son or lover. ... Ensnaring and death dealing, she is Astarte, Kali, Durga, Lilith, Hecate, Circe, and is the (black virgin) or has serpent hair or is of frightful appearance (p.108-109).

Indeed a conception of the daemonic element springs from this terrible aspect of the female which has a deep influence on the esoteric teachings about the metaphysics of human sexuality. Two important deductions emerge from this perception : (1) mysticism, magical propensity and vulnerability attached to femininity, viz. vagina and thus the evolution of 'yoni magic and worship' and (2) fear of the feminine, specially because of the threat of destruction of manhood, viz. dismemberment or absorption of male erotic energy. Examples of the former at the social level can be seen in the concept of witchcraft, folk-beliefs about the mysterious vagina and the rituals of 'yoni worship' in different cultural forms, while the latter can be seen in various traditional beliefs concerning the female threat of male potency destruction either by magic or by absorbing the male essence of life, viz. the vital fluid semen.

Vagina as Mystic and Vulnerable

Since time immemorial the vagina or 'yoni' is regarded as the primal root of the source of objectivation or as a symbol of cosmic energy. It was believed that the yoni or vagina has an inherent magical power and energy. This conception has a deep cultural and religious background where women have long been regarded and honoured as an embodiment of divine female energy or 'Shakti' and where the female genitals are seen as

a sacred symbol of the goddess.

Yoni, in Sanskrit meaning 'womb, origin or source', is the centre for various myths of both types, i.e. protective and destructive, the latter being the projection of the former ! Yoni is thus regarded as a kind of magical weapon imbued with supernatural energies which may protect or destroy and the mere exhibition of which has effects akin to certain magical spells. 'Yoni power' thus is a universal phenomenon and its embodiment as a magical source is well documented in almost all the cultures of the world. The following is a description of such a 'yoni magic' cult in some notable cultural groups of the world.

Tibet :

Suryacandrasiddhi or "highest dakini", also known as Laygya Wangmo or "great sovereign dakini of deeds" : The great adept of tantrik Vajrayana in Tibet, Padmasambhava, earned the magical/shamanic symbol *hum* from her, who swallowed him whole and let him pass through her body. In this process Padmasambhava was purified and obtained a number of magical powers before being reborn and ejected through her yoni or "secret lotus" and hence his name, meaning "lotus born" (Camphausen, 1991).

Japan :

Ama-no-Uzume : She is a shinto deity known as the "dreaded female of the heaven". She is known for her yoni magic, displaying her "heavenly gate". The popular religious myth says that the Japanese phallic god, Sarutahiko or "walking penis" with mighty power, lost all strength and will like a dead flower when he was confronted by the yoni of Ama-no-Uzume. This runs a proof of more potent force of yoni magic than that of the phallus (Camphausen, 1991).

India :

Yoni was thought to possess nuptial powers that can dispel evil influences. Many of the erotic sculptures at Khajuraho show women exposing their genitals. In certain areas of Tamil Nadu, women expose themselves in order to quiten down storms and thunders (Camphausen, 1991). Yoni is regarded as the receptacle of supernatural energy, e.g. serpent energy (Fig.4). Yoni Tantra is a religious text from Bengal which describes the different aspects of yoni-power and hence its worship or 'yoni-puja'. Yoni Asana (a secret yoga posture) and yoni-mudras (Fig.5) are specific tantric rituals to be observed by the *sadhaka* (one who is dedicated). The tantrik texts highlight the miracle/supernatural potentials of yoni by associating it with the yoni of the goddess as per the morphological similarities between the two. Ten subdivisions of yoni topography thus has been enumerated, viz. hairpit, field, edge, arch, girdle, nodule, cleft, wheel, throne and root. The association of these parts with goddess runs like Yonicakra-Kali, Yonicakra-Tara, Yonikuntala-Chhinnamasta, Yonisanu-pato-Matangi, Yonigarta-Mahalakshmi and Yonigarta-Sodasi etc. The tantrik mediative cognition regards yoni as the emblem of 'Shakti', the creative genetrix of the universe (Fig.6).

The essence of the sacred/magical power of yoni is an inherent theme of tantrik tradition which worships female energy or *Sakti*. The mythological legend says that the tantrik sacred places (*pithasthans*) came into existence when Lord Siva carried away the dead body of his wife Sati or Parvati, which had been dismembererd by Lord Vishnu into 51 parts that fell on widely varied geographical pockets all over India. The *Kamakshya* temple of Kamrupa in Assam is believed to be the place where Sati's yoni fell and is regarded in tantrik tradition as a living centre of her immeasurable power (Mookherjee & Khanna, 1989). This cult of *Shakti* is very often projected with sexual connotation where icons depict the terrible aspect of the goddess (Fig.7) as an over powering energy or force on phallic supremacy (Figs.8 & 9).



Fig.4. Yogini with serpentine energy manifesting from her yoni. 18th century, South India (Rawson, 1992).

