

EVOLUTIONARY PANENTHEISM AND METANORMAL HUMAN
CAPACITY: A PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY OF MICHAEL MURPHY

by

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ABSTRACT

This psychobiographical study explores the research and conclusions of Michael Murphy's theories on evolutionary panentheism and metanormal human potential. Murphy's diverse oeuvre renders it impossible to produce a comprehensive study without accounting for Murphy's integrality; multiple ways in which separate personal and professional events unite to create a whole. The current literature on Murphy appears as segmented overviews which inhibit thorough chronicling of his work. This lacuna contributes to a resistance to attend to Murphy's philosophy within an academic schema. By addressing his achievements as components within the totality of his worldview, the researcher demonstrates that Murphy deserves stronger academic recognition.

This qualitative study incorporates features of psychobiography, hermeneutics, and narrative analysis. Psychobiology emphasizes biographical and psychological development, allowing the researcher to use these aspects of Michael Murphy's activities to provide additional insight into his motivations, philosophies, and work-product.

This psychobiography uses Michael Murphy's literary and nonliterary works, as well as data obtained from interviews with Murphy, as representative constituents of his philosophical totality. Murphy's works integrate his (1) theory on evolutionary panentheism, which proposes a God that not only desires humanity within Its consciousness, but also "cares" for Its creations, residing within and evolving with them, (2) faith in the theories of involution–evolution, which maintain the existence of accessible levels of advancement, (3) innate trust in the interrelationship of all things, (4) evidence that advanced human potential has been part of humanity's development since the origins of contemplation, (5) conviction, stemming from data-driven research of metanormal occurrences, that humanity can evolve and transmute, (6) commitment to overcome the divisiveness of science and religio-mysticism, as well as the disparities of religious tenets, (7) humanist efforts to mitigate problems of the disenfranchised, persecuted, diasporic, and powerless factions of humanity; and finally, (8) trust in the inherent value and possibilities of human life. These components reflect Murphy's overarching goal: building a bridge between science and religion in order to facilitate an intelligent, integrated understanding of the natural and cosmological order—and the future it portends.

Dedication

To Adam, Brian, Kevin, and Marti.

Even as the magical innocence of youth fades, as it must, you continue to be blessed by the compensating beauty of grace, tolerance and, especially, loyalty to someone who may not always be deserving but is forevermore grateful.

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Section 1: Purpose of Inquiry

It is a formidable task to produce a comprehensive and thorough study of Michael Murphy because of the plurality of his interests, visions, and accomplishments. Were he just providing data to demonstrate human transformative capacity, or promoting evolutionary panentheism, or creating one of his four works of fiction, the undertaking would be simplified.¹ To formulate a holistic, comprehensive overview of Murphy's lifeworks, however, the full spectrum of his interests must be taken into account: his authorship of fiction and nonfiction, his inquiry, observations, and validations of data regarding metanormal events and practices, his examination of secular and spiritual science, and his interventional support for equanimity within social and economic politics.

¹ Evolutionary panentheism is one of the core features of Michael Murphy's hypothesis on the relationship of a Supreme Principle (God, for example) to Its universe. As explicated in Section 5, "theism" is the belief in the existence of God (or a Principle) viewed as the intimately related, creative source of the human race and the universe. While classical theism posits an unqualified distinction between God and the world, "pantheism," as generally described, implies that God is immanent in or identical with the universe; God is everything and everything is God, and the God-creature relationship becomes less distinct. The pantheist believes that the totality of all that exists is God. The panentheist believes that the universe is a part of God, God is greater than the universe, and God is involved in all aspects of the universe at all times, which implies the important theory that God evolves in support of humanity's development. Murphy posits that historical spirituality and natural history support the theory that a Supreme Principle is the secret unconsciousness of Nature, and evolution is the long cosmic process through which this God awakens humanity into unification and super consciousness (Cooper 2006; Clayton 1997; Kripal 2007; Murphy 1992).

Preliminary Discussion of Michael Murphy's Lifeworks

Michael Murphy is well known as the co-founder, with Richard Price, of the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. Founded in 1962, Esalen is the acknowledged birthplace of the human potential movement, inspired by Abraham Maslow's psychology of peak experiences, which offers promise of humanity's capability to develop extraordinary potential through the natural and metaphysical sciences (Kripal 2007, 137).² Prior to Esalen's founding (Tomkins 1976, 41), Murphy and Price were heavily influenced by Gerald Heard and other members of the "laymen's religion," which Frank Baumer (1960) defines as "an individualized combination of beliefs and practices chosen by such diverse sources as Christianity, oriental religions, political ideology, psychological theories and anthropological observations" (Robb 1985, 47-48).³

Robb (1985, 48) further states:

As such, the layman's religion expresses a personal belief system rather than adherence to formal dogma or theology. Moreover, it exhibits at least two significant characteristics: it is polymorphic and anti-dogmatic.

² Aldous Huxley is credited for the phrase "human potential" (Kripal 2007, 86). According to sources, George Leonard evolved the term "human potential movement" (Esalen Leonard 2013, 2). The human potential movement had its origins at Esalen in the 1960s; its focus the belief that, through the development of human potential, persons and, subsequently, society can experience an exceptional quality of life. A 1969 *Newsweek* article (May 12, 106) called Esalen "the Harvard of the Human Potential Movement" (Anderson 2004, 276). A clear distinction between the generic human potential movement and Murphy's (1992, 221-30) worldview philosophy of human transformative capacity is Murphy's belief that metanormal human capacity is, of evolutionary necessity, the bridge linking the microcosm of humanity to the macrocosm of cosmic spirituality.

³ Robb, David. 1985. Robb quotes Frank Baumer (1985) in his article "Brahmins from Abroad: English Expatriates and Spiritual Consciousness in Modern America."

While Richard Price handled the on-site management of Esalen until his untimely death in 1985 (Erickson 2005, 159-60), Michael Murphy's journey extends far beyond his work with the Institute. Former U.S. Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich (2010, 163) writes:

Michael is both a spiritual leader and a social leader—dedicating himself to achieving hugely ambitious and almost impossible goals (consider, for example, the audacity of bringing Soviet leaders together with American leaders at the height of the Cold War, while at the same time leading generations toward deeper personal insight).

Murphy is recognized by his peers as a leader, but what empowers his intellectual quiddity? Robb (1985, 45) provides a context within 20th Century academic history:

Symptomatically, many Western intellectuals, academics, writers and artists evidenced a longing to believe in some transcendent idea or principle that would give structure and meaning to their experience. This longing, according to Franklin Baumer, was brought on by the failure to reconcile the "man–society" connection with the "man–universe." connection.⁴ For some, this longing for belief was satisfied by either a kind of religious adherence to political and economic ideologies or by a return to traditional religious creeds. Others were led to an exploration of a broad combination of religious, scientific and psychological elements which together represented a new, modern syncretic spiritualism.⁵

⁴ Frank L. Baumer, *Religion and the Rise of Skepticism* (1960, 225) credits Arthur Koestler with coining these two terms (man-society/human universe). Michael Murphy lists Arthur Koestler's *The Act of Creation* (1964) and *The Sleepwalkers: A History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe* (1959) as two of the books that most influenced his evolutionary thinking.

⁵ There is, in many quotations, male gender usage in lieu of the more generic terms such as humankind, or humanity. This is unacceptable practice in contemporary scholasticism unless specificity is required. I have kept to original quotations but have made efforts to weed out, within the body of this study, any usage of gendered pronouns ("man," "men," "mankind,"). Likewise *God* (already a misleading term due to its anthropomorphization) is constantly referred to as *He*, except by some progressives who employ the feminine pronoun as some sort of statement or compensation. I make every attempt to denote God as a neutral entity (Supreme Principle) rather than a person, with full awareness that even that is insufficient because *It* is indefinable in the canons of most religious theory.

The general search for meaning—and the exploration of wide-ranging and diverse fields in order to validate that search—summarizes the framework that underscores Michael Murphy’s worldview and situates the transparent integrality that is central to Murphy’s philosophy. A finite definition of integrality is difficult due to disparate academic interpretations. For purposes of this study, integrality is synonymous with integralism, a name adopted for a doctrine or theory in which the concept of the integral whole is employed. Integrality is the condition of espousing the completeness of an entity or concept through the study and understanding of as many relevant components or factors as needed for comprehensive and comparative evaluation. My use of ‘integrality’ within this study connotes a metasystem by which completeness is determined by a multiplicity of factors that contribute to the sum of its constituent elements. Just as one’s health is subject to a variety of factors (age, genetics, health practices, heredity, living environment, mental attitude), so academic integrality is comprised of components that, examined separately, contribute only a partial understanding of a stated conclusion or summation of being. Academic integrality demands inclusionary analyses of as many available components as possible to assist in providing the most thorough understanding of a theory, belief, practice, and or event.⁶

⁶ Michael Murphy (1992, 588-89) defines “integral practice” as: “A discipline to cultivate the physical, vital, affective cognitive, and transpersonal dimensions of human functioning in an integrated way.” When describing “integral empiricism,” Murphy emphasizes the acquisition and collaboration of data from mainstream science, psychical research, comparative studies of religious and metaphysical experience, and other fields that are ordinarily kept separate by scientists and scholars.

One example of Michael Murphy’s integrality is his reliance on the evolutionary theory that maintains that all things, all entities, are interdependent upon each other—so much so that nothing can exist without this interdependence. This theory is supported by Whitehead (1933), Ghose (2006), McDermott (1973, 1974), Chaudhuri (1972a, 1972b). Murphy’s contribution to scholarship has been to frame this theory of interdependency within his evidentiary conclusions about humanity’s transformative capacities, substantiated by the data-oriented research in which Murphy provides evidence of metanormal or extraordinary capacities in human beings.⁷ Murphy (1992, 587) defines ‘extraordinary’ or ‘metanormal function’ as upward human ability, accessible through practice, which surpasses the typical functioning “of most people living today.” There are multiple kinds and degrees of this functioning, “and at times it appears to be mediated by agencies or principles beyond those apparent in normal experience.” Murphy (1992, 179) writes of his integral assessment of tenets, hypotheses, and theories:

To best appreciate our possibilities for extraordinary life, we need to embrace both the facts of evolution revealed by modern science and the witness of sacred traditions East and West. To do this, we must confront two fundamental realities: a universal development of (inorganic and living) forms that has lasted for several billion years, and transcendent orders of existence conceived or experienced for several millennia by people all over the earth. The possibility of integrating these two aspects of existence is fundamental to my inquiries here.

⁷ The phrase “extraordinary functioning” is credited to Michael Murphy. George Leonard suggested the word “metanormal” (Murphy 1992, 587). Murphy “used the terms interchangeably in *The Future of the Body* to refer to human functioning that in some respect radically surpasses the functioning typical of most people living today” (Taves 2005, 230).

In order to better understand humanity's capacities for metanormal experience, Michael Murphy argues, one must take into consideration all factors that may contribute to these extraordinary perceptions and events. A primary facet of this coalescence of thinking is the merging (or re-emerging) of methodological and integral explorations into verifiable and overlapping aspects of both science and metaphysics.

Michael Murphy's research into metanormal human capacity investigates the data-driven studies provided by Frank Myers and Leopold Myers (1907) and Myers, Gurney, and Podmore (1918), as well as Herbert Thurston's (1951) chronicling of Catholic miracles. In his expanded vision of this extraordinary capability, Murphy also reviews multiple philosophical concepts including those provided by Śri Aurobindo Ghose (1919, 1950, 1972, 1996a, 1996b, 2002, 2006, 2012), Henry James, Sr. (1863), Murphy (2012), and found in Henri Ellenberger's (1970) massive compilation of historical psychoanalysis. In this study, I intend to illustrate that Murphy's lifelong study of human potential and cases of metanormal events places him at the forefront of the human potential movement.

Michael Murphy's theoretical constructs have roots in both Eastern and Western spiritual philosophy. A result of this is Murphy's expansion of Śri Aurobindo's synthesis of yoga into his own practical unitary vision, which necessitates brief analyses of the formations and hierarchies of the practices grounding Śri Aurobindo's philosophical evolution. Murphy also incorporates the Christian spiritual science of Teilhard de Chardin (1959, 1974), and the secular

theories of Alfred North Whitehead (1926, 1933, 1978; Hosinski 1993) into his constructs. Murphy (1992, 14) models his concept of synthesis as interpreted by Charles Dunbar Broad (1953) in his book, *Religion, Philosophy and Psychological Research*:

Synopsis is the deliberate viewing together of aspects of human experience which, for one reason or another, are generally kept apart by the plain man and even by the professional scientist or scholar. The object of synopsis is to try to find out how these various aspects are inter-related. Synthesis is the attempt to supply a coherent set of concepts and principles which cover satisfactorily all the regions of fact which have been viewed synoptically.

Michael Murphy's manifold interests—explicated in this study—often appear unrelated until the diverse components have been analyzed and evaluated to achieve as full an understanding as possible of the integral whole. For example, a description of fanciful powers in Murphy's fiction is justified later in his data-driven exploration into the metanormal. Murphy is a naturalist of humanity's temperament, including its mental, physical, and spiritual aspects. The journey of his ideas and adventures are integral to his evolutionary pattern of philosophical development; Murphy will research a project, analyze it, and move on, assimilating all that he has discovered for future use.

Although they coalesce into a unitary vision when projected as a conclusive whole, when taken as individual products of his wide-ranging professional and philosophical path, Michael Murphy's ideas may appear to be incohesive, and unsystemic speculations. This, I believe, contributes to a continued scholarly reticence to evaluate Murphy's philosophical achievements with open and tolerant perspective. The foundational refusal of contemporary academia to embrace the contributions of metaphysics as valid scientific,

historical, and philosophical factors when presenting the totality of human experience is an aberration that distorts any attempt at worldview thinking. This refusal only amplifies a philosophical disingenuity which, although some believe is slowly eroding, in my opinion, still remains academically foreboding:

While cultural historians have paid some attention to the Esalen Institute, they have not attended to Michael Murphy as a thinker or the place of his research within a larger intellectual frame of reference. (Taves 2005, 224)

Like Columbus who set off for India and ended up on San Salvador Island, sometimes it seems as if Michael Murphy is headed in one direction before he surprises his supporters by landing in an unexpected intellectual hemisphere. For example, few would have been able to predict that Murphy's fiction novels, in particular, *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972) and *Jacob Atabet* (1977b), would become catalysts for the extraordinary research and cataloguing that is the foundation of *The Future of the Body. Explorations into the Further Evolution of Human Nature* (1992), a book which generated the following from philosophy professor, Stephen Phillips (1992): "Not since William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* has there appeared such a galvanizing probe into uncommon human capacities" (front cover insert). Murphy's early obsessions with the interrelationship of natural history, quantum mechanics, the magical powers of ancient Indian *yogis*, Sufi metaphysics, and Christian hagiography meld themselves into definitive and well-documented theories of humanity's metanormal human potential.

Judging by his resultant data-driven sociological expertise in the evolution and capacity of humanity's developmental nature, there is an obvious coherence of purpose in Michael Murphy's years of research into extraordinary human potential and evolutionary panentheism. Existing literature and other sources do

not convey a cohesive study of Murphy's determination to adopt an integral approach to every aspect of his disciplines and writings, including his comprehensive work on metanormal human potential. Murphy's life story, I contend, demands a comprehensive psychobiography. This study attempts to provide an understanding and exposition of Murphy's major contributions, the intellectual and spiritual lineage of those contributions, and the psychological processes and life events that influenced Murphy's worldview.

Who Is Michael Murphy?

While the title of this dissertation is *Evolutionary Panentheism and Metanormal Human Capacity: A Psychobiography of Michael Murphy*, it is as much about the 'individual' Michael Murphy as it is about Murphy's position as a conduit for the understanding of the interrelationship with and interdependency of cognitive, spiritual, and physical abilities.

Beginnings

Michael Murphy was born in 1930 to an Irish father and Basque mother in Salinas, California. He is the eldest of two brothers. When Murphy was in the eighth grade he became an Episcopalian altar boy, which established Christian roots that would later be amplified by Eastern spiritual philosophy. At an early age, his friend Walt Anderson (2004, 25) reports, Murphy "believed that there was another way of being, a higher consciousness that was natural and available to people if they could only figure out how to get into it." However, none of this

prescient spiritual awareness seemed to have interfered with his popularity as a youth. Murphy “was valedictorian of his class, president of the student body, and captain of the golf team” (Tomkins 1976, 32).

Michael Murphy eschewed a scholarship to Harvard in favor of Stanford University because of the special memories he had of watching football games there with his parents. During his graduate work at Stanford in the early 1950s, Murphy mistakenly attended a class on Eastern theology and spiritualism, and was instantly captivated by the intellectual incandescence of Professor Frederic Spiegelberg, Stanford professor of religion and friend to Paul Tillich, Martin Heidegger, and Carl Jung. Spiegelberg's passion for Indic philosophy motivated Murphy's burgeoning vision, inspiring him to reach into the scientific and religious-mystical depths that have become wellsprings for much of his lifeworks and ambitions (Kripal 2007, 57). The social and philosophical upheaval of the sixties influenced this spiritual development as Murphy continued to study and evaluate Eastern theories and practices. According to Jay Ogilvy (2010b, 37), Western orthodox religion at that time was a matter of belief, but not necessarily the natural residence of contemporary practice or action:

To be a believer was to go to church and worship a deity at a distance, the Lord of lords who loved “man-kind,” but a Lord who dwelt at a distance, remote from the affairs of men and women; a transcendent God whose essence could be seen only "through a glass darkly." All those religious rituals, the (un)likely stories about virgin birth, crucifixion and resurrection, the miracles, the God of Abraham to whom Jews prayed, the mumbo-jumbo ... it was all so patently implausible to bright young students raised on a diet of post-Enlightenment science.

These words define the implicit realization that much of humanity's relationship to God is mired in a perception of deific non-intervention, a belief expressed by centuries of dogmatic Western authoritarianism. This epitomized the need for the school of thought emphasized in Esalen's Mission Statement (2013): one that comprehended the absolute essentiality for human beings to "look beyond dogma to explore deeper spiritual possibilities, forge new understandings of self and society, and pioneer new paths for change, tracing the arc from change to change agent (Esalen Mission, 3).⁸

Michael Murphy earned his BA in psychology from Stanford in 1952. After a two year stint in Puerto Rico as a psychologist, Murphy travelled first to Scotland (the locale for *Golf in the Kingdom* 1972; and *The Kingdom of Shivas Irons* (1997). He then then went on to India where he spent eighteen months (1956-1957) at the Śri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry with Mirra Alfassa, (Śri Aurobindo's spiritual partner), broadening his education in psychology and other sciences, religious commonalities, and the Eastern lineage of his own spiritual philosophies. This lineage in which Murphy sought to situate himself "might be understood as one that seeks to bridge the worlds of science and religion" (Taves 2005, 226).

⁸ Because of the multiple worldviews of God, for purposes of this study, the term "God" is analogous and equivalent to Supreme Principle, Ultimate Principle, Supernature, Supermind, the Omega Point, the One, Brahman, Krishna, Buddha, Allah, the Tao, Consciousness. Kripal (2007, 419) states:

what is traditionally called "God" is woven into the very chemical, atomic, and quantum fabrics of existence, catalyzed now by human intention and transformative practice within a fourth evolutionary domain, that gradually, ever so gradually, will reveal the always present Divinity.

After his return to the United States, Michael Murphy continued his philosophical/natural science studies while in residence at the Cultural Integration Fellowship in San Francisco, where he met fellow Stanford University graduate Richard Price (Tomkins 1976, 19).

Michael Murphy co-founded Esalen with Richard Price in 1962 with the goal of exploring work in the humanities and sciences. The Institute became a nonprofit organization dedicated to humanistic alternative education and devoted to multidisciplinary studies, areas traditionally neglected by secular academia.

Michael Murphy at Esalen

For over half a century, Esalen has offered more than 500 public workshops per year in addition to invitational conferences, residential work-study programs, research initiatives, and internships (Esalen 2013). Within Esalen's progressive walls, visionaries have written, taught, meditated, and created diverse programs inspired by Price and Michael Murphy, who encouraged some of the greatest minds to share their own visions. Former participants include Bateson, Bradbury, Campbell, Capra, Castaneda, Chopra, Feldenkrais, Fuller, Grof, Harner, Hillman, Kesey, Laing, Lilly, Maslow, McKenna, Naranjo, Pauling, Perls, Rogers, Rolf, Skinner, Sontag, Tillich, Toynbee, and Watts (Anderson 2004; Kripal 2007).

With the exception of Michael Murphy's continuing efforts to bring problem resolution to nations in political, cultural, and religious turmoil, the history of Esalen is left to those who have ably written about its successes and

failures (Anderson 2004; Kripal 2005; Tomkins 1976). Instead, this study concentrates primarily on Murphy's evolution above and beyond Esalen.

Michael Murphy's role as primary spokesperson for Esalen was not without its challenges. The Institute quickly became a formidable enterprise garnering national recognition (Howard 1969; Kahn 1987; Litwig 1967).

Anderson (2004, 180) reminisces:

Michael found himself being held accountable for things like drugs, encounter groups, and sexual freedom that he was not entirely sure he wanted to defend. He had reservations about many of these, and he did not feel comfortable in the role of spokesman for every deviation from the American norm.

Murphy attempted to divorce himself from these demands of Esalen as his leanings pointed towards new and challenging dimensions, bringing novel vision and fresh perspective to his research on the interrelationship of metaphysics and the natural sciences to advancing human potential. Still, in his role as the institution's principle spokesperson, "Murphy gained a degree of fame as Esalen's emissary, representative, and public persona ... and was in high demand as the national media began to cover the Institute's activities in the mid-1960s" (Erickson 2003, 170).

Michael Murphy took charge of his own destiny by moving to San Francisco in the mid-1960s to write his first novel (1972), while remaining an active collaborator within Esalen. Murphy's associate, Richard Price was willing to take up the slack at Esalen, seemingly more comfortable with the management of the ambitious Institute which, for Murphy, "had grown to be too successful and too complex and too demanding" (Tomkins 1976, 47). Price turned out to be an

excellent administrator, according to Kripal (2007, 358), leaving the personal appearances and external activities to Murphy, who continued to ponder his value to humanity outside of the confines of the Institution:

Beyond the discipline to which he dutifully and thoroughly subjected himself, beyond the hours of meditation, Michael Murphy came to the conclusion that there was something missing in a tradition that paid too little attention to the body, too little attention to the psychology of the unconscious, and too little to the sensuous realities of this world. (Ogilvy 2010c, 38)

Murphy felt that the world was catching up to Esalen with numerous copycats and other groups that promoted much of what Esalen had discovered in its early years.⁹ What had begun at the Institute as a theoretical and therapeutic approach to psychopathology had become increasingly an existential-humanistic “therapy for normals” (Marx and Seldin 1973, 42). It no-longer provided cutting-edge therapy, although there was always the promise of new methods of effectuating psychological well-being and increased human potential. By the late sixties, it appeared as if everyone was emulating some or all of Esalen’s concepts, and egos

⁹ Besides encounter groups and a variety of non-traditional therapies (including Gestalt therapy, psychodrama, transactional analysis, primal scream therapy, and Morita therapy), the human potential movement also embraced a number of disciplines and practices (both Eastern and Western) involving healing, self-improvement, and self-awareness, including Zen Buddhism, astrology, art, dance, and various somatic systems of body movement and rejuvenation. While the flashier and more eccentric aspects of the human potential movement have largely been relegated to fads of the 1960s and 1970s, for example, primal scream therapy and EST (Erhard Seminars Training), it endures in other forms. The American Society of Humanistic Psychologists is still an active, well-organized group. Journals in the field include the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *Journal of Creative Behavior*, and *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Beyond this, the legacy of the human potential movement can be seen in the continuing popularity of self-improvement workshops and books and even in the recent proliferation of 12-step groups, as well as in the many ways its values and principles continue to influence the professional work of therapists within a variety of orientations (HPM 2013, 2014).

at the Institute were often difficult to manage (Anderson 2004, 188). Throughout all the change and turbulence, however, one thing remained constant: Murphy's enthusiasm for and receptiveness to new and evolving practices and ideas. What reservations Murphy may have had about the institutionalization of Esalen did not affect his enthusiasm and management style. Anderson (2004, 189) writes:

[Murphy's] gift of joy was real, and the smile and the optimism did come easily. They influenced his style of leadership. Instead of intimidating the people who worked with him, he praised them and encouraged them. He was forever congratulating people. The natural corollary of the let's-do-it spirit was to celebrate things done.

Michael Murphy's 'let's-do-it spirit' led to greater networking outside of Esalen. In 1970, Murphy travelled to Europe with Esalen residential fellows Sara and Stuart Miller. They held conferences on human potential in London and visited with R. D. Laing, and with Robert Assagioli in Italy (Murphy 2009a).¹⁰ For Murphy, "the point and purpose of such exploration was always understood to be in the service of 'awakening the Divinity latent in all of us'" (Fuller 2005, 216), and was a continued calling for the study and transmutation of extraordinary human events. When Murphy described Esalen as a "kind of *sphota*, a seed-like swelling" or flash that originates an entire universe (Kripal 2005, 126), he was speaking of the belief in the microcosm of the earth and its creatures (human beings) in active participation with the macrocosm (Supreme Principle). Murphy honed his concept of evolutionary panentheism through the spiritual and scientific philosophy of involution–evolution. Simply put, there must be a divine involution

¹⁰ Michael Murphy made a total of five CDs in 2009, two of which are sourced in this study: *Human Potential and the Cold War* (2009a), and *Mapping the Zone* (2009b).

to matter for anything to exist at all; something cannot evolve from nothing. As Murphy (1992, 188) posits, “This world’s unfoldment is based upon the implicit action, descent, or involution of a Supreme Principle or Divinity.” Subsequently, humanity evolves, through various stages later described within this study, into a singular unification with the Supreme Principle.

While in Europe, Michael Murphy and the Millers researched Russian explorations into parapsychology, and Murphy set up an intercontinental telepathy experiment. Upon his return to San Francisco, Murphy concentrated on mentally transmitting a series of images to a Russian telepath, who waited in Moscow under supervised test conditions, to receive them. The Russian did perceive, with remarkable clarity, the image that Murphy sent: a toy wooden elephant from a photograph in a dictionary. Murphy (1992, 21) later described the experiment with a sense of awe:

It was something, wasn’t it, how he saw the elephant? He thought it had a “moveable nose dropper,” just like the trunk on the model I used. I was amazed he was so accurate. There was absolutely no way he could cheat, given the fact that he was in Moscow and I was in San Francisco.

While Murphy admitted the overall results of the experiment “were statistically inconclusive” (Tomkins 1976, 48), the experiment created a ripple of excitement within the fields of advanced human potential and parapsychology.

This exercise was only a small example of the influence that psychic phenomena had on Michael Murphy’s vast study of extraordinary events that led to his magnum opus on human transformative capacities, *The Future of the Body*:

Explorations Into the Evolution of Human Nature (1992) (hereinafter, *The Future of the Body*). Bestselling author Joseph C. Pearce (1992b) describes Murphy's work:¹¹

The Future of the Body is a major, monumental, and magnificent testament to the greatness of humankind. It points the way toward a new lexicon of the human spirit and is seminal to a new image of who we are and why we are here. It lifts us up beyond petty, divisive, sectarian, and inherited beliefs on the one hand, and the deadly confines of academic-scientific assumptions on the other, and points beyond the "biological constraints" of our all-too fragile flesh.

Murphy has begun to receive deserved broad recognition of his data-driven inventory and explication of contemporary natural science that bridges the gap between science and metaphysics, the cornerstone of his philosophy of advanced metanormal potential. This study is intended to enhance this academic recognition.

During this period of transition from full-time Esalen leader to a philosopher of natural history, Michael Murphy married Dulce Cottle, herself a visionary of advanced human potential. Dulce began to assume responsibilities at Esalen (2013), eventually becoming an investigator for CTR, The Center for Theory and Research (Esalen CTR), and President and Executive Director of TRACK TWO, Esalen's Institute for Citizen Diplomacy (Esalen TRACK TWO (2013, 1). Along with many citizen diplomats, including Chungliang Al Huang, Sam Yau, and Jay Ogilvy, Michael and Dulce have been primary catalysts for the

¹¹ Pearce, Joseph Chilton. 2004. Pearce is an American author of multiple books on human development is well-known for his books, *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg* (1973), *Magical Child* (1977) and *A Biology of Transcendence, a Blueprint of the Human Spirit* *The Bond of Power: Meditation and Wholeness* (2004).

establishment of harmonious, humanitarian efforts in Russia, China, Brazil, India, and other nations, coordinating mutually beneficial diplomacy in medical research, education, the arts, politics, and religion.¹² For example, Hasse (2010, 88) memorializes:

1989 was the year the Soviet's ended their debilitating and aimless ten-year war with its Afghan neighbor. At this very time, Michael Murphy and Esalen's Soviet-American Exchange center were launching a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder project engaging American and Soviet specialists, an example of Esalen's experiential, humanist activism. They were bringing a group of Soviet Afghanistan War veterans to participate in an exchange of healing practices, trying to close gaps between traditional psychiatry and spirituality, seeking through expanding states of consciousness and shared experience to transcend resistant and disconnecting memories of physical and emotional pain and fear.

So, while Esalen and the human-potential movement continued to make large demands on Michael Murphy, with the help of his wife, the 'other' Michael Murphy, 'the closet extrovert', "was knocking authoritatively to get out" (Tomkins 1976, 48).

Beyond Esalen

To this day, Michael Murphy remains a director of Esalen. Through his vision and extraordinary data-driven research and production, Murphy continues to expand his scientific and religio-philosophical reach into regions of human transformative experience, heretofore inadequately explored due to dualistic scientific dogma, religious tenet, and superstition. Murphy's philosophical vision

¹² Michael Murphy's ventures into social politics include the various philosophical and psychological programs at Esalen, as well as the Institute's international programs such as the Center for Theory and Research (Esalen CTR 2013), and the TRACK TWO Program (Esalen TRACK TWO 2013), both which explore and support remedies for divisive issues of international diplomacy, health, the arts, and religious fundamentalism within Esalen's program of Citizen Diplomacy.

meets the expected resistance from established religions, fundamentalism, habituation to familiar social practices, and the reductive materialism of many scientists. By embracing a multivalent methodology in data-gathering and critical inquiry, Murphy has provided sophisticated research methods for the exploration of human supraordinary functioning. This high level of research is evident in *The Future of the Body* (1992), in which Murphy:

uses much of the text to provide examples of metanormal functioning in literature, religion, science, and psychology from many cultures and historical eras. His main thesis is that each of us harbors latent metanormal capacities rooted in biological evolution: ESP, clairvoyance, extraordinary movement abilities, uncanny somatic awareness and self-regulation, superabundant vitality and universal love, among others. (El Magharbeh 2008, 1)

Personal Experience of Michael Murphy

To write about someone living and known to his psychobiographer is to place oneself in a precarious position. There is a slight sense of trepidation. What if I find myself in conflict with Michael Murphy's philosophy or his methods of analysis? What if I believe Murphy's assertions to be, in my opinion, capricious or erroneous? The fact that Michael Murphy supports me in this endeavor makes it even more emotionally precarious.¹³ I believe my integrity of purpose, positive skepticism, and extensive research will facilitate a strong, unbiased assessment of

¹³ Michael Murphy's support is evidenced by the valuable time he spent with me, discussing the objectives of this study in meetings and on the phone during the evolution of this dissertation. His immediate and thorough responses to additional questions via email also greatly assisted these efforts. Murphy continues to generously make his time available.

Murphy's philosophy.¹⁴ This study required a developed understanding of Michael Murphy's own inclusive methodology, similar to the method provided by Barclay J. Erickson in his study on Richard Price (2003, 40), which is:

a reconstructive, intuitive, interpretive method based upon the synthesis of all available evidence culled from all available sciences providing systematic analyses of information on the life and life's works of a single individual.

Murphy's (1992, 9) inclusive research mechanisms support these methods with the caveat:

To explore the further reaches of human nature, in short, we must be open-minded but keep an ear for tall tales. ... For an inquiry as wide ranging as this, we must be bold and yet employ the critical distance that characterizes good science.

By invoking "critical distance," Murphy emphasizes the need for contemporary reasoning to be tolerant and inclusive of multiple methods of learning, especially within the realm of the paranormal, mystical, and experiential.

I found Michael Murphy's story, fragmented as it is in the current literature, to be extraordinarily consequential to contemporary philosophy. My initial 2011 meeting with him at Horizons Restaurant in Sausalito, California

¹⁴ My interpretation of skepticism agrees with that of Richard Tarnas (2006) who writes in *Cosmos and Psyche* (2006, xiii):

Skepticism is the chastity of the intellect ... The mind that seeks the deepest intellectual fulfillment does not give itself up to every passing idea. Yet what is sometimes forgotten is the larger purpose of such a virtue. For in the end, chastity is something one preserves not for its own sake, which would be barren, but rather so that one may be fully ready for the moment of surrender to the beloved, the suitor whose aim is true. Whether in knowledge or in love, the capacity to recognize and embrace that moment when it finally arrives, perhaps in quite unexpected circumstances, is essential to the virtue. Only with that discernment and inward opening can the full participatory engagement unfold that which brings forth new realities and new knowledge. (xiii)

solidified my desire to initiate this study. Murphy graciously allowed me the freedom to formulate my investigation without his personal interference. Is he the enigmatic figure portrayed in the media? Some of his closest friends advise that Murphy is comfortable with any perceived obscurity; however, the opposite is true. Murphy wants his story to be told. Tomkins (1976, 48) labeled Michael Murphy a “closet extrovert”; I found Michael Murphy to be, as his friend Sam Keen described, “A joyous mystic” (1976, 31).

Because of the plethora of information available in the media, at Stanford University, in Esalen archives, and as expressed by Michael Murphy’s own essays and other publications, our interviews were often more about clarification than primary substance. For the interviews, I formulated a series of questions to augment my study, then taped our conversations and had Murphy’s responses transcribed and approved. This method achieved a closer proximity to the deliberations and personal conflicts, and provided what I consider to be a more visceral substantiation of Murphy’s worldview. Murphy’s responses to my questions proved to be treasure troves of information that provided comprehensive correlation of the influences and events that determined the outcome of his works and philosophy.

When asked for the titles of books that he thought were most personally influential, Michael Murphy 2010 (1) listed: Śri Aurobindo Ghose’s *The Life Divine* (2006), *Letters on Yoga* (2012) and *Commentary on the Isha Upaniṣad* (1996b), Gupta Mahendranath’s *The Gospel of Śri Ramakrishna* (1942), William James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), Myers and Myers’ *Human*

Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death (1907), Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (2008), Plotinus' *The Enneads* (1984), Plato's *Symposium* (2009), *Phaedrus* (1914), *Phaedo* (1914) and *The Republic* (2000), G. W. F. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1976), Teilhard de Chardin's, *The Phenomenon of Man* (1959), Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Collected Essays* (1989), Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1910), Arthur Koestler's *The Act of Creation* (1964) and *The Sleepwalkers* (1959), Aldous Huxley's *Essays on Human Potentialities* (2002), Abraham Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1968), and Henri Ellenberger's *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970). Tomkins described Murphy's home as:

upholstered in books—books on Tibetan Buddhism and Vedanta and Christianity and Islam; the complete works of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramakrishna; the Upanishads, in various translations; Meister Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa; Freud and Jung; Coleridge, Blake, Joseph Campbell, Plotinus, James Joyce. A whole library of the human potential, past and present. (1976, 31-33)

The books a person admires, I believe, can reveal elements of that person's personal philosophy, and illustrate the extent of that person's comfort zone within the wider fields of learning and knowledge. *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dostoevsky 1910), arguably one of the better books ever written, illustrates the relationships of and among three brothers with vastly different personalities. In many ways Dostoevsky's masterpiece is a statement of integrality. It is composed of parts that together constitute a whole, each brother a constituent to the completeness of human nature. The Karamazov brothers are masterful examples of how siblings intertwine within a single family unit—a collective consciousness

writ small. Michael Murphy's appreciation for this specimen of existential aggregation is as obvious as his keen interest in all elements that ground his theories on evolutionary panentheism and metanormal human potential.

The Debate

Craig Callender (2001), philosopher of science and professor of philosophy at U. C. San Diego, is quoted by Tomkins (1976, 31):

Even today, philosophy of science appears caught in what Einstein (1933) called the “eternal antithesis between the two inseparable components of our knowledge – the empirical and the rational.”¹⁵ It wants to employ metaphysical speculation, but impressed with the methods of the subject it studies, it fears overreaching. Philosophy of science thus tries to walk a fine line between scientifically grounded metaphysics and its more speculative cousins.

There are those who dispute Michael Murphy’s beliefs about metanormal phenomena and the present and future potentialities of humanity because any novel theory has its opposition. This is as it should be. “Any pioneer is always the successor of previous ones and the precursor to others” (Ellenberger 1970, 69), and doubt usually precedes awareness. Science is in a perpetual search for an intelligent and integrated comprehension of an ever-changing world requiring a series of judgments, as well as supportive experimentation and intellectual revision. Scientists can be hostile to that which they do not thoroughly understand or which is beyond their interpretation of the ‘norm’.

¹⁵ Einstein, Albert. 1933.

In the opinions of Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor (1999, 45), the strident and dogmatic atmosphere of contemporary science must be continually challenged:

largely because, for three hundred years, the dualism of Descartes has required an absolute separation of mind and body, while its handmaiden and more recent dictum of research, scientific positivism, asserts mechanistically that what is immediately physical and material constitutes all there is to reality.

Montgomery (2013, 87) provides Jung's perspective which:

cautions scientists to avoid the temptation of discounting those events which the senses of scientific instruments cannot detect. He warns that one must not come to such a conclusion too quickly since the senses and technologies may not be "capable of perceiving all forms of being.

The belief in the separation of mind, body, and spirit, and the emphasis on empirical over experiential evidence are not the only hurdles to reinventing the ways in which science is conceived, conducted, and canonized. Other obstacles to scientific evolution, according to Michael Murphy (1992, 8) include:

professional specialization, divergent (or conflicting) conceptual systems, and the information explosion [that] make it difficult to gather the evidence for human transformative capacity so that it can be seen as a whole. Experts in a given field typically have less than expert acquaintance with knowledge produced outside their own scholarly or scientific domain. Relatively few physicists and biologists, for example, appreciate how much evidence there is for paranormal events or the greater care with which such evidence has been gathered. ... Few scholars of contemplative activity know much about discoveries of medical science that bear upon mystical realization.¹⁶

¹⁶ "Paranormal" simply describes events or phenomena such as telekinesis or clairvoyance that are beyond the scope of normal, current scientific understanding and/or its willingness to consider (Murphy 1992, 588).

This is further affirmation of the continued contemporary separation of science—even the science of philosophy—from the so-called ‘speculation of metaphysics.’ It is this divisiveness that Michael Murphy has spent his life attempting to overcome. In his studies of positive and encouraging aspects of human development and potentiality, Murphy does not offer undocumented theories; he bases his evolutionary and spiritual philosophies on extraordinary human potential through data-driven research and scholarly interpretation.

In his article in *Psychology Today*, Leonard¹⁷ (1992, 1-2) sums up the reality and utilization of metanormal human potential:

As human beings, we have extraordinary potentials which are not fully utilized ... some of these capabilities are measurable scientifically; some of them require observation, hearsay, or just faith. But their existence, their reality is more certain than ever ... there’s overwhelming evidence that most if not all of our human attributes have extraordinary or seemingly miraculous versions. We can now recognize the pattern of the extraordinary in human life to a degree that people in former times could not ... the metanormal is widely available. For thousands of years, throughout all cultures, certain individuals have exhibited capacities that are truly extraordinary. And certain of these capacities have appeared independently in separate cultures, and can’t be attributed to imitation or cultural diffusion.

17. George Leonard:

produced numerous essays and special issues on education, science, politics, the arts, the Civil Rights Movement, and foreign affairs. A collection of his *Look* essays was published in 1970 as *The Man and Woman Thing and Other Provocations*. ... Articles by George Leonard also appeared in such magazines as *Esquire*, *Harper's*, *Atlantic*, *New York*, *Saturday Review*, and *The Nation* ... While serving as senior editor for *Look* magazine (1953-1970), he won an unprecedented eleven national awards for education writing. His coverage of the Civil Rights Movements (praised in the February 10, 2003 *New Yorker*) contributed to *Look* receiving the first National Magazine Award in 1968. (Esalen Leonard 2013)

This recognition of evidence of the extraordinary or metanormal capacities of humanity is merely an appetizer to Michael Murphy's voluminous, data-driven research in *The Future of the Body* (1992). This research, and its subsequent conclusions, are evidence of Murphy's stated primary goal: a contemporary and thorough investigation into the natural history of the self, using the evidence unearthed through research into "integral practices in human growth and transformation" (Taves 2005, 239).

Review of Literature on Michael Murphy

In addition to personal interviews with Michael Murphy, I performed an exhaustive search of books, dissertations, journals, and periodical publications for inclusion in this study. This Section offers brief overviews of existing literature describing and discussing Michael Murphy, followed by an evaluation of those sources for the purposes of this study, and finally, an explanation of how the literature interacts with and contributes to his overall worldview.

Periodical Articles

In my review of the literature, I found several articles particularly relevant to this study. The first article, "Introduction and "Eleven Theses on Murphy" (Ogilvy 2010b) is of special significance: Jay Ogilvy joined Esalen in 1979. The author of nine books and over fifty published articles on a variety of topics (Esalen Ogilvy 2013, 1), Ogilvy provides a unique perspective of Michael Murphy during his transitional stage from Esalen founder and guru to bestselling author and researcher of advanced metanormal potential. Ogilvy's article was originally written for a meeting of Esalen's Center for Theory and Research

(CTR), then rewritten as an article for *ReVision* (2013c). An earlier essay by Linda Wood (2008) in *Pacific Historical Review*, “Contact, Encounter, and Exchange at Esalen: A Window Onto Late Twentieth-Century American Spirituality,” offers rare insight into the relationship of Michael Murphy and Richard Price to the hierarchy of progressive educators that helped evolve Esalen into an academically renowned foundation for humanistic psychology. The article illustrates the tension between contemporary religious notions and scientific culture as a whole, and the efforts of visionaries at Esalen to find a place for the former among the latter. By underscoring this tension, Wood adds to an understanding of the dynamic process in which religion is founded, distorted, revitalized, misinterpreted, politically and socially revised, and rejuvenated by change, cultural evolution, and the incorporation of contemporary beliefs and practices. In *Psychology Today*, George Leonard (1992) authored “How to Have an Extraordinary Life,” a thoughtful investigation into Michael Murphy’s work on advanced human potential.

Books

Walter Truett Anderson’s (2004) early book on Esalen—a combination of institutional history and biographical material—is titled *The Upstart Spring: Esalen and the Human Potential Movement: The First Twenty Years. Esalen*, by Jeffrey J. Kripal (2007), is a formidable academic exercise which validates and supplements Anderson, while providing an additional wealth of material on Esalen and on Murphy’s works and productivity beyond his commitment to the Institute.

Since Michael Murphy's magnum opus, *The Future of the Body* (1992), contains elements of the experiential and the autobiographical, it is included as an integral part of this literary review. *The Future of the Body* (1992) is the culmination of decades of Murphy's research into the metanormal or extraordinary capacities of humankind. I include it in this review of literature because it is the truest and most comprehensive authority on Murphy's investigations into extraordinary human potential. True, it is 'by' Murphy rather than 'about' him, but it offers the reader a thorough evolutionary synthesis of his data-driven research that is only sparingly covered in other existing literature. The work is a 785-page, data-driven summation of Murphy's evolutionary theories of mental, bodily, and spiritual transformations, and the absoluteness of their interrelationships. *The Future of the Body* (1992) is a more expansive catalogue of actual metanormal events than previous offerings: Myers and Myers's (1907) *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* and Herbert Thurston's (1951) *The Physical Phenomenon of Mysticism*; it is Murphy's reintroduction to this disciplinary method of investigation into metanormal human events through the integral and comprehensive use of multiple disciplines, including comparative spiritualities and religions, natural history, psychical evidence, medical science, mysticism, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. Through his understanding of the cosmic interrelationship of all entities, *The Future of the Body* (1992) is

Murphy's attempt at the reestablishment of the important study of advanced human potential to a contemporary audience via a rational intertwining of religion and science "in light of two centuries of experimentation with altered states of consciousness" (Taves 2005, 227).

Essays, Chapters, and Other Contributions

The two collections of essays relevant to this literature review. *On the Edge of the Future: Esalen and the Evolution of American Culture* (Kripal and Shuck 2005), and Oglivy's (2010) *An Actual Man: Michael Murphy and the Human Potential Movement* offer a number of biographical and philosophical ruminations on Michael Murphy. One such contribution is Catherine L. Albanese's "Sacred (and Secular) Self-Fashioning: Esalen and the American Transformation of Yoga," a historical overview of religion and spirituality, which presents a brief history of Murphy's philosophy. Don Hanlon Johnson's "From Sarx to Soma: Esalen's Role in Recovering the Body for Spiritual Development" is a primer on the cultivation of somatics within human transformation. Jeffrey Kripal's essay, "Reading Aurobindo from Stanford to Pondicherry" provides information on Murphy's relationship to Śri Aurobindo and his trip to India. "Michael and the Natural History of Supernormal Human Attributes" by Ann Taves, offers a historical and academic evaluation of *The Future of the Body* (1992) as it relates to and augments two of Murphy's primary predecessors in the documentation of metanormal activity: Myers and Myers's 1907 (*Human*

Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death), and Herbert Thurston's 1951 (*The Physical Phenomenon of Mysticism*). Finally, Gordon Wheeler's "Spirit and Shadow" illustrates the influence of Gestalt in Murphy's methodology.

An Actual Man: Michael Murphy and the Human Potential Movement hereinafter, *An Actual Man*), edited by Ogilvy (2010), is a book of essays compiled in honor of Michael Murphy's eightieth birthday, which contains several essays of particular relevance. They include Richard Zentatsu Baker's "Michael Murphy, A World of Friendship," which briefly describes Murphy's international diplomacy, and Robert N. Bellah's "Michael Murphy and Embodied Practices," a homage to Murphy's work in metanormal embodiment. "The Sursem Series" by Emily and Ed Kelly addresses Murphy's activities in advanced human potential, Robert B. Reich's "Michael Murphy and the Two Realms" is a personal reflection on the integrity of Michael Murphy's life and work, and Gordon Wheeler's "The Evolution of Experiential Education" discusses the rebirth of experiential education, and the five faculties of the human potential curriculum: mind, body, heart, spirit, and the social.¹⁸

Articles in Other Media

"New Paradigms," Calvin Tomkins's 1976 article in *The New Yorker*, extensively describes Murphy's philosophical trajectory and accomplishments and was a major catalyst for my determination to create this study because of the

¹⁸ The social faculty helps determine and clarify our ethics, our philosophy, our beliefs about the Supreme Principle, and all our relationships. Because of its ability to be explicitly cultivated, our social faculty can enhance every aspect of our life and our *being*.

reported depth and integrality of Murphy's achievements. This lengthy profile is a fine biographical examination of Murphy through his adolescence, education, and his tenure as Esalen's primary shepherd.

Gaps in the Literature

The previously named sources are relevant to individual elements in Michael Murphy's productivity and worldview, especially Murphy's lineage to Myers and Thurston (Taves 2005), and the biological overview of Murphy's early years presented by Tomkins in *The New Yorker* (1976). However, when read as separate documents they do not create the integrated whole needed for a thorough scholastic understanding—one, I argue, that would assure Murphy's rightful place in the academic canon.

The components that comprise the current literature on Michael Murphy provides valuable insight on Murphy's scholarship (Kripal 2007; Wheeler 2010), and the merits of Esalen under his co-leadership (Wood 2008; Leonard 1992), but no single work offers conclusive insight into the reasons behind or the comprehensiveness and value of Murphy's productivity and influence.

Tomkins's (1976) article in *The New Yorker* is a personality piece that contains speculations about how Michael Murphy's university years, his discovery of the teachings of Śri Aurobindo and other Eastern influences, and his partnership with Richard Price contributed to the creation of the Esalen Institute. The article provides a profile of Murphy that is long on anecdotes, facts, and conclusions, but lacks the constructive and thorough investigation of a formal

academic study. In short, Tomkins puts forth an extensive list of events and relationships that led Murphy to and beyond Esalen, but that list is not accompanied by a rigorous and comprehensive understanding of the evolution of Murphy's scientific, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions. However, Tomkins does establish a healthy, biographical glimpse into the person of Michael Murphy, one that engendered my personal enthusiasm for an extensive, panoptic study of how Murphy's philosophical worldview is exacted through the multivalent components of his life history.

There is little doubt as to the scholastic merits of Jeffrey Kripal's (2007) *Esalen*. The book covers more than fifty years of the Institute's evolution, providing interesting biographical information on Michael Murphy and Richard Price, among other worthy Esalen participants. However, the qualities that make *Esalen* a valuable institutional history do not lend themselves to highlighting the exclusive perspectives and motivations of a single individual. While many of Murphy's achievements and other motivating insights are brought to the reader's attention, *Esalen* is a concentration into the historical and sociological merits of Esalen, and remains tangentially focused on Murphy. Similarly, Walt Anderson's *The Upstart Spring: Esalen and the Human Potential Movement; the First Twenty Years* (2004) includes much about Murphy but does not attempt a comprehensive portrayal. The book targets Esalen's early years, and includes multiple biographies of a plethora of personalities who, at some time or another, sought to embellish Esalen's cultural reputation; Murphy, again, is only one of those personalities.

Articles and essays in Kripal and Shuck's (2005) *On the Edge of the Future: Esalen and the Evolution of American Culture* individually provide valuable insights on a variety of issues and experiments at Esalen when Michael Murphy shared the helm. These contributions, while useful, do not coalesce into a finite academic psychobiography of Michael Murphy or anyone else, for that matter.

An Actual Man (Ogilvy 2010a) is a compilation of many contributors voicing opinions on multivalent relevant subjects such as Michael Murphy's humanist activities and his research into the metanormal. However, the essays, singularly and collectively, lack conclusive insight into the comprehensiveness of Murphy's contributions to the cohesion of natural science and metaphysics.

Even as each of the aforementioned works considers singular and multiple issues that support this investigation into Michael Murphy, none fully assess the integrality of the constituents as they apply to the integral whole. The literature takes into account the biographical details and theoretical wellsprings of his life as they have shaped his philosophy, yet lacks a comprehensive analysis of Murphy, himself. This study before you offers a first effort to fill the significant lacuna that exists within the research on an important turn of the Twenty-First-Century natural scientist and philosopher.

Section 2: Methodology

In this Section, I present the theoretical and practical tools used to generate this study. I begin by outlining the logical progression from biography to psychobiography. Next, I unpack the in-depth study that founds the psychobiological method and its components.

Biography

Very simply defined, a biography is an account of someone's life written by someone other than the subject. According to Runyon (1984, 36), a biography is "a portrait painted by a specific author from a particular perspective, using a range of conceptual tools and available data." In his dissertation on Richard Price, Barclay Erickson quotes historian R. G. Collingwood (1946) from *The Idea of History*, who defines 'biography' as "the discerning of the thought which is the inner side of an event." To Collingwood, history is primarily concerned with the knowledge of the mind and the thoughts it generates, which motivate an individual's philosophy and action. "The task of the historian is penetrating to the thought of the agents whose acts they are studying" (2003, 25). At its meanest level, this dissertation is a biographical review of Michael Murphy, focusing on his life's experiences with an eye toward his internal philosophical determinations. Since I have chosen a psychobiographical study, then biographical events must be understood in their psychological perspective. This study gives special consideration to Murphy's research into human transformative capacity—his evidence for extraordinary functioning as result of events, practices, and phenomena affected by and affecting the human person. Murphy's theory of

evolutionary panentheism staunchly lends itself to the idea of advanced human potential and practical implementations to expand same. What is essential within evolutionary panentheism is the spiritual theory of involution–evolution, wherein life and consciousness is not only evolutionary, but interdependent upon all that precedes and proceeds it. Dilthey and Jameson (1972, 229) write:

There can indeed be no history worthy of the name that does not breathe something like his spiritual enthusiasm for the traces that life has left behind it, something of the visionary instinct for all the forms of living activity preserved and still instinct within the monuments of the past.

When Emerson reminded us in his *Complete Writings* (1929, 125) that “man is explicable by nothing less than all his history,” he was not referring to individual history but the entirety of humanity. As evidenced in this study, a singular entity cannot exist without its interrelationship with other entities. Every ‘thing’ is intertwined, interconnected, and interdependent upon and within other ‘things.’ Atwood and Stolorow's (1984, 7) *Structures of Subjectivity: Explorations in Psychoanalytic Phenomenology* informs biographers that they must go beyond fulfilling the basic requirements of a simple narrative to accomplish something above and beyond:

psychoanalytic histories must bridge the gulf between the concrete particularity of an individual life and the experience of being human in universal terms ... providing the initial basis of comparison for describing the pattern of the individual's life as the realization of shared human possibilities.

In other words, this study must meticulously research Michael Murphy's biographical life while simultaneously applying what he has learned, experienced, and discovered to the universal terms that have become the cornerstone of his philosophy.

Psychobiography

The methodology of Erik H. Erikson's (1958) *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* is the genesis of modern psychobiography and the foundation for psychological analysis. To Atwood and Stolorow (1993, 13), Erikson was the first 'pure' psychobiographer because he was able to synthesize aspects of the psychology of knowledge (personal-subject relativity) and the sociology of knowledge (historical-cultural relativity). "Although each field [psychology of knowledge and sociology of knowledge] can make a certain degree of independent progress, their analyses are allied and complementary". What evolves from these complementary analyses are syntheses of material that coalesce into a psychobiographic framework. These sciences include sociology, biology, psychology, religion, phenomenology, and history.

William Runyon (1988, 285) began advocating for the use of psychology in psychobiography, "mediated through the aggregate-level social sciences, including such scientific 'substratum' as social structure and personality, historical sociology, psychological anthropology, and political psychology."

Atwood and Stolorow (1993, 9) also campaigned for the use of multiple perspectives in psychobiology, promoting "a psychobiographical method capable of flexibly drawing upon the knowledge of all the different schools of thought, and also of devising new concepts as it goes along." This correlates to

Michael Murphy's data-driven research which, as he points out in *The Future of the Body* (1992, 9), demands "a synoptic acquisition of soundly verifiable data that draws at once upon the natural and human sciences, psychical research, religious studies, and other fields."

Pillemer (1998, 70) states that there are three significant or seminal events central to a psychobiography. 'Originating events' are the beginning of a life path "or the birth of a set of enduring beliefs or attitudes to a single momentous event." One of these events could be the day Michael Murphy entered the wrong classroom at Stanford and heard the inspirational *vedāntic* words of Professor Frederic Spiegelberg. The second type of seminal event is an 'anchoring event,' a touchstone for a continuing set of beliefs which often appear in retrospect "as subsequent events validate the believer's intellectual or emotional thrust" (1998, 74). The formation and success of Esalen could easily fall in this category. The third event is the 'turning point', in which a "specific episode, or series of episodes, appear to alter or redirect the ongoing flow of the life course" (1998, 76). The reader can be allowed to speculate that a turning point for Michael Murphy was his extensive stay at Pondicherry, India, and his interrelationship with the Mother. (See Section Three.)

This dissertation is not a psychoanalytic biography of Michael Murphy but a psychobiographical one: that is to say, it is a discussion of Murphy's accomplishments as they pertain to the spiritual and philosophical foundations that developed as a result of his life history, rendered from a psychological perspective.

William McKinley Runyon's (1984) *Life Histories: A Field of Inquiry and a Framework for Intervention* served as another catalyst for extensive inquiry into the role of Michael Murphy's life history as it pertains to his philosophical ruminations.

Particularly germane to this study are investigations which include: (1) the philosophical growth and conclusions resulting from Michael Murphy's intensive study, experiential activity, and productivity, (2) his outlook, or set of mental characteristics, (3) analysis and insight into the psychological motivations of his behavior, and (4) the practical implementation of these motivations and activities in interactions with others.

Erik Erikson (1958, 39) stated that "psychobiography is committed to a narrative mode of truth arrived at through an in-depth, case-study approach to biographical and psychological knowledge." Three general characteristics distinguish an in-depth psychobiographical case study from other methodological approaches, according to Atwood and Stolorow (1993, 27). First, the in-depth case study is "inherently *personalistic* and *phenomenological*" because it "presupposes that the issues being investigated in personality research can be fully understood only if viewed in the context of the subject's personal, subjective world." Second, psychobiography is *historical*. The personal world can best be illuminated as a life-historical phenomenon; personal development, as far as current understanding goes, occurs within temporal dimensions (1993, 28). Third, the in-depth case study is "*clinical* and *interpretive*," (1993, 28) as opposed to experimental or deductive (1993, 28).

A person's philosophical interpretations and intuitions are based on the meanings that emerge when placed within the context of the entire life history under academic investigation. This approach follows Dilthey's (1961) elaboration of hermeneutics and the "hermeneutic circle" in which the parts are "accessed in relation to a totality while knowledge of the whole is constituted by study of the parts" (Atwood and Stolorow 1984, 3). Integrating these multivalent methods substantiate the in-depth psychological study. David Polkinghorne, president of Saybrook Institute and author of *Methodology for the Human Sciences: Systems of Inquiry* (1983) also advocates for the use of hermeneutics in order to better understand what canon and tradition mean to a specific element of philosophy. Barclay Erickson (2003, 40) informs that:

The psychobiographic, in-depth, case study is a reconstructive, intuitive, interpretive method based upon the synthesis of all available evidence culled from all available sciences providing systematic analyses of information on the life and life's works of a single individual.

Tools of Psychobiography: Hermeneutics and the Hermeneutic Circle

The interest in psychobiography and its methodological in-depth case-study slowed between the great wars of the Twentieth Century only to witness a resurgence in Dilthey's (1961) hermeneutic approaches. Hermeneutics is the science of the interpretation of scripture, canons, and tenets. As the Christian Bible is subject to a plethora of interpretations, so too is the extant religious and spiritual literature of all spiritual traditions and disciplines. Conflicting interpretations can be credited with much of the regional and world conflicts that inflict intolerance and fear. Polkinghorne (1983, 221) opines that one of the difficulties with hermeneutic knowledge is that it is difficult "to attain a degree of

intersubjective agreement and certainty that one has understood an expression accurately.” The expositor has to understand hermeneutics as supportive of the interpretative analysis of how scriptural texts coalesce into the wholeness of the religion or discipline. Within this study, these interpretations are expressions of meaning for Michael Murphy and not necessarily for anyone else. In other words, as his psychobiographer, it is my obligation to identify the parts of Murphy’s life and works that contribute to the wholeness of his philosophy. The reader must keep in mind that, while Murphy’s worldview is obviously influenced by those sources he relies on for evidence and philosophical foundation, the conclusions I deliver on Murphy’s behalf must remain true to *his* philosophy.

Nineteenth Century German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher shared the creational concept of hermeneutics with Dilthey, but until Schleiermacher (1938), hermeneutics had been at best a system of rules, “a whole whose parts were held together by the aim of giving an interpretation of general validity” (Dilthey and Jameson 1972, 240). Dilthey took the art and science of hermeneutics into scriptural context, while Schleiermacher expanded his style of hermeneutics “to apply to any literary text” (Atwood and Stolorow 1984, 2). The ultimate goal of the current hermeneutic process is to understand one’s spiritual or religious subject of inquiry in the most subtle and conclusive way. Polkinghorne (1983, 221) advises:

Hermeneutics is possible here because ... there is here the relation of the parts to the whole in which the parts receive meaning from the whole and the whole receives meaning from the parts: these categories of interpretation have their correlate in the structural coherence of the organization, by which it realizes its goal teleologically.

