

ERGONOMIC FUNCTIONALISM

A JOURNAL DEVOTED

TO THE WORK OF

WILHELM REICH



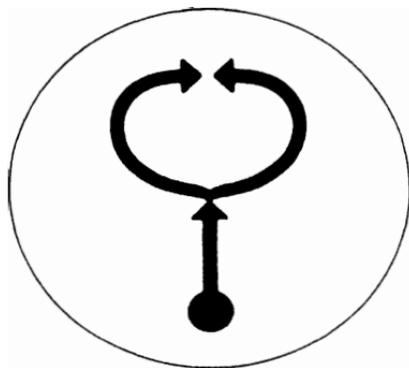
VOLUME 3 / SUMMER 1991

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Orgonomic Functionalism is published semi-annually
by The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust Fund, Orgonon,
Box 687, Rangeley, Maine 04970.

All correspondence, direct changes of address,
subscription requests, and related business to this address.

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ISSN 1054-075X

*Love, work, and knowledge are the wellsprings of our life.
They should also govern it.*

Wilhelm Reich

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*The Developmental History of Orgonomic Functionalism**

THE EXTRA-PSYCHIC, BIOLOGICAL NATURE OF THE ORGASM FUNCTION

Classical medicine, which deals only with physical and chemical processes, knows that the stomach ulcer is associated with the over-production of gastric acid. It therefore formed the opinion that the stomach ulcer is caused by the tissue of the stomach wall being damaged by the hydrochloric acid that is secreted. This belief is correct, but it relates only to a certain part-function of the illness, namely, the chemical-physical or physiological side. This approach investigates the lesion in the tissue resulting from the chemical attack and the physiological consequences of the lesion, such as the risk of the stomach wall becoming perforated, cancerous degeneration, digestive disturbances, physical pain, vomiting, etc. Classical medicine does not and cannot indicate why an ulcer occurs in certain individuals and not in others. It does not know the "background" or, as physicians tend to say, the "disposition" of the organism toward the formation of a stomach ulcer. Obviously, the ulcer with its chemical-physical functions is based on a *more general* principle which is not chemical-physical in nature. This conclusion is justified because we can assume that this unknown background would otherwise have been detected at some point in the many decades of medical research. Mechanistic medicine conducts its research carefully, using a wide variety of methods. It is a perfect research tool in physics and chemistry. If, therefore, classical medicine has not succeeded in explaining the formation of the stomach ulcer, this is obviously because the functions of such ulcers lie outside the chemical-physical sphere. The purely physi-

cal or somatic side of research is thus inadequate to permit disease in the organism to be fully comprehended.

Let us group together under the label *physical* or *somatic* all those events occurring in an organism which manifest themselves as changes in tissue structure and as chemical or physical processes, in order to distinguish them from *psychic* and *biological* events.

When depth psychology expanded the boundaries of its research to include also the so-called somatic disorders, it was discovered that certain psychic structures exhibit a tendency toward the development of specific physical symptoms. Repressed destructive impulses were found to be the essential mechanism in the generation of such physical symptoms. Psychosomatic medicine evolved from simultaneously observing the physical and psychic aspects of the organism. The reasoning employed by psychosomatic medicine was from the start either dualistic or monistic. Body and soul were either "one and the same," or they were parallel processes which mutually interacted but were fundamentally independent of each other. Anxiety and destructiveness, for example, were interpreted as psychic processes, in contrast to inflammatory tissue damage, which is a physical process. This is where the so young and promising medicine of the future made its first serious error of logic. Hopefully it will be able to correct this mistake as quickly as possible.

In present-day psychosomatic thinking, it is drives and emotions, namely, psychic functions, that create the physical symptoms, unless we commit the much greater error of referring to "the psychic contributions to physical illnesses." It was chiefly Groddeck who endowed the chemical-physical body functions with a "psychic content." He *directly* attributed the sterility of a woman to her unconscious dislike of children. Now, it is correct to say that sterile women sometimes display a dislike of their husbands or of children. (We are leaving aside purely mechanical obstructions resulting from inflammation in the fallopian tubes.) It is also correct that this dislike has something to do with the sterility. But it is incorrect, and misleading, to assert that the "unconscious dislike *produces* the sterility." It should at least be possible to demonstrate in *what way* the emo-

tional dislike can cause the physical sterility. The new standpoint that psychic causes can produce physical diseases loses its significance entirely if it is again used mechanically and not functionally. Functional insight is acquired only if it is possible to identify the specific functions which lead from unconscious hatred to contraction of the fallopian tubes. The statement "unconscious hatred causes sterility" is purely mechanical and therefore meaningless, as is also, for example, the statement "electricity generates light." Mechanical processes do indeed exist, and rightly so, but only in the sphere of mechanical, physical, and chemical functions. The increased production of gastric acid does in fact destroy the wall of the stomach in a purely mechanical way. But the repressed hatred, which causes the damage to the stomach wall, does it in a nonmechanical and indirect way. It is correct that hatred is at work in the background of the formation of the stomach ulcer. Hatred is certainly part of the disease process, but *we must be able to explain the specific functions which lead from unconscious hatred to the action of the gastric acid on the stomach wall.* And it is precisely this aspect which the mechanistic standpoint of psychosomatic medicine omits. At this point the theory of orgonomic functionalism is useful in gaining an understanding not only of the overall function but also of its part-functions.

The functional view has shown us that the affect of hate is linked with muscle actions. It has also demonstrated that the suppression of a hate reaction is functionally identical with a muscle contraction or a muscle spasm. The process taking place in the muscle determines the process occurring in the psychic sphere of emotion and vice versa. They are mutually dependent processes which cannot be separated from each other, and therefore they cannot be considered independently if we want to give a correct description of objective events: The suppression of psychic hate and physiological muscle contraction form a functional antithesis and must therefore be functionally identical in a third, deeper function.

Let us now consider carefully the way in which the various processes in the organism fit into our scheme of thought. We have defined the "somatic" as the sum total of all chemical

and physical-mechanical processes taking place in the tissues. The "psychic" has been defined as the realm of sensations, perceptions, and ideas. Thus, in the case of the stomach ulcer, suppressed hate and the contraction or spasm of the stomach wall interact with each other. Each surge of hatred intensifies the contraction of the stomach wall. But ulcer formation and hatred are also independent of each other because once the process of ulcer formation has been set in motion in the stomach wall, it follows its *own* chemical-physical laws. The increased production of gastric acid damages the stomach wall and the damaged stomach wall is less resistant to the action of the acid, and so on, until the wall is perforated. We note the functional interaction of gastric acid and tissue structure as *an area of chemical-physical functioning which is now independent of the psychic sphere.*

Consistently applying and checking our own functional schema, we must now ask what constitutes the common functioning principle of emotional and physical functional disorders. We can correlate the psychic and the physical disorders in just *one* particular, reciprocal way, but *we cannot link them directly with each other.* The common third element in which both the psychic and the physical disturbance, namely, the stomach ulcer, have their root or their common functioning principle (CFP), is something much broader and deeper than the tissue structure of the stomach or the psychic, repressed hatred. Both these dysfunctions stem from *a general contraction of the organism, i.e., from a disturbance in the area of biological functioning.* In fact, there is no case of a stomach ulcer in which the local ulcer and the specific unconscious readiness to display hate are not based on a general armoring of the organism or on a state of anorgonia. The armoring does not form a *specific* background for the ulcer and the hatred. There are always special functions which cause the general biological dysfunction to manifest itself specifically in the stomach as an ulcer. And it is this specific localization or concentration of the biological malfunction in the stomach that needs to be clearly verified. What we are dealing with here is a specially developed contraction of the diaphragmatic segment which accompanies every "silent" hatred.

It is therefore misleading to consider a stomach ulcer separately from the total organism, in the same way that it is misleading to ignore the repressed hatred which plays a role in its formation. The common functioning principle of all forms of biological armoring, and thus of all physical and psychic dysfunctions to which it gives rise, is - and this has been proved clinically - the total or partial disruption of orgonotic pulsation. All persons who develop a stomach ulcer are at the same time orgasmically impotent. Conversely, one would never find a stomach ulcer in a person who is orgasmically potent. *The function of the orgasm therefore, as a yardstick of orgonotic pulsation, belongs not to the narrower psychic or physical functioning realm but to the deeper and broader functioning realm of the biology of the total organism.*

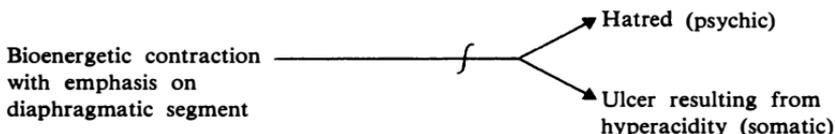
I earnestly request the reader not to regard these discussions as superfluous philosophical musings. We are concerned here with decisively important medical and pathological questions, and also with the biological intactness of human organisms. The practical value of these theoretical remarks becomes immediately apparent when an attempt is made to cure a stomach ulcer. Mechanistic medicine was helpless in the face of this symptom because the only tool this type of medicine possessed was the mechanical function. The best it could do was to respond mechanically to the chemical-physical dysfunction by resection of the pathological area.

The response of depth psychotherapy to the problem of stomach ulcers is much more appropriate. But a stomach ulcer can only be improved, not totally eliminated, by revealing the unconscious hatred. This is because the repressed hatred itself stems from the general reservoir of dammed-up biological energy, to which the spastic diaphragm contributes, and it is constantly being renewed there. When the biological factor is ignored and deprecated, it is not due to ill will or scientific negligence but to emotional and social motives. Operating on a stomach ulcer, or uncovering unconscious hatred, does not affect social institutions. However, exposing the general bioenergetic background throws up, in one stroke, a whole series of provocative and far-reaching questions, such as the state of a person's marriage, the

general social suppression of genitality in childhood and puberty, etc. Here already we recognize the difference in the ranking of the functions which are involved in the development of a stomach ulcer.

The general bioenergetic background of the somatic and psychic functions may not be ignored if we wish to eliminate a stomach ulcer. The armoring, and along with it the local diaphragmatic contraction, can only be released if the biological energy economy of the body is restored by discharging excess energy. This has been proved conclusively by clinical experience.

In the course of these remarks, we have thrown some light on the so-called disposition to disease by bringing in the common biological functioning principle of the psychic and somatic realms. At the same time, we have found an important new arrangement of the organismic functioning. Under the specific conditions of general armoring of the organism, there develops a pathological antithesis of suppressed destructiveness and somatic changes in the stomach wall.



These functional relationships can now be generalized as follows: Psychic functioning always takes place in a narrower range than biological functioning. It needs to be sharply delineated from the purely physical, chemical-physical realm, despite all the interactions between body and psyche. *The link between the psyche and the body is never direct, but exists only via the common functioning principle of the bioenergetic emotions.* Radical, causal therapy of the so-called psychosomatic diseases must always involve changing the biological reaction basis. Naturally, this does not exclude but, on the contrary, includes the mechanical-physical and psychotherapeutic interventions. At the very core of this whole matter is the question of the *economy of biological energy*; and the key to this economy is the function of orgasmic potency, in other words, the ability of the organism

to discharge its surplus energy in a biologically appropriate manner through total orgasmic convulsions.

By overcoming the Christian-mystical thought of the Middle Ages, thinking man acquired the right to form his own opinion on natural events and to express this opinion, at least theoretically, without risk. Facts, therefore, can be the subject of various opinions. But just because many different opinions exist about one particular fact, we cannot interpret this as meaning that all the opinions are simultaneously correct, particularly if they contradict each other. Opinions and the correctness or incorrectness of opinions are very different things. When the orgasm theory earned the right to take its place in the world of psychoanalytic thought, opinions differed on what importance it had in the functioning of human beings. There were psychologists who believed that the theory was superfluous or incorrect, while others felt it made "an important contribution to our understanding . . ." etc. Then, again, there were other people who saw in this theory the chance to escape from the misery of psychologism, from attributing a living soul to all of nature.

A scientific theory has the right to exist only if it is based on facts and on a *principle of thought* which arranges these facts in an understandable manner in the general natural order. In this way, the scientific theory can develop; it leads onward. Theories which are not based on any such thought principle, or supported by facts, and which therefore cannot undergo any development, are nothing more than doctrines which may be correct or incorrect. Philosophical liberalism extends only to the formation and expression of an opinion. It does not and cannot apply in those cases where natural-scientific statements are made. I am fully aware that the last sentence might be interpreted and used in a dictatorial way by certain character types. Of course, this is far from what I intend. I am concerned here solely with the criterion of objectivity, and the scope and developability of a scientific opinion. It is banal to state that incorrect scientific opinions are often based on irrational motives which have nothing to do with interest in conducting research. This cliché has only one meaning in the present context: The functional method of thought makes it possible to verify the

scientific character of an opinion even if it is still not confirmed or refuted by any facts. If the criterion of functional thought is joined by the empirical criterion of the facts, then the opinion changes into a genuine scientific theory. Let me now take a concrete example from the history of orgonomy to show that *only one* correct opinion, and not two or more, can exist about a certain set of facts.

The conflict in the formation of psychoanalytic theory developed around the question whether the orgasm function is only part of the analytic thought structure, or whether it is situated *outside* the framework of psychoanalytic work and thought and merely acts on this psychological thought structure. In the first case, the orgasm function would have had a much narrower functional range than psychology, and in the second case, a much wider one. Initially, this conflict seemed to be a "difference of opinions" based not on principles of thinking but on the assessment of facts. Those who asserted that the orgasm theory was just one of many elements in psychoanalysis were irrationally motivated; they wanted to keep the orgasm function within the bounds of psychology and not allow this functioning realm to be taken away from them. They frequently accused me of being obsessed with the need to be original and of being competitively motivated. But this was not the case. If we look back about twenty years from the current state of orgone research to that time when psychoanalysis was struggling to find a correct interpretation of instinctual drives, what we see quite clearly is where we would have ended up if we had listened to the people who wanted to limit the orgasm theory to the realm of psychoanalysis. In keeping with its own method of thinking, which is correct in the psychic sphere, psychoanalysis would have tried to discover the *meaning* of orgasm. By applying the principle of analytic interpretation and by historically tracing psychic facts back to their origins, various psychoanalysts have in fact consistently attempted to explain copulation in psychic terms, to see it as being made up of past psychic wishes, for example, as the combined product of anal and oral fantasies (Ferenczi), or as a fantasy of the "return to the womb" (Rank), etc. They widened the functioning area of the psychic and its

valid thought techniques, and extended it far into the bioenergetic realm. They were describing a broader functioning area from the standpoint of a narrower one. The theory of sex economy also proceeded from psychic functions when it comprehended the bioenergetic foundations of those psychic functions. But the difference is decisive. Psychologically oriented depth analysis attempted to apply derivative functions, such as "wishes," "unconscious ideas," "experience," etc., which distinguish psychic from bioenergetic functioning, to drives. Sex economy, which was energetically oriented right from the start (1920), did not trace the psychic variations or contents, but instead it pursued the ENERGY PRINCIPLE, which was active in the psychic sphere, into the biophysiological realm where it functioned in a *quantitatively determinable* manner within a broader framework. In this way, sex economy, starting from the affects pleasure and anxiety in the psychic sphere, arrived at the functions of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems in the autonomic life apparatus, and from there it went on to the processes of bioelectric charge and discharge at the periphery of the organism. Depth psychology's application of a derived special natural principle to a broader, deeper functioning principle, led to the concept of the "collective unconscious," a logical monstrosity; it also led to the "death instinct" in psychological terms, a will to die; it resulted in the view that an unconscious wish can *directly* cause a cancerous growth to form, or that suppressed hatred can produce a stomach ulcer; it led to the sublimation of primary biological drives, such as genitality, "in the interest of culture," etc. These were expressions of life in a small, utterly negligible circle of Viennese intellectuals, and sick expressions at that. They were utterly unaware of the life necessities of millions of human animals who knew no culture, did not care for such cultural ideas since they were starving and dying by the millions from the cruelties of age-old patriarchies, such as the Chinese, Japanese, Hindu, etc. It is amazing to find how narrow the outlook of a psychology, which pretended to liberate the human mind from its shackles, was.

These and similar poor judgements were short-circuits in the thinking process. They involved the mechanical transfer of func-

tional principles from one realm, where they are valid, to another where they are not, with the result that the bioenergetic and physical functioning of the living organism was totally eliminated. In short, research in its own area, as well as cooperation with related disciplines, was blocked, or it led to mechanical associations such as, in 1943, the correlation of leg fractures with a certain type of character structure. However, a fractured leg which is brought about by emotional reasons has nothing directly to do with a particular character structure. It is the *general* dysfunction in autonomic biological functioning, so-called disequilibrium, that results in accidents; and this biological disequilibrium is, in turn, determined by muscular discoordination due to armoring. Here, for the first time, we see a link with historical psychic experiences or with structural peculiarities. The direct linking of psychic with physical functions is bound to short-circuit and prevent us from gaining decisive insights.

To recapitulate: The orgasm function is in the most fundamental way biological in nature. It is a basic function of the living. Therefore it is of a deeper and wider rank than the realm of psychic functioning. *The psychic forms part of the living, but the living is not part of or identical with the psychic. Hence, one can correctly judge the psychic realm from the standpoint of the living, but the living cannot be comprehended from the standpoint of the psychic alone.* We can only correctly progress from the psychic to the living if we take as our starting point what the psychic has in common with the living, and not what distinguishes it from it. In concrete terms, it has been demonstrated by the discovery of cosmic energy, i.e., of the orgone, that it is possible to progress from the psychic affects via the physiological excitations to the biological cell lumination, and from here to biological cell energy, and from the cell energy to atmospheric orgone energy. But it is impossible to progress to atmospheric orgone energy from an obsessional idea, an hysterical rape fantasy, or a lust for money. There is no way which leads from the variation to the common functioning principle, unless it is via the *functional identity* of the variation and the basic function.

In what follows, we will convincingly show that only the biophysical and not the psychological method of thinking was able to comprehend the orgasm function as a *primary* basic function of all living matter, to discover the common functioning principle of the living and nonliving, and to advance toward biochemical and even astrophysical functions. As a principle of thought, chemical-physical mechanism, like psychologism, can only proceed in the opposite direction. It inevitably has to mechanize the psychic *and* the biological. Therefore, it failed to detect the atmospheric and organismic orgone energy. It tried to eliminate vasomotor hypertension by operating on the sympathetic nervous system. It is the reason why inexcusable, cruel brain surgery was performed on emotionally inhibited children, for example, in the case of speech defects, and why the vagina was mechanically stretched in the case of vaginal spasm, etc.

