



FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

ON WORKING ENERGETICALLY

Part I

Meaning and Expression

Will Davis





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Meaning and Expression

People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.

Joseph Campbell

This is the first of two papers that attempts to define what it means to work therapeutically from a Reichian energetic perspective. The intention in each paper is to distinguish between two approaches in depth psychotherapy; an orgonomic functional approach and a traditional psychological approach. The purpose of this paper is to clarify these differences by comparing Reich's understanding of natural functioning and its implications for human behavior with more traditional psychological approaches which use interpretation and meaning in order to understand behavior.

Toward the end of his life, Reich's writings strongly indicated how he understood his discoveries, and how this put an entirely different emphasis on therapy compared with a classical psychological understanding. Dreams, memories, personal histories and interpretation now had a revised position in his work. Due to his discoveries, and the resultant development of both technique and theory, he came to see that his work could no longer be considered psychology as it had been understood up to this point. In the Orgone Energy Bulletin he writes:

“Psychology analyses, breaks down experiences and conflicts and traces them back to earlier, historically important experiences. Present day ideas and instinctual goals result in an understandable fashion from earlier or repressed ideas and instinctual goals. Functional orgonomy does not break down experiences, it does not operate with the association of ideas, but directly, with instinctual energies which it loosens from characterological and muscular blocks and allows to stream freely again. It is not concerned with what experiences have led to the block.”(Reich, 1950)

This statement makes clear the differences among Reich's approach, psychology generally, and psychoanalysis specifically. He points out early in *Function of the Orgasm* that the psychoanalysts were not making clear differentiations between the manifestations of the energetic process, in this case the unconscious, and the energetic process itself, the libido. For him, as well as for Freud, the energetic process is unknowable directly. One could not know the energy directly, one could only know, and therefore only work with, the manifestations - and symptoms - of a deeper, more primary process.

“One could not operate with the id, which was not tangible, not with the super-ego, which was only a construction. Nor with the unconscious in the narrow sense, because as Freud correctly pointed out, it was tangible only in its conscious derivatives. ...Much of the confusion was due to the fact that they failed to differentiate between (sic) theory, hypothetical construction and practically visible facts, and to their belief that they were working directly with the unconscious. These errors blocked the way to an exploration of the vegetative nature of the id, and consequently, the access to the biological basis of psychic functioning. (Reich, 1967)”



The confusion was compounded by this misunderstanding. Not seeing the biological basis of psychic functioning, the analysts had a tendency towards the "psychologizing of the somatic".

"Freud psychologized biology when he assumed biological 'tendencies', i.e. forces with this or that 'intention'. ... "According to this concept, practically all physical diseases were due to unconscious wishes or fears. Thus, one acquired cancer, 'in order to ...', one perished from tuberculosis because one unconsciously wished to..., etc." (Reich, 1967)

Reich further establishes the difference between this understanding of human functioning (and human nature) with his own concepts when he writes:

"Certainly no 'wish' in the current sense could conceivably produce deep organic changes. The 'wish' had to be comprehended on a deeper level than it could by psychoanalytic psychology. Everything pointed to deep lying biological processes of which the 'unconscious wish' could be no more than an expression." (Emphasis added, Reich, 1967)

As a result psychoanalysts and psychologists could not appreciate the distinction Reich was making. Forty-five years later this unacknowledged distinction continues in both psychoanalysis and in psychology in general. There can be no doubt that psychoanalysis has jettisoned the energy concept - the libido - that was such a central construct in the early classical period. Without an energetic foundation, or any other formulation that would ground them in the body, they are left with no choice but to psychologize and interpret. In The Sexual Body Arthur Efron comments on the increasing emphasis being placed on psychic material at the expense of the energetic (libido) in the form of the physical body of sexuality.

"As one of the most respected among psychoanalytic theorists has put it, in the review of the phases of psychoanalytic theory, 'Classical psychoanalysis is a moral psychology...'. By 1968, when Guntrip had published his statement, theoretical emphasis had shifted to the ego, in a move that Guntrip and many others recognized as a step away from the instinctual or the biological core of the classical theory. The libido had become passe. The move, in other words, was toward the human mind as the root metaphor of psychoanalytic psychology, in a way that de-emphasized the body and with it sexuality.

Today ego psychology is out of fashion, but the shift toward mind and away from the sexual body continues. I have heard the distinguished analyst and theorist Otto Kernberg, declare at the outset of a presentation ... that he could begin his presentation only if it were understood that psychoanalysis as he defines it is within the Cartesian metaphysical framework, the cogito. Obviously the body and sexuality could not be considered central." (Efron, 1985)

Yet analysts continue to be haunted by the ghost of their energetic past. The information processing theory of Emanuel Peterfreund (1971) is "a very thorough attempt to remove psychoanalytic thought from its base in sexual drive theory and from its dependence on a theory of sexual energy, the libido" (Efron, 1985). But even "information" needs to be moved and what moves it, and how it is moved becomes a problem. Unavoidably, the language used is filled with metaphorical energetic terminology, and no clear cut state results.