Murphy's broad expanse of spiritual interests is served well by the Gestalt of the hermeneutic circle with its intertwining constituent pieces contributing to the single whole. Any attempt to separate one piece of the circle from the others mitigates cohesiveness; one's spiritual evaluations are products of interconnected parts, which are in turn constituents of the whole. The parts without the whole—as well as the whole without its parts—are inadequate to conclusive evaluation.

The contemporary methodology of psychobiography employs the hermeneutic circle as a free-flowing, albeit fine line between exegesis and hermeneutics. 'Exegesis' is the "explanation, exposition (of a sentence, word, etcetera); *esp.* the interpretation of Scripture or a Scriptural passage" (Exegesis 2014). Hermeneutics is a broader, more thorough examination. To Kripal, hermeneutics is "a model that recognizes a truly profound engagement with a text [that] can alter both the received meaning of the text and one's own meaning and being" (2007, 61). However, hermeneutics is only one facet of multiple methodologies used in the psychobiographical meta-narrative that engenders a comprehensive wholeness to this study.

In terms of Michael Murphy, I attempt to ascertain the wholeness of his being and beliefs through the separate elements by which that wholeness is composed. The essence of the integral approach is the use of seemingly unrelated avenues of discovery and documentation. Every analysis of an integral theorist like Murphy must contain elements deriving not only from the theorist's personal world, but also from external social fields: ideas, nuclear events (defining

moments that stand out from the background of everyday experiences), and concepts and archetypes within which the subject formulates his thinking.

Atwood and Stolorow (1984, 3) emphasize that “the outstanding characteristic of man is his individuality.”

Tools of Psychobiography: Narrative

Embracing individuality is, of course, a key component to any psychobiography. The primary method for doing so is through narrative. As personality psychologists began to turn their attention to peoples’ life histories, story become more valid in “conveying the coherence and the meaning of lives” (McAdams 2001, 102) through the final narrative. As used in this study, the narrative is the method of presentation incorporating the methodologies of the psychobiography into a stimulating and understandable rendition of the many facets of an individual’s life. Biographical narratives foster a strong understanding of “characteristic adaptations,” a phrase coined by Northwestern psychologist McAdams (2001, 126):

which includes such personal goals and motives, defense mechanisms and coping strategies, mental representations of self and others, values and beliefs ... domain-specific skills and interests, and other personal characteristics that are contextualized in time, place, or social role.

Michael Murphy’s personal goals and motives, along with his sources of investigation and interpretation, are paramount to this study, as is his place in contemporary and future academic studies of a natural history that combines science with religion and metaphysics. In his article in *Review of General Society*, McAdams (2001, 114) asks: “To what extent are memories for personal events accurate renditions of what really happened or biased reconstructions of the

past?” Accuracy and bias certainly function as parts of the whole of any individual history. Is one expected to remember all the events and memories—subtle and otherwise—that molded that individual into a more evolved personality? As cautionary advice, Dilthey and Jameson (1972, 233) maintain that ascertaining truth’s validity through narrative biography can incite debate. However, debate is an essential component of any presentation. To Dilthey, narrative truth is a razor's edge because memories are subject to interpretation and reinterpretation:

For we can always make mistakes about the motivation and the principal actors in history; they themselves can indeed spread misconceptions about their own motives. But the work of a great poet or innovator, or a religious genius or a genuine philosopher can never be anything but the true expression of his spiritual life; in that human community delivered from all falsehood, such a work is ever true and unlike every other type of expression registered in signs; it is susceptible of complete and objective interpretation; indeed, it is only in the light of such works that we begin to understand the other contemporary artistic monuments and historical actions.

A psychobiography cannot be written entirely from spatial-temporal records of life experiences. Events happen, and we remember them happening but, more often than not, we do not retain concrete recollections of the day, time, circumstance, or other exacting details. However, memories and their interpretations, whether correctly recollected or not, should not be taken as false or intentionally inaccurate. One creates the best and most honorable recollection of which one is capable. The subjective view that constantly confronts the objective observer must be coherent within the full narrative. Pillemer (2008, 10) defines narrative truth as:

the criterion we use to decide when a certain experience has been captured to our satisfaction; it depends on continuity and closure and the extent to which the fit of the pieces takes on an aesthetic finality.

This suggests that it is up to me as psychobiographer to determine, through judgment and scholasticism, the primary experiences that factor into Michael Murphy's decision-making and lead to his own philosophy of evolutionary panentheism and the potential for metanormal human development.

It is apparent why Michael Murphy's study of spiritual philosophy and natural history is so important to a valid discussion of his works, especially his seminal data-driven cataloguing of the metanormal events and examinations that are part and parcel of *The Future of the Body* (1992). This discussion is augmented by my methodology, an integral approach employed to produce as thorough an examination of Murphy as possible. Exegesis and hermeneutics must be used, as well as narrative, storytelling, and psychology—each method an integral and interrelated part to the others, and each factoring in the overall narrative of a psychobiographical dissertation. What is of added importance to this study are my own interpretations and evaluations of the extensive information obtained through this integral methodology. As Runyon (1984, 47) informs:

Explanations and interpretations can be evaluated in light of criteria such as (1) their logical soundness, (2) their comprehensiveness in accounting for a number of puzzling aspects of the events in question, (3) their survival of tests of attempted falsification, such as tests of derived predictions or retrodictions, (4) their consistency with the full range of available relevant evidence, (5) their support from above, or their consistency with more general knowledge about human functioning or about the person in question, and (6) their creditability relative to other explanatory hypothesis.

Whether my evaluations stand the test of time remains to be seen. There is little doubt that some of my conclusions may stray from those of others, even those of Michael Murphy, but they are discriminating conclusions that rest on my thoroughness and understanding of the causes that eventuate Murphy's philosophical productivity and his contributions to natural science and spiritual philosophy.

All of the aforementioned methodological elements are key components to a psychobiography as integrated into its final narrative. I again offer the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* (1910) as illustration of the literary psychobiography in action: the fiction focuses on a period of trauma in the lives of three brothers, close in age and with overlapping personalities. Dimitri, Ivan, and Alexey retain their contrasting individualities, participating in sibling rivalry within the family bond, weaving their lives into collective conclusion in the harshness of the Russian winter. Through Dostoevsky's brilliant literary design and intricate plotline, the entanglement of the brothers and father embraces their individualities as constituents of an integral whole.

Methods

Reading of and Research into Michael Murphy

The archives for Murphy are extensive. He has written or co-authored numerous novel and works of nonfiction. There are magazine and periodical articles—peer-reviewed and otherwise—about Murphy's opinions, conclusions, and productivity which extend far beyond his authorship. Throughout this study, I provide quotations from Michael Murphy's fiction as evidence of his early

predilection for mystic spiritualism, Eastern and Western collaborative thought, and metanormal human capacity. Concentration is reserved for these philosophical, religious, scientific, and esoteric elements that transcribe to Murphy's most important nonfiction work: the data-driven research on transformative human capacity, *The Future of the Body* (1992).¹⁹

Murphy's philosophy is an exposition of his philosophical lineage. It is important to carefully peruse the major contributions which influenced Murphy's evolution of thought (Myers and Myers 1907; Myers, Gurney and Podmore 1918; Thurston 1951; Ellenberger 1970; Maslow 1968, 1970; Ghose, 1919, 1950, 1972, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 2006, 2012; Teilhard de Chardin 1959, 1974; Whitehead 1926, 1933, 1978). This abundance of research material provides a more than adequate foundation for this study, and collectively informs the substratum of Murphy's ontological development.²⁰ In order to solidify, confirm, or offer alternative viewpoints for Murphy's theories, I also enlisted a number of mainstream philosophical academic works.

¹⁹ Michael Murphy (1992, 15) defines his method of data-driven research, analysis, and interpretive documentation:

If we need a term for this approach, we might call it a synoptic, multidisciplinary, or integral empiricism (remembering, of course, that *empiricism* usually refers to data acquisition and verification limited to sensory experience).

²⁰ For purposes of this study, ontology just means the study of Being, of the relationship of Self to self, of that which allows things to be at all, and how that 'all' began, is now, and might be.

Interviews with Michael Murphy: Framing Questions and Method of Transcription

After obtaining approval from the Human Resources Review Committee (HRRC) of the California Institute of Integral Studies, a series of interviews were set up with Michael Murphy at mutually convenient times. These interviews took place at Horizons Restaurant in Sausalito, California, which has an atmosphere conducive to extensive conversations. All interviews were structured by specific lines of questioning, and then evolved into extemporaneous conversations about any number of relevant topics. On average, these meetings lasted approximately two hours. The first interviews generated information supporting materials already available to the general public. In later interviews, I framed questions reflecting issues that required clarification. Some issues were discussed in person; others, by phone and email. Recordings of interviews were professionally transcribed, the transcriptions personally reviewed by me, and then the recordings destroyed according to HRRC guidelines. Emails were archived, and the interviews and telephone conversations were submitted to Murphy for language approval. The rich material from my interviews with Michael Murphy informs multiple aspects of this study. Per HRRC guidelines, this study does not fall into a risk category.

Definitions and Clarifications

Michael Murphy's philosophical assertions require assiduous unpacking of that which Murphy considers to be concrete evidence for his claims. The goal of this study is to provide an honest, critical extrapolation and evaluation of Murphy, his research, and his conclusions.

In this work I rely primarily on the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2014) for definitions because of its high reputation and emphasis on etymology. I use academic and study-specific encyclopedias (the peer-reviewed *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*) for my own investigation and edification. Particular efforts were made to thoroughly understand and clarify Michael Murphy's interpretations of evolutionary pantheism and metanormal human potential, as well as Śri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophies, especially his exposition of the Supermind and other spiritual and scientific foundations of involution–evolution: (Ghose 1919, 2006; Odin 1981; McDermott 1973, 1974; Whitehead 1983; Chardin 1974). Research efforts on pantheism were especially informed by Cooper (2006); and information and the documentation of metanormal human potential by the research and written works of Myers and Myers (1907), Myers, Gurney, and Podmore (1918), and Herbert Thurston (1951). The religio-scientific concept of involution-evolution is carefully explicated in Murphy (1992), Ghose (1919), McDermott (1973, 1974), Chaudhuri (1972a, 1972b), Korom (1989). Understanding the complexities of the Supermind and its evolutionary path through involution–evolution is effectively supported by works from Ghose (2006, 1996a), McDermott (1973), and Chardin (1974).

Interpretation of Data

To underscore my methodology, I began with skeletonized observations of integrated pixels (minute addressable elements within Michael Murphy's life) and attempted to craft a balanced rendering of Murphy the individual to include his research and conclusions. The reconstruction of Murphy's totality is best approached, I believe, through the integration of his multivalent contributions. For example, one cannot hope to understand Murphy's evolutionary panentheism without understanding the components that influenced the philosophy of involution–evolution (Chardin 1974; Chaudhuri 1972a, 1972b; Ghose 1919; Korom 1989; McDermott 1973, 1974; Odin 1981; Saint-Hilaire 2011; Weiss 2006) and thus evolutionary panentheism as it applies to human metanormal potential.

Psychobiographical methodology grounded this study by requiring the gathering of as much information as possible about the parts which make up the whole. Assiduously assembling the puzzle piece-by-piece reveals the whole with more insight than mere observation of the finished product; with the puzzle-piece approach, one avoids emphasis of one over another—the psychobiographer must remain true to the subject's whole 'and' its parts. As MacIntyre (2007, 48) asks in *After Virtue*, “Which of our desires are to be acknowledged as legitimate guides to action, and which, on the other hand, are to be inhibited, frustrated or re-educated?” In his superb encapsulation of Śrī Aurobindo's philosophy, S. K. Maitra (2006, 10) reminds us that mind “by its very nature is a consciousness which cuts up and breaks asunder the forms of things from the indivisible whole

in which they alone can really exist.” After all, what is a psychobiological dissertation but a rendering of events that help deliver a complete perspective? A dissertation is “a spoken or written discourse upon or treatment of a subject, in which it is discussed at length; a treatise, sermon, or the like” (Dissertation 2014).

My methodological process is analogous to the alchemic separation of *ghee* (Skt: butter), made by simmering unsalted butter until the skum has boiled off and separated from the milk-solids which settle to the bottom of the pot. The texture, color, thickness, and taste of the ghee depend on the source of the milk from which the butter was made, and the length of time it simmers. My goal in data-gathering and analysis is to amass a multivalent array of sources, allowing the combination to simmer and separate in the process of the current study. The totality is the resultant ghee at the bottom of the pot.

Examples of Methodological Use

An example of how specific and singular theories and events are merely components of the whole is well illustrated in the various constituents of this intersubjective methodology called a psychobiography. First of all, I read and highlighted the bulk of Michael Murphy’s works, then books and essays written about him. I examined additional information provided by Esalen’s website (2013, 2014). I delved into other sources pertaining to issues and values addressed by Murphy. I perused the books recommended by Murphy (2010, 1) as his most influential.

Our interviews were of inestimable value, first in order to set the boundaries of a good working relationship, and then as a forum to address topics that required further explication. The one-on-one interviews were generously augmented by Murphy's spontaneous flow of visions and thoughts, which were of additional enormous value.

A more finite illustration of how the various parts of this intersubjective methodology were facilitated is difficult to draw. As in the unity and interrelationship of mind-body-spirit, methods overlap and interrelate, as demanded by the specific component or issue.

Barclay Erickson (2003, ii) writes that "as an intersubjective method of inquiry, psychobiography seeks to reveal how the structure of a person's subjective experience arises out of the critical formative events in his or her life." To facilitate this, I employed a variety of methods, including narrative, storytelling, exegesis, hermeneutics, interpretation, and inference.

The use of hermeneutics was invaluable, for example, to a full comprehension of the complexities of Aurobindo Ghose's 2006 'many-runged ladder' (307) to Supermind via involution–evolution. My review of Śri Aurobindo's writings and those of his commentators grounded the construct, and philosophical intricacies were clarified through the interpretations of McDermott (1973), Chaudhuri (1972a), Trivedi (1971), N. K. Gupta (1976). Exegesis, by its religious simplicity, factors in the symbiotic relationship of Chardin's (1971) the Omega Point to Śri Aurobindo Ghose's (2006) Supermind, and Murphy's (2012)

Supernature. Exegesis also served to facilitate the coalescence of the multitudinous versions of God: Chaudhuri's (1972b, 8) "Supreme Person or Divine Ruler," Aurobindo Ghose's (1950, 141) "Truth-Consciousness," Murphy's (2012a, 11) "world-transcending supernature."

Narrative is the method of presentation incorporating the events, theories, and relationships within Michael Murphy's life into an interesting and understandable rendition of the many facets of his 'being'. Storytelling is an excellent method of making the study readable, comprehensive, and appealing. Interpretations and inferences are of obvious necessity because of the multitude of opinions and theses that accompany any study. An example of this interpretation is provided in my analysis of Pillemer's (1988, 70-76) three seminal events in a person's life central to a psychobiography. The events that portray Michael Murphy's moments of major, philosophically-bending experiences require multiple interpretations to facilitate conclusionary possibilities—definitive descriptions, experiences, and timing of these seminal events are often intangible. A psychobiography is an in-depth case study. The in-depth case study, according to Atwood and Stolorow (1993, 27-28), is a series of submethods within a psychobiography which are personalistic, phenomenological, historical, clinical and interpretive.

Summarization of Methods

Erikson (1958, 39) writes: “Psychobiography is committed to a narrative mode of truth arrived at through an in-depth, case-study approach to biographical and psychological knowledge.” Three general characteristics distinguish an in-depth psychobiological case study from other methodological orientations and approaches, according to Atwood and Stolorow (1993, 37). First, the in-depth case study is “inherently *personalistic* and *phenomenological*” because it presupposes that the issues under investigation can be best understood from a perspective inclusive of the subject’s personal, subjective and phenomenological world. Second, psychobiography is *historical* (1993, 28). This means that the personal world can be best illuminated in a historical and linear perspective; however, personal development is only partially understood as events in time. No one can be certain how and through what events and sources such development is engaged. Third, the in-depth case study is “*clinical* and *interpretive*” as opposed to experimental or deductive. Interpretations and intuitions are based on the meanings that emerge; hypotheses are formulated by interpreting the conclusions, always keeping in mind the fluidity of an individual’s entire life history. This approach supports Dilthey’s (1961) elaboration of hermeneutics and the “hermeneutic circle” in which the parts give rise to the whole and the whole provides a context for an evaluation of the parts (Atwood and Stolorow 1984, 2-5).

The psychobiography employs the intersubjective methodology of an in-depth case study which uses evaluation, interpretation, and intuition to arrive at a comprehensive narrative. The use of psychology in psychobiography is mediated through aggregate-level social sciences such as social structure and personality interpretation, historical sociology, psychological anthropology, and political psychology. The study maintains its flexibility by drawing upon the knowledge of many schools of thought, while devising new concepts as they become necessary for evaluation. A psychobiographical dissertation must remain true to the subject's intersubjectivity. It requires extensive and often exhaustive research. It demands integrity of purpose, virtuous skepticism, and open-mindedness.

Section 3: Pondicherry, India

I include in my methodology psychologist David B. Pillimer's (1998, 70-76) hypothesis of the triune of significant events that occur in a person's life—originating, anchoring, and turning point—that contribute to a temporal understanding of how that person's telos evolves. For some, these events could be singular momentous occasions that change the person immediately. The purported apparition of the Virgin Mary to a group of three shepherd children at Fátima (1907) is one example. In most cases, however, to arbitrarily pick a single instance for conversion is fruitless. Not only is there the probability of the existence of several originating events that serve to develop the foundation of a person's philosophical *raison d'être*, but the specifics and importance of each occurrence is indeterminable. These significant events might occur within any number of situations, each adding mortar to the development of a person's set of enduring beliefs. Kripal (2005, 205-06) writes that Michael Murphy, even as an adolescent:

had already begun to develop what he calls an emanationist worldview, that is, a philosophy that understands the universe to be an overflowing or spontaneous expression of the divine. ... He had begun to realize that one cannot really cure a neurosis; the best one can do is transform it into something else, what he would later call, drawing on the yogic and Tantric traditions, a *siddhi*, or "superpower." But that would come later.

What 'is' evident, according to Murphy, is the catalytic importance of his inadvertent attendance of Professor Frederic Spiegelberg's class on the perennial philosophy of Eastern spiritual disciplines. Anderson (2004, 27) describes the scene:

Spiegelberg lectured that day on the Vedic hymns, and he talked about the Brahman, rolling out the name of THE BRAHMAN in a sonorous voice that seemed to carry within its own resonance all the grandeur of the Hindi concept of the great spirit of the universe. Murphy had never been exposed to these concepts before, nor had he read any of the Eastern religious texts. But when he walked back to the fraternity house for lunch that day, he knew that his world had changed.

According to Kripal (2007, 55-56), Spiegelberg's comparative religious course:

began with the ancient Brahmanical scriptures, the Vedas and Upanishads, then moved onto Buddhism, Saint Paul and Plotinus, and ended with the Hindu mystic Sri Ramakrishna as the exemplar of the unity of world religions and Sri Aurobindo as the philosopher of the future.

Catherine Albanese (2005, 71) reports that Michael Murphy's devoted philosophical relationship to Śri Aurobindo began in that class on Indic studies.

He read *The Life Divine* (Ghose 2006) and began to meditate, exposing "a metanoia, a spiritual conversion that turned his life around." In Murphy's own words:

I started reading [Śri Aurobindo's] *The Life Divine* before Spiegelberg got to him in the course, and it had an incredible impact on me. SA's stuff about the evolution of consciousness here on earth fitted right in with my own primitive and naïve notions. There was a tremendous feeling of everything falling into place. (Tomkins 1976, 33)

The *purusha*, or basic consciousness is a complex entity in Śri Aurobindo's psychology, embracing both *atman* (the eternal self) and a psychic being or soul that evolves from life to life. While *atman* is eternal in its oneness with Brahman, the psychic being is its representative in time. Although

essentially divine, the person is imbued with a unique identity that gives special flavor to the person's individuality. By transformative practice, this hidden core of the self 'comes to the front', expressing its essential uniqueness more fully upon one's thoughts, emotions, and physical expression.

It was at Stanford, that Michael Murphy began to experience, what some might call, a chronic spiritual catharsis. Albanese (2005, 59) records:

Murphy began to manifest all sorts of neurotic symptoms, including shortness of breath and rushes of anxiety. He read these as meaningful signs, warning him he was on the wrong path. He thus abandoned the doctoral program to do what he had long wanted to anyway. Go to India. He set off in April of 1956.

Murphy's recognition of the value of Śri Aurobindo's contemporary integral harnessing of the various Hindu schools and yogic foundations was inherent to Murphy's vision and would underscore his efforts in researching metanormal human capabilities. Anderson (2004, 30) states that Śri Aurobindo was "one of the most important contributors to Michael Murphy's philosophy of life." Profoundly moved by Śri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy, Murphy realized that much of the metaphysician's spiritual philosophy supported his own innate and integral belief-system. Both Śri Aurobindo and Murphy embraced human nature as part of cosmic evolution coparticipating within the latent divinity within all things. According to Albanese (2005, 71), the influence of Śri Aurobindo on Murphy was so deep and profound that:

in 1956, he travelled to Pondicherry, a French colonial city in India, where 1,500 devotees of the guru were living under the direction of Mirra Alfassa Richard (1878-1973), the "Mother" at his ashram. Murphy remained for sixteen months, meditating for eight hours a day (not a requirement) and participating in the life of the community.

In 1957, at the end of his year-and-a-half participation at the Pondicherry ashram, Michael Murphy returned to Palo Alto.

When the American Academy of Asian Studies was created in San Francisco in the early 1950s, Frederic Spiegelberg assumed the presidency—the same Spiegelberg who taught the Stanford Asian Studies class Murphy attended by accident. Spiegelberg subsequently communicated with Śri Aurobindo, asking him to suggest a candidate for a teacher of Indian philosophy. After consultation, Śri Aurobindo nominated Haridas Chaudhuri, a student upon whom he had bestowed *darshan* (literally “sight”) on several occasions. Śri Aurobindo had guided Chaudhuri’s dissertation work on integral philosophy. Haridas Chaudhuri was a Calcutta University PhD and student of Śri Aurobindo who studied and taught philosophy in India before his invitation to teach in the United States in 1951. Chaudhuri was entrusted with the task of extending Śri Aurobindo’s spiritual philosophy to the Western world (Kripal, 2007, 59). When Chaudhuri arrived in San Francisco in 1951, he initially established the Cultural Integration Fellowship in his own home. A committed exponent of *pūrṇa* or integral *yoga* in the tradition of his mentor, Chaudhuri then founded the California Institute of Asian Studies in 1968.²¹ Thirteen years later the name was changed to the California Institute of Integral Studies (Kripal 2007, 59).

²¹ *Pūrṇa yoga* is Śri Aurobindo’s synthesis of the primary philosophies of certain Indian yogic thinking and disciplines which underscored an inclusivity of practices rather than the prevailing separateness of one over another as competing soteriological avenues of redemption.

In 1960, three years after his return from Pondicherry, Michael Murphy learned that Chaudhuri:

had set up a center in a big old house on Fulton Street where students could live and study and meditate, he moved to San Francisco. It was at this point that he met Richard Price. (Tomkins 1976, 35)

And the experiment called ‘Esalen’ began. Murphy and Dick Price both lived at the center and attended lectures there, which facilitated Murphy’s partnership with Price as well as his intimate bond with Haridas Chaudhuri. Murphy (2013, 1) recalls Chaudhuri fondly:

Haridas was a constant friend and counselor from the time I met him in 1951 until his death in 1975. He was a wonderful colleague who helped clarify and amplify my life’s work and my understanding of Aurobindo, and he was particularly helpful in my understanding of the Indian renaissance in Bengal and its historical relevance.

The friendship and scholarly exchanges between Michael Murphy and Haridas Chaudhuri were important to Murphy’s advanced understanding of Śri Aurobindo’s spiritual philosophy. Murphy studied with Chaudhuri, and recognized the value of his unique perspective on the *siddhas*’ magical (metanormal) abilities.²² Especially beneficial to Murphy was Chaudhuri’s (1972a) article “The Philosophy and Yoga of Sri Aurobindo,” complimented by Chaudhuri’s (1972b) *International Philosophical Quarterly* article on “The Supermind in Sri Aurobindo’s Teachings.” Murphy often consulted Chaudhuri

²² *Siddha*’s are early yogic practitioners of *siddhis* or magical powers that Murphy (1992, 171-72) finds metaphysically similar to Catholic charisms, Sufi adornments, and similar “phenomena in other religions.”

on spiritual and psychic matters including *siddhis*, and “both shared a deep interest in ... those “superpowers” that are said to develop spontaneously during certain stages of yogic practice” (Kripal 2005, 105). A list of these *siddhis* is provided in Appendix B.

Eastern Influences: Background and Context

One cannot properly evaluate the effects of Michael Murphy’s trip to Pondicherry, or the influence of Śri Aurobindo’s thought without a sense of the ‘spirit’ of contemporary India, which provides an Eastern perspective on the progressive thinking that underscores Murphy’s worldview. This firmly coalesced as a result of: (1) Murphy’s strong relationship to Esalen’s originating foundations, which were greatly impacted by Gerald Heard, Christopher Isherwood, and Aldous Huxley—all members of the Vedanta Society of Southern California (Miller 2005, 89-95),²³ (2) Murphy uncontestable commitment to the spiritual philosophy of Śri Aurobindo (Kripal 2007; Murphy 1992) and, (3) his admiration for Frederic Spiegelberg, the Stanford professor who was enchanted by the eclectic spiritual lineage informed by *tantric* ideas and practices—many of which heavily influenced Murphy (Anderson 2004; Kripal 2007).

²³ The Vedanta Society owed its popularity to Vivekānanda’s groundbreaking address to the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. It was in the spiritual lineage of Śri Ramakrishna and his disciple, Vivekānada, “that Huxley, Heard, and Isherwood found much of their own inspiration and through which a general Hindu perennialism was passed on to early Esalen and American culture (Kripal 2007, 87-88).

Evidence illustrates that modern Hinduism does not represent a major break with the past. Modern Hinduism consciously affirms the importance of all periods of Indian history, from the days of Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Valley civilization to the independent India of today. Indian cultural evolution is not a ‘cutting off’ or forgetting of the past; it is a rekindling of the new with the old, an amalgamation of the past and the contemporary that synthesizes history, literature, religion, and spirituality. Raju (1985, 541), a major historical and philosophical contributor to Indian spiritual thought and its collaboration with Western theory, offers this evaluation:

Another factor in the development of contemporary Indian thought should not be ignored. All the great philosophers in the last few decades in India are products of the Indian Renaissance and Enlightenment. The Renaissance is the revival of ancient learning in literature, fine arts, religion, and philosophy, thanks to many western orientalists particularly the German, who drew the attention of the world to the greatness of the ancient Indian cultural achievements and who expounded and even interpreted them. . . . The importance of Sanskrit culture impressed men like Goethe, and its philosophies influenced such thinkers as Schopenhauer and Edward von Hartman. In fact, the post-Kantian idealism and romanticism of Germany wove up many currents of Vedāntic thought.

Śri Aurobindo and his philosophical forebearers lived in a context of struggle for tolerance and inclusiveness. As with the colonialization of indigenous peoples worldwide, the Indian experience significantly influenced the 19th and 20th Century Indian cultural evolution. Since this is not a study on colonialization, I leave the historically significant aspects of territorial

establishment and exploitation to others. However, the British rule in India did set the stage for a situation in which issues that were part of India's historical-cultural landscape were viewed through the lens of nationalism and nation-building.

India's first constitution, passed by the Constitution Assembly of India on November 26, 1949 (India 2014), addressed traditional injustices by abolishing the caste system, providing equal property for women, provisioning for the protection of the Muslim minority, and banning *suttee* (a custom in which a wife joins her deceased husband on the funeral pyre).²⁴

²⁴ Excerpt from India's Constitution, Part III.

Right to Equality

14. Equality before law.—The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

15. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.—(1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to—

(a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment;

or

(b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.

(4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

(5) Nothing in this article or in sub-clause (g) of clause (1) of article 19 shall prevent the State from making any special provision, by law, for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in so far as such special provisions relate to their admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of article 30 (India, 2014).

Śri Aurobindo (1872-1950)

When Śri Aurobindo returned to India from school in England, he joined the Indian nationalist movement, becoming one of its most important leaders. He made multiple excursions to Bengal, at first in bids to re-establish links with his parents' families, and later to install resistance groups across Bengal. He formally moved to Calcutta in 1905 after the colonial government initiated their divisive participation of Bengal, segregating the largely Muslim eastern areas from Hindu western provinces. Śri Aurobindo's arrest and acquittal for printing 'seditious material' in his periodical *Bande Mataram* (Ghose 2002) consolidated his position as a formidable leader of the nationalist movement. Calls for India's complete political independence from England were considered extremely radical at the time and frequently caused friction in India's new Congress. In 1907, at the Surat session of India's Congress, full-independency advocates held a major showdown with supporters of more moderate compromises. Śri Aurobindo led the radicals along with Bal Gangadhar Tilak ('Father of the Indian unrest'). In 1907 and 1908 Śri Aurobindo travelled extensively to firm up support for the nationalist cause, giving speeches and meeting with various groups (Heehs 1971, 28-50).

Despite his revolutionary activities, Śri Aurobindo considered his efforts to be not merely political but also profoundly religious. For him, according to Urban (2003, 92), nationalism was a divine mission, and religion was the life-blood that flowed through the organic body of the Indian nation. In his periodical, *Bhavani Mandir*, Śri Aurobindo urged the young men of India to build a temple to the universal mother at a "mountain retreat where youth could be trained in

spirituality and revolution” (McDermott 1972a, 17). Śri Aurobindo was arrested in May 1908 in connection with the Alipore bomb case.²⁵ He was acquitted and released, but only after a year of isolated incarceration. The time spent in solitary transformed Śri Aurobindo from revolutionary to spiritualist. It was during his confinement that Śri Aurobindo rediscovered the *Bhagavad-Gita* and its four inherent yoga’s, which would ground his spiritual philosophy of *pūrṇa* yoga (Heehs 1989, 58-9, 60, 99, 103).

Murphy found a figure who was himself already an apostle of “the integral” in his life as well as his philosophy. Part of Aurobindo’s signal contribution as a student of both the Eastern and Western traditions was to give a certain Darwinian flavor, at least, to the Vedantic and other Eastern traditions of the story of humanity and the universe as the evolutionary unfolding of Spirit ... Aurobindo’s perspective offered a way of contextualizing those traditions, incorporating them into a vision that was cosmic and yet progressive, spiritual and yet activist in the world. (Wheeler 2005, 185)

The Alipore prison term changed Śri Aurobindo’s entire outlook on his search for meaning; “he entered prison as a highly mystical revolutionary; he emerged as a mystic concerned with spiritual and social evolution” (McDermott 1972a, 16).

²⁵ The Alipore Bomb Case was a consequence of revolutionary anger at the partition of Bengal. On April 30, 1908, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki, associates of Śri Aurobindo, attempted to kill the anti-nationalist Judge Kingsford. The bomb thrown at his horse carriage missed its target and killed two British women, the wife and daughter of barrister Pringle Kennedy. Police arrested 33 suspects including Śri Aurobindo. Many were found guilty. Heehs (1989, 57) writes:

The case against Aurobindo, on the other hand, caused the prosecution great difficulties. At the time of his arrest, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, convinced that he was ‘the ringleader of the whole movement’ ... urged the Government of Bengal to deport him. Sri Aurobindo was eventually acquitted and subsequently moved to the safety of Pondicherry, a French province in India.

After his release from prison, Śri Aurobindo created two publications: *Karmayogin* which appeared in English, and *Dharma*, written in Bengali (Heehs 1989, 62). His own literary contributions to these new journals resulted in continued persecution by British colonial officials even as his “Uttarpara Speech,” delivered in 1909, confirmed his transition toward spiritual matters over politics (Ghose 1909). In April 1910, Śri Aurobindo signaled his retirement from the political landscape and moved to Pondicherry, then a French province, where he could be free from British harassment (Heehs 1989, 70-75).

In India, numerous leaders and visionaries contributed to the contemporary ‘Geist’ of progressive social equanimity that would influence Michael Murphy. He (1992, 560) speaks of this contemporary lineage of progressive social and spiritual influences that preceded Śri Aurobindo and greatly influenced Murphy’s philosophical telos:

An analogous idea was developed by the Indian seers Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and Aurobindo, who described their experiences of the personal and impersonal, transcendent and imminent, silent and dynamic aspects of Divinity. The transcendent order is immensely complex, the three claimed, and thus cannot be revealed through narrow ideas or practices.

The impact of this lineage on Michael Murphy is important for the following reasons: (1) while Murphy may best be known for his philosophical support of panentheism and metanormal human potential via the involution–evolution theories of Śri Aurobindo (Murphy 1992; Ghose 1919; McDermott 1973, 1974; Chaudhuri 1972a, 1972b; Korom, 1989; Whitehead 1978; Hosinski 1993), he often cites Ramakrishna as an exponent of the amelioration of societal and political divisiveness, which factored in Murphy’s own citizen diplomacy,

and (2) Vivekānanda was a key figure in the introduction of the Indian philosophies of *vedānta* and yoga to the Western world which helped generate the philosophical creation of Esalen (Kripal 2007, 86, 91). In the overviews that follows I profile the contemporary leading figures of India whose efforts for tolerance and social remedies were influential to Murphy's predilection towards humanism.

Śri Ramakrishna (1836–1886)

Śri Ramakrishna provides an excellent model of spiritual inclusiveness. His embracing worldview is evidenced by his purported visitations with *Kālī*, *Sitā*, *Rāma*, *Kṛishṇa*, Allah, and Christ—all aspects, he claimed, of the same reality. A disciple of Śri Ramakrishna, Mahendranath (1942, 256) quotes his master:

Some say that this state of mind is a disease. I say to them, “How can one become unconscious by thinking of Him whose Consciousness has made the whole world conscious?”

Śri Ramakrishna claimed that many religions offered different paths to the same goal of eventuating nonduality with the highest consciousness or principle.

Michael Murphy (1992, 50, 152) references examples of Ramakrishna's sense of self and his depth of love, citing his reported physical illumination and contagious energy. Murphy (1992, 475) writes:

[Ramakrishna] practiced several Tantric disciplines, realizing the different ecstasies they were intending to promote, and entered *nirvikalpa samadhi* [beyond the spiritual state of consciousness] upon meeting the Vedantic teacher, Totapuri, remaining in trance for a full six months. In the course of his spiritual realizations, he had visions of Krishna, Christ, and Mohammed that led him to declare that the contemplative paths of every religion were fulfilled in a single Divinity. No other modern mystic has dramatized so many kinds of religious experience.

Śri Ramakrishna was a quiet proponent of social reform, understanding that good works (*karmayoga*) should support devotion and should always be performed in the spirit of detachment—a belief inherent within the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which Śri Aurobindo and Michael Murphy took to heart and to their philosophies as manifested in their facilitation of integral yoga. For Śri Ramakrishna, social reform was a reflection of devotion; he believed social amelioration such as “the removal of caste distinctions should be the natural consequence of the love and worship of God” (Richards 1985, 63). He supported universal tolerance and equanimity through spiritual and societal inclusiveness, as analogized in one of his many philosophical homilies:

The mother cooks different dishes to suit the stomachs of her different children. Suppose she has five children. If there is a fish to cook, she prepares various dishes from it—pilau, pickled fish, fried fish, and so on—to suit their different tastes and powers of digestion. (Mahendranath 1942, 81)

Vivekānanda (1863-1902)

Śri Ramakrishna’s foremost disciple, Vivekānanda took his own sympathies for the underprivileged on the road, advocating for the alleviation of suffering while promoting “child welfare, education and charitable works” (Richards 1985, 78).²⁶ Like his mentor, Vivekānanda supported the elimination of the caste system. Additionally, Vivekānanda firmly believed that education was the key to breaking the chains of poverty, and he established Ramakrishna

²⁶ From 1893-1897, Vivekānanda represented India at the 1893 Parliament of the World Religions then subsequently conducted hundreds of public and private lectures and classes, discussing basic tenets of Hindu philosophy in the United States, England and Europe (Adiswarananda 1996, 1).

Mission near Calcutta in order to teach others his spiritual and social ideals.

Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley, and Christopher Isherwood were all advocates of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, and early influences on Murphy and Price (Kripal 2007, 86, 91)

Rabindranāth Tagore (1861–1941)

Continuing this lineage is Rabindranāth Tagore, who laid the foundation for Michael Murphy's social commitment to individual and collective humankind through the creation of and participation in programs and activities that advance humanity's well-being as a whole. Born two years before Vivekānanda, Tagore was a poet by the age of twenty and winner of the Nobel Prize for literature at the age of fifty-two. Richards (1985, 136) writes that Tagore was a strong proponent of education who believed in the integration of spirituality with intellectual pursuits. As result of his belief that "social justice is the inevitable consequence of divine immanence," Tagore joined the growing list of Indian intellectuals who believed that the time had come for supporting women's rights, eliminating the caste system, and righting other social injustices.

Tagore was a firm proponent of Indian independence; although he had tactical disagreements with Gandhi (including, at one point, talking him out of a death fast), their teloi were complimentary. Tagore's body of work is strongly sympathetic to the poor and "upholds universal humanistic values. His poetry drew from traditional *vaiśnava* folk lyrics [and] was often deeply mystical" (Hare 2010, 1). In addition to Tagore's notable humanism, Aldous Huxley emphasized Tagore's implicit appreciation for advanced human potential through education,

which resonates throughout Michael Murphy's data-driven research and methods of transformation.²⁷ In his article, "Aldous Huxley on Tagore," Akademi (1968, 6) states:

Tagore was trying to develop a system of education that should help human beings to realize all their desirable potentialities. He saw very clearly that education as it exists at present suffers from the grave deficit that it is primarily an education in terms of words and concepts. ... He saw that it was necessary to train not only the word-using, symbol-manipulating part of the mind, but also the perceptions, the imagination and the body in general, the whole muscular and visual apparatus.

These influential leaders—Śri Aurobindo, Śri Ramakrishna, Vivekānanda, and Tagore—embraced spiritual diversity and tolerance, dedicating their efforts to the betterment of society through education and righteous political perseverance. As a result of those efforts, their thoughts, beliefs, and philosophies that subscribed to communal equanimity are enshrined within the language of India's constitution.

Michael Murphy did not encounter Śri Aurobindo during his stay at the ashram in 1956–1957; he arrived years after the guru's death. His visit to Pondicherry coincided with the supremacy of the Mother, Mirra Alfassa. However, his journey illustrated Murphy's affection and affinity for the teachings and wisdom of Śri Aurobindo, who Murphy (2013b, 18) describes as "one of India's foremost independence leaders, as well as a richly educated intellectual and realized mystic." Murphy's appreciation for Śri Aurobindo did not wane throughout the years. In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 554), Murphy holds his

²⁷ Huxley, Aldous. 1961. Excerpt from a transcribed text of Aldous Huxley's concluding speech, delivered extempore at the International Literary Seminar held at New Delhi in November of 1961.

spiritual mentor in the highest esteem, acclaiming him one of the greatest visionaries of contemporary integral philosophy. Śri Aurobindo's theories on involution–evolution and successive human levels of spiritual attainment established the perfect grounding for Murphy's synthesis of the sciences of natural history and metaphysics. In his fourth novel, *The Kingdom of Shivas Irons* (1997, 229), Murphy writes:

I don't have to tell you that Śri Aurobindo, India's greatest philosopher of this century, claimed that a new kind of embodiment will appear on Earth, and give rise to the next great phase of evolution.

Adulation aside, it would be oversimplification to assert that Michael Murphy's integral philosophy and pursuance of the natural history of extraordinary human capacity is based solely on the thoughts of Śri Aurobindo. While underscoring the undisputed influence the mystic held on Murphy, the significance of other visionaries such as Śri Ramakrishna, Meister Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa, Coleridge, Blake, Maslow, Plotinus, James Joyce and multiple others must be taken into account (Murphy 1992, 13).

Michael Murphy's concept of the inestimable value of integrality was always foundational to his own evolutionary reach. During one of our interviews, Murphy (2013, 1) described his innate understanding of the necessary interrelationship of all things:

I recognized the philosophical content by the age of nineteen and it was always implicit in my motivations and work. My understanding of it later mushroomed with additional study, time spent at the Ashram, in my work at Esalen, and especially in the years of dedicated research for *The Future of the Body*.

Murphy's works on evolutionary panentheism and advanced human capacity is contingent upon his intellectual commitment to the integrating and graduating forces of consciousness, and their effect on the advancement of humanity. Śri Aurobindo writes of the evolutionary characteristics of consciousness in *The Life Divine* (Ghose 2006, 731):

An upward evolutionary progress of the consciousness itself from grade to higher grade, an ascent, is the evident spiral line or emerging curve that, on this foundation, the evolution must describe. A taking up of what has already been evolved into each higher grade as it is reached and a transformation more or less complete so as to admit of a total changed working of the whole being and nature, an integration, must be also part of the process, if the evolution is to be effective.

In Part 2 of *The Life Divine*, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2006, 968) analogizes his 'many-runged ladder' to the Supermind to the evolutionary process of nature:

There is the same process of evolution as in the rest of the movement of nature; there is a heightening and widening of the consciousness, an ascent to a new level and a taking up of the lower levels, an assumption and new integration of the existence by a superior power of Being which imposes its own way of action and its character and force of substance-energy on as much as it can reach of the previously evolved parts of nature.

So whether it is Murphy's Supernature (1992), Chardin's the Omega Point (1974), or Śri Aurobindo's Supermind (2006), each is directly tied to the advancing levels of consciousness that supersede yet include prior forms.

McDermott (1973, 59) writes:

The new consciousness attained in the spiritual evolution is always higher in grade and power, always larger, more comprehensive, wider in sight and feeling, richer and finer in faculties, more complex, organic, dominating than the consciousness that was once our own but is now left behind us.

In *The New Yorker*, Tomkins (1976, 31) illustrates Murphy's own conclusions regarding the relationship of expanding consciousness to evolution:

I really do believe that evolution is becoming conscious of itself in man, and that man is on the verge of a transformation. There's a great opening up, a synthesis now going on between intuition and intellect, body and mind, matter and spirit, East and West, and terms like "the human potential" and "transpersonal psychology" and "altered states of consciousness" are emerging to deal with it.

It is safe to posit that Murphy's drive toward his natural/metaphysical data-driven research into the metanormal capacities of humanity facilitated, at the same time, the unfolding of Murphy's own potential of being and consciousness.

Michael Murphy at Pondicherry: Meeting the Mother

The Mother remains an enigmatic figure, one perhaps even more controversial than her companion, Śri Aurobindo. Is she the Divine Mother of which Śri Aurobindo so profoundly speaks in his short book, *The Mother* (1995)? Was she the supramental *mahaśakti* (great mother), or was her spiritual consort speaking in vagaries, leaving the aspect of divinity to the intuitions of her followers? The individual can determine his or her own relationship to the Mother of Pondicherry as to any anthropomorphic or mythological aspect of personal divinity. If it exists to the worshipper then it does indeed exist—at least to the worshipper. McDermott (1974, 177) provides a more definitive assessment of Śri Aurobindo's implicit relationship to *Śakti* and their concept of the Mother Goddess:

the particular impulse which characterizes Aurobindo's philosophy and yoga, and clearly distinguishes them from Advaita Vedanta, is called Shakti, the divine force which progressively bridges the gap between the Divine, human and natural levels of the self-manifestation of Brahman. This concept presupposes the reality of the Avatar as developed in the Gita, and points towards the concept of the Mother as the embodiment of the Divine in its transcendent, cosmic and individual forms.

The Mother (SAS 2012b, 16) was beset by psychic and spiritual experiences at a very early age—experiences which revealed to her:

not only the existence of God, but man's possibility of uniting with Him, of realizing Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon earth in a life divine. (16) (Webpage italics.)

At seven, the Mother realized the force of *māhākālī* (the great *kālī*) when she accosted a younger and larger bully and threw him to the ground. At the age of 28 she formed a spiritual group called “Idea” (SAS 2012b, 10).

Through her brother, Matteo, the Mother met Max and Alma Theon, a pair of occultists living in Algeria. On a voyage to Paris, Max Theon requested the Mother subdue a storm that was tossing the ship about. Inside her cabin the Mother (SAS, 2) discovered “innumerable entities, but formless, madly jumping about ... I appealed to them ... for half an hour I went on cajoling and remonstrating with them, until they gradually began to calm down.” In fact, the Mother’s life was purportedly replete with visions and psychic experiences. Whether or not these occurrences of events are believable to the average reader only serves to underscore the difficulty Michael Murphy faces in his data-driven research into the natural history of advanced human capacity.

Śri Aurobindo moved to Pondicherry in 1910, the same year Mirra’s second husband, Paul Richard arrived on a diplomatic mission. Mirra joined Richards in 1920, and indicated she could feel Śri Aurobindo's presence even before meeting him. As for Śri Aurobindo’s impressions of Mirra, he wrote (Ghose 1995, 55):

There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realization—most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda (*Divine Joy*) which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the other Powers of the universe.

This quote might persuade the reader that Śrī Aurobindo considered the Mother either a symbolic or ‘real’ vestige of the Divine Mother, even though he does not articulate whether the subject of his essay is Mirra Alfassa or a generic image of which she is personification (in India, there is little differentiation between the two attitudes). Satprem (1976, 120-21), the Mother’s personal secretary, speaks of the divine presence within all of humanity:

It is the earth that has to be divinized, it is humanity that has to be divinized, it is matter that has to be divinized. What we seek is the reality of the earth and of those who inhabit it.

According to the concept of involution–evolution, the world is replete with divinity, as the Supreme Principle has infused Itself into the basic constituents of the earth and the creatures that evolve therein.

The Mother remained with Śrī Aurobindo throughout the rest of his life. It is she who titled him *Śrī* (a token of veneration). It was she who organized the Śrī Aurobindo Ashram in November 1926. In 1952 she established the Śrī Aurobindo International Centre of Education, and in 1968 the international township of

Auroville. In 1964 the Mother created the Auroville project, “the City of Dawn,” and the first stones were laid in 1968 (SAS 2012a, 1). In 1973, the Mother passed on at the age of 95. Satprem (1976, 68-69) describes the Mother’s suffering on her deathbed:

Total surrender, for the body, means accepting death. Accepting it physiologically, accepting it mentally is fine, but what do you do when you start suffocating? ... it bursts forth from the very depths of our body. A burning. An intense heat that feels like love, something that is very still but feels like a compressed, compact, almost overwhelming power—it has nothing to do with feelings; it is like a tidal wave of flame.

It is this the metanormal burning heat that later resonates in Michael Murphy’s list of metanormal events? This searing physiological incalcescence might be compared to the *incendium amoris* experienced by shamans, numerous Catholic saints, yogis, and Kung bushmen who “told anthropologist Richard Katz that nu/m was ‘given by the Gods’” (Murphy 1992, 102).²⁸

While in Pondicherry, Michael Murphy maintained a close but often brittle relationship with the Mother. He certainly admired the Mother but, according to Anderson (2004, 31), Murphy “disliked the cult aspects of [the ashram] —the almost idolatrous reverence for the works of Śri Aurobindo and the daily pronouncements of the Mother.” When a young woman at the ashram became distraught and threatened suicide, Murphy asked the Mother for advice.

²⁸ Kalahari bushmen:

put n/um into people to “pull out” their sickness, frequently handle or walk on fire (sometimes placing their head into the flames), see the insides of other people’s bodies, observe scenes at a distance, and ‘travel to God’s home.’ The effects can be painful and destabilizing, and must be controlled through practice. (Murphy 1992, 272.f).

She encouraged him to take matters into his own hands. Murphy went up on the roof and managed to coax the woman down simply by meditating next to her.

Tomkins (1996, 35) expresses Murphy's mixed-emotions about the state of the ashram under the Mother:

“It was quite a juxtaposition for me,” [Murphy] said. “I had seen the Mother in this numinous way, and now here I was face to face with her, talking about this situation. I could see she was very upset by what had happened. An Englishman had killed himself three months before at the ashram, and there were two other Westerners who'd had psychotic breaks that same year. It was one of the reasons they were saying 'no' to Western applicants.”

One of the Mother's contributions to contemporary logical execution is her emphasis on Hegelian thinking in terms of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. She urged that the mind be trained to envision an antithesis to each thesis that is developed. “When this is done,” Ryan (2005, 26) writes, “she urges a mental practice of envisioning a higher synthesis. She urges that the ambit of the mind be gradually and progressively expanding.” This expansion can facilitate the blossoming of potential to achieve the highest level of Supernature (Supermind), the “dynamic aspect of the Absolute” that will “transform earthly life by a ‘universal descent’” (Murphy 1992, 553).

Michael Murphy's firsthand experience with the Mother did not mitigate his ambiguousness toward the cult-like atmosphere of the ashram, as he explained in our interview of February 2012:

It's not that I dislike the Mother; it's that I had my criticism while realizing that she was an extraordinary character, extraordinary! I'd be foolish to say she wasn't. I learned a lot about her in my first weeks at the Ashram during an intense psychodrama around Stephanie Palmer who had a psychotic breakdown. The Mother enlisted me to help save her life. She said she would put her force through me. ... That brought me close to the Mother. (2012b, 1)

I reiterate that Michael Murphy's philosophical worldview is built upon his years of study and research. It is an integration of innate wisdom, the dedicated perusal of (at the very least) Western and Eastern beliefs and practices, and natural and behavioral science. Murphy's (1992, 553) evaluation of Śri Aurobindo's spiritual conclusions are not absolute:

Aurobindo's discipline suffers from certain limitations. It has not been deeply informed by modern depth psychology or scientific study of the body, and it relies too much, I believe, on Aurobindo's doctrine that Supermind, the dynamic aspect of the Absolute, will transform earthly life by a "universal descent."

Summarization of Michael Murphy's Eastern Influences

India's transition from colony to independent state—and the political, cultural, and social movements that accompanied it—are evident in the biographical accounts and teachings of Śri Aurobindo and his forebearers. For these independence-minded and inclusionary historical figures, three thousand years of dominant schools of thought provide significant contributions to modern spiritual philosophy and social equanimity. Śri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy is one of many foundations for Michael Murphy's theories on metanormal human potential and evolutionary panentheism. Continued study, research, and especially his discovery of *The Life Divine* (Ghose 2006) galvanized Murphy's evolution of his own synthesis of thinking, encouraging him to dedicate his life to an integral and tolerant coalescence of the natural, behavioral, and metaphysical sciences.

The importance of India's development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, using affirmations of the past as tools to forge a modern nation, is evident in the spiritual philosophy of Śri Aurobindo and his predecessors: Śri Ramakrishna (Mahendranath 1942; Richards 1985; Murphy 1992), Vivekānanda

(Murphy 1992; Richards 1985), and Tagore (Richards 1985; Hare 2010). These intellectuals channeled the political, social, and spiritual totality of India as it revealed itself through the dialectic of history, and their inclusive, contemporary worldviews compliment Michael Murphy's own—including Murphy's data-driven research into metanormal human potential as well as its compliment, evolutionary panentheism.

Section 4: The Concepts of *Tantra*, *Śākta*, and *Kāśmir Śaivism* and the Evolution of *Pūrṇa (Integral) Yoga*: Śri Aurobindo to Michael Murphy

Contemporary Eastern thought and discipline is only one major constituent of Michael Murphy's worldview, without which the aggregate wholeness of his concepts and theories would be inadequately expressed. Murphy (1992, 167) supports multiple mystical, scientific, and philosophical conclusions relevant to evolutionary panentheism and transformative human capacity:

While it is obvious that there are many differences between the cultural determinations, realizations, and reports of mystics in different traditions, it is obvious as well that adepts in different religions report and exhibit many similar or identical metanormal capacities.

Murphy's (1992, 191) inclusive methodology includes metanormal practitioners of all sacred traditions:

the idea of divine emanation economically and beautifully reflects a realization reported by countless people since antiquity that they enjoy a secret contact, kinship, or identity with a founding Principle of this universe. Such realization, which gives philosophical doctrines of emanation-return (or involution–evolution) compelling justification and support, may be brief or long-lasting, spontaneous or the result of transformative practice. Philosophers and mystics of virtually every sacred tradition have expressed versions of it through parables, aphorisms, or metaphysical statements.

The involution–evolution theory of spiritual and cosmological development is scrutinized later in this study through Eastern and Western philosophical and scientific constructs. It is imperative—to give rightful and appropriate interpretation when describing how a piece of machinery has been developed, or a work of philosophy has been achieved—to unpack the assembled product into its individual components. Only from this effort can the assembled object be rendered cohesive.

Kripal (2007, 17) tells us that “[Michael] Murphy’s spirit had been awakened and guided by” Śri Aurobindo, and the integrality of his *pūrṇa yoga* was thoroughly adopted by Murphy. Since *pūrṇa yoga* is itself a synthesis of primary philosophies of Indian yogic thinking and disciplines, I provide brief overviews of the three yoga’s of Śri Aurobindo’s favored *Bhagavad-Gita: bhakti* (love, devotion), *jñāna* (knowledge), and *karma* (actions or works), the predominant foundations of Śri Aurobindo’s spiritual philosophy. The relevance of these three yoga’s and their integral totality to Michael Murphy’s works and worldview is of major significance.

In this Section, I present abbreviated overviews of *tantra*, *śākta*, and *kaśmir śaivism*, three disciplines which display elements particular to the philosophy of Michael Murphy and, at the very least, influences on the works of Śri Aurobindo. From there, I move to a discussion of *pūrṇa* (integral) *yoga* in order to provide more context for the early evolution of Michael Murphy’s philosophies.

Tantra, Śākta, and Kaśmir Śaivism

To readers who might think that investigations of these philosophical constituents are of questionable relevance for this study, I reiterate my statement of intent. Michael Murphy’s life’s work is the product of interconnected and interdependent parts which constitute his integral entirety, and an examination of the parts without the whole, as well as the whole without its parts, is incomplete and thus inconclusive. If one of Murphy’s philosophical determinates is that of evolutionary panentheism, if his worldview is an appropriation of specific

philosophical thinking, if he incorporates disciplines of philosophical thinking essential to Śri Aurobindo's own conclusions, then this exploration of *tantra*, *śākta*, and *kaśmir śaivism* is of epistemological necessity. It is therefore appropriate to dissect, at least minimally, these Hindu schools of thought, although extensive review would be a distraction to the major premises of this study.

Briefly, *tantra* is a much maligned and over-interpreted amalgamation of disciplines, its numerous historical traditions and practices ubiquitous. There are two particularly distinct paths within *tantra*. Urban (2003, 1) identifies *vāmamārga* (left-handed path) as a particularly radical and dangerous activity that involves practices normally prohibited in mainstream society. Both Michael Murphy and Śri Aurobindo disavow the controversial heterodoxy of left-handed *tantra* and support *dakshinachara* (right-handed *tantra*) as the more orthodox method of *tantric* discipline. Practitioners of *śākta* regard the creative source and animation of the cosmos as a feminine power or energy that is manifested in various forms as the Goddess. *Kaśmir śaivism* is a substratum of *tantra* that maintains the universe and its creator as essentially one and the same, and describes the microcosm as a delightful, fascinating play of existence and consciousness.

Tantra

For purposes of this discussion about *tantra* and its influence on Michael Murphy and Śri Aurobindo, the following definition from David Gordon White, as quoted in Kripal (2007, 19) is a good place to begin:

Tantra is the Asian body of beliefs and practices which, working from the principle that the universe we experience is nothing other than the concrete manifestation of the divine energy of the Godhead that creates and maintains the universe, seeks to ritually appropriate and channel that energy, within the human microcosm, in creative and emancipatory ways.
29

The complexities that arise from such a narrow definition must be addressed.

Urban (2003, 5) informs the reader:

Not only is the very notion of Tantrism, as a unified, singular, abstract entity, itself largely the product of modern scholarship, but it has been subjected to an enormous variety of conflicting and contradictory interpretations.

So, any values that appeal to Murphy are derived from the orthodox, right-handed *tantra*. The ritualistic, sexual, and often dangerous practices of the left-handed, heterodox version are palatable to more purulent sects of *tantric* practitioners. One difficulty with these competing categorizations, as Muller-Ortega (1989, 49) points out, is that *tantric* originations are not easily traced:

The difficulties involved in actually circumscribing the Tantra have often been remarked upon. This difficulty stems from the fact that it is not a single school or system that is in question, but rather a broad religious movement which did not respect the boundaries of the older traditions, but spread both within Hinduism and Buddhism, and even amongst the Jains.

Supporting Muller-Ortega's (1989) belief in the influence of *tantra* within Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, it could be said that there is little that would 'not' fall under *tantra*'s umbrella. Kripal's (2007) assessment of 'tantric

²⁹ White, David Gordon. 2000. Kripal (2007, 8) quotes from White's introduction to *The Practice of Tantra: A Reader*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

transmissions' within Esalen and, especially, within Michael Murphy's himself, underscores the manifestation of *tantra's* more benign, concrete manifestation of divine energy. As Kripal (2007, 237) informs:

a kind of Tantric transmission has run through Esalen's history, mostly through Murphy himself. The fuller truth, of course, is that Murphy ... constantly rejected the antinomian and sexual methods of the Tantra and of the American counterculture (which he has often described as a kind of left-handed Tantra) and has opted instead for a more stable "right-handed" metaphysics of meditation and Śri Aurobindo's writings.

Kripal (2005, 11) argues against those who disavow 'any' inclusion of *tantra* in Śri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy. He writes:

One can trace Esalen's own specific Tantric emphases on embodiment and this-worldly concerns to cofounder Michael Murphy's encounter with the writings of the Indian philosopher and guru, Sri Aurobindo. Murphy's American appropriation of Aurobindo thus helped extend the appeal and influence of Tantric practices to a Western audience.

In *Esalen* (2007), Kripal provides an extensive assessment of *tantric* elements that appear in Michael Murphy's *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972) and *Jacob Atabet* (1977b) —two fiction forerunners of Murphy's data-driven research into human transformative capacity:

Tantric emphases on the mystical potentials of the human body, on a structural universe seen as the manifestation of divine energies and processes, on the uses of sexual desire as a spiritual force, and on a type of salvation in and as this life and this world—these are *all* classical features of Esalen's history. Murphy's life-long interest in what he calls the *siddhis* or supranormal powers also fit beautifully here. (Kripal 2007, 20)

In addition to the yogic magical powers (*siddhis*), which Murphy includes as possible evidence of early human capabilities,³⁰ Stober (1989 297) posits that Śri Aurobindo “came to regard Tantra as a very positive form of traditional Hindu spirituality because of its stresses on spirit in nature, the power of Śakti, and embodied transformation.”³¹ Indeed, it is the unity of consciousness and energy in *tantra* that is the basis for Murphy’s perceptions of consciousness, although he, like Śri Aurobindo, maintains a somewhat ambiguous relationship to *tantra* because of its historical nonspecificity.

Much of Kripal’s (2007) theory of Esalen’s *tantric* elements and Michael Murphy’s implicit encouragement of same came as a surprise to Murphy, although not an unpleasant one. In our February 2012 interview, he explained his interpretation of his own *tantric* underpinnings:

³⁰ Murphy and White (1995, 137): The term *siddhi* (also *vibhuti*) refers not only to magic powers:

but also to cognitions of fundamental aspects of Reality. These cognitions are sometimes called *brahasiddhis* (powers to apprehend Brahman) and are regarded as the highest of all powers that result from yogic practice.

Murphy (1992, 589) defines *siddhi* as a:

Sanskrit term, roughly synonymous with the Roman Catholic term *charism*, for special human capacities that, although they occur spontaneously outside of the context of formal discipline, more typically arise as byproducts of transformative practice. Among such capacities are mystical cognitions, clairvoyance, and extraordinary physical abilities.