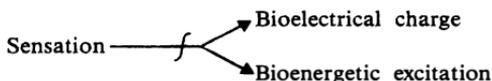
I am trying to convince the attentive reader of the fact that the principles of logical thought are not a philosophical luxury; that, on the contrary, they can decide questions of life and death, of the well-being and suffering of mankind. Mysticism is a necessary logical consequence of equating the psychic, biological, and nonliving realms. Mechanism is a necessary logical consequence of equating chemical and physical with psychic, biological, and cosmic energy processes. Apart from the non-differentiated "pan-psyche," mysticism knows of no other describable energy processes. Mechanism acknowledges only the chemical-physical processes and regards these functions as the most general and primary realm of functioning.

We have now taken the chemical-physical functions in the organism to be a variation of the basic biophysical function, i.e., we have subordinated the former to the latter and consequently we have come into sharp conflict with the mechanistic way of thinking. If the chemical-physical processes are actually a primary natural function, they cannot drop to the level of playing a secondary role in the living organism. We would inevitably be thinking once more along mystical lines if we were to leave this contradiction unresolved. It will, in fact, be resolved in the further course of these investigations, and it will satisfy both the claim of functionalism as well as that of mechanism. The

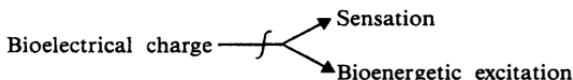
contradiction between functionalism and mechanism relates exclusively to the question of the specific character of the *primary* natural functions from which the secondary, tertiary, etc. functions are derived. The chemical-mechanistic realm *per se* is, of course, not in dispute. All that we question is its extent.

Using concrete functions, we are pursuing the functioning principles down into the depths, and in so doing we arrive at a ranking or, to put it another way, at a yardstick for determining how far removed are the various principles from the basic functioning principle of nature. This is already conceivable theoretically, but it can only be achieved through the progress made by factual research, because functional relationships can be formulated only on the basis of concrete natural phenomena.

Let us now attempt to arrange the results of our bioenergetic experiments in a functional order.* In the course of these experiments we came across psychic sensations, evidence of bioelectrical charge, and bioenergetic excitation. We cannot make sensation into the common functioning principle, whose variants would be bioelectrical charge and bioenergetic excitation.



This arrangement does not work, because it leads up a blind alley. Sensation would be left hanging, as it were, in the air. The next logical question must therefore inevitably be: "What is the opposite of sensation and its common functioning principle?" We could make bioelectrical charge the common functioning principle of sensation and bioenergetic excitation.

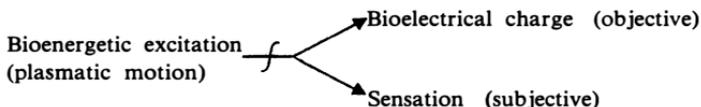


But in so doing, we come up against an insoluble contradiction: Charge appears on the oscillograph in our bioenergetic experi-

*Cf. Reich, *The Bioelectrical Investigation of Sexuality and Anxiety*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1982 [Eds.]

ments in measurable units of electricity, in millivolts. But the thousandth part of a volt does not go together well with the gigantic amounts of energy expended by a living system. It would be impossible with these small quantities to explain the average amount of work performed daily by an organism. The caloric theory of body energy can also not explain it. In addition, the gradual, undulating form of movement which we see on the oscillograph agrees poorly with the rapidity of movement of electrical energy with which we are familiar. With this arrangement, we would admittedly be in agreement with the electrical theory and view of the universe, but neither the form of the biological excitation or its quantity can be explained in terms of electrical phenomena.

This problem leads to one of the cardinal aspects of functional energetics, with which we will deal in detail later on. It is correct and in accordance with the facts to relate the bioelectrical processes of charge and their functional antithesis, the corresponding sensations, to bioenergetic excitation as their common functioning principle.



Although this brings us into conflict with the mechanistic view of nature, we nevertheless have more room in which to inquire into the functional nature of the bioenergetic excitation of the organism and the deeper functioning principle from which it springs, its functional antithesis.

SPONTANEOUS MOTILITY AS THE COMPREHENSIVE FUNCTIONING PRINCIPLE OF THE LIVING

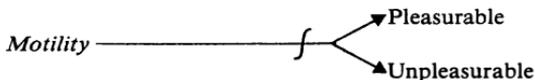
We have decided, with good reason, to adopt bioenergetic excitation as the common principle of bioelectrical charge and sensation. But this is not enough. The functions of "excita-

tion," "charge," and "sensation" are dealt with in different branches of science, in biology, electrical theory, and psychology. If any progress is to be made in the logical development of our thought technique, it is of decisive importance to identify which basic property of nature manifests itself and is at work in the three functions. The formal logical arrangement must be fulfilled by a concrete natural process, physically accessible to our organs of perception and to our measuring instruments, if we are not to remain stuck in formalistic logic and schematization.

We must avoid two different points of view if we wish to do justice to our functional thought technique: If we describe the properties of a natural process without trying to arrange them, we acquire a knowledge of facts without identifying their functional relationship. If we arrange facts schematically without concretely stating the function which fuses them into an organic unity, let us say into a living organism, then we become victims of logical formalism. The first one-sided view is represented by empiricism and the second by abstract mathematics. Unless the facts follow functional logic, and unless functional logic follows concrete observations, functionalism loses its value as a tool of reasoning. Form and content, the principle and the product of development, the "how" and the "what," form two different elements of an antithetical function in the common principle of functional thought. What then is the concrete natural process which fuses excitation, charge, and sensation into the functioning unity of a "living system" or "organism"? If we search through the three functions in detail, then we find that they have only one characteristic in common: SPONTANEOUS MOTILITY.

The psychic states of anxiety and pleasure sensation are experienced as specific states of motility. We experience pleasure directly as a movement of expansion, of widening, and anxiety is experienced as contraction, as "shrinking" in fear, as "retreating into oneself" in the case of timidity, as "having to burst," or as "inner restlessness" in acute anxiety states. I would like to comment that I am not referring here to the "pleasurable" or "unpleasurable" quality of two perceptual

states, but instead I am dealing only with the sensation of motility. In everyday language the word "motility" also expresses directly what is actually happening in the organism: One feels "moved." This "being moved" can be strong or weak, pleasant or unpleasant, but it is always movement.



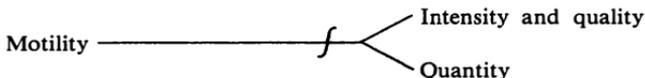
Internal motility is visible on the oscillograph, accompanied by processes of charge and discharge. The characteristic feature of a charge process, regardless of whether it is toward the center, as in the case of anxiety, or toward the periphery, as in pleasure, is always the state of motility, this time the motility of the skin potential, its "wandering." This movement of the potential, which is visible as the motion of the light beam on a galvanometer mirror can be fast or slow, in this direction or that. It may take place suddenly or hesitantly. The common factor in all these phenomena, which express such different part-functions, is again and again motility. In fact, we might even go so far as to regard the cessation of movement as a special form of movement, as *immobility*. In the realm of sensations, this corresponds to the "psychic immobility" or "affect block" of the kind encountered in catatonic patients. The functioning principle of motility exists in the physiological and physical realms as the movement of charge.

The motility of sensations and the motility of charges is based on the excitation of the organism as the bioenergetic functioning principle. What do we mean in concrete terms when we talk of "bioenergetic excitation"? We should not fall into the error of mechanistic description and believe that we can understand natural processes simply by naming and cataloguing them. What then actually is bioenergetic excitation? The answer, based on microscopic observations of roots and wheat seeds, protozoa, transparent worms, etc., is: *Biological excitation functions visibly as MOVEMENT OF THE PROTOPLASM*. These movements may be fast or slow, in this direction or that; they may be inter-

mittent or spasmodic. Whenever we talk of bioenergetic excitation, it is always plasmatic motility which we mean. Certain types of motility of the protoplasm correspond to certain states of excitation which we describe by using terms such as "fast," "greedy," "hesitant," "stagnant," etc. It is not just the principle of motility but also its various forms of expression which are common to the three functioning principles. For example, we can use the words "hesitant" or "eager" to describe emotions, the movements of skin potential, and the plasmatic movements of an amoeba. Thus, the objective process of movement has various forms which make a certain qualitative impression on us, such as "hurried," "anxious," "hesitant," etc. Each bioenergetic motion expresses something meaningful, and each form of expression is associated with a specific type of motion. The "meaning" of living functions was hitherto sharply separated from and incompatible with the "mechanics" of living functioning. Now, since both movement (mechanics) and meaning (psychic) are functionally derived from *one* bioenergetic function, *plasmatic expressive motion* or emotional expression, the deep abyss between quality and quantity, psychic and physical is bridged in the depths of the "moving" living substance. Note carefully that language grasped this functional identity long before the human intellect succeeded in formulating it scientifically. Living protoplasm is "moving" in the physical as well as in the emotional sense of "meaningful expression." A rock before one's foot which suddenly began moving would certainly be a quite "moving" event for the observer. From here we can further proceed in our functional formulations.

Spontaneous motility as a comprehensive functioning principle (CFP) of the living, forms the starting point for a number of scientific investigations:

a. Bioenergetic motility is characterized by *intensity* of sensations and *quantity* of the bioenergetic charges. Intensity and quantity are different, mutually interacting functions but they are functionally identical in the principle of motility:



b. Bioenergetic motility is further characterized by the functional pairing of *movement as expression* and *expression as movement*. Each movement of a living organism expresses something meaningful and comprehensible, and each form of expression is associated with a particular type of movement. This is the principle on which is based the *expressive language* of the organism, which operates where word-based language leaves off, and it is this expressive language which we learn to understand in medical orgonomy.



c. Bioenergetic motility is also characterized by chemico-physical processes, by the movement of ions in the body fluids, by the flow of action currents in the heart and in the muscles, by the movement occurring in chemical reactions, etc., and by the movement of sensations. Obviously, this is where Bergson's phenomenon of experiencing the sensation of *duration* in the ego belongs.

d. The *totality* of the organism, which has spontaneous motility as the all-encompassing functioning principle, is again characterized somatically or physiologically by the unity of the various organ functions on the one hand and the subjective sensation of the ego on the other. Ego perception is again made up of various organ sensations to form an inseparable unity. *Where the somatic organ functions lose their unity, physical diseases and ailments occur.* A brain tumor, for example, excludes the brain from the total function of the organism. Similarly, a schizophrenic hallucination eliminates some of the organ sensations from the unitary ego perception. This leads to the well-known phenomenon of the split in the affective personality which is denoted by the term *schizophrenia*. Thus we arrive at the point where we must use a new criterion to assess biological

“health” and “illness.” *The undisturbed totality of the functions of the organism in the physical and the psychic realms forms the basis for the biological state known as “healthy” or “normal.”* Each disturbance of this totality and unity, whether it takes place in the somatic or in the psychic sphere, forms the basis of a disease state on a small or large scale. From here the path leads into medical pathology, which can be nothing more than a functional standardized pathology if it tries to treat the organism as a biological unity.

e. The most important area of research opens up if we now consistently and logically ask: *on what is the motility of the living organism based?* Or, put differently: WHAT MOVES? Because, no matter how extensive its functioning sphere, this motility is not something which is completely beyond our comprehension, as mystics and metaphysicists assume, but instead it must have an origin, a developmental principle, and a functioning principle. We are permitted to draw, and indeed we *must* draw, this logical conclusion and place the living purely theoretically, along with its functioning principle of motility, in an even wider framework of movement. In principle, we must understand living motility itself as a derivative of even simpler natural functions of motility, even if we are not permitted to back up this formal theoretical principle with one single concrete fact. For, let me repeat once more: Above all, the way of thinking is always more important than the facts.

We must now address the concept of emotion, which has such a wide range of significance in the fields of modern psychology and medicine. We must attempt to arrange it in order to prepare the way for subsequent concrete investigations. The word “emotion” is usually taken to be synonymous with the words “feeling” or “affect.” This means that it is restricted to the psychic sphere. This restriction is based, without any doubt, on the equating of the psychic with the biological, which we know is incorrect. The human animal has invented the word “emotion” probably on the basis of his organic sensations. Thus, without bringing forward any etymological proof, we may conclude that he has simply described his inner state of “motility.” In this

case, however, the concept of emotion cannot be limited to the realm of psychic functioning (in the sense of our functional thought technique), because it also expresses physical and bioenergetic states of motility. The fact that the process of emotion actually has a bioenergetic and not just a psychic significance will be clearly apparent from the presentation of the clinical experiences which we have gathered in orgone therapy.

We have classified the function of plasmatic motility as the common, all-encompassing functioning principle of *living* nature. It follows logically that this principle differentiates the living as a specific functioning realm of nature from other realms of functioning. We might make do here with the brief statement that, through the function of motility, the living is as distinct from nonliving nature as is a jellyfish from a rock in the sea. But this bit of information gets us into difficulties, because motility also occurs in nonliving nature, as in electrons and planets, the mechanical movements of the surface of the oceans, gravitational acceleration, etc. We will have to differentiate even more precisely the function of motility in the living if we wish to progress beyond it. This is a matter of prime importance. If it is not understood, we will not be able to integrate the living correctly into the realm of nonliving nature.

To be continued.

*Orgonotic Pulsation**

The differentiation of orgone energy from electromagnetism
Presented in talks with an electrophysicist

INTRODUCTION

The present article deals with orgonotic pulsation as a *physical* characteristic of cosmic orgone energy. The relevant experiments demonstrate orgonotic manifestations in the realm of nonliving nature. With that, orgone biophysics takes root in orgone *physics*. The past five years (1939-1944) have shown that the differentiation of the cosmic orgone energy from electromagnetism, as it is usually understood, was indispensable and fruitful. In the process of this differentiation, a wealth of connections between orgonotic pulsation and problems of biology, geology, and astronomy were discovered. They are as yet incalculable, and only a small fraction of them could be organized. I was confronted with the choice of either postponing the publication of the basic facts of orgone physics until such time as all these connections are essentially clear, or of delimiting certain problems and presenting them separately.

In the first case, the presentation of a total picture of the orgone functions would inevitably have been burdened with hypotheses. In the second case, that of piecemeal presentation, the view of the whole is unsatisfactory and often even confusing. There is, however, the advantage that the details of a special realm of functioning can be more sharply drawn. I chose the second way, which also enables me to collect more differing and critical points of view before attempting to correlate the various aspects of the orgone function into a whole.

I can understand the impatience of my friends who would like to learn as much as possible as soon as possible. However,

*Written 1939-1944. Translated from the German by Theodore P. Wolfe. Reprinted with permission of Erica Wolfe Burke.

the interest of the total work requires the interpolation of several years between the time a finding is made and its publication. This is an automatic safeguard against theoretical blunders. From the very beginning of orgone research it has proven valuable not to publish a new finding until it has developed into an essential new insight. The continued development to a new insight is a confirmation of the previous finding.

The finding that all substances which have been made to swell show a bionous structure was not published until it had already brought an understanding of the cancer cell. The finding of the visibility of the orgone was not published until after the discovery of the temperature difference. When the findings of thermal and electroscopic organometry were published (1944), the phenomena of organotic attraction and repulsion (1942-43) had already been confirmed. Now when I submit the phenomena of organotic pulsation for publication, there are already new findings and correlations derived from the study of the pulsation, which confirm and elaborate it.

These things are being said for a good reason. Many of my critics are hasty in their judgment. Thus, for example, in the case of the article, "The Discovery of the Orgone" (1942), the objection was made that I should have used this or that method of measurement, that I should have made this or that additional experiment. We do not have to pay attention to the sarcastic derision with which the first publications on the orgone were met in certain quarters. It is the reaction of impotent people to something alive.

This presentation of organotic pulsation in the realm of non-living nature is made in the form of talks with an electrophysicist. He propounds views and objections which, in the course of years, have been propounded by actual physicists. In some places, I have attributed to him typical textbook opinions. In others, he raises objections which I had to raise myself in the course of the experiments. In still others, he gives explanations as they derive from the orgone experiments. Thus, our electrophysicist is the personification of many real physicists of diverse orientation. This manner of presentation seemed the best to pave the way to a common meeting ground of orgone physics

and electrophysics. The erroneous concepts of my electrophysicist are quite common in the world of physics. It goes without saying that they are not mine.

I would like to ask the reader's indulgence toward minor errors which may be found here and there. If one cuts through a jungle, one is apt to trip over a root and make a blunder. The pioneer in the jungle does not necessarily have to know the exact chemical composition of the leaves. Theoretical physics contains so many *fundamental* errors that it can ill afford to appear in the role of an intolerant critic of a young and pioneeringly fruitful science such as orgone physics.

WILHELM REICH.

April, 1944.

THE POSITION OF THE BIOLOGICAL ENERGY IN NATURAL SCIENCE

Electrophysicist (E): A biologist friend of mine told me very peculiar things about your orgone research. He thinks that your bion experiments may prove of great significance for biology. On the other hand, he doubts whether the world of classical biology will ever accept the bion theory.

Orgone biophysicist (O): I share his doubts. Orgone biophysics will not first gain social recognition in the realm of biology, but in the realms of *biopsychiatry and physics*.

E. I don't understand. After all, with psychiatric problems concerning the nature of the "emotions" as your point of departure, you found a way into the *biological* foundation of psychic processes. One would think, then, that the realm of biology would be the first to acknowledge your findings. Do you understand this resistance on the part of classical biology?

O. This question can be answered in a few sentences: Biology, apart from vitalism, has an essentially *mechanistic* orientation. Orgone biophysics operates *functionally*—in the experiment, its interpretation, and in the formulation of theories. Classical biology finds itself in a tragic dilemma. On the one hand, it deals

with *living* processes which it considers sharply delineated from nonliving nature. On the other hand, and simultaneously, it attempts to comprehend the life principle by way of methods and concepts which are taken entirely from physics and chemistry, that is, the sciences concerned with *nonliving* nature. Orgone biophysics finds itself at the opposite pole. First, it assumes the existence of fluid transitions from the realm of nonliving to that of living nature. Second, it dispenses, of necessity, with the mechanistic physical conception of living processes. It demonstrates a specific biological energy which governs all living processes on the basis of simple natural laws. This energy, called orgone, governs living as well as purely mechanical natural processes. The functions of this energy make comprehensible the manner in which living matter develops from nonliving matter, that is, the process of biogenesis.

E. It was precisely this aspect of your research which made me look you up. I don't come to you because of my interest in electrophysics, but rather because I am interested in biology. I have been studying it on the side, as one collects stamps or plays golf, in order to get a change from my own professional field.