"In fact, he (Peterfreund) prevents asking himself pertinent questions about energy and the mind by first constructing a dichotomy between 'physical energy', which is lawful, biologically sound, confirmed and scientifically respectable, and a 'psychic energy' which is arbitrary, conceptually chaotic, unobservable and not accepted by modern biology." ... it is significant that Otto Kernberg, in his own reformulation of a psychoanalytic model of the human mind, is led to introduce certain mysterious entities which he labels 'affect dispositions' to account for the fact that the processes of object-relations have got to be energized by some force else they do not function as processes". (Efron, 1985)



It appears that Kernberg's attempt to deny an underlying energetic process by evoking 'mysterious entities' is even more fantastic than what he is trying to avoid. As Reich pointed out, mysticism is the last resort to fill the gaps in mechanistic thinking.

This continued denial of Reich's biologically based understanding of human functioning is in direct contradiction to recent research by investigators either unaware of or indifferent to Reich. In a major study showing the relation of parent/child contact and resultant aggressive behavior, James Prescott states that in the social sciences in general and in psychoanalysis specifically, the concept of somatosensory contact as a major developmental factor is largely missing. And that his findings are "fully supportive of the position taken and advocated by Wilhelm Reich in *The Function of the Orgasm*." As Efron goes on to point out, the same is true for a new understanding of energy production and transfer on the cellular level.

"In 1984, a new theory of how cells transfer energy was reported by Samuel Besman of U.S.C. The old theory held that energy is carried throughout cell production by a compound called adenosine triphosphate, or ATP. New evidence however suggest that for brain, heart and muscle cells, where energy requirements are comparatively high, a special substance called creatine, produced in the liver is the effective carrier. While ATP remains at the local cell site where it is produced, creatine moves in a circular pattern, from mitochondria to the wall of a muscle fiber and back again to the mitochondria where it acquires more of the energy molecule...1 This micro-pattern of energy movement is affected by macro-movement of the organism as a whole: 'Exercise stimulates energy production, Dr. Besman said ..."This suggests that chronic energy blockage in the organism such as Reich described under the heading of 'armor' ... are connected with decreased energy production in the body, potentially down to the level of the cell.'"(Efron, 1985)

Considering the history of psychoanalysis, with Reich's relationship to it giving the whole matter a special flavor, it is not surprising that the above described differences exist. What is surprising is how the newer therapies, and especially those who acknowledge a debt to Reich, have not successfully integrated biophysical functioning into their formulation. Alexander Lowen's *Bioenergetics* is certainly the best known of all the neo-Reichian therapies. Yet in 1958, in *The Language of the Body*, he is discussing the "neurotic equilibrium" in terms of a "displaced energy" and uses the word libido to describe this process. He discusses energy only in terms of mechanical energy, as it was understood before Reich's work.

"Here again, we have references to basic physical laws, movement involves the discharge of energy and action equals reaction." ... "all living processes can be reduced to manifestations of this bioenergy"... yet, "It is not important at this point to know the final form of this basic energy."(Lowen, 1958)

Almost twenty years later, writing in the "Energy Concepts", chapter of *Bioenergetics*, his definitive work, he states that

"Bioenergetics is, as I have emphasized, the study of the human personality in terms of the energetic processes of the body".

He then mentions electrical energy, Reich's orgone and the Chinese concept of yin and yang (mistakenly representing yin and yang as two separate energies). Incredibly he then goes on to state:

"I do not think it is important for this study - (the study of human personality in terms of the energetic processes) - to determine what the energy actually is." (Emphasis added, Lowen, 1975).



The same is true of Hakomi Therapy by Ron Kurtz. In this excellent synthesis of a broad range of new developments in the modern therapeutic field, including as well more arcane sources, he puts the biological on a par with interpersonal relations and symbolic material.