³¹ In his article, Stober (2009) particularizes Śri Aurobindo’s evolution away from an embracement of *tantrism* in his early revolutionary days, although even then he shied away from any overt politicizing of *tantra* because of the politically sensitive sexual practices of *vāmamārga* (left-handed path). In his later years, Śri Aurobindo further distanced his spiritual movement away from *tantra*, evolving into the practice of *advaita vedānta*, which he vigorously applied to his major spiritual philosophy of *pūrṇa yoga*, citing *tantra* as ineffectual and limited in its development.

When I started Esalen, *tantra*, for me, was not the all-encompassing metatheory that Jeffrey Kripal describes. It's Jeff who came up with the thesis that Americans' embrace of Eastern Philosophy took an inflection away from the Vedanta toward *tantra* in the 1960s and Esalen was in the middle of that inflection. That was Jeff's interpretation. That was not in my mind or that of others when we started Esalen. That's a retrospective reading by Jeff Kripal, and I think it is very interesting, certainly it is suggestive, and I think that it is largely correct. I think Aurobindo would subscribe to it if, by *tantra*, one understands that the Divine is both transcendent and immanent. (Murphy 2012c, 1)

In spite of Murphy's acknowledgement of Esalen's and his own *tantric* undercurrents, there is minimal mention of *tantra* in his nonfiction. However, certain *tantric* practices and schemas have influenced Murphy's "realization of a particular experience of the freedom, spontaneity, and unboundedness of consciousness" (Mueller-Ortega, 1989, 52), and its affirmation of the synergism of immanence and transcendence. Particularly relevant to Murphy are certain *tantric* "emphases on the mystical potentials of the human body, on a structured universe seen as the manifestation of divine energies and processes" (Kripal, 2007, 19-20).

Tantra, in its more benign or right-handed capacity, certainly factors in both Michael Murphy's and Śri Aurobindo's integral systems of thought. In *Essays on the Gita*, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1950, 9) states that *tantra*:

though less subtle and spiritually profound, is even more bold and forceful than the synthesis of the Gita, —for it seizes even upon the obstacles to the spiritual life and compels them to become the means for a richer-spiritual conquest and enables us to embrace the whole of Life in our Divine scope ... Moreover it grasps at that idea of the divine perfectibility of man.

Although eventually distancing himself, Śri Aurobindo acknowledged in *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Ghose 1996a, 613) that:

the *Tantric* system makes liberation the final, but not the only aim; it takes on its way a full perfection and enjoyment of the spiritual power, light and joy in the human existence, and even it has a glimpse of a supreme experience in which liberation and cosmic action and enjoyment are unified in a final overcoming of all oppositions and dissonances.

Did Śri Aurobindo have spiritual or emotional *tantric* affiliations, or was he an actual participant? Was his relationship with the Mother bonded by the attachments of *tantra*? Bolle (1971, xvi) asserts that Śri Aurobindo's *pūrṇa yoga* “and the philosophical, devotional and ascetic life of the many devotees around him would have been unthinkable without a *Tantric* background.” The great philosopher's incorporation of certain *tantra* elements is an acceptable probability due to his Indian heritage, and would influence Michael Murphy, who was already invested due to the contemporary psyche of a progressive American spirituality. Murphy has an excellent academic understanding of the disciplines that infuse much of Indian thinking. He (1992, 565) writes:

Theravada Buddhism with its doctrine of *annatto* (not-self) emphasizes the illusionary nature of ordinary selfhood; whereas Samkhya philosophy posits an *uprūsh*, or observing self, that is liberated by witness meditation from *priority*, the observable world. In *vispassana* [insight-meditation] the ego-sense gives way to emptiness; whereas in Samkhya yoga *purusha* realizes its own essence more clearly. But in spite of their different supporting philosophies, the two meditation practices require the same close attention to internal processes.

Murphy not only studied Eastern theory, spirituality, and metaphysical disciplines and beliefs at Stanford University and in India, but incorporates multiple aspects of same in his data-driven research into metanormal human capacity:

In the Upanishads, Brahma sutras, and Bhagavad Gita; in the works of Shankara, Ramanuja, and other Vedantic philosophers; in the writings of Nagarjuna, Dogen, and other Buddhists; in the texts of Lao-tze, Chuang-tze, and other Taoists there are various formations by which sensory, rational, and contemplative knowledge are related to one another. According to certain Indian philosophers, for example, sense perception, rational inference, and yogic illumination are all deemed to be *pramanas*, “sources or means of acquiring new knowledge,” and all are deemed to be intrinsically valid. (Murphy 1992, 13-14)

It is not the purpose of this study to make a determination regarding Śri Aurobindo’s affiliation with or disregard for *tantra*. There are numerous references that discuss Śri Aurobindo’s leanings (Bolle 1971; Heehs 1989), but as this dissertation is about the philosophy and worldview of Michael Murphy; explorations into the *tantric* elements that influenced Murphy relative to his research and exposition of metanormal human capacity are valid.

Gupta, Hoens, and Goudriaan (1979, 7) write: “*Tantra* is rooted also in very old traditions of unsystemized *Yoga* and body cult, shamanism, medicine, magic white and black, astrology, religious eroticism and folkloristic ritual.” Michael Murphy’s inclusion of many of these elements—shamanism, medicine, magic, mysticism, the occult—within *The Future of the Body* (1992) and other works is evident. Stansell’s (2010, 225) views on the portability of *tantrism*—that “Hinduism, Buddhism, Śikhism, and Jainism all came to incorporate *Tantra* in some way and became significantly and permanently altered by it,” and “Persian, Greek, and Tibetan religious practices were impacted as well” —certainly find fulfillment in Murphy’s integration of disciplines within his breakdown of metanormal human potential.

So, while Michael Murphy's *tantric* affiliations may be more explicit than those of Śri Aurobindo, it is certainly worth speculating that the mystic's philosophical and spiritual notions, at least tangentially, fit within the rubrics of *śākta tantra* and *kaśmir śaivism* as constituents of his overall integral theme.

Albanese (2005, 72) supports this:

Aurobindo's "integral yoga," which he developed at the ashram, was in fact what might be described as a "right-handed" tantric system—that is, one in which no deliberate or intentional transgressive activity was enjoined or practiced but in which the material world was valued positively and affirmed.

The fact that Śri Aurobindo minimized *tantra*'s participation is supported by his statements that the spiritual philosophy of *pūrṇa yoga* is based primarily on *advaita vedāntist* thinking and the yoga's of the *Bhagavid-Gita*. Misra (1998, 6) writes:

Śri Aurobindo calls his system *Advaita* for the reason that he regards Brahman or the Absolute as one and the fundamental reality. His Advaitism is called *integral* for the reason that it does not deny the reality of any of the aspects of Existence. It is not based on the denial of the reality of the world and the individual. It reconciles all the opposition between Infinite and Finite.

Contemporary *vedānta* refers to a group of philosophical traditions that focus on the self-realization through which one understands the ultimate nature of reality.

Originating from the *vedas* and *upaniṣads*, *vedānta* is, simply put, an embracement of several Indian sects that adhere to the same. Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1950, 62) acknowledged the *Bhagavad-Gita* to be primarily a *vedāntic* work, praising it as:

so highly esteemed as to be ranked almost as a thirteenth Upanishad. But still its Vedantic ideas are throughout and thoroughly colored by the ideas of the Sankhya and the Yoga way of thinking and it derives from this coloring the peculiar synthetic character of its philosophy.

For Śri Aurobindo, *vedāntic* thought compliments his interpretation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and its extensive review of the yoga's as incorporated into his synthesis of *pūrṇa yoga*. In *Essays on the Gita*, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1950, 74) writes: "The whole truth of the first six chapters of the Gita is to synthesize in a large frame of Vedantic truth" (1950, 74), and "The Lord himself is the knower of Veda and the author of Vedanta" (1950, 84). The most senior of Śri Aurobindo's disciples and a co-defendant in the Alipore bomb case, N. K. Gupta (1970, 336), confirms the guru's appropriation of *vedāntic* thought:

[Śri Aurobindo] holds in this respect what may be generically called the Vedantic position where the basic epistemological principle is that the knower and the known (jnata and jneya) are fused together in knowledge (jnana).

This is one of many generic positions within *vedānta*. What is important to realize is that there are several branches of this tradition. Śri Aurobindo was a proponent of *advaita* (nondual) *vedānta*, which claims that there is no difference between Brahman (God) and *atman* (person). *Advaita vedānta* supports Michael Murphy's belief in the interdependency of the microcosm and macrocosm, as well as the soteriological position of complete unification with the Supreme Principle through involution–evolution, prevalent foundational aspects of evolutionary panentheism. Murphy uses the term Supernature for this final unification, which connotes that "nature" is to God what "person" is to humanity. Dyczkowski (1987, 34) writes:

Advaita Vedānta emerged, to a large extent, as a critique of Sāṃkhya dualism. Classical Sāṃkhya posits two realities, both eternal but of contrary nature. One is *Puruṣa*, "the Person," the other *Prakṛti* or "Nature." The Person is the Self who, as pure sentient consciousness, is

the witness of the activity of all that lies in the sphere of objectivity. The latter includes not only the outer physical worlds but also the body and mind the Person inhabits, vitalizing and illumining it with his conscious presence. ... The two together make experience possible.

Misra (1998, 175) offers additional evidence for *advaita vedānta*'s universality in both *kaśmir śaivism* and *śāktaism* (subsets of *tantra*):

We find a distinct leaning towards Advaitism in Kashmir Śaivism. In this system Śiva is regarded as the ultimate reality. He enjoys infinite consciousness and unrestricted independence. It is Śiva who manifests himself in the dual forms of subject and object, as the experience as well as the experienced ... By his own wonderful power (Śakti) inherent in him, God appears in the form of souls and constitutive objects for their experiences. ... Śiva is the changeless reality underlying the universe. Śiva remains changeless in spite of his manifesting the entire universe by his energy or Śakti. His Śakti has an infinity of aspects, the chief of which are Cit (intelligence), Ānanda (bliss), Icchā (will), Jñāna (knowledge) and Kriyā (creative power).

When one contemplates *kaśmir śaivism*, consideration must be given to the overlapping relationship of *śākta* to *kaśmir śaivism*, and how each affects the other in terms of Michael Murphy's worldview.

Śākta

For the uninitiated, the term *śākta* refers to the discipline or tradition to which a member subscribes, while *Śakti* is the embodiment of the female creative deity who is acknowledged and worshiped as the energy-force of the cosmos. *Śākta* practitioners view the Goddess *Śakti* rather than *Śiva* to be the Ultimate Supreme. *Śakti* derives from the Sanskrit root *éak* which means "to be able." Korom (1989, 126) stresses that "the meaning of *śākta* can be said to be 'power,' 'strength,' or 'energy.' ... All three words appropriately describe the primeval maternal principle subtly inherent in matter."

The transcendent, universal, and individual conscious force that upholds humanity and the universe can be traced to the discipline of *śākta*; it is the *Śakti*'s cosmic energy that, for one, permeates one's body during meditation. *Śākta* offers support to Michael Murphy's transformative practices designed to enhance metanormal human capacity through meditation, introspection, and self-analysis. Śri Aurobindo's spirituality also includes *śākta*, the creative source and animation of the cosmos, as a component. Stober (2009, 294) comments that although Aurobindo's *śāktism* leans heavily toward *bhakti* (devotional worship), there are elements in it that correspond with features of *śākta tantrism*.

Śākta tantrism, generally speaking, holds that "we are all forms of this Śakti" (Raju 1985, 512). Granted, this correspondence is found in many *Śiva tantras* that do not fall under the auspices of the *śākta* tradition. However, because of the traditional unification of the Goddess (*Śakti*) with her consort (*Śiva*), each co-manifestations of the universe, there is a correlation to panentheism: the creative energy or highest principle is active and involved in the universe, is its totality, yet separate from it. Gier (1997, 272) supports this argument:

In general, Śakti theology is a thorough going panentheism in which the Goddess is a divine matrix for all things (hence, not being any one thing in particular) rather than an abstract unity transcending all qualities.

Beane (1973, 58) emphasizes the symbology of *Śakti* as someone who:

maintains and protects the world. In fact, in words that suggest a pantheistic imagery, the traditional creator-God, Brahmā, extols her as "thou who contains the world." She is, therefore the queen of the universe, and is the eternal world-soul which resides in everything.

Michael Murphy's evolutionary panentheism stems from involution-evolution as iterated by the spiritual wisdom of Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1919), the scientific reasoning of Whitehead (1978), Hosinski (1993), as well as the Christian-scientific conclusions of Teilhard de Chardin (1974). Śri Aurobindo thoroughly understood the predominance of *Śakti* in terms of the origins of the cultural and political development of India. Urban (2003, 96) writes:

Sakti is first and foremost the power of the Indian nation. ... For Aurobindo, this divine Sakti is nothing other than the collective power of India, the combined energy of each individual Indian soul.

Neither Whitehead (1978), Teilhard de Chardin (1974), nor Michael Murphy (1992, 2013b) —propose that Supermind, Supernature, or the Omega Point expresses the highest principle as a Goddess; there is no sexual determination in the involution–evolution of divinity. This highest level of consciousness, to which humanity will become collectively unified, is non-anthropomorphic; it is a principle. Śri Aurobindo acknowledged *Krishna* as the supreme source of all primordial energy (Ghose 1950), yet the philosopher's relationship to the Mother underlined a special affection for *Śakti* (Ghose 1995); however, this female vestige is more symbolic than real. McDermott (1973 16) clarifies how the Goddess is analogous to creative energy and to consciousness and force:

In Śri Aurobindo's *Integral Yoga*, the concept of *shakti* refers to *prakriti*, or world process, in its feminine aspect; in short, World-Mother. ... In philosophical terms, *shakti* is the conscious force—rather like a Bergson *élan vital*—that carries the world process to ever higher stages of evolution; *shakti* raises the lower levels of reality by infusing them with the higher levels.

Ram Shankar Misra (1998, 174) further explains how the symbols and traditions of *Śakti* are converted into the transcendent and immanent, the universal and individual. “Thus we find that the conception of *Śakti* in Śāktaism and Śri Aurobindo’s system is fundamentally the same though there are important differences in other respects.”³²

Kaśmir Śaivism

While *śākta tantrism* informs Murphy’s evolutionary panentheism, *kaśmir śaivism* gives purpose and direction to humanity’s metanormal capacity within the evolutionary process.

Kaśmir śaivism is a branch of *tantra* that “maintains that the universe and its cause are essentially one and the same” (Grosz 1995, 70).

What is commonly called “Kashmiri Shaivism” is actually a group of several monistic and tantric religious traditions that flourished in Kashmir from the latter centuries of the first millennium C.E. through the early centuries of the second. These traditions have survived only in an attenuated form among the Brahmans of Kashmir, but there have recently been efforts to revive them in India and globally. (Lawrence, 1998, 1)

A fundamental distinction between *śākta tantrism* and *kaśmir śaivism* is the *śākta* belief in *Śakti* (the female deity) as the Supreme Principle. In monistic *kaśmir śaivism*, the mother deity is incorporated into the metaphysical essence of her consort, *Śiva*. *Śiva* subsumes *Śakti* within his androgynous nature as his integral power and partner.

³² Ram Shankar Misra is former professor of Comparative Religion at Benares Hindu University.

One concept that *kaśmir śaivism* shares in common with the worldviews of Michael Murphy and Śri Aurobindo is a belief in a universe as a play, one controlled by *Śiva* and *Śakti*. It is described as a captivating and enjoyable play of existence, consciousness, force, and will. Lawrence (1998, 197) summarizes the belief as follows:

According to the predominant monistic Shaiva myth, Shiva out of a kind of play divides himself from Shakti and then in sexual union emanates and controls the universe through her.

The existence and spiritual development of humanity is one result of the universe at play, caused by an enigmatic Supreme Principle that participates in the production of said divine play; the Supreme Principle is the producer that defies factual comprehension. Michael Murphy (2012a, 4-5) believes that there is much for humanity to accomplish within this theater of delight:

If we harbor a secret Divinity that presses us to manifest on Earth, there's no telling how far our transformations might reach. We don't know the limits of mind and will. The flesh itself might reveal the glories of spirit. Evolutionary panentheism implies possibilities for humankind beyond those that science and religion have yet given us.

This concept of a divine play is supported by McDermott (1973, 69):

All nature is a display and a play of God, power and action and self-creation of the one spiritual Being. Nature presents to Spirit at once the force, the instrument, the medium, the obstacle, the result of his powers, and all these things, obstacles as well as instrument, are the necessary elements for a gradual and developing creation.

This is affirmation of the correlation of nature to God, which supports Michael Murphy's use of Supernature as his evolutionary concept of Śri Aurobindo's Supermind. In the larger sense, they are equivalent; in a more specific

interpretation, Murphy's concept of Supernature evidences his philosophy of natural science that proposes a divine principle more accessible to human potential because of the innate comfort and recognition of nature as a conduit of developing consciousness.

N. N. Bhattacharyya (1974, 74) analyzes this correspondence of *Śiva* and *Śakti*:

The Kaśmir Śaivism has based its doctrines on the Vedānta system with emphasis upon the *Māyā* element regarded as the Śakti or Brahman (*Śiva*). This *Śakti* mainly divided into five categories, —*cit* (the power of intelligence), *ānanda* (the power of bliss), *icca* (to power of will), *jñāna* (the power of knowledge), and *kriyā* (the power of action) —is not different from Śiva and is spoken of as his feminine aspect. With the opening out of *Śakti*, the universe appears and with her closing it disappears.

Anton Grosz (1995, 96) defines the relationship of *kaśmir śaivism* within the integral philosophy of Haridas Chaudhuri, student of Śri Aurobindo, and friend and mentor to Michael Murphy:³³

Kashmir Shaivism imparts sentience in differing degrees to everything. Equally, Kashmir Shaivism gives purpose and direction to the evolutionary process itself, including our own material presence in that process. Thus, integration of the Kashmir Shaiva view of reality in one's consciousness changes one's approach to living by instilling a sense of purpose and meaningfulness to one's very being.

Postulations regarding the *tantric* impact on Michael Murphy's philosophy require a consideration of its influences—in particular, its emphases on the mystical potentials of the human body and on the ways in which a structured

³³ Anton Grosz's (1995) dissertation focuses on Haridas Chaudhuri, whose views were grounded in the integral philosophy of Śri Aurobindo. While I have found no direct evidence of Śri Aurobindo's affiliation with *kaśmir śaivism*, aspects of this tradition are 'mirrored' in certain aspects of his philosophy.

universe is seen as the manifestation of divine energies and processes. Subsets of *tantric* thought are easily linked to Murphy's philosophic views. Whether Murphy came by these conclusions as result of Śri Aurobindo's writings or as result of his own extensive study and special understanding of Eastern practices, it is important to analyze these Hindu components if one is to understand the life's work of Murphy as a product of the interconnected parts that are constituents of his integral wholeness. Jeff Kripal (2005, 11) offers the supposition that Michael Murphy's appropriation of Śri Aurobindo's writings "helped extend the appeal and influence of Tantric practices to a Western audience."

To reiterate, these three disciplines—*tantra* and its subsets of *śākta* and *kaśmir śaivism*—while adding philosophical strength to Murphy's works, are only three constituents, among many, of his comprehensive worldview.

Śri Aurobindo's Pūrṇa Yoga and Its Three Foundational Yoga's

Śri Aurobindo experienced human nature as a "part of cosmic evolution and participating in the awakening of the latent Divinity in all things" (Fuller 2005, 201). McDermott (1972b, 13) tells us that the secret of Śri Aurobindo's *pūrṇa* (integral) *yoga* lies in an individual's "conscious cooperation with the creative energy of Being toward the integral transformation of his total being, including the social and global dimension." In simple terms, the practice of yoga means "a change or transformation of consciousness, a heightening and broadening of consciousness" (N. K. Gupta 1976, 16). McDermott (1972b, 171) describes yoga as "the ideal of binding the self to a spiritual world," the culmination of "cosmic perfection" (1972b, 173), and the discipline of "psychic

change” (1972b, 177). The Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary (2008) provides 37 definitions for yoga but, for this study, it is defined as a yoking or attachment of one’s self to the Supreme Principle already residing within. The word ‘yoga’ is derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, which, means to yoke one’s self or attach one’s self to the means of spiritual liberation. By Śri Aurobindo’s definition, according to McDermott (1972b, 173):

yoga culminates in cosmic perfection. On one hand, this creative evolution is possible because of the individual’s own efforts to become an effective instrument, and, on the other, because of the creative force of evolution itself.

Pūrṇa yoga is commonly interpreted as integral or complete yoga, or Śri Aurobindo’s yoga of Self-Perfection. This yogic synthesis integrates other schools of yoga—in particular *karma*, *bhakti*, and *jñāna*, three primary yoga’s of the *Bhagavad-Gita*—into a single inclusive and comprehensive practice of transformation and healing, offering wisdom and techniques for the union of the body and the mind with the spirit (Ghose 1995, 2012).

Thus the name *pūrṇa yoga*, complete yoga ... combines or integrates all yogic practices into one total whole ... If integral yoga were just another path, if Śri Aurobindo had merely devised another way to transcend material life, then his contribution would not be nearly as great as it is. But that is not the case, for *pūrṇa* or integral yoga is a synthesis of all yoga’s with a goal, not of the transcendence of life but of the transformation of life. (Grosz 1995, 112)

In *The Life Divine*, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2006, 680) informs that:

an integral knowledge then must be a knowledge of the truth of all sides of existence both separately and in the relation of each to all and the relation of all to the truth of the Spirit.

Robert McDermott (1972b, 168) presents *pūrṇa yoga* as a way to access the “Supramental levels of Reality” or Supermind within the process of involution–evolution, a concept later analyzed in detail:

Firstly, the significance of *Pūrṇa Yoga* lies in its emphasis on social and historical dimensions of self-discipline; secondly, that this discipline is the instrument by which man is to ascend progressively from the physical through the mental and psychological to the Supramental levels of Reality; thirdly, that [Śri Aurobindo’s] theory of history, particularly his vision of an emerging Spiritual Age, is based on the assumption that history progresses according to a double movement—by man’s ascent to progressively higher levels of consciousness and by the descent of these levels into the lower levels.

This spiritual concept is readily acceptable to Michael Murphy and other spiritual philosophers such as Teilhard de Chardin (1974) and Chaudhuri (1972a). In his dissertation on Haridas Chaudhuri, Grosz (1995, 110) clearly illustrates that the prominent practices within Śri Aurobindo’s *pūrṇa yoga* have their origins in certain yoga practices fundamental to Indian spirituality. “The traditional Indian path to spiritual fulfillment is through meditation, or yoga” (110). Grosz (1995, 110-11) also enumerates other disciplines complimentary to an integral: *hatha yoga* (discipline of the body), *kriyā yoga* (the raising of ethereal vital energy), *raja yoga* (stillness of the mind), *prāṇa yoga* (breath concentration), *jñāna yoga* (wisdom and knowledge), *karma yoga* (proper attitude toward work), and *bhakti yoga* (the path of devotion). The inclusivity exhibited by Śri Aurobindo’s *pūrṇa yoga* correlates to Michael Murphy’s (1992, 579) expression of the need for flexibility in the process of human integral adaptation, a flexibility that allows the practitioner to incorporate multiple revelations into a singular understanding:

the need for flexibility is especially pronounced if our aim is integral transformation. A multidimensional approach requires methods adapted to each of its practitioner's shortcomings, strengths, and stage of growth. For that reason there can be no single or "right" kind of integral discipline with a universal applicable and strictly specified set of techniques. If experience has shown that flexibility is necessary to accomplish narrow ends, it emphatically teaches us that a many-sided development of human nature requires rich, diverse, and adaptable practices.

Understanding the yogic disciplines that play integral parts in Śri

Aurobindo's vision is important to this study of Michael Murphy's contributions.

Murphy's writings contain generous references to the certitude of integral existence in all aspects of being; the methods he suggests to transmute our psychological and physiological right to transform. Murphy (1992, 554) writes how "Aurobindo's synoptic metaphysics, his psychology of supraordinary states, his doctrine of bodily transformation, and many practical aspects of his yoga point the way to integral practices for our time."

It is important to note that the practices of yoga, "control of the body and mind for the sake of self-realization of one's pure self," are thought "to be older than the Veda's themselves" (Raju 1985, 337). Śri Aurobindo understood the *Bhagavad-Gita* to be primarily a *vedāntic* work, and systemically integrated "the three yoga's of the Gita—*karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* ... and extended [them] by a fourth yoga, self-perfection" (McDermott 1972a, 20).

Yoga is the method that joins. It may be the joining of the finite spirit with the Supreme Spirit; or of the apparent spirit to the real spirit ... or of an individual to his ideal in which case *yoga* is self-realization in the widest sense of self-realization. Not only this joining, but also the methods or practices leading to the joining are called *yoga*. (Raju 1985, 337)

Although all yoga's can lead to liberation, Śri Aurobindo encourages us to pay special attention to *bhakti* (devotion), *karma* (action), and *jñāna* (wisdom). In the *Synthesis of Yoga*, he (Ghose 1996a, 220) advises us to:

“practice unfalteringly” ... “with a heart free from despondency,” the Yoga; for even though in the earlier stage of the path we drink deep of the bitter poison of internal discord and suffering, the last taste of this cup is the sweetness of the nectar of immortality and the honey-wine of eternal Ananda.

For Śri Aurobindo, the synthesizing of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* yoga's into a singular, integral yoga was inspired by his love for and interpretation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, in which Krishna emphasizes the essence of the practices of these disciplines as integral foundations for liberation. McDermott (1972b, 174) explains:

Integral Yoga includes the jnana, karma, and bhakti yoga's which [Śri Aurobindo] called the Yoga of Self-Perfection. Similarly, he supplements the Gita with an emphasis on man's active participation in the process of divinizing human history.

Although Michael Murphy is a staunch adherent of Śri Aurobindo's synthesis of yoga and subscribes to the “essential Divinity within every person”—one of the Five Central Beliefs of Esalen (Goldman 2005, 299)—Murphy does not claim that his research into events and practices of extraordinary human potential will lead directly or absolutely to an ultimate consciousness or final unification with the Supreme Principle. Murphy qualifies his cataloging of extraordinary events by suggesting that it offers evidence of the capability for human advancement toward the extraordinary in some areas of human existence. Extraordinary is beyond the ordinary; however, it does not promise ultimate transformation.

In Michael Murphy's conception of evolutionary panentheism (see Section 5), the Supreme Principle, in Its involution, throws Itself into the basest forms of pre-Matter, and is thus present in all subsequent evolutions from pre-Matter to Matter to Vital Life and beyond. Each rung on the ladder of ascension, each link in the chain of being already exists within the preceding and succeeding levels of being, and the divine resides within them all. Murphy (1992, 189) illustrates comparable Western thinking by highlighting Henry James, Sr.'s synthesis of ethical, social, and metaphysical deliberations:

For him, evolution was preceded by the involution of Divinity in this world. "Whatsoever creates a thing," he wrote, "gives it being, *in*-volves the thing, not the thing it. The Creator involves the creature; the creature *e*-volves the Creator."

It is Murphy's belief that his evidence and practices of extraordinary human capacity should be viewed as small steps toward greater products of human potential.

To draw out the connection between the components of Śri Aurobindo's *pūrṇa yoga* and Murphy's integrality, I correlate Śri Aurobindo's *bhakti* to Murphy's (1992, 148) projections about the possible transformative capacities of love, *jñāna* to cognition (1992, 126), and *karma* to good works toward the individual and society (See Section Seven.)

Bhaktiyoga

Bhaktiyoga is known as the yoga of devotion. It derives from the Sanskrit root *bhaj*, which essentially means to adore or worship God. *Bhaktiyoga*, like any other form of yoga, is a path to self-realization, a spiritual journey that fosters love of, faith in, and surrender to God; its aim is a form of divine, loving union.

According to Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1996a, 39), it is a “Path of Devotion” that aims at the enjoyment of the supreme Love and Bliss and utilizes the conception of the Supreme Principle in Its role as the divine creator and lover of the universe and Its creatures. Our reception of divine love requires that we cherish both God and our neighbor as we would ourselves, a common thread that runs through all benevolent religions and spiritualities. Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1996a, 160) writes:

As with individual, so with universal Love; all that widening of the self through sympathy, goodwill, universal benevolence and beneficence; love of mankind, love of creatures, the attraction of all the myriad forms and presences that surround us, by which mentally and emotionally man escapes from the first limits of his ego, has to be taken up into a unifying divine love for the universal Divine.

In similar vein, Murphy (1992, 155) speaks of the necessity of the transformative act of love to facilitate the mitigation of intolerance and injustice within humanity:

The overcoming of injustice requires love as well as strength. Without many kinds of charity, this world would not last for long. While love requires other virtues, among them courage in dealing with cruelty and aggression, it can bring forth goodness in all sorts of circumstance. It is the culmination of caring behavior ... and our profoundest transformative act.

Murphy (1992, 418) further expands upon the transformative faculties of love in order to experience extraordinary potential:

love can flower in extraordinary ways, transforming the world to some extent while revealing new worlds to us. As we are conceived in love and brought forth from our mothers in love, we are opened by love to our greater possibilities. This fact of life has been celebrated since antiquity. In Plato’s *Symposium* (210-212), Socrates describes love’s progress from devotion to a single body to beauty in all bodies, and from devotion to bodies to beauty in laws, sciences and wisdom.

In *The Future of the Body*, Michael Murphy (1992, 50) provides a list of twelve universally shared human attributes of which love is primary. The “love that transcends needs and motives” is a product of metanormal development. It supports the universal truth that loving engenders being loved. Murphy understands that the micro-macrocosmic interrelationship is generated and requited by love.

Jñānayoga

Miller (2004, 61) translates the following excerpt from the *Bhagavad-Gita*: “When ignorance is destroyed / by knowledge of the self, / then, like the sun, knowledge / illumines ultimate reality.” *Jñānayoga* provides access to the divine consciousness through true knowledge. Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1996a, 38) grounded his synthesis on his interpretation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. “The Path of Knowledge aims at the realization of the unique and supreme Self. It proceeds by the method of intellectual reflection, *vicāra*, to right discrimination, *viveka*.”

In *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1996a, 289) provides methods for attaining such knowledge for liberation:

since men are mental beings, thought, if not truly their best and highest, is at least their most constant, normal and effective means for enlightening their ignorance. Armed with its functions of gathering and reflection, meditation, fixed contemplation, the absorbed dwelling of the mind on its object, *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana* [the triple means to *mokṣā*], it stands at our top as an indispensable aid to our realization of that which we pursue, and it is not surprising that it should claim to be the leader of the journey and the only available guide or at least the direct and innermost door of the temple.

Michael Murphy is convinced of the spiritual and therapeutic value of knowledge attained through self-reflection and meditation. This is evident in the ways both are deeply incorporated into Murphy's (1992, 543) presentation of the types of practices most likely to promote personal evolutionary change:

The self-reflection we sometimes practice when confronted by difficulty can be deepened by means of sustained meditation. Transformative disciplines use both inherited and socially acquired attributes to improve many kinds of functioning.

Self-reflection and introspection are mediated by forms of meditation, a practice that Murphy (1992, 128) believes can lead the practitioner to mystical knowing:

In its classic form, mystical knowing reveals a fundamental reality, greater self, or Divinity by direct experience, without analysis and reasoning. "Although similar to states of feeling," wrote William James,³⁴ "mystical states seem to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge. They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain; and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for aftertime."

A third primary yoga, introduced by Krishna to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, is the yoga of good deeds or *karmayoga*, the method of achieving perfection and liberation through positive action or good works.

Karmayoga

Lord Krishna counsels Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "Be intent on action, / not on the fruits of action; / avoid attraction to the fruits / and attachment to inaction!" (Miller 2004, 38). In *Essays on the Gita*, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1950, 64) writes:

³⁴ James, William. 1902. Lectures 16 and 17: *Mysticism*.

it is evident from the whole teaching of the Gita and its later definitions that the word karma is used in a very wide sense and that by Yoga is meant the selfless devotion of all the inner as well as the outer activities as a sacrifice to the Lord of all works, offered to the Eternal as Master of all the soul's energies and austerities.

What is important, according to Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1996a, 39), is that one does not pat oneself on the back for doing good works. They should be performed without quest for appreciation or reward:

The Path of Works aims at the dedication of every human activity to the supreme Will. It begins by the renunciation of all egoistic aim or for the sake of a worldly result.

Part 3 of Michael Murphy's *The Future of the Body* (1992, 543-86) focuses on practices which may induce and enhance people's metanormal capacities, engaging in extraordinary events that have the potential to lift humankind beyond its current normal level of beingness to extraordinary levels of being, knowing, creativity, and spiritual envelopment. These practices, outlined later—some physical, some cognitive, some introspective—are actionable, dynamic operations of volition. Positive transformative actions beget a widening of the self which leads towards greater fulfillment.

Integral practices outlined by Murphy, Donovan and Taylor in *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* (1999), and Murphy's own *The Future of the Body* (1992, 562) virtually demand the employment of *karmayoga*, or positive creative action:

our practices must promote perceptual, kinesthetic, communication, and movement abilities; vitality; cognition; volition; command of pain and pleasure; love; and bodily structures. All of this involves social creativity, as none of us can develop without considerable help from our fellows. Indeed, we need many virtues and traits that help produce good societies in general, among them charity, courage, forgiveness, and balance.

To reiterate, these three yoga's—singular paths to liberation as expressed in the *Bhagavad-Gita*—set the foundation for Śri Aurobindo's integral (*pūrṇa*) yoga, which combines their singularities into unified vision. There is little doubt that Śri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy affirms the validity of Michael Murphy's innate integrality. Kripal (2005, 104) tells us that Murphy describes his relationship to the writings of Śri Aurobindo's as the “big climax” in which “it all came together” for him.

Summarization of the Yoga's that Ground Sri Aurobindo's *Pūrṇa Yoga*

It is the three yoga components within the *Bhagavad-Gita*— *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti*—that are most relevant to Śri Aurobindo's synthesis of *pūrṇa yoga*. Michael Murphy's appropriation of these yoga's appears in his worldview and his writings—particularly in *The Future of the Body* (1992), in which he offers a series of integral practices to enhance the acquisition and cultivation of metanormal human capacities.

According to S. K. Maitra (1941, 7), a friend and strong proponent of Śri Aurobindo's philosophy, the object of yoga is “the preparation of the field, so that when the Supramental light descends, it may find the soil fit to receive it.” Said light is equivalent to liberation, the primary intent of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and of all spirituality.

Michael Murphy's belief in the omnipresence of integrality in every aspect of existence and essence is an inherent realization, one supplemented by study and research, and confirmed by his resolute commitment to and understanding of Śri Aurobindo, Haridas Chaudhuri, and other scientists and philosophers. *Bhakti*,

karma, and *jñāna* yoga's are prime constituents of the integrality 'and' wholeness or integrality of *pūrṇa* yoga. This contemporary synthesis exemplifies the concept of integrality which founds the basis for Murphy's (1992, 11) research and explication of metanormal human development, which supports Śri Aurobindo's belief in humanity's ability to transform:

Śri Aurobindo, the greatest practicing contemplative among the thinkers I've noted, outlined an elaborate psychology of our further development, a phenomenology of supranormal consciousness, and an "integral yoga" to transform all our faculties as instruments of the Divinity we harbor.

Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1996a, 40) provides his own encapsulation of the spiritual benefits of integrality:

I believe that one can see also that in the integral view of things, the three paths are one. Divine Love should lead to the perfect knowledge of the Beloved through perfect intimacy—thus becoming a path of Knowledge—and to divine service, thus becoming a path of Works. Likewise, perfect Knowledge should lead to perfect Love and Joy and a full acceptance of the works of That which is known; dedicated Works to the entire love of the Master of the Sacrifice and the deepest knowledge of His ways and His being. It is in this triple path that we come most readily to the absolute knowledge, love, and service of the One in all beings and in the entire cosmic manifestation.

Pūrṇa yoga is Śri Aurobindo's philosophy of integrality which, in turn, is an essential foundation for Michael Murphy's data-driven research and summary of metanormal human capacity, and methods of transformation. In this study, I focus on Śri Aurobindo's biographical details and philosophical particulars because of his profound influence on Murphy. This focus, of course, has been noted by other scholars who map out the influence between Śri Aurobindo and Murphy through the term 'integral'. As Wheeler (2005, 185) explains:

The key word here is “integral”—again, the idea that human experience is potentially unitary, that we are at an essential level unified with, not separate from, our world, and the foliation and then reweaving of new parts of that experience is an evolutionary process, resulting in the generation of novelty and new forms; that is, the unfolding of human potential. In all of this we can see the deep influence on Murphy, in particular, of the tradition of the Indian philosopher–saint Śri Aurobindo.

In order to move forward with my analysis of Michael Murphy’s influences, I must briefly move backward in time to note that Frederic Spiegelberg—the Stanford professor who taught the crucial and serendipitous Asian Studies class that Murphy accidentally attended—viewed Śri Aurobindo as the master spiritual advisor of our age. Spiegelberg stated that Śri Aurobindo and Heidegger were the two greatest philosophers of the Twentieth Century (Kripal 2007, 390). McDermott (1974, 168) also speaks to their similarities and suggests other Western philosophical comparisons:

In the modern West, the nearest analogue to *The Life Divine* is Heidegger’s *Zein und Zeit*, particularly since it is Heidegger’s express intent to allow Being to disclose itself. The philosophical content and language of *The Life Divine* resembles the works of the major idealists and process philosophers—Hegel, Bradley, Royce, Bergson, James and Whitehead.

Again this is representative of Murphy’s use of multivalent sources as all the aforementioned are integral contributors to his philosophy. The following Section will illuminate the God-human inclusiveness that is the essence of evolutionary panentheism.

Section 5: Evolutionary Panentheism

Theism, Pantheism, Panentheism

In this Section I unpack Michal Murphy's philosophical attraction to evolutionary panentheism to include definitions of competing theories showing how, in Murphy's view, evolutionary panentheism is best suited for the spiritual and natural understanding of how a dynamic, evolving Supreme Principle intervenes in support of humanity's metanormal human capacity. In this brief explication of the philosophical-spiritual lineage of evolutionary panentheism, I provide brief overviews of theism, pantheism, panentheism, and Murphy's evolutionary panentheism.

An expert on the evolution of panentheism, Cooper (2006, 14) provides the following definition of theism:

In brief, classical theism asserts that God is transcendent, self-sufficient, eternal, and immutable in relation to the world; thus God does not change through time and is not affected by a relation to his creatures. ... Classical theism intends to represent God as supernaturally revealed, not merely as known by reason.

'Theism' derives from the Greek *theos* meaning 'god.' It is the belief in the existence of God as the creative source of the human race and the universe.

"Classical theism posits an unqualified distinction between God and the world; although intimately related, God and creatures are always and entirely other than one another" (Cooper 2006, 18). 'Pantheism,' as generally described, implies that God is immanent within or identical with the universe; God is everything and everything is God. In *God and Contemporary Science*, part of the Edinburgh Studies in Constructive Theory series, Clayton (1997, 479) writes of pantheism:

There is only the All, and everything that exists is contained within it. Unfortunately pantheism can understand that All only as object rather than as subject, since there is no Other in relation to which it could emerge as subject.

In other words, in pantheism, humanity is subject to the grace of God, but God is not subject to the will or desires of humanity. Within pantheism, God is all there is and humanity is incorporated into God. God does not reveal his subjectivity toward humanity. There exists, therefore, the dualist dichotomy of subject-object because humanity is subjective to deific objectivity. Confusion and disagreement prevail among modern spiritual thinkers regarding pantheism versus panentheism, and indeed, the two can appear quite similar. Essentially, the pantheist believes that the totality of all that exists is God.

The panentheist believes that the universe is a part of God, God is greater than the universe, and God is involved in all aspects of the universe at all times, which implies the important theory that God is not static but dynamic and evolving in support of humanity's development. In his review of Bergson's spiritual commitment, Cooper (2006, 146) defines his theology of mutual interplay as:

a species of modern dynamic panentheism. God is the creative power of the evolving universe. He needs a world and is immanent in the cosmos as the Vital Force in which all creatures live, move, and have their being. Although they are in God, creatures are ontologically distinct from God and partially free in how they evolve. And although all things are in God, he has generated human creatures with a special capacity for mystical experience: direct, self-conscious, reciprocal participation in the Vital Force itself.

The Supreme Principle permeates the universe, instigating, through Its involution, the evolution of Matter to Mind. Michael Murphy (1992, 193) evidences Whitehead's assertion that God attracts actual entities to himself (atoms, cells,

humans) and “suffers with and is shaped by their activities.”³⁵ There is no divine evolution apparent in theism, and no dynamic interaction between God and other entities in pantheism because there is only the One and no other; therefore no attraction. Murphy (1992, 193) writes:

In their recognition of both external and developing aspects of Divinity, Whitehead and Hartshorne come close to the involution-evolution ideas proposed by Aurobindo and James. Indeed all four thinkers can be deemed to be pantheists in that they acknowledge both transcendent and immanent aspects of Divinity.

Taken within Murphy’s perspective of the interrelationship between microcosm and macrocosm, one can easily envision the seeds of his evolutionary pantheism. Murphy believes that God intervenes by ‘thrusting’ or involuting Itself into life at the meanest levels of submatter, providing for the evolution of consciousness up the Aurobindian ladder (Chaudhuri, 1972b), which gives humanity the potential for dynamic, extraordinary spiritual and physiological growth, and subsequent transcendence via metanormal experiences. Murphy (2012a, 3) writes:

While remaining transcendent to all created things, the divine spirit manifested itself through the birth of the physical world, so that the process that’s followed—the often meandering but seemingly inexorable emergence of new forms of existence from matter to life to humankind—is the unfolding of hidden Divinity.

³⁵ Whitehead, Alfred North. 1978, 362-63.

Evolutionary Panentheism

Evolutionary panentheism informs that God evolves with humanity, the universe is a part of God, God is greater than the universe, and God is involved in all aspects of the universe at all times. Michael Murphy (2012a, 11) explains that the universality of evolutionary panentheism:

is based on just a few fundamental principles, among them: first, that evolution is a fact (though its discovery has given rise to various theories about it); second, that our universe arises from and is constituted by a world-transcending supernature, call it the One, God, Brahman, the Absolute, Buddha-Nature, Allah, Geist, or the Tao; and third, that humans have a fundamental affinity or identity with that supernature, which can be known through immediate experience either spontaneously or by means of transformative practice.

How does evolutionary panentheism conform to Michael Murphy's evidence-based research and transformative measures within his theory of humanity's metanormal capabilities? Murphy (2012a, 5) posits that evolutionary panentheism:

gives us a compelling reason for the resonance between human volition, imagination, cognition, emotion, and physiological processes through which psychosomatic transformations (as well as the influence of mind over inanimate matter evident in psychokinesis) appear to be mediated. Our cells, feelings, and thoughts resonate with each other because they share the same omnipresent reality, responsive to the same indwelling spirit. Mind and matter, consciousness and flesh, inform each other because they have evolved from (and within) the same ever-present origin.

Evolution

Cranwell (2010, 275) provides an excellent, analysis:

evolution is the unfolding of higher order, more complex entities, both as life forms and inter-dependent systems: bio-geo-physiological, eco-systemic and social. ... It drives the unfolding of the potentials of being and consciousness both in individual selves and collectives.

Evolutionary processes are the subject of multivalent theories. Evolution is a domain that is the source for change, expansion, transformation, or unfolding.

Kripal (2007, 418) states that:

Murphy offers a third moment of evolutionary transcendence into a fourth domain, the domain of a broadly conceived history of mysticism and the supernormal transformations of the human form. In Murphy's words now: "certain types of extraordinary human development, I believe, herald a third evolutionary transcendence. With them, a new level of existence has begun to appear on earth, one whose patterns cannot be adequately specific by physics, biology, or mainstream social science."

According to Murphy, humanity's potential for metanormal human development may herald a new form of existence, especially if expedited by the methods proposed by Murphy in Part 3 of *The Future of the Body* (1992), "Transformative Practices":

So how does humanity achieve this evolutionary level of transcendence? There are three geologic and biologic types of evolution: divergent, convergent, and parallel. These are current 'acceptable' scientific Darwinian evolutions of natural selection that act upon random mutation. Some sciences now recognize additional types of evolution—inorganic and psychosocial—which have "many features in common but operate according to separate principles" (Murphy 1992, 25). In a splendid essay, Ann Taves (2005, 243) clarifies Murphy's singular articulation of biologic or geological evolution:

Murphy, at least, is well aware, he and his predecessors are not, for the most part, referring to biological or geological evolution when they refer to evolution. He is using the term “in a very general sense, to denote different kinds of human growth.” He adds: “Though the kinds of development that occur in the physical, biological, and psychosocial domains are shaped by different processes and have different patterns, they proceed in sequences that are called evolutionary.”³⁶

There is also the theory of punctuated evolution, which proposes that speciation is not gradient and Darwinian, but rather composed of abrupt geologic events of evolutionary change. There is the theory of quantum jumps in evolution. A quantum jump is commonly described as a leap that is big; however, to the scientific community quantum jumps are tiny, disconnected, and abrupt. Paleontologist George Simpson calls certain changes of this kind among living species instances of “quantum evolution” because they involve relatively abrupt alterations of adaptive capacity or bodily structure, and leave little or no evidence in the fossil record of the transitions between them (Murphy 1992, 26).³⁷ The punctuated and quantum evolutionary theories are similar, the primary difference being the latter’s relation to quantum physics. As Murphy (1992, 27) proposes:

For certain types of extraordinary human development, I believe, herald a third evolutionary transcendence. . . . As life developed from inorganic elements and humankind from its primate ancestors, a new evolutionary domain is tentatively rising in the human race, both spontaneously and by transformative practice, and it was made possible by quantum jumps in development such as the discovery of fire, the emergence of language, and the birth of religious awareness.

³⁶ Murphy, Michael. 1992, 24.

³⁷ Simpson, George Gaylord. 1949, 1953.

Additionally, there is Bergson's proposition of creative evolution, which suggests that evolution is motivated by an *élan vital*, a 'vital impetus' that can also be understood as humanity's natural creative impulse—a concept that reminds one of Whitehead's scientific analyses. Another variation is Aristotelian emergent evolution, which Hegel posits is the progression of life from nonliving to living, to conscious, and then to the spiritual. This lends itself, nicely, to the evolutionary panentheistic theory of Michael Murphy (2012a, 12):

Unlike most past versions of panentheism, it sees the entire world as “slumbering Spirit,” pressing insistently toward a greater existence on Earth, and it views supranormal capacities that appear in the course of spiritual practice not as hindrances to higher life but as emerging attributes of our latent Supernature.

In developing his philosophy of the capacity for human potential, and his theory of evolutionary panentheism, Murphy (1992, 179) synthesized an extraordinary list of consummate minds, prominent among them Henry James, Sr., Teilhard de Chardin, Śri Aurobindo Ghose, Whitehead, and Hartshorne, all of whom espouse compatible cosmic philosophies. Most of science, however, remains fixated with the three geologic and biologic types of evolution. Indra Sen (1952, 46) states:

While the human psycho-physical organism is universally accepted as a product of a long evolution—and in recent times even teleologically determined evolution too has been conceived of—yet one does not find any attempt in the field of scientific thought to consider the future course of evolution and its possible objectives.

Sen wrote that over seventy years ago, and the recognition of spiritual and mystic contributions to evolution has become inexorably relevant to such modern thinkers as those Murphy (1992, 179-80) lists below:

During the two centuries since “progress” became a prominent idea in the West, the philosophers ... Whitehead, Samuel Alexander, C. Lloyd Morgan, Jean Gebser, Charles Hartshorne, Teilhard de Chardin, and Śri Aurobindo, among others, have tried to comprehend or explain the developing universe in relation to something ultimate, eternal, or everlasting. ... Many insights of these philosophers suggest that the links between superordinary dimensions of existence and this world’s developmental processes are ripe for new understanding.

Panentheism

Michael Murphy’s theories on advanced human potential are underscored by his belief in the capacity of individuals to work in concert with Supernature to achieve the supraordinary. These theories are predicated on the involution–evolution theories of Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1919), Teilhard de Chardin (1974), and Alfred North Whitehead (1978, Hosinski 1993). Again, panentheism argues the theory or belief that God encompasses *and* interpenetrates the universe, and at the same time is greater than *and* independent of it while remaining beholden to it, which implies that God is capable of change, of evolution within the universe. In their article on “Hartshorne and Indian Panentheism,” Stansell and Phillips (2010, 295) offer the following clarification:

A view may be termed pantheistic if it takes God to be somehow both immanent in the world, and transcendent of it, independent of, or greater than the world. Under panentheism, God is not simply identical to the world as pantheisms assert. This has significant upshots: God can still be characterized as perfect while the world is characterized by imperfections, to mention just one of the theologically significant. At the same time, panentheism allows for a relationship between God and the world which goes far to explain how things are.

Baltzly (2010, 197) writes about this concept of divinity within all humanity:

At its core, panentheism insists on some kind of commonality between god and the universe. They are not radically separated from one another in such a way as to render one divine and the other not.

Lawrence (2005, 214) believes that “a panentheistic approach to the problems of tradition and modernity has inspired many contemporary retrievals of Hindu tantrism.” This supports the probability of *tantric* influences on Michael Murphy, and its prevalence in the origins and evolution of Esalen as espoused by Kripal (2007, 19-20, 68) and acknowledged by Murphy (2012b, 1).

Panentheism literally means “all-in-God-ism.” This is the Greek–English translation of the German term *Allingottehre*, “the doctrine that all is in God.” It was coined by Karl Krause (1781-1832), a contemporary of Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Hegel, to distinguish his own theology from both classical theism and pantheism. The term ‘panentheism’ did not come into common usage, however, until Charles Hartshorne popularized it in the mid-Twentieth Century (Cooper 2006, 26). In *God and Contemporary Science*, Clayton (1997, 99) reaffirms panentheism’s philosophical embrace of the nonduality of the immanent and transcendent.

There is simply no place for finite things to “be” outside of that which is absolutely unlimited. Hence an infinite God must encompass the finite world that he has created, making it in some sense “within” himself. This is the conclusion that we call panentheism.

Murphy (1992, 193) writes:

Panentheism holds that the being of God includes, and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in him but—as against *pantheism*—that his being is more than, and is not exhausted by the universe.³⁸

³⁸ “The Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part exists in Him, but His Being is more than, and not exhausted by, the universe.” (F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.)

The telos, the eventuating unification in Michael Murphy’s philosophy, is via evolutionary panentheism. Again, one can choose to call this finality the Supermind, the Omega Point, Supernature, the ultimate nonduality of self and Self, the one with Brahman or, as the *Veda* states, “the One conscious in unconscious things” (Satprem 2003, 253). One thing resonates within Murphy’s (1992, 188) incorporation of similar-thinking spiritual philosophers over time: evolution results from involution:

Hegel, Henry James, Sr., and Śri Aurobindo, among others, have advanced the idea that this world’s unfoldment is based upon the implicit action, descent, or involution of a Supreme Principle or Divinity.

This is the crux of Murphy’s spiritual philosophy. Only that which is inherent within can ‘come out.’ Murphy (1992, 193) backs up his thinking through the science of academic research by evidencing broad data for advanced human potential through innate and active transformative capacity:

The involution-evolution idea resonates with my proposals that transformative practice (like evolution) can evoke our latent capacities for extraordinary life. ... The involution-evolution doctrine articulated by Henry James, Sr., and Śri Aurobindo has much in common with the views of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. Whitehead’s *prehension* [grasping], for example, is of two types: physical prehension of actual entities, the spatio-temporal happenings that constitute universal process ... and conceptual prehension of eternal objects, which are reminiscent of the Platonic forms.

As a prelude to Part II of “The Emergence of Evolutionary Panentheism,” Michael Murphy (2012a, 6) quotes German philosopher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1910)³⁹

³⁹ Fichte, J. G. 1910. *The Vocation of Man*, 34.

Nature herself ascends gradually in the determinate series of her creations. In rude matter she is a simple existence; in organized matter she returns within herself to internal activity, —in the plant to produce form, in the animal motion; (and) in man, as her highest masterpiece, she turns inward that she may perceive and contemplate herself, —in him she, as it were, doubles herself, and, from being mere existence, becomes existence and consciousness in one.

As Murphy has acknowledged, since his twenties he has been deeply influenced by Śri Aurobindo, who “claimed that human consciousness exists at the vortex of the ascending and descending flow of cosmic energy. ... Murphy’s exposure to Aurobindo’s ideas proved life altering” (Fuller 2005, 202).

Anderson (2004, 322) relates that Murphy:

still looks for the Great Evolutionary Leap, a breakthrough that will be a falling-away of old paradigms, an awakening to new realities, a Renaissance and Enlightenment and new Copernican revolution put together.

In Murphy’s concept of evolutionary panentheism, according to Kripal (2007, 419-20):

What is traditionally called “God” is woven into the very chemical, atomic, and quantum fabric of existence, and it is the long process of evolution, catalyzed now by human intention and transformative practice within a fourth evolutionary domain, that gradually, ever so gradually, will reveal this always present Divinity. God is the secret unconscious of Nature, if you will, and evolution is the long cosmic process through which this God awakens into superhuman consciousness and takes flesh.

That statement integrates the thinking of Henry James, Sr. (Murphy 1992), Whitehead (Hosinski 1993), Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2006), and Teilhard de Chardin (1959). It is the foundation of the spiritual theory of involution—evolution, which affirms the necessity for deific involution into basic pre-matter and subsequent higher levels of life; an involution is necessary for any evolution because, again, ‘things’ cannot evolve from *no*-‘thing’.

Mutual Theories of Evolution: Teilhard de Chardin and Śri Aurobindo

Michael Murphy's concepts of evolutionary panentheism and its support of advanced human potential are predicated on the philosophical theory of involution–evolution. These theories fall within the domain of evolutionary panentheism in that they presuppose that God—Murphy's (1992) Supernature, Śri Aurobindo's (Ghose 2006) Supermind, Chardin's (1974) the Omega Point—injects Itself into Pre-Matter so that life can commence its journey through several levels of spiritual and mental progression before reaching the ultimate level of unified consciousness. While Murphy finds Śri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy formidable but not totally satisfying, he is able to articulate his own philosophy through his correlation of Śri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy to that of Chardin's (1959, 1964) Christian interpretation, as well as Whitehead's scientific contributions (Hosinski 1993). These will serve to support my contention that Murphy, in addition to his unadulterated love for Śri Aurobindo, conceptualized his theories of Supernature, evolutionary panentheism, and metanormal human potential through diligent research and evaluation. During his studies at Stanford University, Anderson (2004, 30) writes, Murphy:

was reading history almost compulsively, trying to take in everything, from the earliest beginnings of human civilization up to the present, so that he could fully comprehend the evolutionary ideas of Aurobindo and the majestic scientific/theological thinking of Teilhard de Chardin.

Michael Murphy discovered his passion for Teilhard de Chardin in 1961 during Murphy's reign as co-leader of Esalen, and he subsequently began correlating Chardin's and other progressive thinkers' evolutionary ideas with those of Śri Aurobindo:

Paleontologist and Catholic priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin fed this conversation. Like Aurobindo, Teilhard forged a scientific-religious synthesis, but he attached Darwinian thought to Catholicism, not to Hinduism as Aurobindo had. He suggested that everything—spirit, matter, and mind—was evolving toward greater unity, advancing toward one final, complete, harmonious whole that he called “the Omega Point.” (Wood 2008, 477)

Murphy (1992, 197) accepts that there are those who cling to the doctrine of theism—proclaiming that God created a geologic and biologic evolutionary advance but chooses to remain either *in absentia* or “uses humans as means to His (or Its) own ends, as mere instruments of a grand design” —and who remain unwilling to acknowledge the expansive and cohesive possibility that the Supreme Principle would desire to merge with human consciousness in any capacity.

According to Murphy (1992, 197-98), this theistic attitude is:

dramatized by Kierkegaard, who felt that Hegel’s vision of a world proceeding according to the Absolute’s inexorable logic robbed each individual of significance, subjectivity, and sense of worth. ... similar objections have been raised in response to other visionary philosophies, against Teilhard de Chardin’s proclamations that the universe is moving towards the Omega Point, for example.

Avoiding the conflict that exists between the traditional God of revelation and the new God of evolution, the Vatican disallowed the publication of most of Chardin’s writings during his lifetime. The Jesuit priest and scientist believed in the inevitability of the establishment of a new faith: the religion of evolution.

Within the panentheistic walls of Esalen, according to Anderson (2004, 11),

Murphy was greatly influenced by Chardin:

There was much talk of evolution in the seminars; the source most often cited was not Darwin, with his bleak notions of survival of the fittest, but the scientist-theologian Teilhard de Chardin, with his ideas of the onward-and-upward spiraling of the human spirit.

It is documented (Korom 1989, 124) that Chardin had perused Śri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy, but the Indian philosopher could not avail himself of the same opportunity, since he passed away well prior to the post-1955 release of Chardin's scientific hypotheses. Chardin himself did not hold to pantheism or panentheism, but did acknowledge a spiritual need for pantheism in its interpretation of the 'Whole,' calling it a "well-justified ... tendency in the human soul, a tendency which can be fully satisfied only in Christianity" (1959, 57), an idea analogous to Śri Aurobindo's economical panentheism where he believed other religions "good to the extent that they agree with [his] own religious stance and, thereby, promote the evolutionary process, and evil to the extent that they do not" (Minor 1979, 367). Śri Aurobindo disapproved of what he deemed the transcendent misappropriations of certain religions. "When a religion causes misunderstanding among different peoples, or when it inhibits the development of its members' ego-transcending capacities, it becomes a travesty of its stated purposes" (Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers 2002, 180). As result of extensive study in Śri Aurobindo's Birth Centenary Library,⁴⁰ Minor (1979, 373) asserts that:

Aurobindo's critique of the form of other religions as well as his critique of their contents, it must be emphasized, receives their validity from his claim to have experienced a higher vision. This integral vision saw the whole of Reality and could thereby judge other stands because they universalized what from his knowledge he saw to be merely their own particular viewpoints. In doing so Aurobindo was consistent in rejecting the absolute claims of others who also claimed to have seen the Highest Reality and yet believed its content to be different.

⁴⁰ Ghose, Aurobindo. 1972.

One striking dissimilarity between Śri Aurobindo, and Chardin and Michael Murphy are the latter's interest in presenting their work with scientific, data-driven documentation. Korom (1989, 125) states that Śri Aurobindo was less interested in:

the many technical questions pertaining to scientific evolution, his major interest being in social and spiritual evolution. He does stress, however, the fundamental role that evolution plays in the creative process of the universe. Teilhard, on the other hand, feels that it is absolutely necessary to explain biological evolution alongside social evolution as a part of his continuously unfolding mystical vision.

Michael Murphy, Śri Aurobindo, and Teilhard de Chardin acknowledge the role of evolution within their philosophical teloi, although their views do not correspond with those of the scientific community's emphasis of geologic-biologic evolutionary theory in lieu of more coalescing theories. Murphy (1992, 181) finds fault with current scientific aversion, contending that "Emergent evolutionists encourage us to oppose reductionisms that inhibit understanding of scientifically anomalous events, including those extraordinary experiences ... that might signal a new evolutionary order."

The greater universal consciousness that Chardin alludes to is a collective consciousness, a spiritual yoking of all individual minds into a single superconsciousness which he refers to as the 'noosphere.' Śri Aurobindo calls this the domain of the Supermind, a divinely driven force which draws all individual minds toward Itself until unification eventuates. Michael Murphy provides expansive data on the advancement of human potential, emphasizing its essential

part of evolutionary development within the 'noosphere' that leads toward Supermind/Supernature/the Omega Point. All three thinkers "envision a future in which a collective convergence towards the ultimate will take place" (Korom 1989, 129).