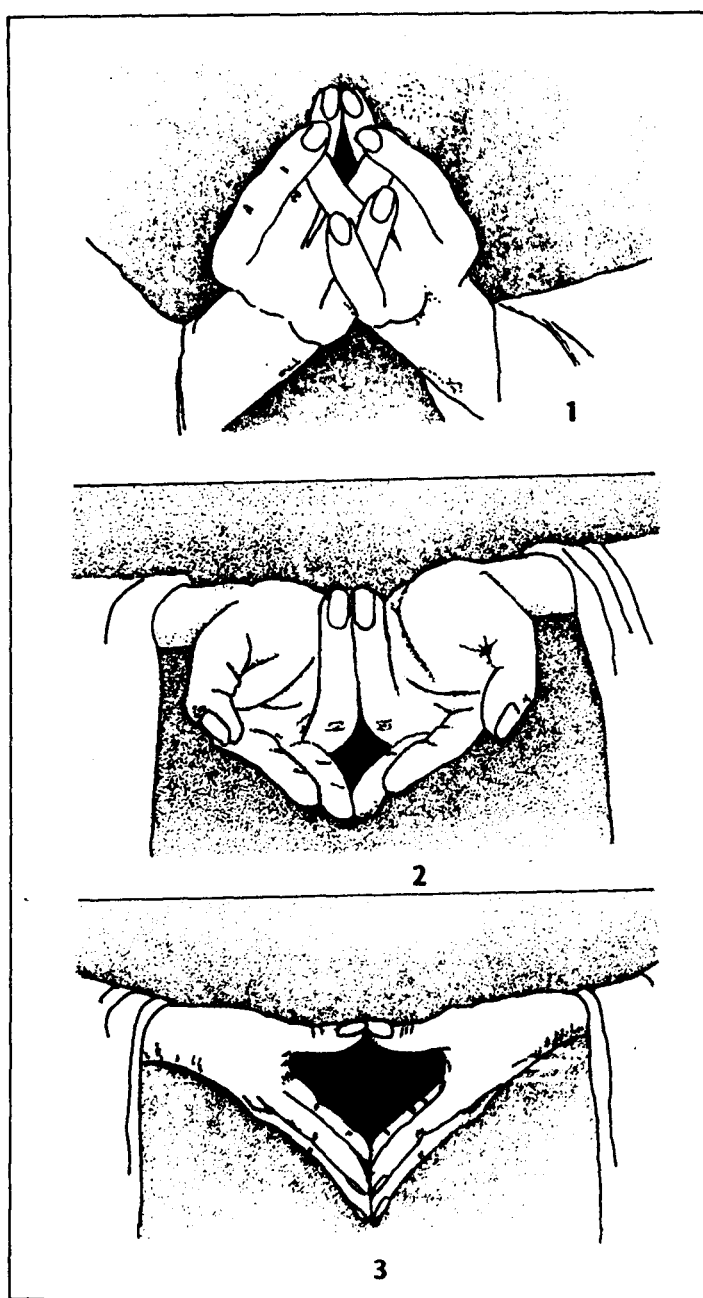


Fig.5. The hand gestures or Mudra is a secret Jantrik technique. Yoni-Mudras resemble the shape of a yoni. 1. Maha Yoni Mudra; 2. Yoni-Linga Mudra; and 3. Yoni Mudra (Camphausen, 1991).



Fig.6. The divine Yoni. 19th century woodcarving, South India (Rawson, 1992).



Fig.7. Goddess Kali, represented in her destructive aspect as Chamunda. 18th century paper painting, Kangra, India (Mookherjee & Khanna, 1989).

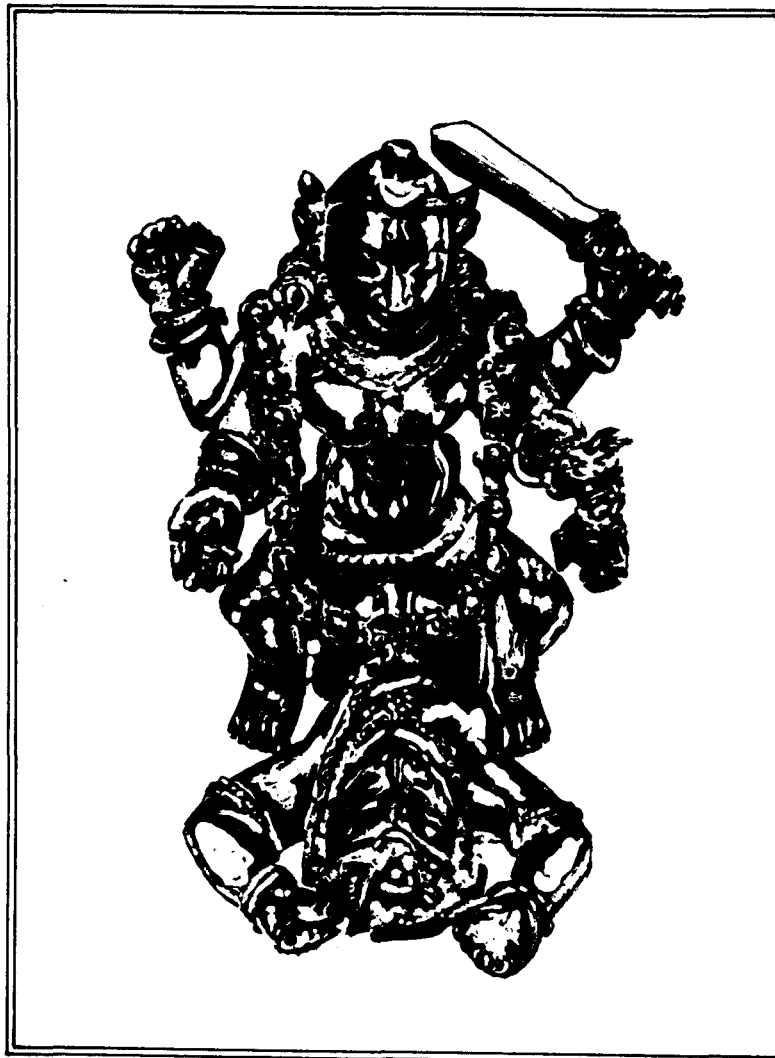


Fig.8. Icon of the terrible Goddess Daksina Kalika, seated in intercourse with the male corpse-Siva. 17th century, Bronze, Orissa, India (Rawson, 1992).



Fig.9. Folk painting of Goddess Kali straddled over the erect phallus of the corpse-Siva. 19th century, Orissa, India (Rawson, 1992).