"Biological needs and inheritances are considered as part of the overall approach, but the therapy does not focus on them." Core material is "acquired beliefs, especially about self and others, intense memories ... and a lot of unexamined assumptions, attitudes and habits. ... People organize their behavior perceptions, values, judgments, and the way they use their bodies under the influence of this core material". (Hakomi Therapy, 1983)

One would be hard pressed to dispute the above statement. The reason for referring to both Hakomi and Bioenergetics is neither to prove them wrong, nor ineffective. The point is that this work remains "psychology" as Reich defined it in the opening quotation. Lowen's references in Language of the Body consists of eighteen to Freud and two to Reich. In Bioenergetic, when he does refer to Reich, it is invariably from Character Analysis, Reich's last psychoanalytic writing. This work remains analysis with an energetic overlay. The same is true for Hakomi. Although they make no claims to be an energetic therapy, I include them because of their growing influence in the modern therapy world. There is no section on energy concepts, six pages on emotional work and sixty on character work. The sixty pages on character work are excellent, as is Lowen's work on character. But as with psychoanalysis, unless there is an energetic concept, or some other formulation that allows these disciplines to see below or beyond personality functioning they will be left with the limited tools of psychologizing and interpreting.

Reich's intention is clear. He makes the distinction complete and, in effect, separates himself from those disciplines that would insist on a psychological understanding of human nature, devoid of the biological depths.

"... in the somatic realm, it is not admissible to think in terms derived from the psychic realm. Every psychic occurrence has, in addition to its causal determination, a meaning in terms of a relation to the environment. To this corresponded the psychoanalytic interpretation. However, in the physiological realm there is no such 'meaning', and its existence cannot be assumed without re-introducing a supernatural power. The living simply functions; it has no 'meaning'." (Function of the Orgasm, 1967)

Reich is suggesting that all meanings, interpretations and understandings that are the bread and butter of psychology are in essence after the fact pronouncements that have little to do with the deeper reality of the natural biological processes. They are true or have meaning "in terms of the environment", but they are not essential to the nature of the living process itself. And further, to psychologize natural functioning is to misrepresent nature and therefore, by extension, the nature of man, for he is no more than expressions of the natural processes as a part of a larger cosmic energy function.

In the third edition of Character Analysis this transition from a psychologically based interpretation to functional orgonomy is made strikingly clear when Reich briefly discusses how viewing a classical "resistance" from both perspectives produces quite a different result. He offers an example of a "no" attitude that had permeated a patient's character, and then goes on to point out through an interpretation of known historical material how the "no" attitude developed and even the rationality of it. He then presents the difference between a depth psychology approach and functional orgonomy. Depth psychology quickly saw the meaning of the no and its "clamped down" effect. But he then contrasts that with a "perspective from the biological core" and states: "... it is not a matter of the clamped down no-no, but of the



incapacity on the part of the organism to say yes." (Reich, 1976) The correct interpretation of the meaning of the character attitude was no. The natural expression was one of an inability to say yes. It was not a resistance against that lay at the core, but rather an inability - to be for something. It is not a going against – the “no” that is important - but rather an incapacity to go for, or towards. "The biopathic structure is used to biopathic functioning, it is like asking a lame man to dance." (Reich, 1976)

To clarify what is being presented, it is useful to distinguish between meaning and expression. Meaning is considered the human value and understanding put on behavior "in terms of the relationship to the environment". Thus, behavior is "understood" by what it represents in the present reality. For example, is it good or bad if a person sticks a knife in you? If the person is a doctor and you are in need of an operation, it would be considered both good and valuable. If he is a thief, it would not be so good. The meaning is largely determined by the context and the reality of the perceiver at that time. Even if it were a doctor, and a person needed an operation, but that person was someone who had not been previously exposed to modern medicine, or whose religious beliefs would not permit such an operation, the act would be valued as bad. But the situation is different with the natural expression of the living. Reich has made it amply clear that there is no meaning in this realm, only function. There is no meaning in the sense that a human interpretation puts on it from that perspective, even if the interpretation is in tune with the natural functioning. The functioning of the cosmic orgone is beyond language, proceeds understanding. In fact, reasoning itself, as well as conceptualization are products of the energetic processes.

In Character Analysis Reich writes: "Purpose and meaning of biological activity seem to arise as secondary functions". But later in Ether, God and Devil he seems to compound an already difficult point by writing:

“... the functioning of living matter is simple, that the essence of life is the vital functioning itself, and that it has no transcendental 'purpose' or 'meaning'. The search for the purposeful meaning of life stems from the armoring of the human organism, which blots out the living function and replaces it with rigid formulas of life. Unarmored life does not look for a meaning or a purpose for its existence for the simple reason that it functions spontaneously, meaningfully and purposefully without the command "thou shalt".” (Reich, 1973)

Reich seems to be suggesting that there is both meaning and no meaning in functioning.

