

# The Myth of the

# VAGINAL ORGASM

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## *General statement*

Whenever female orgasm is discussed, a false distinction is made between the vaginal and the clitoral orgasm. Frigidity has generally been defined by men as the failure of women to have vaginal orgasms. Actually, the vagina is not a highly sensitive area and is not physiologically constructed to achieve orgasm. The clitoris is the sensitive area and is the female equivalent of the penis. I think this explains a great many things. First, the so-called frigidity rate among women is phenomenal. Usually we are told that it is our hang-up if we don't have an orgasm, and most women accept this analysis. But men are hung-up too, and they have orgasms, so I think we must look for the causes elsewhere.

What actually happens is this: there is only one area for sexual climax although there are many areas for sexual arousal--the clitoris. All orgasms are extensions of sensations from this area. Since the clitoris is usually not directly stimulated in the conventional sexual positions, we are left "frigid." The only other kind of stimulation is purely psychological, the kind of orgasm achieved through fetishes or thinking about someone. But this kind of orgasm is not caused by friction with the vagina and therefore cannot be considered a vaginal orgasm. Rather, it is a psychologically caused orgasm which manifests itself physically in the clitoris. Of the orgasms that are caused by physical contact with the clitoris, there may be many degrees of intensity--some more localized and some which are more diffuse and sensitive. The physical organ which causes them, however, is the clitoris.

All this leads to some interesting questions about conventional sex and our role in it. Men have orgasms essentially by friction with the vagina, not the clitoris, which is external and not able to cause friction the way penetration does. Women have thus been defined sexually in terms of what pleases men; our own biology has not been properly analyzed. Instead, we are fed the myth of the liberated woman and her vaginal orgasm, an orgasm which in fact does not exist.

What we must do is redefine our sexuality. We must discard the "normal" concepts of sex and create new guidelines which take into account mutual sexual enjoyment. While the idea of mutual enjoyment is acknowledged in marriage manuals, it is not followed to its logical conclusion. We must begin to demand that if a certain sexual position now defined as "standard" is not mutually conducive to orgasm, then it should no longer be defined as standard. New techniques must be used or devised which transform our current sexual exploitation.

## *Freud - a father of the vaginal orgasm*

Freud contended that the clitoral orgasm was adolescent, and that upon puberty, when women began having intercourse with men, women should transfer the center of orgasm to the vagina. The vagina, it was assumed, was able to produce a parallel, but more mature orgasm than the clitoris. Much work was done to elaborate on this theory, but not much was done to challenge the basic assumptions.

To fully appreciate this incredible invention, perhaps Freud's general attitude about women must first be realized. Mary Ellman (Thinking About Women) said it this way:

Everything in Freud's patronizing and fearful attitude toward women follows from their lack of a penis, but it is only in his essay *The Psychology of Women* that Freud makes explicit...the deprecations of women which are implicit in his work. He then describes women as intellectually less able and prescribes for them the abandonment of the life of the mind, which will interfere with their sexual function. When the psychoanalyzed patient is a male, the analyst sets himself the task of developing the man's capacities; but with women patients, the job is to resign them to the limits of their sexuality. As Mr. Rieff puts it: for Freud, "analysis cannot encourage in women new energies for success and achievement, but only teach them the lesson of rational resignation."

Once having laid down the law about our sexuality, Freud not so strangely dis-



covered a tremendous problem of frigidity in women. (Frigidity defined as failure to achieve a vaginally caused and experienced orgasm). His cure was that women who were frigid needed psychiatric care. She was suffering from failure to mentally adjust to her 'natural' role as a woman. Frank S. Caprio, a contemporary follower of these ideas:

...Whenever a woman is incapable of achieving an orgasm via coitus, provided her husband is an adequate partner, and prefers clitoral stimulation to any other form of sexual activity, she can be regarded as suffering from frigidity and requires psychiatric assistance. (p. 64/ The Sexually Adequate Female)

The explanation given was that women were envious of men--"renunciation of womanhood". Thus it was diagnosed as an anti-male phenomenon.