The Road to Supernature via Evolutionary Panentheism

Matter

Michael Murphy's concept of Supernature closely correlates to Śri Aurobindo's Supermind and, although Murphy is reticent about some facets of the mystic's spiritual predictions, he supports enough of the Supermind theory that it bears explication. To reiterate, the Supreme Principle involutes Itself into the origins of nature in order for humanity to exist and transmute.

'Matter' is defined as "physical substance in general, as distinct from mind and spirit; (in physics) that which occupies space and possesses rest mass, especially as distinct from energy" (Matter 2014). S. K. Maitra (1941, 1) clarifies that "the fundamental idea upon which the whole structure of [Śri Aurobindo's] philosophy rests is that Matter as well as Spirit is to be looked upon as real." The exclusive emphasis on spirit at the expense of matter or vice versa is as inadequate as the philosophies which ignore the connection. McDermott (1972b, 175) writes, "As Spirit—and because Spirit—descends into Matter, Matter ascends toward Spirit." This is involution–evolution, its master premise that, for something to evolve from another there has to be something existent from which to evolve. Chaudhuri (1972b, 190) speaks to this evolutionary process:

In the material world (*bhuh*) in which we live, matter is the matrix of all existence and the nurse of all becoming. But other structural principles of Being such as life, mind, supermind, psyche, spiritual energy, and pure being are also present in matter from the very beginning in a state of involution.

Matter is material substance that occupies space, has mass, and is composed predominantly of atoms consisting of protons, neutrons, electrons, and subatomic particles such as quanta. Matter is inclusive in every entity in the physical universe: not only basic rocks classified by mineral and chemical composition, not only the fungi, bacterium, eukaryotes, viruses, animals, humans, and constellations, but all that is observable and/or quantifiable. In his comprehensive *Stubborn Fact and Creative Advance*, Hosinski (1993, 94) explains how Whitehead came to his own scientific conclusions about the Supreme Principle's involution to pre-matter:

Whitehead argues, we must hypothesize that the capacities which define the conditions of the possibility of novelty and self-creation must be latently present even in the lowest type of occasion in nature.

This Matter, the base constituent of our universe and our being, conceived from stellar dust, is life and a form of consciousness: an essence (Skt: *sat*), and a viable part of the scheme of life and dissolution. "Teilhard and Aurobindo purport that all matter contains a rudimentary germ of consciousness" (Korom 1989, 126). Nolini Kanta Gupta (1976, 25), among those arrested with Śri Aurobindo for conspiracy in the Alipore bomb case, informs that:

The core of [Śri Aurobindo's] teaching, the central pivot on which his *Yoga* and his work rest is the mystery of the Divine Descent—Spirit descending into Matter and becoming Matter, God coming down upon earth and becoming human, and as a necessary and inevitable consequence, Matter rising and being transformed into Spirit and man becoming God and Godlike.

God must thrust Its divinity into life's beginnings so that humanity can evolve from Matter and make the long natural journey toward the ultimate consciousness of Supernature/Supermind. Plato's *Timaeus* describes humans as a divine plant that has its roots in the stars, and the Demiurge as:

the heavenly craftsman responsible for the creation and maintenance of the physical universe, who planted the immortal part of each human soul in the stars and the microcosm of the evolutionary being, as a part of the macrocosmic universe. (Baltzly 2010, 49)

Murphy (1992, 189) quotes F. H. Young (2011) in *The Future of the Body*:⁴¹

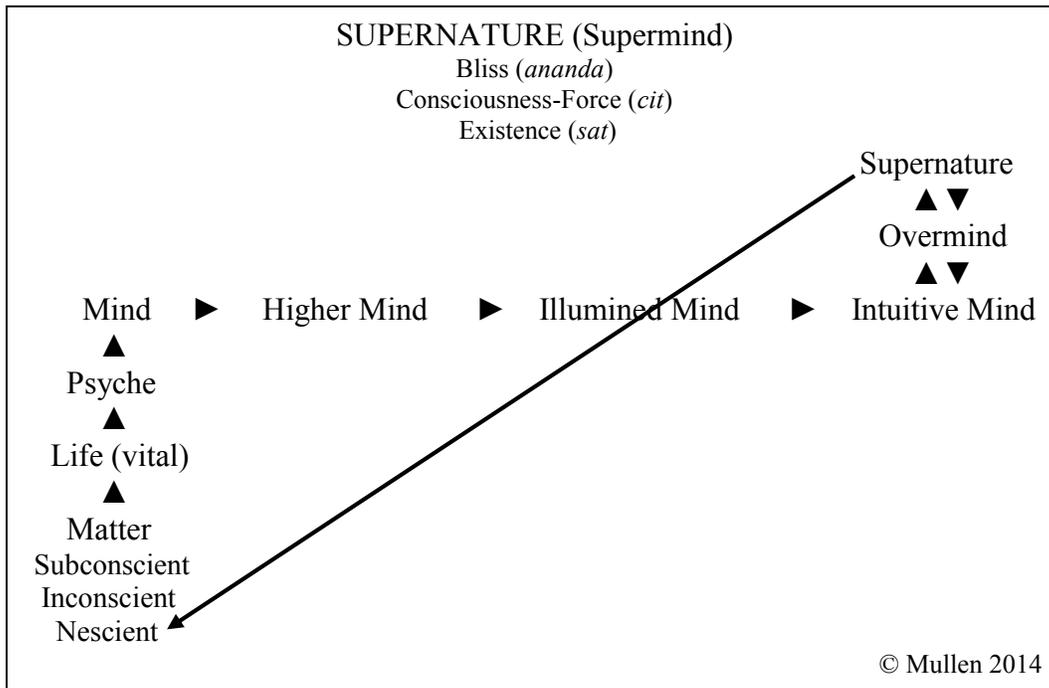
The mineral form then is the earliest or lowest evolution of the me. It is the me in an intensely inert state, in a passive state or state of rest simply. It is the me getting place or position first, in order to its subsequent experience of *growth* in the vegetable form, *motion* in the animal, and *action* in the human form.

Meanwhile, Indra Sen (1952, 47), often cited as the founder of integral psychology, wrote:

Spirit and matter are both data of experience, and [Śri Aurobindo] accepts the one as wholeheartedly as he does the other and sets out on his philosophical adventure to discover their proper relationship. And the success he achieves in this connection is the test and the distinction of his philosophical system. He shows by a detailed working out of the evolutionary process how "matter" is tending or progressing, through "life" and "mind" with long intermediate ranges toward the "supermind," a supramental consciousness to meet what appears to be its contradictory, the spirit.

⁴¹ Young, F. H. 2011.

Figure 1. The Path to Supernature (Supermind)



In support of the integrality within and among evolutionary stages, Michael

Murphy (1992, 185) informs us that:

all consciousness, all soul, even a disembodied soul, interacts with other entities, whether inorganic, animal, human, or superhuman, through a prehension [a grasping] that does not always depend upon sensory processes, language, or the direct application of muscular force.

Chardin (1974, 50) provides a succinct formula that can be interpreted within the foundational philosophies of the Supermind and Supernature: “There are, thus, two phases to be considered in the complete cycle of the universe: A phase of evolution in matter ... A phase of evolution to spirit.” Michael Murphy (1992, 180) informs the reader that:

No general theory of human development can in good faith overlook the enormous witness to mystical cognition and other metanormal abilities revealed by modern religious studies, physical research, anthropological studies of shamanism, and other kinds of systematic inquiry into extraordinary experience. The evolving universe and supernature, however named, stand before us now as two inescapable facts.

Vital Life, Psyche, Mind

Michael Murphy's relationship to the Aurobindian ascent toward Supermind has been well established and his conclusions parallel Sri Aurobindo's basic premise. In shedding light on the specifics of the various interconnected levels of progression and degression as presented in Figure 1, the reader will discover parallels evident in Murphy's theory of metanormal human potential. The four interconnecting and interdependent levels of Mind underscore Murphy's data-driven research and are essential components to human interplay and spiritual advancement, which require explorations into the subsequent progressive levels of Mind (Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, and Intuitive Mind). Discussion regarding the highest plateaus of Overmind and Supermind, although enigmatic, is included in this study in order to better understand the entire theory as explicated by Śri Aurobindo and philosophical advocates. Indra Sen (1952, 51-52) provides details on the evolution of Matter to Vital Life and beyond:

Looking to the pre-mental evolutionary stages we observed "matter" and "life" and their influence on the mind. The mind thus stands for us as a particular stage in a chained process of evolution. It carries within itself in a modified form the previous stages of "matter" and "life" as also the various stages yet to come in a nascent and an incipient form.

As I continue within the premise of an ascent to Supermind via the advancement of human potential through evolutionary panentheism, synopses of Vital Life and the Psyche are essential to the reader's concrete understanding of

the totality of the spiritual functioning. Vital Life, Psyche (soul), and basic Mind are parts of the metamorphosis from inertia to energy to metanormal organic existence. Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2006, 691) speaks to this progression:

It is true again that Life when it emerges becomes dominant, turns Matter into creation and veils itself in the forms of Matter; there is a truth in this appearance and this truth must be admitted as part of the integral knowledge. Life, though not the original Reality, is yet a form, a power of it which is missioned here as a creative urge in matter. Life, therefore, has to be accepted as the means of our activity and the dynamic mould into which we have here to pour the Divine Existence.⁴²

Psyche can evolve from Vital Life. Psyche comprises an entity that is commonly mobile, cognitive, but not necessarily capable of thinking (animals). Aristotle identified organisms by their potential and attributed both plants and animals as having a psyche or soul.⁴³ According to him, plants have the lowest kinds of souls, animals have higher souls which can feel, and humans alone possess rational, reasoning souls. Such reasoning one would call Mind, which emerges from the Psyche, itself emerging from Vital Life. While creatures possess Vital Life, theorists propose that plants have souls, and animals sentience. In an article for *Psychology Today*, Mark Bekoff (2013, 2) makes his case for animal experiential subjectivity:

⁴² Cultural spellings of words within quotations that may not conform to contemporary usage are, nonetheless, included within this study.

⁴³ *Psyche* (or *Psuche*), in Greek mythology was the personification of a beautiful maiden who was loved by Eros. It also connotes breath, and butterfly. The term has generated one of the great philosophical debates of all times and has resulted in a range of psychological and spiritual definitions that will inform this dissertation.

A strong and rapidly growing database on animal sentience supports the acceptance of the fact that other animals are sentient beings. We know that individuals of a wide variety of species experience emotions ranging from joy and happiness to deep sadness, grief, and PTSD, along with empathy, jealousy and resentment. There is no reason to embellish them because science is showing how fascinating they are (for example, mice, rats, and chickens display empathy) and countless other “surprises” are rapidly emerging. ... Solid evolutionary theory, namely, Charles Darwin's ideas about evolutionary continuity in which he recognized that the differences among species in anatomical, physiological, and psychological traits are differences in degree rather than kind, also supports the wide-ranging acceptance of animal sentience.

Extending this belief back to early Hindu thinking, animal sentience is aptly illustrated within the *dēvī māhātmya* (Glory of the Goddess) authored by Vyāsa (through Markandeya), circa 400-500 CE. This is a story of how the *dēvī* (mother Goddess) kills *madhu* and *kaiṭabha* (demons who emerged from the ear of *viśnu*).

In the *Devi-Mahatmya* (2013, 1:49-50), the *dēvī* relates how:

every being has the knowledge of objects perceivable by the senses, and object of sense reaches it in various ways. Some beings are blind by day and others are blind by night; some beings have equal sight both by day and night. Human beings are certainly endowed with knowledge, but they are not the only beings to be so endowed, for cattle, birds, animals and other creatures also cognize (objects of senses).

The evolutionary stage of Matter to Mind is evidenced by the concept of spiritual cosmic intention, which means that God intentionally thrusts Its spirit or consciousness into Pre-Matter as the starting point of evolution from which emerges Vital Life, Psyche, and Mind. Stober (2009, 296) further clarifies:

Aurobindo classified reality into four major planes or levels of existence: the supramental (or spiritual), mental, vital and material. Each of these planes has various graduations and aspects and is constituted by particular beings, powers and movements, which can function independently or interact with aspects of other planes in supportive and integrative ways.

Basic Mind is the current apex of evolution, which presages higher levels of post-ordinary mental adaption. These stages (Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, and Intuitive Mind) are levels that must be attained in order to reach Śri Aurobindo's Overmind. Their evolutionary processes are continuous yet interdependent on their former and latter stages, as Dyczkowski (1987, 111) informs:

Change is the coming to prominence of one power at the expense of another. When a jar, for example, comes into being, the pragmatic efficacy of the clay ball is superseded by that of the clay jar. In this way the abiding fullness (*pūrnatā*) of the one universal power, in a sense, alters as one aspect "expands" and comes to the fore, while another "contracts" or recedes to the background. Śakti is, in this sense, in a state of perpetual pulsation (*spanda*) expanding and contracting, assuming now this, now that form.

Each higher stage re-integrates with preceding stages "under a new principle, that of its own nature, but in doing so it acquires in a measure the characteristics of the lower ones" (Sen 1952, 51). According to Śri Aurobindo and Chardin, "each stage of physical development is accompanied by a higher level of consciousness. Both ... use the term 'ascent' to describe this movement" (Korom 1989, 127). Whether or not spiritual cosmic intention is determined to be scientifically proven, Trivedi (1971, 145) offers the following:

The process of cosmic evolution from Matter to Mind through Life [the individual] does not seem to experience, because he himself is a product of the cosmos, when the latter has evolved in it the principles of Life and Mind. He may however accept it as a fact proved by the scientific theory of evolution.

N. K. Gupta (1976, 4) reaffirms the interdependence and integrality within the Aurobindian levels of spiritual progression:

Matter, Life, Mind-Intelligence—these are not distinct or separate entities, one coming after another, the succeeding one simply adding itself to the preceding, coming we do not know from where. Not so, for something cannot come out of nothing. If life came out of Matter, it is because life was there hidden in Matter. Matter was secretly housing, was instinct with life.

McDermott (1972a, 176) provides additional support for this evolutionary process:

Thus, when the living or vital evolved from matter, matter was in fact transformed by the dual process which produced the vital. Similarly, the vital and physical levels were transformed when they generated the mental level; the singularly decisive leap from living body to mind, from animal to human, is part of the continuous process of transformations. According to [Śri Aurobindo], the next leap, comparable in importance to that between vital and mental, will be from mind to Supermind.

Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind

Michael Murphy understands that Mind is currently at its meanest level, although he believes that there are those individuals who have achieved moments of clarity and intuition that exceed basic Mind. The premise of *The Future of the Body* (1992) is humanity's capability to transform basic Mind into subsequent levels of Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, and Intuitive Mind. Murphy (1992, 188) writes:

The hierarchal stages of mind leading to Supermind are typically expressed in particular kinds of extraordinary activity—*higher mind* in synaptic thought, *illumined mind* in mystical inspiration, *intuitive mind* in religious genius, and *overmind* in world-transforming action.

The Higher Mind is the first level beyond basic Mind on the ascending plane towards Supermind. Higher Mind is more receptive to enhanced spiritual knowledge than basic Mind. In a paper presented at the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, Kunkolienker (1998, 3) writes of Higher Mind:

Its basic substance is a unitarian sense of being with a powerful multiple dynamisation capable of the formation of a multitude of aspects of knowledge, ways of action, forms and significances of becoming. 'It is therefore a power that has proceeded from the overmind, — but with the supermind as its ulterior origin ... but its special character, its activity of consciousness are dominated by Thought; it is a luminous Thought-mind, a mind or spirit-born conceptual knowledge.'

From Higher Mind evolves the Illumined Mind, to which is added a brilliance, not of ordinary sources, but one of a spiritual manifestation.⁴⁴

Illumined Mind is an evolution from higher thought to spiritual light. The mind is essentially illumined from above to deeper spiritual truth and power. Although it is a realm not yet normally achieved by basic Mind, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2006, 271-72) offers this spiritual evaluation:

The principle which underlies this continually ascending experience and vision ... is that all cosmic existence is a complex harmony and does not finish with the limited range of consciousness. ... Being, consciousness, force, substance descend and ascend a many-runged ladder on each step of which has a vaster self-extension, consciousness a wider sense of its own range and largeness and joy, force a greater intensity and a more rapid and blissful capacity.

An Illumined Mind embraces an inner force and power, it replaces the slow and deliberate process of the Higher Mind with the violent awareness of *spanda* (cosmic vibrations). Satprem (1976, 273) enumerates on this cosmic pulsation, calling *spanda*:

⁴⁴ Michael Murphy (1992, 13) says of Illumination:

Western thinkers of late antiquity and the Middle Ages—among them Neo-Platonists such as Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus; Christians such as Origen, Augustine, John Scotus, Bonaventure, Meister Eckhart, and Thomas Aquinas; Jews such as Philo, Moses Maimonides, Abraham Abulafia, and the anonymous author of the Zohar; Moslems such as Avicenna, Suhrawardi, and Ibn Arabi—all held that contemplative illumination delivered testable truths about God and human nature.

Vibrations moving within an absolutely unique and identical field. It's only the intricacy and reception of vibrations that give the impression of something independent and separate. But there is nothing separate or independent; there is only one substance, only one force, only one consciousness, only one will moving in countless ways of being.

Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1996a, 471) comments on humanity's potential development toward advanced mental faculties:

I include here in mind, not only the highest range of mind ordinarily known to man, but yet higher ranges to which he has either no current faculty of admission or else only a partial and mixed reception of some faint portion of their powers, —the illumined mind, the intuition and finally the creative Overmind or Maya which stands far above and is the source of our present existence. If mind is to be understood only as Reason or human intelligence, then the free mental being and its state would be something much more limited and very inferior to the description given here.

Michael Murphy (1992, 129) quotes Henry James describing an “illumined” experience that occurred when he was six:

I was taken to a park in the evening to enjoy a firework display. It was summer. There was a crowd of people round the lake ... There was a breeze, and the leaves of the poplars vibrated, rustled. I believe I said to myself, “How beautiful, how wonderful those three trees are.” I think there was awe and wonder. And I remember comparing the luminousness—that's a grown-up word of course—the marvelous beauty, the haunting, oppressive power of those trees with the artificiality of the surroundings, the people, the fireworks and so on. Oddly, I kind of knew that this was something extraordinary at the moment it occurred.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ James, William. 1902. Quotation provided by the Religious Experience Research Unit at Oxford University, and recorded in James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Murphy provides evidence that these metanormal experiences are abundant. He has recorded extraordinary occurrences from more than 10,000 studies in *Future of the Body* (1992) and, with Donovan and Taylor (1999), experiences from some 1,300 studies of meditation in *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation*.

Higher Mind and Illumined Mind experience their authority and their own united completeness by unification with the higher plateau of the Intuitive Mind.

Michael Murphy (1992, 187) posits the following characterization of intuition.

Turned toward the self, it [intuition] becomes an immersion in the indivisible flow of consciousness, a grasp of pure becoming. Unlike the intellect, which remains detached from its objects, producing knowledge that is relative to some viewpoint, intuition enters into what it knows, dispensing with symbols.

Intuitive Mind possesses an even higher form of reason or intellect. The Intuitive Mind is also intuitive reason. The Intuitive Mind expands its reason with higher power and certainty. "It acts in a self-light of the truth which does not depend upon the torch-flares of the Sense-Mind and its limited uncertain percepts" (Kunkolienker 1998, 4). While it can be speculated that certain advanced individuals (yogis, saints, poets) have accessed the periphery of these upper mental faculties, even the level of Intuitive Mind has its limitations. Skora's (2001, 23) dissertation on consciousness stresses:

Intuition, thus, being overlaid with mental stuff and its flow being frequently interrupted by imitative mental movement, is not in a position to give us that integral experience which alone reveals the ultimate truth.

Intuitive Mind is the first level of spiritual advancement in which there is real awareness of the full potential of realization; it is the final precursor to the Overmind. N. K. Gupta (1976, 35) supports this premise:

There are several levels of consciousness of which three main ones have been named and described by Śri Aurobindo. The first one nearest to the Overmind and the least contaminated by the Mind is pure Intuition; next, the intermediary one is called the Illumined Mind, and last comes the Higher Mind. They are all powers of the Overmind functioning in the Mind. The higher ranges are always more direct, intense, synthetic, dynamic than the lower ones where consciousness is slower, duller, more uncertain, more disintegrated.

In Saint-Hilaire's (2011, 5) view, intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge, for it is always something that leaps out directly from a concealed identity. Intuition is "the action of looking upon or into; contemplation; inspection" (Intuition 2014). It is the action of mentally looking inward; introspection, concentration; perception, recollection and recognition. In *God and the Evolving Universe*, Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 142) expand on intuitive knowledge within metanormal experience:

Transcendental knowing is not limited to artistic or scientific work. At times it comes as immediate knowledge about how we should proceed in the everyday conduct of our lives. We might call this "precognitive" or "anticipatory" intuition. It might come as a hunch, gut feeling, or an image of our doing something at a particular time or place that ultimately leads—as if by "synchronicity"—to new information, connections, or situations that enrich our lives and allow us to actualize larger projects.

In our experience as humans, a less fluid, sporadic intuition is an exhilarating part of our entire being that, seemingly, appears out of nowhere. To be intuitive is to be able to look inside ourselves and examine our inner person looking back at us. It is seeing ourselves for who we truly are, and what we might and must become. "Intuition is in its very nature a projection of the characteristic

nature of these higher grades into the mind of Ignorance” (Ghose 2006, 288).

Michael Murphy (1992, 187) quotes philosopher T. A. Goudge, who presents his analysis of Bergson’s conception of intuition, one that adds credence to Śri

Aurobindo’s theory of the progression of mental faculties:⁴⁶

[Bergson] came to emphasize [intuition’s] cognitive character instead of its immediacy, and even spoke of it as a mode of thinking. As such, it is not a spontaneous flash of insight but an act that is engendered by mental effort. To achieve an intuition, we must turn our attention away from its natural concern with action. This act demands concentration of thought. Even when we are successful, the results are impermanent. Yet the intellect can effect a partial communication of the results by using “concrete ideas,” supplemented by images. . . . Consequently, the knowledge attained by intuition is not altogether ineffable. Nor is it, in the strict sense, absolute, for intuition is a progressive activity that can widen and deepen its scope indefinitely. Its limits cannot be fixed a priori.

Chardin (1979, 71) encapsulates these ascending (as well as descending) levels of spiritual transformation as they constitute significant parts of the Whole which is

Chardin’s Omega Point:

the universe has no complete reality except in the movement which cause all its elements to converge upon a number of higher centres of cohesion (in other words, which spiritualizes them); nothing holds together absolutely except through the Whole; and the Whole itself holds together only through its future fulfillment.

Of course, as in any psycho-metaphysical theory, there are those who in certain sciences who deny the veracity of intuition, as Michael Murphy (1997, 10) takes pains to point out:

⁴⁶ Goudge, Thomas Anderson. 1967.

The underlying and usually hidden philosophical assumptions of traditional rationalist science do not value the intuitive. They do not acknowledge the reality of the transcendent or subscribe to the concept of higher states of consciousness, let alone, in the strictest sense, even admit to the possible existence of unconscious forces active in cognitive acts of perception.

To recapitulate, a primary step in ascension toward the Supermind is Vital Life, which itself evolves from the consciousness of Matter. Life's vitality often develops a soul (Psyche), and from Psyche evolves the Mind. Eventually (in events which cannot be temporally determined) one is thrust into a Higher Mind, one of advanced Gnostic thinking. In their book on metanormalcy in sports, Murphy and White (1995) offer the following from Śri Aurobindo, whose spiritual philosophy channels the macrocosmic delight of God to Its play of creation, which inheres itself to the microcosmic joy of humanity.⁴⁷ In *The Life Divine* Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2006, 127) writes:

There must be something in us—much vaster, profounder, truer than the superficial consciousness—which takes delight impartially in all experiences; it is that delight which secretly supports the superficial mental being and enables it to persevere through all labors, sufferings and ordeals. ... In our ordinary life this truth is hidden from us or only dimly glimpsed at times or imperfectly held and conceived. But if we learn to live within, we infallibly awaken to this presence within us which is our more real self, a presence profound, calm, joyous ... of which the world is not the master.

⁴⁷ *In the Zone* (Murphy and White 1995) is a revised edition of *The Psychic Side of Sports* (Murphy and White 1978).

Involution–Evolution

I have discussed the necessity for the spiritual scientific theory of involution–evolution in order to support the psychological, physiological, and spiritual development of humanity. Without it, Michael Murphy’s theories of humankind’s metanormal potential fall short. In his essay “Involution and Evolution,” Sri Aurobindo (Ghose 1919, 5) makes a case for Michael Murphy’s concept of the ultimate consciousness of Supernature:

We must, if a hidden spiritual being is the secret of all the action of Nature, give its full power to that latent value of the idea. We are bound then to suppose that all that evolves already existed involved, passive or otherwise active, but in either case concealed from us in the shell of material Nature. The Spirit which manifests itself here in a body, must be involved from the beginning in the whole of matter and in every knot, formation and particle of matter; life, mind and whatever is above mind must be latent inactive or concealed active powers in all the operations of material energy.

The opposite extreme of evolution is involution and one cannot exist without the other. Kripal (2007, 420-21) calls involution and evolution “two sides of the same enlightenment of the body, of the same incarnational process.” An involution is necessary for any evolution because ‘things’ cannot evolve from ‘nothing’.

“Cosmologically, involution signifies world creation, the self-projection of Spirit into inconscient matter (*prakṛiti*) which is in fact “veiled Spirit” and “secret God,” whereas evolution is the reverse” (Odin 1981, 184). There has to be a priori existence for any sort of evolution. In the Supermind model, the earliest stages of evolution are the Nescient, the Inconscient, and the Subconscient. According to McDermott (1973, 96), these three sub-levels are all factors within Matter and its subsequent hierarchical evolutions. Trivedi (1971, 140) calls the Supermind both *Saccidānanda* (Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss) and Superconscience:

Now, during Involution, as we have seen, the Spirit or the being of Saccidinanda descends from its original state of Superconscience to the state of Inconscience through the successive intervening states of Supermind, Mind, Life and Matter; and during Evolution, it ascends back from the state of Inconscience to its original state of Superconscience through Matter, Life, Mind and Supermind. Since Saccidinanda is the principle of unity of the three aspects of Sat, Cit and Ananda, i.e. Existence, Consciousness-Force and Bliss, all these aspects therefore descend and ascend simultaneously.

As each ascending level is “successfully transformed” they are “neither destroyed nor negated—by the level immediately above it” (McDermott 1972a, p 175).

Murphy (1992, 193) incorporates the involution–evolution theory into his own developing philosophy of evolutionary panentheism to express the reality of metanormal experiences that evidence extraordinary human potential, stating it:

helps account for certain longings, illuminations, and apparent remembrances of a primordial Superexistence; and helps explain the profound resonance between human volition, imagery, emotion, and flesh through which psychophysical transformation appears to be mediated.

The process of involution is a logical necessity of the process of evolution. “Otherwise there would be not an evolution but a successive creation of things new, not contained in their antecedents” (Trivedi 1971, 147). Again, the Supreme Principle casts Itself into Pre-Matter through the process of involution in order to set the groundwork for the manifestation of pure consciousness. Michael Murphy (2012a, 4) declares:

For if it is indeed the case that the entire universe presses to manifest its latent Divinity, then we must share that impetus, which is evident in our desire for the illuminations, self-existent delight, self-surpassing love, and sense of eternal freedom and identity we experience in our highest moments.

From Pre-Matter evolves humanity, but this creation could never exist without the Supreme Principle's insertion of Its own Being into the creative process. Śri

Aurobindo (Ghose 1919, 7) states:

The spiritual process of evolution is then in some sense a creation, but a self-creation, not a making of what never was, but a bringing out of what was implicit in the Being.

Overmind and Supermind

If one adheres to Sri Aurobindo's multi-runged ladder to the Supermind, as does Michael Murphy to a great extent, then one has to accept the concept of the Overmind, which is the next level up from the highest degree of Mind.

However, both Overmind and Supermind are so radically anomalous to everyday understanding, it is impossible for the average person to comprehend the complex facets of their operations. In the words of McDermott (1972a, 176), Śri

Aurobindo foretells:

the Supermind will descend as soon as man has evolved to the point where he can utilize the Supramental power in accordance with the needs of the entire evolutionary process. In the meantime, a lower principle, Overmind, functions as a kind of bridge or shuttle, comparable to Plato's Demiurge, between the mental and supramental levels of consciousness.

In other words, once a human being has evolved beyond the highest plateaus of Mind, it can migrate into the Overmind, where it will remain until all humanity has achieved the same residency. The spiritual fullness of the Overmind cannot be breached until collective humanity has evolved beyond the Higher Mind and Illumined Mind to the Intuitive Mind. Whether Śri Aurobindo was able to peek into the enigmatic realm of Supermind from the Overmind is, for the most part, conjecture because our basic Mind cannot fathom the actuality of either mystical realm. Heehs (1989, 103-04) states:

As Śri Aurobindo rose towards supermind he became aware that between it and the lower levels there was an intermediate plane of “supraconscious cosmic Mind,” to which he gave the name “Overmind.” This plane, he said, was the ultimate source of man’s higher intuitions, indeed it was the determining source “of all movements below it and all mental energies.”

Basic mental capacity cannot understand the abstractions of the Overmind and Supermind. They cannot be satisfactorily investigated, nor can conclusions be drawn on the basis of words or ideas, although Chaudhuri (1972a, 10) provides an assessment of Supermind as it pertains to integrality and nondualism:

The supermind is the principle of integral consciousness in which all opposites are harmonized. So the supermind alone is capable of laying the foundation for a unified world-order in which unity and diversity, peace and justice, love and freedom can coexist. *Pūrṇa yoga* or integral yoga is the art of bringing forth into overt operation, in our life and society, the integral and all-integrating consciousness of the supermind.

The same abstractions apply to the higher stages of Mind, except that some extraordinary visionaries have ostensibly experienced and conceptualized these furtive realms through metanormal events. Current mental inadequacy to fully grasp the aftereffect of advanced human potential should not deny its certitude. In *The Future of the Body* (1992), Michael Murphy catalogues evidence of metanormal activity and urges all individuals to strive for extraordinary functioning. Yet humanity, for the most part, remains mired in basic Mind. Murphy (1992, 30) posits the possibility that one may move beyond basic Mind, even if only as brief and sporadic occurrences:

I am led by data such as those presented in this book [*The Future of the Body*] to believe that the self-evident break with normal consciousness and behavior, the transcendence of certain needs, and the self-mastery of mind and flesh characteristic of metanormal functioning would, if realized by enough people, create a new kind of life on the planet.

Advanced human consciousness and potential can only be achieved, Śrī

Aurobindo (Ghose 2006, 510) informs us, as:

the result of a total observation and penetration of the relevant facts of consciousness—both those of the surface and those below or above our surface level or behind our frontal surface—and a successful fathoming of their significance.

The ascent to Supermind “initiates a vision of heights of consciousness which have indeed been glimpsed and visited, but have yet to be discovered and mapped in their completeness” (Saint-Hilaire 2011, 1). The advanced levels of Mind are hidden from humanity by the inherent nescience that resides within, as described by Śrī Aurobindo (Ghose 2006, 523):

From all this the one great fact emerges that the very nature of our mind is Ignorance; not an absolute nescience, but a limited and conditioned knowledge of being, limited by the realization of its present, a memory of its part, an inference of its future, conditioned therefore by a temporal and successive view of itself and its experiences.

Overmind resides on the plane of Supermind, any perceived duality residing as single unity-consciousness in the realm of the divine. N. K. Gupta (1976, 19) attempts to breach the enigmatic:

Where Supermind and Overmind meet, one can see the multiple godheads, each distinct in his own truth and beauty and power and yet all together forming the one supreme consciousness infinitely composite and inalienably integral. But stepping back into Supermind one sees something more—Oneness gathering into itself all diversity, not destroying it, but annulling and forbidding the separative consciousness that is the beginning of Ignorance.

Through its saturation within pure *Saccidānanda*, Supermind remains remote from the planes of existence under Overmind, yet it is not completely detached because It ‘converses’ with Overmind, which job it is to assert and understand the truth of the lower planes. N. K. Gupta (1972, 17) again attempts to mitigate the complexity of Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual philosophy:

The Overmind dissolves or transcends the ego-consciousness which limits the being to its individualized formation bounded by an outward and narrow form or sheath of mind, life and body; it reveals the universal Self and Spirit, the cosmic godhead and its myriad forces throwing up myriad forms; ...it is the overwhelming vision given by Śri Krishna to Arjuna in the Gita.

Overmind is directed by the Supermind to perform as intermediary between It and Intuitive Mind. There is a division imposed between the Overmind and Supermind. Supermind is composed of and embraced totally within *Saccidānanda*, while the Overmind is the conduit of the many facets of existence, comprised of the evolutionary plateaus of Matter, Life, and Mind. Overmind affirms the reality of all the levels that are, as Śri Aurobindo likes to analogize, rungs on a ladder. These rungs are linked together by the entirety and faculty of the ladder itself, and are interdependent upon each other for upward mobility as well as descent. The Overmind cannot protect us from the nescience (*avidya*) of the world, but it has the ability—once fully embraced by all of humanity—to open the gateway to Supermind, which is absolute Truth–Consciousness. Chaudhuri (1972b, 184) expresses the limitations of the Overmind:

the overmind can grasp the material world as a whole, and appreciate the predominant role and function of matter as the basis and stuff of the material world, with such other values as life, mind, and spirit gradually evolving therein. But ... it cannot eliminate the discords and divisions, the conflicts and contradictions of the material world. The supermind as the knowledge of unity-in-diversity can alone eliminate them.

There is a cessation of illusion once one becomes ‘as one’ with the Overmind where only truths survive. The Overmind is composed of the illumination of the Mind below and the Supermind above. Overmind divides and distributes that luminosity into the manifoldness of the universe. It is the Overmind that has the ability to create Ignorance within cosmic existence, and it is the job of humanity to eventually break from its illusive cosmic existence. Murphy (1992, 198) emphasizes humanity’s responsibility:

The choice to cultivate our greater possibilities is ours, not God’s. All high-level human change involves our subjectivity. There will be no further human development unless some of us work to realize it.

Employing the term ‘Truth–Consciousness’ as synonymous with Supermind, Śri Aurobindo indicated a consciousness evermore free from Ignorance, the current foundation of humanity’s phase of evolutionary existence. The Supermind has total knowledge, Its Truth–Consciousness inherent in It because Its very nature is knowledge. With this in mind, I point to Michael Murphy’s adoption of the word Supernature to describe the manifestation of Supermind/Omega Point. Kunkolienker (1998, 5) writes of the necessity of defeating ignorance (nescience) in order for humankind to advance to the highest levels of spiritual evolution:

In an evolutionary movement of its own graded self-manifestation by which it would eventually reveal its own highest heights [Supermind/Supernature] must be in its very nature essentially free from ignorance and error: it starts from truth and light and moves always in truth and light. As its knowledge is always true, so too its will is always true, it does not fumble in its handling of things or stumble in its paces. In the supermind feelings and emotion do not depart from their truth, make no slips or mistakes, do not swerve from the right and the real, cannot misuse beauty and delight or twist away from a divine rectitude.

For humanity to reach the plateau of Overmind, it will have overcome its collective ignorance and ego-saturated nature through higher consciousness. Only then will Supermind descend, bringing with It the ever-pervading consciousness of the Supreme Principle. Minor (1979, 372) posits that:

Aurobindo's philosophy, then, can be reduced to three propositions: the Divine is within; the world is the Divine in evolution; true knowledge of the Divine is supramental. All three of these propositions may be reduced to the doctrine of the Supermind in evolution.

So, whether one chooses to call It Supermind, the Omega Point, or Supernature, God manifests within humanity by Its very act of involution even though this manifestation is veiled from us by our ignorance. Michael Murphy (1992, 29) touches on this inherent manifestation, and how it influences us even without our comprehension:

That recognition of a Something beyond, I propose, coupled with our inability to specify its operations in us, points toward a new kind of human development. We don't know where our new vision, love, or joy came from, or how we effected our marvelous deed, precisely because such things are unfamiliar and because their mediations are related to something emergent in us.

Saccidānanda

Michael Murphy's research, exposition of, and methods for transformative human potential does not presuppose an expectation of immediate appearance by a new phylum or the eventuation of Supermind anytime soon. His primary concern is the betterment of humanity through individual achievements in the here-and-now. Murphy (1992, 30) writes:

But need we imagine that a widespread realization of extraordinary capacities would comprise an evolutionary transcendence analogous to the origination of living species of homo sapiens? Does the evidence for metanormal activity require such a grand projection of the world's advance? Perhaps any widely shared development of metanormality would be more aptly and simply described as a product of ordinary psychosocial development.

Murphy (1992, 3) hopes that the more probable outcome for advanced human potential in our lifetime is, “a worldwide understanding that all of us have great potentials for growth,” a tiny step toward harmonious existence. This belief, however, does not change Murphy's view that Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy holds great promise for humankind in the distant future. Murphy (1992, 187-88) comments that Śri Aurobindo's metapsychology is:

more elaborate than Hegel's or Bergson's. Like them, he distinguished more comprehensive from less comprehensive kinds of knowing, but described several layers of higher consciousness culminating in *Supermind*, in which the divine unity is expressed through diversity, individuals are harmonized with their universal Ground, and personal will is joined with the cosmic action.

Murphy's goal is to do what can be done as opposed to what will be done. The presence and power of *Saccidanānda* is prevalent in both instances.

Saccidānanda is a compound of three Sanskrit nouns: *sat* (reality-existence), *cit* (consciousness-force), and *ananda* (bliss): absolute being, absolute consciousness, absolute bliss: “the state of the cosmic spiritual hierarch, Brahman or the Second Logos, the Absolute of our cosmic hierarchy” (Babylon 2013, 9). *Saccidānanda* resides at the culmination of unity within the Absolute. “It also permeates the hierarchal planes of Involution and Evolution” (Trivedi 1971, 140). It even resides in Matter, which Minor (1979, 366) reveals, “is actually the Supermind veiled.”

McDermott (1974, 171) describes the pervasiveness and universality of

Saccidānanda:

The world evolves on its several levels because at each level Sachchidananda has already involved itself in each of these levels. Logically prior to evolution, involution is the process whereby Brahman, or Sachchidananda, seeks its own manifestation through the multileveled universe.

In *The Life Divine*, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2006, 152) writes of *Saccidānanda*'s residence within all of humanity all of the time:

We have started with the assertion of all existence as one Being whose essential nature is Consciousness, one Consciousness whose active nature is Force or Will; and this Being is Delight, this Consciousness is Delight, this Force or Will is Delight. Eternal and inalienable Bliss of Existence, Bliss of Consciousness, Bliss of Force or Will whether concentrated in itself and at rest or active and creative, this is God and this is ourselves in our essential, our non-phenomenal being.

Odin (1981, 188) binds the correlation between *Saccidānanda* and Śri

Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy:

Saccidānanda, the “integral” (*pūrṇa*) Yoga of Śri Aurobindo's Neo-Vedānta endeavors to, as it were, “bring down” from above the supramental radiance and bliss of *Saccidānanda* into matter, life, and mind, leading to the integral transformation, divinization, and the perfection of the entire lower hemisphere.

Saccidānanda is a *vedāntic* term and, according to Śri Aurobindo, the word that best describes the essential nature (*svarupa*) of Brahman and “thus underlies all that Brahman underlies, namely everything” (Phillips 1986, 273). In Śri Aurobindo's (Ghose 2006, 152-53) vision, Brahman is the universe and the universe is a delightful play of existence, consciousness, force, and will, and “that delight is the sole cause, motive and object of cosmic existence.” Our real self (*atman*) can share in this enjoyment of oneness with Brahman. For Michael

Murphy, the Supreme Principle is real and inheres within humanity—veiled and discrete—awaiting the cessation of ignorance wherein humankind can join It in exquisite and pure consciousness. McDermott (1974, 175) advises that our primary objective is to seek out this divinity within us.

For Śri Aurobindo, the universe, from God to inert matter, should be experienced and described not as an illusion but as creative energy (Shakti), as play (Lila) or as joy (Ananda) ... “To seek for delight is therefore the impulse and sense of Life; to find and possess and fulfill it is its whole motive.”⁴⁸

Unfortunately, humanity remains ignorant of the play and of the intentioned delight due to self-delusion and individual mental egos.

The Absolute is to be comprehended as an affluent “supramental” mode of awareness, which through a process of “involution” descends through a multiple succession of experiential stages—from the Supermind to Overmind, Intuitivemind, Illuminedmind, and Highermind, finally focusing into the physical mind itself, characterized by ego-attachment and noesis–noema duality, with its finite modes of intellectual apprehension. (Odin 1981, 180)

Murphy addresses the mitigation of ego-attachment in his description of high-level change involving ego-transcending activities, linking them to a temporary higher condition of Mind. These extraordinary experiences, according to Murphy (1992, 549):

have inspired metaphysical doctrines such as divine emanation and return, or panentheism, that posit a Supreme Person or Principle that is both immanent and transcendent to this world ... Versions of these ideas have arisen among Vedantic, Buddhist, Taoist, Platonist, Kabbalistic, Christian, and Islamic mystics, and are reflected in dicta such as the Upanishads’ “*Tat Tvam Asi,*” thou art that, the Kabbalists’ “as so above, so below,” and the Christian “not my will, but Thine be done.”

⁴⁸ Ghose, Aurobindo. 2002.

Summarization of Evolutionary Panentheism

Classical theism posits an unqualified distinction between God and the world. Although intimately related, God and Its creatures are always and entirely distinct from one another. Pantheism is the belief that God is immanent in or identical with the universe, in other words, the doctrine that God is everything and everything is God. This concept proposes deific neutrality, a beingness within but unchangeable and indistinct to anything and everything It created.

The panentheist believes that the universe is a part of God, God is greater than the universe, and God is involved in all aspects of the universe at all times, which implies the important theory that the Supreme Principle is not static but evolving in support of humanity's development. God penetrates the whole universe including the evolution of Matter to all levels of Mind. Like Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2006), James, Sr. (Murphy 1992), Whitehead, (Hosinski 1993), and Hartshorne (Murphy 1992; Cooper 2006), panentheists argue the theory that God encompasses and interpenetrates the universe, is greater than the universe 'and' independent of it, but beholden to it. This suggests that God is dynamic, capable of evolution within the universe, and of participation with humanity's transformation.

Involution–Evolution realizes that God involutes to Pre-Matter, thus creating the foundation for humanity which, although currently mired in basic Mind, is capable of ascension towards Supernature (Murphy 1992), Supermind (Ghose 1919, 2006), the Omega Point (Chardin 1974). An involution is necessary for any evolution because 'things' cannot evolve from no-'thing.' Śri Aurobindo

analogized Involution–Evolution to rungs on a ladder. These rungs are linked together by the entirety and faculty of the ladder itself, and are interdependent upon each other for upward mobility. The highest level of consciousness before the all-embracing intimacy of Supermind is, according to Śri Aurobindo, Overmind; the manifestation of all levels of evolution that precede it. This final gateway cannot protect us from the nescience (*avidya*) of the world, but has the ability, once fully embraced by all of humanity, to access Supermind, which is absolute Truth–Consciousness. From Pre-Matter through Vital Life, Psyche, and multiple advancing levels of Mind to the unknown Ultimate; each level has consciousness, each is imbued with the principles of the others, and each enjoys the participation of the Supreme Principle.

Michael Murphy’s evolutionary panentheism rejects the simplicity of geologic and biologic evolution and their exclusion of a spiritual dimension, supporting instead the Involution–Evolution philosophical theories of Whitehead (1978, Hosinski 1993), Hartshorne (1950), Chardin (1974), and Śri Aurobindo (Murphy 1992; Ghose 1919). From the coalescence of these theories, Murphy is able to justify the benefits of his data-driven research and transformative methods of advanced metanormal potential. For Murphy, evolution is the means for humanity to eventually achieve oneness with God, as God joyously participates in humankind’s achievements.

Section 6: Advanced Human Potential

Michael Murphy's data-driven research into events of human metanormal activity underscores his belief in the evolutionary betterment of humankind through methods and practice of transformative actions. The discipline of advanced human development flourished under Murphy's leadership at Esalen. Kripal (2007, 23) writes of the "fundamental Esalen category of *the human potential* and the ways that it recognizes universality (human), particularity (potential), and, above all, development." Murphy's resultant body of work on advanced human potential, *The Future of the Body* (1992, 3), was a five-year effort resulting in nearly eight hundred pages and twenty-one appendices:

Indeed, the evidence assembled here [in *The Future of the Body*] suggests that we harbor a range of capacities that no single philosophy or psychology has fully embraced, and that these can be developed by practicing certain virtues and disciplines and by building institutions to support them.

There is one major distinction between Michael Murphy's ontology and other prevailing disciplinary systems of advanced human potential (AHP).⁴⁹ Most conceptual AHP programs within the human potential movement emphasize the promise of a better life via methods of self-actualization, promoting the

⁴⁹ The Human Potential Movement (HPM 2014, 1) is:

a psychological philosophy and framework, including a set of values, "that grew out of a humanistic psychology created by Albert Maslow (1908-70) in the 1940s and 1950s." The term was first used for humanistic psychotherapies that became popular in the 1960s and early 1970s in the United States. But the term now covers a wide range of self-improvement groups and programs—some of which are shaped by New Age philosophies and alternative spiritualities. Basic to the movement is the view "that through the development of 'human potential,' humans can experience an exceptional quality of life filled with happiness, creativity, and fulfillment.

integrality of mind and body into satisfaction within the here-and-now, but deflecting the universal integrality of the macro- within the microcosm, and vice versa. Murphy's expanded vision of AHP is the integration of physical, mental, and 'spiritual' evolution above and beyond ego-self-fulfillment. Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 54) write:

If it's in knowing of fact from superstitious claims, in its passion to find verifiable data, science increasingly turned away from confirmable facts of the inner life that reveal much about the human potential. In discrediting ancient myths and outmoded practices such as alchemy, philosophers and scientists of the Enlightenment began to reject all spiritual phenomena even though many of them are in principle verifiable.

The Advanced Human Potential movement is focused on the cultivation of supranormal potential that its proponents believe resides in all persons. AHP's purpose is to understand and document metanormalcy in order to provide methods for experiencing a self-fulfilling life (HPM 2013, HPM 2014). Tomkins reports that during Michael Murphy's early tenure as co-founder/leader:

The very first program at Esalen, offered in the fall of 1962, was a series of four seminars on "The Human Potentiality"; the opening seminar dealt in detail with the work of Maslow. (1976, 42)

In the *Pacific Historical Review*, Wood (2008, 459) writes that the overriding premise of Maslow's philosophy of human potential was:

built on Maslow's seminal text, *Motivation and Personality* [1970], in which he argued that self-actualization "refers to man's desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially." This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming.

The majority of human potential movements (Werner Erhard's EST; The Center for the Advancement of Human Potential (CAHP); primal therapy) support a sort of theism by ignoring the panentheistic interrelationship between humanity

and its conceptual deity. The explicit goal of these programs is the elevation of the individual to the highest level of self-development on this earthly plane.

According to Kelly and Kelly (2010, 133), Michael Murphy claims that:

We are part of a supreme evolutionary adventure in which part of our individualized personality is manifesting higher and higher potentials. The I witnesses, while the self evolves. The dichotomy between the witnessing ground and the evolving self was portrayed in the Rig Veda in the following way: There are two birds in the World Tree, one eats the sweet fruit, while the other watches and eats not. This is the dichotomy between the changeless, primordial Self and the self engaged in the dance of life. ... Survival research dwells on the second self, which is equally important.⁵⁰

The objective of Michael Murphy's theory of human transformative capacity is the documentation of extraordinary events in an attempt to produce methods to advance metanormal human potential to novel levels of consciousness and comprehension as conduits toward unification with the Supreme Principle. The capacity resides within humanity; all extraordinary potentiality is innate and has been there from the beginning. This is affirmed by the theory of involution—

⁵⁰ In their article, "The Sursem Series," Emily Kelly and Ed Kelly (2010, 25-26) quote Michael Murphy from an unpublished 1998 Sursem Conference Summary.

Alternately known as the Big SUR Seminar and the SURvival Seminar, Sursem, now in its fourteenth year, is the longest running series ever to take place at Esalen. Spearheaded by Michael Murphy, these events have brought together neuroscientists, psychiatrists, philosophers, physicists, and historians to assess the empirical evidence for human survival of bodily death evident in such phenomena as near-death and out-of-body experiences, mystical experiences, psychical phenomena, and children who remember previous lives. (Esalen CTR 2013, 2)

evolution, and humanity's inherency of "stubborn facts."⁵¹ Each level or plateau of mental–spiritual advancement retains a form of consciousness; each is interdependent on and carries with it the attributes of all preceding and succeeding levels. Murphy's evolutionary panentheism—an incorporation of Śri Aurobindo's ladder to the Supermind (Ghose 2006, McDermott 1974), Teilhard de Chardin's (1974) ascent to the Omega Point, and Whitehead's consecutive creative advances (Hosinski 1993) —offers to guide humanity toward a new process of becoming through self-initiation supported by the Supreme Principle.

Primary Influences

As previously determined, Michael Murphy's (1992, 8) work in the development of advanced human potential requires data-driven evidence from multiple avenues of research: psychology and medical science, the esoteric lore of religious traditions, contemporary science and scholarship, and other integral elements. The following focuses on the primary theorists that influenced Murphy's concentration within the field of human metanormal potential. These specializations fall within reciprocal disciplines: medical, philosophical, psychological, the religio-mystical.

⁵¹ For Whitehead (1978, 23) "Stubborn facts" are past actual entities that cannot be changed or evaded. This suggests, ostensibly, that "the "being of all past actual entities (beings, things) are, in Whitehead's term, "objectivity immortal." This means that while the moments of the past are no longer "alive" in becoming, they nevertheless live on to influence future moments.

Psychical Research

Michael Murphy's academic incorporation of the works of Myers and Myers (1907), Myers, Gurney, and Podmore (1918), Thurston (1951) is an attempt to reinvigorate the natural history of extraordinary occurrences. In *The Future of the Body* (1992), Murphy:

used the terms "extraordinary or metanormal functioning" and located his research in relation to that of Fredric Myers, William James, and Herbert Thurston, who he described as helping "to create a new kind of natural history, as it were, showing that specimens of extraordinary functioning can be collected for comparative analysis." (Taves 2005, 225)

Murphy (1992, 12) admonishes contemporary dismissal of the validity of psychical research:

Despite the disciplined tests of experience provided by psychical research ... many scientists and philosophers today reject the evidence for paranormal phenomena. Such rejection is frequently prompted by lack of acquaintance with the data of psychical research, by ignorance about the enduring testimony to mystical experience, or by automatic associations of such data and testimony with outmoded or superstitious beliefs.

The study and contemplation of things perceived, affecting, or influenced by the human mind is not a novel concept.⁵² A singular series of events that underscore current concentration was the discovery and subsequent popularity of

⁵² Whitehead (1978, 21):

'Creativity' is the principle of *novelty*. An actual occasion is a novel entity diverse from any entity in the 'many' which it unifies. Thus 'creativity' introduces novelty into the content of the many ... The 'creative advance' is the application of this ultimate principle of creativity to each novel situation which it originates.

hypnotism, which surfaced in the late Sixteenth Century. Advocates included Franz Mesmer (1734–1818), Pierre Janet (1849–1947), and The Nancy School (19th-20th Century) established by Ambrose-Auguste Liébeault and Jean-Martin Charcot (the founder of modern neurology).

Arguably, interest in the paranormal and the extraordinary has been a staple of curiosity since the beginning of cognitive evaluation. Fire and electricity were magical tricks until they became commonplace. Extranormal human feats were held in awe until repeated and naturalized. The relatively new science of determining and cataloguing supranormal events as ‘real’ occurrences became a foundational discipline around the Eighteenth Century. The broad, successful use of hypnotism in medicine and psychotherapy strengthened the prevailing undercurrent for psychical research. Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 63) address the foundations of recent psychical research, namely mesmerism, and hypnotism:

In spite of their fluctuating reputation during the last two hundred years, mesmerism and hypnotism have been used by therapists and experimenters to demonstrate the power of suggestion, alleviate pain and promote general health, cure phobias and addictions, increase physical energy and strength, retrieve lost memories, improve concentration, establish positive habits, induce experiences that appear to be paranormal, produce exaltations that resemble mystical states, and release a wide range of other untapped capacities.

Frederic William Henry Myers (1843–1901)

Michael Murphy’s work in advanced human potential places him at the forefront of a lineage of scientists who argued that the discipline of natural science provided a less-than-adequate representation of humanity’s potential by its refusal to take into account the super- or metanormal events that are part and

parcel of humankind's experiential reality. In the early 19th century, Myers, Gurney, Podmore (1918), and Myers and Myers (1907) began their groundbreaking investigations into the paranormal, providing a thorough cataloguing of metanormal events that formed the architecture of the Society for Psychical Research (2011). These collaborations resulted in *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (1907) and *Phantasms of the Living* (1918), both works of major influence to Murphy's *Future of the Body* (1992). The same can be said for Herbert Thurston's (1951) book on the extraordinary events that facilitate the Church's research into the beatification of Catholic saints. Taves (2005, 229-30) informs us that:

Like naturalists, who by gathering biological specimens helped reveal the fact of evolution, these researchers [Myers et al, William James, Sr., Thurston] have prepared the way for new understandings of our human potential.⁵³ Just as naturalists extract living specimens from their native habitat and display the preserved specimens in a new configuration in order to make a scientific point, so too Murphy followed Myers, James, and Thurston in extracting "specimens of extraordinary functioning" from the contexts in which they were embedded, preserving them textually and arranging them in order to make a comparative point.

Frederic William Henry Myers (1843–1901) was a philologist, poet, and classicist; Edmund Gurney (1847–1888) a psychologist. Both Englishmen were graduates of Cambridge (SPR 2011). In 1882, Myers and Gurney founded the Society for Psychical Research (SPR 2011, 2) in England. Psychical events were being discovered and diagnosed at an amazing rate for that time, and SPR began extensive and meticulous documentation. Of course, many professionals were

⁵³ Murphy, Michael. 1992, 9.

skeptical of SPR's findings, denying the existence of psychical events, and suggesting that a person's reaction to such purported events is, at most, a sort of autosuggestion or hysteria. Michael Murphy (1992, 345) notes the reaction of renowned physicist, Hermann Helmholtz, to telepathy:

I cannot believe it. Neither the testimony of all of the Fellows of the Royal Society, nor even the evidence of my own senses would lead me to believe in the transmission of thought from one person to another independently of the recognized channels of sensation. It is clearly impossible.

A significant contingent of other thinkers disagree with Helmholtz, including:

Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Stekel, Jule Eisenbud, Jan Ehrenwald, and other psychoanalysts [who], for example, have argued from their own therapeutic experience that telepathic interaction, like any other human ability, must be developed and used with the same consideration of ethics that we demand of ordinary communication. (Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers 2002, 108)

Kripal (2005, 112) posits a correlation between Śri Aurobindo and SPR: "I detect the profound influence of Frederic Myers, and his notion of the subliminal self, which Aurobindo distinguishes from the psychoanalytic subconscious." As Michael Murphy (1992, 15) records:

For more than a century, the best psychical researchers and parapsychologists have continued to distance themselves from the fraudulence, superstition, and self-deception that characterize much activity related to the occult. Though many scientists and academic philosophers still argue that paranormal events do not occur, we have considerable evidence for such events provided by competent researchers.

Emily and Ed Kelly (2010, 132) emphasize the significance of SPR (2011) to Michael Murphy's *The Future of the Body* (1992) due to the bulk of evidence and the extremely careful documentation produced by SPR's team of researchers:

Myers' methodological approach exemplifies the natural-history approach that lies behind so much of Mike [Murphy's] work, from his exhaustive bibliographical review of studies of meditation (Murphy and Donovan, 1997), to his ongoing collection of the testimony of sports figures about their exceptional experiences (Murphy and White, 1978/1995), to his own monumental work *The Future of the Body* (1992). Both men have critically canvassed the literature of unusual human experiences to an unparalleled degree.

Society for Psychical Research

The substratum of The Society for Psychical Research (2011) is their investigation and cataloguing of “paranormal phenomena and subliminal workings of the mind” (Murphy 1992, 549). SPR claims to be the first orthodox organization formed for the purpose of investigating the paranormal in unimpassioned enquiry—the criteria for scientific research. A methodological and administrative foundation, SPR created a journal for reporting and discussing psychical research worldwide. Emily and Ed Kelly (2010, 130) report:

the early members of the SPR produced in less than 20 years an astonishing immense body of empirical evidence showing that human beings have latent capacities that go far beyond ordinary mental and physical functioning. Additionally, one of the members in particular—Frederic Myers—laid out an ambitious theoretical framework suggesting that these capacities collectively point toward the continuation of human personality in a wider, postmodern environment.

Psychical research was knocking on the door of science with its disciplined research and documentation, using standardized methods of description established by some of the finest minds of the day. At the center of SPR's activities was, and continues to be, the collection and investigation of ‘paranormal’ data including telepathy, hypnotism, clairvoyance, and other phenomena. Regarding clairvoyance, Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 91) write:

There is considerable evidence that clairvoyance, or “remote viewing,” is a common though largely unappreciated human ability. Some anthropologists believe that shamans of Stone-Age cultures used it for hunting and other purposes; it is considered to be a real power in most Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi and Taoist contemplative practices; and it has often been attributed to Jewish and Christian mystics.

Supporting the probable validity of events of clairvoyance, Michael Murphy (1992, 71) states:

Its spontaneous occurrence among people of various temperaments, cultures, and religious beliefs has prompted some theorists to propose that it is a universal human (or even animal) capacity that is universally utilized—either creatively or destructively—in the service of ordinary needs and desires.

The Society for Psychical Research still enjoys popularity today, although its claim to science is often ridiculed, perhaps due to SPR’s continued research into post-mortem events. Myers and Myers (1907, 254) assert the following:

And here too, I might fairly claim, the evidence of my primary thesis, —namely, that the analysis of man's personality reveals him as a spirit, surviving death, —has attained an amplitude which would justify the reader in accepting that view as the provisional hypothesis which comes nearest to a comprehensive co-ordination of the actual facts.

SPR’s Literary Committee, charged with collecting historical and current evidence, produced the first landmark production in psychical research, *Phantasms of the Living* (1918), which contained over 700 carefully analyzed cases of advanced human development. Myers, Gurney, and Podmore (1918, 31) claimed that:

If we can suppose telepathy ... to occupy in the spiritual world some such place as gravitation occupies in the material world, we might imagine something analogous to the force of cohesion as operating in the psychical contexture of a human personality.

Michael Murphy (1992, 226) places telepathy within the domain of communications:

I note three types of extrasensory communication: sustained telepathic exchange of particular emotions, thoughts, or intentions; telepathic transmission of spiritual illumination; and communal ecstasies that appear to be telepathically induced.

Bear in mind that hypnotism and telepathy are just two elements of metanormal faculty that appear more palatable to the contemporary scientific community than other extraordinary events (levitation, body elongation, bodily incorruption after death). Hypnotism has become an accepted therapeutic approach to psychoanalysis, and telepathy, to a lesser degree, is evidenced in an individual's reception to atmospheric moods that can evince a palpable emotion.

Early SPR (2011) participants were Frank Podmore, Frederic William Henry Myers, Leopold Hamilton Myers, Eleanor Sedgwick, and Edmund Gurney, later joined by physicist William Barrett, experimental physicist Lord Rayleigh, and philosopher Gerald Balfour. In America, under the leadership of William James, a satellite society was formed. Leading French psychotherapists were Corresponding Members of the Society, and SPR also established a close relationship with Nobel Laureate Charles Richet and English Prime Minister Arthur Balfour.