Because of the inherent properties of the energy, it has specific qualities or functions. Firstly, there is no meaning in the sense of intention, no super natural "mind" behind it directing it, nor any consciousness in the sense of "in order to". Natural functions simply exist, and as a result there is life, growth, health, etc. Thus there is no need to make sense of it or to understand its meaning. It is self-defining. The second aspect of the energetic qualities is what man does with his understanding of natural functions. Because he is armored, and has lost contact with his roots in nature, he cannot see the completeness of natural functioning. For example, he cannot see that the life force is spontaneously life supporting. Because he cannot know the natural order that spontaneously arises from natural function, man must ascribe meaning and purpose to it. This constitutes the interpreting and psychologizing that Reich criticizes and tries to make distinct from his work. All the functional aspects of the energy, its properties - what it does - are without inherent value, although we are free to judge any of it in the context of our particular reality as good or bad, creative or destructive. In this



sense it only has meaning comparatively - within "an environment". However, this is usually a different process from what results from the natural energetic functions which result in what we would call life positive. The importance of making this distinction is absolutely essential in understanding the difference between Reich's work and psychology in general. To be doing body psychotherapy and to not understand this differentiation is to not be working functionally and energetically in the sense that Reich used these terms.

Two examples can serve to help clarify this distinction and to emphasize why and how this difference is important. The first has to do with the so-called "fetal position" and the second with Reich's understanding of the masochistic character.

A common phenomenon in psychotherapy is the acted out desire to curl up, bringing the knees and head together in what is commonly called the fetal position. This is usually interpreted as a desire to return to the womb, to withdraw, become infantile and is generally associated with being in a weakened and dependent position. Giving such an interpretation to this specific behavior may be at times correct, but if one is familiar with Reich's findings about the basic properties of the orgone and how it functions, this very same movement can take on an entirely different, and possible opposite "meaning". In fact, this behavior can exist without any meaning at all even though a powerful process is clearly happening. Reich has shown that one of the main properties of the mass-free orgone energy - before matter is created - is that by its nature, it "comes back to itself". This characteristic is of special interest to us in our discussion of the so-called fetal position. This coming back on itself is represented as a spinning wave, or *Kreiselwelle* (KRW). In its natural state, the mass-free orgone moves simultaneously in a spinning, forward movement, coming back on itself as it flows forward in a curving arc. Reich illustrated the movement as follows:

Diagram no. 1

Kreiselwelle (KRW)

As Reich states, this is the observable, verifiable state of affairs regarding the "behavior" of the energy. "It has no meaning, it merely functions...", although what may result from this basic process can be meaningful to us. The above diagram shows how the mass-free orgone functions in a re-occurring pattern of turning back on itself. Once mass - physical matter - is formed, this same re-occurring pattern continues, for it is a basic property of the energy and it is not altered by the creation of physical matter. Reich argues in Cosmic Superimposition that form follows function. What is relevant to this discussion is that physical matter and the form it takes is a direct function of the inherent qualities of the orgone. And these basic qualities, including its ability to come back on itself, continue to function in the living organism.

The mass-free orgone energy slows and physical matter is formed, allowing for the creation of encapsulated orgone systems. These are living organisms surrounded by a membrane, and humans are a highly developed form of this encapsulation. Once the energy is encapsulated, it is still flowing within the organism, and the same basic properties are functioning. (And the form created as a result of how the energy functions specifically reflects these energetic properties.) When the energy becomes encapsulated in physical form, this same turning in on



itself continues as the new bounded orgone flows within the confines of the membrane. Reich diagrams the basic life form and energy flow as such:

Diagram no. 2

Orgonome

The simple form diagramed above is the prototype for all living forms. (For a more complete discussion and rationale see Cosmic Superimposition.) As one can see, the form has been created out of the movement properties of the orgone - the forward moving curvature - as well as the fact that with this form, the energetic properties can continue to function within the boundaries of the membrane. As a result, the free orgone, which by its nature spontaneously moves forward and turns back on itself, now maintains the same qualities once a body is formed. This natural functioning of turning in on itself *is now alive and well in man in the form of the orgasm or life reflex*, the spontaneous coming together of the two opposite ends - the head and the pelvis - in a folding together motion. This natural, spontaneous movement is a surrendering or an allowing of the natural impulses to function in the body. It is an allowing process - permitting the orgone to flow more freely and to complete itself. It is a softening, a releasing of muscular and characterological rigidities. It is a sign that the person is beginning to open to a deeper process within.