O. I doubt that your interest in biology is no more than an incidental avocation. The biologists, left unsatisfied by their own science, seek respite from dry mechanism in physics and chemistry. For the same reason, many physicists and chemists find their way into the realm of living functioning, if not into mysticism. It is striking to see to what extent Newton was involved with metaphysical and religious problems. At first glance, this seems amazing in a representative of that "most exact of the natural sciences," mathematics. But that which is alive in genuine scientists always searches for the *basic* elements, for the *common denominator* in the natural laws and processes. The living is a significant part of nature. Until now, it was in the keeping of mysticism and genuine religiosity. Of course, I am not referring here to the officials of natural science who are concerned with knowledge which is already recognized. They are comparable to museum guards who watch over statues. I am referring to the *genuine researcher*, the one who strives to get beyond his own

limited field, the one who attempts to find the place of his special field in the unitary natural process.

E. Obviously, there has always been a tremendous need for the simplification and unification of the scientific world picture. Unfortunately, the efforts in that direction have been futile. Rather, the increasing specialization of the various branches of research and their concern with detail work has had the opposite effect, leading natural science farther and farther away from its real goal, the simplification and unification of natural processes. The natural philosophers, on whom this task developed, also soon became specialists, specialists in speculation and in the attempt to solve the riddle of the common denominator in nature by pure thinking. The cry for integration of the natural sciences means little as long as the process and function are not found which comprise all natural processes in their totality as well as in their individual functions.

The specialists of today are poorly trained in systematic thinking. They cannot coordinate the details into a whole. One does not see the woods for all the trees, or the natural process for all the words. It is as if thousands of builders were to create a magnificent structure without having a plan for the whole. Thus there are beautifully furnished rooms with no entrance; the water pipe leads into the chimney; the bedrooms are in the lobby and the reception room on the eighth floor. The result is utter confusion. When the tenants move in, there is war, for—all improvements of modern technology notwithstanding—nobody can find his way around.

O. I usually demonstrate to my pupils and friends the difference between mechanistic word-science and functional natural science by way of a very simple illustration.

E. Let's hear it.

O. Take a primitive who enters a modern living room and sees a chair for the first time in his life. What will be his immediate question? "What do you call this?" or "What do you do with it? What is it made of?"

E. The latter, of course. To begin with, he would not ask about the name because a word, such as "chair," would not tell him anything about the function or nature of the sitting

contraction. To him, "table" or "book" could equally well mean "chair." His biological feeling of motion will soon tell him what one has to *do* in order to "use" this peculiar sitting apparatus. Not until our primitive has established this practical, that is, functioning, contact, will he give the contraction a name, such as "leg rest" or "buttocks support."

O. Our classical biologists are not that close to reality. Classical biology has divided and subdivided the realm of the living according to external statistical characteristics and clothed it with a host of difficult words. With that, the primitive sense for *function* and the *origin of function* was so thoroughly lost that the natural functional intelligence underwent complete atrophy. When a biologist sees an energy vesicle, which is spherical and takes blue Gram stain, he believes he has explained it satisfactorily when he names it "staphylococcus," thereby completely blocking the avenue of approach to the questions, "Where does it come from? What becomes of it? How does it function?"

E. Yes. And since there is a word for every one of the infinite number of diverse manifestations, the result is a fantastic confusion.

O. Neurology actually believes to this very day that it has "explained" a motion when it designates the nerve fibers in which the excitation runs. Among the hundreds of thousands of anatomical names referring to the animal organs, and all the naming of the various reflexes, there is not one referring to the orgasmic contraction. The simple and basic biological functional movements have been overlooked. If any animal were to try to function according to the description of its body in a mechanistic anatomy textbook, it would be unable to move a limb.

E. I once saw a mental patient in a rigid attitude of defense and made a remark about it to the psychiatrist. He said, "This is the well-known opisthotonus." He did not see the *expression* of the movement, that is, its function.

O. It is a pleasure to hear a physicist speak in strictly functional terms. After all, hasn't the electron theory realized the desired unification of the scientific world picture to some extent? Isn't the electron theory of today in harmony with the good old atomic theory of Democritus? To judge from the news-

papers and professional publications, everything seems to be pretty well settled.

E. As a professional physicist, I should agree; as a living organism, I cannot. To begin with, nobody has yet seen any electrons. Their existence was *assumed* as a work hypothesis in an attempt to comprehend the *common denominator*. Unfortunately, this common denominator soon fell apart into neutrons, protons, electrons, positrons, etc., which are unrelated. Their common denominator is unknown. Similarly, the atoms remained invisible.

O. Like the genes of the heredity people.

E. Exactly. Nevertheless, the superstitions about the unchangeability of chemical elements have been dissipated by Madame Curie's discovery of radium. But now the substances are built of electrons, positrons, etc. The question of the common denominator has only been shifted and become more complicated. In addition, there is magnetism, heat, mechanical energy, etc. Their common basis is unknown. Since Kepler and Newton, the laws of gravitation have been known, but one knows nothing about its nature. Comprehension of the common denominator of the various forms of energy seems farther removed than ever.

O. I am not knowledgeable enough about practical physics and chemistry to form an opinion here. In biopsychiatry, the mechanistic splitting up of natural science is disturbing. Physics and chemistry have thus far contributed nothing fundamental to the understanding of the vital apparatus, either theoretically or practically. The total functioning of the organism has remained a riddle.

E. People say that, with your *orgone* physics, you transgress your competence as a psychiatrist. If, as you contend, there is a universal cosmic energy which can be measured and made visible, the physicists should have discovered it long ago. You yourself admit that you do not know much of practical physics and chemistry, and thus confirm this objection.

O. Let's clarify the question of competence. It is a matter of the point of view from which competence is judged. I have often asked myself whether I was not exceeding my competence in trying to comprehend *orgonotic* manifestations in nonliving nature.

Two considerations contradicted my doubts:

First, it is a fact, one that has been stated by many eminent researchers, that mechanistic natural science has not yet contributed anything fundamental to an understanding of the simplest life manifestations, such as pulsation. Classical biology, tied as it is to the apron strings of inorganic chemistry and physics, and deriving its scientific principles from the realm of non-living nature, has also failed. If competence is judged not from pretensions but from *achievements*, there can be no doubt that the mechanistic natural sciences have not proved their competence in the realm of the living. This is clearly shown in the sad state of affairs which prevails with regard to medicine and the vital apparatus. People with cancer die a living death of putrefaction. No pathologist, chemist, or physician notices this simple fact.

Second, *the discovery of the specific biological energy, the orgone, did not result from a transgression of basic biopsychiatric questions but, on the contrary, from their consistent study.* Quite logically, the discovery of an unconscious psychic life postulated the existence of a "psychic energy." Equally logically, this postulated "psychic energy" had to be thought of as rooted in the biological apparatus. Sex-economy occupied itself for a decade and a half with the vast field of psychic *emotions* before it made an important biophysical discovery: *The intensity of the sensations of pleasure, anxiety, and rage, that is, of the three basic emotions of any animal organism, was shown, at the oscillograph, to be functionally identical with the quantity of the biological excitation in the vital apparatus.** This was a deep breach into the obscure mind-body problem. The emotional sensation is not a "result" of the biological excitation, as the mechanists had assumed for thousands of years; nor is it the "cause" of the biological excitation, as the spiritualists had always believed. It is not independent of the excitation, as the dualists believe, nor the "other aspect" of the excitation as the monists contend. The bioelectrical experiment shows that *excitation and sensation*

*Cf. Reich, *The Bioelectrical Investigation of Sexuality and Anxiety*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1982 [Eds.]

are one and the same process in the biological apparatus, because the intensity of a sensation corresponds to the quantity of the excitation, and vice versa. At the same time, however, a sensation, e.g., a visual impression, can produce an excitation, and, conversely, an excitation, like the touch of a hand, can produce a sensation. Adrenalin in the blood produces anxiety, and anxiety results in increased adrenalin secretion into the blood.

E. You call the relationship of sensation and excitation "functionally identical and antithetical." It is difficult to conceive of a simultaneous identity and antithesis.

O. This is due to the armored human structure which is incapable of thinking *functionally*, that is, in keeping with reality.

E. You will arouse violent objections if you contend that people, as a result of their biopsychic structure, perceive natural processes incorrectly. If you were right, the two prevailing systems of thought, mechanism and metaphysics, would have to be understood as having resulted from the character structure of man during an epoch of some thousands of years. That is hard to swallow.

O. Not any harder than when man had to give up the erroneous belief he had held for two thousand years that the earth was the center of the universe. Then, the doctrine of a divine, i.e., supernatural, creation of man was responsible for the false belief that man was the center of the world and, with that, the earth was the center of the universe. Similarly, the mistaken idea that man's thought, independent of his character structure, is "in itself logical and correct" creates the erroneous beliefs of his natural philosophy. Ever since the beginning of written history, human structure has become rigid as a result of authoritarian civilization. For this reason it no longer follows purely biosocial laws. It is not difficult to understand that a biologically rigid organism experiences its own body and, with that, its sensations and perceptions, in a different way than does a biologically non-rigid organism, e.g., that of a snake.

E. What you mean is this: As natural philosophy has always known, sensation is the only portal through which we gain access to the environment and our own organization. If, now, the sensations of the organism are not unitary, if they are blocked

or split apart, this state of affairs must be reflected in the perception and the intellectual comprehension of the natural processes. In that case, an organism which does not experience its vegetative currents directly and in a unified manner but which, nevertheless, is under their influence, would have to assume mystical, supernatural forces, while an organism which experiences itself as angular and mechanical could only produce a mechanistic world picture.

O. Precisely. Functional thinking, on the other hand, corresponds to the natural unitary functioning of the organism. This fact is clearly established by painstaking character-analytic investigations. In schizophrenia, for example, the emotions are perceived as influences coming from outside, because the perception of the vegetative currents is blocked from the excitation. The splitting of excitation and sensation is a basic symptom of this disease and gives it its name. The compulsive character, with his mechanical, angular, unyielding compulsive thoughts, with his tendency to divide everything he experiences into mechanical subdivisions, is the prototype of mechanistic thinking. In reality, mechanical rigidity and mystical experience usually go hand in hand. This is so because the mechanistic splitting up of self-perceptions leaves a void in the experiencing of life. The mystical experience then makes up—in a pathological manner, of course—for what the rigid, mechanistic thinking does not provide.

E. Can you graphically depict your schema of biopsychic functioning?

O. This is what it looks like:

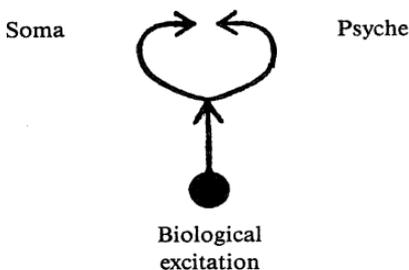


FIG. 1. Schema of biopsychic functioning

As you see, the schema comprises the unity as well as the antithesis of the biopsychic apparatus. What functions antithetically at the surface is identical in the depth. This schema has proven a safe guide in the most difficult observations and formulations of natural science.

E. I would like to test it on a simple example from the realm of the nonliving. In magnetism, the north pole and the south pole of a magnet are antithetical. In the function of magnetic attraction they are identical. Now, if we try to describe magnetism by way of the methods refuted by you, we would have to say, "The quality of the north pole determines the quality of the south pole." This is obvious nonsense, as is the converse. Or, "The quality of the north pole and that of the south pole are one and the same thing." This is incorrect, for north pole and north pole repulse each other, while north pole and south pole attract each other. "North pole and south pole function in a parallel manner" would be equally wrong.

O. Try it with an example from chemistry.

E. Sodium ions and chlorine ions are functionally antithetical, but they do not "cause" or "determine" each other. Sodium goes to the cathode, chlorine to the anode; they have a positive and negative charge, respectively. But they attract each other chemically and form the neutral compound NaCl. In this, the two antithetical functions are united, forming a new and different functional unit, NaCl. Your scheme applies here as well as for any other chemical compound.

O. Test it on more general natural processes.

E. Your formula applies to the whole realm of nature: Living matter is sharply distinguished from nonliving matter and often antithetical to it. At the same time it has basic factors in common with nonliving nature, such as the basic chemical and physical processes.

O. The simultaneous identity and antithesis of living and nonliving matter is most easily demonstrated in the orgone-biophysical formula of living functioning. It is the basic formula of biological pulsation: MECHANICAL TENSION→ENERGY CHARGE→ENERGY DISCHARGE→MECHANICAL RELAXATION. It applies to the pulsation of the heart as well as to the motion of the worm

or the contraction of the vorticella.

E. I see. Tension and relaxation, charge and discharge are also found in nonliving nature. To that extent, living nature and nonliving nature are functionally identical. The antithesis consists in the fact that these physical functions occur in living nature in a *four-beat combination* which is specific to life and does not occur in nonliving nature. That's amazing.

O. Now try to apply the mechanistic or the vitalistic method of thought to this.

E. "The nonliving determines the living." Correct. But life also turns again into the nonliving. This fact is left out of consideration in the concept of a one-sided determination of the living from the nonliving. Spiritualism postulates the dependence of the nonliving on the living. Correct, for living matter turns into nonliving matter. But here the opposite direction of the process is left out. What about the dualistic theory? "The living and the nonliving are two different, independent, parallel natural processes." This is obviously erroneous. Now, as to monism: "The living is identical with the nonliving." This, too, is obviously one-sided and therefore erroneous. Your formula, better than anything else, reflects reality: The living is identical with the nonliving and at the same time antithetical.

O. Our formula of living functioning solves the age-old feud between the mechanists and the vitalists. Living matter follows, indeed, the same natural laws as nonliving matter, as assumed by the mechanists and materialists. But at the same time there is a fundamental difference between living and nonliving matter, as the vitalists contend. The functional identity between the living and nonliving consists in the fact that it is *one and the same energy which governs both realms*. Living matter is different in that it functions according to the four-beat of TENSION→CHARGE→DISCHARGE→RELAXATION. This four-beat does not exist in nonliving nature.

E. You are supposed to have said somewhere that any concept, including the metaphysical one, has some basis in reality. Does that mean that the diverse theories regarding nature are concerned, in each case, with different aspects or functions of the same natural process?

O. I once set out to combine the diverse and contradictory methods of thought in our basic schema of functioning.

E. But that is impossible. For if the diverse methods of thinking deal only with individual functions, they cannot possibly be united in a schema of thought which proves these diverse methods to be one-sided or incorrect.

O. Yet, it *is* possible. One must even assume that the organisms which observed and described the natural processes, despite onesidedness and incorrectness, nevertheless hit upon *parts* of the actuality depicted in our functional schema.

E. But the spiritualistic concept that the spirit creates the body can hardly be compatible with a functional concept of nature.

O. Let us divide our schema into segments which we number:

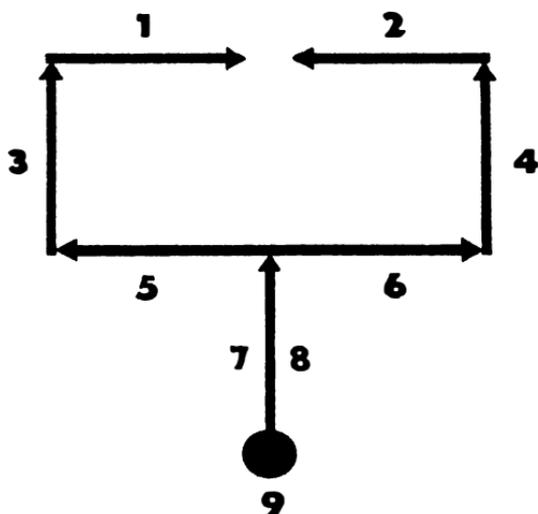


FIG. 2. Diagram of energetic functionalism comprising mechanistic, vitalistic, parallelistic, mystical-theological and monistic natural philosophies.

1→←2 Mechanistic materialism

2→←1 Idealism, vitalism

3 ↑↑ 4 Psychophysical parallelism, dualism

5←→6 Theism, mysticism

7 ↑ 8 Monism, psychophysical identity

9 The "common denominator of nature," the cosmic energy, orgone (mystically: "God"; physically: "ether")

Now, if we consider the constituent parts of the schema separately, we find the following:

At the surface, at 1 and 2, there is an *absolute antithesis of psyche and soma*. This is the realm of the mechanists who derive psychic functioning one-sidedly from chemistry and physics. It is also the realm of the vitalists who, conversely, believe that the vital energy creates and determines the soma. "The soma determines the sensation," say the mechanists; "the sensations (the entelechy) determine matter," say the vitalists. It all depends on whether your point of departure is 1 or 2.

3 and 4 run parallel and, considered apart from the rest of the diagram, without any connection between each other. These lines correspond to the parallelistic mind-body theory, according to which somatic and psychic processes are independent of each other and run parallel.

5 and 6 run in opposite directions. They correspond to that concept which contends that matter and spirit, soma and psyche, instinct and morals, nature and culture, sexuality and work, earthly and divine things are incompatible; more than that, they are antithetical. They represent the thinking of every kind of mysticism.

At 7 and 8 there is only *one* line of direction, which can be viewed either from the left or the right side. It corresponds to the concept of monism, of psycho-physical identity, according to which psychic and somatic are merely different aspects of the same thing. We must admit that in their thinking the monists came closer to the truth than the mechanists, vitalists, dualists, and others. They have come very close to the common origin of all other functions. But they overlooked the *antitheses* which result from the splitting up of the unitary as, for instance, that of nature into living and nonliving matter, animals, and plants, or the organism into autonomous organs. In overlooking the antithesis, they also overlook the mutual interdependence of the somatic and the psychic.

Our schema, on the other hand, takes into consideration the many autonomous functions of a *functional unit*. According to this concept, the various functions derive from a common source (9); in a certain realm, different functions are identical

(7, 8); in a different realm, they are divergent (5, 6); or they run parallel, independent of each other (3, 4); or, finally, they are convergent, that is, attract or influence each other (1, 2).

To illustrate in concrete terms: The animal organism is formed from a single unitary cell which is equipped with the function of orgonotic expansion and contraction (9). From this unitary cell, on the basis of the function of tension and charge, the somatic as well as the psychic function of what is going to be the complicated total organism develops in a *unitary* branch (7/8) which manifests as yet no differentiation into independent psychic and somatic functions.

Then we see a differentiation take place: The somatic functions develop by themselves forming, in the course of embryonic development, the various independent organs. In this period, the emotional functions are not developed beyond the primitive stage of pleasure and unpleasure perceptions. At birth, soma and psyche already form *two branches* of a unitary apparatus (5, 6), the organ functions on the one hand and the pleasure-unpleasure functions on the other. The bio-energetic branch which they have in common (7/8) continues to exist.