Notwithstanding its detractors, as the knowledge about aspects of psychical research and related areas expanded, SPR (2011) created a fastidious investigative unit supported by an educational body, which now boasts a psychical research library and an archive of original documents, maintained at

offices in London and at Cambridge University Library. The Esalen Library of Papers at Stanford University has joined their ranks. Tomkins (1976, 30) wrote of the renewed belief in certain metanormal occurrences:

In fact, it is beginning to be thought that telepathy, clairvoyance, mystical transports, and other altered states of consciousness may be latent in most, if not all, of us, along with psychic powers and dominions not yet demonstrated.

Today the SPR continues to promote and support psychical research, which has become an academic discipline with postgraduate courses offered at a number of universities. Weaver (2009, 2) reports that psychical projects are now carried out as part of university research. SPR's (2011, 1) website states that its purpose is to “foster research on the interrelationships between the physiological and psychological aspects of behavior” and to “examine allegedly paranormal phenomena in a scientific and unbiased way.” In *Psychology Today*, Leonard (1992, 2) interviews Michael Murphy, who states:

The future is finally unpredictable. But there's overwhelming evidence that most if not all of our human attributes have extraordinary or seemingly miraculous versions. We can now recognize the pattern of the extraordinary in human life to a degree that people in former times could not. From this pattern we begin to discern the outlines of a possible future, a future in which the extraordinary could become commonplace.

Herbert Henry Charles Thurston (1856–1939)

Michael Murphy (1992, 478) cites Jesuit priest Herbert Thurston's “observations and introspective reports of metanormal capacities” within the Catholic Church:

I describe several extraordinary phenomena, or charisms, attributed to Catholic religious figures. My primary sources for this discussion are biographies of saints that include eyewitness reports from canonization proceedings; *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, as edited by Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater; [and] books on the physical phenomena of mysticism by Herbert Thurston.

Herbert Thurston was an English Jesuit priest and prolific scholar on liturgical, literary, historical, and spiritual matters. Thurston wrote more than 100 articles for *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (2013) between 1907 and 1914, and published nearly 800 articles in magazines, scholarly journals, and a dozen books. He also re-edited *Butler's Lives of the Saints* (Butler, Thurston, and Attwater 1932). Although his phenomenological research displayed an affinity for stigmata research, Thurston also covered other aspects of the Catholic phenomenal world such as bilocation, luminous phenomena, fragrance, levitation, and other forms of activity. Of stigmata, Thurston (1951, 57) wrote:

There is nothing perhaps which is more remarkable in this enquiry than the extreme diversity of the manifestations capable of being grouped under the general head of stigmatization. No two cases are precisely alike. Each need to be examined by itself and to be judged upon its own merits.

Michael Murphy describes his inquiries as the pursuance of a natural history of supranormal human attributes or a natural history of extraordinary functioning. Taves (2005, 225) quotes Murphy as stating that his work on advanced metanormal capacity is:

analogous to natural history in the life sciences in that it systematically and critically compares items of supranormal human experience (rather than plant or animal specimens) in a broadly empirical manner, collecting data from all relevant fields.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Murphy, Michael. 1992, 1-2.

In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 9-10), Michael Murphy compares his research to that of Frederic Myers, Henry James Sr., and Herbert Thurston, all acknowledged as helping “to create a new kind of natural history, as it were, showing that specimens of extraordinary functioning can be collected for comparative analysis” (Taves 2005, 225). In *The Physical Phenomenon of Mysticism*, Thurston (1951) evidences these pursuits within such categories as luminous phenomena, levitation, stigmata, and living without eating. Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 101-02) visit the phenomenon of bilocation:

Such experiences of so-called “bilocation,” simultaneously being in more than one location, have been described at length in the Catholic tradition. In *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, it is listed among the principal phenomena of Christian devotion. It is also described as a development of the *akasha* and *moska* siddhis of Indian yoga and in the lore of Taoism. But such events are not limited to religious adepts. They frequently occur spontaneously during erotic and other ecstatic experience, illness, near-death episodes, vivid dreams, crisis, and intense adventure.

Murphy (1992, 115) cites documentation of bilocation through a variety of sources:

In *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, bilocation is listed among the principal charisms of Christian devotion. It is also the result of the *akasha* and *moksha* siddhis of Indian yoga and is described in the lore of Taoism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Sufism.

Regarding levitation, Murphy (1992, 536) states:

no scientific studies have recorded instances of levitation. There are at least three possible reasons for this lack of evidence. First, of course, it may be that levitation has never happened. Second, the contemplative traditions may have lost their power to evoke the phenomenon. Third, levitation may only occur during rare and spontaneous ecstasies that cannot be programmed to meet the requirements of a scientific experiment. ... there is a trade-off between robust results and scientific precision.

Although Paramahansa Yogananda (2001, 57) did not personally experience the airborne faculty of Bhadhuri (2001, 53 *ff*), the “levitating saint,” he provides the following:

Among “levitating saints” of the Christian world was the 17th-century St. Joseph of Cupertino. His feats received ample attestation from eyewitnesses. St. Joseph exhibited a worldly absentmindedness that was really a divine recollectedness. His monastery brothers could not permit him to serve at the common table, lest he ascend to the ceiling with the crockery. The saint, indeed, was uniquely disqualified for earthly duties by his inability to remain, for any long period, on the earth.

Thurston (1951, 26) testifies to Chichester’s witnessing of St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, levitating in ecstasy during chapel prayer, “while the evidence for St. Catherine of Siena’s levitations seems quite overwhelming.” Many of Thurston's articles reveal his skepticism toward popular legends of saints and holy relics.⁵⁵ His treatment of spiritualism and the paranormal was regarded as eccentric by some of his fellow Catholics. In addition to mysticism, hypnotism, and phenomena, Thurston was captivated by Christian Science, Spiritualism, and Theosophy. In spite of the dubiety of many of Thurston’s peers, Murphy (1992, 479) supports the meticulousness and veracity of his documentation:

⁵⁵ Catholic saints are named through canonization. For centuries, saints were chosen by public approbation. Some stories were distorted by legend and some saints never actually existed. In one rumored incident, the local church in Sweden canonized a monk who was killed in a drunken brawl. In 1234, Pope Gregory IX established procedures to investigate the life of a candidate saint and any attributed miracles. The process usually begins many years after death in order to provide perspective. The officiating bishop investigates the candidate's life and writings for evidence of virtue or martyrdom, and orthodoxy of doctrine. Then a panel at the Vatican evaluates the candidate. After approval by the panel and cardinals of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, the pope proclaims the candidate 'venerable.' Verification of two miracles as result of petitioning the candidate is considered proof that the person is in heaven and can intercede for the living (Saunders 2007, 1).

In judging evidence from Roman Catholic sources about metanormal phenomena, we should appreciate the thoroughness with which such phenomena have been investigated by church authorities, medical researchers, and historians determined to uncover pious fraud or temper uncritical belief. . . . Thurston's balanced, highly informed examinations of the physical prodigies associated with Catholic sanctity are a primary source for the material presented here.

In spite of his enormous literary contributions, Father Thurston was inclined to keep his pursuit cloistered within the archives of the Church. Although privy to the 'unimpeachable' criteria of Roman Catholicism to support his theories, he still remained dubious of numerous approved miracles, such as levitation. Thurston (1951, 3) clarifies his reticence:

given sufficient day-light and fairly normal conditions the most uneducated witness is competent to declare whether a particular person was standing upon the ground or elevated in the air, the more so because, owing to the state of trance in which the subject of the inquiry is found, it is quite possible for the witness to approach and satisfy himself by the sense of touch that the spectacle presented to his eyes is no illusion . . . [the] number of persons without any claim to saintship who are said to have been levitated, either by the agency of spirits or by forces magical or psychic, has been considerable.

Thurston's final effort was the editing and incorporation of many of his articles into *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (1951). Ann Taves (2005, 232-33) reports:

Murphy followed Myers, James, and Thurston in extracting "specimens of extraordinary functioning" from the contexts in which they were embedded, preserving them—so to speak—textually and rearranging them in order to make a comparative point. . . . In contrast to traditional specimens, which were, generally speaking, physical things—parts or individuals that exemplified a whole—the specimens collected by Murphy and his predecessors were phenomena—that is, occurrences in which something out of the ordinary had taken place.

Michael Murphy is not immune to mixed reviews about his belief in metanormal human potential. Murphy (1992, 9) reasons: “To evaluate reports of extraordinary human feats, we need both prudence and imagination, both discrimination and a willingness to suspend judgment.” Chaudhuri (1972b, 191) supports Murphy’s methodology of careful and integral valuations:

at the present state of our incomplete scientific knowledge it would certainly be wise to keep an unbiased and open mind without slamming the door upon any possibility, however occult or mysterious.

Henri F. Ellenberger (1905–1993)

In his data-driven research of human metanormal events, Michael Murphy’s goal in bridging science and mysticism (spirituality, the occult) in order to revise the study of natural history requires a comprehensive understanding of the persons responsible for advances in the fields of metanormalcy within dynamic psychiatric systems. Murphy’s (1992, 265) research includes the systems of Mesmer, Charcot (300-02), Freud (165, 301), and Jung (369, 379, 384). To understand their historical and cultural perspective, Murphy turned to multiple sources. The most prominent among them was Henri Ellenberger.

Ellenberger—psychiatrist, medical historian, and criminologist—is often considered the founding historiographer of psychiatry. In 1952, Ellenberger became the head of psychiatric services at the Menninger Clinic in the United States, and later, a professor of criminology at Université de Montreal. A citizen of France and Canada, Ellenberger published his massive work of nonfiction, *The*

Discovery of the Unconscious in 1970, providing an exhaustive analysis of the evolution of dynamic psychiatry, and outlining the origins of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. In the opinion of Professor Elkind (1970, 3), *Discovery of the Unconscious* is:

a major contribution to the literature of dynamic psychiatry and one that will be a source book and referenced volume for many years to come ... [resulting from the] author's sensitivity to the spirit of different historical periods and his familiarity with the less figures and major figures of each era.

Ellenberger's (1970) book, which appears on Michael Murphy's list of his ten most influential, is a major source of evidentiary support. Ellenberger provides a comprehensive evaluation of the social, political, and economic conditions that support the figures who dominate the originations of dynamic psychiatry. In addition to mesmerism and hypnotism, these pioneers were able to breach the unconsciousness of patients, thus opening up new frontiers in support of the extraordinary. For example, delving into memories within the unconscious opens the client to recollection, reconstruction, and subsequent actions. These events are transformative, and transformative practices are the crux of Murphy's methods of physiological and psychological transmutation, which form the ground for metanormal advance.

Discovery of the Unconscious (1970) is a historical study of the various disciplines of psychiatry and their relationship to philosophy. For example, Ellenberger (1970, 525) writes of Freud's opinion of metaphysics and religion:

His philosophy was an extreme form of positivism. which considered religion dangerous and metaphysics superfluous ... Freud defined religion as an illusion inspired by infantile belief in the omnipotence of thought, a universal neurosis, a kind of narcotic that hampers the free exercise of intelligence.

However, even as Freud attempted to investigate psychic phenomena both in dreams and in conscious states, he was more concerned with potential implications for the public image of psychoanalytic science, and objected to the idea of publicly revealing his phenomenological interests. C. G. Jung displayed less reticence. Jung's concentration (Ellenberger 1970, 657) was a return to the philosophy of nature. Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 66) report that:

[Jung's] lasting innovation in consciousness research was his insistence on exploring the spiritual realms of the unconscious and the latent creativity we all possess, but he also contributed the concepts of the shadow or "dark side" of the self, introversion-extroversion, and synchronicity.

In *Discovery of the Unconscious*, Ellenberger (1970, 657-748) devotes almost 100 pages to Jung and his analytical psychology. "Jung claims to have approached objectively and annexed to science a realm of the human soul intermediate between religion and psychology" (1970, 257). Jung was an advocate for spiritual reality, the depth of the unconscious (residence to the archetypes), and psychic events. Jung's theoretical concepts include synchronicity (1960), the archetypes, and the collective psyche (1956), each requiring individuation in order to liberate the self from deception and the power of unconscious impulses.

Jung and Main (1998, 5) spoke of phenomena as meaningful coincidence:

More specifically, in the field of psychical research, the concept of acausal connection offers a fresh way of looking at the kind of phenomena usually designated as telepathy, clairvoyance, psychokinesis, precognition, and so on. Each of these terms, Jung felt, perpetuates the expectation of finding some kind of energetic and hence causal relationship between the events involved ... Even easier to overlook from the causal perspective are the kinds of meaningful acausal connections which constitute the

correspondences upon which divinatory and similar forms of esoteric thinking are based. As Jung's astrological experiment demonstrated, these connections, unlike the more radical anomalies, often do not even achieve the salience of statistical significance, and so would in many cases not be noticed at all if one were not sensitized to their possibility by one's awareness of the principle of synchronicity.

Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 150-51) embrace Jung's acceptance of psychic events:

The famous Swiss psychiatrist defined this phenomenon as the appearance of "meaningful coincidences," events that dramatize and reinforce certain turns in our lives in a matter that seems beyond mere chance.

Jung's parallels to Michael Murphy's epistemology are plentiful, especially in his interpretation of the interrelationship of psychic to physical events. Jung admitted that "Paranormal psychic phenomena have interested me all my life" (Murphy 1992, 379).⁵⁶

Ellenberger (1970, 671) reveals how "the world of archetypes threatened to submerge [Jung]." As preventative measure, Jung self-imposed three rules:

First, he had to maintain a strong tie with reality. ... Second, he had to examine carefully each image from the unconscious and to translate it, insofar as this was possible, into the language of consciousness. Third, he had to ascertain how far the revelations of the unconscious could be translated into actions and incorporated in daily life.

Michael Murphy (1992, 12) understands how the demand for authenticity is subject to human condition, and how reality, especially within the world of the extraordinary, is often enigmatic and ambiguous at best:

⁵⁶ Jung, Carl Gustav. 1975.

Because we suffer perceptual distortions caused by fatigue, sensory malfunctions, or unexamined needs and motives; because such distortions can produce unwarranted, incoherent, and sometimes destructive beliefs or behavior; because our grasp of any data may be hampered by limiting expectations; and for other reasons, we need help in clarifying our data apprehension in any domain of experience.

Henry James, Sr. (1911–1982)

Michael Murphy's theory of evolutionary panentheism is predicated on the spiritual philosophy of involution–evolution. His goal of bridging ideologies (science and mysticism; Eastern and Western thought) brought him to the wisdom of Henry James Sr., who, like Śri Aurobindo and other thinkers, regarded the manifest world as the emanation of divinity and, simultaneously, a dynamic process creatively seeking to reveal God in the physical. Murphy (1992, 189) quotes James from *Substance and Shadow*:⁵⁷

Let us clearly understand then that the Divine operation in creation is made up of two movements: one ... creative, giving us natural being or identity; the other ... redemptive, which is a movement of glorification giving us the amplest individual or spiritual expansion of that base root. The prior movement, the descending, statical, the properly creative one—gives us natural selfhood or consciousness, a consciousness of separation from God, of a power inhering in ourselves and independent of Him. The posterior movement—the ascending, dynamical, and properly redemptive one—gives us spiritual consciousness, a consciousness of union with God.

Born in Albany, New York, James, Sr. expended much of his father's fortune in pursuing his own concentrations: he was a cultural theorist, editor, writer, lecturer, philosopher, literary critic, and historian. After a dissolute early life as a drinker and gambler—perhaps as result of trauma experienced by the amputation of his lower right leg at the age of 13—James completed two years of

⁵⁷ James, Sr., Henry. 1863.

study at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1875. Voicing his distrust of professional clergy, it is little surprise that he left without graduating (Wulf 2013, 1). The life he created for his family was a peripatetic one, yet his two sons, deprived of a fluid education, still managed to become illustrious in their respective fields: writer, Henry James, and philosopher, William James. Similar to Jung's crisis, Wolf (2013, 1) relates how:

A spiritual crisis overtook him [James, Sr.] ... pushed him to the edge of a psychological abyss. He became convinced that he was confronting terrifying demonic forces. In this extreme it was the ideas of the European mystic Emanuel Swedenborg that helped him to regain his psychological footing. The private philosophy he erected upon Swedenborg's foundation was to sustain him for the rest of his life.

Michael Murphy was not without his own spiritual pressures. Analogous to the spiritual crises of Jung and James, I remind the reader that Murphy experienced all sorts of neurotic symptoms at Stanford, including shortness of breath and rushes of anxiety (Kripal 2007, 59). As a result, he left the doctoral program and traveled to Pondicherry. Kripal (2005, 106) also notes that at the Pondicherry ashram, when settling down to meditate in Śri Aurobindo's apartment, Murphy "lost consciousness, almost immediately."

Henry James's theories on the dynamic redemptive move of ascension, similar to Sri Aurobindo's ascent to Supermind (Murphy 1992, 192), provides additional Western philosophical support for Murphy's philosophy of the human capacity for transformation due to involution–evolution.

AHP Exploration

So what drives Michael Murphy's indefatigable belief in the psychological, physiological, and spiritual benefits of metanormal human capacity? I posit a number of considerations that form this determination: (1) Murphy's belief in evolutionary panentheism, which proposes a Supreme Principle that not only desires the unification of humanity within Its ultimate consciousness, but also "cares" for Its creations, resides within, and evolves with them, (2) his faith in the spiritual theories of involution–evolution, which maintain the existence of universally accessible levels of advancement, (3) his innate trust in the integrality of all things, philosophical assertion of universal unification, (4) his evidence that advanced human potential has been a part of humanity's development since its historical beginnings, (5) his conviction, stemming from his data-driven research of metanormal occurrences, that humanity can evolve and transmute, (6) his efforts to bridge the gaps of science and religio-mysticism, and the disparities of religious tenets possessing the same eventuating teloi, (7) his humanist efforts to mitigate the problems of the disenfranchised, the persecuted, the diasporic, and the politically fractious and powerless factions of contemporary humanity through his involvement with human concerns and welfare, and finally (8) his trust in the inherent value and potential of human life. With Redfield and Timbers, Murphy (2002, 79) speaks of humanity's potential:

Our capacity for luminous perception and mystical knowing; our powers of volition; our abilities to communicate; our vitality; and our very identity can blossom into the greater life many of us sense in moments of inspiration. It is our deep conviction that we can cultivate these emergent capacities so that they will manifest in our lives with a deeper love, purpose, and synchronistic flow.

Michael Murphy's quest for data-driven documentation of events of metanormal human potential was cultivated at Esalen, an institute with the explicit goal of creating a space where people could explore and practice what Aldous Huxley called human potentialities—various holistic approaches to wellness and personal transformation that involved the body, mind, and spirit.

Kripal (2007, 86) states that:

Aldous Huxley's writings on the mystical dimensions of psychedelics and on what he called the perennial philosophy were foundational. Moreover, his call for an institution that could teach the “nonverbal humanities” and the development of the “human potentials” functioned as the working mission statement of Esalen.

Thirty years after Esalen's genesis, Michael Murphy published *The Future of the Body* (1992), his compendium of extraordinary (metanormal) events of human transformative capacity, along with transformative practices that, Murphy asserts, can help individuals attain their higher potentials.

The Future of the Body (Murphy 1992) is divided into three parts: “The Possibilities of Extraordinary Life,” “Evidence for Human Transformative Capacity,” and “Transformative Practices.” Michael Murphy (2009b, CD4) catalogues the data in relation to twelve attributes, which he further unpacks.

I chose 12 sets of universally shared human attributes, for example, ‘perception of the external world.’ Then I started to delve into what brought about Supranormal capacities. My book covers a large range of “transformative moves” or “modalities” or acts that appear to mediate these changes. You can look for the ways and means across a range of human activities that go from pathological to common activities over to

deliberate, life-long transformative practices in the great Yogi and shamanic contemplative traditions. Part 3 comprises a program of our own future development. I lay out a framework for what I call integral transformative practices.

Overview of Murphy's AHP Methodology

Michael Murphy's exposition of levels of behavior leading toward both actual and potential human transformative capacities is a complex exercise. Metanormal occurrences in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992) are thoroughly exemplified, examined, categorized, and explicated. I intend to condense and simplify said materials, while remaining cognizant of Murphy's important theoretical elaborations and methods of presentation. In this overview, I concentrate on the twelve basic sets of attributes that Murphy (1992, 38) delineates within three levels of evolution. Murphy:

Compares 12 sets of evolutionary according to their appearance in the domains of (1) animal development, where they are produced by natural selection, differing rates of reproduction, and so on; (2) psychosocial development, where they are shaped by social reinforcement, education, and transformative practice; and (3) metanormal development, where they are evoked by self-discipline, supporting institutions, and conceivably by processes beyond those involved in ordinary human functioning.

“Products of Animal Evolution” evolve into “Products of Ordinary Psychosocial Development,” which can be further transformed into “Products of Metanormal Development. As in involution-evolution each succeeding and preceding product resides in the former and latter stages

Throughout this study I address *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992) as it pertains to culture, genetics, philosophy, religion, and other supportive metanormal influences. In addition, I enumerate some of Michael Murphy's evidence of human transformative capacity within specific sectors of metanormal

development including sports, biofeedback, imagery, and esoteric practices—all aspects of Murphy’s extensive research into transformative practices that, he asserts, can facilitate extraordinary human experiences and events. His twelve sets of universally shared human attributes are: (1) Perception of External Events, (2) Somatic Awareness and Self-Regulation, (3) Communication Abilities, (4) Vitality, (5) Movement Abilities, (6) Abilities to Alter the Environment Directly, (7) Pain and Pleasure, (8) Cognition, (9) Volition, (10) Individuation and Sense of Self, (11) Love, and (12) Bodily Structures, States, and Processes.

Due to the thoroughness and complexity of Murphy’s “Development of Human Attributes,” I highly recommend perusing *The Future of the Body* (1992) in order to better understand what is to follow. In lieu of that, at the very least, please visit Appendix A for an abbreviated breakdown of Murphy’s methodology and presentation.

Perception of External Events

Michael Murphy (1992, 92) emphasizes, “All of our capacities, whether normal or metanormal, are subject to the limitations and distortions produced by our inherited and socially conditioned nature.” As outlined in Appendix A,

products of animal evolution within the categorical perception of external events include “sensory abilities mediated by organs such as the canine ear, the feline olfactory bulb, and the human eye.” (Murphy 1992, 41)⁵⁸

Michael Murphy’s (1992, 41-42) dissection of abnormal developments within the ‘perception of external’ events offers three examples. The first is metanormal sensory perception, which includes both extraordinary applications of the five senses, and extraordinary synesthesias;⁵⁹ the second is the deliberate clairvoyant perception of physical events, including telepathy; and the third is the

⁵⁸A comparative analysis of the *perceptions of external* events is provided within the basic tenets of *Abhidharma*, a post-Buddhist systematic account of sentient experience within eighty-two somatic valuations broken down into four types of experiences. This doctrine of perception was generated 2000 years before Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Michael Murphy. “The Abhidharma analyzes in great detail each of these categories, thus creating relational schemata whereby each acknowledged experience, phenomenon, or occurrence can be determined and identified by particular definition, and function. Especially important is the analysis of consciousness or *citta*, on which much of Abhidharma doctrinal thought is built. There are other theories which dispute the number of categories of experience but they are essentially the same systematic series of operations” (Ronkin 2014, 2). Vasibhandhu (fl. 4th Century BCE) documented these channels of perception (*dhatu*). In *Abhidharma*, the subject has six channels each of capacity, object, and their integrational functions. These channels are the five senses plus the mind. Their “affective (emotional) and cognitive uses,” (Goodman 2002) are the objects which can be perceived via our capacities, i.e. we see forms with our eyes; hear sounds with our ears; smell odors with our nose, etcetera. The integrational functions are visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and conscious perceptions. The *Abhidharma* is simply one example of multiple methods for conducting perceptual analysis in order to get to the veracity of one’s own subjectivity. Goodman (2002) adds, Vasubhandu’s “technical definition of the absolute truth according to the Abhidharma Kosha is: anything which remains after there has been a thorough smashing and analysis of everything, physically and mentally” (51-53).

⁵⁹ According to Murphy, synesthesia is the condition in which one type of stimulation evokes the sensation of another (1992, 68) — the smell of bacon reminding one of breakfast as a youth, or the sound of Gregorian chant, which can transport one back to a Catholic High Mass.

perception of events or entities beyond the normally perceivable world, which includes encounters with disembodied entities (phantoms), auditions of supremely beautiful music, and metanormal touch, often appearing to accompany telepathic exchanges.

Well prior to his publication of *The Future of the Body* (1992), Michael Murphy provided a fictionalized account of a surge of metanormal perception in *Jacob Atabet* (1977b, 142):

For periods ranging from a few minutes to several hours, my vision, hearing, taste, and smell, as well as extrasensory perception, had grown more acute; my kinesthetic awareness, balance, and dexterity had improved; volition had grown more efficient; new powers of mind over matter had appeared and my vitality had increased.

In *The Future of the Body* (1992), Murphy delineates, documents, and evaluates Perception, Volition, and Vitality as separate (but integral) elements within his twelve sets of attributes produced by animal, ordinary human, and metanormal development.

Somatic Awareness and Self-Regulation

Johnson (2005, 259) defines somatics as “the field of study of first-person bodily experience, in distinction to biomedical sciences of third-person object bodies.”⁶⁰ The discipline of somatics employs holistic, body-centered approaches

⁶⁰ Don Hanlon Johnson is the founder of the Somatics Graduate Program, the first of its kind, at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. Johnson has been a member of the Center for Theory and Research (CTR) at Esalen Institute. In that capacity, he coordinates public and private seminars, and has given numerous lectures on Somatics. He is a contributing editor of the professional publication *Somatics Magazine-Journal* (1976-present), which provides a meeting ground for those who practice mind-body unification in their work and everyday lives. Johnson is also the editor of a series of seminal collections of writings within the field (Johnson 2014).

to assist the individual in the integration and transformation of the ‘self’ through movement and awareness practices intended to promote psycho-physical well-being and advanced kinesthetic awareness. The field of somatics contains distinct disciplines, each with its own concentration and/or therapeutic emphases, principles, methods, and techniques. For example, Murphy (1992, 89-90) emphasizes the benefits of physical activity:

Sports, dance, and the martial arts, too, promote kinesthesia and self-regulation. Accomplished distance runners creatively change their racing stride by responding to fine shifts of muscle tone. Yachtsmen can track a boat’s course through subtle alterations of their balance. Great rodeo riders stay on bucking bulls, gymnasts do handstands, and divers enter the water cleanly through extraordinary muscular feel.

Metanormal somatic awareness is mediated by the central nervous system, and a “perception of somatic events that does not depend upon bodily organs” (Murphy 1992, 43). In the realm of the esoteric, extraordinary somatic awareness could be as result of *yogic* practices. Tomkins (1976, 42) again underscores Murphy’s coalescence of Eastern and Western practices: “The human potential movement as a whole has its own inherent logic, it seems, that is corresponding more and more with the great contemplative traditions of the past.” Murphy outlines certain *siddhis* (magical powers)—for example, *animan siddhi* (reducing one's body even to the size of an atom) and *gariman siddhi* (becoming infinitely heavy)—that are reputed to produce within the body of the practitioner a mystical, physical recognition of cells, molecules, and atomic patterns (see Appendix B). A fictional account of cellular transformation is a predominant subplot of Michael Murphy’s (1977b, 169) novel, *Jacob Atabet*.

It is not the same face exactly, of that I am sure. Nor is this the same body. Today I moved through a landscape of human cells in ecstasy. There might have been a million of them as I watched—they were speeding past so swiftly—then I went into those towers of the DNA. And into something new: a glimpse of pulsing light ... It was terrifying. (Murphy's italics.)

Although unwilling to axiomatically recognize the validity of esoteric teachings regarding metanormal embodiment within Indian *chakras* and the Christian *soma pneumatikon* (the body-spiritual, resurrection), Murphy (1992, 156) allows their possibility as integral functions within the study of advanced human development:

Still, we can begin to picture somatic alterations that might accompany the further reaches of extraordinary functioning, supposing: first, that accounts of chakras, kundalini, and the like, though fanciful in some respects, might reflect actual developments of physical structures unrecognized by medical science; second, that metanormal capacities require distinctive types of supporting process; and third, that we can extrapolate from physiological changes revealed by modern science in imagining somatic developments required for high-level change.

Metanormal events that could result from somatic awareness and self-regulation include the experiencing of one's own bodily structures and the sensation of potential damage or insufficient productivity, the determining of one's own stress level during extreme exertion through taste or smell, and the hearing of melodies that somehow correspond to one's physical condition. In describing certain methods of somatic techniques, Michael Murphy (1992, 387-89) writes of the optimal functioning of the body through sensory-kinesthetic awareness first developed by Frederick Matthias Alexander, who experienced the effectiveness of bodily movement in order to regain the use of his voice, an illness which had baffled physicians. Murphy (1992, 389-92) also describes the development of Johannes Schulz, whose implementation of autosuggestion helped alleviate certain physical conditions and eventually led to the science of

biofeedback and the development of visualization techniques—both staples of current mental and physical improvement techniques. Feldenkrais developed unfamiliar techniques of movement, which amplified flexibility, vitality, and self-awareness (1992, 392-94); Ida Rolf was able, through intensive massage, to force muscle surrounding connective tissues into improved natural muscle functioning (1992, 394-99). *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992) also addresses Reichian Therapy (408-13), and other methodologies within somatics generated to balance and promote healthy bodily functions for an enhanced integration of mind, body, and spirit (385-413).⁶¹ Johnson (2005, 264) writes:

One of the most profoundly unifying notions of the field is the idea that experiential and methodological journeys into breathing, sensing, moving, touching, cellular pulsation, and countless other interstices of bodily experience reveal not just emotional stories and release from traumatic scars but also the depths of what people in various traditions have called the corridors of spirit: spaciousness, cosmic connection, compassion, and the acceptance of what is.

In *The Kingdom of Shivas Irons* (1997, 151), Michael Murphy states:

Somatic patterning is a social set. It helps determine our ethics, our philosophy, our beliefs about God, and all our relationships. And because it can be cultivated, it can enhance every part of our life.

Communication Abilities

Michael Murphy (1992, 44) identifies products of metanormal development within communication as extraordinary skills mediated by sensory cues, and extraordinary communication through telepathic interaction—exceptional verbal or nonverbal interchange which includes

⁶¹ See Alexander, Frederick Mathias 1985, 1969; Feldenkrais Moshé 1970, 1972; Reich Wilhelm 1972, 1973; Rolf Ida P. 1973; Schultz, Johannes and Wolfgang Luthe 1959.

sustained telepathic rapport, direct transmission of spiritual illumination, and shared ecstasy or illumination that arises spontaneously in a couple or group.

Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 105) predict:

In what would be a new step in this socialization and evolutionary process, modern people, we believe, can move consciously toward the level of communication exemplified by certain mystics and saints. ... According to the celebrated history of the desert fathers *Historia Monachorum*, Christian contemplatives reach out through extrasensory means to nurture and communicate with others. ... In the lore of Hinduism, such transmission, or *diksha*, can be effected by a glance, a gaze, a touch, a word, an embrace, or other gesture.

In the interrelationship between animal and human mind, the evolution of communication posits the ability to transmit information between organisms. An obvious example is the ability for a canine to transmit his needs to someone with a vested interest, and vice versa. It is no coincidence that people spell out words like 'walk,' 'dinner,' and 'bath' to peers because the lower organism of the canine is adept at understanding the actual word, tonation, or phrase.

Often two people say the exact same thing in unison or verbally conclude another's comment. Just as frequently, one can interpret the mood of another without verbal communication and, less often, depending on one's level of metanormal faculty, one can sensorally interpret the mood of another 'without' their presence. As Michael Murphy (1992, 95) informs:

It is indisputable that in every domain of human experience some people have extraordinary powers to communicate. These messages may be musical, poetic, or humorous, religious or philosophic, either for the enrichment or diminution of life. No matter what type of communication we think of, there are men and women with abilities that transcend the ordinary patterns of human connection.

One product of the extraordinary capacity of communications is the ability for an individual to enter a room full of people and sense an atmosphere of anxiety, claustrophobia, ennui, hostility, or inhibition. (Granted, one has to anticipate one's own sense of being prior to any analysis of another.)

The metanormal abilities of communication can be mediated by sensory clues. How different is it to hear the same joke from two different individuals? Extraordinary abilities within communication can be initiated by telepathic interaction, especially between siblings (evidence between twins is extremely well-documented), intimate friends, lovers, and family—individuals connected to an 'other' or others through mutual interest. This can include scientists endeavoring to validate the same hypothesis, athletes on the same team, or religious participants searching for or surrounding themselves with the same truth.

Communication is presence, the authentic intersection of the perceiver and the perceived. It is the job of the perceiver to accommodate the fluctuating emotions of the perceived, and vice versa. Communication is mutual and includes spontaneous body movement; gestures which naturally accompany communication. A shrug of the shoulder, the twitch of the spine; each mobility expresses the mental processes. Well before we become aware of it, our body exposes what we are thinking and experiencing. The body is a living organism by which we thrust or emerge our intentionality into the world. The energy of the

existence of self is experientially lived through the body. Merleau-Ponty (Dillon 1968) described the body as flesh, made of the same flesh of the world, and it is because of this mutuality that we can know and understand the world and those with whom we are interconnected. As Michael Murphy (1992, 94) stipulates:

In the long course of hominid and human development, primate signaling systems evolved into the complex repertoires of language, gesture, and facial expression by which we communicate with our fellows. Our abilities to convey information develop from infancy and are shaped—for better or worse—by parents, teachers, and friends until the day we die. Through imitation and tutoring, we learn how to form new words and phrases, move our hands, adopt certain postures, and alter facial muscles to express our feelings and thoughts.

In authentic presence, a common ground is constituted between the self and other(s), all thoughts interwoven into a single fabric. Merleau-Ponty (1962, 416) tells us that actions and words:

are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator ... we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity.

Vitality

As has been determined in the stages of the Aurobindian ladder within involution–evolution, vitality signifies an evolving level of being beyond the inconscience of Matter. The base constituent of our universe and our being, conceived from stellar dust, is Matter, a dormant form of consciousness, yet an essence (*sat*). To Michael Murphy, vitality is depicted by a general increase of available energy, the fluctuations of warm-bloodedness among birds and mammals. Rather than classify all animate life under vitality, Murphy differentiates between warm-blooded animals and ‘lesser’ levels of life, his primary concentration on the human species—self-developing beings who

experience metanormal occurrences within environmental extremes. From the Latin *vita* (life), vitality is recognized through forms of dynamic expression. A living organism experiences its own life through the internal dynamics of its own being, often unobservable from the outside. In his interview with Murphy, Leonard (1992, 3) asks about metanormal characteristics within vitality. Murphy responds:

I began to ask whether there might be a metanormal vitality, and found examples of such vitality in six separate cultures, all of which are given separate names but which share several striking features: the *incendium amoris* (fire of love) of Catholic mystics, the kundalini of Hindu-Buddhist yoga, the Tibetan *tumo*, the boiling *Num* of the Kung bushmen of South Africa, shamanic magical heat, and the superabundant vitality seen in certain athletes. . . . First, each is characterized by extraordinary energy, which enables the person who experiences it to accomplish seemingly miraculous deeds. Second, all are characterized by heat that's hard to account for in terms of simple exertion, vasodilatation, or some other mechanism understood by mainstream science. Third, all of them involve an autonomous process which, once begun, is hard if not impossible to stop.

Murphy (1992, 105) provides overviews of the *tumo* meditation of yogis, shamans, and others who survive intense cold through meditation, and the vital mutation of the Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert who experience boiling *N/um chai*, a healing ritual followed by all-night trance dancing. The *N/um* is in the fire, and the heat felt by the physical bodies of the practitioners. As the trance deepens, the heat intensifies to such a degree that tribesmen shriek from pain and often fall directly onto hot coals. Father Thurston (1951, 209) describes how the *incendium amoris* (fire of love) inflicts devotees of Christ such as St. Stanislaus Kostka who was:

so violently assailed by the love of Our Savior as to often faint and suffer spasms in consequence, and he was obliged to apply clothes dipped in cold water to his breast in order to temper the violence of the love he felt.

Michael Murphy has always maintained a steadfast affinity for sports and the exceptional events and chronic occurrences that prevail within.

To be sure, great athletes had their own private experiences of the exceptional states of consciousness ... Michael Murphy would make this study of exceptional consciousness experiences in athletes a particular focus of his own research. (Wheeler, 2010, 211)

Who of us cannot remember witnessing some of the many athletic accomplishments that seemed to defy the possible and become *other-worldly*: Michael Jordan's amazing contortions at the basket during the championship era of the Chicago Bulls, Wimbledon prodigy Boris Becker's unbelievable play as he rolled, twisted, and flung himself onto the dirt to make his almost inconceivable win a reality, the 1980 Olympic 'Miracle on Ice.' Murphy and White (1995, 75) state: "The ability to call up extraordinary reserves of energy is a key to outstanding athletic performance." The list of extraordinary sports performances is endless. The feats of sports personae expand what seems natural, offering even more amazing physical exploits as the years and physical acumen evolve. Ever the experientialist, Murphy put his own body on the line in endurance marathon running at the age of 43. Then he fictionalized his participation in *Jacob Atabet* (1977b, 77), describing his long-distance running under the guidance of his mentor, Jacob:

According to some teachings, the range of this energy is infinite, and its development takes place in three stages, each encompassing more of the universe than the preceding level: The first stage, which is the one most relevant to current athletes, involves individual coordination and centralization of *ki*. In the second stage, the influence of *ki* extends beyond the individual and touches others. The final stage—rarely tapped—puts the athlete in touch with the center of life itself.

Who among us has not suddenly felt the physical relief of what is commonly called ‘the second wind’, which enables us to expand our physical effort? In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 101), Michael Murphy explains the scientific factor:

These increases of vital capacity, of course, result in part from processes understood by mainstream sciences. Athletic fitness involves cardiopulmonary changes described by contemporary medicine. ... Every instance of vital increase among sports people and religious adepts, it seems to me, is caused to a large extent by processes that operate in ordinary human functioning. However, factors unspecified by contemporary science may also contribute to some of these energetic mutations.

Murphy and Rhea White’s (1995) book, *In the Zone: Transcendent Experience in Sports* (hereinafter, *In the Zone*) is replete with anecdotes and evidence of extraordinary events in sports.

Movement Abilities

Michael Murphy (1992, 45) outlines abilities in ordinary psychosocial development to include “agility, coordination, grace, and stamina produced by somatic disciplines, sports, and the martial arts.” Extraordinary physical movement is a result of the acceleration of normal capacities through practice, evolution, and determination which can effect a metanormal occasion or habit. Murphy’s (1992, 111) inclusion of *Time Magazine*’s article on Mikhail Baryshnikov’s performance leaves little doubt as to the extraordinary or metanormal abilities on display:⁶²

⁶² *Time*. 1975. “Baryshnikov: Gotta dance,” 44-50.

When he launches his perfectly arched body into the arc of one of his improbably sustained leaps—high, light, the leg beats blurring precision—he transcends the limits of physique and, it sometimes seems, of gravity itself. . . . He is an unbelievable technician with invisible technique. Most dancers, even the great ones, make obvious preliminaries to leaps. He simply floats into confounding feats of acrobatics and then comes to still, collected repose. He forces the eye into a double take: did that man actually do that just now?

Murphy (1992, 56) catalogues attributes of movement abilities, among them the sense of levitation “during physical exercise, prayer, or lovemaking”; the physical feeling of flight, especially in dreams; experiencing an extraordinary pleasure in movement “accompanied by an apparent release of new energies”; out-of-body experiences; and the execution of metanormal moves in sports “while sensing a new power or ‘self.’”

It seems apparent that all individuals have experienced subtle metanormal events, often too slight to be readily discerned by the uninitiated. How often has one been listening to a lecturer while fantasizing making love at a different location? While this is merely mental rather than physical out-of-body experience (OBE), the mind, in essence, detaches itself from its present location. It is temporarily out of the body. Thomas Metzinger (2013, 4) writes:

There is a well-known class of phenomenal states in which the experiencing person undergoes the untranscendable and highly realistic conscious experience of leaving his or her physical body, usually in the form of an etheric double, and moving outside of it. In other words, there is a class (or at least a strong cluster) of intimately related phenomenal models of reality, the classical defining characteristics of which are a *visual representation* of one’s own body from a perceptually impossible, externalized third-person perspective (e.g., as lying on a bed or the road below oneself) plus a *second representation* of one’s own body, typically (but not in all cases) as freely hovering above or floating in space. This

second body-model is the locus of the phenomenal self: It not only forms the "true" focus of one's identity as consciously experienced, but also functions as an integrated representation of all kinesthetic qualia and all non-visual forms of proprioception. Such experiences are called out-of-body-experiences.

Abilities to Alter the Environment Directly

In addition to the ability to alter one's own movements is the capacity to directly alter the environment. Under products of animal evolution, Michael Murphy (1992, 46) lists the animal acquisition of the beak or rostrum necessary for eating, grooming, protection, moving objects, and feeding young. Products of metanormal development include telergy or hypothetical mental energy (the influence of one brain over another person), in other words, the "deliberate influence of a mind at a distance upon living tissue, as in spiritual healing." Murphy catalogues metanormal events of environmental alteration: extrasensory influence from a distance, the psychokinetic alteration of ambient room temperature, leaving behind an emotion in an empty room, the ability to encourage plant growth ('a green thumb'), and the feeling of possessing invisible hands that touch another person and elicit a response.

Murphy (1992, 120) defines telekinesis as "influence upon inanimate objects at a distance from, and without material connection with, the motive cause or agent." Thurston (1951, 151) offers anecdotal evidence of the communion

wafer that disappears from the communion chalice, and reappears in the mouth of Dominican nun and 17th Century Saint, Suor Domenica dal Paradiso. Her priest claims to have witnessed the following:⁶³

When she knelt at my Mass, ravenous with spiritual hunger, I often saw the Eucharist in her mouth taken from the Sacrifice which I had consecrated. This was conveyed to her by the ministry of an angel. And this I knew not only from what I saw, but also from the number of Hosts, for one was missing from the number I had counted.

While scientists remain skeptical because telekinesis, levitation, and so on violate current well-established laws of physics, over two billion Christians accept the teachings that Jesus Christ transmuted water into wine, multiplied quantities of food, healed the sick, and raised the dead. Paramahansa Yogananda (2001, 272) recounts his initiation into *Kriyā Yoga* as his ‘guide’ reveals a material manifestation:

Yonder light is the glow of a golden palace, materialized here tonight by the peerless Babaji.⁶⁴ In the dim past, you once expressed a desire to enjoy the beauties of a palace. Our master is now satisfying your wish, thus freeing you from the last bond of your karma. . . . The magnificent palace will be the scene of your initiation tonight into *Kriya Yoga*. All of your brothers here join in a paean of welcome, rejoicing at the end of your exile.

⁶³ Thurston (1951) sources *Summarium Responsiones*, 5-6 as his evidence of the process of beatification of Suor Domenica dal Paradiso.

⁶⁴ Babaji, a Mahavatar (Divine Incarnation) who has, ostensibly, lived in the Himalayas for centuries, refuses to reveal to his disciples any facts about his birthplace and date. He was the guru of Lahiri Mahasaya of the lineage of Paramahansa Yogananda.

Pain and Pleasure

It is understood that pain and pleasure are opposites of the mean, which is comfort. In an article for *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Murat Aydede (2000, 554) writes:

It is a little surprising to see that there are very few psychological and neurophysiological studies of pleasure as such in the scientific literature, whereas studies on pain are abundant. Part of the reason is that technically pleasure does not count as a sensory modality. Typically, there is not even an entry for “pleasure” in the indices of many relevant text-books.

Within products of animal evolution, Michael Murphy lists the sensations of pain and pleasure mediated by the vertebrate nervous system. As products of metanormal development, Murphy (1992, 126) focuses on self-existent delight within Eastern traditions, which subsumes ordinary pain and pleasure:

For Buddhists, suffering is rooted in desire, which can be dissolved in nirvana. For Vedantists, unhappiness is overcome by the experience of *ananda*, self-existent delight. In spite of their differing metaphysics, religious teachers East and West have asserted that we can realize a joy that subsumes ordinary pains and pleasures. “From delight all these creatures are born,” says the Taittiriya Upanishad. “By delight they exist and grow. To delight they return. For who could live or breathe if there were not this delight of existence as the ether in which we dwell.”

Methods for controlling pain in order to gain a level of comfort or even delight can be achieved through suggestive hypnosis, athletics, martial arts, and religious/spiritual training. Mortification of the body for spiritual gain is part and parcel of many ritualistic events. Extreme fasting leading to inedia is prevalent, as is self-flagellation. The employment of pain in order to gain pleasure is not confined to religio-spiritual devotees. Cutting, especially by teenage girls seeking validation, is common. Beyond the mystical experience is the sexual role-play of

the masochist who turns pain into pleasure due to a psychological need to be punished for past transgressions, a perceived lack of parental love, or other causes. These painful exercises bring pleasure to the initiator. In my article on the emotional relationship between cutting and stigmata, I offer the following:

Even in contemporary times, rituals that involve either self-flagellation and intentional bloodletting or beatings by others is common in Muslim ceremonies; Hindus and Buddhists pierce the face and body during certain rites, and often burn the top of the head; and in Africa and Australia, indigenous people sometimes use genital mutilation on boys and girls that is intentionally painful ... the incorporation of voluntary pain, suffering, and self-denial are part of spiritual traditions [that promise] access to the divine. ... To a ritual participant, the primary objective is to achieve analgesia or absence of pain, not simply to control or even conquer pain, but to feel its absence as a transcendent spiritual experience. (Mullen 2010, 5)

Michael Murphy offers four methods of eliminating pain and enhancing pleasure. The first is the elimination of pain by simply willing it away.⁶⁵ Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 118) quote Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1972):

We feel pleasure or pain in a particular context because that is the constant relation the recipient has established with [it]. But it is within our competence to return quite the opposite response, pleasure where we used to have pain, pain where we used to have pleasure.

A second method for the mitigation of pain is the experience of the inexplicable pleasure, or a stream of vitality apparently located in the spine, the solar plexus, or some other bodily part (lending credence to the validity of the esoteric practice of *kundalini*). A third experience of pleasure over pain is the feeling of

⁶⁵ On a personal experiential level, I cite recent, extensive dental surgery, where I consciously endeavored to polarize the pain of the surgical mechanics into a pleasurable experience with some success.

momentary and spontaneous “shivers of ecstasy,” according to Murphy (2012, 57), and the fourth is the experiencing of “profound joy” that suddenly surfaces without explanation and can be contagious, even in “the midst of pain or discomfort.”⁶⁶

For those who choose to alleviate themselves of pain without narcotics—pain brought on by disease, physical complications, and emotional distress—there is abundant documentation of the positive effects of hypnosis. Michael Murphy provides a comprehensive list of the success of hypnotic pain reduction, which can eliminate the need for analgesics or anesthetics during surgery. Murphy (1992, 325-26) documents surgical events, including appendectomies, gastrostomy, cardiac surgeries, hysterectomies, and tumor extractions. “In a series of articles published during the 1950s,” Murphy (1992, 325) informs us that “physician Byron Butler (1954) reported the successful reduction of pain in cancer patients,” and Cangello (2008) successfully used posthypnotic suggestions for pain reduction, demonstrating that “deeply hypnotizable patients generally experienced more relief than the others, through

⁶⁶ From *The Future of the Body* (1992, 126f):

Religious life produces countless types of joy. A great many of these have been described in Sanskrit, among them *kamananda*, a sensuous feeling arising from the transmission of sexual desire; *raudranananda*, which is produced by the conversion of pain to pleasure; *vaidyutananda*, an electric pleasure that comes as blissful shock; and *visayananda*, a yogic delight of the senses.

about half of the less susceptible were also helped.” Hypnosis has also been employed as a tool to overcome apprehension and anxiety before surgery, to assist transition to convalescence, and to lessen the need for postoperative narcotics, alleviate nausea, and raise morale (Murphy 1992, 297-300, 325-31).

Cognition

Cognition is the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, judgment, evaluation, and the senses that result in perception, sensation, or intuition. Michael Murphy (1992, 126-27) defines:

The word *cognition* [as it] refers to various ways of knowing, including analysis and reasoning; pattern recognition through the use of metaphor; intuitive comprehension of another person’s subjective state; problem solving that involves visual, auditory, or other imagery; and mystical illumination. ...and the supreme intellection evident in certain inspired works, which is typically accompanied by a sense that one has received knowledge or creative power beyond one’s normal capacities.

Herbert Spiegelberg (1971, 550) extends the definition further:

Cogito or cogitations comprise all the acts of consciousness, including doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, et cetera. The ego exists only as a result of these cogitations and these cogitations continue only as long as we are self-aware.

These skills are enhanced and refined by art and philosophy (which, via metanormal development, have the potential to engage in mystical illumination), and creative efforts which receive their spontaneity and completeness through extraordinary vision and consciousness. Murphy (1992, 127) clarifies:

The word cognition refers to various ways of knowing, including analysis and reasoning; pattern recognition through the use of metaphor; intuitive comprehension of another person’s subjective state; problem solving that involves visual, auditory, or other imagery; and mystical illumination.

Murphy calls this involuntary and often subliminal cognition *inspiration*, a transcendence of ordinary thinking or artistic rendering. In *The Future of the Body*, Murphy (1992, 573-74) suggests half-a-dozen transformative practices that might facilitate advanced cognitive activity: the resolution of psychological conflicts that interfere with one's imagination; the lessening of inhibitions to new and unusual ideas via psychotherapy and philosophic introspection; methods to improve concentration; and the study of philosophy, myth, art, and symbology in efforts to integrate "analytic, holistic, and imaginative thought." Murphy (1992, 571-72) adds:

Transformative practice can develop cognition by bringing new material into its purview or by articulating and strengthening its various processes. ... almost every practice that increases cognition promotes its extension, articulation, and strengthening to some degree.

Some of these transformative practices require the resolution of psychological conflicts through psychotherapy, and the use of introspection to recall repressed imagery and ideas that have been stultified through inhibition or depression. Murphy (1992, 571-73) also recommends "strengthening concentration" and reestablishing "unfamiliar types of knowing" through sensual stimuli and imagination via "fantastical literature, contemplative writings, dreams, or altered states of mind." For cultural comparison, Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor (1999, 81) add:

The perceptual and cognitive abilities that seem to have been enhanced during modern experiments correspond with various capacities described in the Hindu-Buddhist traditions as *siddhis* (exceptional powers), *vibhutis* (perfections), and *riddhis* (psychically prosperous states). *Smritritwa*, for example, is a highly developed form of memory enhancement reported in contemporary studies.

Volition

Volition is the willful power or faculty to make a conscious choice or decision. Michael Murphy (1992, 138) recommends self-reflection and analysis, either alone or with the support of spirituality or psychoanalysis:

Through self-observation we can clarify the nature of our shifting or enduring motives, some of them rooted in basic needs, some of them acquired by social conditioning, some healthy, some destructive, many of them unnoticed or repressed. The ongoing self-reflection enjoined by religious leaders and moral authorities of every culture, and by psychotherapists of modern times, can help to illumine secret or half-concealed attitudes that rule our thought and behavior.

Ordinary psychosocial development of volition, according to Murphy (1992, 49), is the “refinement, clarification, strengthening, and integration of volition produced by psychotherapy, hypnotic suggestion, sports, martial arts training, religious practice, and other transformative practices.”

The function of psychotherapy and hypnotic suggestion is to assist individuals in grasping the self-knowledge of who they are, their strengths and weaknesses, and the ingrained attitudes that have become part and parcel of their being, ‘ruling’ their “thought and behavior” (Murphy 1992, 138). These attitudes, through practices listed above, need to be integrated from individual multiple wills into a single transformative vision. To attain a metanormal degree of volition requires an understanding of the social conditioning that brings one to the many compulsions that rule conflicted thinking. One needs to limit the egocentricity that leads to self-conscious illusions, to forgo the restrictive need for perfection in order to generate authenticity, to persevere without the desire for

immediate recognition, and to achieve a fluidity of instinctive reaction without self-attachment. Leonard sees this as a form of addressing the issue, then letting go of it. Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 147) report that:

George Leonard coined the term “focused surrender” to describe the paradox of achieving flow. In his book with Michael Murphy, *The Life We Are Given*, he described the Zenlike results of his research on the phenomenon. He noted that exceptional moments of grace, or “perfect rhythm,” involve the unlikely marriage of trying and not trying, of zeroing-in and letting go. It appears that both focused intentionality and the surrender of ego are necessary to experience existence at such a fundamental level and create what often seems miraculous.

Such transcendence from the constraints of the ‘self’ sets the ground for universal unity, creativity, and harmony, derived from detachment from results.

Murphy and White (1995, 110) offer the following:

The concentration of will and awareness in sport is heightened, we believe, because it takes place in the midst of winning and losing, amid dramatic ups and downs. The participant who perseveres in a sport has to learn the poignant lesson—at some level at least—that there is an interior grace that transcends the world’s uncertain results. Sport can teach us the ancient wisdom that by losing our lives we gain them.

Transformative spiritual practices can strengthen the capacity for single-minded, self-complacent behavior, providing options for creative and more plentiful endeavors.

Individuation and Sense of Self

In *Re-Visioning Psychology*, James Hillman (1976, 87-88) writes of individuation:

When a therapist insists that no two cases are alike, he means this not merely in the detail of its accidents but in the profound sense that human being is essentially “differing” being, and that individuality is given with the particular mix of soul, the complexity of its composition. Therefore, when Jung defines individuation as a “process of differentiation” and differentiation as “the development of differences, the separation of parts from the whole,” it means realizing our differences from every other person.⁶⁷

When Michael Murphy defines the second level of evolution toward transformative human development, he is speaking of ordinary psychosocial development, which illustrates how traditional individuation and a healthy sense of identity can be gained by an integrality of experiential events. Transformative practices are not unitary events capable of achieving an authentic sense of individuation; it is the integration of multiple practices and occurrences that leads one to positive self-identity; all positive influences coalesce to produce the desired effect. If one is lacking or detrimental, the others grow as compensation.

Michael Murphy (1992, 52-53) posits that the metanormalities of everyday life “are nascent expressions of fully developed extraordinary attributes ... the first versions of metanormal capacities available to all of us.” As Illumined Mind supersedes Higher Mind, so do products of metanormal development supersede products of ordinary psychosocial development. Products of ordinary psychosocial evolution include a healthy, authentic sense of identity produced by parental influence, positive early development, psychotherapeutic methods, “religious practice, and other transformative practices.” Products of metanormal development include, according to Murphy (1992, 50):

⁶⁷ Jung, Carl Gustav. 1953.

The realization of an ego-transcendent identity that perceives its oneness with all things while remaining a unique center of awareness and action [and the] cognitive-emotional-behavioral complexity and uniqueness evident, for example, in religious figures such as Francis of Assisi and Śri Ramakrishna.

Love

Within the separate evolutionary domain of love, Michael Murphy (1992, 152-53) includes the:

many expressions of love, indeed many types of love, each with its own transformative power. Poets and philosophers have celebrated agape, good will, philanthropy, friendship, fellow feeling, empathy, congeniality, romance, married devotion, parental self-giving, and love for a work or set of ideals, as well as eros and religious devotion. Love takes many forms and has many kinds of effect but always gives birth to new life.

In *God and the Evolving Universe*, Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 43)

provide the following quote from St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

Love is kind; loves is not envious or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

Teilhard de Chardin (1959, 264) writes:

Considered in its full biologic reality, love—that is to say, the affinity of being with being—is not particular to man. It is a general property of all life and as such it embraces, in its varieties and degrees, all the forms successfully adopted by organised matter. In the mammals, so close to ourselves, it is easily recognized in its different modalities: sexual passion, parental instinct, social solidarity, etc.

Chardin then advances his concept of love in *Christianity and Evolution*:

I know now that I belong to the world and that I shall return to it, not simply in the ashes of my body, but in all the developed powers of my mind and heart. *I can love the world*. And since, therefore, I can now distinguish in the cosmos a higher sphere of person and personal relationships, I am beginning to suspect that appeals and indications of an intellectual nature may well build up around me and have a message for me. (1971, 117-18)

Murphy (1992, 148) shares the metanormal aspect of love:

like our other capacities, love can flower in extraordinary ways, transforming this world to some extent while revealing new worlds to us. As we are conceived in love and brought forth from our mothers in love, we are opened by love to our greater possibilities.

Bodily Structures, States, and Processes

Michael Murphy (1992, 59) provides a list of metanormal occurrences within human bodily structures, states, and processes to include “spontaneous surges of energy up-and-down the spine, spiraling around the torso, or rising from the soles of the feet,” and an agility beyond one’s “ordinary range of movement that seems related to a new and extraordinary elasticity of tendons, ligaments, and muscles.” To facilitate the positive development of bodily structures, states, and processes, Murphy (1992, 155) recommends:

beneficial somatic changes produced by hypnotic suggestion, biofeedback training, Autogenic Training, Structural Integration, Progressive Relaxation, physical fitness training, martial arts, yoga and Zen Buddhist practice, and meditation in a variety of secular settings. Numerous clinical and experimental studies have shown that each of these disciplines affects the flesh as well as the psyche.

Murphy (1992, 155-56) suggests such disciplines as the practice of *kundalini*, the use of energy channels (*nadis*), chakras, the mystical magic of the *siddhas*, and other esoteric practices which, he indicates, may be capable of facilitating “supranormal suppleness of joint and muscle, and other dramatic improvements of the flesh.” One forgotten, esoteric example, provided by Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 94), is:

The *animan siddhi*, one of eight famous powers that are referred to in several yoga texts, [which] enables one to see one’s bodily cells and the atoms of which they are composed. It is striking that this ability was discovered thousands of years before the advent of microscopes and other instruments of modern science.

Although hesitant to arbitrarily accept esoteric practices that purportedly produce metanormal embodiment, Murphy is willing to entertain the possibility of these and other psychophysical events unrecognized by modern science. The following description of metanormal cellular process is from Murphy's (1982, 109) novel, *An End to Ordinary History*:

Something was forcing him deeper into his cells and molecules, into his atoms it seemed, until he got control of the body's most fundamental energies. The moments of luminosity he had felt for so many years could become more stable that way, he thought. Then he could master the process more deeply. To do it, though, he would have to go back layer by layer into the past. In trance he would contact his cells directly. Because the molecular and atomic patterns in our body are like the ones that existed in our primordial history, he called his adventure a 'return to the first day.' It was a little fanciful, we thought, but he kept calling it that: 'A descent to the first day when matter first rises from Mind!'

Providing parallel evidence in nonfiction is the following by Satprem's (1976, 27) chronicling of the Mother's attempt to modify her cellular structure in order to experience advanced consciousness:

And, all at once, there was such a clear vision that only what is supremely perfect can bring plenitude to this body. ...at the same time, a sort of suggestion of Annihilation, of Nothingness—of eternal Peace [the physical mind's great aspiration: reverting to the stillness of the stone]. And it swept all that away [it is the cellular mind itself that does the sweeping], as if the body drew itself up: "Eh, but wait a minute! This is not what I want. I want ... (and there was a dazzling light, a dazzling golden light) ... I want the splendor of your Consciousness." The first pure reaction of the cellular consciousness. I have the feeling that it's like grasping the tail of the solution. A whole world is beginning to open up. (Satprem's brackets and italics.)

We should take note that neurogenesis, the creation of new brain cells in adults, is now a recognized science. Neuroplasticity—changes in neural pathways and synapses due to behavioral, environmental, and neural processes—is not only a science, but a burgeoning industry for enhanced attention and memory retention.