We can now return to the conceptualization of the so-called fetal position. Viewed psychologically, this folding together is traditionally interpreted as a psychologically important act, and its "meaning" is usually connected with regression or withdrawal. But viewing this very same movement from a functional point of view, we are left with entirely different impressions and conclusions. When the orgasm reflex develops, it is a natural function of the basic properties of the flow of the freed orgone energy. By definition, the life reflex is a surrendering, a giving in, but not a giving up. It is a softening, not a weakening; it is a desirable letting go, the instroke of the pulsation, the moving inward for deeper contact, and not a withdrawal or a denial. It is in fact an affirmation of life and living, a coming alive! It is a clear sign of movement, with the potential for growth and going forward. The two movements of the fetal position and the orgasm reflex are essentially the same when viewed on the physical plane, especially the instroke part of the pulsation of the reflex. But under no circumstances are the two the same in their expression or their "meaning". Regression may well be a valuable and necessary part of the healing process. The point here is not that withdrawal and regression do not happen and are not to be understood as therapeutic. Rather, being able to distinguish between a contracting withdrawal and an opening surrendering, even though the two movements may be identical in their form and motion, is potentially more therapeutic and is only possible with a full understanding of energetic functioning. It is not a matter of which position is more "right" or "better". It is a matter of being able to make this



distinction before conclusions are drawn. (This is not exactly representative of Reich's position, because he did not think that regression actually occurred.)

It is also worthwhile to note that the so-called fetal position is an excellent example of psychologizing the biological even if a person is expressing regression. Psychology understands the fetal position as a position of seeking safety and security, and when experienced by adults, as an attempt to return to the womb and all that it implies. If one understands natural functioning, it is clear what the fetal position represents: the position itself is a function of the orgone energy and as result there are attachments and then meanings placed on it. If one looks at the orgonome, the basic life form diagramed earlier, and one compares that with the fetal position, the similarities are obvious and not coincidental. This is because the fetal form, just like all forms, is a function of energetic principles. The fetus turns in on itself, not to be safe, but rather it is in that position as a result of the turning in pattern on the energetic, and therefore, physical level. As a result, it is possible that the developing fetus feels safe because it is safe in the womb, and so an association is made between that position and the feelings of security. This is a learned associated behavior, not natural functioning. Then and only as a result of this association is the fetal position experienced as secure. This is a different understanding from believing that the fetal position is secure. It is only experienced as secure because of the association made when a more primary function, the energetic turning in, was so prevalent in the relative security of the womb. To understand and work with these differences is to know the difference between psychologizing the biological and working functionally and therefore more directly with the energetic processes.

Unless the therapist understands this, he will not be able to make any differentiations and his treatment agenda will be limited by what the "thinks", he "sees". If he cannot distinguish between a natural, primary, expressive, growth oriented movement, rooted in primary process - the life reflex - and a secondary, regressive, defensive reactionary process - the assuming of the fetal position - he will only be able to psychologize and interpret the behavior, but never really understand it. If the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem will look like a nail. And of course the same result will befall the client. If he has no knowledge of the possibility that his "coming together" is life positive, and is offered none by the therapist, he will misinterpret what is happening. He will come to believe that what is in reality a natural, healthy unfolding of energetic processes that should be encouraged, is merely a childish response and a giving up. He will misinterpret what is actually a sign of growing health and increased functioning in the light of regression.

Energy turning back on itself can be either a creative or a destructive development. If one interprets this activity one risks misinterpreting. However, not to know that one is interpreting and making meaning is an even greater risk. If the natural functioning of the organism is understood in its broad sense, the need to interpret is greatly decreased. The "meaning" is revealed in the functioning. In fact, the need to interpret can be viewed not only as a function of armoring as Reich points out, but also as an indication of the incompleteness of the process, and therefore it is necessary to make sense of it. The natural orgone flow reveals itself when complete, and can be known even when incomplete, if the underlying principles are clearly understood. The energetic processes, as Reich declares, are "rational"; sense and meaning are built into them, perhaps not meaning in the psychological sense but meaning in the sense of natural functions.



A second example of the masochistic character can serve to show how psychologizing and interpreting can interfere with understanding natural functioning and therefore human behavior and human nature. In Function of the Orgasm, the section entitled "The Breakthrough into the Vegetative Realm"; Reich has used a functional understanding of the masochistic structure as a cornerstone for explaining energetic processes in humans. One of the primary results of this work is to clarify the difference between a psychological understanding of this structure, and a functional/energetic one. Reich opens the section of the solution of the masochistic character with the statement: "According to Psychoanalysis, the pleasure in offering pain was simply the result of a biological need; 'masochism was an instinct like any other, except that it had a specific goal'." He then goes on to say that after having actually hit a masochistic patient in a session and seeing the result, he "... realized that - contrary to general belief - pain is far from being the instinctual goal of the masochist. When beaten, the masochist, like any other mortal, experiences pain". He quickly saw that there was no pleasure involved and, viewing the issue energetically, suggested that masochism was no more than an individual's attempt to free itself from the armored restraints in both his character and his musculature attitudes.