From this point on, the two developments run independently of each other, i.e., "parallel" (3, 4), at the same time influencing each other. The various body organs have been formed and continue to grow. Independent of this, the pleasure-unpleasure function branches off into the three basic emotions of pleasure, anxiety, and rage, and the various functions of perception. The development and differentiation of the function of perception is autonomous, independent of the growth of the organs. Nevertheless, both series of development are provided with biological energy from the *common* branch (9 and 7/8) in the form of the autonomic nervous system, for the growth of the organs, as well as the development of the emotions, depends on the total function of the autonomic life apparatus.

During the first few months of postnatal life, one can observe how the organ functions (movements of eyes, arms, legs, grasping, sitting up, etc.) become coordinated with each other into a totality, while, on the other hand, the pleasure, anxiety, and rage reactions also become more detailed, more coordinated,

and unified. Then the contact between organ *movement* and organ *perception*, the reaction of the organs to perceptions and the reaction of perception to organ movements, follows step by step. With the coordination of individual, as yet purposeless movements, into purposeful total body movement, with the coordination of individual sensations into the perception of the total body, and with the coordination of total body impulse with body perception, what we call *consciousness* gradually develops. The innumerable individual functions continue to operate independently, but at the same time they form a unitary whole and influence each other synergistically and antagonistically (1, 2). With the function, say, of walking, the "goal" of locomotion develops, e.g., that of reaching a table. *The function determines the goal*, not—as the vitalists believe—the goal the function. But the function also determines the chemico-physical processes, and not vice versa, as the mechanists believe. Such is the functionalism in biological reality which guides our thinking. The more exact our observations, the more fluid and differentiating but at the same time more comprehensive and unitary are our deductions.

The functional nature of our thinking is shown in the fact that it recognizes antitheses and identities alongside with other functions. It is not rigid; it recognizes transitions. Nevertheless, it follows definite laws. The mechanistic splitting of the all-embracing, unitary, natural function into separate functions, on the other hand, results inevitably in rigidity since it does not allow for the fact that the same process may have different functions at one and the same time.

E. What you have shown here is indeed far from being just a play with lines. Since it leaves room for differentiation, the common denominator and antithesis at one and the same time, it really is a true reflection of reality. Man and woman have a common origin and common interests. They have a sexually antithetical anatomy, their interests may be different and yet run parallel, and in spite of any antithesis they can attract each other and melt into each other. How did you come upon this methodological schema of thought?

O. Biophysical thinking, comparing, and differentiating is guided by the functions of the organism. The organism presents a marvelous picture of unity and differentiation. It forms a functional unity and totality. All its organs derive from one tiny undifferentiated germ cell. What is unitary and undifferentiated splits up into diverse organs with a different function and construction. The action of the heart has in itself nothing to do with the function of hearing, the contraction of the biceps nothing with gastric secretion. Nevertheless, in spite of all the autonomy of the various organs, the organism presents the perfect picture of harmonious unity, order, and cooperation, in short, that of biological self-regulation. If, now, you arrange the various functions of the organism in a schema, beginning from the common denominator and the simple functions, progressing to the complicated and antithetical, you arrive at our schema of functional thinking.

E. I begin to see why you should have such difficulties in coming to an understanding with other sciences. This methodology of thought is new. It is manysided. The usual methods of thinking are one-sided. In your methodology, the functions show fluid transitions and yet follow definite laws. The customary thinking establishes more or less rigid limits, allowing no such transitions.

O. You are right. Our functional method had to be developed in the study of the psychic and somatic functions before the orgone could be discovered. To come back to the question of competence: Does it not seem logical now that the discovery of the biological energy took place not in the realm of chemistry or physics, but in the realm of biopsychiatry? The guiding principle was not the functioning of the Diesel engine, but the *pulsation* of the heart, of a vacuole, or a protozoon. It was not the chemical compound, but sexual attraction, not the X-ray, but emotional excitation, not the flight of an airplane, but the flight of a bird or the movements of a fish, not the motion of an engine piston, but orgasmic contraction, or the contraction of growth in the embryo. In brief, it was *the functional manifestations of living matter, and not the mechanical ones of nonliving matter, which brought sex-economy on the track leading to the*

orgone energy. Manifestations of life revealed the energy which governs them, for the simple reason that sex-economic research did not borrow anything from the realm of the nonliving. Instead, it learned to deduce the nature of living movement and, with that, the nature of the biological energy, from direct observation. In the course of the past decade, many physicists tried to follow. Many of them failed because they were incapable of giving themselves over to the process of their perceptions and sensations and incapable of simply relinquishing an orientation in nonliving processes.

E. It would be peculiar if a New Yorker visiting Stockholm were to try to orient himself by a map of New York.

O. I wonder whether you will be as easily convinced if we enter, in a practical way, the field of perception and its interpretation. I am afraid that there we will find ourselves taken not from one city to another, but to a dense jungle which has no resemblance to a place of habitation, where streets and houses still have to be built.

E. It is easier to follow a theoretical principle than the hard process of practical work. The joy in hearing of a military victory over the radio has little in common with the emotions experienced in the actual winning of the victory. Things are easier for the spectator than the actor.

O. As a hardworking natural scientist, idle praise is almost as painfully experienced as the carping criticism of the uninitiated passer-by. The functional method of research requires a manysided knowledge of basic facts and the ability to relate isolated facts with each other. This is why it is so difficult to come to an understanding with the specialists who think and work mechanistically. In addition, functional research presupposes a knowledge and mastery of one's own character structure and that of others. This is so because every perception and sensation is tinged by the character structure. Orgasm research required this self-control to a particularly high degree, since it has connections with all fundamental branches of research in natural science. This research grew out of psychiatric work, took roots in sexual biology, pushed on to the emotions, and, with that, to the biophysiology of excitation. There, even though initially

I had no inkling of it, it entered the realm of the cosmic energy.

E. To one not intimately acquainted with these problems it would seem peculiar that a new branch of physics should have developed from sexological research. I think you should no longer speak of sex-economy and orgasm theory, but of orgone physics and orgone biophysics. This would make your theory much more readily acceptable.

O. And would soon obliterate a new field of knowledge. I am very familiar with people's reactions to the terms sex-economy and orgasm. They evoke pornographic ideas. However, it is the character structure of the people who react in this manner that is to be blamed, not sex-economy. These reactions are painful and create ridiculous as well as dangerous situations. But should one give in to such manifestations of the emotional plague, this universal disease which finds itself confronted for the first time by a deliberate medical opponent, namely, sex-economy? No, we must continue to adhere to the terms and concepts of sex-economy for more than historical reasons. *Without sex-economy and orgasm research, the orgone would not have been discovered.* However, orgasm research has more than historical significance for the study of the basic cosmic energy. People and concepts come and go. They are like indifferent passengers on an express train; they stay on for a short distance and disappear again. The express train, however, continues across the continent. Compare the function of a human prejudice with the function of the living! The human prejudice which impedes orgasm research is at most 4000 years old. The orgasm function, however, is timeless. Together with respiration, it is the basic function of the living, as expressed in the orgasmic longing, whether conscious or unconscious, of man and animals. It is not due to this natural process that the animal, man, deteriorated pornographically. Besides, the pornographic prejudice is not being cultivated by the human species but by some relatively few disturbed individuals. Unfortunately, they do it with great and devastating success, for there is as yet no penal law against the defamation of nature by individuals suffering from the emotional plague. The most immediate practical function of orgasm research is precisely the elimination of pornography. Beyond that,

it will always remain the core of orgone research. I did not make it that way; it is so whether we want it or not.

E. You are right. There is no researcher or artist of any account whose work did not in one way or another grow out of the sexual process.

In your presentation of the function of the orgasm you speak of bio-electricity. The orgasm makes the living being part of the general process of nature. Are you still of the opinion that the animal organism is part of the general *electrical* process of nature?

O. Before orgone energy was discovered and made an object of study, it was necessary to assume that electrical energy processes were at the basis of the orgasm function. But with this assumption, the interpretation of the processes ran, again and again, into unsolvable contradictions. For example, emotional excitation was expressed in potential differences of millivolts. This extremely small magnitude of electrical reaction did not fit the gigantic forces at work in an organism. It is impossible to define an organism, with its unitary function, in terms of bipolarity, that is, in terms of positive and negative electricity. Nor is it possible to equate the polarity of the sexes with electrical polarity, to assume, for example, the man to be positively charged and the woman negatively. Besides, the slow, wave-like forms of motion of living tissues are at variance with the rapid, angular motions of electricity. In other words, even before the discovery of the orgone, there were many difficulties in applying electrical concepts in the realm of the living. The gradual exploration of the orgone settled this question by demonstrating conclusively its *nonelectrical* nature. True, electrical stimuli result in sensations, but these sensations are alien to the organism. They have a disturbing effect and are at variance with organic sensations. Incidentally, physiology has not yet succeeded in reducing the specific biological reactions to electrical processes. It did not get any farther than the application of electrical stimuli and the study of the action currents. But between stimulus and action current there is a third link, the specific biological reaction. This, however, is independent of both the stimulus and the action current. It also functions with-

out stimulus. In addition, the kind of reaction is specific and has nothing to do with the electrical stimulus. The same electrical stimulus produces a different reaction in a skeletal muscle, a heart muscle, or a smooth muscle. True, the electrical stimulus can bring about a biological reaction, a contraction, but the energy of the contraction is something different from the energy of the stimulus.

E. Do you take the basis of the biological reaction to be a "spirit," an "entelechy"? It seems to me that this basic question should be dealt with first of all. Not only the theists and mysticists, but prominent natural scientists assumed a general "animism" of nature, including nonliving nature. This concept of nature, beginning with the "soul atoms" of Democritus, persisted over more than 2000 years in the diverse forms of natural-scientific idealism. We find it in the "crystal soul" of Haeckel, the "categorical imperative" of Kant, etc. Materialists who thought correctly always postulated a "matter that perceives." This seems to be the greatest riddle of all research in natural science, if one excludes the metaphysical, absolute universal spirit. Very likely, the perceiving plasma of the animal, man, has misinterpreted the cosmic energy in terms of an absolute universal spirit. Unfortunately, man represented this universal spirit as unknowable and invested it with banal human characteristics, such as a beard.

Where do you put the boundary line between the living and nonliving?

O. It is not long since a "soul" and "perception" was ascribed only to man, as distinguished from the other animals. The biophysical point of view can find no line of demarcation in the realm of the living at which perception is added to pulsation. If we draw the consequences from our bio-electrical experiments, according to which the quantity of a biological excitation is identical with the intensity of the perception of pleasure or unpleasure, then *biological excitation and psychic perception are functionally identical*. That is, *perception is present with the very first plasmatic expansion and contraction*. On the other hand, there is no sufficient reason for the assumption that noncontractile, nonliving, matter perceives. It is important to exclude a

general spiritualizing of nature, including nonliving nature. At the present state of our knowledge of perception and biophysics, we do better to separate the living from the nonliving; the living being that which is characterized by *pulsation* (alternating expansion and contraction) and *perception*, the nonliving that which is rigid and without perception. *Where there is no pulsation, there is also no perception.*

E. If orgone energy functions in both realms of nature, and if the orgone is connected with the characteristics of life, I see no way of excluding perception from the realm of the nonliving.

O. There are some experiments which show that pulsation, that is, alternating expansion and contraction, is an immanent basic function of orgone energy. The orgone shows a pulsatory function in rigid substances also. This finding supports your argument. But mysticism would immediately make capital of such a gap in natural science and contend that natural science had confirmed the existence of the universal spirit. Living matter differs from nonliving matter in that it is capable of *participating* in the orgonotic pulsation. Nonliving matter, due to its rigidity, is incapable of participating in the orgonotic pulsation.

E. In other words, *we can speak of the living only if cosmic orgone energy functions in matter that is capable of contraction, if the orgonotic pulsation produces an actual pulsation in it.*

O. Precisely. It is a matter of the *pulsatory changes in form* which occur in matter. It is these changes of form which determine the fundamental biological functions, such as growth, division, procreation, metabolism, pleasure, and anxiety. This is not really comprehended until one has first observed the pulsation in rigid matter, that is, matter *incapable* of change of form. Thus one convinces oneself that there are *two kinds of pulsation*, energy pulsation and material pulsation. *They must coincide, must be synchronous, in order to produce life processes.*

E. Did you succeed in observing the transition of matter from a rigid state to a pulsatory state directly?

O. The study of this transition is the most important aspect of microscopic bion research. The process by which previously nonplasmatic matter becomes plasmatic, in other words, the appearance of the capacity of pulsation in previously rigid matter,

can be observed directly.

E. You mean to say you observed movements of contraction and expansion in previously rigid substances?

O. Yes. But such observation is not possible at a magnification of less than 3000x. This direct observation shows beyond any doubt that what causes the movement is *inner impulses* and not external mechanical impulses which the mechanist ascribes to molecules and calls "Brownian movement."

E. One should think it's obvious that Brownian movement can result only in a movement from place to place and that it cannot explain *inner* motility.

O. This has already been admitted by some biologists.

E. Movement without energy is inconceivable. Since we must exclude the presence of external impulses, the inner motility can be ascribed only to an energy which develops in and from the matter itself.

O. It cannot possibly be otherwise.

E. How do you bring about the transition from rigidity to inner motility?

O. By making matter swell. This can be done simply by putting it in water. Depending on the hardness and density, it will take more or less time until the first manifestations of inner motility appear. In order to shorten the process, we add substances which promote the process of swelling, such as potassium chloride, and heat the solutions in the autoclave to 120°C. In doing so, we reproduce a process which continually goes on in nature. After a long spring rain, for example, one finds vividly pulsating bions in the soil. Very hard or rigid substances, such as rock or coal, have to be "smashed" by heating them to incandescence before being exposed to the process of swelling.

E. How does the bion differ from its substance of origin?

O. First of all, structurally. For example, a coal or rock particle, or a particle of iron filing shows a smooth or striated structure. After having been made to swell, however, the same substances show, particularly in the darkfield, a vesicular structure. The vesicles detach themselves. If viewed with apochromatic lenses, at a magnification of 3-5000x, their content appears blue

or blue-green. The substances of origin, however, show their own color: coal appears black, iron blackish brown, etc. Every substance which has been made to swell and every living substance shows these two characteristics: *bionous*, *vesicular structure* and *blue or blue-green* content.

E. At what stage do the pulsatory movements occur?

O. When the membrane of the bion has become thin enough to yield to the internal impulse to expansion and contraction.

E. I would like to limit myself to the physical manifestations and suggest that we postpone discussion of the biophysical ones until we have understood the orgone functions in the realm of the *nonliving*.

O. Fine.

E. Do you find that the particles exert any influence *at a distance*, and are there any differences in this respect between the bions and the substances of origin?

O. The nonliving substances of origin show no inner motility, the bionous substances do. This indicates the mobilization of attractive and repulsive forces in the process of swelling. The rigid substances of origin have no influence on bacteria which are placed in their proximity. The heaps of bionous matter, however, attract and paralyze them. This effect is the more marked the more mobile and more strongly radiating the bions are.

E. You say "more strongly radiating," How do you determine this?

O. Bionous matter refracts light more strongly than does non-bionous matter. Microscopically and photographically, it shows a strongly refracting "margin" around the membrane. This radiating margin appears with the bionous disintegration of matter and disappears when the bion dies, that is, becomes immobile or degenerates into T-bacilli. T-bacilli, or, to put it differently, particles with a weak orgone charge, show no radiating margin. Blood platelets do not show it. The radiating margin, then, is certainly not a phenomenon of refraction.

E. You assume a connection between orgone and light. What have you found out about that experimentally?

O. Nothing really up to now. The connection is still obscure. We have experimented with photographic plates for the past five

years, without reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

E. Are photographic plates influenced by the orgone?

O. We have incontrovertible proof that orgone affects the photographic emulsion. However, the results obtained in different experiments are so contradictory and so unusual from the standpoint of customary radiation photography that they are as yet inconclusive. For this reason, we are not yet publishing the results obtained thus far.

E. After all, in a research field as new as yours, nobody will ask to see everything settled at once. Does orgone influence the photographic plate like light or like another kind of electromagnetic energy? Does it *blacken* the plate?

O. According to observations to date, the atmospheric orgone consists of *three* different forms of energy. I shall not tell you about them yet, because I would like you to see them for yourself. Since the orgone penetrates everything and, for that reason, it has not been possible to delimit it, it was also not possible to separate the three different forms from each other. If photographic plates are exposed in the dark to concentrated orgone, one obtains results which correspond to an influence of light. If, however, the plates are exposed to concentrated orgone *and* light, simultaneously or successively, one finds that those parts of the emulsion which were influenced by the orgone no longer react to the light influence. It seems that orgone acts like light and, simultaneously, *antithetically* to it. On the one hand, it blackens photographic plates; on the other, it prevents or reduces the blackening by light.

E. That sounds peculiar. The prevention or reduction of the light effect by an energy is something basically new. I would like to see orgone energy.

O. That will not be difficult. We sit down in this completely dark orgone accumulator,* which consists of a double layer of organic and metallic material. From the outside inward, there is a layer of celotex, then a layer of sheet iron, then again a layer of celotex and another layer of sheet iron. We shall have

*Reich refers to a room in the students' laboratory at Orgonon which was layered as an accumulator. [Eds.]

to adapt our eyes to the darkness for about half an hour. Then, will you describe your observations?

E. All right. I am very curious and believe in direct observation. In physics, unfortunately, we cannot directly observe the flight of energy particles; we can only photograph it. But that is not the same thing. We are forced to form hypothetical concepts concerning the motion of the electrons, without being able to observe them. We can only deduce their motion but cannot see it. The motion of the energy particles is too rapid for our eye and is in itself not perceptible, except by way of fluorescent substances or the photographic plate.

O. In observing the orgone, we have the great advantage that the motion of the particles is *very slow* compared with the speed of electromagnetic energy. Keep watching a definite spot on the metal wall of the accumulator. You will have to wait until you really can see the phenomena.

E. I find that the room is not absolutely black, but appears filled with a dim diffuse light. It is of a *bluish-gray* color. It also seems that there are small bluish dots flying by. But I can't be sure, because when I close my eyes, they continue to be there.

O. Since orgone is present everywhere, you have it in your eyes just as you have it outside at the wall of the accumulator. This is one of the difficulties inherent in these observations. The orgone also irritates the optic nerve and produces after-images.

E. Now it becomes more distinct. I see small blue sparks fly toward me and past me. They seem to come out of the walls at rhythmical intervals, which have nothing to do with my pulse rate. As the dots move toward me, they seem to slowly contract and expand. When flying by sidewise, they take a trajectory similar to a parabola. This trajectory is interrupted by loop-like forms; it is as if at certain points of the trajectory, the dots would begin to fly in the opposite direction, thus forming a loop.