So when one speaks of science fiction, or ‘the possibility of’, one does not necessarily stray far from the probability of human transformative capacity. Medical science is now equipped with the ability to inject healthy cells into a person to replace decaying or cancerous ones. This, of course, alters the cellular structure. In actuality, since 2,500,000 red cells are being born and consumed every second, do we not frequently change our entire cellular structure? Therefore, the genetic reality of new cells replacing the old falls under Michael Murphy’s dictum of animal ‘and’ ordinary psychosocial evolution, while the medical advance of the injection of healthy cells strides on the cusp of extraordinary or metanormal human evolution.

Esoteric or Magical Practices

I have already provided evidence of Michael Murphy’s conditional acceptance of esoteric practices which support his theories of metanormal human capacity. According to Murphy (1992, 127), these practices include mystical knowledge, spiritual healing (257), Catholic charisms (478), shamanic powers (467), Taoist magic (471), Jewish mystical practices (472), bodily transformation, and yogic *siddhis* that include “mystical cognitions, clairvoyance, and extraordinary physical abilities” (589). Kripal (2005, 122) writes:

central to Murphy’s corpus is a lifelong interest in what the Indian traditions call the *siddhis*, those psychic “powers” or supranormal “capacities” or “attributes” that are said to develop along the spiritual path that are commonly said to function as distractions or obstacles on the way to the absolute.

To reiterate, it is not only the ‘magical’ power of the Hindu *yogis* that support psychic definitions of physical transformation, but also the comparative charisms of Catholic Saints, the adornments of esoteric Sufis, Christian doctrines

of the Glorified Body, Shamanic dismemberment and resurrection, Taoist legends about holy flesh, perceptions of extraphysical domains, out-of-body experiences, dematerializations, and other supraordinary practices of mystical reputation.

Evidence of esoteric practices are presented within biblical lore, spiritual texts, experiential events, reports, and corroborations (Murphy 1992, 471-78, 579).

Murphy delivers “The proposition that we cannot comprehend our potentials for extraordinary life without a synoptic, or integral, empiricism that involves many fields of inquiry and different kinds of knowing.” (1992, 4)

According to Taves (2005, 242):

Murphy notes that most siddhis of Hindu-Buddhist lore, charisms of Catholic saints, and similar phenomena in other religions have been regarded in their respective traditions as inferior to enlightenment or union with God.” “But,” he says, “from an evolutionary perspective”—and here he consciously extracts these phenomena from their respective traditions and places them in a different (evolutionary) perspective—“they can be seen in another way—as emergent features of human development, as capacities inherent to the richer life that is available to us.”⁶⁸

Murphy (1997, 141) illustrates other esoteric, metaphysical metanormal practices:

The Roman Catholics “mystical luminosity,” the Sufi’s “man of light,” the Tibetan Buddhists “diamond body,” the Taoists’ “spirit child”: Each in its own way represents a set of experiences that suggest that we can radically alter our flesh, and prominent among these is the perception of particles, “sparks,” or scintillae that revitalize mind and body.

Murphy (1992, 11-12) concludes that:

Virtually all contemplative traditions have claimed that objects of mystical insight such as Buddha Nature, God, or Brahman are realities that exist independently of any human experience; they have also held that these objective realities can be apprehended through particular practices that produce experiences (or data) that can be confirmed by the

⁶⁸ Murphy, Michael. 1992, 171-72.

contemplative's mentors or fellow seekers. In this they are, broadly speaking, empirical. Philosopher Stephen Phillips has called this position "mystic empiricism," and has argued like Wilber that there is a parallel between the evidentiality of sensory experience and that of mystical realization.⁶⁹

In a footnote to Part I, Chapter 2 of *The Future of the Body* (1992, 11)

—"The Varieties of Evidence for Human Transformative Capacity"—Michael Murphy states that:

Taking contemplative experience to be a kind of data in the sense that Wilber suggested, one can argue that it has been subjected to growing numbers of communal tests as global communications have improved and once-esoteric religious teachings have been publicly accessible. Countless experiences of shamans, saints, and mystics have been publicized in modern times; metaphysical doctrines associated with them have been translated into contemporary languages; similarities and differences between them have been widely discussed. Such comparisons, I suggest, comprise a kind of data verification in the sense that they implicitly involve tests of each realization's richness, comprehensiveness, and power to account for world and self.

See Appendix B for a comprehensive list of Hindu yogic *siddhis* provided by Haridas Chaudhuri (2002), and Catholic charisms and charismata's, provided by Herbert Thurston (1951), and *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Charisms 1992).⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Phillips, Stephen H. 1986, (5-53).

⁷⁰ Chaudhuri, Haridas. 2002. This list of *yogic siddhis* was supplied to Michael Murphy by Chaudhuri, just prior to his death in 1975.

Summarization of Advanced Human Potential (AHP)

In this Section, I concentrate on Michael Murphy's methodology in researching, cataloging, and evidencing events of advanced metanormal potential. Murphy (1992, 143) separates the attributes of animal, normal human, and advanced human productivity into twelve categories, each of which is thoroughly explained and supplemented by examples of extraordinary events and analogies:

The uniqueness that is evident in all human beings becomes more pronounced as our capacities develop. The broadening of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral repertoires, the deepening of self-awareness, the creativity and the articulation of human will noted in these pages contribute to the individuality to which animal and human development gives rise. This individuality, I propose, has at least two kinds of metanormal development: first, the realization of an ego-transcending identity reported by people in many walks of life but most notably by religious contemplatives; and second, the complex cognitive-emotional-behavioral repertoires, or sub-personalities, evident in highly creative people. (143)

Section 7: Philosophical Concepts within Michael Murphy's Worldview

Any theory or philosophy is based, consciously or unconsciously, on an amalgamation of grounding constituent philosophies or modes of operation. In any theory, the tenets that form its ground are particular, relative, and essential constituents; its axiomatic completeness equal to (or greater than) the sum of its values and beliefs. One cannot be a rationalist without experientialism, logic, discursive reasoning, and their subsequent subsets (thinking, cognition, and intellect). Utilitarianism is best served by the participation of reductionism and forms of naturalism. Five philosophical components that compliment Michael Murphy's worldview: Gestalt, existentialism, experientialism, panentheistic humanism, and integrality. Murphy's research into and conviction of metanormal human advancement—heralding a higher dimension of human existence—is made more comprehensive by these constituent philosophical concepts.

In this Section, I make the case that Gestalt, existentialism, experientialism, panentheistic humanism, and integrality are primary and essential assets to the totality of Michael Murphy's philosophical determinations.

Gestalt

Michael Murphy's relationship with Gestalt is made implicit through his active participation in integrality, in which the whole or Gestalt is composed of its constituent parts and is, at least, as substantial as those parts.⁷¹ The entirety of

⁷¹ The phrase and contemporary concept of Gestalt, i.e. "the sum is *greater* than its parts," has been conceptually adopted from a mistranslation of Kurt Koffka's original phrase from *Perception: An Introduction to the Gestalt Theorie* (1922): "The whole is *other* than the sum of the parts" (Tuck 2011, 2).

Michael Murphy's work is, philosophically and mathematically, a Gestalt.

Rescher and Oppenheim (1955, 90) state:

The parts of the whole must stand in some special and characteristic *relation* of dependence with one another; they must satisfy some special condition in virtue of their status as parts of a whole.

Michael Murphy's Gestalt is underscored by his intent to bridge the worlds of science and religion in order to facilitate an intelligent and integrated comprehension of the natural and cosmological order. I have argued that the interrelationship and interdependence of 'all' entities is a given; therefore, these entities are essential parts of the whole. It can be argued that, under such definition, all things are parts of some subset of a wholeness, and all subsets can be aligned into a cosmological whole. Epstein and Hatfield (1994, 1) opine:

The Gestaltists' philosophy of mind ... cuts across the usual boundaries and thereby calls them into question. Further, it offers insights of contemporary relevance in the realist attitude toward phenomenal experience and its simultaneous advocacy of physiological explanation.

Gestalt is a fairly recent philosophical application that visualizes the totality of a concept prior to assembling the constituent parts. Gestalt was conceptualized in 1890 by Christian von Ehrenfels, and further understood as a value and effect of perception by Koffka, Wertheimer, and Köhler in the early Twentieth Century (Wulf 1996, 4). In German, the word *Gestalt* refers to the structure or shape of an entity's complete form. It is defined as *shape, configuration, structure, arrangement, organization, or figure* (Sabar 2013, 7). Swiss philosopher and psychologist, Jean Piaget (1970, 66) references the use of Gestalt within psychological and psychological functions. Gestalt is perception of a configuration or system which forms a completeness, a wholeness fully

determinable through the brain's⁷² ability to visualize the entirety of that which is only perceived in part. When we see the side of a pot, for example, the brain immediately reconfigures the whole of the pot, as opposed to just the side which is visible. It does this in multiple ways: via the experiential then empirical relationship to similar objects or, by inference to the entirety of that which is partially perceived.⁷³ Gestalt is the psychology/philosophy term which, essentially, symbolizes the codependent parts manifesting into a unified whole. Gestalt refers to theories of visual and mental perceptions and how said theories attempt to describe how we organize elements into groups or unified totalities. A Gestalt may refer not only to form or physical structure, but to physiological and psychological functions. Piaget (1970, 65) provides the following example:

When I perceive a house, I do not at first see the color of a tile, the height of a chimney and the rest, and finally the house! I immediately see the house as *gestalt* and then analyze it in detail.

⁷² Again, we fall into the dichotomies of the relationship of the physical *brain* to thought; cognitive reasoning is, arguably, not the province of the physical organ alone. Although *brain* may contribute to compartmentalization and synaptic interrelationships of the overriding formulations of cognition, science still struggles with a conclusive understanding of from wherein mind and its many constituents originate.

⁷³ Raju (1985, 87) writes:

All that is possible to offer is a phenomenological and existential analysis of human experience in the realms of nature, ethics, and religion—We may have to accept that ultimately inference is meant not for any conclusive proof of something absolutely unknown so far, but as an instrument for intellectually articulating the conceptual patterns involve in the several forms of experience in a way not to destroy its integrity and integrality, but to correct its aberrations.

In Gestalt, we anticipate the whole then research and analyze the various perceptual constituents that construct the whole. These perceptions (and subsequent empirical conclusions) are privy to memory, intuition, experience, rationality, reasonableness, and inference. As Wheeler (2011, 172) informs: “Perception itself is an act of interpretation, rendering sense data (itself selected and interpreted) into useable whole units, or gestalts, of imaginal pictures, narratives, and other sequences.”

Gestalt assembles the parts which form the composition of the perceived wholeness, thus providing a more authentic understanding. While ‘authenticity’ is a quality subject to multiple philosophical interpretations, for purposes of this study, authenticity means being genuine or as real as possible, or being as true in substance as possible, given one’s subjective and objective truth.

Gestalt is comprised of a subset of constituent bases—Gestalt psychology, perceptual Gestalt, Gestalt Therapy—which arose from the original domain of Gestalt philosophy. The word *Gestalt*, or its plural *Gestalten* is mentioned sparingly in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992) in reference to Gestalt Therapy, a group psychological methodology developed by Fritz Perls, Laura Perls, and Paul Goodman during residency at Esalen (Kripal 2007, 161-165). Anderson (2004, 79) informs that Gestalt and its therapeutic offshoot was one of three basic components of the Institute’s inventory, along with encounter and body work. Michael Murphy (1992, 564) cites Gestalt Therapy as one of five examples of “transformative methods that promote particular kinds of healing or growth.”

Both evolutionary panentheism and the Aurobindian ladder to the Supermind require involution–evolution, a concept predicated on interrelating and intermingling constituent levels of existence. To reach the pure consciousness of Supermind or Supernature, each level of ascent and descent must incorporate all prior and future levels of transitional ‘being’; the ‘whole’ (the Supreme Principle, Supernature, Supermind) initiates the process with Its descent, ‘and’ is the final outcome. This is analogous to Wulf’s (1996, 4) premise that:

the whole precedes the parts, and Gestalt formation is a primary characteristic of organismic functioning and also of the individual movement toward closure/satisfaction to return to a state of equilibrium.

While Gestalt is only a singular component of Michael Murphy’s expression, it is codependent on and comingles with existentialism, experientialism, panentheistic humanism, and integrality. Murphy (1972, 144) writes of Gestalt in *Golf in the Kingdom*:

Most psychologists would say he was merely reinforcing my kinesthetic or proprioceptive sense, making me more aware of the messages coming from my muscles and enteroceptors. Or they might say he was making me more sensitive to “the bodily image,” the fluctuating Gestalt that emerges from our various bodily sensations.

Further evidence of Michael Murphy’s appropriation of Gestalt is exemplified in his integrality of transformative methods that, he claims, can lead to events of advanced human potential. Gestalt is synonymous with the theory of nonduality; results cannot exist without their causes, nor can a complete understanding of these results exist without a concerted understanding and analysis of these causes.

Gestalt is a philosophical refutation of the Cartesian duality of mind and body—as well as body–soul, subject–object, self–other, and so forth—and its separation of each component into “discrete and separate entities” (Reynolds 2005, 8).

The guiding idea is to eliminate the opposition between the immanence or subjective and the transcendent or objective by pointing to a more basic reality, the phenomena or Gestalt, which embraces both sides. (Dillon 1968, 81)

Wheeler (2005, 177) advises that Gestalt is “the basis for reintegrating the whole panoply of repressive splits and exaggerated polarizations of the culture. The Gestalt model of perception and cognition [is] itself fundamentally holistic.”

Gestalt therapist Rosemarie Wulf (1996, 6) writes of Gestalt’s Eastern philosophical contributions:

Almost all “forefathers and foremothers” of the Gestalt concept had studied Eastern philosophy or mysticism, especially Taoism and Zen-Buddhism. The awareness concept has drawn upon various aspects of Eastern thinking.

Like Taoism and Zen, Barclay Erickson (2003, 243) tells us, Gestalt values “experiencing over thinking,” and is perceptually viable in experiential reception. Michael Murphy’s coalition of mind-body-spirit in his research on metanormal human capacity, emphasizes the experiential in order to expand our physiological and psychological limits.

The components of Gestalt (experientialism, existentialism, empiricism) provide stark evidence of philosophical integrality. One participates in existence by ‘being’, and experiencing the forms (concepts, etc.) that make up the whole. These forms include past events, values, memories, inference, interpretations, and perceptions. One has to participate to benefit from Gestalt’s physiological and

psychological functions. Wulf (1996, 2) writes: “Existence is ‘potentially being’ (*Sein-können*), being confronted with choices, constantly having to make decisions.” Two primary components of psychological Gestalt are productive thinking and reproductive thinking. Productive thinking is confronting and solving a problem with insight, a response to situations and environmental interaction analogous to Michael Murphy’s perception of external events, cognition, and abilities to directly alter the environment. Reproductive thinking, on the other hand, presupposes the prehension and metanormal cognition of previous experiences that are subsequently used to solve a problem. Wheeler (2005, 173) explains the relationship between the physiological and psychological within Gestalt:

the primacy of relationship in living process and individual development, the way brain, mind, emotion, action, and belief become tightly integrated in experiential/behavioral schemas which tend to unfold as whole sequences—all these things are now both taken for granted and well-grounded in research. And all of these conclusions and more come out of Gestalt lab and social research.

Experientialism

Experientialism goes hand-in-hand with Gestalt, and, according to Wheeler (2005, 173), facilitates:

The role of expectation in perception, the emotional basis of cognition, the inseparability of mind and body, the futility of trying to consider behavior apart from intention and context, the way meaning-making controls perception and behavior, the problem-solving nature of perceptual process itself.

How does one participate in perception? One experiences it.

Experientialism is the theory or doctrine that knowledge is derived from experience.⁷⁴ Experientialism is active participation; it is doing, perceiving, reacting, and introspecting. There can be no complete knowledge without the support of one's own evaluation of one's experience. Edmund Montgomery (1889, 493) wrote:

Experientialism was quick to perceive, that, if all knowledge is thus experientially put together by simply remembering bit by bit the sensibly impressed order of natural connection, without our being in possession of general principles by force of which we may legitimately constitute knowledge over-reaching the experiential data ... that there can be no knowledge whatever transcending the facts and combinations of actual sensorial experience.

The value of experiential participation in the metanormal process is evident. Take, for example, Michael Murphy's development of somatic awareness and self-regulation. Murphy (1992, 88) states that this awareness:

can be increased through biofeedback training, somatic education, martial arts, sports, and meditation, and other disciplines ... both long experience with such practices and experimental research have shown that humans can, by developing somatic awareness, increase their capacities for voluntary self-control.

'In the zone' is a popular expression of positive tunnel-vision, an individual or team so focused that normal reality recedes in deference to the immediate intentionality of the moment. In recent years, many athletes have described the zone as a condition in which their physical skills reach supraordinary levels. Again, people with different temperaments and backgrounds

⁷⁴ By experience is meant the total content—feelings, sensations, observations—perceived as a result of one's participation in an event or occurrence.

claim that a particular capacity—in this case bodily movement—is at times inspired by something beyond their ordinary functioning (Murphy 1992, 108).

Leonard and Murphy (1995, 118) write of the grace and exceptionality of the human body experienced:

Far from being a mere machine, the human body is the most advanced material realization we've encountered of the divine potential hidden in the early, inchoate universe. Each body is all time remembered. In its dancing quanta of radiation, its elementary particles, its atoms and ions, its simple and complex molecules, its cells and organelles and organs, its bone and marrow and muscle and sinew, we can read the story of cosmic evolution, that chronicle of exquisite joinings and hairbreadth escapes, which has created a consciousness capable of knowing itself.

Frequently, rather than acting as a dominant philosophical structure, experientialism is a subset or adjunct to a more dominant school of thought. It is often used as an adjective to amplify its subject, as in experiential Gestalt, experiential cognition, experiential epistemology, or the experiential ground of being. It is acceptable to Śri Aurobindo's foundational school of "Advaita Vedanta [which] does not deny the experiential or empirical reality (*vyavaharika satyatvam*) of the perceived world" (Ayyar 2012, 4). Experientialism aligns itself with the structures of empiricism and phenomenology (Atwood and Stolorow 1984, 7-31).⁷⁵ Foundationally Gestalt, experientialism evaluates the whole unit through an act of interpretation grounded by experience, thus rendering sense data into useable units of perception, which require empirical evaluation. Galen Johnson (1977, 182) elaborates: "The empirical arguments are empirical, and

⁷⁵ "According to empiricism, the new emerges when observations and experiences connect together often enough, or lend support to an inductive hypothesis" (Paavola and Hakkarainen 2005, 236).

‘empiricism’ means a wide experientialism in which claims are not insulated from the total range of potential experiential counter evidence and falsification.”

Winter (1989, 1136) describes the empirical value of experientialism when experiences are properly evaluated:

experientialism is neither objectivist and foundational nor radically relativist in a nihilist or “anything goes” sense. It is, rather, an approach to reason and knowledge that is simultaneously constrained, realist, and relativist.

Rajapakse (1987, 262) underscores experientialism’s Eastern origins:

Buddhism has frequently been represented as a system which upholds an experientialist stance with respect to the origin of knowledge; the emphasis on “personal and direct knowledge,” as Jayatilleke has noted, is indeed an evident feature of Nikaya literature in particular.⁷⁶

To reiterate, methods of Michael Murphy’s suggested transformative practices are experiential, including physical, mental, and spiritual activities (bodily enhancement, self-awareness, introspection, meditation). Murphy (1995, 133) writes:

As we have seen, a wide variety of extraordinary experience emerges in sports—moments of preternatural calm and stillness, feelings of detachment and freedom, states filled with invincible force. These experiences induce a wide range of extraordinary perceptions, including changes in one’s sense of time and space, apparent clairvoyance and telepathy, and glimpses of disembodied entities.

Murphy (1992, 184-85) identifies experientialism’s relationship to panpsychism and nondualism, and how these can account for the awareness of metanormal occurrences.

⁷⁶ Jayatilleke (1963, 463) relays Buddhism's emphasis that "knowing" (*jdnam*) must be based on 'seeing" (*passam*) or direct perceptual experience, making it a form of empiricism.

The view held by Whitehead, Griffin, and others that the entire universe is a continually prehending process has been called *panpsychism* or *panexperientialism*, in that it sees soul, experience, or subjectivity everywhere, even in the physical elements. ... This panpsychic or panexperiential view of the universe has led David Griffin to suggest a “nondualism or animistic interactionism” to account for telepathy, telekinesis, and psychophysical transformations ... In this view, all consciousness, all soul, even a disembodied soul, interacts with other entities, whether organic, animal, human, or superhuman, through a prehension that does not always depend upon sensory processes, language, or the direct application of muscular force.

Again, experientialism is but one component of Michael Murphy’s integral philosophy. Taken by itself it provides insufficient foundation without the support of the other philosophical components, and subsequent analytic and comparative evaluations. Experiential philosophy alone cannot stand the test of comparison with the result of science.

Existentialism

Hadot (1995, xvi) informs the reader that:

The profundity of a philosopher lies in his anxious involvement in the doctrine of human existence—its nature and goals—he develops. All great religions of the world were anxiously and earnestly concerned with the problems of human existence.

In Michael Murphy’s (1972, 55) *Golf in the Kingdom*, the existential fear of aloneness is personified by the possibility of a ‘hole-in-one’ on the Burningbush golf course. “A *hole-in-one*,” he intoned the term as if it were the holy of holies, “the flight of the alone to the alone.” Spiegelberg (1971, 490) posits that this dread of abandonment is accompanied by “the connotation of cosmic loneliness or even of condemnation.” This life of anxiety and fear of annihilation in which humanity finds itself is addressed by Murphy’s literary exposition of Picasso’s *Guernica*, the visual masterpiece created in response to

the bombings during the Spanish Civil War. Murphy's (1972, 147) vivid reference to *Guernica* exposes the existential horrors of war, the psychic mutilation, agony, and suffering:

The inner body can be torn and rent, pieces of it can be splattered against the wall. Mental hospitals are full of such carnage, so are broken homes and ghetto streets. Have you ever felt it, a piece of your substance blown away? Why do we say our heart is *broken* and our personality is *split*?

Wulf (1996, 2) describes the concept of anguish, and fear of death as evidence of humanity's innate desire for freedom:

Existence is free and realizes itself only in the doing. Thus the basic human experience is anxiety (M. Heidegger), existence (*Dasein*) is finite, it is *Sein zum Tode* (we live to die). The essential meaning of living arises with the encounter of death. Death challenges us to live our own lives in freedom and self-responsibility.

Stressing the philosophical relationship of existentialism to the anticipation of death, Hadot (1995, 68-69) writes:

Leaving aside all of the rich Western literary tradition, so well-illustrated by Montaigne's Chapter "That to philosophize is to learn to die," we can go straight to Heidegger in order to rediscover the fundamental philosophical exercise in his definition of the authenticity of existence as a lucid anticipation of death.⁷⁷

Raju (1985, 15) again provides an Eastern philosophical perspective:

Modern existentialism is not the result of wonder or of mere love of wisdom. Nor is the life of anxiety which nations even of the West live nowadays in constant fear of nuclear weapons ... The tragic sense of life lies at the core of all religion and serious philosophy.

Western proponents of existentialism include Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, Binswanger, Heidegger, Jasper, Tillich, Frankl, and Sartre (Crowell 2010). Merleau-Ponty crafted his theories of existential phenomenological

⁷⁷ Montaigne, Michel de. 1958.

perception from such philosophers as Husserl, Heidegger, and to a lesser extent, Schleiermacher, Scheler, Sartre, and Kierkegaard (Dillon 1968). Murphy's theses, on the other hand, point to such influential writers as Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1919, 1950, 1972, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 2012); Emerson (Murphy 1992); Teilhard de Chardin (1959, 1974); Chaudhuri (1972a, 1972b, 2002); and texts such as the *upaniṣads*, other Indian *smṛti* (post-Vedic) and *śruti* (sacred scripture), as well as:

The existential approaches of Ludwig Binswanger, Medard Boss, Rollo May, and James Bugental [who] embrace fundamental concerns with life-meaning, authenticity, and death, and in so doing support autonomy and self-reflection.⁷⁸ Jungian therapy aims to enrich consciousness and promote individuation. Transpersonal therapies encourage spiritual insight, joining elements of medical therapy and meditation practice in comprehensive programs for personal growth.⁷⁹ (Murphy 1992, 369)

Raju (1985, 540-41) provides the following Eastern perspective on existentialism:

neither the dialectics of the new positivism, empiricism, and the linguistic schools, nor phenomenological and existential analyses are absolutely new to Indian philosophical literature, although they are not called by those names and appear without their banners, but under the banners of some of the Indian traditions, This statement is made without any arrogance and not with the idea that the Indians have nothing new to learn from the West, but only to show that man thinks and can and should think alike both in the East and the West.

Radhikrishnan, who called himself an idealist, affirmed the existentialistic concept within the ancient *upaniṣads* (Raju 1985, 558). Chaudhuri (1972b, 183) wrote of existential inclusion within 'all' entities. "It is out of the fullness of

⁷⁸ Binswanger, Ludwig (1956); Boss, Medard (1963); May, Rollo, Ernest Angel and Henri Ellenberger (1958); and Bugenthal, James (1965).

⁷⁹ Vaughan, Frances. 1986.

Being's creative freedom that the actual and the ideal, particulars and universals, existents and essences, facts and values, emerge into being." Dyczkowski (1987, 140) adds:

Every existent thing is sacred and enshrines the divine cosmos in the fullness of its participation in Being. The human body, in a particularly special way, is the epitome of the universe; it is the pure vessel of pure consciousness.

Michael Murphy's research and data-driven documentation of extraordinary human potential provides existential and experiential methods of individual phenomenal transformation: they are existential because they are constituted by humankind's search for meaning, and experiential because Murphy's documentation of metanormal events reveals, by default, real-life experience.

There remains a tendency to imply deific absence within classic existentialism and, although Michael Murphy implicitly believes in a telos of pure consciousness by some means, he also, as earlier evidenced, takes great pains to employ scientific and experiential verification in his documentation:

evidence for human transformative capacity, even when viewed in terms of a general evolutionary advance, does not necessarily imply that God, *Geist*, evolution, nature, the Dialectic, or any other entity is automatically implementing its grand design with indifference to individual choice or significance. (Murphy 1992, 198)

Atwood and Stolorow (1984, 7-8) tell the reader:

The notion that a genuine science of human experience demands its own exclusive concepts and methods, and cannot rely on emulating the sciences of nature forms a central tenet of the existential-phenomenological movement. We are in agreement with this tenet, and especially with the phenomenological critique of doctrines of consciousness that descend from Lockean empiricism.

What is a human being? How does he or she function? Why do we exist?

What makes one feel alive? Viktor Frankl (2006, 100-01) declares:

The term *existential* may be used in three ways: to refer to (1) *existence* itself, i.e., the specifically human mode of being; (2) the *meaning* of existence; and (3) the striving to find a concrete meaning in personal existence, that is to say, the *will* to meaning.

Classic existentialism stresses that existence precedes essence, which ties in nicely with Sartre's (1989, 4) view of the responsibility of the individual towards humanity:⁸⁰

If, however, it is true that existence is prior to essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus, the first effort of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility of his existence squarely upon his own shoulders. And, when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men.

This maxim of existence preceding essence is applicable to a contemporary agnostic vision of humankind, and does not take into consideration any essence of divinity. However, in spiritual interpretations of the theory, existentialism lends itself to the existence of a Supreme Principle. This is a primary distinction between classical existentialism and the existentialism of Michael Murphy. Both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty were atheists, although the latter made attempts to include a Pascalian possibility of deistic participation. Spiegelberg (1971, 558)

⁸⁰ For purposes of this study, *essence* means the core nature of God or an Ultimate Principle. Merriam-Webster defines *essence* as “*a*: the permanent as contrasted with the accidental element of being, and *b*: the individual, real, or ultimate nature of a thing especially as opposed to its existence” (Essence 2014).

quotes Merleau-Ponty, who concludes that we are essentially present at the world, and the world is subjective. “It is not only we who choose the world. It is just as much the world which chooses us.”⁸¹ Lawrence (1998, 204), however, argues that essence precedes existence:

God is existentially prior to His creations, whether this is conceived as ex-nihilo or through emanation. Accordingly, His understanding of the rationality by which He constitutes the world must primordially be an understanding of something within Himself, which we may call a kind of self-recognition. This rationality is reflected in our interpretations of the world. In this way, according to traditional Christian doctrine as well as the Pratabhijñā, it is God's self-recognition that provides the necessary grounds for all other reflective “seeing-as” in the world.

Therefore, if God is existentially prior to Its creations, so too is Its essence.

‘Existence precedes essence’ is philosophical terminology, not spiritual dictum.

Classical existentialism concentrates on the existence of the ‘individual’, who, being free and responsible, is held to be what he makes of himself through acts of the will. Sartre (1989, 4) clarifies his hypothesis:

What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards. ... he will be what he makes of himself.

It seems reasonable that humankind makes of itself what it is capable in light of circumstances through acts of volition. This scenario is true whether existence precedes essence or vice-versa. When claiming unification with the Supreme Principle as the final telos, one must embrace essence preceding

⁸¹ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1962, 518.

existence. Within the theory of involution–evolution, humankind is preceded and assisted by the involution of the Supreme Principle into Pre-Matter that propels humankind’s ascension into Vital Life, Psyche, Mind, and upwards. This insinuates the presence of God in all aspects of being.

We exist in the world and what we become is the result of that experience of living in the world. Existence and essence are in harmony with one another. Existentialism is a practical rather than theoretical philosophy focusing on how humans, as sentient being, have presence in the universe, how he or she experiences that presence, and how he or she should interpret that experience. Maslow (1970, 11) expresses the correspondence of essence and existence:

On the whole, most philosophies and religions, Eastern as well as Western, have dichotomized them [the physical and spiritual sides of the individual], teaching that the way to become “higher” is to renounce and master the “lower.” The existentialists, however, teach that *both* are simultaneously defining characteristics of human nature. Neither can be repudiated; they can only be integrated.

In contradistinction to Sartre’s contention that “we are condemned to freedom,” existential phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty (1962, xxii) believe “we are condemned to meaning.”

Existentialism and Phenomenology

In his two-volume scholarly work on *The Phenomenological Movement. A Historical Introduction*, Spiegelberg (1971, 534) advises us that “no commonly agreed definition exists ... phenomenology has practically become all things to all people. Existentialism is based on individual existence, the purpose of which is to find the self and the meaning of life through free will, choice, and personal responsibility. The last thing I intend to introduce is speculation on Michael

Murphy's existential alienation which, beyond normal human emotions, does not appear to be an explicit facet of his worldview. Rather it is Murphy's determination to search, not only for the meaning of life but for methods of improving such existence, that underscores his existentialism.

In his contribution to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Crowell (2010, 2) binds existentialism to phenomenology:

the philosophical legacy of existentialism is largely tied to the form it took as an existential version of phenomenology ... the question of what it means for *me* to be." Most explicitly, this "general question of the meaning of being involves first becoming clear about one's own being as an inquirer.

Smith (2008, 15) defines the parameters of existentialism to include:

the role of attention in the phenomenal field, the experience of the body, the spatiality of the body, the motility of the body, the body in sexual being and in speech, other selves, temporality, and character of freedom so important in ... existentialism.

Maslow (1968, 9) writes that "Existentialism rests on phenomenology, i.e., it uses personal, subjective experience upon which abstract knowledge is built." In similar terminology, Raju (1985, 368) informs that "phenomenological consciousness cannot have its being or existence apart from existential consciousness." According to Spiegelberg (1971, 411), Sartre's concept of existentialism "meant the fusion of phenomenology and existentialism," while

Thompson (1973, 3) finds the distinction between the two:

Granted, existentialism and phenomenology are not totally dissimilar philosophic persuasions—yet there is a difference. For the purposes of this investigation, phenomenology will be considered as an epistemological position lying somewhere between positivism and existentialism, though leaning toward the latter. (3)

Since existentialism relies heavily on experiential perception and interpretation, it is intrinsically related to phenomenology. Within the domain of phenomenology resides the ‘paranormal,’ which Murphy (1992, 588) defines as “A term used in reference to certain phenomena that in some way exceeds the limits of what is deemed possible on current scientific assumptions.” There is a distinct relationship between what is considered ‘paranormal’, and the metanormal or extraordinary events that are associated with advanced human potential. For example, Murphy (1992, 588) includes telepathy and psychokinesis as elements of both the metanormal ‘and’ the paranormal.

In this study, I provide little differentiation between phenomenology, the paranormal, and the metanormal or extraordinary. Each is a result of things as they appear. I have made every effort to remain true to Michael Murphy’s preferred use of metanormal or extraordinary occurrences. It is important, however, to address similarities due to this close association of phenomenology to existentialism.

While Kant (2008, 267) provided a distinction between things-in-themselves (*noumena*), which do exist but which we cannot know fully, and things as we come to know them (*phenomenon*), the two are harmonious in nontemporal sequencing as both are existents. It is safe to say that the phenomenological and the metanormal are similar but not identical; metanormal

easily falls under the rubric of ‘phenomenology’, as does ‘paranormal.’ In addition, metanormal practices go far and beyond phenomenological perception. O’Neill (1970, 16) clarifies the conterminous relationship of existentialism and phenomenology:

Phenomenology and existentialism go hand-in-hand: “insofar as philosophy is an inventory of consciousness as the milieu of the universe, philosophy becomes a phenomenology whose mark is an inescapable existential index.

Spiegelberg (1971, 410) provides the following:

Heidegger, however, at least at the stage of *Sein und Zeit*, maintains that his existential analytics is phenomenology. He even claims that it constitutes a science in Husserl’s sense, though hermeneutics implies a considerable modification of phenomenological science as Husserl understood it.

Raju (1985, 364) again provides an Indian philosophical perspective:

The ideas which phenomenology and existentialism can get here are that the knower (I-am) can not only make gross and subtle objects the objects of his consciousness (*grāhya-samāpatti*), but also his own senses and the three factors of the inner sense (*grāhana-samāpatti*), and his I-am or amness (*asmitā*), and Prakṛti and his self (*grahītṛ-samāpatti*). To make Prakṛti one’s object means that there is a way by which my consciousness is directed towards objectivity as such; not consciousness for this or that object, but a general consciousness that there is objectivity which is not myself, and through which the ontological status of myself and all the separate objects can be ascertained.

Panentheistic Humanism

Throughout his adult life, Michael Murphy has been an exponent of what is called ‘citizen diplomacy’ through his personal involvement as well as his association with Esalen Institute.⁸² Baker (2010, 252) writes:

Where the world was the most unfriendly, Michael would decide to do something about it. Where there was ignorance, intellectual stagnation, a lack of vision, spiritual benightedness, Michael would do something about it. He is fearless, and he also saw nothing to fear.

Humanism is any system of thought or ideology which places humans or humanity as a whole at the center of interest; one which is predominantly involved with human concerns and welfare, and focuses on the inherent value and potential of human life. However, Murphy’s humanism is in contradistinction to the rejection, still employed by many classic theorists, of theism or deism in favor of more secular views of humanity. Murphy, as is abundantly evident, favors a telos of deific participation. The term ‘humanism’ can be ambiguous, and there is interpretational contention because, over time, various philosophical movements have identified with it. As enumerated, Sartre equates humanism within the domain of existentialism, opining that ‘man’s search for meaning’ is not only the individual man’s search for meaning but also humanity’s search for meaning. Each is codependent upon and generates the other. In his famous lecture of 1946,

⁸² Citizen diplomacy, as appropriated by Esalen’s TRACK TWO, BRIC, and other programs, addresses problems and opportunities shared by the peoples of Russia, Brazil, China, India, the United States and other areas of the world in conflict. TRACK TWO, formerly *The Russian-American Center*, has worked with the Soviet Union and Russia for more than 29 years through interactions between governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well through individuals or ‘citizen diplomats (Esalen TRACK TWO 2013, 1).

"Existentialism is a Humanism," Sartre (1989, 14) told his audience: "What is at the very heart and center of existentialism is the absolute character of the free commitment, by which every man realizes himself in realizing a type of humanity."

Taking the substantive ambiguity of a uniform definition of humanism, qualification is required. Quoted by Rogers (1935, 266), Huxley characterizes the secular humanist as a:

life-worshipper, [one who] for the most part, disregards eternal life and religion, finding life in this world quite sufficient in itself, and life as an adequate reason for life.

Michael Murphy's evolutionary panentheism, and his belief in the telos of a Supreme Principle—although carefully maintaining that his research into evidence and practices of metanormal human capacity does not promise extraordinary advancement beyond the present faculties of Mind—negates any humanist exclusion of religious consideration. Murphy is a panentheistic humanist; one who is sympathetic and empathetic to human needs, interests, and welfare (and more importantly, one who has dedicated his life to acting upon such concerns), but one who supports humanity's eventuating unification with the Supreme Principle. One need look no further than Murphy's passion in raising the awareness of humanity's potential to transform itself into higher levels of spiritual identity and fulfillment. Fuller (2010, 196-97) writes:

In its insistence that *everyone* has untapped mental, physical, and spiritual faculties, the Human Potential Movement goes beyond identity politics. No one has done more to midwife this movement than Michael Murphy ... pioneer citizen diplomat, and visionary author. Murphy is an artist who has presented us with a new picture of ourselves, and, slowly but surely, we are coming to resemble the picture.

Robert Reich (2010, 162-64) defines two complimentary parameters of Michael Murphy's humanist productivity:

Most of us carry around both sets of aspirations—one for ourselves and our families, another for our society (or for mankind, future generations, the planet). The two are not always in perfect harmony. ...we tend to be more responsive to one of them at one time in our lives than at another. ... Not Michael. He has consistently and unfailingly sought both.

Murphy not only expands upon the value of the individual in his or her potential for growth, but has balanced this with his social commitment to individual and collective humankind through the creation of and participation in programs and activities that advance humanity's well-being as a whole. Murphy has accomplished this through diplomacy as a citizen activist in international politics, social and educational programs, arts exchange programs, the advancement of health, the pursuit of religious tolerance, and economic initiatives. Through his continued involvement with Esalen, Murphy expands his activities to benefit certain segments of society. Esalen's Center for Theory and Research (CTR) and TRACK TWO have been influential forces of subtle politics throughout trouble-spots worldwide.⁸³ The Esalen TRACK TWO website (2013, 8) states:

Murphy has worked extensively with Russia and the Soviet Union since 1980 and continues to expand the mandate of TRACK TWO and citizen diplomacy. Most of TRACK TWO's advisors and board members also worked with the Esalen Soviet-American Exchange Program and The Russian-American Center.

⁸³ TRACK TWO is a nonprofit Institute for Citizen Diplomacy, formerly The Russian-American Center and originally Esalen Institute's Soviet-American Exchange Program created and led by Michael and Dulce Murphy (Esalen TRACK TWO, 2013).

Lizabeth Hasse (2010, 88) writes in *An Actual Man* about the PTSD project between The U.S.S.R. and the United States created by TRACK TWO in 1989.⁸⁴

Michael Murphy and Esalen's Soviet–American Exchange center [launched] a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder project engaging American and Soviet specialists, an example of Esalen's experimental, Humanist activism. They were bringing a group of Soviet Afghanistan War veterans to participate in an exchange of healing practices, trying to close gaps between traditional psychiatry and spirituality, seeking through expanding states of consciousness and shared experience to transcend resistant and disconnecting memories of physical and emotional pain and fear.

In 1989, the Esalen Institute was host to Boris Yeltsin on his first trip to the United States. Michael Murphy and the Institute arranged meetings between Yeltsin and U.S. government and business leaders, including George Bush and Ronald Reagan. Representatives accompanied Yeltsin to cities and towns across the country, arranged lectures and television appearances and—in an incident of international significance—Yeltsin was taken to a Houston supermarket and saw firsthand the endless rows of fresh produce and meat available to casual shoppers, with none of the waiting lines common in the Soviet Union. Kripal (2007, 397) confirms this infamous visit, describing Yeltsin as:

visibly angry and upset. According to his closest aide, Lev Sukhanov ... it was in that Houston grocery store that “the last vestige of Bolshevism collapsed” inside Boris Yeltsin. Later, in an interview for *Ogonyok*, Yeltsin described “this madness of colours, smells, boxes, packs, sausages, cheese was—impossible to bear. Only in that supermarket it became clear

⁸⁴ Extensive chronological lists of the accomplishments of TRACK TWO, CTR, BRIC, The Abrahamic Project, and other social and diplomatic outreach programs can be found within Esalen's primary website (Esalen 2013).

to me why Stalinism so painstakingly erected the ‘iron curtain.’”⁸⁵ Soon after that experience, Yeltsin would officially quit the Party and find himself on a tank in front of the Russian parliament before an international media.

Although it took more than a brief visit to an American supermarket to effect the democratization of Yeltsin, it is evident that the event was a catalyst to the political reformation of Russia in 1981.

A consequence of his commitment to literary freedom and noncensorship, Michael Murphy introduced Norman Mailer to the Soviet Writers Union in 1984, initiating an enduring relationship between Soviet and American writers, which eventually led to the Soviet Union joining the International Pen Club.⁸⁶ In 1989, Murphy:

Celebrated, with Soviet counterparts including the USSR Union of Writers, the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Events were held in Steinbeck’s home town of Salinas, California and in Moscow, with leading Steinbeck scholars at Moscow State University. A festival of Steinbeck films, an exhibit of original Steinbeck memorabilia and photographs by Horace Bristol, as well as lectures on Steinbeck’s life and works were held at the Writers Union in Moscow and attended by large audiences. (Esalen TRACK TWO 2013, 7)⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Aron, Leon. 2000. *Yelstin: A Revolutionary Life*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

⁸⁶ On one of a series of five audio-tapes, Murphy speaks of the:

brokering of their Writers Union coming into the International Pen Club—THE organization in the World that monitors censorship. (Their Writers Union was their way of censoring and controlling who could write in their country.) In 1986 a trip to the U. S. was organized for eminent writers with the intention of bringing them in from the cold. All of this was planned before Gorbachev came to power. This initiative began under the pre-Gorbachev regime. An even more eminent group came over for the second trip; a crucial event under Glasnost and it was brokered by us. (Murphy 2009a).

⁸⁷ John Steinbeck is reported to have used Michael Murphy and his younger brother Dennis as models for the two brothers in his novel “East of Eden” (Tomkins 1976, 31).

One of the elements of a free society is the broadening of universal access to writers within different cultures. “In 1996, Esalen TRACK TWO initiated a program with Lindisfarne Press to publish English language editions of major Russian philosophers including Solovyov, Berdyaev, and Bulgakov” (Esalen, TRACK TWO, 7).

Strongly supporting efforts toward the safety and well-being of youth, Esalen continued its important work with the Chernobyl Children's Project in 1995. With special assistance from TRACK TWO, youth from areas affected by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster worked in partnership with their American supporters to develop new skills, confidence, and lasting personal relationships. In 1998, Esalen held meetings at the Institute of Polio-Myelitis in Moscow to help augment vaccine production and distribution in Russia (Esalen TRACK TWO 2013, 9-11). Kripal (2007, 393) informs that Yelstin declared all net proceeds from his Esalen sponsored visit be set aside for the purchase of “disposable hypodermic needles to be used back home in order to help prevent the spread of AIDS.”

In 2006 alone, in efforts to promote ethnic and religious tolerance, Esalen and Michael Murphy cosponsored a Christian Fundamentalist Conference in April. The Jewish Fundamentalist Conference in September “launched a research and development project as part of TRACK TWO’s out-reach to other countries and cultures on the Muslim Diaspora” within Central Asia. They held the first meeting of their Islamic Outreach program in Mill Valley, California and, in

2007, cosponsored the first Abrahamic Family Strategic Planning Workshop, “where planning for future collaboration was discussed with leading members of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities” (Esalen TRACK TWO 2013, 15).

These examples are but a small sampling of hundreds of events and initiatives attributable to Michael Murphy’s sympathies with issues of the disenfranchised, the persecuted, the diasporic, and the politically fractious and powerless factions of contemporary humanity. Murphy continues to be a leading force of implementation at Esalen. He is currently Chairman Emeritus of the board of the Institute, and directs the Institute’s think-tank operations through its Center for Theory and Research (Esalen CTR. 2013).

N. K. Gupta (1976, 129-30) penned the following:

The individual must be free, free in his creative joy to bring out and formulate, in thought, in speech, in action, in all the modes of expression, the truth, the beauty, the good he experiences within. An all-round culture, a well-developed mind, a well-organised life, a well-formed body, a harmonious working of all the members of the system at a high level of consciousness—that is man’s need, for there lies his self-fulfillment. That is the ideal of Humanism.

Evaluations of the personal essays in *An Actual Man* (Leonard 2010; Hasse 2010; Fuller 2010; Wheeler 2010) support my belief that this “ideal of Humanism,” as expressed by Gupta (1976), can be conferred upon Michael Murphy as a synopsis of his life’s avocation.

Integrality (and Nonduality)

Michael Murphy holds the concept of integrality in the highest esteem. It underscores his entire methodology. In “The Emergence of Evolutionary Panentheism” (2012a, 20), he advocates for:

a many-sided approach to transformative practice, one that embraces body, mind, heart, and soul. That perspective is fundamental to Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga, Ken Wilber’s integral epistemology, the Integral Transformative Practice.

Murphy’s concept of integrality in all things stems from an innate belief that permeated his thinking even as a young man. Integrality is prevalent in Murphy’s philosophy of being, and continues to be an important facet of Murphy’s research and worldview. He writes: “we cannot comprehend our potentials for extraordinary life without a synoptic, or integral, empiricism that involves many fields of inquiry and different kinds of knowing” (1992, 4).

So what is the relationship of integrality to nonduality? Nonduality is the concept of ‘oneness’ or concrete unification. This is not meant to suggest that there is no duality within humanity’s current existence; indeed, duality is prevalent. What nonduality emphasizes is that all perceived dualities in the present are negated by their eventuating unification with the Supreme Principle as all entities merge into single consciousness. Nonduality is also supported by the unified interrelationship and interconnectedness of all entities (Whitehead 1933, 1978; Hosinski 1993). According to the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* (2014, 4: 2) published by the Union of International Associations (UIA):

The distinction between what is and what is not is to be found in the permanence or changeableness of what is being considered. That which observes does not change with what is observed, the ultimate being perception or consciousness itself which is unchanging. Rationally it is clear that there can be no being beyond consciousness and that consciousness and real existence are inseparable.

Were one to look up ‘nondualism’ in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Nondualism 2014), he or she would be directed to a review on ‘panentheism’. The concept of nondualism is present in both Eastern and Western thought. The *advaita* in Sri Aurobindo’s *advaita vedānta* means ‘not two’. “Early Vedantic thought implies panentheism in non-*advaita* forms that understand nondualism as inclusive of differences” (Culp, 2103, 2).

The integral concept of nonduality that blossomed in Michael Murphy as a teenager, has been refined through Murphy’s study of philosophy, natural history, and certain Eastern and Western disciplines. Again, in pure integrality, the overarching theme of cosmic existence is a multiplicity of events and entities within an infinite nonduality because of the interconnectivity and interdependence of all things.

The constituent elements that lead to eventuating wholeness are multiple, co-dependent, and eternally unified. Each and every entity interacts with, creates from, and is interdependent upon all other entities (Gupta 1976; Stober 2009; Sen 1952). Since involution–evolution posits the presence of the Supreme Principle in

Pre-Matter and all subsequent rungs (levels) on Śri Aurobindo's spiritual evolutionary ladder (Ghose 2006; Chaudhuri 1972b; McDermott 1973), and as each level is constituted by the former and latter plateaus of descent and ascent, then the nonduality of Matter, Vital Life, Psyche, four levels of Mind, Overmind, and the Supreme Principle of Supernature is apparent.

Dillon (1968, 55) asks the following:

Which concepts, which terms are at stake? And the answer here must be: all of them. All the traditional distinctions—subject v. object, percept v. sensation, thought v. thing—have grown up from the endeavor of articulating a total vision, a presumptive unity of understanding, and implicit apriori which Western philosophy has been attempting to express and refine since its inception.

Any philosophical opposition of subjectivity to objectivity is proved difficult due to the integrality of perception which requires both a 'perceiver' and a 'thing perceived' to be in perfect unification for a perception to occur. Spiegelberg (1971, 551-52) cites Merleau-Ponty (1962):

Subjectivity thus assumes the form of "inherence in the world." In fact, the world is nothing but the field of our experience and we are nothing but a certain perspective of it. In other words, the internal and the external, the subjective and the objective are inseparable.

This inseparability supports the evidence of nondualism. One cannot realize the cause, purpose, and existence of one entity without entertaining and evaluating the others because they are intertwined within and interdependent upon one another. Merleau-Ponty (1964, 4-5) opined on the inseparability of subject-object, and mind-body-spirit:

we are no longer present at the emergence of perceptual behaviors; rather we install ourselves in them in order to pursue the analysis of this exceptional relation between the subject and its body and the world. For contemporary psychology and psychopathology the body is no longer merely *an object in the world*, under the purview of a separated spirit. It is on the side of the subject; it is our *point of view on the world*, the place where the spirit takes on a certain physical and historical situation ... [the soul] is wholly intermingled with the body.

Whitehead (1978, 242) focuses on the nonduality of conscious and unconscious:

Whenever there is consciousness there is some element of recognition. It recalls earlier phases from the dim recesses of the unconscious. Long ago this truth was asserted in Plato's doctrine of reminiscence. No doubt Plato was directly thinking of eternal truths lingering in a soul derivate from a timeless heaven of pure form. Be that as it may, then in a wider sense consciousness enlightens experience which precedes it, and could be without it considered as a mere datum.

Maitra (1941, 1) posits that "the fundamental idea upon which the integral structure of Śri Aurobindo's philosophy rests is that Matter as well as Spirit is to be looked upon as real." To Bolle (1971, 132), this infers a refusal of the old dichotomies of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, of *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*, of a real and an illusory existence. Regarding body–mind dualism, Reynolds (2005, 3) encapsulates a tenet of Merleau-Ponty's (1962) philosophy of body-as-subject:

we are our bodies, and that our lived experience of this body denies the detachment of subject from object, mind from body, etc. ... This means simply that the perceiving mind is an incarnated body, or to put the problem in another way, it enriches the concept of the body to allow it to both think and perceive. It is also for these reasons that we are best served by referring to the individual as not simply a body, but as a body-subject.

Merleau-Ponty also challenges the ostensible dichotomy of subject–object through the phenomena of perception, and the integrality of immanence and transcendence (Reynolds 2005, 5).

Immanence is inherent: an actual presence, or the abiding of or remaining within an actual presence. In evolutionary panentheism, *immanence* permanently permeates and sustains the universe, as distinguished from the notion of an external *transcendent* creator or ruler. Dillon (1968, 153) describes immanence as “the sphere of consciousness, subjectivity, being-for-itself” as opposed to transcendence, which is “the sphere of things, objectivity, being-in-itself.” Of course, one cannot exist without the other. Merleau-Ponty advises of the:

paradox of immanence and transcendence in perception. Immanence, because the perceived object cannot be foreign to him who perceives; transcendence, because it always contains something more than what is actually given. And these two elements of perception are not, properly speaking, contradictory. (1964, 16)

Dillon (1968, 104) adds:

Phenomena must be conceived as both immanent and transcendent: transcendence alone is incapable of presence and givenness, and the requisite immanence is articulated in the *Phenomenology* in the terminology of subjectivity and consciousness. “What is evident to us [*nos évidences*] is certainly fact, but is inseparable from us,” therefore, we must define “being as that which appears to us and consciousness as a universal fact.”⁸⁸

Transcendence connotes dynamism. To transcend is to surpass or exceed others of its kind; to go above and beyond ordinary limits. The concept of immanence requires that of transcendence for validation. McDermott (1973, 152) writes of the “two poles of being whose essential unity is the secret of existence, Brahman and *Śakti*, Spirit and Nature.”

⁸⁸ Merleau-Ponty 1954, 397.

Nonduality is like a magnet. It has its positive charge and its negative charge; yet one without the other is meaningless, since one without the other is not a magnet. Theoretically, to be a magnet infers a positive and negative charge; a duality which is foundationally integral as a singular object. As Buckham (1931, 207) explains:

Logically considered, the concept “immanence” is incomplete and impotent without its polar concept “transcendence.” It has no true meaning, as has already been pointed out, apart from transcendence. Immanence-transcendence, that is, belongs to the class of polar relationship which may be termed contrapletion, in which one contraplete requires the other as its antithesis, in order to fulfill its meaning, as e.g., above-below, light-darkness, whole-part, subject-object, human-divine, finite-infinite, etc.

Chaudhuri (1972a, 14) speaks to the nonduality of body, mind, and spirit:

First, the world in which we live is not a dichotomy of Nature and Spirit, but rather a Nature-Spirit continuum and an evolutionary movement endowed with the possibility of enormous growth beyond the present human level dominated by the divisive forces of the mind. ... Second, the total being of man is not a dichotomy of matter and mind nor a dualism of flesh and soul, but a body-mind-soul continuum. His being-in-the-world and his nontemporal dimension of oneness with Being are inseparable aspects of his total reality.

In *Religion in the Making*, Whitehead (1926, 90) states that:

The temporal world and all its formative elements constitute for us the all-inclusive universe. These formative elements are: 1. The creativity whereby the actual world has its character of temporal passage to novelty. 2. The realm of ideal entities, or forms, which are in themselves not actual, but are such that they are exemplified in everything that is actual, according to some proportion of relevance. 3. The actual but non-temporal entity whereby the indetermination of mere creativity is transmuted into a determinate freedom. This non-temporal actual entity is what men call God—the supreme God of rationalized religion.

Buckham (1931, 207) expanded on the co-relationship of immanence and transcendence:

This universal human creation activity, involving transcendence of the thing created and immanence in it, seems to furnish the best possible clue to the origin and nature of the universe as a whole. In what other way may we conceive of the coming into being and development of the cosmos than by this appeal to our own creative experience and reason,-especially when the highest motive we ourselves know, i.e., love, is assigned to the total cosmic process.

Summarization of Philosophical Concepts within Michael Murphy's Worldview

Any theory or philosophy is based, consciously or unconsciously, on a variety of grounding constituent philosophies or modes of operation. Michael Murphy's world vision is a composition of five philosophical components: Gestalt, existentialism, experientialism, pantheistic humanism, and integrality. These do not constitute the entirety of Murphy's philosophical components but are, in my view, primary constituents. Complete theoretical integrality posits dualisms that fold within themselves to generate the nondual reality of truth-existence. Murphy's embracement of Gestalt is implicit throughout his active participation in integrality, in which the whole or Gestalt is composed of its constituent parts and is, at least, as substantial as those parts. Murphy cites Gestalt Therapy, prevalent within the circles of Esalen, as one of five examples of transformative methods that promote healing and growth. Gestalt supports the coalescence of mind-body-spirit, subject-object, self-other, subjective-objective, and immanence-transcendence. The portrayal of involution-evolution discourages any dichotomy of separateness.

There is nothing in Michael Murphy's work and worldview that does not require the act of participation, the foundation of experientialism. This participation includes physical, mental, and spiritual activity. Experientialism is foundationally Gestalt and integral, falling within the grounding structures of empiricism, panpsychism, and phenomenology.

Existentialism is based on individual existence, the purpose of which is to find the self and the meaning of life through free will, choice, and personal responsibility. We exist in the world and what we become is the result of our experience of living. For most, existentialism maintains a theoretical alliance with phenomenology.

Michael Murphy's work in the natural and behavioral sciences with respect to metanormal human advancement is balanced by an intense social commitment toward the betterment of mankind. This is evident by his extensive work with the health, education, social, political, and cultural issues of the powerless factions of contemporary humanity.

Section 8: Michael Murphy, Fiction Author

Part of the unique quality of Michael Murphy's body of written work is in the transition of fictional accounts of metaphysics, science, the spiritual, the magical, and the mystical to his later nonfiction theorizations that complement and enhance the veracity of these same elements. This evolution originates with his fantastical creations of the metanormal in *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972), cellular reconstruction in *Jacob Atabet* (1977b), and otherworldly luminosity in *An End to Ordinary History* (1982). They conclude with his theses on: (1) meditation in *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* (Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor 1999), (2) extraordinary feats of sport that fill the pages of *In the Zone* (Murphy and White 1995), (3) the spiritual philosophy of involution–evolution in “The Emergence of Evolutionary Panentheism” (Murphy 2012a) and, (4) the data-driven documentation of metanormal human events and the possibilities for psychological, physiological, and spiritual transformation in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992). It is my intention to illustrate, as a theoretical exercise, how Murphy's efforts in nonfiction segue, emulate, and complete his visions that originally appeared as, for lack of a better term, science fiction. In other words, Murphy's basic philosophical foundations and avid interest in the natural history of metanormal evidence do not diminish in his transition from novel to textbook, but are expanded upon and authenticated. It is a textbook example of how, in the opinion of Oscar Wilde, life can indeed imitate art, at least in the case of the literary production of Michael Murphy. In *The Decay of Lying*, Wilde (1909, 13) provides the following assessment:

Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life, and I feel sure that if you think seriously about it you will find that it is true. Life holds the mirror up to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter or sculptor, or realises in fact what has been dreamed in fiction. Scientifically speaking, the basis of life—the energy of life, as Aristotle would call it—is simply the desire for expression, and Art is always presenting various forms through which this expression can be attained.

Michael Murphy's nonfiction not only imitates the 'art' of his novels, but authenticates his metamorphic forays into metanormal events and spiritual underscoring through scrupulous research and documentation. I will underscore the relationship between Murphy's fiction and nonfiction by analyzing their continuities, illustrating how fabricated plotlines and events are incorporated into Murphy's explication of advanced metanormal potential and methods of transmutation present within his nonfiction. By his second novel, *Jacob Atabet* (1977b):

Murphy further theorizes on his own occult experiences and begins to dream of a kind of magnum opus, a book to end all books on both the reality and evolutionary encoding of supranormal phenomena throughout human history. (Kripal 2007, 291)

Michael Murphy is credited with the publication of four novels. In chronological order, they are *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972), *Jacob Atabet* (1977b), *An End to Ordinary History* (1982), and *The Kingdom of Shivas Irons* (1997). In an article in *The American Society for Aesthetics*, F. E. Sparshott (1967, 3) argues against the assumption of philosophers like Joseph Margolis, who contend that works of fiction cannot be "construed as embodying claims to tell any truth about

the real world.”⁸⁹ Fiction always portrays some truths, no matter how obscure.

The psychological conditioning of the writer reveals, in some aspectual degree, the truth of who that author is and the relevance of revelation. Sparshott (1978, 44) agrees that truth is revealed in fiction when the product:

consists of the beliefs that generally prevailed in the community where the fiction originated: the beliefs of the author and his intended audience. And indeed the factual premises that seemed to us acceptable in reasoning ... were generally believed in the community of origin of the stories.

In the same article, Sparshott (1978, 45) goes on to say that:

Truth in fiction is the joint product of two sources: the explicit content of the fiction, and a background consisting of either of the facts about our world ... or of the beliefs overt in the community of origin.

Whitehead (1933, 241) tells us that “Reality is just itself, and it is nonsense to ask whether it be true or false.” To make sense of Michael Murphy’s corpus of evolutionary thought that led to his data-driven nonfiction research into, panentheism, and advanced human potential, I am compelled to make a literary argument by asking the question: Can fiction be about truth or does it just represent truths? Of course, to argue for or against the validity of or interpretation

⁸⁹ Margolis, Joseph Zalman (1955, 155) is an American philosopher who has published numerous books critical of the central assumptions of Western philosophy, and has elaborated a vigorous form of relativism.

of truth is not my undertaking. That is for others to debate. However, it ‘is’ my intention to illustrate the relationship of art to fiction by focusing on the three novels Murphy wrote prior to or in concert with *The Future of the Body* (1992).⁹⁰

Science Fiction: Does Genre Matter?