It is important to emphasize that Freud didn't base his theory upon a study of the woman's anatomy, but rather upon his assumptions of women as an inferior appendage to the man, and her consequent social and psychological role. In their attempts to deal with the ensuing problem of mass frigidity, Freudians created elaborate mental gymnastics. Marie Bonaparte, in Female Sexuality (p. 148-Grove Press), goes so far as to suggest surgery to help women back on their rightful path. Having discovered a strange connection between the non-frigid woman and the location of the clitoris near the vagina,

It then occurred to men that where, in certain women, this gap was excessive, and the clitoridal fixation obdurate, a clitoridal-vaginal reconciliation might be effected by surgical means, which would then benefit the normal erotic function. Professor Halban, of Vienna, as much biologist as surgeon, became interested in the problem and worked out a simple operative technique. In this, the suspensory ligament of the clitoris was severed and the clitoris secured to the underlying structures, thus fixing it in a lower position, with eventual reduction of the labia minora.

But the severest damage was not in the area of surgery, where Freudians absurdly ran around trying to change the anatomy to fit their basic assumptions. The worst damage was done to the mental health of women who wither suffered silently with self-blame or flocked to the psychiatrists, looking desperately for the hidden and terrible repression that kept from them their vaginal destiny.

### *Lack of evidence?*

One can perhaps at first claim that these areas are unknown and unexplored areas, but upon closer examination this is certainly not true today, but was not even true in the past. For example, men have known that women suffered from frigidity often during intercourse. So the problem was there. Also, there is much specific evidence. Men knew that the clitoris was and is the essential organ for masturbation, whether in children or adult women. So obviously women made it clear where they thought their sexuality was located. Men also seem suspiciously aware of the clitoral powers during 'foreplay' when they want to arouse women and produce the necessary lubrication for penetration. Foreplay is a concept created for male purposes, but works to the disadvantage of women since as soon as she is aroused the male changes to vaginal stimulation and leaves her both aroused and unsatisfied.

It has also been known that women need no anesthesia inside the vagina during surgery, thus pointing to the fact that the vagina is in fact not a highly sensitive area.

Today, with anatomy and Kinsey and Masters and Johnson, to mention just a few sources, there is no ignorance on the subject. There is, however, social reasons why this knowledge has not been accepted. We are living in a male power structure which does not want change in the area of women.

### *Anatomical evidence*

Rather than starting with what women ought to feel, it would seem logical to start out with what the anatomical facts are regarding the clitoris and vagina.



The Clitoris - is a small equivalent of the penis, except for the fact that the urethra does not go through it as in the man's penis. Its erection is similar to the male erection, and the head of the clitoris has the same type of structure and function as the head of the penis. G. Lombard Kelly, in Sexual Feeling in Married Men and Women, p. 35 (Pocketbooks), says

The head of the clitoris is also composed of erectile tissue, and it possesses a very sensitive epithelium or surface covering, supplied with special nerve endings called genital corpuscles, which are peculiarly adapted for sensory stimulation that under proper mental conditions terminates in the sexual orgasm. No other part of the female generative tract has such corpuscles.

The clitoris has no other function than that of sexual pleasure.

The Vagina - Its functions are related to the reproductive function. Principally, 1)menstruation, 2)receive penis, 3)hold semen, and 4)birth passage. The interior of the vagina, which according to the defenders of the vaginally caused orgasm is the center and producer of the orgasm, is:

Like nearly all other internal body structures, poorly supplied with end organs of touch. The internal entodermal origin of the lining of the vagina makes it similar in this respect to the rectum and other parts of the digestive tract. (Kinsey, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female, p. 580)

The degree of insensitivity inside the vagina is so high that "Among the women who were tested in our gynecologic sample, less than 14% were at all conscious that they had been touched. (p. 580/Kinsey)

Even the importance of the vagina as an erotic center (as opposed to center for orgasm) has been found to be minor.