O. Can you tell whether the distances between the loops are uneven or about even?

E. They seem to be about even.

O. We shall draw the form of the trajectory sometime and discuss it. For the time being, just get acquainted with it. In

the corner of this large orgone accumulator is a small one consisting of three layers each of organic and metallic material and measuring 1 cubic foot. It contains a small frosted bulb, such as those used in the development of highly sensitive photographic films. In the front wall there is an opening measuring 4 square inches, containing a cellulose disc with a dull surface on the inside. In its stead, one could also use a fluorescent screen such as is used in X-ray fluoroscopy. I now turn on the green bulb.

E. I see some sort of movement at the disc, as if vapors moved over it. It is like a vivid flickering. Why, this is amazing! You have turned on a dark green electrical bulb which gives a steady dim light. But what I see, in addition to the flickering, is not green, but *blue-violet* light!

O. This is the specific color of the orgone. Can you distinguish details?

E. My eyes are somewhat blinded.

O. This cannot be due to the green light, for eyes rest in the dark and are not irritated by dim green light.

E. It is as if the opening became alternately lighter and darker. At times, the impression of light seems to disappear altogether. Other times, it looks as if luminous vapors came through the opening, as if in individual impulses.

O. Here is a magnifying glass with a magnification of 5x. Focus it on the disc.

E. I see yellowish-white rays which move very rapidly in all directions. It looks like miniature fireworks.

O. In other words, you have now seen the three different energy forms of the orgone: blue-gray vapors, blue-violet dots, which float slowly and form loops at regular intervals, and, finally, rapid, straight, yellowish rays.

E. There can be no doubt about it. It is remarkable that you should not yet have succeeded in photographing this intensive energy in an unmistakable manner. Doubtless, it has some connection with light, for the light dots were far less distinct in the dark than they are now against the background of the steady, dim green light. It is as if the dim light produced a stronger radiation in the particles. A most peculiar thing!

O. Instead of the green light, I shall now turn on a dim *red* bulb such as is used in dark rooms.

E. There are definitely violet patches against the dim red light at the disc. You did not turn on a violet bulb, did you?

O. No, but red plus blue gives violet. This only demonstrates again that there is a blue energy in the atmosphere.

E. The longer I look, the more distinct the trajectories become. There can be no doubt: the trajectory continues to turn back on itself in a rhythmical manner, and the little dots become alternately larger and smaller. What do you think about it? What does it have to do with the nature of light?

O. Let's discuss this question another time.

E. The facts can no longer be doubted, though they are very difficult to comprehend. Radiating energy points which move very slowly and seem to float! My eyes hurt.

O. We shall get some fresh air. The air in the orgone accumulator is heavy, and we have been sitting in it for an hour and a half.

E. I should like to think over this experience. Could we continue our discussion in a couple of days?

O. I shall look forward to it.

THE ORGONOTIC EXCITATION OF INSULATORS

Questionable points in the concept of static electricity

O. You have convinced yourself of the existence of visible energy particles in the atmosphere. I termed this energy "orgone," at first, for purposes of investigation, in order to distinguish it from all other known phenomena of radiation. We have good reasons for the assumption that the functions of this energy cannot be subsumed under the concept of "electricity." My observations force me to assume that what is commonly called electricity is only a special function of orgone energy.

E. That is a very radical conclusion. One cannot simply introduce a new concept of energy and thus reduce to insignificance an old concept worked out by thousands of research-

ers. But I shall listen to your arguments.

O. Before giving them, let us find out whether there is any kind of consensus of opinion in the world of physics concerning the basic principles of electricity. Is there an awareness of fundamental gaps in the understanding of electromagnetism?

E. Indeed there is. There are plenty of contradictions. Quite a number of prominent physicists doubt the correctness of the prevalent concepts of so-called "static electricity."

O. How would you briefly formulate these doubts?

E. Modern physics has progressed to functional formulations of energy. The concepts of "matter" and "energy" are no longer rigid. They no longer denote sharply delineated fields but, rather, a functional condition, which allows for transition. "Energy" is no longer thought of as attached to "matter"; rather, matter is considered extremely slowed down energy which has become solidified, while energy is matter which is dissolved and extremely speeded up. Compared with such functional concepts in modern physics, the concept of the two "electrical fluids" which supposedly explains the phenomena of the static electroscope is unsatisfactory.

O. The findings of orgone biophysics absolutely fit the *functional* concept of the relationship between matter and energy. On the other hand, they are at variance with the concept of two separate electrical fluids, positive and negative electricity. This old theory is a reflection of mechanistic thinking which splits things up. This thinking not only made an absolute distinction between "matter" and "energy"; it even split up the electrical energy into two independent "fluids."

E. The old scientific pioneers should not be blamed for that. After all, this concept was in accord with a number of phenomena of friction electricity. A rubber rod, when rubbed, shows an energy which indeed has the opposite electroscopic effect from the energy shown at a rubbed glass rod. If one deflects the electroscope leaf with a rubbed rubber rod, a second rubbed rubber rod will increase the deflection, while a rubbed glass rod will decrease it. This confirms the concept of the two separate electrical fluids.

O. I have carried out the old experiments with this kind of

electricity many times and can confirm them. But in doing so I have made two observations which are at variance with the theory.

E. New observations may still be understood in terms of the old theory. Only if this is absolutely impossible, only when a new concept brings more facts into a simple unit than the old theory and does it in a better way, only then has it a right to replace the old theory. Experimental physics is rightly strict in judging new theories, if for no other reason than to avoid chaos. What are the observations which are at variance with the theory?

O. I continued the experiments with electricity induced from rubber and glass in the following manner: Instead of rubbing the glass rod on dead felt, I rubbed it on the *hair* of my head. The electroscope was excited with an electrified rubber rod. According to your mechanistic theory of friction, there should be no difference between the dead felt and my hair. Friction is friction. Consequently, the glass rod which was excited with my hair should *decrease* the opposite charge of the electroscope. In reality, it *increases* the charge, that is, it has the same sign as the rubbed rubber rod. This contradicts the assumption of a specific glass electricity. It would be senseless to assume that the glass rod becomes energized like the rubber rod if rubbed with the hair and like a glass rod if rubbed with felt. It is conceivable, however, that the process taking place between glass rod and hair is different from that taking place between glass rod and dead felt. This phenomenon is incompatible with the mechanistic concept of electrical excitation by friction. My observations of the orgone manifestations explain the contradiction. The hypothesis of the two specific electrical fluids fails us here.

E. Not yet. There is the possibility that the glass rod draws off negative electricity from the hair, while it may itself become excited, that is, react positively, with the felt, which is much rougher than the hair.

O. I raised this objection myself. Another experiment answers your argument. If you were right, then the friction induced by the felt—independent of the sign of the excitation of the glass rod—would have to result in the same deflection of the electro-

scope as the identical friction caused with the hair.

E. Yes, if one considers the identical amount of mechanical friction to be the cause of the phenomenon. What does the experiment show?

O. I stroke the glass rod lightly over the hair of my head, just once. The electroscope leaf deflects to an angle of about 45 degrees. Now we discharge the glass rod with water. We stroke it lightly over the much rougher felt. The leaf deflects only minimally or not at all. That is, the phenomenon is not mechanically determined. *The hair not only excites the glass rod much more easily than does the felt, it also charges it with a different energy, the same as that of the rubber rod.*

E. There must be a mistake here. That's completely incomprehensible.

O. There is no mistake. I have made this experiment hundreds of times, always with the same result. It is in accord with other observations of the orgone. The phenomenon is incomprehensible only from the point of view of the mechanistic concept of the two separate electrical fluids attached to glass and rubber, respectively.

E. What does the same experiment show when done with the rubber rod?

O. A confirmation. 1. *The excitation with the hair is in the same direction as that with the dead felt.* 2. The excitation with the hair—the manipulation being the same—is incomparably stronger than that with the felt.

E. What is your conclusion from these findings?

O. Only a preliminary one. It is: *So-called "friction electricity" has nothing to do with friction.* Further facts will confirm this assumption.

E. How does your theory explain the fact that, after all, rubber or glass have to be rubbed in order to get a deflection of the electroscope? Apparently, friction is indispensable. You draw off from the hair, that is, use friction.

O. "Drawing off" and "rubbing, using friction" is not the same thing. There are organotic phenomena which appear only if one draws off *gently* but not if one rubs hard. Friction eliminates many reactions which are easily obtained by gentle

stroking. More about this another time. The orgone theory answers the question of friction in the following manner: Orgone energy is present *everywhere*. The felt is permeated by it as is the soil or the atmosphere. The felt, however, as a nonliving substance, does not of itself radiate energy. It only gives off what it has taken up from the environment or what is released by strong friction. The living hair, on the other hand, radiates orgone by virtue of its living functioning. It is *spontaneously* charged. For this reason, it is very easy to draw off orgone from the hair with a rubber or glass rod. The felt does not live, that is, it does not spontaneously give off orgone. The orgone can only be "rubbed out" of it.

E. From this it would follow that the concept of "friction electricity" could be replaced by that of *orgonotic excitation*. "Friction electricity," then, would be no more than an uninteresting special case of orgonotic excitation which may be based on passively absorbed orgone or orgone radiated as part of living functioning.

O. That is precisely the conclusion to be drawn from these observations. It does not become fully convincing, however, until one demonstrates the same electroscope reactions without friction and without drawing off of energy.

E. This would indeed be incontrovertible proof. But I doubt that it can be done.

O. Yes, it can: Rubber or cellulose, if rubbed on metal, shows no electroscopic reaction, regardless of how we interpret this fact. We take a cellulose disc and make certain that it shows no reaction at the electroscope. We then leave it lying for a few days on the metal wall of an orgone accumulator. Depending on the orgone tension in the accumulator, the cellulose disc will absorb orgone more or less quickly and the electroscope will show a more or less strong deflection. In making this experiment, one must have patience and not expect the reaction too soon.

E. You should not expect the physicists to trouble themselves too much with new experiments. Is there not another method of demonstrating the orgonotic excitation without friction or stroking?

O. Yes, there is. The sun constantly radiates orgone into the atmosphere. Let us put a cellulose plate, which is electroscopically indifferent, into bright sunlight, possibly in the absence of wind. After about 15 to 30 minutes of exposure to the sunlight the cellulose will cause a deflection of the electroscope. The magnitude of the reaction will depend on the intensity of the sun radiation and the relative humidity of the air. It is important to remember that most orgone reactions disappear and cannot be reproduced when the relative humidity is more than about 50%.

E. Thus far you have only shown that so-called "friction electricity" is a special function of orgone energy. But you have not yet proven your original contention that *orgone is not electricity at all*. What physics calls "electricity" might be a special function of the orgone; it also might be something basically different. My belief is that orgone is nothing but negative electricity, pure and simple.

O. This is exactly what was said by a Dutch physicist at the time of the discovery of the orgone in 1939. The orgone in the rubber or the glass rod, taken from the hair, does indeed act like negative static electricity. Since all energy must be reduced to *one* common denominator, it goes without saying that what we call "orgone" and what you call "electricity" must have some connection with each other. But, unfortunately, there are important differences. It would be much more convenient for me if I could express the characteristics of the orgone in well-known terms of electricity, if I could describe them, in terms of the electron theory. Unfortunately, that is not possible without doing violence to the facts. *The functions of orgone energy cannot be understood in terms of known functions of electricity and magnetism*. This forces the researcher to carry out difficult and time-consuming experiments to find what organotic functions there are which do not exist in electromagnetism, which, in other words, are *specifically organotic*; to discover what the undoubtedly existing connections between orgone and electromagnetism are; and, finally, to prove that orgone and electricity are not identical. It would be so much simpler if the orgone could be subsumed under electricity. So you see that my conten-

tions do not spring from a desire to be original.

E. I think your undertaking is hopeless. You cannot simply throw over hundreds of years of research in electricity, or provide all the proofs that would be needed to support your contention.

O. It may look that way. But there are gaps in the theory of electricity which are filled by orgone physics. There are a number of observations which are fundamental enough to encourage the undertaking. If one *must* ascend Mont Blanc, one cannot let oneself be intimidated by its height and the difficulties of the climb. Patient climbing will carry you a considerable distance. Nobody can predict, however, whether or not you will succeed in reaching the summit.

E. Let's hear. We don't expect it to be easy.

O. There is some consolation in the following: In studying physics and talking with physicists one meets so many erroneous contentions, which are advanced with uncritical conviction, that I have resigned myself to the possibility of adding another incorrect assertion to the many already present. But the prospects of a rich harvest if I succeed are too enticing to allow the attempt to be discontinued. In addition, the numerous contradictions in physics are only another incentive.

E. Well, there can be no harm in formulating a new hypothesis.

O. Electricity—to stick to the term for the time being—was discovered and produced by the ancient Greeks and later by Gilbert, Cabeo, Guericke, Franklin, and others, in *nonmetallic* substances. Those substances which produce but do not conduct “electricity” they termed “*electrica*”; the metallic substances, which conduct but do not produce electricity, they termed “*non-electrica*.” The good old electrical machine was based on the principle of friction between leather and glass. The electric energy was accumulated by way of points and “*Leyden jars*.” Franklin's famous experiments with the lightning conductor were based on this. Have you ever been struck by the fact that this original method of producing electricity has been given up and relegated to the museum of history?

E. Frankly, I never gave it any thought. But it is true that,

since the days of Volta and Faraday, the principle of producing electricity has become entirely different. In industry, electrical energy is produced only by chemical elements or the motion of metal wires in magnetic fields. The generator and the battery have replaced the old electrical machine. That's all. It doesn't strike me as remarkable.

O. But it is. This has not happened by accident. The theory of friction electricity did not lead any further because it became bogged down in the concept of the two separate fluids. Technically, it was a miscarriage. *Practically*, the principle of two electrical fluids was replaced by the more fruitful principle of moving electromagnetic energy fields.

E. What about it? You are getting complicated.

O. No, I am not. I have merely to recall from oblivion an extremely important fact, precisely in connection with the question of whether or not orgone is electricity. My contention is that the energy with which the ancient Greeks and our forefathers since Gilbert were dealing was a basically different energy from that with which the physicists have been dealing since Volta and Faraday, different not only with regard to the principle of its production, but *fundamentally* different. In reality, with the principle of friction, the ancient Greeks had discovered the *orgone*. The *electric* current was discovered first by Volta, Faraday, Coulomb, Ampère, etc., and they broke completely with the line of energy research followed by the ancient Greeks, and by the moderns to the times of Gilbert and Franklin.

E. Why, that sounds fantastic. I would not even listen any more if I did not know you to be conscientious.

O. It is no more fantastic than the overlooking of the atmospheric orgone on the part of physicists and astronomers.

E. How do you explain the fact that the atmospheric energy was so thoroughly overlooked?

O. There is a psychological or, rather, *biological* explanation which I shall present elsewhere. But there is also a purely technical explanation. The men who study "cosmic rays" have been on the track of the orgone for a long time. The fact that they missed it is due to an erroneous interpretation of electroscopic reactions.

E. You don't say! Can you explain this in a simple manner?

O. Basic facts can always be presented simply. What is complicated is the working out of new methods, and, above all, the refutation of prejudiced and erroneous concepts which shroud the simple facts. The phenomenon of overlooking the atmospheric orgone shows this particularly clearly.

E. If you had not given me an incontrovertible visual demonstration of the orgone, I would have refused to follow any further.

O. It is just the point at which so many physicists deny me credence. One is loath to give up old, well-established concepts. That has always been so. I wonder if man will ever reach the stage where he is willing to relinquish the illusion of emotional security provided by well-established concepts for the feeling of triumph experienced in finding something new.

E. You overlook the factors of envy and the narrowness of everyday thinking.

O. I have learned to understand this narrowness. It is necessary for a well-ordered functioning of the social machinery and as a protection against human irrationalism. Unfortunately, it blocks many decisive insights and, with that, the real mastery of the difficulties of life.

E. What are your facts? We want to postpone the interpretation of the facts until later.

O. I am glad to hear you make a clear-cut distinction between the two. All too often, facts are explained away by concepts without any content. When I demonstrated the bions to a biologist he brushed them off with the remark that "The Brownian movement was a well-known fact." When I asked him whether the physical Brownian movement, based on "the push of the molecules," could explain the movements of *expansion and contraction* in the bions, he became angry. Let us start by looking at the new facts and try to bring them into harmony with the concepts of electricity. Will you, as an exponent of these theories, formulate the accepted view of electrical conduction and insulation?

E. This is simple and generally recognized: The good conductor of electricity differs from the insulator or poorly conducting

material by the fact that, in it, the units of electricity, the electrons, are freely mobile. They are immobile in the good insulator.

O. This is in accord with the fact that the electrical energy in a wire which is insulated with rubber does not act beyond the surface of the wire. The rubber does not conduct the electricity to the surface of the wire, that is, it "insulates" it. Now I should like to show you an experiment: We insulate with thin polystyrene between the metal knob of this electroscope and the

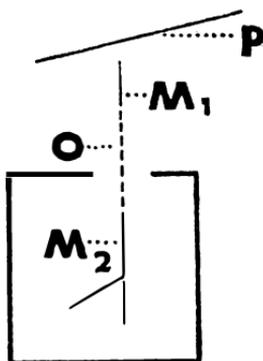


FIG. 3. Demonstration that organic substances conduct orgone. P = polystyrene rod; M_1 = metal knob; O = organic insulation (polystyrene); M_2 = metal rod.

metal rod to which the leaf is attached. That is, we have inserted an "insulation" between the knob and the leaf. According to your theory, no electricity should flow from the knob to the leaf. The experiment contradicts this contention. If we hold a polystyrene rod, which has been charged from the hair, at a distance of about 1 cm. from the knob, we get the same deflection of the electroscope as with direct metallic conduction. The only difference is that with the insulator in between the deflection occurs somewhat more *slowly*. At any rate, *the insulator did conduct "electricity."*

E. You must have chosen a poor insulator.

O. The better the insulator, the more marked the reaction. Polystyrene is known as an excellent insulator. It always gives the reaction.

E. This is amazing. I have never heard about this experiment.

O. It is amazing only from the standpoint of the concept that in the insulator the electrical units are immobile. From the standpoint of the orgone theory the phenomenon is not amazing at all. The energy which I draw off from my hair is not electricity but orgone energy which is capable of penetrating everything. *The theory of the insulators applies to electricity but not to the orgone.* Orgone is something different from electricity.

E. This one experiment would hardly suffice to prove your contention. A well-trained physicist could explain it in the framework of the concepts of electricity. For example: Have you calibrated your electroscope? Do you know the magnitude of the charge you use?