Egypt :

Egyptian women used to expose their genital parts to drive away evil spirits from their fields and a similar theme has been depicted in the Theban wall paintings of funerals (Camphausen, 1991).

Africa :

It is believed that even a wild lion is fearful about the yoni magic and it shies away from the sight of a naked yoni. The rock painting from Tassili in the Sahara, dating from about 8000-5000 B.C. is an extraordinary example of yoni magic (Fig.10). It is seen in this religious art that a magical force is flowing from the yoni that helps the men's hunting endeavours (Camphausen, 1991).

Western World :

Symbols of the yoni are probably the oldest (35,000-25,000 B.C.) of all depictions of the primal goddess and of women's fertile power (Camphausen, 1991). Rock-incised triangles and circles symbolizing the female genital have been found in many caves in France (La Ferrassie, Abri Blanchard, Cellier, Les Rois etc.), Yugoslavia (Fig.11) and Russia ("vulva rocks" of Kostienki).

Sheela-na-gig (Fig.12) is a collective name for many female figurines, probably of celtic origin, found in Ireland, England, Scotland and Germany (Camphausen, 1991). Usually *sheelas* are mostly cut from stones exhibiting enormous yonis and are found embedded in the walls of early monasteries and village churches. The popular belief was that their yoni magic would protect the building from "dark powers".

In Christian iconography **Mandorle** is a symbol of 'yoni as gateway of life'. This is an almond-shaped design, also known

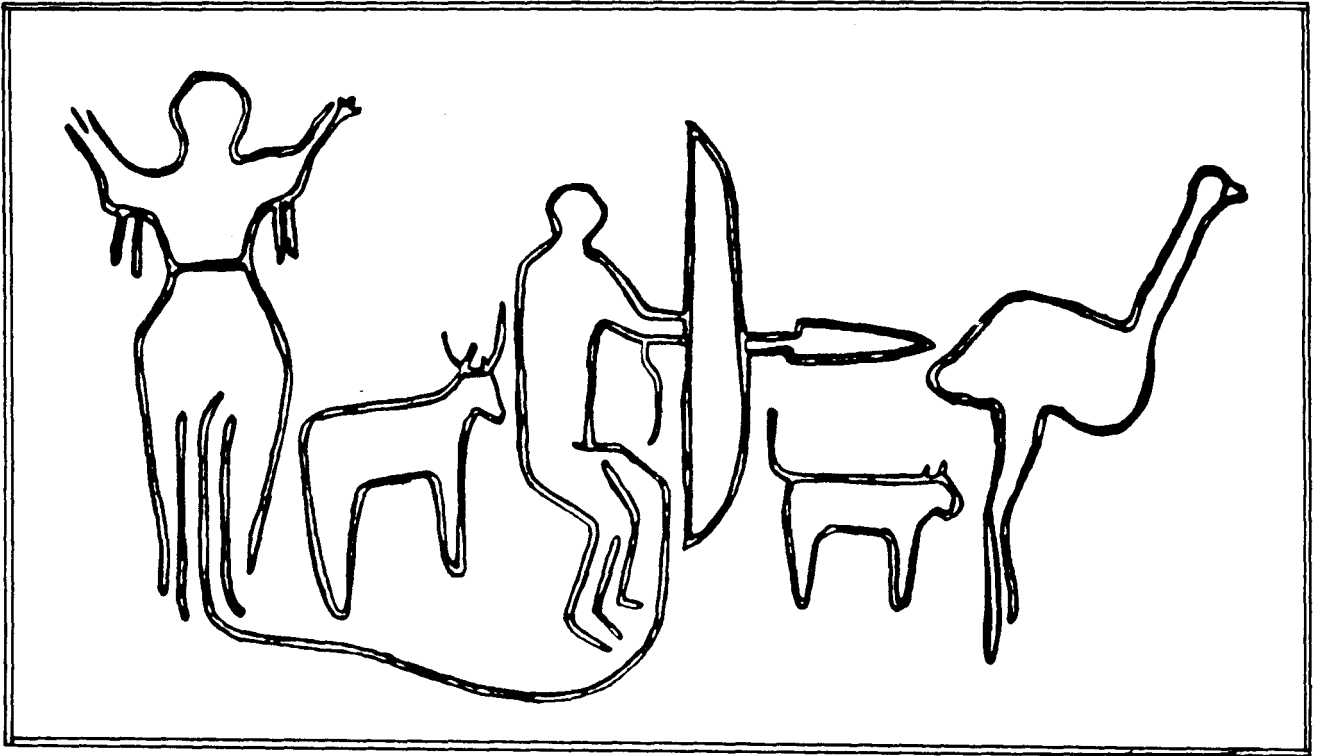


Fig.10. Yoni Magic : An African rock painting depicting the transmission of energy from a woman, or goddess, to the hunter. 7000 B.C., Tassili, Sahara (Camphausen, 1991).