Other Areas - Labia minora and the visible of the vagina. These two sensitive areas may trigger off a clitoral orgasm. Because they can be effectively stimulated during 'normal' coitus, though infrequent, this kind of stimulation is incorrectly thought to be vaginal orgasm. However, it is important to distinguish between areas which can stimulate the clitoris, but incapable of producing the orgasm themselves, and the clitoris:

Regardless of what means of excitation is used to bring the individual to the state of sexual climax, the sensation is perceived by the genital corpuscle and is localized where they are situated: in the head of the clitoris or penis. (p. 49/Kelly)

Psychologically Stimulated Orgasm - Aside from the above mentioned direct and indirect stimulations of the clitoris, there is a third way an orgasm may be triggered. This is through mental (cortical) stimulation, where the imagination stimulates the brain, which in turn stimulates the genital corpuscles of the glans to set off an orgasm.

### ***Women who say they have vaginal orgasms***

Confusion - Because of the lack of knowledge of their own anatomy, some women accept the idea that an orgasm felt during 'normal' intercourse was vaginally caused. This confusion is caused by a combination of 2 factors. One, failing to locate the center of the orgasm, and two, by a desire to fit her experience to the male defined idea of sexual normalcy. Considering that women know little about their anatomy, it is easy to be confused.

Deception - The vast majority of women who claim vaginal orgasm to their men are faking it to, as Ti-Grace Atkinson says, "get the job." In a new best-selling Danish book, I ACCUSE (my own transl.), Mette Ejlersen specifically deals with this common problem, which she calls the "sex comedy."



This comedy is caused by many reasons. First of all, the man brings a great deal of pressure to bear on the woman, because he considers his ability as a lover at stake. So as not to offend his ego, the woman will comply with the prescribed role and go through simulated ecstasy. In some of the Danish women mentioned, women who were left frigid were turned off on sex, and pretended vaginal orgasm to hurry up the sex act. Others, admitted that they had faked vaginal orgasm to catch a man; in one case, to get him to leave his first wife, who admitted being vaginally frigid. The woman pretended that she was 'normal', which greatly pleased the man. Later she was forced to fake orgasm, as she obviously couldn't tell him to stimulate her clitorally.

Many more were simply afraid to establish their right to equal enjoyment, seeing the sexual act as being primarily for the man's benefit, and any pleasure that the woman got as an added extra.

Other women, with just enough ego to reject the man's idea that she needed psychiatric care, refused to admit her frigidity. She wouldn't accept self-blame, but she didn't know how to solve the problem, not knowing the physiological facts about herself. So she was left in a peculiar limbo.

Perhaps one of the most infuriating and damaging results of this whole charade has been that women who were perfectly healthy sexually were taught that they were not. So aside from being sexually deprived, these women were told to blame themselves when there was none. Looking for a cure to a problem that has none, can lead women on an endless path of self-hatred and insecurity. For she is told by her analyst that not even her one role allowed in a male society -- the role of Women -- is she successful in. She is put on the defensive, with phony data as evidence against her, that she better try to be even more feminine, think more feminine, and reject her envy of men. That is, shuffle even harder, baby.

### ***Why men maintain the myth***

1. Sexual Penetration is Preferred - The best stimulant for the penis is the woman's vagina. It supplies the necessary friction and lubrication. From a strictly technical point of view this position offers the best physiological condition, even though the man may try other positions for variation.

2. "The Invisible Woman" - One of the elements of male chauvinism is the refusal or inability to see woman as total, separate human beings. Rather than this approach, men have chosen to define women only in terms of how they benefited men's lives. Sexually, a woman was not seen as an individual wanting to share equally in the sexual act, any more than she was seen as a person with independent desires when she did anything else in society. Thus, it was easy to make up what was convenient about women; for on top of that, society was so controlled that women were not organized to even form a vocal opposition to the male experts.