O. Yes, my electroscope is calibrated. A deflection of 90 degrees corresponds to the deflection obtained with about 1000 volts.

E. I am sorry you fell into the trap. I hope you will prove to be right, for our concept of static electricity is indeed unsatisfactory and contradictory. Our usual electrical wires have an insulation sufficient for 110 to 220 volts. If you put 1000 volts through such a wire it will go through the insulation; that is, the same thing will happen as happened in your insulator here. This fact can be understood in the framework of electricity.

O. You don't really think that I would make my claims without considering such facts and adducing the proper proofs.

E. There can't be any such proofs.

O. They are as simple as the fact of the existence of a visible energy in the atmosphere which hitherto has been overlooked. Please charge the electroscope with your static energy so that the deflection represents a tension of about 1000 volts.

E. Here is the charge. What now?

O. Put a disc of cellulose, a good insulator, the size of about 6x12 inches, on the metal plate of the electroscope. Now touch the insulating disc with your finger.

E. *The electroscope discharges gradually!*

O. A fact which is incomprehensible from the point of view of your electrical fluids, since, according to that view, the insulator has no mobile electrical units and, therefore, cannot conduct

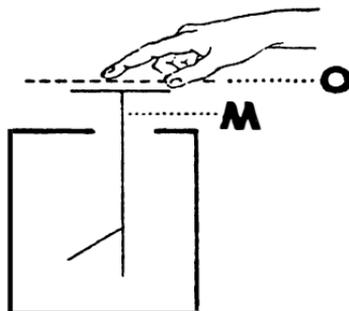


FIG. 4. Discharge of orgone-charged electroscope through an insulator. O = organic insulation (cellulose); M = metal plate.

electricity. From the standpoint of orgone physics, the phenomenon is easily understandable:

The electroscope is charged not with electricity, but with orgone. The orgone penetrates everything, conductor and nonconductor, only at different speeds. The insulator does not conduct electricity. But it conducts orgone. This is why you can charge an electroscope with an organotically charged insulator, just as you can discharge the electroscope through an insulator.

E. You have given the electroscope a tension corresponding to about 1000 volts. If you are right that the energy in the electroscope is not electricity, then a control of this contention is possible. Let us connect a voltmeter to the electroscope. According to our theory, the deflection is due to a tension between the negative electricity at the leaf and the positive electricity at the casing. This must show at the voltmeter.

O. Connect the voltmeter with the electroscope in any way you wish. If the energy in the electroscope is electrical, your voltmeter must react.

E. No matter how I do it, I cannot obtain any reaction at the voltmeter.

O. I know. I have checked this many times and always obtained a negative result. The voltmeter does not react at all, in spite of the fact that the electroscope contains energy in the amount of about 1000 volts. From the point of view of electricity, this is incomprehensible. From the point of view of the or-

gone theory, it is simple enough: *orgone is not electricity*. The electroscope contains not an electrical but an orgonotic charge. Orgone does not influence electromagnetic measuring apparatuses precisely because it is not electricity. This is a fact which I have observed in amazement for years.

E. I shall assume your point of view, tentatively. According to it, there is no connection between orgone and electricity. This, I must say, sounds unlikely.

O. There is, in fact, a connection. *Orgone energy disturbs electrical energy*. For many months, I connected voltmeters in diverse ways with my orgone apparatuses and never saw the slightest reaction. Then, one day, a very "unscientific" method of obtaining the voltmeter reaction occurred to me. Please connect the voltmeter with this dry-cell battery.

E. Done. The voltmeter shows 4 volts.

O. Now draw orgone from your hair with the polystyrene rod and move the rod sidewise past the voltmeter pointer, at a distance of about 2-5 cm.

E. You wouldn't call this an experimental method, would you?

O. Why not? Facts are facts, whether we like them or not.

E. Agreed. Well, I get a deflection of the voltmeter pointer according to the way in which I move the rod.

O. I was just as amazed as you when I saw this for the first time. But it is really quite simple and entirely in accord with other orgone observations. *Orgone deflects magnetic needles. It disturbs electromagnetic apparatuses*. The so-called electromagnetic storms in the atmosphere at the time of increased sun spot activity have nothing to do with electrical or magnetic energy. They do deflect the needles of electrical measuring apparatuses, that is, they disturb them in the same manner as you did when you brought about a deflection of the voltmeter with your body orgone.

E. Why, that's fantastic!

O. Only at first glance. If one gets used to it, as I have, it becomes quite simple and clarifies many natural processes which hitherto have remained obscure.

E. Somebody told me once that control experiments had been carried out and that they had not confirmed your experiments.

But here every one of your contentions is proven to be true.

O. In the early phases of my orgone-physical work, I repeatedly made the mistake of showing *individual* findings to physicists and biologists who had not participated in the work. Their reaction was always the same incomprehensible one. They saw the finding, gave some "explanation" for it, and, with that, believed they had understood it. I had to learn that these new findings must be presented only in their logical context, and that a clear-cut distinction has to be made between *fact* and *interpretation*. For example: When I discovered the phenomenon of lumination of fluorescent electric light tubes, I showed it to a physicist. Before demonstrating it, I asked him what he would expect to happen if a charged polystyrene rod was brought close to the tube. He said that *nothing* was expected to happen. When the tube, nevertheless, luminated, he was at first highly surprised, but immediately found an "explanation." It was the gas in the tube, he said. I was surprised to see that this man, a good electrophysicist, failed to realize that his "explanation" did not in the least explain *why* the tube, when approached with the charged rod of insulating material, began to luminate. The specialists have too little curiosity; they are too easily satisfied with *words*.

E. Your lumination experiment reminds one of the electrified atmosphere connected with Northern lights. According to my knowledge, all astronomical radiation phenomena are explained by electrical ionization. Do the orgone experiments say anything about this?

O. You have quite correctly seen a connection here. The customary interpretations of such phenomena as the aurora borealis are altogether uncritical. In all these phenomena, we are dealing with orgone, and not with electricity.

E. Can you prove that?

O. Yes, to the extent of my experimental experience. If the Northern lights were of an electrical nature, then a voltmeter would have to react in an experimental reproduction of these phenomena. Connect one of the knobs of this fluorescent argon tube with the electroscope knob. Now move the orgone-charged polystyrene rod up and down past the tube.

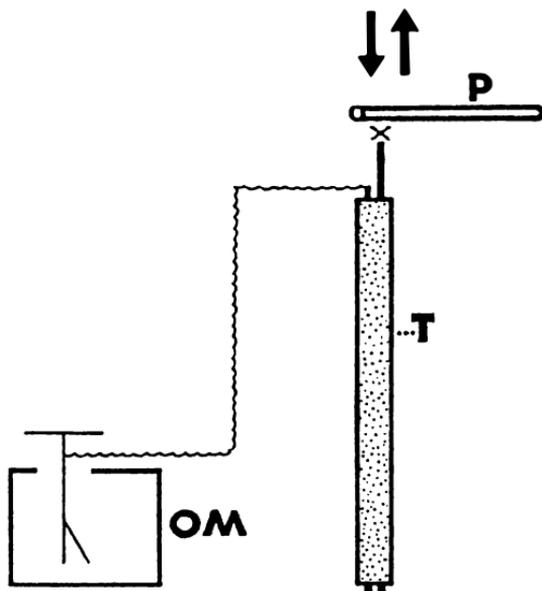


FIG. 5. Demonstration of orgonotic lumination in fluorescent tube. P = polystyrene rod; T = fluorescent tube; OM = organometer (electroscope)

E. The electroscope shows deflections of several hundred volts.

O. We shall now darken the room and adapt our eyes to the darkness. Then we bring the rod close to the knob of the electroscope.

E. The tube luminesces every time the rod is *brought near* it and every time it is *removed* from it; the same happens when I bring the rod near the tube itself and remove it from it.

O. That is, the orgonotic charge makes the tube luminate. It is transferred through the wire to the knob of the electroscope where it brings about a deflection, and vice versa.

E. The phenomenon would disappear if we were to ground the tube.

O. Try it.

E. The phenomenon remains the same, whether or not the tube is grounded.

O. Precisely. This fact is incompatible with the theory of positive and negative electrical charges. You remember that we have

not applied a tension between two charged poles. *Our energy system is unipolar.* There are no unipolar phenomena in the realm of electricity. Wherever they are assumed, critical examination will show organotic, not electrical, reactions.

As we know, there are charges of several hundred volts at work in the gas tube. Now connect the knobs of the tube in any way you please with a voltmeter and repeat the experiment.

E. The phenomenon of lumination as well as the electroscope reaction continue to exist. But the voltmeter does not react, whether it is connected parallel or in series.

O. This confirms again the earlier experiments and the orgone theory: orgone and electricity are not the same.

E. According to these observations, then, "static electricity" in the customary sense is not electricity at all.

O. That is the inevitable conclusion. It is merely a matter of convention whether we are going to identify the "electricity" of the ancients with the orgone and retain the concept of electricity for the organotic phenomena. In this case we would have to form a new concept for that which has been known as electromagnetism since Faraday, Ampère, and Volta. Or else we drop the ancients' concept of electricity, call the respective phenomena organotic, and restrict electricity to those phenomena which are obtained through the movement of wires in magnetic fields.

E. This is a radical and painful operation. It will inevitably influence large fields of chemistry and physics as, for instance, those of colloids and atoms.

O. I cannot help that if I am to continue to adhere to the facts, which you yourself just confirmed. It will have its advantages. One will be forced to come down out of the realm of verbiage into the realm of facts.

E. That won't be easy.

O. I am prepared for great difficulties. Organized natural science becomes a means of making a living; that is one of its functions. Every kind of pioneer work suffers severely as long as it cannot serve this function.

E. Do you expect these facts to be recognized by organized physics and biology?

O. I was once naive enough to do so. Only after many bitter experiences did it occur to me that the discoverer of the incandescent bulb, for example, would have been more than naive to expect the manufacturers of gas lamps to recognize electrical illumination.

E. In your case, who plays the role of the gas lamp industry?

O. The pharmaceutical industry.

E. It would seem to me that the radium and X-ray industry would be even more dangerous to you.

O. I know it.

E. I would like to think over what we have spoken of today. It was a lot to take in at one time. I will be back.

To be continued.

*The Evasiveness of Homo Normalis**

Not so long ago the human animal had declared himself to be strictly distinguished from the animal. He called himself "homo sapiens," the godlike *man*. He had erected a barricade of "strictly scientific" theories to prevent any penetrating look at this fallacy. He called his theory "the unchangeability of the species." This theory collapsed like a house of paper under the impact of the theory of evolution. It was shown beyond doubt that man, the godlike creation of a supernatural power, was a descendant of the ape and, with that, of the long chain of animal forms. Homo sapiens disappeared from the scene.

But it took the animal, man, only a few decades to replace homo sapiens with "homo normalis." This time it was a new theory of "cultural adaptation" which was to rescue the animal, man, from recognizing himself. Homo normalis not only replaced homo sapiens, he did more. He put up a new barricade against any attempt to break up a vicious circle of thinking and action. The human animal discovered "culture" and "civilization," and he ran with flying colors to their rescue. Now, there was no longer a supernatural destiny which demanded the elevation of man from the ranks of the animal kingdom to heavenly heights. It was—and man was proud of it—a more realistic, down to earth ideal, "human society," which gave man his goals and aims in life. "Human society," mind you, not as an ever changing form of human cooperation, but as an ideal, as a new absolute value of unquestionable perfection and dignity. It was true and indeed recognized that society needed improvement and reform, but somehow the human mind managed to keep the social misery and the ideal, which contradicted it, peacefully in one and the same compartment.

This ideal, it was true, killed homo normalis by the millions through bad thinking, neglect of most primitive requirements of

*Written in English, 1947.

social living, and wars. But that did not matter in the least when it came to questioning the set idea of the absolute "social value." *Homo normalis* does not like such questions. With the advent of psychiatry as a powerful social tool, the word "schizophrenic" came into use and into abuse. Now, *homo normalis* declared everybody "crazy" or, more politely, "schizophrenic," who dared to question the *normality* of his thinking. *Homo normalis* does not call you "heretic" any more, as did *homo sapiens*, when you challenge his position. There is "progress" in this world of ours, without doubt. He does not burn you alive any more as did *homo sapiens* a few hundred years ago, in the name of his holy spirit. Nowadays, he just puts you away into some lunatic asylum, and he watches most carefully over its entrance. No understanding of the rationality of the schizophrenic breakdown must pass through it. The number of schizophrenics and other types of psychosis is increasing at an alarming rate. When more attention was paid to the emotional structure of the individual, as for instance with war mobilization and under similar circumstances, it was found that a great percentage of the population is endemically neurotic. But *homo normalis* maintains face with an admirable steadiness of conviction. He is imprisoning most of the lunatics to protect society from the menace. He governs the world which he declares to be his own. Now, look at the world and ask yourself whose fault it is that about one hundred million people were killed, burned, mutilated, and starved to death in a few years, that millions of people are continuing to die, when all lunatics are being imprisoned and only *homo normalis* governs the world.

When, some fifteen to twenty-five years ago, I used to speak to hundreds and thousands of people in gatherings of all kinds, I told them that I am capable of joking with children, playing with them in the grass, and developing great humor in my contact with them; but when it came to serious matters, like that of human interrelationship in a broad sense, I did not joke. Serious matters must be taken seriously. Sometimes people did not seem to grasp my attitude. They often asked me why I took all things "so seriously." After some years had gone by I found

the answer to their question: They were used to a type of behavior in homo normalis which is the exact opposite of mine. Homo normalis is usually stern and solemn with children; he expects them "to behave," to "sit quietly," "to please the neighbor," in short, to "adjust to society." On the other hand, homo normalis usually develops his greatest capacity for humor when it comes to serious matters. When you ask an average psychiatrist why he does not do something about the misery in his state hospital, he will tell you to "take it easy," "not to get excited," that "reforms are being attempted" but that "human nature," this hideout for the lazy, is and remains human nature. You simply cannot do anything about it.

When you ask a mother in the park, who has just spanked her small child cruelly, why she beat the child she will smile in a most kindly manner and tell you: "It's not so bad. The child is used to it." Or: "Well, it's *my* child, isn't it?" But when you tell her the truth she will get angry or even furious. She hates to hear that the child is an individual in itself, and not just "her object." Only rarely will a mother burst into tears and tell you that she is incapable of coping with the child in a different way, that she can find no other way out. But this is very rare, as I said.

Returning home from the park where you witnessed the merciless beating of a two-year-old baby, you meet an important educator, the head of a recognized institution for small children. You tell him of the experience and you ask whether it would be possible to create a special educational force, not exactly a police force, but an organization whose task it would be to patrol the parks and other places where parents and children go, in order to spread knowledge about the harmfulness of beating children, and similar things. Such an organization, I maintain, would, in the course of time, develop into a powerful weapon to fight the emotional pest.

I feel some of my readers shrink back right now, just as the schoolmaster was shrinking away from my suggestion. You might say, just as he said, that one cannot interfere with "such matters," that it would cause trouble etc., etc.

Why is it self evident that armed police can interfere when

you drive badly on the roads, or when you don't clean your sidewalk? Why is it so foreign to the mind of homo normalis that interference with the misuse of parental authority on a broad social basis is infinitely more important than any other kind of interference?

Once I enjoyed great acclaim when, in a large gathering, I suggested that parents should be licensed to have children. They are licensed to embrace each other, though a sexual embrace of two people of different sex who love each other should be nobody's business. But where the very existence of the whole social structure and functioning is at stake, homo normalis does not understand.

This example teaches us that homo normalis tends to promote and to defend most vigorously such regulations which do not touch his emotional core. He shrinks back, gets anxious, or even runs amok, when you touch upon essential problems which involve a special emotional situation.

We can expand our scrutiny of homo normalis from this first attempt to understand his peculiar ways of acting and thinking. To what extent is it true that homo normalis will cooperate in nonessential matters or nonemotional matters, whereas he will surely oppose you, beginning with rigid objections and ending with imprisonment in a state hospital, when you touch on vital, emotionally central questions of living? Let us go a few steps further: You sit in a movie theater. A film is shown featuring animal life. A scene comes up where fish are mating. At this very moment you hear giggling, embarrassed laughter, and sometimes whistling, or even some dirty jokes. I am sure there are few people who have not witnessed such reactions at one time or another during their lifetime.

Another example: A very cruel battle scene is being shown in a newsreel. The whole misery of human history of several millenia is painfully brought into the focus of your mind. A jeep races over the battlefield. It goes over a bump and is thrown high into the air. A good half of the audience bursts into loud laughter. What is it that makes them laugh, you ask yourself. There is nothing comical about a jeep being nearly thrown over by a bump. It is still less funny that the soldiers

in it are in danger of being killed in an accident instead of by bullets. Every single person in this audience has a father or a brother or a son or a boyfriend on the battlefield. He may be the one right now in this jeep. You don't know, because the jeep is racing away from you. Why do they laugh? If you are a homo normalis you will say simply and plainly that it was funny, or if you are more serious, that "people are that way," or "Why shouldn't they laugh? Are we not living in a free country? We are not in Germany where you cannot laugh freely!" Only a few people will tell you: "Well, they just want to get away from the cruel war scenes, I guess." But nobody will tell you why people are "that way," or why a jumping jeep appears funny to them, or *why* people try to get away from the most cruel issue that devastates their lives. The same father or mother who gives you these answers will spank or scold a child when it plays with father's shoes or mother's necklace.

The sharp contradiction in behavior is quite obvious. It is a major problem of human nature. Logically, most of the world's cruel problems could be solved if the reaction of the average homo normalis would be just the opposite, if he could get mad at the jumping jeep and laugh at the child who plays with the shoes or the necklace. In other words, the reaction of homo normalis in such situations is clearly upside down, i.e., irrational.

The well-trained and serious bio-psychiatrist, who does not evade important issues of life, finds many connections between such twisted behavior in the movie theater and behavior he experiences in his office. He recognizes it as a sign of evasiveness. He is very well acquainted with it. He has to destroy the evasiveness if he is to accomplish his medical task with his patient. He must bring his patient to the point where he overcomes his attitude of dodging issues and gains the ability to face vital facts. But we are well aware of a major difficulty in the performance of this task. We know from long experience that the evasiveness will not be overcome until a *basic* change has taken place in our homo normalis. We also know that homo normalis will fight tooth and nail against this basic change. Homo normalis will come to you as a patient suffering from all kinds

of troubles, mental as well as physical, in order to recognize and to remove their source and mechanisms. He will cooperate as long as his psychiatrist deals with "most interesting" dreams and "amazing unconscious mechanisms." He will even cooperate and become enthusiastic when the psychiatrist succeeds in breaking down a part of his muscular armor. He will feel relieved, happy, and full of hope that he will "reach full orgasmic potency." If you are experienced as an orgone therapist, you will warn him not to become too optimistic. You will tell him that the highest hurdle is still ahead, and that some people are quite incapable of jumping over it.