Assigning specific literary classification to Michael Murphy’s fiction is not without its challenges. As stated, three out of four of these works are precursors to *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992) and other nonfiction, but without the data-driven documentation and explication, much of the phenomenal activity within the pages of Murphy’s fiction might appear to the novice as speculative and fantastical, albeit teeming with certain scientific, philosophical, and religious truths.

Margaret Atwood (2005), winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award and Prince of Asturias Award for Literature wrote an article for U.K.’s *The Guardian*, titled “Why We Need Science Fiction.”

The form is often used as a way of acting out the consequences of a theological doctrine. The theological resonances in films such as *Star Wars* are more than obvious. Extraterrestrials have taken the place of angels, demons, fairies and saints, though it must be said that this last group is now making a comeback. ... Literature is an uttering, or outering, of the human imagination. It lets the shadowy forms of thought and feeling—heaven, hell, monsters, angels and all—out into the light, where

⁹⁰ *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972), *Jacob Atabet* (1977b), and *An End to Ordinary History* (1982). *The Kingdom of Shivas Irons* (1997) is a product of ‘art imitating life’ as it was written after *The Future of the Body* (1992) as an extension and conclusion to Murphy’s (1972) *Golf in the Kingdom*. Published a quarter of a century apart, *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972) and *The Kingdom of Shivas Irons* (1997) are similar products, both with metaphysics as their overarching theme underscored with references to the spiritual, mysterious, and metanormal. Of *The Kingdom of Shivas Irons* (1997), the author of *The Celestine Prophecy* proclaims, “Michael Murphy has achieved a rare feat; he has penned a sequel to that not only amplifies and extends his earlier masterpiece but creates a new vision of future possibility” (Redfield 1982, back cover).

we can take a good look at them and perhaps come to a better understanding of who we are and what we want, and what the limits to those wants may be. Understanding the imagination is no longer a pastime, but a necessity; because increasingly, if we can imagine it, we'll be able to do it.

Science fiction can be defined as imaginative fiction based on postulated scientific discoveries, often set in the future or in other realms, and often involving space and/or time-travel. Science fiction deals, primarily, with the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individuals, or employs scientific technology as an essential component. In an interview in *The Washington Post*, Hamilton (2003, 271) hypothesizes that:

reading science fiction used to be the only way to get to the future. ... Now the pace of change is so continuous and so fast there's no longer any clear barrier separating us from the future. We're living in the future. We're living in science fiction.

Murphy provided his own evaluation of his fiction, when, according to Kripal (2007, 272):

he drew a four-part distinction between fantasy, science fiction, magical realism, and his own occult or mystical realism. Whereas *fantasy* is that genre of literature that is purely fictional and is meant solely for the entertainment of the imagination (think *Lord of the Rings*), *science fiction* is roughly based on reality, that is, on the future possibilities of technology and science (think *Star Trek*). Often, moreover, the latter is intended to be predictive of what will someday be. For Murphy, though, a novel like *Golf in the Kingdom*, or *Jacob Atabet* is not quite any of these things. These rather are expressions of what he calls *occult* or *mystical realism*.

All of the following designations are easily applicable to Michael Murphy's fiction: science fiction, the spiritual, the magical, the occult, the mystical.

Fiction as Vehicle for Presenting Worldview

Michael Murphy's fiction parallels his own research—often experiential—into the metanormal in natural and behavioral science, psychology, metaphysics, sports, and meditation. Murphy's use of symbolism is evident. A vivid example is his comparison of the “perfect golf links” to a Pythagorean wind-instrument in *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972, 49):

It would include music on certain holes. All sports,” he whispers, conspiratorially, “are improved when you can hear the right music with the inner ear if possible, or with bagpipes and bands if you couldn't. Ecstasy produced beneficial vitamins, it seemed.”

In his fiction, Michael Murphy appropriates archetypes, mystical powers, magical events, the metanormal, and the cosmological relationship of the macro- and microcosm. In *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972, 53), Shivas—golf-pro, storyteller, and guru—claims that “God recapitulates evolution ... it is a microcosm of the world, a projection of all our hopes and fears.” To which the fictitious Murphy reflects: “I cannot remember the phrases, but his words were an ecstatic hymn to golf ... as it might appear in the Platonic World of Ideas, the archetypal game of games.” Another character in *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972, 55) posits, “We know in our bones what we are meant to be, so we are attracted by any glimpse of greater possibilities.”

The protagonist of *Golf in the Kingdom* and *The Kingdom of Shivas Irons* is a fictionalized version of Michael Murphy, himself, who mirrors the real Murphy's zeal for spiritual and intellectual quest. Kripal (2007, 60) writes of the actual Murphy's eventful stop on his journey to India:

[Murphy] thus abandoned the doctoral program to do what he had long wanted to do anyway: go to India. He set off in April of 1956. On his way, ever the avid golfer, he stopped over in Scotland to play a round of golf on the famous links of St. Andrews, the legendary origin site of the game. It was this pilgrimage and this round of golf that would later become fictionalized in Murphy's popular novel, *Golf in the Kingdom*.

In *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972, 3), St. Andrews morphs into Burningbush, which is a famous golf course in Scotland where, between the poetic alliteration of “the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Tay, lies the Kingdom of Fife—known to certain lovers of that land, simply, as “The Kingdom.”

In fact, stark evidence of Michael Murphy's overriding fascination with comparative religio-spiritualism, mysticism, and advanced metanormal potential is contained within the first fourteen pages of *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972, 1-14). Murphy references Śri Aurobindo, St. John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart, human potential, Plotinus, the Ten Commandments, Lucifer, the *psychonauts* of Esalen, and the Kingdom—confirmation of his foundational interest all of the above-referenced components. The *San Francisco Examiner* declared *Golf in the Kingdom* “the basis for a whole philosophical and ethical concept, golf as a metaphor for life” (Kamstra 1972). Murphy clearly has a great deal to say, and incorporates a plethora of philosophical and metaphysical wisdom into his first novel. His efforts proved successful. *Golf in the Kingdom* (1992) is the bestselling work of fiction ever written about the game of golf, with millions of readers. In 2010, it was made into a film starring Malcolm McDowell and Frances Fisher (Murphy and Streitfeld, 2011). Roger McGrath (2011, CI) wrote in *The New York Times*:

For many golfers Michael Murphy's 1972 novel, *Golf in the Kingdom*, is practically a sacred text. It's about a young man, modeled on Mr. Murphy himself, who, on his way to an ashram in India stops off in Scotland, where his life is transformed by an encounter with a golf pro and mystic named Shivas Irons, who knows as much about Pythagorus and the Hindu scriptures as he does about hitting a high fade.

A successful if modest interpretation, the film does not disguise the predominance of the mystical and metaphysical in its transition from novel to screen.

During his first round of golf at Burningbush, the fictional Michael Murphy meets the shamanlike, charismatic golf pro, Shivas Irons who, over a twenty-four hour period, teaches Murphy of the confluence of golf and spirituality. "Let the nothingness into your shots" (Murphy 1972, 38). Given Murphy's predilection for ascribing allegorical identities within the names of his characters, it can be claimed that Shivas is a reference to the God, *Śiva* (Shiva). Although Murphy (1992, 11) denies this, said renouncement might be interpreted as tongue-in-cheek:

There is also a noun "shive," which means a slice of bread; I would prefer to think that his name derived from that, since he offered me the very bread of life in his presence and wisdom. There is also the noun "shivereens," which has approximately the same meaning as the word "smithereens," namely fragments, atoms, shivers (he was blown to smithereens); that relationship is apropos, seeing what he did to certain people's perceptions. I could find no connection with the ancient Hindu name for the God of Destruction and Redemption ... but I have consoled myself that direct etymologies are not the only sign of inner consciousness.

Shivas's own mentor, Seamus MacDuff is an otherworldly figure, spoken of but never seen. Seamus is working on a project he calls gravity—something that involves an awareness of 'energy-dimensions' and the relation of 'things'.

Through Seamus, and characters and events in future novels, readers are able to quickly discern Michael Murphy's affinity for quantum theories as evidenced by

references to The Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen effect, Bell's theorem, closed timelike world lines, 'zero-point' energy due to quantum-mechanical fluctuations in space, references to David Bohm, string theory, random event machines, and the idea that the future can enter the present, curving back to speak "though light-cones tipped in extremely curved space-time" (Murphy 1992, 49).

In *Golf in the Kingdom*, Murphy (1972, 34-35) also delves deeply into the evolutionary process of consciousness:

Then on the ninth hole I did see something. It wasn't much, just the tiniest glimpse, but I did seem to see a yellow light around a sea gull swooping in from the sea. Then as I was driving on the tenth it happened again, a tiny aura around the ball, a violet one this time. When I hit the ball I hit the sweet spot (30-31) ... Specters of former attitudes passed through me, familiar curses and excuses, memories of old shots, all the flotsam and jetsam of my golfing unconscious—but a quiet field of energy held me and washed them away. I can think of no better way to say it—these final holes played me.

Later that same evening, Murphy and Shivas golf in the dark of night, letting their inner instinct and consciousness drive the balls into improbable feats of precision.

At Shivas's house, our protagonist realizes that Shivas is no ordinary man, but a guru using the game of golf as analogies of spirituality and hidden human potential:

I think we're like the great God who lost Himself in this dark unconscious universe and wends His way back toward light and fullest knowin'. Forgettin' and rememberin', losin' and finding our original face—the great God and all of us are in the game together. (Murphy 1972, 66).

Analogous References between Murphy's Fiction and Nonfiction

In the following overview, I offer specific instances of how Michael Murphy's unique visions made the transition from his fiction to nonfiction. He writes in *Jacob Atabet* (1977b, 125):

Yet there is much evidence that the body can manifest the glories of spirit—evidence from myths and legends all over the world, from hypnosis and psychical research, from the lore of spiritual healing, from the stigmatic prodigies described in the religious and psychiatric literatures, from sports and Tantra, from the physical phenomena of mysticism.

In fact, Murphy's works of fiction are replete with events of transformative human capacity supported by the mystical, spiritual, and mythical: a black phantom apparition eyeballing the protagonist at the infamous thirteenth-hole, the field of clotted gorse built on a graveyard, the diaphanous atmosphere of the eighteenth-hole offering the perception that one could pass through solid objects. In *An End to Ordinary History* (1982, 42), Murphy analogizes a shaman's initiation into a mythical Hades:

A giant bird, black as ebony, was turning toward me. Its unblinking eyes fixed my gaze, and I felt something inside me surrender. If I would let it, something said, it would tear me apart. Tear me slowly and deliberately to pieces. A shudder passed through me, part fear and part pleasure. Slowly it came down from the rail. Then it bent toward me and started to rip out my organs one by one. The heart came first, and as it did I felt a thrill of pleasure. Piece by piece, I would be completely dismembered. Next came my lungs, dripping veins and arteries, then my liver and kidneys spurting blood.

From the same novel (1982, 112):

“I started imaginin’ what it would be like to have a fit and then I began to shake all over. Weird images started comin’ into my mind. Picture’s o’ my body breakin’ tae pieces, arms and legs flyin’ apart, things like that ... and then I saw the stars above me and felt a joy. Oh, I niver forget it—it was my first journey into *the one*.”

These are references to the shaman's journey within the *axis mundi*, where the healer traverses the terrestrial cosmic axis to bring ‘wisdom’ from another dimension. In his descent, the shaman is subjected to existential alienation and

dread, the body torn asunder, made to undergo to tests of inhuman and terrifying nature. In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 209), Murphy describes shamanism as exhibiting:

certain strong similarities from culture to culture. Rituals of symbolic dismemberment and resurrection, conversations with spirits, and trances in which the shaman journeys into other worlds have been observed among Siberians, Central Asians, North and South Americans, Africans, and peoples of the South Sea. These and other practices, I suggest, anticipate disciplines to produce metanormal embodiment.

While it may appear superfluous to leap between Michael Murphy's fiction and reality, that transition is a prevalent course of Murphy's literary journey; thus a necessary part of this study, which researches the progression of Murphy's spiritual and metaphysical leanings. It is not my intention to provide detailed synopses of each work of fiction, but only to research their mystical and philosophical discourses as they pertain to the investigations and conclusions which appear in Murphy's nonfiction: sports (Murphy and White 1995), meditation (Murphy, Donovan and Taylor 1999), transformative capacities (Leonard and Murphy 1995), and advanced human metanormal capacity (Murphy 1992).

The following are just a few of the metaphysical and phenomenological ruminations that Michael Murphy offers in his fiction that are illustrated within his nonfiction. All quotations are from Murphy's own pen.

Regarding humanity's unconscious connection with the pre-historical past, Michael Murphy writes in *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972, 54):

The flight of the ball, the sight of it hanging there in space, anticipates our desire for transcendence. We love to see it curve in flight as if it is free—why else do we hit a fade or a draw? We love to see it hang there, that is why we love to hit our drives so far. The ball in flight brings dim memories of our ancestral past *and* premonitions of the next manifesting place.

Strikingly, in his nonfiction, “The Emergence of Evolutionary Panentheism,”

Murphy (2012a, 15) expounds:

evolution has a telos of sorts, a creative tendency toward greater life on Earth that works through the different evolutionary processes operating in the inorganic, animal, and human domains. This overarching pattern of development, which connects the earliest forms of life to our highest moments, is consonant with a vision that sees a “*deus implicitus*” emerging to become the “*deus explicitus*.”

Michael Murphy (1992, 53) addresses the metanormalcy of sports in fiction:

With its improved clubs and balls and courses, golf reflects man’s advancing human potential through technology. It is a vehicle for training for higher capacities. It is the *yoga* of the entrance to the road to the Supermind, the ultimate discipline for transcendence.

Likewise, in nonfiction (2012a, 21):

It is highly likely as well that sports will continue to appropriate such research. Athletes often use mental training derived from yoga and the martial arts in conjunction with advances in fitness training discovered by medical science; and Olympic committees as well as national sport federations have incorporated such discoveries in their training regimens, for both profit and enjoyment. Today, we see a worldwide proliferation of sports both old and new that push the edges of human capacity, with an attendant acceleration of record-breaking in all age groups. The dramatic appeal of this self-surpassing activity will only increase, I believe, if sport is imbued with a worldview that embraces the wide range of supranormal phenomena it evokes. (Murphy’s italics.)

Michael Murphy’s commitment to the universality of grace, enlightenment, and the *Bhagavad-Gita* is first recorded in *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972, 67):

“My friends,” he said in what seems to this author to be a discourse from the Bhagavad-Gita, “devoted discipline and grace will bring ye knowin’ and powers everywhere, in all your life, in all your works if they’re good works [*karma*], in all your loves [*bhakti*] if they’re good loves.”

These beliefs are echoed later in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992, 170):

As I have suggested, doctrines of divine mercy or grace in the Western religions, of nonattainment in Buddhism, of surrender to God’s will in certain Hindu sects, and of noninterference with the Tao refer to the same fact of human experience, namely that unitive awareness and other extraordinary capacities often appear to be given rather than earned, spontaneously revealed rather than attained through ego-centered effort.

Also from *The Future of the Body* (1992, 178), Murphy writes:

the Bhagavad Gita’s account of Krishna’s relation with Arjuna has the three essential features that Pallis [1974] found in both Christian and Buddhist experience, namely, a call (or invitation) from Krishna to his human instrument, Krishna’s subsequent companionship with Arjuna on the fields of Kurekshetra, and reminders (or skillful means) by which Arjuna could be enlightened in the midst of his suffering.

Michael Murphy expresses his interest in the possible validation of the *siddhis* (magic powers) of experienced yogic practitioners in *An End to Ordinary History* (1982, 87):

The experience went through stages. At first there was a vague yet tangible sense that there was indeed a body closer to me than my skin, with its own weight and shape. It seemed to waver and bounce and subtly change its form, as if it were elastic. Then—I can still remember the feeling so clearly—it changed to an hourglass: my head and feet were enormous and my waist was as small as a fist. . . . My body felt enormously tall, I seemed to look down from a point several feet above my head.

This speculation also appears in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992, 171-72):

from an evolutionary perspective, they can be seen in another way—as emergent features of human development, as capacities inherent to the richer life that is available to us. Charisms and *siddhis*, when viewed in their rich diversity, signal a multileveled transformation of our entire nature. These dynamic by-products of religious practice can be seen not as hindrances to life’s highest good, but as budding faculties of our greater humanity.

That same possibility is presented in “The Emergence of Evolutionary Panentheism” (2012a, 21):

We can also predict that other once-esoteric manifestations of transformative practice will be studied more intensively in the years to come. These will inevitably include the *siddhis* of Hindu-Buddhist yogas; the “charisms” of Roman Catholicism; the “adornments” of Sufi mysticism; the extraordinary powers of shamanism; and other supranormal phenomena now described and compared by religious scholars.

Luminosity is fictionalized in *Golf in the Kingdom* (Murphy 1972, 100-01):

I stood up and tiptoed around in front of him of him—and suddenly felt faint. His eyeballs were rolled back leaving nothing but white. He was totally unconscious. I felt his pulse, my heart pounding, and bent over to smell his breath. He was still alive. Epilepsy? Heart attack? Stroke? ... At that moment I could have sworn I saw an aura around him. For a moment he was sitting in a pool of turquoise light—just for a second—then I could feel some quick shutter close in my brain.

Luminous events also appear in *An End to Ordinary History* (Murphy 1982, 119):

In the years that followed, Shivas and Seamus worked on the relations between consciousness and physical laws, "Seamus being the theorist and Shivas his practitioner in the world of golf." He hinted that the old wizard had other areas in which he was trying his theories, that many other human activities would be transformed one day in the knowledge of true gravity and the “luminous body.”

In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 73), Murphy speaks of:

Perceptions of extraordinary luminosities. Perceptions of auras or halos around animals, plants, and humans; of luminous forms associated with particular thoughts or emotions; of sparks that seem to arise from empty space; and of unexplained lights that pervade a room or other location have long been described by shamans, mediums, and contemplatives. In modern times, such perceptions have been deemed important by Carl Jung, Wilhelm Reich, and their followers.

Michael Murphy introduces Śri Ramakrishna in *Golf in the Kingdom*

(1972, 99):

“I took a volume that was familiar to me, *The Gospel of Śri Ramakrishna*.” It was a large, handsome edition “containing the conversation of India’s greatest 19th-century mystic lovingly recorded by his disciple “M.”

Later, Murphy writes of Śri Ramakrishna’s spiritual transformations in *The*

Future of the Body (1992, 152):

In his own ecstatic devotion, Ramakrishna exhibited a striking physical radiance and highly contagious energy. During the initiation of his disciple Narenda ... and in the course of other meetings, people he touched felt a presence or force that had immediate physical effects. In his remarkable diary, Ramakrishna’s follower Mahendranath recorded several instances of such transmission, which appeared to involve something materialized by Ramakrishna’s love of God.

Murphy (1972, 103) acknowledges Indian chakras in *Golf and the*

Kingdom:

Long brown scrolls of wrapping paper covered one entire wall. Each had a title at the top: *Dangerous Connections* and *God is Waking Up* are two I remember. Another was entitled *History of the Body*, with lists of historic events joined by red and green lines to names of political leaders, philosophers, and artists, to organs of the body including the heart, liver, kidney, and lungs, and to certain physic centers like the Indian chakras.

Chakras also figure prominently in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992, 156):

we can begin to picture somatic alterations that might accompany the further reaches of extraordinary functioning, supposing: first, that accounts of chakras, kundalini, and the like, though fanciful in some respects, might reflect actual developments of physical structures unrecognized by medical science; second, that metanormal capacities require distinctive types of supporting process; and third, that we can extrapolate from physiological changes revealed by modern research in imagining somatic developments required for high-level change.

The expression of the inner body is brought to light in *Golf in the Kingdom* (Murphy 1972, 135), as the golf ball is analogized as “an icon of Man the Multiple Amphibian, a smaller waffled version of the crystal ball, a mirror for the inner body,” and:

the evidence is compelling that we do indeed possess another body, an *inner* body, a vehicle of consciousness that survives death, travels to far places during sleep and trance, and changes size and shape. (1972, 149)

In his nonfiction, Michael Murphy (1995, 160) illustrates this inner body as experienced by those in physical transformation:

Some distance runners, for example, have told us that they sometimes see organs, muscles, and blood vessels—and even forms that look like cells. Following a hard workout, one runner was flooded with images of breaking capillaries. He had lain down to rest when, in his mind’s eye, he suddenly saw red cells spurting from broken vessels. The perception was frightening, but there was a sensation of healing in his chest and a pervasive sense of well-being. A few nights later he had the same kind of vision in a dream.

Apparitions within fiction in *Jacob Atabet* (Murphy 1977b, 29):

Had I spontaneously produced an apparition by the process Frederick Myers called psychorrhagy? Had the gesturing figure been a product of my hemorrhaging psyche, a projection of my subliminal mind? Or had Seamus MacDuff projected himself in some sort of spirit-body. An entry from one of Shivas’ journals implied that he could do that.

In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 216), Murphy writes:

Some people apprehend phantom figures of extraphysical worlds that seem to be more than figments of their imagination. Climbers Estcourt and Scott, explorer Ernest Shackleton, seafarer Joshua Slocum, and aviator Charles Lindberg, for example, described disembodied entities that tried to communicate with them and that persisted for hours or days.⁹¹

Also from *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992, 82):

These participants ... all perceived phantom figures or felt invisible presences that haunted them afterward. With similar experiences reported by religious figures and other adventurers, their visions and the strangely coincidental events that sometimes accompanied them suggest that humans can indeed perceive disembodied entities.

Michael Murphy (1972, 151) explores cellular regeneration and alteration

in *Golf in the Kingdom*:

He called his trances “the trip up” and his work on the body “the trip down,” because his cells were slowly being altered by the primal force he brought from his ecstatic states.

The topic appears in *Jacob Atabet* (1977b, 144) as well:

We came up with five separate mechanisms that might be mediating these changes: “psychokinetic influences from mind to body;” telepathic communication” between the cells; “vibratory form-giving response” between cells, organelles, genes and even the atoms themselves ... and the release of dormant genes. (Murphy’s italics.)

Cellular awareness and regeneration in nonfiction is embedded in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992, 51) as:

⁹¹ During a successful ascent of Mount Everest, members Doug Scott and Nick Escourt “sensed disembodied companions ... a presence that guided their party by some sort of telepathic speech,” warning them about impending dangers. Joshua Slocum, the first person to sail solo around the world in 1985, spoke of the phantom visitor who took over the helm of Slocum’s boat. Declaring himself a member of Columbus’s crew, the apparition guided the boat while Slocum underwent sickness and delirium. Ernest Shackleton sensed his phantom companion during his famous exploration of the South Pole. The established comfort zone was so prevalent, Shackleton and the other members of the team sensed that they were four, rather than the physical three (Murphy 1992, 77, 79, 81).

Extraordinary alterations of bodily process and structure to facilitate the metanormal capacities [of the human organism]. Such alterations are represented, for example, by the *nadi drishti siddhi* through which a yogi transforms the nervous centers and other internal structures of his body.

In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 43), Murphy describes:

extrasomatic awareness, or internal clairvoyance, [which] is said to accompany certain types of yogic experience. It is characterized as the *anudrishti siddhi*, or *animan siddhi*, for example, and is said to produce awareness of cells, molecules, and atomic patterns within the body.

These examples from Michael Murphy's fiction and their ease of transposition to his works of nonfiction are only tips of the iceberg. The presence of analogous references is formidable. They transport the reader into a metaphysical world of perceptions and potentials, imagination, spirituality, and mysticism. The transitional world of Murphy's fiction to nonfiction correlates his philosophy of evolutionary panentheism and his data-driven documentation of advanced human potential to the extraordinary events referenced in his novels, then researched and categorized in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992), *In the Zone* (Murphy and White 1995), "The Emergence of Evolutionary Panentheism" (Murphy 2012a), *The Life We Are Given* (Leonard and Murphy 1995), and *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* (Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor 1999).

Fiction vs. Truth

Perhaps it is more intellectually responsible to say that fiction is merely 'representative' of truth. In Michael Murphy's case, fiction is representational of what is later determined to be evidentiary. The representational truth that flourishes in Murphy's fiction gains verifiability in Murphy's nonfiction because of his meticulous documentation and research within the sciences, religion,

psychology, and metaphysics. Sparshott (1967, 5) posits three reasons why Murphy's fiction so easily transmigrates into his data-driven compilations of natural and behavioral science:

fiction may convey purported truths about the actual world. First, it may suggest that such and such an actual community is of such a kind that certain imagined things might go on in it. Next, it may suggest that a certain familiar kind of person or place or community, whose well-known characteristics are used to body forth the unspecified characteristic and background of our fictional entities, is such as to be compatible with the characteristics and actions that our fiction specifies. Third, it may simply suggest that the actual world is such that what is described and recounted might find a place in it.

Supporting this argument, I evidence the following. The primary locale of Michael Murphy's four novels is Northern California, specifically San Francisco; the narrative dwells within the world of the phenomenal; and the subtext is extraordinary human potential. Given the Bay Area's progressive spiritual dimensions in research and practice, and its affinity for metanormal human potential, Murphy's books do take place in a community in which 'certain imagined things might go on'. Second, Murphy's fictional protagonists delve into the metanormal, which certainly evidences familiarity with the 'characteristics' of real persons doing the same. Finally, Murphy's works of fiction, in their stated assumptions of *anima mundi*, the metanormal, and spiritual evolution support the fact that what he describes and recounts are elements of a particular worldview. Murphy's writings offer a "type of spiritual cross-training that astronomically speeds up transformation and awakening" (Wilber 2010, 257).

Can there be truth in fiction, or is it merely representational? The beauty of Michael Murphy's novels—works of science fiction, heavily influenced by the religio-spiritual, the philosophical, the magical, the mystical, the occult, and the metaphysical—is how effortlessly the same evidence and events, when extrapolated into his nonfiction, changes the reader's perspective from one of delighted reader to that of philosophical wonderment. The suppositions that occur in Murphy's fiction are easily transferable and rendered factual by the inclusion of verifiable evidence in his works of nonfiction.

Summarization of Michael Murphy, Fiction Author

Assigning specific literary classification to Michael Murphy's fiction is difficult because of the generosity of his foci. He writes of the metaphysical, the magical, the philosophical, the spiritual, and the metanormal. However, in the three nonfiction precursors to Murphy's *The Future of the Body* (1992), the phenomenal activity lacks veracity absent the data-driven documentation later provided.

Of note are the numerous and explicit parallels between Michael Murphy's fiction and his nonfiction works. For example, the protagonist of *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972) is a Michael Murphy, who mirrors the real Murphy's zeal for metaphysical quest. Murphy's works of fiction are filled with events of transformative human capacity supported by mystical, spiritual, and scientific theories. I have provided a number of parallels between Murphy's fiction and his data-driven documentation in his nonfiction. These analogous references are formidable because they transport the reader into metaphysical worlds of

perceptions, potentials, imagination, mysticism, all of which correlate to events and practices of metanormal human capacity in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992), *In the Zone* (Murphy and White 1995), and *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* (Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor 1999).

Yes, art imitates life, and there is truth in Michael Murphy's fiction, be it explicit, implicit, or representational, because that 'truth' is subsequently revealed in his works of nonfiction.

Section 9: The Integrality of Mind, Body, Spirit

Michael Murphy's codification of transformative capacities falls within three interfolding and complimentary categorizations: (a) body, (b) mind, and (c) spirit.⁹² These are not separate commodities but reciprocal constituents necessary for comprehensive interpretation; each categorization embraces the others and is incapable of existing without interactive support. Georg Feuerstein (1992, Cover page insert) comments:

The Future of the Body is a magnificent tour de force in documenting and interpreting the entire range of extraordinary physical and psychic capacities with which our species seems to be so richly endowed.

Michael Murphy has written or contributed with major impact to the following nonfiction books: *The Future of the Body* (1992), *In the Zone: Transcendent Experience in Sports* by Michael Murphy and Rhea A. White (1995), *The Life We are Given* by George Leonard and Michael Murphy (1995), *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* by Michael Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor (1999), and *God and the Evolving Universe* by James Redfield, Michael Murphy, and Sylvia Timbers (2002).

In the Zone (Murphy and White 2002) is an investigation and presentation of the extraordinary in sports. Meditation and introspection are addressed in *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* (Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor

⁹² While Michael Murphy includes *heart* in his codification of transformative capacities, this additional specificity, in my opinion, confuses rather than clarifies my efforts because of the ambiguities of definitions. Heart is bodily, mentally, and spiritually ordained. Wheeler calls heart "the life of the emotions" (2010, 217), while Śri Ramakrishna places heart within the expansive capacities of the mind. "The fourth plane of the mind is at the heart. When the mind dwells there, one has the first glimpse of spiritual consciousness" (Mahendranath 1942, 150-151).

1999). The case for contemporary evolutionary emergence of humanity's capabilities is discussed in *God and the Evolving Universe* (Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers 2002), and integrational transforming practices (ITP) developed by Leonard and Murphy are synthesized in *The Life We Are Given* (Leonard and Murphy 1984). In this Section, it is my intention to address these nonfiction books as they conform to Michael Murphy's overriding concept of integrality, but to save most of my investigations for *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992), a consolidation of the other listed works of nonfiction. This is not to say that these books are rendered obsolete by *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992). On the contrary, they all provide extensive components of Murphy's grand vision and should be taken as singular and supporting documentation of and methodologies for personal transformation.

The primary foci of Michael Murphy and Rhea White's *In the Zone* (1995) are the transformative capacities within sports and other physical activities. *In the Zone* emphasizes the psychic mental capacities and spiritual essence of physical endurance and conquest. Murphy and White (1995, 133) write:

As we have seen, a wide variety of extraordinary experience emerges in sport—moments of preternatural calm and stillness, feelings of detachment and freedom, states filled with invincible force. These experiences induce a wide range of extraordinary perceptions, including changes in one's sense of time and space, apparent clairvoyance and telepathy, and glimpses of disembodied entities.

Kripal (2007, 283) illustrates how one can achieve events of metanormal capacity within sports through:

out-of-body experiences, altered perceptions of space and time, extraordinary elevations of physical and psychical energy, even precognitive dreams and telekinetic-like phenomena appear throughout the amateur and professional worlds [of sports] with a remarkable consistency.⁹³

Murphy (1995, 443) concludes:

The many reports we have collected show us that sport has enormous power to sweep us beyond our ordinary sense of self, to evoke capacities that have generally been regarded as mystical, occult, or religious. (443)

Lauded by Deepak Chopra and Ken Wilber (2002, backcover), *God and the Evolving Universe* ventures into the evolutionary mystery that is humankind.

Authors Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers (2002, 200) maintain that, by tapping into our potential capacities for physiological, psychological, and spiritual expansion, we can better harness our innate abilities, further developing them into structures of new and consequential evolutionary steps forward. *God and the Evolving Universe* provides historical, philosophical, and religious evidence of how the co-evolution of mind, body, and spirit has led humanity to a hypothetical contemporary leap in consciousness expansion. The authors outline their reasons for writing the book:

In short, we propose that our emergent capacities, which alter our physical functioning to some degree whenever they make their appearance, can gradually give rise to a new and more luminous embodiment. We know that this is a radical idea. We are aware that to many it will appear far-fetched. But there have long been intuitions of it, as well as evidence that it has begun to manifest in certain people.

⁹³ Murphy, Michael. 1977a. "The Esalen Institute Transformative Project: A Preliminary Report."

The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation (Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor 1999) is the specific cataloguing of body-mind-spirit co-participation within the act of meditation. Michael Murphy (1992, 579) explains:

Because they involve all dimensions of human activity, integral practices develop through a complex series of outcomes, each of them produced or nurtured by specific methods ... Such methods embrace the entire mind-body complex, illuminating volitions and cognitive processes, enriching emotion and relations with others, promoting many virtues, and giving the body new power and beauty.

In *The Life We Are Given*, Leonard and Murphy (1995, 145) address the body as teacher and coparticipant of mind and spirit through implicit and integral cooperation:

we offer exercises that call upon this teacher not only to show us how to live a more balanced, vital, and healthy life but also to point the way toward the next stage of human evolution. As previously pointed out, we see body, mind, heart, and soul as coequal manifestations of the human essence.

Murphy (1992, 538) evidences the results of this integral coparticipation:

The range of outcomes included in this research has grown considerably since the studies of yogis and Zen masters by Bagchi, Wenger, Kasamatsu, and Hirai. Cardiovascular, cortical, hormonal, and metabolic changes, several behavioral effects, and alterations of consciousness resulting from meditation have been explored in recent years. ... This growth in sophistication of method is gradually improving our scientific understanding of meditation in ways that complement the insights contained in the traditional contemplative literature.

All of these works add to or are supported by the evidence of metanormal human capacity as carefully outlined in *The Future of the Body* (Murphy 1992).

As evidenced, *The Future of the Body* is a documentation of events and practices using the entire nature of man—mind, body, and spirit—as a singular unit of interacting elements. I will address this integrality as it applies to these components, as well as how each is defined as they apply to Michael Murphy's

conceptual studies and analyses. To simplify matters, I will illustrate how Murphy's conclusions evidence that the principles of mind, body, and spirit do not and cannot exist on their own but are responsible to and interdependent upon each other. Leonard and Murphy (1995, 18) state, "For a practice to be integral as well, it must aim to cultivate the physical, vital, cognitive, volitional, affective, and transpersonal dimensions of human functioning in an integrated way."

In one of our interviews, Michael Murphy clarified his methodology of integral cultivation through his analysis of the components that overlap and intertwine into universal unification. This is how I approached this study—by researching the units (components, entities) that compose the totality; the bricks that assemble to build the house, so to speak:

The integral can be expressed as a very simple formula—our practice is the cultivation of body mind and soul—but it can be unpacked into competing sections in our reach for universality. The integral is inherent from our animal ancestors, present prior to historical record, and simultaneously points forward to supernatural expressions that underline the effervescence of human development. (Murphy 2013, 1)

Integrality within Mind, Body, and Spirit

Integrality is a pervasive methodology that requires a conceptual evaluation of the parts which consolidate to evidence the whole. The Oxford English Dictionary defines integral as:

Of or pertaining to a whole. Said of a part or parts: Belonging to or making up an integral whole; constituent, component; *spec.* necessary to the completeness or integrity of the whole; forming an intrinsic portion or element, as distinguished from an adjunct or appendage (Integral 2014).

The specificities of the constituents within an integral system are determinable by the resultant wholeness and vice-versa. For Michael Murphy (1992), Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1919, 2006), Chaudhuri (1972b), and Chardin (1974), the wholeness or telos is the cosmic supreme truth of Supernature, Supermind, the Omega Point (call it what you will) as underscored within the theory of involution–evolution. That wholeness is embraced by the Aurobindian rungs of the ladder ascending to Supermind (Submatter, Matter, Vital Life, Psyche, the three levels of Mind, Overmind, and Supermind). McDermott (1972a, 174) writes:

To the extent that man has gained control of his body, mind, and soul—primarily in accordance with the dictates of the Integral Yoga system—he is thereby in cooperation with the Divine process.

Chaudhuri (1972b, 181) postulates the radical integrality of the Supermind, stating:

the supermind is integral consciousness. It is the awareness of Being in its integral fullness as distinguished from the mind’s sectional or fragmentary cognition. . . .the supermind comprehends all the seemingly isolated data of perception as inseparably interrelated parts of the same cosmic whole.

The human capability of experiencing or creating extraordinary events is constructed within the body, mind, and spirit unitary complex. While Michael Murphy (1992, 188) remains skeptical about the specificities of Śri Aurobindo’s “delineation of higher mental levels,” he does believe in the residing divinity within every person, and the integral unity and interdependence of mind, body,

and spirit. Murphy (1992, 588) defines integral practice as “A discipline to cultivate the physical, vital, affective, cognitive, volitional, and transpersonal dimensions of human functioning in an integrated way.” In another interview, Murphy (2013, 1) spoke of his innate belief in integrality:

For most of my life, the concept of integrality in body, mind, heart and spirit was inherent. ... The integral relationship is the deepest part of the complexity of the human being and reaches to the extent of the cosmos.

In the 1990s, Michael Murphy and George Leonard created the Esalen workshop called Integral Transformative Practice. ITP offers the practitioner the possibility to:

discover your infinite capacity for creative evolution, get a clearer picture of your true nature and take home a daily practice for ongoing integration of body, mind, heart, and soul. Integral Transformative Practice ... is a well-researched program that cultivates all aspects of your being and is designed to increase your vitality, fulfillment, and joy. (Esalen ITP, 2013)

To recapitulate, Michael Murphy’s documentation of transformative events and practices extends beyond the philosophies of secular human potential movements. Murphy’s vision of the natural merging of science and metaphysics demands belief in a universal, singular consciousness as the eventuating telos. However, it is important to realize that Murphy makes no claim that events and practices of extraordinary human potential will lead to permanent, advanced progressions of the Mind. Murphy postulates that his cataloging of evidence and resources offers promise of extraordinary human advancement in some capacity of current existence. Extraordinary means ‘beyond’ the ordinary, but does not promise ultimate cosmic transformation. I am not denying Murphy’s innate belief in humanity’s full evolution into spiritual conscious unity. However, Murphy’s forte is in the historicity of natural science and metaphysics, and how revived

knowledge—and methods of transformative practice—can lead humanity onward and upward; he leaves the specificity of the realm of the afterlife to others. His efforts are for the betterment of the here-and-now and immediate future possibilities. Murphy (1992, 7) writes that:

all of us can realize at least some of the extraordinary possibilities described here. I am convinced that men and women young and old, in widely disparate situations, at time experience the unitive awareness, selfless love, and redeeming joy that crown human life. I have come to believe that virtually everyone of us has experienced, and that everyone of us can cultivate moments when the ordinary becomes extraordinary, when mind and body are graced by something beyond themselves.

Murphy (1992, 199-200) does theorize the probability of humanity's greater reaches:

If we actually harbor the potentials described in [*The Future of the Body*], we stand at the edge of an immense frontier. This frontier, conceivably, could attract our love of exploration, our need for new territories, our drive to exceed ourselves. ... Cultivation of extraordinary capacities can make us more capable of enriching the world.

In *The Life We Are Given*, Leonard and Murphy (1995, xv) add:

Every person on this planet can join the procession of transformative practice that began with our ancient ancestors. ... The ways of growth ... can be adopted by anyone, embrace our many parts. We call them *integral* to signify their inclusion of our entire human nature—body, mind, heart, and soul.

Before delving deeply into integrative transformative capacities of mind, body, and spirit, it behooves me to clarify how these individual constituents are defined, since each has multivalent, synonymous, and embracing interpretations.

Mind

In *The Future of the Body*, Michael Murphy does not dwell on the specifics of defining mind, body, and spirit; he merely incorporates commonly held conceptions. Murphy's efforts are focused more on how each embraces and supports the others. When he writes of the mind he assumes that all definitions are applicable to advanced integral learning. For instance, Murphy (1992, 169) incorporates Howard Gardner's, six major types of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, and personal, each a component or subset of the constituent intelligence of mind, which itself is a constituent of the whole person.

With respect to mind, there exists a plethora of synonyms, among them 'brain,' 'consciousness,' 'intellect,' 'soul,' 'spirit,' and 'wisdom'; each integral constituents of mental processes.⁹⁴ (Note how spirit is already contained within the definition of mind, providing a linguistic integrality.) Should one focus on a primary capability of the mind, it might be in its acquisition of knowledge, which falls within four determinates: that of the logical, semantic, systematic, and empirical. In addition, there are the sub-constituents of knowing. Murphy (1992, 13) provides this illustration: "In *The Republic*, for example, Plato explored the relations among different kinds of knowing, *dianoia*, discursive reason, and *noesis*, contemplative apprehension of the Good." Aristotelian *nous* is the Western classic philosophical term for mind or intellect. Hadot (1995, 269)

⁹⁴ Synonyms provided for mind, body, and spirit are taken directly from Roget's Thesaurus (2013) for the purpose of illustrating their corelationship and integrality.

apprises us that “philosophy for Aristotle was a quality of the mind, the result of an inner transformation. The form of life preached by Aristotle was the life according to the mind.”

As for consciousness, another enigmatic function, Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2012), delineates it into ternary faculties—that of Outer, Inner, and Innermost Being. The Outer Being refers to the superficial and definite existence which characterizes one’s worldly consciousness and experience, whereas the Inner Being is the subliminal faculty of one’s being that lies behind the surface consciousness. Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 2012, 307) states:

There are always two different consciousnesses in the human being, one outward in which he ordinarily lives, the other inward and concealed of which he knows nothing. ... There is always a double nature in human beings, the inner (psychic and spiritual) which is in touch with the Divine; the outer, mental, vital and physical, which has been brought up in the Ignorance is full of defects, imperfections and impurities.

Maitra (1941, 28) offers his own take on the multiple elements of consciousness:

there is also an inner-substratum within us. There is a subliminal mind, life and matter which is more plastic, more powerful, more capable of dynamic action than our surface mind, life or body.

Innermost being is an even deeper aspect of human nature which can be contacted through spiritual discipline and higher states of consciousness. Our innermost being is meant to infer our psychic being, our soul. Michael Murphy (1992, 559) evidences the concept of inner-life as an embodiment of human nature:

Psychologists Carl Jung and James Hillman, philosopher James Ogilvy, mythologist Joseph Campbell, and others have explored the polytheism of human nature, showing that our inner life is many-dimensional, multilayered, and teeming with presences of various kinds.

Maitra (1941, 19) informs us that:

Mind by its very nature is a consciousness which cuts up and breaks asunder the forms of things from the indivisible whole in which alone they can really exist. It treats the parts as if they could exist independently.

All of these interpretations provide evidence of the complexities that appear when trying to narrowly define mind, and illustrate the corelationships inherent and absolute in body, mind, and spirit. Each of Michael Murphy's twelve attributes of evolutionary products articulated in *The Future of the Body* (1992) requires some sort of mental appreciation (i.e., a sensation, image, act of will, feeling of self-worth, experiential awareness).⁹⁵ These mental entities include the participation of the body and spirit.

Of relevance to this discussion is the constituent of the mind that Michael Murphy (2012, 127) refers to as 'cognition':

The word *cognition* refers to various ways of knowing, including analysis and reasoning; pattern recognition through the use of metaphor; intuitive comprehension of another person's subjective state; problem solving that involves visual, auditory, or other imagery; and mystical illumination. Here I do not attempt a comprehensive inventory of extraordinary cognitions, but focus upon the mystical knowledge celebrated by the contemplative traditions, and the supreme intellection evident in certain inspired works, which is typically accompanied by a sense that one has received knowledge or creative power beyond one's normal capacities.

⁹⁵ Again, these evolutionary products are: "perception of external events, somatic awareness and self-regulation, communication abilities, vitality, movement abilities, abilities to alter the environment directly, pain and pleasure, cognition, volition, individuation and sense of self, love, and bodily structures, states and processes. "In each attribute, "data is arranged along a continuum, running from animal to normal human to extraordinary human development" (Taves 2005, 240).

Mystical Knowledge

Bergson (1935, 213) writes of the potential benefits of mysticism in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*:

In the first place mysticism—for that is what we have in mind—may, it is true, lift the soul to another plane: ... pure mysticism is a rare essence, that is generally found in a diluted form, that even then it still gives to the substance with which it mingles its colour and fragrance, and that it must be taken together with the substance, to be regarded as practically inseparable from it.

Mystical knowledge is not limited to Eastern experience, but is part and parcel of the universality of knowledge. Bergson (1935, 226) spoke of complete mysticism as action, creation, and love: “that mysticism comparable to the mysticism of Christianity, we find in a Ramakrishna or a Vivekananda.” Murphy (1992, 128) offers the following description from William James (1902):

Although similar to states of feeling ... mystical states seem to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge. They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain; and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for aftertime.

When Michael Murphy writes of mystical knowledge in *The Future of the Body* (1992, 126), he refers to it as an aspect of transformative practices that promote “concentration and access to the mind’s subliminal depths.” Mystical knowledge is a type of metanormal cognition “that exist[s] independently of any human experience” (1992, 128).

An extreme positivist who “considered religion dangerous and metaphysics superfluous,” Freud labeled mysticism: “the obscure self-perception of the realm outside the Ego, the Id” (Ellenberger 1970, 525-26).⁹⁶

Michael Murphy speaks of a universal core of mystical cognition, referencing Hindu, Christian, and Islamic mystics, attributing any differences to cultural shaping (Christian charisms, Yogic *siddhis*, Sufi adornments). Kripal (2007, 299) explains:

“Yogic Potentials and Capacities, or *siddhis*, in Hindu-Buddhist Psychology” is a fascinating document whose synthesis of humanistic psychology, psychical research, quantum physics, and Bengali Tantric lore both looks back to earlier Esalen figures and prefigures much that will come later at Esalen with its mysticism of science literature.

Murphy (1992, 163) adds:

Mystical illuminations, for example, are subject to social influence, even if they are rooted in a primordial Ground that transcends all conditionings. Such cognitions take different forms in different religious traditions, while exhibiting certain features that appear to be universal.

Anderson (2004, 309) cites Michael Murphy’s study of Russian spirituality, of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, and of healers, psychics, and spiritualists. “Murphy saw in [these] a deep and thwarted mysticism that is now finding a socially legitimate outlet in science.” This mysticism, for Murphy, is evident in both Eastern and Western philosophy and spiritual disciplines. For the Christian tradition, Thurston (1951) writes of levitation, stigmata, telekinesis, the odor of sanctity, *incendium amoris* (the fire of love), bodily elongation, and the luminous phenomena of mysticism.

⁹⁶ Freud, Sigmund. 1941.

N. K. Gupta (1976, 287) once analyzed:

Mysticism is not only a science but also ... an art. To approach it merely as a science, as the modern mind attempts to do, is to move towards futility, if not to land in positive disaster ... Mysticism is not merely an object of knowledge ... it is an end, an ideal that has to be achieved, a life that has to be lived.

While writing effectively on Indian thought through “comparative confrontations of Eastern and Western doctrines,” Raju claims that “Christian philosophy and theology could not have made any progress without the stimuli of mysticism”

(1985, xxviii). Murphy (1992, 2-3) shares the:

unbroken tradition of mysticism which can be said to embody forms of meditative practice in the West—from the Neo-Platonists such as Plotinus, through the medieval mystics both early and late—Johannes Erigena, St. Bonaventure, John of the Cross, St. Theresa, St. Bernard of Clairvaux—followed by such personalities as Robert Parsons, Margaret Mary Alacoque, and Emmanuel Swedenborg, to modern Christian contemplatives such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Merton, and now Schlomo Carlbach, Bede Griffiths, and David Steindl-Rast.

Joseph Campbell (1968, 585), former lecturer at Esalen, provides his own

comparative of Eastern and Western mysticism that supports Murphy’s research:

In India, where, in yoga, they have had a little more experience of this inward way than we do in the West, Eckhart and Tauler would simply have been said to have experienced *nir-vikalpa samādhi*, absorption *without* distinction; and Ruysbroeck, *sa-vikalpa samādhi*, absorption *with* distinction: the former dissolved in *nir-guna brahman*, the unqualified absolute, and the latter enjoying *sa-guna brahman*, the qualified.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Meister Eckhart (1298-1328) was a Dominican priest who became Master of Theology at Paris in 1302, Provincial of the newly founded Province of Saxony in 1303, and Vicar General of the Province of Bohemia in 1307. His controversial pantheistic pronouncements were declared heretical by Pope John XXII. Johannes Tauler (circa 1300-1361) was another Dominican known for his fiery sermons, and like Eckhart, considered one of the greatest mystics and preachers of the Middle Ages. John Ruysbroeck (1293-1381), nicknamed the Divine Doctor, was a popular Flemish mystic. An ascetic priest, he was primarily known for his attacks on the false mysticism of the heretical Brethren of the Free Spirit (Catholic Encyclopedia 2104).

However, as Murphy (1992, 130) advises:

Mystical knowing, in short, like all metanormal experience, is subject to cultural shaping. And it can also be clouded by various pathologies. Because it can be distracted by unexamined motives, desires, or beliefs, it has to be disciplined. It “must be sifted and tested, and run the gauntlet of confrontation with the total context of experience.”⁹⁸

Supreme Intellection

In his discussion on supreme intellection through scientific, artistic, and philosophic inspiration, Michael Murphy researched evidence offered by Myers and Myers (1907), and the Society for Psychical Research (SPR 2011). Myers and Myers’s (1907) focus was on the cognitive supranormalcy offered by genius: a designation attributed to those who are presumed superlative in any discipline. The label ‘genius’ implies an instinctive and extraordinary capacity for imaginative creation, original thought, concept, or idea. Genius, as Myers and Myers (1907, 56) explained:

should rather be regarded as a power of utilizing a wider range than other men can utilize of faculties in some way innate in all;—a power of appropriating the results of subliminal mentation to subserve the subliminal stream of thought;—so that an "inspiration of Genius" will be in truth a *subliminal uprush*, an emergence into the current of ideas which the man is consciously manipulating of other ideas which he has not consciously originated, but which have shaped themselves beyond his will, in profounder regions of his being ... it may be of something *supranormal*;—of something which transcends existing normality as an advanced stage of evolutionary progress transcends an earlier stage.

There are those creative people who, according to Murphy (1992, 130), claim to be imbued with inspiration from “the gods, a higher self, or Divinity itself.” They envision themselves in concert with a divine muse. “Genius represents a narrow

⁹⁸ James, William. 1902. Lectures 16 and 17: *Mysticism*.

selection among a great many upbrushes of emergences of subliminal faculty both within and beyond the limits of the ordinary conscious spectrum” (Myers and Myers 1907, 63). Examples provided are:

inspirations described by Wordsworth, Nietzsche, Mozart, and Poincaré [which] share a number of features, such as their speed and spontaneity, their joy and excitement, their exceeding of ordinary mental processes, and the beauty of their products. They also resemble each other in their dependence upon several extraordinary cognitive capacities. (Murphy 1992, 135)

Henri Bergson (1935, 214) correlates genius to mysticism:

just as when an artist of genius has produced a work which is beyond us, the spirit of which we cannot grasp, but which makes us feel how commonplace were the things we used to admire, in the same way static religion, though it may still be there, is no longer what it was, above all it no longer dares to assert itself, when truly great mysticism comes on the scene.

Frederic Myers and Leopold Myers (1907, 80) expand upon advanced cognitive abilities within the categories of para- or supra-normal possibilities:

When the subliminal mentation co-operates with and supplements the supraliminal, without changing the apparent phase of personality, we have *genius*. When subliminal operations change the apparent phase of personality from the state of waking in the direction of trance, we have *hypnotism*. When the subliminal mentation forces itself up through the supraliminal, without amalgamation, as in crystal-vision, automatic writing, etc., we have *sensory or motor automation*.

Murphy (1992, 127) offers methods to advance this creative inspiration:

Hypnotic suggestion and imagery practice, for example, can improve performance on visual memory tasks, evoke comprehensive images for problem solving, reveal memories and perceptions that words do not adequately represent, promote the ability to restructure conceptual systems, and facilitate nonanalytic, holistic strategies involved in creative inspiration. Psychotherapy can release intellectual inhibitions, stimulate new problem-solving styles, and relieve inner conflicts that impede intellectual work.

Ellenberger (1970, 168) posits that codependent operations within the mind—a conscious but restricted ego, and a subconscious or much wider ego—is the model for other unknown powers of the mind. Said subconscious is:

unknown to the conscious one, but endowed with unknown perceptive and creative powers. The phenomena of inspiration could be explained as a more or less intermittent outburst in the conscious mind of psychic material, which had been stored in the subconscious mind. (168)

Michael Murphy (1992, 772-73) provides integral practices or methods that might lead to transformative abilities within cognition including self-observation, imagery recollection through emotional catharsis or witness meditation, and concentration strengthening. Myers and Myers (1907, 63) contribute the following:

I have argued that men of genius, whose perceptions are presumably more vivid and complex than that of average men, are also the men who carry the power of concentration, furthest; —reaching downwards, by some self-suggestion which they no more than we can explain, to treasures of latent faculty in the hidden Self.

Body

Again, Michael Murphy (1992, 568) does not find it necessary to specifically define body, but posits the cultivation of the perception of human events that can be achieved through sensory awareness methods “that promote sensitive hearing, taste, or touch,” fitness training, and martial arts. For the cultivation of vitality he recommends athletic training, and for cultivation of movement abilities, Murphy (1992, 570) promotes “modern dance, hatha yoga, tai chi, aikido, karate, rock-climbing, cycling, basketball, and soccer.” Murphy does not specifically describe the uniqueness of mind, but provides evidence of its

necessary integrality within the transformation of our metanormal capabilities.

Stansell (2010, 257) relates that, in many Hindu disciplines and traditions:

Control and cultivation of the body—which include not just the physical aspect but *prāna* or vital breath, vital energy, mind, and consciousness—lead to realization of one’s fully divine nature and thereby liberation. (257)

That is strong postulation of the inseparable unity of mind, body, and spirit as each interacts upon and is interdependent with each other.

Cooper (2006, 69) writes that Spinoza considered the human body and mind two “mutually irreducible aspects of one finite thing,” a unitary entity. “The mind is the person regarded according to the category of thought, and the body is the person regarded according to the category of extension.” Stansell and Phillips (2010, 292) recognize “body-awareness as ‘a form of self-cognition.’” Śri

Aurobindo claims, according to Kripal (2005, 119):

that the human body, like the human mind, possesses its own subliminal and occult dimensions, that these are intended to emerge gradually through the evolutionary process, and that they are linked to such traditional psychical abilities as hypnotic suggestion, mind reading, precognition, and clairvoyance.

The body is an essential component of the majority of Michael Murphy’s evolutionary products that form the foundation of *The Future of the Body* (1992).

The body participates through vision in the perception of external events, the voice through communication, telekinesis through the ability to alter the environment directly. Engagement of the body is self-evident in somatic awareness and self-regulation, movement abilities, physical pain and pleasure, individuation and sense of self, and bodily structures, states, and processes.

Murphy (1992, 88) groups somatic awareness into two classes: “first, those mediated primarily by the central nervous activity; and second, those that appear

to be largely due to receptive and expressive psi—that is, clairvoyance and psychokinesis.” Murphy (1992, 155) further outlines transformative and healing aspects of the mind–body–spirit relationship through biofeedback and autogenic training, structural integration, progressive relaxation, physical fitness training, martial arts, yoga and Zen Buddhist practices, and meditation:

Numerous clinical and experimental studies have shown that each of these disciplines affects the flesh as well as the psyche. Medical science has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that each of the practices just noted can benefit our physical functioning as well as our mental-emotional life.

Of particular interest to Michael Murphy (1992, 431) is the mind–body–spirit coparticipation within physical activity and sports:

Among the positive mental and emotional results attributed to regular physical activity, these have been reported in the medical literature: improved academic performance, self-confidence, emotional stability, independence, cognitive functioning, memory, mood, perception, body image, self-control, sexual satisfaction, and work efficiency; and decreased alcohol abuse, anger, anxiety, confusion, depression, dysmenorrhea, headaches, hostility, phobias, stress response, psychotic behavior, tension, and work errors.

Murphy and White (1995, 133) add:

As we have seen, a wide variety of extraordinary experience emerges in sport—moments of preternatural calm and stillness, feelings of detachment and freedom, states filled with invincible force. These experiences induce a wide range of extraordinary perceptions, including changes in one’s sense of time and space, apparent clairvoyance and telepathy, and glimpses of disembodied entities.

Murphy (1995, 4) comments on the “enormous powers [of sport] to sweep us beyond our ordinary sense of self, to evoke capacities that have generally been regarded as mystical, occult, or religious.” Murphy’s experiential participation in marathon running is recorded by Kripal (2007, 285):

In 1973, at the age of forty-three, Murphy had turned to running as his principle athletic yoga (by 1983, he would place third in the 1500 meter for fifty-year-olds at the Masters National Championship at Rice University).

This event is analogized in Murphy's fictional account of a similar event in *Jacob Atabet* (1977b, 112):

Then suddenly my strength flooded back. A downhill slope had appeared, stretching for what looked like a mile. Sky and water vanished and there was only one consuming thought: it would be possible to break forty minutes. The one thought, and a first hint of the disembodied state that lay beyond pain and distraction. "It's like a quantum jump," Atabet's voice seemed to say. "You find you run faster than ever. And it lasts for miles." It had happened before, finding this unexpected free momentum.

Murphy's (1995, 151) Eastern influence is expressed in the following:

We have also seen that ordinary focusing can grow into something more, into something athletes have called "the zone" and others have labeled the "playing trance." This "something more" resembles the advanced meditation states we have described—the *dhyana* or *samadhi* of Patanjali's yoga sutras, for example, in which "the true nature of the world shines forth, not distorted by the mind of the perceiver."⁹⁹

Cooper (2006, 42) offers this from Plotinus: "Plato rightly does not put the soul in the body when he is speaking of the universe, but the body in the soul."¹⁰⁰

Spirit

An example of Michael Murphy's integration of spirit can be seen in his methods for the cultivation and harmonization of honesty, creativity, courage, and resilience (1992, 576-78). Murphy recommends physical exercise (body), therapy and behavior-modification (mind), and meditation and introspection (spirit)

⁹⁹ Patanjali. 1953.

¹⁰⁰ Plotinus. 1984.

(1992, 577). Physical activity can activate spiritual awareness, behavior modification can expose the body to certain threats (physical and mental), and introspection can be a mental effort to achieve a meditative state, an attempt to induce a nothingness, the essence of certain spiritualities. Body, mind, and spirit are not separate; one does not act or react without the coalescence of all three.

Spirit's integral interrelationship with mind is expressed in the following by Cooper (2006, 43):

In a certain sense the world itself is in God, since the world is in the Soul, the Soul is in Mind (Nous), Mind is the One, and the One is not in something else but encloses everything entirely within itself."¹⁰¹ All things are not divine, but all participate in God, who infinitely transcends all. This is classical pantheism.

McDermott (1973, 101) informs that body and mind come from the creativity of the spirit:

body and mind are not the creators of the spirit, the spirit is the creator of the mind and body; it develops these principles out of its being, it is not developed into being out of them.

Michael Murphy's embracement of involution–evolution illustrates how Mind emanates from Psyche (spirit, soul), itself evolving from Vital Life (body), which emerges from the Supreme Principle's spiritual descent into Matter. And, as each level is constituted of and retains the former and latter levels, their integrality and interdependency are absolutes.

Penetrating the mysteries of the spirit has been one of the greatest challenges of humankind. In contrast to its purely material elements, spirit is the animating principle in a being which gives life to the organism that, when joined

¹⁰¹ Reale, Giovanni. 1985.

by the Psyche and the Mind, provides the consciousness of being conscious. This correlates with the theory of involution–evolution, which posits that Vital Life, Psyche, and Mind are corresponding and interdependent levels of evolution. Substantiating its multivalent interpretations, spirit is synonymous with inspiration, energy, anima, conscience, disposition, ego, *élan vital*, essence, feeling, force, genius, heart, intellect, mind, *noumenon*, reason, self, and thought. One might discover oneself hopelessly lost investigating the enigmatic realms of each particular definition; ‘soul’ alone, as substitute for spirit, is replete with interpretations. Many use spirit and soul interchangeably. Capitalized, Spirit is synonymous with divinity, as opposed to the human spirit which is a part of or in communion with that divinity; yet they co-inhabit one another. “The true aim of philosophy is to make the spirit into an organ of knowledge through which man may become aware of higher spiritual realities” (Ellenberger 1970, 206-07). For Jungians and depth psychologists, the persona, the shadow, and the anima or animus are archetypes of the spirit informing the self. Myers and Myers (1907, 320) propose the existence in the human spirit of hidden powers of insight and of communication. Maitra (1941, 49) equates soul with *psyche* which, in Greek translation, is ‘spirit.’ Clayton (1997) equates mind with spirit. Chaudhuri (1972b, 187) writes of mind and matter’s equal manifestation of the same creative energy (*prakṛti, śakti*).