Using a functional approach, Reich conceived the masochistic character as a bladder blown up to its limits. The bladder was the membrane - the skin - and the inflating aspect was the undischarged energy that had now reached intolerable levels of tension. It is as if a balloon had been blown up and was about to burst. Bursting would, of course, relieve the tension, giving relief to the organism.

For Reich, all masochistic behavior was an attempt to release this tension. The beatings, the pinching, etc. were not pleasurable. Relief from the tension - the undischarged energy - was what was pleasurable. A desire to be beaten was an attempt on the part of the organism to get relief that it did not know how to get otherwise. The tension felt in the masochistic structure, the tension he sought to have relieved in beatings, had nothing to do with "instinctual" behavior or a need in the primary sense. It was not inborn, or a part of the organism, to engage in such extreme and bizarre behaviors. And it did not have inherent psychological meaning, although attachments and anchorings can develop which will then have psychological meaning and historical roots.

Without advocating the practice of masochistic behaviors, one could almost say "Good for you" when a patient says he or she engages in such activities. Understanding that masochistic behavior is an attempt to get free, allows it to be seen as a life affirming action. The individual has not given up. He is still alive and in touch with himself enough to feel what is wrong even though the feeling is intolerable and he is confused about it. He still has enough organism integrity to need to do something about it - even if what he is doing is not very effective and at times detrimental. The point here is that masochistic behavior can be viewed energetically and functionally and seen as an attempt on the part of the organism to heal itself - to free itself so that the energy can flow more openly. And, of course, if it doesn't, over time, more serious problems will set in due to the energetic stasis.

Masochism does not have to be seen as a pathological, diseased state with the accompanying psychological explanations. It can be viewed as a distortion of natural functioning. The person does not have to be seen as perverted. It does not have to be understood as a self-punishment for guilt feelings towards parents or for events that happened in the "shadowy"



past. It can be seen functionally, as the patient's inability to discharge accumulated tensions, in the present time. What he does and how he does it can be viewed psychologically, but the underlying force that masochism is based on is simply distorted natural biological functioning.³ The concept of the bladder is helpful in understanding Reich's work, and we can use it here to demonstrate further how his functional thinking is radically different from the way most of psychology views man. In his excellent biography of Reich, Fury on Earth, Myron Sharaf tells us that one day, in an off-handed manner, Reich commented to him that he viewed man as essentially "a sac of fluids and energy". To someone knowing nothing about organomy, this comment would at best seem awfully odd and at worst quite disparaging, especially for a psychiatrist. But in fact, it is a revealing statement. In the May, 1977 issue of Energy and Character, Dr. Arthur Efron wrote an unusual article discussing Reich's Function of the Orgasm from a literary point of view.⁴ He refers to Reich's concept of the bladder, explaining what he understood Reich's position to be:

"The bladder begins to talk, indeed complain loudly of being artificially confined, armored. Although Reich apologetically describes all this as a 'curious analogy', by the end of the book he is nearly able to say that it is a literal fact ... In other words, man is a bladder, even though when we look at him, we see a man, not a bladder." (Efron, 1985)

Efron argues further that Reich's;

"Constructions of amoeba and bladder (cannot) be passed off as elegant metaphor, discreetly controlled, as they might have been had they been employed by a writer like Freud. Whatever Reich is offering in his book, it is not what is usually called 'fine writing'. I want to suggest instead that Reich had a sound intuition that the bladder never was an analogy". (Efron, 1985)

Efron also discusses the works of Albert Rothenberg whose theory of creativity contains the concept of:

"...homospacial thinking (is)... conceiving of two or more discreet entities occupying the same space, a conceptualization leading to the articulation of new identities ... Two entities are 'superimposed, fused', within the mind so that imaginary space becomes filled with a 'literal thinking of the unthinkable'. A major example is taken from an autobiographic essay by Einstein that has (sic) just been published: for Einstein, the key concept of his discovery of the General Theory of Relativity was his envisioning of a man falling from a roof, who was both falling through space and staying stationary at the same time. Einstein did not first think of someone falling and then try to place against that thought the image of someone not moving; he envisioned both happening at once in the same location. The same kind of juxtaposition occurs in all the examples of homospacial thinking offered by Rothenberg. They are not analogies, but new entities imagined literally.