The patient approaches this major obstacle with the expectations of a baby or the belief of a mystic. He trusts you, assures you of his loyalty and love. He enjoys every step on the way to the obstacle where he is bound to turn out to be your bitter enemy. As long as you work on his stiffened facial expression and, lower down, on the emotions held back in his chest, he will be happy. When you reach the point where the diaphragmatic block is to be dissolved, he will harden. When you make him soft again and go further, he will begin to vomit. The diaphragm has become loose. He can breathe freely and is "already a changed human being." You again caution him against overenthusiasm, and you proceed further down. The closer you come to his genital region, the harder it is to break down the armoring. The patient might tell you at this phase of the work that he is worse again, that he cannot sleep, and that he went to "see an allergist to find out about his trouble." You succeed in convincing him that he is afraid of yielding to his deepest longing, to freedom in his pelvis. You know from experience that there is no neurosis without orgasmic impotence, and no orgasmic impotence without a stiffened or retracted pelvis. You can see this biological mutilation of the human animal everywhere on the street. You know that the immobilized and retracted pelvis is the core of the trouble of the animal, man. It is the source of his sexual troubles and of most marital unhappiness, the source of his eternal longing for happiness, which cannot be fulfilled, and his mystical, as well as brutal, emotional structure.

You try with all your skill to accomplish your medical or

educational task. You succeed for the first time in mobilizing a spontaneous motion in the stiffened pelvis. But you are mistaken if you think that the patient will now turn friendly and cooperative again, that he will get hold of the longed-for motion, and carry it further. On the contrary, his evasiveness becomes more acute than ever. You realize once more that the character trait of evasiveness is based on the deeply rooted *evasive attitude towards one's own genital function*. This is a generally valid and firmly established fact. This patient and all other patients, without exception, evade the main issue of their life. They evade it with all means and in the most complicated manner. It is a major part of your profession as an orgone therapist to know the ways and means of evasion of the *main issue*. You can master this basic evasiveness in your medical treatment room to a greater or lesser extent, depending on your experience. Here you are the factual authority. The patient came to you and not you to him. You proved to him in an irrefutable manner that you were right, from the facial armoring down to the armoring in the pelvis. But even having succeeded so far and being a "recognized authority" you are in danger of failing "further down." This place "further down" is like an unconquerable fortress. Your patient wants you to storm it, and yet not to touch it. He curses you when you fail to establish his capacity for happiness, but he curses you more when you seem to succeed in establishing it. There is, in my experience of nearly 30 years of psychiatric work, no other physical and emotional spot in the whole organism which is as dangerous to deal with as the genital region. You cannot, by any means, take the patient's fortress by storm. You cannot force spontaneous behavior. The patient has to overcome his terror of spontaneity, but it must be accomplished slowly, step by step. He must learn in a most painful way to deal with the *main issue*, and to stop evading it as he did all through his lifetime. First of all, he must overcome the characterological reactions which he had developed through the years to fight off the *main issue*, to deceive himself and the whole world about it *not* being the main issue.

We shall come back to these reactions in a different context. At present, we have to keep well in mind that the *core* of all

mental disease is anxiety and even terror of the natural spontaneous movement of the genitals. This has nothing to do with morals, but only with biopathology.

I was describing the typical reactions of patients who come for help in connection with their biopsychic troubles. The next logical question is the following: Is this fact, the *genital* meaning of evasiveness, valid only in the realm of clinical medicine? Or is it also valid in the realms of everyday, so-called normal life? And if it is valid also here, how far-reaching is its influence in social life, e.g., does genital anxiety and consequently characterological evasiveness govern the meetings of our diplomats too?

The reader will surely have felt more or less embarrassed at this question. I was prepared to meet the universal evasiveness when I asked it. The evasiveness will appear in different disguises at this point. One will ask "what in heaven's name" the diplomatic conference has to do with the medical office of an orgone therapist. Another homo normalis will ask why I do not stick to my job as a "muscle pincher," why I meddle in affairs of state. A third homo normalis will ask, as he has asked many times before, whether it was not already proved that the "sexual theory of the neurosis," was wrong, or exaggerated, that "there are *other* important things in life, and that Freud himself had withdrawn his libido theory some twenty years ago.

I am only predicting what homo normalis will say to my statements without discussing it. I could easily prove to any open mind that the diplomat at the conference table is mostly, with very few exceptions, a homo normalis himself who evades the homo animalis in his organism. I could reprint at this point any of the long drawn out meetings of the UN where the main issue is never, never mentioned, and where everybody makes everybody else believe that he does not know the main issue. I could also prove easily to any honest mind that my job as a "muscle pincher" is highly regarded in many circles and that it will outlast any of the present day programs or resolutions of any association of homo normalis. I could also prove that this, in itself, is widely known. At this point, homo normalis, e.g., a free-lance writer (by accident and not by talent) might call the

police and the state authority for help, and in order to get a sensational story into the newspapers of progressive homines normales. I could equally demonstrate the fact that it was homo normalis again who spread the gospel that Freud himself had withdrawn his original libido theory, although there is no grain of truth in it. I could, furthermore, prove to the satisfaction of any well-trained psychiatrist, who prefers to be a good doctor to being a homo normalis, that it was precisely the latter who forced Sigmund Freud to introduce a second theory, besides the libido theory, in order to keep the swelling flock of normal and well-adjusted analysts within the association of psychoanalysis.

I would not evade the trouble of writing a whole book on each of these contentions if I could hope to meet rational judgment. But it is, unfortunately, one of the main miseries of our time, and a sure consequence of the general evasiveness on the part of all normal human beings, that it does not help to prove things when, not the truth, but the keeping up of the status quo is at stake. There is no limit to evasive argumentation, and no means to overcome it, except in the doctor's office.

Let me come back now to the question of whether neurotic evasiveness is prevalent in everyday human life, and how far this goes. My answer to this question is not a guess. I did not spend my life in my medical office overcoming armoring in individual patients. When making a fairly good living was secured, I spent most of my time in social mental hygiene. I had to deal with medical officials of ministries of health and education, with party officials from the extreme right to the extreme left, with educators, and doctors, and social workers, in many countries and over a period of decades. I can assure the serious reader, though I feel helpless in the face of the reader who takes everything lightly, that there is no difference between a conservative schoolmaster and a communist party official in matters of the main issue. Neither are there any class boundaries in this respect between the east side and the west side of New York or Berlin or Vienna. Only the ways and means of evasion are different. Some promise to shoot you, and others don't want to take part in public demonstrations of contested experiments. The evasiveness varies with social standing and political belief. But there

is always the basic fact of evading the main issue, be it orgasmic potency of the masses, be it true democracy, or the discovery of orgone energy.

The answer to this question whether the neurotic symptom also governs everyday life is strictly and unequivocally *yes*. The so-called man in the street, this free-for-all hook-on of all kinds of politiciandom, does not evade the main issue when you talk to him frankly and when you show him that you know his troubles and that you understand him well and honestly. But he will distrust you deeply until you have proved your sincerity and frankness. Otherwise he will avoid you, too, and he will evade the main issue as everybody else does, in order not to be classified as not belonging to the mass of homines normales.

Simple working people are generally more understanding and have a more open attitude in these matters. But their economic misery under bad social conditions is apt to turn their inner freedom into a perverted and brutal kind of behavior. And the pressure of official evasiveness is so strong and devastating that nobody dares to speak out frankly who has not first secured a high social position. But then, he mostly forgets what he once had intended to say. I would like to condense the facts into one general statement: *The so-called common people know the truth better than their leaders. But they are also more afraid and much too oppressed by their own mental and emotional troubles to utter the truth they know.* It is a most distressing fact and a major element of human misery that millions of people know the truth better than the "higher-ups" and they believe, in a typical manner, that what they know could not be the real truth as compared with the truths proclaimed by the authorities.

But, in general, everybody seems to know the truth about the root of the evil. Some time ago, after years of struggle with the politician within me, I wrote down a speech I would have liked to address to the little man, a speech in which I told him all the truth about himself and his responsibility for the social misery.* But I did not dare to make this speech public. The core of it was the evasion in the little man's average behavior in

*Cf. Reich, *Listen, Little Man!*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1974 [Eds.]

social matters. When I wrote the speech I was thinking about the "G I" as he is pictured in bad films, making silly jokes, pretending to be humorous when longing for his home is eating him up, giggling at the pin-up girl on the wall when he is starving for a loving embrace with his real girl friend. That's the way the military sees him and wants him to be. And that's the way he really is when he "adjusts to society" like a good boy. Homo normalis does not take anything seriously. He treats things humorously. He is portrayed as dying on the battlefield with a dirty or a jovial joke on his lips. He does not, as he does in reality, cry or pray to God or to his mother to help him; he does not feel dulled and like a machine when shooting or being shot at; he just continues to make jokes. Thus he evades the solemnity which, once painfully felt by all GI's of the world, would make a sudden end to all wars and warmakers.

The evasion of truth is a habit, like sleeping or eating. Yet, there was an American film where somebody said: "There is only one thing no politician can do anything about, and that is the perfect truth." Why, then, does nobody tell the perfect truth? Millions and millions of people saw this film, heard these words, knew they were true. And yet nobody tells the truth. Everybody competes with everybody else in evading the truth.

Let us look at a few simple truths, truths that everybody knows more or less clearly, truths which everybody avoids mentioning.

The "common man," the "man on the street," the "people" are taking over the government of this society. There is no doubt about this, and nobody with clear senses will deny it. Everybody knows too that the average common and "little man" brings with him a terrible burden of characteristics which he inherited through the centuries in his oppressed social position. Hunger and misery and sexual devastation of character do not make for leadership. The "age of the common, little man" is dawning, so the politicians say, while gathering their popular votes. But I never heard a politician tell the little man the truth about himself. He is acclaimed as the bearer of society, as the toiling man, the hungry man, the war hero, the good patriot, the pillar of civilization, but nobody dares to tell him what he really is. A

burst of political word-bullets, or real bullets (It happened!) would instantly kill the one who would dare to break the silent rule that this subject should be evaded. This rule acts like an underhand agreement among all kinds of politicians.

But, says the "perfect truth," how can a man take responsibility for his own existence and the existence of society if he knows nothing about himself? How should he govern the process of human life if nobody teaches him how to look at himself? If you look around for awhile you find that the "little man," the common man, who is becoming the ruler of the world, has no friends in this world. When a "proletarian" diplomat has to travel to a meeting in Paris, his friends tell him, no doubt, how to dress, how to behave, how to speak cautiously, how not to be duped by the well-trained "capitalist" diplomats, and they tell him not to speak of the revolutionary proletariat but of the Slavic fatherland, and so forth. He has friends who try to fit his personality for the task ahead. Nobody does the same with the little "common man on the street." It is true he is taught not to spit in the subway, not to smoke in the orchestra of the movie theater, under penalty of so and so or such and such or both. He is taught to work on the lathe or the counting machine, to supervise work of others, or to drive on the right side of the road. All this is important and as it should be. But nobody in the home or the school teaches him how to govern himself and how to act as an indispensable worker in vitally necessary fields of work. Did you ever listen to the jokes the little man makes about himself on the radio? He seems to know himself well, but he does nothing, and nobody else does anything, to overcome just that which makes for good jokes on the radio. Nobody dares to tell the perfect truth about the little man. There is a good reason for this. It may cost you your life. So everybody is eager to evade this basic and most important truth.

Take another evasion: We are voting in a free democracy on everything. We elect our presidents and secretaries; we vote on the budget and on teachers' salaries; we vote on prohibition of alcohol in the name of morality; we vote on the procedure in court and in the United Nations; we vote right and left and everywhere. Did you ever hear a statesman anywhere in this

world suggest that we should vote on whether we wish to go to war or not? You will object to this, saying that Congress or Parliament votes on war. Yes, this is true. But when the little man elected his representative he had no idea that he gave his life away into the hands of the House of Representatives. He voted for his congressman in order to get protection as a farmer, a worker, a citizen. There was no mention of war when he voted. This fact sounds strange, doesn't it? But it is true. It would be a matter of "perfect truth" to ask the voters during election campaigns whether or not they delegate their right to go to war.

I know well what homo normalis is going to say now. If he is decent, he will say that war is an emergency situation, that it would be impossible, and that it would only help the aggressor if the question of war would be left up to the people who suffer from it and contribute most to it. If he is a master of evasion, he will say that the State has its own rights, forgetting that our constitution makes the State the servant of the people. Or he will say that voting on war is impossible when the dictators do not bother to vote on war. He overlooks the fact that a serious suggestion for an obligatory voting on wars would drive away the people from the dictators and warmakers of all black or red fatherlands of the world. Should our homo normalis be most true to his structure, he will say that I am a "red" or a "foreigner" or "unAmerican," that I should keep my mouth shut on such holy questions of "the nation" as wars, lest I be put in prison or shot. The perfect counter truth to this is again that the democratic right to the free expression of opinion was not meant for homines normales alone but for other people too; that it was meant to promote and not to inhibit opinions and actions which enhance progress in the self rule of people. It is a perfect, clean, and penetrating truth that in order to avoid wars, as the core of life problems is being avoided, the right of the people to vote on war should be established everywhere. I would love to see a dictator in a world situation where all other countries are calling their populations to the polls to vote on war. Is there any greater force in this world to check a good-for-nothing liberator? He can only prevail and out-evade as long as you compete with him in formalities and

evasions. He will collapse like a house built of tinder if you make him face the perfect truth. You can try it and convince yourself of the reality of this force.

You will ask what makes me so sure since I have never directed wars or diplomatic meetings. What makes me so sure is my knowledge of human character, its contradictions, and its weak spots where the dictator usually hooks on his pledges at times of liberation. What makes me so sure, furthermore, is the fact that I overcame most dangerous situations by simply telling the truth. My experience taught me that you tumble instantly when you deviate from the truth once you have started to tell it. Only where lie meets lie, the biggest lie prevails. The big question is not whether or not a little truth can destroy the big lie as, according to religious history, little David killed the giant. The big question is rather why this weapon is not being used wherever decent people meet to avert the impending disaster. The greatest difficulty in answering this question is the fact that people are generally unaware of the mechanisms which cause the evasion of truth.

It is not that the truth is not known or that it is not utterable. Everybody knows the truth, and everybody could tell it. The trouble is that the whole structure of present human society and character is geared to the evasion of the core of vital problems. Take another example of simple truth to illustrate what I have said just now:

Every human soul knows from its own bitter experience the agonies of puberty, when natural sexual satisfaction is prohibited. There is no exception to this statement, based on many thousands of medical experiences. The head of every school knows it, even if he or she has become totally rigid. The adolescents know it from their immediate suffering. The churchman knows it, as does the party official, the doctor around the corner, and the head of the mental hygiene clinic. Yet, nobody mentions it. There are few situations in life which demonstrate more evasiveness than the problem of puberty. Out of their sexual anguish, boys of fourteen kill little girls of four, afraid they might tell that the boys had attacked them sexually. Everybody knows why the boy attacked and why he killed the little girl afterwards.

He was bursting with sexual feeling. Grownup men who went through the hell of puberty become criminal sexual offenders and go to jail for life or to the electric chair. Everybody knows why, and nobody tells the truth. It is not because it would be so dangerous to tell this truth. I have not been hanged yet—to the regret of many liberators—despite the fact that I was the first to tell this truth in writings and speeches all over Europe more than eighteen years ago, when the danger was much greater than today. On the contrary, much of the admiration and acclaim which is bestowed on my work is due to the telling of this truth. *It is a matter of course, and it would be the solution to most problems of so-called juvenile delinquency, if the boys and girls in puberty would not suffer from sexual stasis and thus from frustration, perversion of their emotions, and sadism. Puberty should be the age of the greatest sexual happiness.*

Right now you are mixing up the pornography of the magazines on the newstands with blossoming human love in puberty, my dear reader. You are shrinking away and into yourself because you mix up two things which are mutually exclusive. You do not hear youth marching through the street in military step shouting loud, as I heard them shout: "We want women! We want women!" You do not have an eye for all the sexual dirt around you. But you get excited when the only remedy to these evils is being mentioned.

Well, here is our well known evasion of the *main thing* again. It is not the fault of man that he evades the issue; he was brought up to do so. But I claim it is his *responsibility* to stop evading the main issues. And it is *your* fault when the ministers and the judges and the educators and your medical doctors and other authorities evade the main issue, preferring to talk about something else. The situation is so bad with regard to this general evasiveness that even my good friend A.S. Neill does not dare to speak out frankly because he has a school to protect. But he is frank to tell you that he must avoid the issue. And that is your fault, and only yours. You would understand him and acclaim him if he told you the truth, but you would do nothing at all to protect him, or me, when the emotional pest would indict us for tax evasion, since it could not face us openly

on this question. And another truth that is known all over the world is that you are indicted for some ugly crime, "framed," as one says in America, when the main issue must be avoided.

It is hard for *homo normalis* to believe that the problem of adolescent sexual starvation is closely related to organic medicine, as well as with the formalities of the United Nations. Yet, it is true that the human being will react in all other life situations just as he has learned or was forced to react in his childhood or puberty to his sexual urge. Every good psychiatrist knows that; the others only pretend not to know it. The evasiveness in the character of the boy who was shivering with anxiety after masturbating, for fear of being detected, is well known. You can read it in his face; he avoids your eyes. His words avoid what he wants to say. He will always go round about the main thing. The evasiveness has become "structuralized," as we say in clinical psychiatry. *Homo normalis* is unable to act differently and consequently directness or frankness will shock him, because it touches upon his own vulnerability. We *know* (there is no guessing about it any more and no "difference of opinion") that the evasion of the main issue of childhood and puberty remains as characterological evasiveness all through one's lifetime. Since you cannot find five human beings in a thousand who have not gone through this school of evasiveness, is it any wonder that evasiveness has become the most outstanding feature in human intercourse? The evasiveness in drawing conclusions and connecting things properly goes very far. On the one hand, the experiences of bio-psychiatry are acknowledged as true. On the other, no connection is being established between this knowledge and the general social behavior of man. *Homo normalis* is triumphantly at work again: "You just do not mention such things!" And he goes on dying for the "higher values" in life.