3. Penis as the Epitome of Masculinity - Men define their lives greatly in terms of masculinity. It is a universal ego builder, whereas racism, for example, is connected with particular areas of racial mixture. Masculinity is defined culturally by what is the most non-female. The Essence of chauvinism is not the practical, economic comfortable services women supply. It is the psychological superiority. This negative kind of definition of self, rather than a positive definition based upon one's own achievements and development of one's potentials, has of course chained the victim and the oppressor both. But by far the most brutalized of the two is the victim.

The analogy is racism, where the white racist compensates his feeling of unworthiness by creating an image of the black man (this is primarily a male struggle) which is inferior to him. Because of his power in a white male power structure, the white man can socially enforce this mythical division.

To the extent that men try to prove male superiority through physiological differentiation, masculinity depends on being the most muscular, the most hairy, the deepest voice, and the biggest penis. Women, on the other hand, are approved of (i.e., called feminine) if they are weak, petite, shave their legs, have high soft voices, and no penis.



Since the clitoris is almost identical to the penis, one finds a great deal of evidence of men in various societies trying to either ignore the clitoris and emphasize the vagina, or, as in many places in the Mid East, actually performing clitoridectomy (p. 151 - Bonaparte). Freud saw this ancient and still practiced custom as a way of further "feminizing" the female by removing this cardinal vestige of her masculinity." (151 - Bonaparte) It should be noted also that a big clitoris is considered ugly and "masculine." Some cultures pour chemicals on the clitoris to make it shrivel up into proper size.

It seems clear to me that men in fact fear the clitoris as a threat to their masculinity.

4. Sexually Expendable Male - Men fear that they will become sexually expendable if the clitoral organ is substituted for the vaginal as the basic pleasure for women. Actually this has a great deal of validity if one considers only the anatomy. The position of the penis inside the vagina, while perfect for reproduction, does not usually stimulate an orgasm in women because the clitoris is not usually located there, but rather externally and higher up. Women must thus rely upon indirect stimulations in this 'normal' position.

Lesbian sexuality, in rubbing one clitoris against the other, could make an excellent case, based on anatomical data, for the extinction of the male organ. Albert Ellis makes a statement something to the effect that a man without a penis can make a woman an excellent lover.

Considering that the vagina is very desirable from a man's point of view, purely on physical grounds, one begins to see the dilemma for men. And it forces us to discard many 'physical' arguments explaining why women go to bed with men. What is left, it seems to me, are psychological reasons why women select men at the exclusion of other women.

5. Control of Women - One reason given why men cut the clitoris off women in the Mid Eastern countries is that it will keep the women from straying. Removing the sexual organ capable of orgasm, it must be assumed that her sexual drive will diminish. Considering how much men look upon their women as property, we should begin to consider a great deal more why it is not in the men's interest to have women totally free sexually. The double standard, as practiced for example in Latin America, is set up to keep the women bound as property, while men are free to have affairs as they wish.

6. Lesbianism - Aside from the strictly anatomical reasons why women might seek women lovers, there is a great fear on men's part that women will seek the company of other women on a full, human basis. The establishment of clitoral orgasm as fact would threaten the heterosexual institution. The oppressor always fears the unity of the oppressed, and the escape of women from the psychological hold men now maintain. Rather than imagining a future free relationship between individuals, men tend to react with paranoid fears of revenge on the part of women. (as witnessed with the V. Solanas events)

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BOOKS MENTIONED IN PAPER:

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE HUMAN FEMALE, Alfred C. Kinsey, Pocketbooks

FEMALE SEXUALITY, Marie Bonaparte, Grove Press

SEX WITHOUT GUILT, Albert Ellis, Grove Press

SEXUAL FEELINGS IN MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN, G. Lombard Kelly, Pocketbooks

I ACCUSE (JEG ANKLAGER), Mette Ejlersen, Chr. Erichsens Forlag (Danish)

A BOOK ON THIS SUBJECT WORTH BUYING:

AN ABZ OF LOVE, Inge and Sten Hegeler, Alexicon Corp.





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