
PHYSIOLOGICAL ANCHORING OF PSYCHIC CONFLICTS

I. PRESENT-DAY SITUATION AND INFANTILE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ever since Freud, modern psychiatry has had to wrestle with a certain difficulty in everyday practice which is due precisely to the knowledge of the depth of neurotic disturbances and of their anchoring in infantile experiences. The more one knows about the unconscious complexity even of the simplest neurosis, the more helpless one feels when confronted with an everyday case which requires speedy diagnosis and therapeutic help; where real character-analysis, which requires a great deal of time and expense, is out of the question. This helplessness is basically different from that born of ignorance, as in the case of the general practitioner without any depth-psychological training. He tries to get along with such illusions as bromides or peptalks, thus saving the patient from the necessity of facing his conflicts. The helplessness of the trained physician is shown up occasionally in such tragicomic occurrences as the following which happened on a prison hospital ward:

There was a man on the ward who suffered from compulsive murderous impulses. It was all he could do not to jump at his neighbor's throat during the night and to choke him. Becoming more and more afraid of these impulses, he sought a consultation with the psychiatrist. He returned from the consultation all upset and reported: "What do you say to this! The psychiatrist told me I wanted to sleep with my mother and murder my father. And that I had a resistance against realizing that!"

Needless to say, the psychiatrist's procedure was wrong; but it is understandable out of his desire to utilize his psycho-analytic knowledge for bringing about a quick therapeutic effect. That such an

attempt can result in nothing but an intensification of the patient's defenses, goes without saying. Vegetotherapeutic training safeguards the physician against illusions and against such blunders; more than that, it supplies him with the means of achieving practical results in acute situations without having to delve into all the unconscious conflicts. This is possible because of the following facts:

The vegetotherapist knows that even the oldest infantile sexual conflicts *are still active in the form of muscular and vegetative disturbances*. Though he knows perfectly well that the neurosis in any individual case may be of several decades' standing and is deeply anchored in the psychophysical apparatus, he does not necessarily have to reach the deep conflicts. He looks for *the place of the physiological anchoring of the psychic conflict* and tries to alleviate the stasis of energy by establishing natural respiration and by releasing inhibited impulses. This is possible in a considerable number of cases, even in neuroses of long standing. The well-trained vegetotherapist knows, of course, that he does not "cure" a neurosis by releasing a few muscular blocks. However, he is able to bring about at least a temporary alleviation of the condition; an alleviation which is far more valuable than illusionary consolation or the explanation of unconscious contents while naively overlooking the deepseated resistances. This can be illustrated by the following case.

A woman of 35 came to see a vegetotherapist because of "nervous headaches," insomnia and severe anxiety. In particular, she suffered from the fear of "going crazy" and having to be put in a mental hospital. She had seen any number of physicians; they gave her bromides or told her "it was just overwork" or "it was

just a cold." She suffered from a severe orgasmic disturbance and a neurotic fear of the pessary, which in turn made her husband neurotic. She also complained of feelings of depersonalization. Her present illness had started suddenly 3 months before. It was immediately evident that the patient inhibited her respiratory function quite severely. Correspondingly, she suffered from "shortness of breath." The abdominal musculature was tense, the pelvis retracted, the musculature of neck and chin extremely rigid. True, the "nervous headaches" had unconscious psychic contents and an early infantile history; but they could be understood as the immediate result of the spasms in the musculature of the head and neck; it was in these spasms that the unconscious contents were anchored. It was clear that the patient was making an enormous effort to hold back "something." After about 10 minutes of correct breathing, the patient began to have coughing spells. She jumped up and refused to continue the work. She was persuaded to go on trying "to get her chest down." She did, but now she developed the *impulse to vomit*, and soon she ran to the bathroom and vomited violently. After this, she felt a great relief and spontaneously related the following: Shortly before she fell ill, a woman friend of hers had been taken to the hospital for violent vomiting. From then on, she herself had developed the fear of being taken to the hospital should she vomit (that is, a case of hysterical identification). In the course of a few days she developed actual impulses to vomit; these she fought by holding back. This was the origin of her "nervous headaches" which resulted from the muscular spasms connected with the holding back. True, the vegetotherapist knows that the hysterical identification with the friend has an infantile basis. He also knows that a sex-economically healthy organism could not develop any hysterical vomiting impulses; that, in other words,