So also for Reich: the amoeba lives in the exact place that the man also lives, and that simple organ, the living bladder, is coextensive with the immensely complicated human organism ... What he reveals in his narrative is that his imagination was not compatible with that linear model." (Efron, 1985)

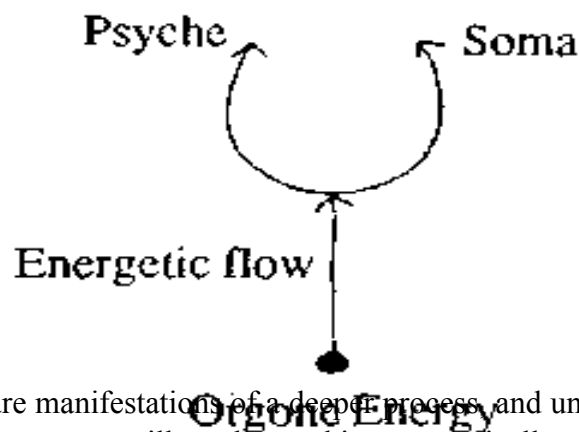
Thus we have a sac of fluids and energy. Reich was actually looking at people as functioning units. He had come to see people not in terms of behavior and what that behavior might or might not mean, but from a more basic or primary perspective.

Another way of discussing the difference between Reich's work and psychology as he understood it centers around the concept of working psychosomatically. Often his work is described as psychosomatic work, and I believe that most body psychotherapists would think of their therapy in these terms. The concept of working psychosomatically is a recent



advancement in psychotherapy. Modern psychology has its roots in psychoanalysis - verbal work designed to cure through the mind, the understanding of problems. The idea of the reciprocating relationship between the psyche and the soma predates psychoanalysis but had been lost to Western medicine and therapy and is currently revived in the form of psychosomatic medicine, in a number of the body oriented therapies and in some areas of psychology. Most of the body psychotherapies follow or owe something to Reich. Such leading approaches as Bio-energetic Analysis and Biosynthesis would claim to work with the concept of re-unifying the mind/body split. And, in fact, I believe that this is what they do. But this is not necessarily energetic or functional work as Reich understood it. Body psychotherapists, by focusing on the body with its accompanying movements and emotions, are not necessarily any closer to the energetic process than the analysts, or any of the other verbal therapies. The reasoning behind this statement is, as Reich diagrammed, the mind and the body are one in the same expressions of the common functioning principle (CFP). Neither the mind nor the body is any closer to energetic functioning than the other. And just as verbiage can prevent deeper processes from emerging, Reich points out that movement and emotions can do the same. "Voluntary movements in certain muscle groups, then, may serve as a defense against involuntary movements. Similarly, involuntary movements may appear as defenses against other involuntary movements." And he also spoke of ..."acquired vegetative behaviors" (Function of the Orgasm, 1967). The same is true for emotions. Reich warned against believing that released affect was in fact vegetative. He considered it a part of the defense system, until it reached a specific level. His diagramming of the psyche/soma relationship shows that each is an equal function of the underlying energetic process and is equally "distant" from it.

Diagram no. 3



Both mind and body are manifestations of a deeper process, and unless that is understood and integrated into our therapy, we will not be working energetically, except occasionally and by accident. To work with thoughts or emotions or both is not working energetically per se. And to think that by working with movements and provoking emotions is automatically closer to energetic functioning is to be in the same position as early analysts who, as Reich points out, could not get deeper in their understanding of human functioning because they mistakenly thought they were working with the unconscious or the id itself! They were mistaking manifestations and symptoms for the real thing. And the same is true working psychosomatically, working with emotions and movements. Reich did not diagram the psyche/soma relationship, in terms of energetic processes as:



Diagram no. 4

Movements, emotions, feelings, sensations, etc. are no "better" energetically, no more real or important than thoughts, judgments or reasoning. They are functionally and practically identical. They are the same thing, only in different forms. To value one higher than the other as more important is not to understand the CFP and its manifestations.

To clarify this point, it is worthwhile to look again at Reich's formulation of how the energetic process functions. In Cosmic Superimposition, he describes the process by which life develops from the primordial mass-free cosmic orgone to the final stages of human development, both physically and psychically. A condensed version of this is as follows: the mass-free orgone, due partly to superimposition, "slows" and matter is created. (Matter is merely slowed energy). With the creation of matter, membranes (skins) encapsulate what was free orgone, and a physical orgone system is formed. In its primary state, this is the conceptualization of the Orgonome described earlier. What becomes important to our discussion is the next stage of this process. The orgone is now flowing within a "body", and this flow, and accompanying pulsation, is felt in the organism as plasmatic streamings that are then converted into orgonomic sensations. These sensations are what we know as experiences of the psyche and the soma. They are the emotions, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc. that we then are aware of. These sensations then move into behaviors - physical, emotional and mental - and under certain conditions, into symptoms. Viewed schematically we have the following:

Psyche – Behavior - Symptom

Primary functioning - Encapsulation – Streamings - Sensations -

Soma - Behavior - Symptom

This schema is not an exact representation, but it does suggest the distance between primary energetic functioning and symptoms and behavior. It also helps to make clear how one function follows from an earlier one until we can trace it back to the source, the primary energetic functioning. As Reich points out, the energy is unknowable directly. All we can do is to know its manifestations, understand them for what they are, and to know which level of manifestations we are intervening on. This alone will help the therapeutic process immensely. The orgonomic sensations are the manifestations of the deeper energetic process. They are its products. Behavior and symptoms typically worked with in psychology follow from orgonomic sensations. They are its products; more exactly, they are the product of the interpretation process the individual makes of his own sensations. Behaviors, and then symptoms, are the once and twice filtered interpretations of the orgonomic sensations filtered through the organism's perception of himself and his reality.