By spirit I mean “the spirit of synthesis and sublimation,” in which is painfully concentrated, through endless attempts and setbacks, the potency of unity scattered throughout the universal multiple: *spirit which is born within, and as a functioning of matter*. (Chardin 1974, 107-08)

Murphy and White (1995, 4) tell us how: “Sport has enormous power to evoke capacities that have generally been regarded as mystical, occult, or religious.” The authors provide examples of athletes who claim levels of experience beyond the norm: sensations of acute well-being, a peaceful calm, detachment, freedom, floating and weightlessness, power and control, being in the present, instinctive action and surrender, mystery and awe, feelings of mortality, and unity (1995, 9-33). Murphy and White (1995, 7) quote Joe Green, defensive tackle of the Pittsburgh Steelers, who describes the sensations within peak performance:¹⁰²

it feels “beautiful. You are going all out. You are full of the desire to succeed. You are full of a feeling of power ... of superior confidence. You reach a peak in every part of your being. You reach an emotional high, a physical high, all of them together. It's almost like being possessed. ... You have great awareness of everything that is happening around you and of your part in the whole.

Tomkins (1976, 42) writes of Maslow’s definition of peak experiences:

Most of us, according to Maslow, are capable, moreover, of what he termed “peak experiences”—breakthrough moments of deep emotional understanding or intensity, the most dramatic examples of which are spiritual revelations of saints and mystics.

In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 443), Murphy explains how:

disciplined activities sometimes give rise to spontaneous metanormalities. ... And so it is in the heat of sports: inspired jumping can give rise to apparent levitation, disciplined ball-handling to unearthly hand-eye coordination, practiced footwork to superordinary agility. Where capacities are stretched to their limits, metanormalities tend to appear, despite the expectations or desires of their participants.

In *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* (Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor 1999), the focus of spiritual transformation is found in

¹⁰² Oates, Bob, Jr. 1980.

meditation. Murphy, who has a history of daily prolonged meditation, points out that said practice has many disciplines and is only one of many methods of transformation. Murphy (1992, 564):

how might we organize integral practices? One way to begin, I propose, is to compare those transformative methods that promote healing growth. Theravada Buddhism's *vispasanna*, Samkhya yoga, Zen Buddhist *zazen*, Psychosynthesis, and Gestalt Therapy, for example, rely on the non-interfering observation of thoughts, emotions, and sensations.

Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor (1999, 46, 50) evidence the effects of meditational practices on the body, citing an abundance of research:

Some studies indicate that meditation lowers the heart rate more than biofeedback, progressive realization, other therapies, or simply sitting, while other studies indicate that these various activities have an equivalent effect on the heart rate. ...There is strong evidence that meditation helps lower blood pressure in people who are normal or moderately hypertensive.

The same authors go on to examine additional studies that document the physiological effects of meditation on the cortical and respiratory systems, blood chemistry, treatment of cancer, and alleviation of pain (1999, 58-79). Meditation is a mental effort, usually accompanied by certain bodily activity or positioning. The immediate effects of meditational practices are multivalent. They include relaxation, self-healing, and the expansion of consciousness. The eventuating circumstances of meditation can also strongly imply spiritual accession. Among the behavioral effects of meditation are enhancements to perceptual and cognitive abilities, concentration and attention, memory and intelligence, empathy, creativity and self-actualization, and addiction (Murphy, Donovan, and Taylor 1999, 81-134).

Given the prior discourse on mind, body, and spirit, it is reasonable to posit that forms of transformative practice vividly display the integration of these constituents. For example, meditation uses the body for right breathing and the mind for inner concentration, often in an effort to reach some spiritual dimension. Employing visualization to prepare for a tennis match can result in a stunning display of athleticism that takes one to spiritual levels of oneness with the racket and the ball, and where physical prowess can virtually levitate one's body off the surface of the court, as one loses oneself within the sheer beauty of the game.

Michael Murphy (1992, 207-08) states:

the human body is definitely determined by spirit. The face of a man who is passionately searching for truth is not only more “spiritual” than that of the man with a dulled mind, it is also more of a face, that is to say, it is more genuinely, more intensively “body.” And there is not only more “spirituality” in the bearing of a man with a free and generous heart than in that of a crude and selfish person, there is a more responsive body.

Summarization of the Integrality of Mind, Body, and Spirit.

In order to fully understand Michael Murphy, it is imperative that the reader recognize the inestimable value Murphy places on integrality in all aspects of his life: in his philosophy, research, and worldview. As the whole is only as substantial as its parts—or perhaps greater—so Murphy understands that every entity, every aspect of nature, is built upon its interrelationship with the others.

Whitehead (1978, 57) summarizes:

The creative action is the universe always becoming one in a particular unity of self-experience, and thereby adding to the multiplicity which is the universe as many. This insistent concrescence into unity is the outcome of the ultimate self-identity of each entity. No entity—be it “universal” or “particular”—can play disjointed roles.

Michael Murphy's codification of human transformative capacities falls within four categorizations: those of body, mind, spirit, and heart. For expediency and clarity of exposition, I include 'heart' within the domain of spirit. Each of these constituents of human nature has multivalent and intertwining interpretations. For example, mind is synonymous with the physical brain, the mental intellect, and, arguably, the spirituality of consciousness. For Murphy (1992, 126-30), mind is qualified as cognition, which includes multiple ways of knowing, including mystical knowledge and supreme intellection achieved through scientific, artistic, and philosophic inspiration. For Myers and Myers (1907), extraordinary cognition is analogous to genius. The body correlates to mental processes, and the Mind (*nous*) to soul. The body participates through vision, voice, and other physical and sensational events. Through the mind-body-spirit interrelationship, transformative and healing aspects are generated through a number of disciplines including biofeedback, yoga, sports, and meditation. Spirit, for Murphy, is found in the extraordinary physical endurance and mental aloneness of sport, as well as within introspection of the mind. Practices of the mind-body-spirit interrelationship are found in psychosynthesis and the many methods of meditation, all of which can produce physiological and psychological well-being.

Of imperative importance is Michael Murphy's total immersion into integrality in his life, and his work. There is nothing within these triune natural forces of human nature—mind, body, and spirit—that functions without the others' coparticipation. As Chaudhuri (1972b, 187) explains:

Matter and mind, body and soul, nature and spirit, world and God, existence and essence, fact and value, Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself—these are all divergent modes of self-expression of the same cosmic energy which freely creates out of the immeasurable depths of its own Being.

Section 10: Final Thoughts

To recapitulate, Michael Murphy's life's works include (1) his theories on evolutionary panentheism, which propose a Supreme Principle that not only desires the unification of humanity within Its ultimate consciousness, but also 'cares' for Its creations, residing within and evolving with them, (2) his research and understanding of the spiritual theories of involution–evolution, which maintain the existence of universally accessible levels of advancement, (3) his innate use of and trust in the integrality of all things, which is philosophical assertion of universal unification, (4) his data-driven evidence that advanced human potential has been a part of humanity's development since historical beginnings, (5) his conviction, stemming from his evidence-based research into the veracity of metanormal occurrences, that humanity can and does transmute, (6) his efforts to bridge the gaps between science and religio-mysticism, and the disparities of religious tenets possessing the same eventuating teloi, (7) his humanist efforts to mitigate the problems of the disenfranchised, the persecuted, the diasporic, and the politically fractious and powerless factions of contemporary humanity through his involvement with human concerns and welfare, and finally, (8) his trust in the inherent value and possibilities of human life. However, because of his multivalent interests, it is difficult to encapsulate Michael Murphy's productivity into a single encyclopedic study. Through my efforts to

address these works as integral components within the totality of his worldview, I have demonstrated that Michael Murphy deserves substantial academic recognition in the discipline of natural history as well as those of religion and metaphysics.

What are the means for understanding something that is conceptually more complex than our existing knowledge? From where does evolving consciousness find its novelty? Is there any logic to its discovery? How “are we to understand that people can learn or discover something that goes beyond what they already know, and something that is more complex than they have known?” (Paavola and Hakkarainen 2005, 236). Socrates said to Meno:

Some things I have said of which I am not altogether confident. But that we shall be better and braver and less helpless if we think that we ought to inquire, than we should have been if we indulged in the idle fancy that there was no knowing and no use in seeking to know what we do not know—that is a theme upon which I am ready to fight, in word and deed, to the utmost of my power. (Plato 2013, 16)

The greatest good that one can provide is to live one’s life in pursuit of the betterment of ‘self’ and, subsequently, ‘others’. For Michael Murphy, his philosophical structure compels integrality of actions. His research into the documentation of extraordinary human events augmented by a comprehensive list of methods that lead to the positive advancement of the human ‘heart’ is the crux

of Murphy's reason for being.¹⁰³ Supplement this vocation with over fifty years of activism toward the amelioration of health, social, political, and cultural issues of the less fortunate factions of humanity. The apex of these efforts is Murphy's determination to find solutions inclusive of the wisdom of Eastern and Western spiritual tenets, esotericisms, beliefs, and traditions; his comingling adaptation of philosophy, psychology, and natural and behavioral science; his investigations into the psychical and parapsychological; and his utilization of the philosophical constituents best suited for unbiased and nondogmatic resolutions.

Throughout this study I have emphasized Michael Murphy's overt and finely balanced acquisition and application of knowledge. I have determined the primary ingredient—the ground of Michael Murphy's worldview and resultant oeuvre—is his unequivocal integrality. I have provided a rendering of Michael Murphy's accomplishments, and their spiritual and philosophical foundations developed within his worldview. I have recorded biographical events and circumstances that portray his individual life history and philosophical determinations. I have stayed within the advisorial boundaries provided by R. G. Collingwood (1946, 25): “The task of the historian is penetrating to the thought of the agents whose acts they are studying.”

¹⁰³ While precluding the use of the term *heart* in our codification of transformative capacities, we employ it here as a symbol of Michael Murphy's emotional productivity for the betterment of humanity. Heart is synonymous with affection, benevolence, character, compassion, concern, courage, determination, disposition, feeling, fortitude, humanity, inclination, love, moral fiber, resolution, resolve, response, sensitivity, sentiment, soul, steadfastness, strength of character, sympathy, temperament, tenacity, tenderness, toughness, understanding, will, and willpower (Roget's 2013).

To paraphrase Meno's paradox, either you know of what you are searching or you do not. If you know what you are searching for, you already have knowledge of it; therefore, inquiry is pointless. And if you do not know what you are looking for, you would not recognize it even if you came upon it; again, inquiry is thus deemed pointless.

Socrates answered Meno's dilemma through the Doctrine of Recollection:

The Doctrine of Recollection from Plato's *Meno* is traditionally interpreted as a metaphysical account of how learning is possible. The traditional interpretation is that Plato believed that there were eternal Forms in another realm, with which our immortal souls were once acquainted, but knowledge of them was lost upon becoming embodied. The inquirer then should seek knowledge by exercising reason in the attempt to regain knowledge of the Forms. (Systma 2008, 1)

Paavola and Hakkarainen (2005, 236) describe Meno's 'learning' paradox, adapted by Carl Bereiter (1985) in the *Review of Educational Research*:

To put it succinctly, the paradox is that if one tries to account for learning by means of mental action carried out by the learner, then it is necessary to attribute to the learner a prior cognitive structure that is as advanced or complex as the one to be acquired.

Socrates proposed that we can identify the object of something we do not know, because according to Plato's Doctrine of Recollection, we have been already been exposed in a priori existence to the object of any enigmatic search. Its unveiling requires the assistance of a dialectical reminder that comes to us through the exchange of logical arguments.¹⁰⁴ That forgotten knowledge eternally

¹⁰⁴ Cooper (2006, 22) writes:

Dialectic remains important in most kinds of panentheism, most famously in Hegel's. Pseudo-Dionysius blends Neoplatonism with Christian theology and is the original source of Christian panentheism. Erigena, Eckhart, and Nicholas of Cusa are three medieval panentheists who work directly from Dionysius.

resides within our soul, our consciousness, our ‘being,’ and discursive reasoning is a proven method of retrieval. We arrive at answers through inquiry because it is just a matter of recollecting something that is already part of our inherent nature. We know that the answer is correct when it brings itself to light. It is not new knowledge, but recollected knowledge. Plato’s Doctrine of Recollection is the Western appropriation of Socrates’s response. I propose that similarities of the Eastern philosophical Doctrine of Recognition (*Pratyabhijñā*) to Plato’s Doctrine of Recollection resonate within the concept of universal knowledge. The *Pratyabhijñā* or Recognition school of *kaśmiri śaivism*—which takes its name “from the Stanzas on the Recognition of God (*Isvara-pratyabhijñākārikā*) written by Utpaladeva towards the beginning of the Tenth Century” (Dyczkowski 1987, 17) —provides the corresponding theory that all knowledge is inherent within us, but has been veiled or hidden because our Mind [*nous*] has forgotten through *avidya* [ignorance] or *māyā*. In his article on “Kashmiri Shaiva Philosophy,” Lawrence (2005, 1) stipulates:

The most salient philosophy of monistic Kashmiri Shaivism is the Pratyabhijñā, or “Recognition,” system propounded in the writings of Utpaladeva (c. 925-975 C.E.) and Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025 C.E.). Abhinavagupta’s disciple Kshemarāja (c.1000-1050) and other successors interpreted that philosophy as defining retrospectively the significance of earlier monistic Shaiva theology and philosophy.

The Doctrines of Recognition and Recollection are universally similar. According to both doctrines, learning of that which we do not yet recognize is accomplished through the reacquisition of that which we already know but have veiled from ourselves through ego-centric ignorance. Paavola and Hakkarainen (2005, 236) express this a priori acquisition of things present yet forgotten:

rationalism says that we human beings already have the necessary conceptual structures with our reason, and to discover or learn something is to “recollect” or “see” something that we already have possessed in some form all the time. According to empiricism, the new emerges when observations and experiences [perception, experientialism] connect together often enough, or lend support to an inductive hypothesis.

This provides academic support that the historical polarities of Eastern and Western philosophical searches for meaning are based on universal human aspiration: the need to successively know what we do not yet know through the universal questioning of how humanity acquires knowledge of things for which it does not know it is searching.

This process of reacquisition is the foundation of Michael Murphy’s understanding of the transformative measures that bridge our nescience to a metanormal human capacity for knowing (a reembracement of that which is and has always been within us). Murphy’s transformative practices, along with his recognition of inherent extraordinary abilities, propose to lead us forward, ‘back’ to what has always been. As Murphy (1992, 190) proclaims, “the involutory nature of Ultimate Consciousness, this universal evolution arising from a previous involution of Divinity in nature” transports all knowledge, all experience to Pre-Matter, then unveils them coincidentally with humanity’s need to know and embrace. Dyczkowski (1987, 18) provides a mundane analogy:

Yearning for liberation, he [the soul, intellect] is like a young woman betrothed by arrangement to a handsome man. Hearing of his many fine qualities she comes to love him even though she has never seen him. One day they chance to meet but she remains indifferent to him until she notices that he possesses the qualities of the man she is to marry and so, to her great delight, she recognizes him.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Utpaladeva. 1921.

This comprehension of humanity's potential is guided by Michael Murphy's investigations into the integral relationships between Eastern and Western thought. Involution–evolution theories are supported by Hegel, Henry James (Murphy 1992), Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1919), Odin (1981), McDermott (1972a), Chardin (1974), and the scientific views of Whitehead (1926, 1933, 1978), Hartshorne (1950), and Griffin (1989, Murphy 1992). These theories affirm that knowledge, like every entity, is eternally existent and accessible. Murphy (1992, 188) credits the philosophical ground of Hegel's vision:

In Hegel's conception, the *Geist* gradually reveals itself to itself through the long dialectic of history, recovering its fundamental completeness by a series of theses, antitheses, and syntheses in which one aspect of itself after another is subsumed (*aufgehoben*) in a higher fulfillment.

I have evidenced Michael Murphy's data-driven, integral research and documentation evident in *The Future of the Body* (1992). Murphy studied, investigated, and evaluated similar and disparate views to arrive at his own corresponding and comprehensive worldview.

We know that Michael Murphy's (2013b, 3) understanding of the theory of involution–evolution, (which originated in multiple sources) posits the Supreme Principle's spiritual involution into Its creations, thus setting the ground for humanity's evolution. Murphy (1992, 181) credits his philosophical lineage for providing the groundwork by which he is able to discover truth by building upon previous discoveries:

Samuel Alexander, C. Lloyd Morgan, C. D. Broad, Joseph Needham, Michael Polyani, and others have developed the idea that evolution produces emergent structures, processes, and laws (or habits) that had not previously existed.

This only implies that, while all knowledge is not yet accessible to humanity, it is ever-present as truth knowledge within the Supreme Principle and thus available to humanity, when deemed appropriate, through the involution of Supernature/Supermind into the basic constituents of life. Involution–evolution within panentheism supports the reemergence of structures, processes and so on, through the interplay of a macrocosm consisting of all knowledge and a microcosm that contains, within itself, this same knowledge, which reveals itself to humanity as seen fit by some unseen force. Murphy (1992, 550) quotes William James (1902) on the process of knowledge reacquisition:

The further limits of human nature plunge into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely “understandable” world. Name it the mystical region, or the supernatural region, whichever you choose. So far as our ideal impulses originate in this region (and most of them do originate in it, for we find them possessing us in a way for which we cannot articulately account), we belong to it in a more intimate sense than that in which we belong to the visible world, for we belong in the most intimate sense wherever our ideals belong. Yet the unseen region in question is not merely ideal, for it produces effects in this world.

Jung (1953, 328) posits that certain knowledge is presumptive, known through an understanding of how certain things work rather than by observation, referring to our archetypes:

which are to be understood as inborn modes of functioning that constitute, in their totality, man’s nature. The chick does not learn how to come out of the egg—it possesses this knowledge *a priori*.

David Lawrence (1998, 209) explains how:

in the case of Christian Platonism/Neo-Platonism, Plato explains epistemic grounding through anamnesis of the primordial archetype-ideas; Neo-Platonism systematized these in the One's first emanation, nous; and Christians in turn identified nous as the logos/mind of God. Thomism alternatively posits the immanence within our cognition of the unlimited act of the divine intellect as described by Aristotle.¹⁰⁶

Confirmation of Michael Murphy's inherent and continuing belief in the interdependence of all things is evidenced by his philosophy of integrality through the spiritual lineage which precedes it: Śri Ramakrishna (Mahendranath 1942), Emerson (1929, 1987), Henry James, Sr. (1863), Śri Aurobindo (Ghose 1996a), Chaudhuri (1972a). In *The Future of the Body* (1992, 179), Murphy credits Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Bergson, Whitehead, Gebser, and Hartshorne as trying to comprehend the developing universe in relation to something ultimate and eternal," the knowledge for which we search for but do not yet fully recognize. Murphy (1992, 13) also acknowledges Plato's role "in exploring the relations between different kinds of knowing, including dianoia, discursive reasoning, and noesis, contemplative apprehension of the Good." Credit is also given (Murphy 1992, 13) to the Neo-platonic influences of Plotinus, Origen, John Scotus, Eckhart, and Aquinas.

Whitehead speaks of a nontemporal continuant process of becoming. An actual entity exists and functions in its process of emergence. When the process completes itself, it is no longer becoming, and therefore the entity has, for all intents and purposes, faded into the past, succeeded by a new process of becoming. Hosinski (1993, 23) explains that the:

¹⁰⁶ Davies, Charles Maurice. 1876. Davies wrote: "For Plato's doctrine of anamnesis, the soul has pre-existed in a purer state, and therein gained its ideas."

“being” of all past actual entities is, in Whitehead’s term, “objectively immortal.” This means that while the moments of the past are no longer “alive” in becoming they nevertheless live on to influence future moments.

Hosinski’s explanation supports how the process of knowing, which already exists in past entities, is then subsumed into new entities. Michael Murphy (1992, 184) clarifies the substance of Whitehead’s *prehension*:

Prehension does not necessarily involve sensory perception or consciousness, as it goes on continually in the physical elements and among humans at both conscious and unconscious levels. It does, however, involve contact with other entities (or occasions) and influence from and upon them. ... Through prehension, all entities constituting this universe continually contact and influence other entities, with some degree of creativity.

Dillon (1968, 56) writes of Meno’s philosophical ambiguity:

Meno’s learning paradox is the paradox of immanence and transcendence: either we know everything or we know nothing; either the object of cognition is imminent and transparent, or it is transcendent and opaque. These are the polarized categories of traditional dualist thought.

But there is no paradox; both are true. All knowledge resides within as we harbor a divine presence. We maintain the ability to access this knowledge but are conflicted by the additional presence of ignorance. This is confirmation of Michael Murphy’s theory of metanormal human capacity, which encourages study, awareness, and practice in order to mitigate this overriding ignorance. Murphy offers the evidence that continued acquisition is absolute. This begs for a paraphrasing of Socrates famous dictum (which is nowhere to be found in Plato’s

literature): “I know one thing: that I know nothing.”¹⁰⁷ I would have preferred him to have said, ‘Of the vast knowledge of the universe, I know nothing—except that that knowledge is universally accessible.’

Within this study of Michael Murphy, I do not propose the importance of one philosophical constituent over another. The human leg may be muscularly more powerful than the hand, but it cannot as effectively scratch an ear or turn the pages of a book. Nor do I value one theory over another, but merely offer theoretical hypotheses which resonate with possibility, and which will surely be dissected and analyzed as the evolutionary process of metanormal human potential continues. My purpose is to support Michael Murphy’s main philosophical argument that the involution–evolution process within evolutionary pantheism supports his theories on humanity’s metanormal potential. Murphy’s primary philosophical foci are to (a) better understand humanity’s reason for being, (b) document humanity’s current condition through natural science including metaphysics, and (c) evaluate and create processes and theories to facilitate the betterment of man’s condition.

Anton Grosz (1995, 130) provides a metaphysical analysis of the lived integral reality of Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri, which we appropriate as an equally valid tribute to Michael Murphy:

¹⁰⁷ Plato did write in *Apology*, 21d: “This man, on one hand, believes that he knows something, while not knowing [anything]. On the other hand, I – equally ignorant – do not believe [that I know anything]” (Stokes 1997, 18).

Living integral reality ... means not just speculating on the absolute in these two aspects of ineffable unchanging oneness and material overchanging multiplicity, but a life-changing individual experiential awareness of that reality. Whereas spiritual consciousness says that only the spirit is real and material consciousness says that only the material is real, integral consciousness knows that they are both real, and “I” am an aspect of that reality. This is a felt knowing that spills over into the cognitive and takes it to another level.

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Appendix A: Extraordinary Human Development

In the listing that follows, 12 sets of animal attributes are aligned with corresponding features of ordinary psychosocial development, metanormal development, and integral practices for further cultivation and transformation. Each set of attributes exhibits a continuity, a vector as it were, by which we can discern the outcome of further human advance. (Murphy 1992, 36)¹⁰⁸

I.	ATTRIBUTE: Perception of external events
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: ¹⁰⁹ Sensory abilities mediated by organs such as the canine ear, the olfactory bulb, and the human eye.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Improved sensory awareness produced by somatic education, sports, martial arts, contemplation, and other disciplines.
	PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: a. Metanormal sensory perception. b. Perception of the numinous in the physical world. c. Deliberate clairvoyant perception of physical events. d. Perception of events or entities beyond the normally perceivable world.
	INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION: ¹¹⁰ The perception of ordinary sensory stimuli can be cultivated through: Hypnotic suggestions for visual, tactile, gustatory, or olfactory range and acuity sensory perception. Somatic disciplines such as Sensory Awareness that promote sensitive hearing, taste, or touch. Fitness training and somatic education that promote general sensory alertness. Martial-arts training for visual and auditory range and discrimination. Skill-specific training for sensory acuity and ranges, as in sports, wine-tasting.

¹⁰⁸ *The Future of the Body*, p41-51. This is a much edited list, and does not do justice to Michael Murphy's work. I highly recommend reading *The Future of the Body* in order to understand the depth of his grasp.

¹⁰⁹ Peirce (1932) supports this unit of evolution in order to recognize the continuum towards metanormal potential: "...since animals have instincts which are crucial for their survival why not assume that we humans have a tendency to find true theories: because this is something that seems to be crucial for our survival" (Paavola and Hakkarainen 2005, 238).

¹¹⁰ Row 5: *The Future of the Body*, 568-75.

	Meditation that quiets mental interference with sensory experience, stimulates synesthesias, and gives rise to perceptions of numinous beauty in the world at large.
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II.	ATTRIBUTE: Somatic awareness and self-regulation
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Capacities for kinesthetic awareness and self-regulation.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Enhanced kinesthetic awareness produced, for example, by somatic disciplines, sports training, meditation, biofeedback, martial arts, or hatha yoga. Such awareness is mediated by visual imagery, auditions, or an immediate feeling of the body's processes.
	PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: a. Extraordinary somatic awareness mediated by the central nervous system. b. Perception of somatic events that does not depend upon bodily organs. This extrasomatic awareness, or internal clairvoyance, is said to accompany certain types of yogic experience. It is characterized as the <i>anudrishti siddhi</i> or <i>animan siddhi</i> , for example, and is said to produce awareness of cells, molecules, and atomic patterns within the body.
	INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION. <i>Somatic awareness and self-regulation</i> can be cultivated through: 1. Biofeedback training. 2. The practice of visual, auditory, gustatory, or olfactory imagery that conveys information about particular body parts. 3. Disciplined observation of kinesthetic and tactile sensations during physical movement or repose. 4. The deliberate elicitation and modification of kinesthetic experience, as in Sensory Awareness, the Feldenkrais Method, or Reichian therapy. 5. Elicitation of the trophotropic response, as in Atogenic Training and quiet meditation. 6. Close attention to kinesthetic and tactile impressions during any of other practices noted in other parts of this inventory.

III.	ATTRIBUTE: Communication Abilities
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Complex signaling abilities by which information is transmitted between organisms.
	Exceptional verbal and nonverbal communication abilities produced by psychotherapy, religious practice, and other transformative practices, including the capacity to sense another person's psychological state and basic interests.
	PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: Extraordinary communication abilities mediated by sensory clues. Extraordinary communication abilities mediated by telepathic interaction.
	INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION: <i>Communication abilities</i> involve language, gesture, facial expressions, touch, and extrasomatic interactions, which can be cultivated through:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Somatic disciplines that increase the range of expression by relieving chronic tensions, increasing somatic awareness, and articulating the activity of various body parts. 2. Psychotherapy and affective education that facilitates sensitive, straightforward, and creative relationships. 3. Sustained self-reflection that reveals structure on expressive abilities, deepens empathy, and helps one reach out to others with greater understanding and skills. 4. Prayer, meditation, and other religious practices that produce sustained rapport among friends or student and teacher, 5. Acts of service and charity that promote helping skills and strengthen bonds with other people.
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IV	ATTRIBUTE: Vitality
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Sustained energy levels, exemplified by warm-bloodedness among birds and mammals.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Enhanced vital capacity such as the exceptional fitness produced by endurance sports and the ability to survive extreme deprivation produced by religious asceticism.
	PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: Extraordinary vitality evident, for example, in the rising of <i>N/um</i> among the Kung Bushman of the Kalahari desert, the <i>tumo</i> produced by Tibetan yoga, the rising kundalini of Indian yoga traditions, and the <i>incendium amoris</i> of Catholic saints.
	<p>INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION.</p> <p><i>Vitality</i> can be increased through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychotherapy that lifts repressions, resolves internal conflicts, and unblocks defenses against strong feeling. 2. Somatic disciplines that reduce chronic tensions, promote regenerative relaxation, and make available energetic reserves. 3. Athletic training that improves blood circulation, metabolic efficiency, and general fitness so that more energy is available for mental or physical activity. 4. Martial arts that promote mental alertness, emotional balance in stressful circumstances, and general somatic efficiency. 5. Meditation or other religious practices that reduce draining emotions, unify conflicting volitions, and promote access to the subliminal depths of mind and body.

V.	ATTRIBUTE: Movement abilities
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Specialized organs to facilitate movement of the body, such as wings, legs, or flippers.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Enhancement of agility, coordination, grace, and stamina produced by somatic disciplines, sports, and the martial arts. Japanese Ninja, for example, could cover about 300 miles in three days on foot.
	<p>PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Extraordinary physical movement exhibited, for example, by certain shamans, martial artists, and Tibetan lamas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Through the evidence for it is inconclusive, the levitation attributed to Catholic mystics, Indian yogis, Taoists sages, and adepts of other religious traditions. c. Out-of-body experience involving perceptions of the physical world. d. Movement into extraphysical worlds during lucid dreams, deep meditation, hypnotic trance, and other altered states of mind.
	<p>INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION. The body's movement abilities depend on several physical capacities, among them:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Balance, which can be developed through aikido, tai chi, and other martial arts; dance; and sports such as rock climbing, gymnastics, ice skating, and surfing. 2. Cardiopulmonary endurance, which can be developed through running, swimming, rowing, cross-country skiing, race-walking, cycling, and other endurance sports. 3. Agility, which can be developed through aikido, karate, and other martial arts; dance; and sports such as rock-climbing, basketball, and soccer. 4. Flexibility, which can be developed through various stretching routines, modern dance, hatha yoga, tai chi, aikido, and somatic disciplines such as the Feldenkrais Method. 5. Muscular strength and power, which can be developed through weightlifting, calisthenics, and physical labor. 6. Coordination, which can be developed through sports, dance, and the martial arts, as well as by somatic disciplines such as Rolfing that articulate the functioning of separate muscles and ligaments. 7. Speed, which can be developed by cultivating all the bodily capacities noted above, and by the speed training developed by modern athletes and coaches.

VI.	ATTRIBUTE: Abilities to alter the environment directly.
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Specialized organs to manipulate the environment, such as beak, talons, and hands.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Enhancements of dexterity, hand-eye coordination, and specific hand skills by somatic education, athletic training, and the martial arts.
	<p>PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Extraordinary hand-eye coordination and dexterity evident, for example, in great athletic feats. b. Extrasomatic influence upon the environment.
	<p>INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION. Hand eye skills can be developed through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Somatic disciplines (such as Rolfing that articulate the muscles and ligaments of the hand, or Sensory Awareness) that promote sensitive, tender, and loving touch. 2. Sports such as tennis, baseball, and golf. 3. Martial arts such as karate, kendo (swordsmanship), and kyudo (archery). <p>Extrasomatic influence upon the environment can be developed through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Prayer, spiritual healing exercises, and other practices in which telergy is exercised.

	5. Martial arts, shamanic, yogic, and contemplative disciplines that promote telekinetic abilities.
	6. Long meditation practice that alters some portion of physical space.

VII	ATTRIBUTE: Pain and Pleasure.
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Sensations of pain and pleasure mediated by the vertebrate nervous system.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Increased capacity for pain and pleasure produced by psychotherapy and somatic disciplines. Enhancement of pleasure and ability to control pain produced by hypnotic suggestion, athletic training, martial-arts training, or religious practice.
	PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: Self-existent delight, which subsumes ordinary pain and pleasure, described in statements from, for example, <i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i> , II.9, Gopi Krishna 1971, and Śri Aurobindo 1970, <i>The Life Divine</i> , pt. 2, cha27. Vol. 19 in <i>The Collected Works</i> .
	INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR TRANSFORMATION. Pain can be controlled or eliminated, pleasure increased, and need-transcending joy induced through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behavior modification or other therapies by which chronic fears are overcome, desires for approval are transcended, and other pain-engendering responses are creatively modified. 2. Hypnosis, yoga, and other disciplines during which intensely pleasurable feelings are evoked for long periods. 3. Strenuous sports or adventure, during which blows are received without pain. 4. Meditation and other religious practices by which painful stimuli are turned into sources of pleasure, and once-boring routines are enjoyed.

VII I.	ATTRIBUTE: Cognition.
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Specialized organs and internal networks to transmit information within the organism, culminating in human symbol-making and self-reflection mediated by the central nervous system.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Cognitive skills developed by intellectual training, logic, and stimulation of the imagination through art and philosophy.
	PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mystical illumination. b. Creative works marked by extraordinary immediacy, easer, and completeness, which come ready-made as if from powers beyond ordinary consciousness. Mozart, for example, said that he saw many of his compositions tout ensemble, all at once, and Blake claimed he received poems by “dictation.” In Platonic, Sufi, Kabbalistic, and Vedantic traditions, inspired works of this kind are said to come from God, the gods, or Brahman.
	INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION.

	<p>Transformative practice can develop cognition by bringing new material into its purview of by articulating and strengthening various processes. ...Several practices also facilitate cognitive activity in general. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The resolving of psychological conflicts that impede imagination or analytic thought, as in good psychotherapy. 2. The recall of repressed or habitually unnoticed imagery; for example, by emotional; catharsis or witness meditation, so that such imagery enriches mental process. 3. The reduction of inhibition to unusual ideas, imagery, or associative process; for example, by psychotherapy, meditation, or philosophic reflection that makes them philosophically and morally acceptable. 4. Strengthening concentration. 5. Exercising unfamiliar types of knowing. 6. Integration of analytic, holistic, and imaginative thought by the study of philosophy, myth, artistic works, or religious symbols.
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IX.	ATTRIBUTE: Volition.
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Complex chains of purposeful action culminating in human will.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Refinement, clarification, strengthening, and integration of volition produced by psychotherapy, hypnotic suggestion, sports, martial-arts training, religious practice, and other transformative disciplines.
	PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: Ego-transcending volition reflected, for example, by the Taoist doctrine of <i>wu wei</i> , noninterference with the Tao; the Judeo-Christian-Islamic statement "Not my will but Thine be done"; descriptions of the <i>ishatva</i> and <i>vashitva</i> siddhis, by which a yogi exercise his will with constant success because he is in harmony with the Divine intention; and testimonies to athletic performance "in the zone." Such volition involves extraordinary self-mastery, including metanormal abilities to regulate autonomic processes.
	<p>INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION. We can cultivate and harmonize various volitions by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noninterfering observation of them. Focused recall of those that are repressed or unnoticed. 2. Articulating them. 3. Strengthening them. 4. Integrating them 5. Joining them with ego-transcendent agencies during inspired movements in sports, meditation, prayer, artistic work, charitable service, or other activities.

X.	ATTRIBUTE: Individuation and sense of self.
	PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Marked individualization, especially among higher vertebrates.
	PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Individuation and a healthy sense of identity produced by parental influence on early development, psychotherapy, religious practice and other transformative practices.

	<p>PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: The realization of an ego-transcendent identity that perceives its oneness with all things while remaining a unique center of awareness and action. The cognitive-emotional-behavioral complexity and uniqueness evident, for example, in religious figures such as Francis of Assisi and Śri Ramakrishna.</p>
	<p>INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION. A subjectivity that perceives its fundamental oneness with others can be cultivated through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Witness meditation in action or repose during which thoughts, imagery, emotions, sensations, and volitions are noted and relinquished. 2. Communication with a transcendent Presence, Power, or Principle that produces an identity beyond one's ordinary sense of self. 3. Action dedicated to a transcendent principle in which self-regarding concerns for results are relinquished.

XI.	ATTRIBUTE: Love.
	<p>PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Loving devotion to other exemplified, for example, in cetacean care for the young and Neanderthal protection of wounded comrades.</p>
	<p>PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: The clarification of projections, identifications, and dependencies by psychotherapy and other forms of sustained introspection, which helps to liberate and mobilize concern for others. Empathy and interpersonal creativity produced by affective education. The loving service evoked by religious practice.</p>
	<p>PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: Love that transcends normal needs and motives, revealing a unity among people and things more fundamental than any differences between them. It is its own reward. "Love seeks no cause, beyond itself," wrote St. Bernard of Clairveaux. "It is its own fruit, its own enjoyment. I love because I love; I love in order that I may love."</p>
	<p>INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION: <i>Love</i> has many elements, among them delight in others for their own sake, and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empathy. 2. Desire that others thrive. 3. A well-being that overflows to others, which can be cultivated through all the practices noted here and by mutual self-disclosure.

XII	ATTRIBUTE: Bodily structures and processes.
	<p>PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL EVOLUTION: Structures such as the spine to support the organism and separate its components so that they do not crowd each other. Limbs to grasp or execute skilled movement. Other organs to facilitate life in the physical world.</p>
	<p>PRODUCTS OF ORDINARY PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Improved articulation of muscles and myofascia produced by Rolfing. Improved posture and carriage produced by the Alexander Technique, hatha yoga, and the martial arts. Expanded chest and abdominal cavities produced by Reichian Therapy. Strengthened muscles, tendons, ligaments, and skeleton produced by fitness training.</p>
	<p>PRODUCTS OF METANORMAL DEVELOPMENT: Extraordinary alterations of bodily process and structure to facilitate the metanormal capacities noted</p>

	<p>above. Such alterations are represented, for example, by the <i>nadi drishti siddhi</i> through which a yoga transforms the nervous centers and other internal structures of his body; by the Taoists' "opening of the Golden Flower"; or by the activation of <i>chakras</i> and kundalini described in Tantric lore.</p>
	<p>INTEGRAL PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION. <i>Bodily structures and processes</i> can be improved by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical manipulations that articulate the structure of particular muscles, ligaments, and tendons, as in Rolfing. 2. Vibratory movements that break down chronic tensions, as in Reichian therapy. 3. Stretching routines, weightlifting, and other exercises that articulate or strengthen particular muscles, tendons, and ligaments. 4. Routines that develop specific components of physical conditioning, such as interval training for cardiopulmonary endurance, agility exercise, and flexibility training. 5. Training voluntary control of particular autonomic processes, as with biofeedback. 6. Exercises such as meditation that facilitate the Relaxation Response. 7. Mental imagery of desired somatic changes. 8. Comprehensive practices such as tai chi and aikido that help integrate the entire body.

Appendix B: Siddhis, Charisms, Charasmatas¹¹¹

Yogic Potentials and Capacities, or siddhis, in Hindu-Buddhist Psychology

MANOSIDDHI, CITTASIDDHI

Extrasensory perceptions; extraordinary mental powers.

1. Subtle knowledge of distant stars and other heavenly bodies, their interrelations and configurations.
2. Knowledge of other planes of existence (lokas).
3. *Paracitta-jnanas*. Telepathic knowledge of the minds of other people.
4. *Citta-samvit*. Knowledge of the workings of one's own mind.
5. *Tathata-jnana*, *visista-jnana*. Knowledge of individual things and beings in respect of their suchness or being-ness (also called *Nama-Rupa-Jnana*).
6. *Kayavyuha-jnana*. Knowledge of one's internal organs, physiological processes, anatomical structures, energy centers, nervous and cerebrospinal systems.
7. *Jatismarate*, *Purvajnama-jnana*. Remembrance of one's past lives or incarnations.
8. *Adrista-jnana*, *Bhavitavya-jnana*. Pre-cognition of coming events, as well as of one's future destiny. Precognition of the exact time, place, and circumstances of one's own death.
9. *Sphota-jnana*. Knowledge of the revealing light (sphota) inherent in spoken or written words of people, or in the sounds made by animals, birds, and other living things. This enables the yogi to understand the precise significance of human language and the language of animals, birds, trees, flowers.
10. *Akasa-vani-sravana*, *Daiva-vani*. Supernatural auditory knowledge of ethereal records representing the accumulated knowledge of humankind. The tapping of these sources may provide glimpses of the future.
11. *Siddha-darsana*, or *Siddha-sravana*. Seeing the sights or hearing the voices of the world's master minds, whether contracted through living communication or through activation of their wisdom deposited in the records of the *Vinanja loka*.
12. *Viprakrista jnana*. Experience of normally invisible processes of nature, or very remote obscure things and treasures, e.g. objects hidden in far-off caves or ocean bottoms.
13. *Alaukika Vedana*. Registering in one's emotional sensibility the feelings of other people, animals, birds, and even tiny insects.
14. *Alaukika Asvada*. The ability to enjoy the flavors of distant delicacies.
15. *Alaukika Vata*. The ability to enjoy the fragrance of distant and hidden perfumes, flowers, incenses, etc.

¹¹¹ Esalen *Siddhis* 2014. A *siddhi* perceived as a revelation of ultimate truth or reality is called a *vibhuti*; as fully actualized abilities, sometimes *siddhis* are known collectively as *aisvarya*, spiritual wealth and glory.

KAYASIDDHI, DEHASIDDI
Bodily powers and perfections.

1. *Anima*. The ability to reduce the body (or the center of consciousness) to the size of atom.
2. *Mahima*. The ability to expand one's body (or consciousness) to an enormous size.
3. *Laghima*. To make the body as light as a feather.
4. *Garima*. To make the body enormously heavy, like a mountain.
5. *Prapti*. The power to reach the moon (or any object in remote space) and grasp it or touch it with the tip of one's finger.
6. *Prakamyā*. The yogic power of instant wish-fulfillment. The ordinary will power is a function of the mind, a phenomenon of time. In ordinary life there is always a greater or lesser time gap between an effort of will power or the formation of a definite wish and its fulfillment in the realm of actuality. But an advanced yogi, when he becomes united with the timeless creative energy of Being (*Paraprakriti* or *Brahm-Sakti*) is believed to become a master of time, considerably reducing the gap between his focused will-force and actual accomplishment. He attains what is known in Tibetan Buddhism as *Amoghasiddhi*, power in the field of action.
7. *Isatva*. Creative lordship.
 - a. The power of materialization, i.e. producing visible material things or invisible physical sensations (food, smell, color, etc.) out of the raw material of subtle energy.
 - b. The power of physical transformation, e.g. transforming water into wine, iron into gold, etc.
 - c. *Rupanirmana*. The power to assume different forms and project entirely divergent images of oneself. This is also known as *Bahurupitva*.
 - d. *Cittanirmana*. The power of creating different minds as variously effective means of gaining different perspectives and different means of knowledge and self-expression.
 - e. *Atmarupantara*. The power of transforming the physical, instinctual and mental aspects of personality into channels of expression for spiritual values.
 - f. *Pararupantara*. The ability to transform other people into what they essentially are, namely images of the Divine.
 - g. *Yugasristi*, or *Navayugapravartana*. The ability to create a new order of civilization, a new era of cultural efflorescence, a new life style, a new system of values. This enables one to function as a figure of history or a person of destiny.
8. *Vasitva*. Control and mastery over nature, both external and internal, physical and mental. Such control may assume various forms, such as:

- a. Control over one's internal bodily organs, endocrine glands, energy centers, autonomic nervous system. This enormously increases one's power of resistance to disease, decay, and degenerative processes. One gains access to the secrets of rejuvenation and physical charm, vitality and longevity. One attains what is known as *Ichhamrityu*, i.e., the ability to die or leave body at will.
 - b. The ability to control the mind and behavior patterns of other people by projecting powerful suggestions into bioenergetic existence-field.
 - c. The ability to subdue the savage impulse, wrathfulness and aggressiveness of other living beings, human or animal. This is known as *aridaman*.
 - d. Mastery over one's own instinctual drives and urges, passions and motivations. This is known as *Atmasamyama*.
9. *Saktipata*. The ability to transmit spiritual energy of the power of illumined existence to others who are sufficiently receptive or ready in their personal growth. This is also known as *Gurukripa*, *Saktisancara*, or *Diksa*, i.e. spiritual initiation. People can be spiritually initiated and awakened in various ways, e.g. by the Guru's compassionate look, touch, loving embrace, or by spiritual formula or sound-symbol.
 10. *Vyakhinasa*, *Rogavimochana*. Spiritual healing by transmitting harmonizing vital energy or illuminating psychic energy, or by opening the inner being of a person in suffering to the free current of the universal life force.
 11. *Vayubhaksana*. The ability to draw nourishment from air by turning the elemental forces of nature into food.
 12. *Amritasevana*. The ability to drink the heavenly ambrosia or nectar of immortality. This happens when the awakened psychonuclear energy goes up to the highest energy center at the top of the skull. Out of this union flows a stream of joy and rapture flooding the entire organism. This stream of blissful energy, which has a revitalizing and rejuvenating effect, is known as the nectar of immortality (*amrita*). Also known as *sanjivani suddha*.
 13. *Punarujjivana*. The power to bring a newly deceased body back to life.
 14. *Indrajal vistara*. Power of mass hypnosis such as climbing up a rope, assumption of illusory forms of angels, animals or other persons, etc.
 15. *Indra Sakti*. The power of rational will or organized purposive energy carried to the highest limit of development.
 16. *Rudra Sakti*, *Kundalini Sakti*, *Kalimahima*. The most powerful cerebrospinal energy, dark yet luminous, like flashes of lightning in dark clouds, originally beyond all control of the rational will.
 17. *Brahmajyoti*. Attainment of the self-shining light. In the Kena Upanishad, Indra receives this Being-cognition by the grace of Uma, the golden goddess, the self-revealing power of Being.
 18. *Purnajnana Sakti*. This is what Sri Aurobindo calls the supra-mental power (*Atimanasa Sakti*, *Ritacit Sakti*), in which all the powers of consciousness are integrated.

BRAHMASIDDHI, JNANASIDDHI
Transpersonal Being-cognitions

1. *Virat Jnana*. Synoptic vision of Being in its visible manifestation, i.e. knowledge of Being manifesting itself in and through the phenomenal world and color, sound and rhythm. In the Bhagavadgita, Arjuna had the cosmic vision known as *Viswarupa Darsana*, the vision of Krishna as all the forms of the visible world.
2. *Suksma Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of Being as the unmanifest background, or as the invisible all-sustaining medium of subtle forces and vibrations. The ordinary world is the visible manifestation of this invisible energy matrix. (The unmanifest energy matrix is also known as the cosmic seed, the golden egg, the *Hiranyagrabha*).
3. *Karana Brahma Jnana*. Knowledge of Being as the original undifferentiated cosmic energy from which the cosmic manifold springs into existence, in which it abides and endures, and in which it dissolved again. At this level the infinite Being-Energy (*Mahasakti*) is not yet differentiated into distinct forms but holds within itself endless diversity as the cosmic seed capable of sprouting and blossoming into the varieties of name and form (*nama-rupa*).
4. *Nirguna Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of Being as infinite, indefinable, indeterminable, unfathomable Mystery. In other worlds, knowledge of ultimate reality in its transrational, unspeakable, numinous aspect. The same kind of experiential knowledge is described in Buddhism as knowledge of the absolute void or emptiness (*sunyata*). Christian mystics have variously described it as “the dazzling darkness,” “the absolute nudity of pure Being” or “the dark night.” *Bhuma jnana*, *Taraka jnana*, *Turiyatita* are other Sanskrit words for awareness of pure transcendence.
5. *Purna Brahma Jnana*. Integral knowledge of Being as the indivisible unity of the temporal and the nontemporal dimensions of the universe - the evolutionary and nonevolutionary aspects, the multitudinous and the absolutely nondual aspects of the real. One implication of this all-comprehensive understanding is that the nontemporal and transcendental aspect of the universe must not be metaphysically converted or reified into an eternally self-existent substance, absolute Idea, absolute Spirit, all powerful God, universal Mind, or absolute Suchness.
6. *Dharma Jnana*. Knowledge of the cosmic law which controls all operations of Nature and guides destinies of human history and civilization. It is the law that sustains the cosmic whole as an energy-conserving, balance-maintaining, self-adjusting, self-recuperative, creative-destructive, evolving-devolving system of energy.

7. *Tattva Jnana*. Knowledge of the fundamental structural principles of the universe, the archetypal masculine principle (Siva, Purusa, Yang, Logos, Yab), the archetypal feminine principle (Sakti, Prakriti, Yin, Eros, Yum), the ontological relation of dual-nonduality, or bipolar unity (*Dvaitadvaita*), the dynamic interplay of opposites (Lila), the laws of identity-in-diversity and diversity-in-identity (*akhanda vaicitrya*), the psychocosmic correspondence (*deha-citta-abhinnata*), the circular movement of creation-destruction as the rhythm of the cosmic process (*Sristi-Samhara Cakra*), the cosmic law of dynamic harmony (*sasvata dharma*), the natural law of the equality of action and reaction (*kriya-pratikriya samatva*), the ethical law of the recoil of all moral actions (*Karma phalatva*), the psychoevolutionary law of energy mobilization (*Urdhagami tapahsakti*), the creativity of the union of opposites (milana-nihita sristi rahasya). Metaphysics as the science of first principles consists of this kind of knowledge.
8. *Jati Jnana, Samanya Jnana*. Knowledge of eternal forms, essences, ideas, class differentia.
9. *Pradhana Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality (Being) as the primordial neutral energy or matrix of the world.
10. *Anna Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality (Brahman, Being) as universal matter, or cosmic physical energy
11. *Prana Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the universal life force, the élan vital.
12. *Mano Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the cosmic mind, or world of Ideas.
13. *Vijnana Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the universal gnosis.
14. *Sabda Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the cosmic Sound, the primordial Word, the Music of the Spheres, the symphony of original vibrations.
15. *Sphota Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of articulate sound structure composed of intelligently organized symbols. Sphota is the luminous potency of words and propositions to reveal the eternal verities of existence. So language conceived as truth-revealing light is perceived as the essence of the ultimate.
16. *Prema Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as absolute love.
17. *Sakti Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as supreme and absolute power. Supreme power may be conceived as the cosmic will to power, as unchallenged social or economic-political power, or as all-good, all-loving cosmic creative energy (*Mahasakti*).
18. *Ananda Brahman Jnana*. Immediate and intuitive awareness of the ultimate as indescribable and unfathomable bliss.
19. *Atma Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as non-different from the boundless light of pure consciousness that shines at the inmost center of every human's own individual being. This gives rise to the experience of perfect self-sufficiency and everlasting nontemporal self-existence (*Kaivalya*, or the *Atma Pratistha* of Raja Yoga).

20. *Ksana Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of the ultimate as the eternal Now. Knowledge of the entire expanse of time with its three dimensions of past, present and future simultaneously present to the knower in a flash of intuition.
21. *Mahakala Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the cosmic process, as the beginningless and endless creative advance of Time. The Dancing Shiva (*Nataraja*) whose dance manifests the rhythm of the multidimensional cosmic process. The cosmic dance of Kali, dancing in self-oblivion on the tranquil bosom of Siva, the radiance of eternity.
22. *Loka Jnana, Bhuvana Jnana*. Knowledge of the different planes of existence-consciousness or psycho-cosmic spheres established by the creative evolutionary dance of Time (*Mahakali, Nataraja*).
23. *Parabindu Jnana*. Knowledge of the ultimate as the indivisible sound-light-seed-energy. Here vision, audition, and tactual are rolled into one supreme experience. This shows how our divergent sensations are differentiations of the same indivisible nondual reality.
24. *Satya dristi*. The vision of the Supreme Being as Truth which is inseparable from the supreme Good and the supreme Beauty (*Satya-Siva-Sundara*). Which means that the direct knowledge of the ultimate is simultaneous fulfillment of the deepest longing of our intellectual, volitional, and emotional nature.
25. *Kundalini or Kali Darsana*. Awareness of the awakening of the dormant psycho-nuclear cerebo-spinal energy.
26. *Adrista Jnana, Divya Adesha Sravana*. Audition of the Divine Command, the categorical imperative of the Supreme.
27. *Visyakalyana Jnana, Sarvamangala Jnana*. Vision of the cosmic welfare, or of the ultimate good of humanity evolving earth. Such vision of the summum bonum of the terrestrial process is born of the integral experience of the indivisible unity of the timeless transcendence and the creative advance of time in and through planetary evolution. Such a vision is reflected in ideals of the kingdom of heaven on earth.
28. *Akhanda Sattajnana*. Undivided awareness of the physical, the physical and the spiritual, the subjective, the objective and the transcendental aspects of the universe. Ancient Vedic sages of India laid special emphasis upon such integrated knowledge of reality. Agni was for them simultaneously the physical fire, the psychological fire, and the spiritual or numinous fire of transpersonal Being.

ANANDASIDDHI LILASIDDHI

Yogic beautitudes born of extraordinary self-integration or psychocosmic integration.

1. *Visoka, Klesanasa-ananda*. The joy born of elimination of mental disturbances, sensory distraction or deprivation, emotional agitation or fluctuation.
2. *Swatahsphurta-ananda*. The delight of spontaneous self-expression without any hindrance, inhibition or obstruction
3. *Sadananda*. The kind of delight which is intrinsic to being and wells up from the depths without any extraneous cause.
4. *Cidananda*. The delight of pure undifferentiated consciousness which abides in the midst of all changing emotional moods such as sadness and cheerfulness.
5. *Vivekananda*. The delight inherent in fundamental value distinctions.
6. *Nirvananda*. The joy born of the liquidation of the empirical ego-self.
7. *Bhumananda*. The delight of immediate contact with the depth dimension of existence, the ultimate ground all that is.
8. *Gunatita-ananda*. The delight arising from nature-transcendence, abiding in the midst of all changes and reverses of fortune.
9. *Mahanada*. The delight of glimpsing the cosmic energy which originating, sustaining, and consummating all things, beings, events, and processes.
10. *Kalinrityananda*. The delight born of the dance or rhythmical movement of the awakened spiritual energy within one's own being resulting in the circulation of light (*prabhamandala*).
11. *Sarvatma-ananda*. The delight of perceiving the whole universe within one's own Self, and the Self within the universe.
12. *Sristi-ananda*. The delight of illumined creativity.
13. *Amritananda*. The delight of union of the energy aspect and the consciousness aspect of our being - the union of Sakti and Siva, Yin and Yang, Prakriti and Purusa, Eros and Logos, Yam and Yab.
14. *Rasananda*. The all-pervasive delight of perceiving the infinite variations of existence as crystallized expressions of the One.
15. *Lilananda*. The delight of entering into different kinds of rapturous communion with, or dynamic togetherness with, the Supreme Being.
 - a. *Salokya*. The delight of dwelling in the same place of consciousness with God.
 - b. *Samipya*. The delight of existing perpetually in the immediate presence of the Divine
 - c. *Sarupya*. The delight of acquiring the divine form or appearance.
 - d. *Sdrisya*. The delight of growing steadily into the likeness of God.
 - e. *Sadharmya*. The delight of living in accord with the divine law of action.
 - f. *Sarsti*. The delight of acquiring the supernatural powers of God.
 - g. *Sayujya*. The delight of being absorbed in the abysmal depths of divine existence.

- h. *Seva*. The delight of placing the service of the supreme Godhead above even the soul's deepest and most secret personal longing-the longing for complete liberation.
16. *Mahamaya Lila*. The delight of worldly affairs in the spirit of sportsmanship or divine playmanship which is born of perfect liberation (*moksa*).
17. *Rasalila*. The delight of dancing and singing together with kindred souls in the spirit of common dedication, and total self-giving.
18. *Yajna Lila. Atmotsarga Lila*. The delight of unconditional self-giving and joyful sharing with other people out of genuine love for man and God.
- a. *Sampattidan Yajna*. The beatitude of sharing one's earthly possessions with other people out of altruistic love or compassion.
 - b. *Atmadan Yajna*. The beatitude of sacrificing personal comforts and pleasure with a view to serving the Divine Presence in the social have-nots and untouchables, in the poor and down-trodden.
 - c. *Jivandan Yajna*. The beatitude of sacrificing one's own life for the manifestation of divine glory in human society - for the freedom of one's own country, for the elimination of ignorance and injustice, for the restoration of the moral balance of the world.
 - d. *Kamadan Yajna, Brahmacharya, Tapasya*. The beatitude of sacrificing ego drives and desires, impulses and motivations with a view to awakening the Divine Energy (Sakti) which lies dormant in the human psychophysical system.
19. *Bodhisattva Lila*. The beatitude of dedicating oneself, even after the attainment of full enlightenment, to the service of the entire living creation toward the collective liberation of all.
20. *Dharma Lila, Jivanmukti Lila*. The beatitude of dedicating oneself to worldly activities with a view to maintaining the ethical order of the world (*Lokasamgraha*), regardless of the fruits of action.
21. *Jugantar Lila*. Inspired by the vision of new and better world order, an enlightened person may engage in revolutionary action for the ultimate good of humanity in utter indifference to personal, communal, racial, or parochial vested interest.
22. *Navayuga Lila*. The beatitude of participating in planetary evolution in tune with the superconscient energy of Being.

Charisms¹¹²
In the Catholic Church

1. *Visions*, the perception of normally invisible objects
2. *Locutions*, interior illuminations by means of words or statements, sometimes accompanied by a vision and seeming to proceed from the objects represented.
3. *Reading of hearts*, telepathic knowledge of secret thoughts or mood without sensory cues.
4. *Incendium amoris*, burning sensations in the body without apparent cause. These include interior heat, usually a sensation around the heart, which gradually extends to other parts of the body; intense ardours (when heat becomes unbearable and cold applications must be used); and material burning that scorches clothing or blisters the skin.
5. *Stigmata*, the spontaneous appearance of wounds and bleeding that resemble the wounds of Christ.
6. *Tears of blood and bloody sweat (hematidrosis)*, the effusion of blood from the eyes, as in weeping, or from pores of the skin.
7. *Exchange of hearts*, the appearance of a pronounced ridge of flesh on a finger, representing a ring designating mystical marriage with Christ.
8. *Bilocation*, the simultaneous presence of a material body in two distinct places at once.
9. *Agility*, the instantaneous movement of a material body from one place to another without passing through the intervening space.
10. *Levitation*, elevation of the human body above the ground without visible cause and its suspension in the air without natural support. It may also appear in the form of ecstatic flight or ecstatic walk.
11. *Compenetration of bodies*, when one material body appears to pass through another.
12. *Bodily incombustibility*, the ability of bodies to withstand the natural laws of combustibility.
13. *Bodily elongation or shrinking*.
14. *Inedia*, abstinence from all nourishment for great lengths of time.
15. *Mystical aureoles and illuminations*, radiance from the body, especially during ecstasy or contemplation, considered to be anticipations of the Glorified Body.
16. *Blood prodigies, bodily incorruptibility, and absence of rigor mortis* in human cadavers.

¹¹² Murphy, Michael. 1992, 482.

Charasmatas¹¹³

Charismata for the inner development of the Church ¹¹⁴

1. the Apostolate
2. the cognate office of prophecy
3. the discerning of spirits
4. the office of teacher
5. the word of wisdom and science
6. helps
7. the gift of governing

Charismata for the outer development of the Church

1. increased faith
2. the power of miracles
3. the healing of the sick
4. the gift of tongues

Catholic Phenomena¹¹⁵

1. Elongation of the body
2. Levitation
3. Bodily elongation
4. Stigmata
5. Telekinesis
6. The odor of sanctity.
7. The incorruption of the body

¹¹³ Wilhelm, Joseph. 1908.

¹¹⁴ Theologians distinguish the charismata from other graces which operate personal sanctification: they call the former *gratiae gratis datae* in opposition to the *gratiae gratum facientes*. The "gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost", being given for personal sanctification, are not to be numbered among the charismata. St. Thomas (Summa Theol., I-II, Q. cxi, a. 4) argues that the Apostle (1 Corinthians 12:8-10) "rightly divides charismata; for some belong to the perfection of knowledge, as faith, the word of wisdom, and the word of science; some belong to the confirmation of doctrine, or the grace of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, the discerning of spirits; some belong to the faculty of expression, as kinds of tongues and interpretation of speeches." To the former belong the gifts which help the dignitaries of the Church in performing their offices; to the latter the gift of performing miracles. This division seems indicated in 1 Peter 4:10-11: "As every man hath received grace [charisma], ministering the same to one another. . . If any man speak, let him speak, as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it, as of the power, which God administereth." Seven of the charismata enumerated by St. Paul fall into the first category; five belong to the second category. (Wilhelm 1908)

¹¹⁵ Herbert Thurston, SJ. 1951.

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Michael Murphy and Esalen Institute (Esalen *Siddhis* 2014), for permission to publish Haridas Chaudhuri's list of *Siddhis* in Appendix B (2014), http://www.esalen.org/ctr-archive/yogic_capacities.html

Wilhelm, Joseph. 1908 "Charismata." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Accessed October 22, 2012. By permission of Webmaster Kevin Knight (2014). <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03588e.htm>