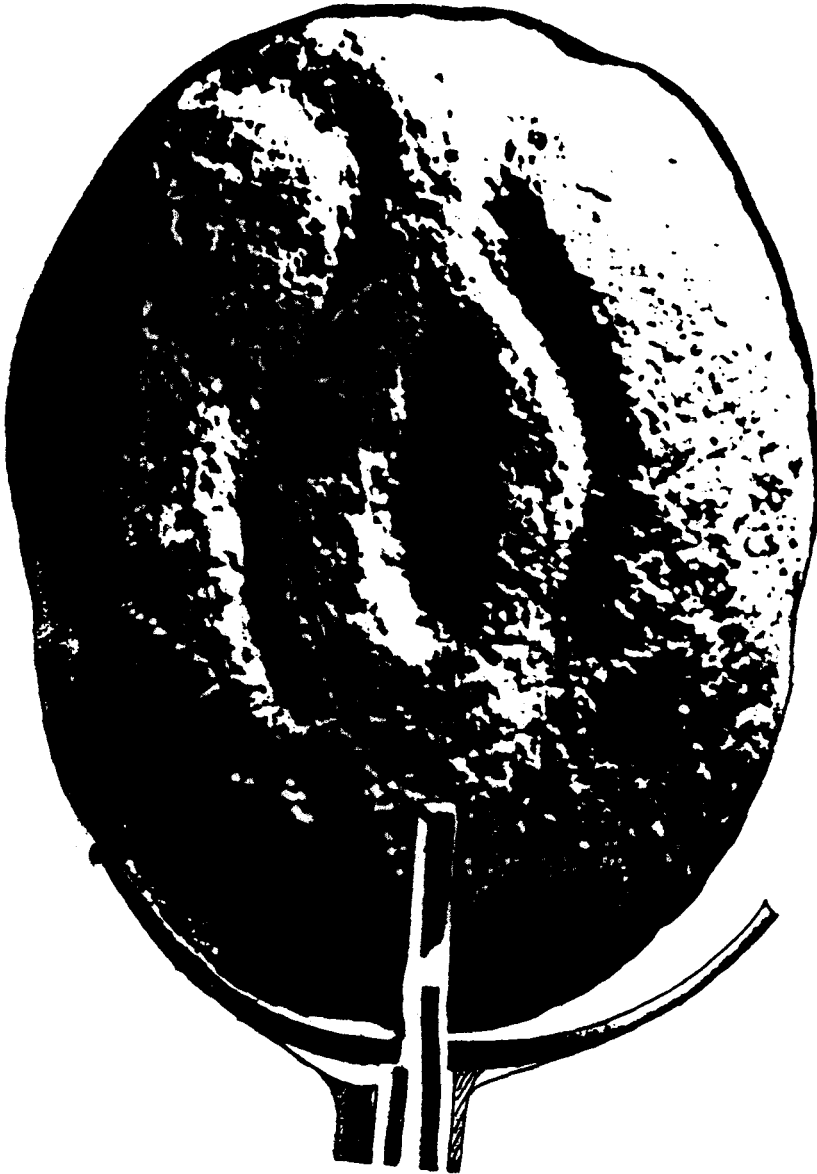


Fig.11. Yoni Worship : Stone sculpture from Lepenski Vir, Yugoslavia. 6000 B.C. (Camphausen, 1991).



Fig.12. Image of Sheela-na-gig, from the church of St. Mary and St. David, Herefordshire, England (Camphausen, 1991).

as *vesica piscis* and is used to symbolize the "flame of the spirit". It often surrounds the whole body of a sanctified goddess or personality such as Mary, the Virgin Queen of Heaven (Camphausen, 1991).

Prince (1992a) while discussing the theme of castration anxiety from a female castrator narrates an astonishing Amerindian example of vulnerable vagina in the form of *vagina dentata* or the vagina with teeth.

"A young male prankster visited a woman of exceptional beauty who invited him to a meal. While sitting at table he noticed that she threw bones and food under the table and there was a peculiar crunching sound. After the meal she invited him to bed. As he was about to have intercourse with her, something warned him to draw back and as he did so the woman's vagina closed with a snap. He repeated the performance and the same occurred. Then he picked up the stick he used to kill fish in the river. He pushed the stick in the woman's vagina and when the vagina had closed upon it, he pulled the stick out to find that the vagina's teeth were embedded in the stick. Afterwards they went to visit the girl's mother who lived nearby. He extracted the teeth from the mother's vagina in a similar way and after that lived with the woman happily for several years" (p.89).

Women and Witchcraft

Evola (1991) designates the conception of the metaphysical trait of magical or daemonic feminine principle as Maya or maya-sakti, i.e., the charmer, of which witchcraft is the popular expression. In a very elegant analysis Evola shows the mythohistorical link of this feminine association of witchcraft.

"At Rome, Venus Verticordia was conceived of as skilled in the arts of magic. Minoan figures of women with magic wands in their hands are well known. ... That woman is more closely linked to

"earth", the cosmic and natural element, is demonstrated on the material plane by the various effects that she undergoes owing to the periodic rhythms of the cosmos. In times of yore, however, this link was referred more to the *yin* aspect of nature, to the nocturnal and unconscious supersensual field, irrational and unfathomable, of the vital forces. Whence there arise in woman certain powers of magic and prophecy in a restricted sense ..., which are liable to degenerate into witchcraft. ... In the traditions of many peoples, this type of magic is related to an archaic feminine and lunar tradition. It is of interest that in China the character *wu*, used to designate a person who exercised the arts of magic in a strict or "shamanic" sense, was originally applied only to females. The techniques employed by the *wu* to contact supersensual forces were sometimes ascetic and at other times orgastic; in the latter case it seems that in the beginning the *wu* officiated wholly naked. The *wu* had to have youth and fascinating beauty as preliminary qualifications for her work, and the meanings of the character *yao* and *miao* as "queer" "disquieting", and "mysterious" refer to the type and qualities of the *wu* (p.162-163).

The cult of witchcraft endorses the seductive qualities of such dangerous females as one of its characteristics. This is probably the hidden clue why the witches show special fascination to rob the male potency or male genital organs. This aspect of male threat from witches is well illustrated in one of the most widely read works, titled *Malleus maleficarum* (Hammer of the Witches) of the year 1489 in Europe.