To work with behaviors and their symptoms is far removed from energetic processes. Unless these distinctions are clear, one cannot discriminate between a natural expression that does not have "meaning" in the psychological sense and a psychologizing of symptomatic



behavior. The point here is not that working with symptoms or behavior is ineffectual or not valuable. That is a work unto itself. But it is important see the difference so that the treatment can proceed accordingly. The same is true for working psychosomatically. Looking at Reich's diagram of the psyche and soma, one can quickly see that although they are different manifestations, they are one and the same functionally, and in terms of energetic functioning they are equal. Functional orgonomy is not psychosomatic work. Psychosomatic work focuses on the relationship between psyche and soma, one with the other. *In functional orgonomy it is not the relationship between psyche and soma that is important but rather the relationship of each to the deeper, functional energetic process.*

The concept of the mind/body split as a functional reality is perpetuated by such formulations of Lowen's where he postulates the head and pelvic centers, and describes the goal of therapy to be the integration of the two. This idea persists in Kelley's formulation of "Purpose Work", a mental functioning that will, when properly developed by the individual, allow him to "overcome the tyranny of feelings". In the behavioral reality of most of us, there is a split felt between mind and body. But in reality, functional reality, they are not separate. To say we need to get them integrated is to presuppose that they are separate entities, rather than to understand that they are merely being *felt* as separate. What Reich is offering is the understanding that makes the mind/body split at least irrelevant, if not meaningless. What functional orgonomy is offering is a solid, natural and biological based understanding that they are not split, and a conceptualization for how to work with this situation when it presents itself in symptomatic behavior.

This paper presents nothing new. It is an attempt to reiterate what Reich has already pointed out, and with that reiteration, hopefully clarify. It is an attempt to make clearer the distinction between psychology and functional orgonomy and to show why that distinction is an important one. Reich's discoveries and his work offer us the opportunity to understand man's roots in nature and in the "rational" laws that govern both nature and man. It is an opportunity to go beyond symptomatic behavior and psychologizing to reach a deeper understanding of human function. The value of his discoveries cannot be overestimated.

In her book Pilgrim at Tinker Creek Anne Dillard sums up the theme of this paper:

“Some reputable scientists, even today, are not wholly satisfied with the notion that the song of birds is strictly and solely a territorial claim. It is an important point. We've been on earth all these years, and still don't know for certain why birds sing. We need someone to unlock the code of this foreign language and give us the key; we need a new Rosetta stone. It could be that a bird sings: I am a sparrow, sparrow, sparrow. As Gerald Manley Hopkins suggests: "myself it speaks and spells, crying what I do is me: for that I came". Sometimes birdsong seems just like the garbled speech of infants. There is a certain age at which a child looks at you in all earnestness and delivers a long pleased speech in all the true inflections of English, but with not one recognizable syllable. There is no way you can tell the child that if language had been a melody, he had mastered it and done well, but that since in fact, it is a sense, he botched it utterly.” (Dillard, 1974)

In depth psychology, Reich is that “someone” who has given us the key, functional orgonomy is the Rosetta stone, meaning is that sense and the expressive language of the living is the melody.





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1 This circular motion of the energy transfer strongly suggests support for Reich's concepts of pulsation and the spinning wave formulation of the *Kreiselwelle*. It indicates that the basic energetic functions as understood by him are alive and well on the cellular level in each of us.

2 Another way to differentiate between functional orgonomy and psychology is to think in terms of movement and behavior. Movement is the natural expression of the organism, whereas psychology thinks in terms of behavior, the meaningful actions of the person. By the time it is behavior, it has already been "psychologized" - that is interpreted and a meaning placed on it.

3 Masochism can now be diagnosed and described characterologically on an energetic, i.e. biological basis, thus providing for a more accurate diagnosis procedure. Not all self-punishing behaviors are necessarily masochistic structures.

4 The original article appeared in Energy and Character. The source quoted is a reprint of the original from the Bio-Energy Journal, Kanazawa, Japan.

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