The worker in the factory avoids taking or claiming his share of responsibility for the manufacture and distribution of goods. The farmer avoids taking responsibility for the prevention of hunger anywhere in the world. The physician avoids seeing the good results of physical orgone therapy, although the patient who was helped lives right around the corner and the physician

knows exactly what has happened. The physicist who visits my laboratory is afraid to sign the visitors' log lest he be involved in the burning dispute about cosmic energy. The atomic physicist avoids recognizing the social consequences of his atomic bomb *before* building it, and he avoids admitting that he failed terribly *after* the military has taken over his product. He still avoids reading the literature on cosmic orgone energy, though he is well-read in other matters. Thus he misses with accuracy the healing effects of natural orgone which he desperately tries to find in his "nuclear energy." When you prove the existence of a constant temperature difference with reference to the orgone accumulator, he rightly says it's a "bomb in physics." This is true, because it upsets the second law of thermodynamics and explains animal heat. But he avoids putting his authority behind it, as he promised to do, and listens to another physicist who succeeds, without proof, in explaining away the difference in temperature.* This is the way honest scientists evade the main issue.

The evasion of the main issue in today's human thinking is so thoroughly engraved in his structure that homo normalis remains unyielding even where his very life and future is at stake. The terror of mentioning the main thing ("What will the aunt's husband, the director of the research council, or the physics division of University X. say?") is so great that even his own life counts less than appeasement. Homo normalis works skillfully and conscientiously in his shop, his factory, his office, his school. He feels and lives the mutual interdependence of all workers in all professions every second of his toiling existence. Yet, when you show him this interdependence, this mutual, and factual interpersonal relationship, he will ask you in astonishment whether you are joking. He does not understand, and he seems to refuse to understand what is going on right before his own eyes: *natural work democracy*. Having split up his political existence into a life as a worker and a life as homo normalis or sapiens or as a "patriot" or a "citizen" or a "taxpayer" or a "voter," he has become incapable of recognizing his own

*Reich refers here to his experience with Albert Einstein. See Reich, *The Einstein Affair*, Orgone Institute Press, 1953. [Eds.]

value and responsibility as the bearer of society. Therefore, the natural work-democratic process which governs all society, with or without politicians, and which is the very essence of his daily toil, is to him an "idea," a "good" or a "bad" new "program." It is not something alive, actually functioning, all-embracing, and basic. It becomes an "idea." No wonder! *Homo normalis* has tried to live on "ideas" for millenia without success. Therefore he is always on the lookout for *new* ideas.

But I claim that every idea of the past which dealt with the problems of human interrelations was a *good* idea. Here, the characteristic evasion of the main issue comes in again. The idea which brought about the French revolution was good and capable of development. Thousands gave their lives to realize it. The idea which was at the beginning of constitutional society, instead of feudal monarchy, was good wherever it appeared, in Germany, as well as in Austria, in England, as well as in Russia. The idea which created the American constitution was an excellent one, full of hope for the future. It only waited to be developed and lived practically. The basic idea which led to the Russian revolution was good, pointing toward a true self-governing democracy. *Homo normalis* is still on the lookout for better and better ideas. He fabricates new programs, manifestos, platforms, continuously, with an admirable diligence. He is steadfast in his conviction that human society could and would become a better one, a peaceful one, where no more wars would be prepared in the name of "peace."

I guess you feel the same uneasiness as I do when you hear generals who tested the effects of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima talk about the peaceful purposes of rocket planes. What a perfect evasion! What uniformity in the acceptance of a big, generally known lie. And nobody, not a single soul, says anything about it. Is it malice? Is it stupidity? Is it deliberate betrayal of the human race? I do not think it is. I am inclined to believe that the peace talks are meant honestly. The trouble is that, at the same time, the evasion of the main issue is more persistent than ever. What is the main issue again?

There cannot be any doubt in anybody's mind that war after war will devastate human society as long as the human race as

a whole will stand by as an onlooker and a victim. Someone will ask now: Isn't it true that the Moslems and the Hindus began to slaughter each other as soon as they got their independence? Is it not true, furthermore, that you yourself said that all evil in society is ultimately caused by the human animal himself? If that is true, and it seems true, how then can anyone hope that things will or might change? We realize, our critic will continue, that dictators and emperors could not make wars if the people said NO. But how are you going to make the people say NO? By "organization" and "revolution"? Look at all the popular revolutions of the past. Not one of them has brought light and peace. Things became worse, and not better, the more revolutions took place. Look at Russia: They overthrew the Czar and established a police state far worse than the old Czarism. They overthrew capitalist exploitation, and established the far worse exploitation by the state. They went into their fight with the cry, "Tell it to the people! Let the people decide!", and they closed their borders against any book or journal that might stimulate thinking and free decision in the people. They began by fighting the lie, and they became masters in using it. They received their strength originally from the renouncement of secret diplomacy, and they became masters in secret diplomacy. The original goal was out-organized, out-maneuvered, out-diplomatized, out-policed, out-planned, out-militarized. But they still thrive on the *idea* of the old goal, drowned long ago by statism.

What's the use then of putting up new programs and new social ideas? The answer to this is simple, so simple in fact that you have to resort to the basic characteristic of human structure again in order to grasp why the simplest thing in the world is not being realized, not mentioned, and drowned in verbiage. No new programs and ideas will do the job. Otherwise the old "new ideas and programs" would have done it long ago. Christ's idea would have been sufficient. It was good and decent, full of hope and future. It was killed slowly but surely. The answer is foreign to homo normalis:

Let us return to the good, old freedom programs. Let us ask and try to understand why all these good programs failed. They

failed, and were bound to fail, because homo normalis is utterly incapable of realizing the goal he set himself, to transform a social idea into reality, to get at the main thing, to abolish talking away the main issue, to go to the root of things and to the core of his animal existence, to stop slandering, defaming, hunting, and killing those few lonely individuals who are courageous enough to tell the truth.

Avoiding the truth is the most outstanding feature of homo normalis. The truth was told by a legion of fighters for freedom. I do not have to enumerate who they were. The learned know them, while homo normalis cannot be brought to know or to appreciate them and what they said. Homo normalis wants to admire an idol, a hero, a leader, one who provides the truth for him. But he is utterly incapable of making something real of his enthusiasm. I have experienced much true enthusiasm on the part of people from many countries and backgrounds. But, with a very few exceptions, I waited in vain for somebody to do something. "Why don't you *do* something, write what you believe is true, say what you honestly feel?" This would help. It would be the only real help! The question "Why does nobody do something?" was always there, penetrating, and desperately asked.

Again, with a very few exceptions, nobody does anything because their character structure makes them incapable of getting at the main thing. Read any psychiatric journal or daily newspaper. Listen to any debate. Everybody evades the main issue. Why do they admire Dos Passos, or Strindberg, or Ibsen, Sinclair Lewis, and Upton Sinclair, and so many others for telling it, and why don't they say it themselves?

They are incapable of telling the truth. Their whole life, their education, their home, and their school, as well as their church, taught them to evade the main issue, to go around it, to kill it in debate, and to expel or ostracize the one who tells it. They know the truth as in a mirror. You cannot drink water from a glass in a mirror. And you cannot tell the truth, though you know it, when your character structure is not geared to think, act, live truthfully.

Homo normalis was forced to develop special techniques of

thinking and acting in order to become a "well adjusted" homo normalis. He had to fight down his natural frankness and directness when he was beaten by his father or mother when, at the age of three or four years, he asked innocently why daddy sleeps in mommy's bed. When my boy asked me this question, I told him the full truth. My neighbor, who is otherwise a decent fellow, tells his boy, "Don't ask such questions!" I told my boy that when he becomes bigger he too will sleep with some girl that he loves. I feel you are shrinking away again right now, my dear reader. And that is exactly what I mean when I speak of the structural evasion of the main thing!

There are homines normales who would run to the police right now to rescue my boy from my bad influence. But I say to everybody: When the child is beaten for asking questions and doing natural things which are at the core of its emotional existence, which are basic to life and procreation itself, questions which deal with main issues, then he will avoid main issues all through his lifetime. And I want my boy to stick to the main issue as long as he lives. Otherwise he will become a homo normalis.

It took the world twenty-five years to dare to write in the daily newspapers, as is done today in the USA, that the sexual activities of small children are natural and that their suppression creates hypocrites and characterological weaklings. Truth, and not "sports," will rebuild the human structure. To me, "character" means truthfulness. To homo normalis, it means a stiff body. If you would care to examine the present-day language of education and "ethics" you will find that the majority of the words are designed to lead the child away from his truth, beginning with "sit still" and ending with "little boys don't have to know everything" and "keep your shoulders back and belly in, don't breath through your mouth." Such armoring of the organism, whether you intend it or not, sets the character to evasion of the main thing. This is not a speculation or the famous "matter of opinion." You can have thousands of opinions about one and the same thing. But you refuse to realize that there is always only *one* correct explanation to a given thing or process.

What has all this to do with the social idea and the "new" political program? When you kill the ability in millions of children to ask basic questions and to feel the emotions in their little bodies, when, through the millennia, you insist on massacring them, deadening them ("What will the neighbor say?"), when you continue with a determination, which you lack in main issues, to believe that the pale and quiet child is the healthy one, and the lively, inquisitive, playful child is the eventual bad citizen, then do not blame your congressman for social disasters but only yourself. And if you see a mother beat her boy cruelly for wanting to play or to ask questions and you still keep quiet, then you become responsible for the helplessness of milliards of people in the face of the threat of the atomic bomb.

As a well-adjusted homo normalis you feel that the behavior of the other mother's son is none of your business, that only "authorities" on atomic energy should talk about the atomic bomb, that briefly, "Who am I, to have an opinion?" "Passing the buck" becomes your directive of behavior; "Let George do it" becomes your guiding excuse. You will wait for your congressman to find a new political idea and write a new program. You will do nothing whatsoever to make the American or the French or the Russian democratic constitution work in your everyday life. You will become an empty rebel against all authority. You will always be "against" and never for something. You will be unable to realize that there is only *one* thing to be done to prevent disaster for everybody: *go back to all old and good programs and constitutions; make them work in real life every single hour of the day; stop constructing new wordy programs and building new nuisance political parties; take full responsibility for your convictions, distinguishing the true from the false ones; speak out the truth; use the democratic right of free expression of opinion, not to persecute the truth, but the lie; stop being proud that you are "defending" the democratic constitution against political reaction, but bring about that state of affairs, utterly incomprehensible to homo normalis, where the lie and defamation will have to defend their right to exist against well established organizations of truth; punish the district attor-*

ney who prosecutes the innocent man; execute the judge who sent an innocent man to the electric chair, while now the main issue is being evaded by saying: "Oh, unfortunately, it was only an error of justice."

In order to defend your old, good constitution and to make it work, you will have to defend the real family against the rigid idea of the family. You will have to adjust social living to the needs of our children, and not our children to a dying world. In short, you will have to realize that, for the most part, what you think is wrong is right and vice versa.

This, and similar measures, are the only hope left to us. No führer or general will be able to do the job for you. But try hard to get this point of view across to the people of the Russian fatherland. Otherwise it will remain a one-sided affair and therefore "impractical."

THE COMMON FUNCTIONING PRINCIPLE OF THE CHARACTER STRUCTURE OF HOMO NORMALIS

Homo normalis believes firmly, as did homo sapiens before him, that he is something special in nature, distinguished by his values or his civilization or his machines or his culture. His values and his civilization and his machines and his culture are to his dependence on his own nature and that around him as the rock is to a mountain or a single tree to a forest. Yet homo normalis feels he is special.

We have learned through the decades to pay attention to what irrationalism says and claims, to understand the hidden meaning and, more than that, to search for the rational in the irrational. Our conviction tells us that everybody, the lunatic as well as the fascist, is right somewhere, even if he does not know where he is right. We find ourselves in the peculiar position of acting as an *advocatus diaboli*, taking the side of the evil and the perverted for a long enough time to discover the hidden meaning in the meaningless.*

*This is more than the emotional pest can claim for itself. It evades the meaning even in the meaningful and tries hard to make it senseless or base.

If you act as the devil's attorney for too long a period you may become a devil yourself. Yet you cannot beat a fascist unless you understand where he is, or tries to be, honest. To fight dishonesty with the sword alone will not remove its *raison d'être*. Beating a child for its senseless spite or for cruelty will not change it in the least. You must understand why a child feels compelled to pull the hair out of the tail of a cat, and why it continues to slam the door. Only when you succeed in understanding it will you be able to remove the mechanism. The same applies to social irrationalism. New political parties with new programs won't change anything.

When homo sapiens or homo normalis continues eagerly to call himself special and different from the animal, he may be right somewhere, somehow, though he surely could not tell you where and how he is right, even if he tried. Following up the rationality in his claim, we find to our great surprise that he *is right*, that he *is* something special, he *is* different from the animal. He does indeed differ sharply from all other nature. He does not realize, and he is apt to kill if you force him to realize, that his "specialness" and "being different" is exactly what destroys him. Let us try to grasp the meaning of the "specialness" of homo normalis in the simplest way possible.

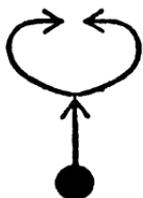
The common denominator of all human irrationalism and of what is special about all homines normales is the armoring of the human organism. Today, 1947, this fact is well established clinically. The armoring of the organism and, consequently, its rigidity and lack of spontaneous motility is what distinguishes the human animal from all other animals. It is at the same time the basic biological aberration which gives homo normalis the *rational* feeling of being different from the animal and special.

In what manner does the armoring of the human animal constitute his peculiarity? What makes the armoring the main deviation from all other biophysical laws? I have written many academic books on this subject, but I find that I have to say it more simply and better.

All nature seems to function according to a law whose main characteristic is the *simultaneity* of unity and diversity, of totality and individuality. Wherever one looks at forms or processes

of nature, this seems to be valid, although I cannot enter the complicated argumentation about the functional law in this paper. Orgone biophysics is based on this principle of research. It is fundamentally different from the mechanical as well as the mystical methods of approach to the functioning of nature.

The main point of the argument is the following: Nowhere in all of nature, except in man, will you find *repression* of natural drives. Nowhere in nature is there anything like the peculiar mechanism which came to be called in orgonomy "emotional blocking" and "muscular armoring." The schema which depicts the functional working of nature looks like this:



It is already well-known to our readers and students. It says in simple terms that each natural function is built of three basic elements which are at work at *the same time*, though they seem to contradict each other. Each function, be it large or small, important or unimportant, has a *common principle*. *This common principle of functioning governs every single variation as well as the whole.*

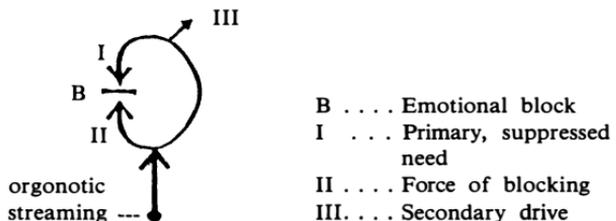
BIOLOGICAL PULSATION is such a common functioning principle in all living matter. Whatever the variation in form, size, location, conditions of living may be, the basic principle of pulsation remains the same. The pulsation may be slow or fast, extensive or narrow, but it is, and always remains, pulsation that constitutes the basic characteristic of living substance.

The discharge of pent-up biological energy through several successive total contractions of the organism is another common or basic principle of the living, including man. But he differs from all other living nature in that he is the only animal which blocked the natural discharge of biological energy. Since the life system continues to produce energy and the need for discharge, culture or no culture, white or black, German or Russian, dicta-

tor or democrat, Catholic or Jew, the production of bioenergy is the common principle of all animals, including man. Man, however, distinguishes himself and becomes something special in that he *prevents* natural energy discharge by becoming rigid in his muscles and tissues. This fact has an immediate consequence which develops into the common principle of all specifically "human" reactions.

On their way outward toward expression and action the biological urges invariably meet a *wall* wherever armoring has occurred. The sharp contradiction between armor and natural urge splits the original unity of the human organism into two distinctly opposite and antagonistic parts of its personality. The emotional block itself derives its strength, as character analysis has abundantly shown, from the very emotions and natural urges which are being bound up by the block. This is the most peculiar and, one might say, the most incredible of all facts: the block itself is built of the same stuff as that which is being blocked. No such thing can be found anywhere else in nature. When a mountain stream runs down a hill, it may encounter a large rock which impedes the flow of the water. But never will water change in such a manner that it will impede its own course. Yet this is exactly what happens with human emotions. The sadist will develop a block against sadistic impulses in the form of exaggerated pity. The perverse human being will develop a brutal moralism against perversion out of his own perverted drives. This fact is firmly established and no cursing or shooting will change it in the least.

Are sadism and perversion to be found anywhere in nature other than in man? The answer is a resounding NO. In order to understand the existence or development of so-called *secondary*, unnatural drives, we must draw a schema of the specific human functioning:



This schema depicts the block as well as the energy flow out of which it continuously derives its strength. The original natural drive, be it the urge to suck in a newborn baby or the genital urge in a four or fourteen-year-old child, splits up under the impact of social suppression brought about by parents and other agents of the society of homo normalis. This splitting of a function under the impact of an outer force is nothing special. It happens in nature all the time. As a matter of fact, all natural development and functioning seems to follow the law of the splitting of one function into two variations, as for instance in the female egg when it is excited by the male sperm. The function of splitting-up seems to be general, even where outer forces do not compel it. The nervous system and the vascular system of the animal organism split up continuously until the organism takes the shape of a widely branched tree. A single seed of a flower or a tree splits up into opposite directions, into root and stem, as soon as it soaks up water. Therefore, the splitting up of the natural flow of bioenergy in the human animal cannot be regarded as pathological. *All* human emotions are results of this splitting of a unitary stem; they are variations of the same common functioning principle.

What is specifically human, however, and what is to become the central mechanism of the emotional block and armoring in homo normalis, what, in other words, constitutes the basic difference between homo animalis and homo normalis, is the *reversal* of the flow of bioenergy at B (block) and the immobilization of the original biological motility of the organism. You can already see this immobilization in newborn babies who become quiet, pale, lifeless. They are looked upon as "normal," "well-behaved" babies. Thus, my assertions are not just opinions or theories; they only describe what you can see in the streets and the nurseries with your own eyes.

Now we can understand better the rationality in the claim of homo normalis that he is "different" and "special." He is right, only he does not know exactly what he is talking about. He *feels* himself different; he *is* different and he *acts* different than the rest of nature. We do not scrutinize the usefulness or the

uselessness of this being different. We only state the fact that homo normalis is right in saying that he is different.

Once the inner emotional split is established, once the emotional block functions, the basic, common functioning principle is at work that, from now on, throughout the life of homo normalis and through all the human generations which will be influenced by homo normalis, will determine his thinking, acting, feeling, judging, his morals, and his ways of love, his forms of hate and pity.