The belief that witches were thought to cause sterility, abortion and impotency and have a magical power to make the penis disappear was a popular theme of witchcraft of Medieval Europe. Trethowan (1963) in his elegant account on "Demonopathology of Impotence" narrates how the medieval belief regards females as a dangerous male enemy who in the form of witches exploit the man's sexual potency for her own interest. Trethowan (1963) cites several examples from different medieval text, inclu-

ding the notorious work of Sprenger and Kramer (1487) where not only occultism, sexual mysticism and witchcraft were the main themes but it also reflected the misogyny of the middle ages, especially the attitudes of the Church towards women in general. It is not out of place to mention in this context the observations of Evola (1991) who states :

"We know that up to a relatively late period the Roman Catholic theologians were wondering whether woman should be acknowledged to have a soul; it seems that Augustine declared, "Woman is not made in the image of God". The thesis that "women are not men" was discussed again 1555 in the sense that they cannot be true human beings but must belong to another species. A like theme is found in Islam, while in the traditions of the Far East it was taught that women were not found in the "Pure Earth" or so-called Western Paradise ..." (p.150).

In tune with present theme of this chapter, viz. fear of the feminine as a focus of male sexual anxiety, the comments by Trethowan (1963) and Evola (1991) in respect of female occultism and male fear are noteworthy. Trethowan (1963) states :

"Misogyny and the witchcraft persecution were, then, means by which the male dealt with his sexual problems. Both sprang from a wish to liquidate the fear of sex and thereby to re-establish disordered equilibrium. This is well summed up by Schubart, who says : "With sexual anxiety was mixed the demonical horror which had once upon a time accompanied the religious experience of mankind. In the witchcraft delusion, the erotic and the religious primitive horror burst forth from their common darkly sinister source. The witch is at one and the same time the product of the male's fear of woman and man's fear of demons". The truth of this statement is clearly evident in the main accusations made by Sprenger and Kramer against those who "infect with witchcraft the vene-real act" (p.344).

Evola (1991) remarks from a mythological context :

"In the Mediterranean cycle of the Great Goddess, the "nonacting" power or magic of woman was represented by Potnia Theron or Queen of the Wild Beasts, a goddess who rode a bull or held him on the lash, and Cybele, who had herself drawn in a chariot by two tame lions ...; Durga seated on a lion with a rein in her hands is the corresponding Hindu goddess. The same theme crops up in the Kabbalistically inspired symbolism of card XI in the game of Tarot, where Force is shown with the figure of a woman who is holding the jaws of a raging lion open without any effort. Every woman, inasmuch as she shares in the "absolute woman", possesses that force to a certain extent. Man knows it, and often owing to a neurotic unconscious overcompensation for his inferiority complex, he flaunts before woman an ostentatious manliness, indifference, or even brutality and disdain. But this secures him the advantage, on the contrary. The fact that woman often becomes a victim of an external, material, sentimental, or social level, giving rise to her instinctive "fear of loving", does not alter the fundamental structure of the situation" (p.166-167).

**Malleus
Maleficarum** This book was first published under the joint authorship of J. Sprenger and H.Kramer, around 1487 and was replete with sexual details, specially within the perspective of witchcraft and females with offences. Parrinder (1958) regards this as one of the most obscene books ever written.

Sprenger and Kramer (1489) stated that God gave the demons a magical power to influence the reproductive act because sexual intercourse was the primary act "by which the first sin was disseminated". The authors stated that some demons do have the power secretly to remove the penis physically from the body, but the witches "can take away the male organ, not indeed by actually despoiling the human body of it, but by concealing it with some glamour". Witches were thought to use glammers or magical cloths or ointments that created illusions. A glamour

is a special charm "interposed between the sight and touch, and between the true body of the sufferer, so that it seems to him that he can see and feel nothing but a smooth body with its surface interrupted by no genital organ".

A case illustration of such penis loss was mentioned by the authors :

"In the town of Ratisbon, a certain young man who had an intrigue with a girl, wishing to leave her, lost his member; that is to say some glamour was cast over it. ... In his worry over this he went to a tavern to drink wine and after a while he got into conversation with another woman who was there, and told her the cause of his sadness. The woman was astute and said : 'If persuasion is not enough you must use some violence to induce her to restore you your health'. So in the evening the young man watched the way by which the witch was in the habit of going and finding her, prayed her to restore him the health of his body. And when she maintained that she was innocent and knew nothing about it, he fell upon her, and winding a towel tightly round her neck, choked her, saying : 'Unless you give me back my health you shall die at my hands'. Then she, with her face already swelling and going black, said 'Let me go and I will heal you'. The young man then relaxed the pressure of the towel and the witch touched him between the thighs, saying : 'Now you have what you desire'. And the young man, as he afterwards said, plainly felt, before he had verified it by looking or touching, that his member had been restored".

Malleus Maleficarum describes the fascinating power of witches to "glamour" men to render their penises invisible. The following paragraph depicts the witch castrator in 15th Century Germany :

(Witches) ..." sometimes collect male organs in great numbers, as many as twenty or thirty members together, and put them in a bird's

nest, or shut them up in a box, where they move themselves like living members, and eat oats and corn, as has been seen by many and is a matter of common report ... A certain man tells that when he had lost his member, he approached a known witch to ask her to restore it to him. She told the afflicted man to climb a certain tree, and that he might take what he liked out of a nest in which there were several members. And when he tried to take a big one, the witch said : You must not take that one; adding, because it belongs to the parish priest".

The principal cause of this apparent disappearance of male genital is also explained in the Malleus, which states :

"Here is declared the truth about diabolic operations with regard to the male organ. But when it is performed by witches, it is only a matter of glamour; although it is no illusion in the opinion of the sufferer. For his imagination can really and actually believe that something is not present, since by none of his exterior senses, such as sight and touch, can he perceive that it is present. From this it may be said that there is a true abstraction of the member in imagination, although not in fact".

This 'odd phenomenon' is called "prestige", and Trethowan (1963) correlates this term in the present day social context nicely: "... a connection between prestige and potency still exists. Even to-day male prestige is often equated with power over woman, and, not infrequently bolstered by boasting of sexual prowess".

Trethowan (1963) describes this situation from an analytical viewpoint and designates this condition as an "illusion of genital deprivation", which he asserts as the expression of castration anxiety. Malleus attempts to describe the mechanism of this genital deprivation from the stand point of perceptual process :

"The devil can excite the fancy and inner sensory perceptions of a man by apparitions and impulsive acts ... so that they appear to be a new impression received from exterior things ... Also such things happen not only to the sleeping but even to those who are awake ... so that ideas retained in the repositories of the mind are draw out ... so that such men imagine these things to be true".

It is interesting to note at this point that though Malleus stresses the process of interior imagination as an occult influence of witchcraft, the same issue in the perception of genital retraction/deprivation is discussed in recent times in relation to Koro by Yap (1965a) and Mellor (1988) as a clinical expression of a localized depersonalization syndrome.

The work of Francesco Guazzo (1608) entitled as 'Compendium Malificarum' of medieval times is also an important reference so far as the expression of genital retraction/deprivation is concerned in connection with witchcraft interference with sexual activity. He discussed elaborately the witchcraft influence on male sexual act under the heading "Of Tying the Points". He enumerated seven types of sexual interference like casting or imposing of suspicion, neglect, rejection between couples; presence of invisible hindrance between couples during intimacy; prevention of seminal discharge; sexual inability because "the fertile semen is dried and taken away"; erectile failure; sterility in woman because of the use of some "natural drugs" and lastly, the point relevant to our present topic Koro, **" a retraction, hiding or actual removal of the male genitals"** (present author's emphasis) or a manipulative vagina : " closing or narrowing of the female genitals".

Trethowan's (1963) critical comment on this witchcraft delusion is worthy of mention here because it reflects the male sexual anxiety and its misogynous background :

"As a corollary it must be remembered that the most ardent persecutors of witches were those sworn to celibacy and whose sexuality,

for this reason, was bound to seek various expression.

The nature of their conflict is perhaps most clearly revealed in the statement : "The power of the Devil lies in the privy parts of man. Of all the struggles those are the hardest where the fight is continuous and victory rare" (p.346).

Risso and Boker (1968) have shown how the belief in female magic, particularly in love philtres and death positions, is widespread in Southern Italy and play a pathoplastic role in causing strong conviction of bewitching and of psychiatric disorders in Italian males.

Fascinazione (in dialect *fascinatura* or *affascino*) is the basic theme of witchcraft magic in Lucania and parts of southern Italy, which describes a strange condition of a person under spell who loses all his power and freedom of action because of *legato* or bond. This power of *fascinazione* is like a contagious agent that can be disseminated through air and imperils human beings everywhere. When this magic power emanates from someone, it is called *malocchio*, the evil eye and if it is the result of an envious wicked look in the eyes or *fattura*, it is the result of the administration of some substance.

Fattura appears in different forms, most often as *fattura d'amore* or the love potion and more rarely as *fattura a morte* or death potion. *Fattura d'amore* can be enacted by magic spells with menstrual blood, pubic hair and finger nails. People who experience this magic charm usually have a fear of sexually alluring women, who are supposed to possess a dangerous power and who could cause both love and death. The most dangerous *fattura* is the death charm which Levi (1948) describes as follows :

"Three years before, a man had died a terrible death. A peasant woman, who was a witch, had drawn him into her net with love potions and he became her lover. When she gave birth to a daughter, he decided to break off the relationship. The witch then gave him

a drink which was intended to kill him. He developed a long and mysterious illness which the doctors could not diagnose. He lost all his powers, his face changed, he became bronze-coloured, and darkened more and more until he finally died".

Risso and Boker (1968) try to seek an answer to this strong belief in magic and witchcraft in the social system and attitudes towards women within the Italian socio-cultural milieu. They comment :

"... in Southern Italy the fear of subjugation to magic influence still exists today and is just as lively as it was in ancient times.

...

Thus at one and the same time the woman is a sexually desired wife, a tabooed Madonna and a dangerous Circe, whose magic is dangerous to the man. Lust entices, the taboo of virginity restrains and behind the mask of femininity the magical threat of an "animal" sexuality waits in ambush. Men fear the magic power which comes from women and which perhaps can ensnare them into marriage against their will. They feel insecure when faced with these sinister women, all the more so because behind the facade of authoritarian masculinity with an excessive feeling of power there is often marked infantilism, which can be explained as a result of the overprotective attitude of the mother to her sons" (p.968).

The legacy of medieval witchcraft and femininity still survives under the name of "Witches Milk" for the colostrum of a lactating mother, in the modern era !

In India since the Vedic times a number of traditional beliefs have prevailed in the society regarding the magical power of women to cause harm to men, specially to his sexual power.

In Atharvaveda one finds the mention of "Love charms" or 'Love magic'. A woman, neglected by her husband, usually used these spells for destroying his virile power and thus cause impotency. There are several kinds of spells to cause specific types of disability e.g. a prayer to make the man impotent (*Kliba*); to split his testicles (*andya*); to make him a eunuch (*vadhri*), to make him a sapless one (*arasa*); to split the two tubes (*nadyan*) in which his virility (*vrnsya*) resides and to crash his penis (*sepah*) which is in another woman's genitals (*muskau*) (Fiser, 1989). There is an illustration in Atharvaveda of a sorceress splitting the member of her unfaithful lover which is in another woman's "little mice", meaning genitals. The submission of ascetics to a woman's sexual charm is a frequent theme in old Indian classics where she "sucks out" or "milks" the groaning man. Fiser (1989) states that "normal sexual functions and potency were by no means a secured state of affairs" in the Rgvedic society. So in Atharvaveda there are specific rites which were believed to induce appropriate sexual vigour. There are several hymns in Atharvaveda rites for promoting virile potency with a peniserecting herb are mentioned. The spell was believed to restore male virility (*pumsam vrnsya*); his member (*pasah*) should be taut like a bow.

Female Castrator : Seduction and Genital loss or death

Prince (1992a) states that from a world perspective, the theme of female castrator is more common than the male one in relation to male castration anxiety. Kirmaer (1992) endorses this view and shows a correlational link of male sexual anxieties with "primal fear of the mother". Freud (1905) in his article "The dissolution of the Oedipus complex" also indicated the theme of castrating female :

"When the child (of male sex) has turned his interest toward his own genital organs, he often displays this interest by playing frequently with them by hand, and he is then forced to come up

against the fact that adults do not approve of this conduct. More or less clearly, with greater or lesser brutality, the threat arises that they seek to take away from him this part which has come to have such great value for him. More often than not the threat of castration comes from women; they often seek to reinforce their authority by appealing to his father or to the doctor who - as they assure him - will carry out the punishment".

The theme of female castrator is a popular myth in many cultures of the world and is often projected in mythology, folktales or the cult of dangerous female - like witches. In almost all the religions we find a particular female deity which are believed to either reduce or sexually assault men and hasten their death. This theme or image recalls the behaviour of black widow spiders, who kill their male after sexual intercourse (Camphausen, 1991). A notable example of this type of a "seductive vampire" and sexual killer is the southern European deity Basa Andere, a mythical female of the Basque folklore.

The myth of Basa Andere ("forest woman") reminds one about the almost same Chinese folk belief regarding the fox-spirit (lady). Camphausen (1991) provides a beautiful account of Basa Andere :

"... a beautiful woman, "perfectly shaped for love and covered all over with soft, golden hair like cat's. This Basque "wild lady" can usually be met near a sunlit stream in a forest, where she awaits the wanderer while combing the hair of her soft belly with a golden comb. She will smile lovingly at the man, lie back with open legs, and offer him first a view of the beautiful moist flower between her thighs, and then entrance into her warm and fragrant body. It is said that the pleasure of making love to Basa Andere is so intense that a man will die from it at the height of his orgasm. The dead are found with their backs arched in the agony of unimaginable pleasure" (p.20).

Lamia, another Basque female deity/spirit is known for her remarkable sexual vampirism. Camphausen (1991) states that Lamia :

"... appears as beautiful human women, yet have the feet of a bird, sometimes a duck. Living in caves, or at rivers and small lakes. ... They are also known to enter love relationships with young men who remain ignorant of the lamia's nonhuman nature . In the case that someone does discover her identity, he is doomed to die. Sometimes the lamia have been known to kidnap men of their choice and to keep them imprisoned, for the purpose of sexual union and for creating offspring" (p.102).

Succubus is the similar female figure of northern Africa. It is a Latin term for an ethereal nonmaterial female intent on sexual intercourse with human beings. It is believed that Succubi suck a man dry of all his vital and potent life juices. Semen collected in this way may be stored by the devil for later use by their male counterparts, i.e. Incubi, to impregnate human females. Succubi are said to be the instigators of men's "wet dreams".

Empusae is the cult of female castrator in Greek and Middle Eastern cultures. Empusae (the "forces in") are group of female sexual demons and/or "vampires" known in Greece and the Middle East. They are believed to seduce men and to suck out their blood. The concept probably stems from a general male fear of the sexually independent woman who is able to drain his vital strength, a fear that probably constitutes the psychological basis for Eastern and Western techniques for the retention of semen (Camphausen, 1991). Peisinoe (Greek, "seductress"), a deity and a siren, who in a group seduced Odysseus and his men with erotic wailing and charmed songs.

Lilith, a very complex demonic/divine goddess, has many representations in various forms in different cultures. Her image

tends to be more demomic in the societies where patriarchal values are prominent. Camphausen (1991) provides a beautiful account of the changing faces of Lilith in conjunction with the evolving of social system of male dominance.

"In ancient Sumer, she was regarded as the "left hand" of the Great Goddess Inanna and as her helper in bringing the men to the goddess's temples, where they were to worship her by participating in "Tantrik" rites with the temple women. As a result of this role, Lilith became known as seducer of men and as a harlot.

Among the Semitic-speaking peoples of Mesopotamia, she was first a figure similar to Lil, a Sumerian goddess of destructive winds and storms. When Hebrew/Semitic morals became dominant in the Near East, she was equated to and merged with Lamashtu, a female demon known in Syria as a killer of children, and so acquired her characterization as a winged demon of the night (in the Talmud), as a dangerous vampire and succubus (in the Zohar), and as mother of the incubi and as screeching nightowl (in the Bible).

Other legends show her to be the magically beautiful first woman to share the original Paradise with Adams, in which she is seen as a female "made by god" in a manner similar to the Genesis story of how God created the first male. Here, then, she is humanity's first woman, an independent and free virgin who would not submit to Adam's attempts at sexual domination. In the later, biblical version of the story of the first man and the first woman, she was replaced by a less independent and less equal Eve, a woman not "made" from the earth but from a rib of the man Adam. It is said that Lilith is but one of twenty names by which that first woman was known, and each name is supposed to contain a "secret of sexual mysticism".

These "secrets" most likely represent the erotic teachings and sexual techniques that were taught to initiates and worshippers in the temples of Inanna, Ishtar and Astrate - teachings and

practices that threatened the new patriarchal leaders and their attempts to make woman into a dependent, monogamous servant of their households" (p.105).

Let us see an example of female castrator in modern society, the studies from Africa being noteworthy in this context. The belief in witchcraft, male sexual anxiety and cultural influence is well-studied in African societies (Lambo, 1955; Elsarrag, 1968; German, 1972; Kagwa, 1964; Prince, 1962; Assael & German, 1970; Carothers, 1953; Lucieer, 1984-85). Carothers (1953) thus noted:

"... anxiety is always felt to be an outcome of a bewitchment (and poisoning) which is threatening one's personal or procreative life. Therefore, phobias are always frankly related to some known or unknown source of witchcraft, and physical symptoms take predominantly the forms of gastric and cardiac neurosis and of impotence".

"Brain-fag syndrome" is the metamorphosis of these anxieties in educated sections e.g. in Nigera (Prince, 1962; Assael & German, 1970). German (1972) in his study of mental morbidity in sub-Saharan Africa notes the "common association between anxiety symptoms, fear of bewitchment, or fear because of the ever present possibility of having broken some taboo or neglected some ritual. The focussing of such fears on heart, stomach and genitalia is strikingly common" (p.475). Elsarrag (1968) considers Koro or genital retraction as a somatic anxiety response of Sudanese males to situations like death of a relative or a close friend. Baasher (1964) believes that cultural sexual restrictions and masturbatory guilt are a key factor in the manifestations of genital shrinkage in the Sudanese. Akan tribes of Ghana believe that witches can remove the penis and throw it away or have it eaten by an animal (Debrunner, 1959).

Lucieer (1984-85) provides an excellent account of a case of genital retraction or Koro in Tanzania where the cult of a vulnerable female or 'Djinni' is the castrator. Lucieer states:

"Djinni, pl. djinn; has originated from Arabic and perhaps ethymologically related to genie. For muslims djinn are airy of fiery bodies, intelligent, imperceptable, and capable of appearing in different forms. ... In popular belief, contrary to official Islam, a human who has lived in deadly sin may after his death be transformed into a djinni" (p.21).

"... the female djinn are beautiful. ... They are very very sexy and fond of sex, they use sweet scented oils and delicate perfumes to enthrall men. The female djinn enters your life mysteriously and can just as suddenly disappear again. She will never tell you where she comes from, nor where she goes to. Although life with her may be deliriously exciting, one word or act which displeases her may bring her revenge, she may kill you or send rats who will eat your penis at night" (p.23).

How eroticism, femininity and cultural beliefs in transitional societies (like Tanzania) affect males, his innermost fear of losing male dominance in the face of women's liberation is well depicted in Lucieer's account. For a better understanding of the situation I quote some general remarks of Lucieer here:

"The female *djinni* finds her origin in the polarity between the sexes, a polarity in which women are generally on the losing side. These polarities in the negative sense of superior/inferior, powerful/powerless create jealousies and fears, such as resentment in women who are forced back to a position of inferiority, or fear among men for revenge.

Hence, there exist the many "man-made" cultural institutions aimed at keeping women in their place. These range from virginity

and virtuousness to attributing women with all kinds of wiles and vices. ... However, not only are women's activities considered inferior to men's, some female activities (and functions like menstruation) are deemed dangerous for men. Women are associated with weakness, sickness, sin and evil, death. ... It is the fear of many Tanzanian men that they may marry a witch (Pelt, 1971).

Ugly old women represent decay, evil and death and conform to the classical European picture of the witch. But how much more dangerous is a pretty woman in whose proximity a man loses his senses and self control ? Did they not have to tie Odysseus to the mast of his ship to prevent him from going to the beautiful, sweet voiced but murderous, sirenes ?

... In the traditional society the role patterns between men and women were clear. Although this doubtlessly also gave rise to tensions, these were eased by the security a stable organized society offered. During this period of cultural transition the situation is no longer stable and both men and women are ill at ease. Women try to shed their bonds. Tanzanian women are on the move.

Seeking freedom they flock to the towns. For many of these women, with little education in a still largely male dominated society, the only way to survive is to offer sexual services to men willing to pay for it. (After the birth of a girl the people of Dar-es-Salaam joke : "we have a new bar girl"). Degrading as it may seem, the driving force behind it is female liberation : many of these women are fiercely independent and prefer this way of life to dependency on a single man.

The sexual availability of women excites men. Their assertiveness inspires fear¹. A man may consider a woman "a great dish", but she eats him as much as he eats her. She may cleanse his penis after intercourse, but there is no shyness, no submissiveness. The barren land used to be grateful for the fertilizing rains,

but it is only for the fun and for money. As the poet Ahmed Bash-eikh Husein (1909-1961) wrote :

these are not the best of times
for a man to be falling in love

The African mind translates these new tensions in tales which beautiful women (i.e. djinn in the guise of women) seduce men only in order to destroy them. (This is not to imply that the Western mind is above these fantasies - for such tales, as expressed in comic books, see Adams 1983)" (p.23-25).

NOTE

1. The perception of genital retraction or Koro after an intercourse with a prostitute is not an infrequent finding in the Koro literature (Gwee, 1963; Rin, 1965; Malinick et al., 1985; Bernstein & Gaw, 1990). The perception of penile shrinkage rooted in the act of intercourse with a prostitute is noted in the Koro cases described by Rin (1965) and Bernstein & Gaw (1990). Malinick et al. (1985) describe a Koro case where the penis began to shrink because of a spell, having been cast by a prostitute during oral sex. The prostitute had cleaned the penis with some chemical substance prior to oral sex. The patient expressed his conviction that "the smile on her face indicated she was about to take away his "nature" through the chemicals or some sort of a "spell".

Chowdhury (1994) in a study of patients in a sexual counselling clinic found a group with sexual complaints (impotency; dhat syndrome) who attributed intercourse with prostitutes as the cause of their malady. The different attributions are : the prostitute sucked away the potency; the prostitute offered some charmed drink to rob the male power; and the application of an unknown

ointment over the penis before intercourse by the prostitute which took away the erotic sensation and because of quarrel and bargaining regarding the rate at the beginning she made the penis small by keeping it for "unusual length of time" inside her medicated (herbally charmed) vagina well after the "unsatisfactory" intromission etc.