it is the sexual stasis due to genital anxiety (frigidity) which causes the displacement of vegetative excitation from the genital to stomach and esophagus and thus gives rise to the vomiting impulses. But, in order to bring about an improvement in the acute situation he need not deal with these depth-mechanisms. In the *emergency*, it is sufficient to release the inhibited vomiting impulses by releasing the spasms of the musculature in chest, neck and head. The *cure* remains for a correctly carried out vegetotherapy.

2. AN INFANTILE FEAR AS EXPRESSED IN A SPECIFIC INHIBITION OF THE ORGASM REFLEX

In spite of numerous detailed clinical examples, many psychiatrists and psychoanalysts still find it difficult to understand how the vegetotherapeutic eliciting of expressive movements also can reproduce the respective infantile memories. The following example shows particularly clearly the anchoring of a repressed memory in a present-day form of expression.

This example is from the concluding phase of the vegetotherapeutic treatment of a character-neurotic. The patient had come for treatment because all pleasurable life situations were ruined for him by the interference of an involuntary "No" in the form of a depressed, tearful mood. This character trait finally had also affected his working capacity and had made him incapable of working. The development of his orgasm reflex had succeeded to a far-reaching degree. For some time, a final inhibition of the reflex failed to give way. Consistent work on the muscular actions which inhibited the reflex brought to light an attitude of the muscles of the neck which corresponded to a ducking of the head. As soon as the orgasm reflex set in, the patient would pull in his head. Gradually, this was replaced by a bending forward of the head.

Simultaneously, his face began to show an angry, observing and threatening expression which reminded one of an "angry old Jew." When this was shown to the patient, he thought of "Liebermann," the name of a German painter. The patient's father was a painter and had shown him pictures of Liebermann when the patient was still at a very early age. Liebermann was a Jew. Now, when the patient let the orgasm reflex come through, he was able to reproduce the expression of an angry old Jew even more distinctly. However, the pleasurable orgasm reflex and the angry facial expression were at variance with each other. When the patient looked at himself in the mirror, he recognized in his sagging cheeks the tearfulness which used to overcome him in pleasurable situations. Suddenly he exclaimed, "But I look like a raven."

Then he remembered that, before he was three years old, he used to have a nightmare of a big black raven sitting at a piano in his bedroom and playing. Then he remembered that his father had at one time painted a picture of a raven. This picture hung at a certain place in an upper story which could be reached only by means of a circular staircase. He always would have liked to go up there to look at the picture but was strictly forbidden to use that staircase. Then he remembered a strong fear he had at that time: the fear that his father might make the acquaintance of Liebermann and learn from him a well-kept secret of the patient. Then followed the recollection that a few years later he had visited an uncle and there had kept gazing at an ashtray. On this ashtray was a raven whose long beak formed the instrument for clipping the cigars. Now, "Liebermann" made him think of "Lieber Mann" and "Lieber Gott" (Dear man, dear God).

These memories, although they had

never come up before, appeared now quite spontaneously and without the patient having any inkling of their connection with the idea of castration.

Clearly, the threatening raven at the piano signifies his own fear of punishment for masturbation. The threat of this punishment expressed itself in his face at the time when the orgasm reflex developed. It appeared as an *actual inhibition* of the reflex, not as a mere historical recollection. All this broke through in a single session, and without the patient having even thought of masturbation anxiety. At the end of the session he said, "I'm dissatisfied; something important is lacking here." The inhibition of his pleasure function by a structurally anchored prohibition had become evident.

During the following session, the infantile fright situation was fully elucidated. Together with the ducking of the head, there appeared now an anxiety reflex in the pelvis and the legs, as if the genitals had to be protected from a threatening danger. The patient made rattling sounds and finally emitted the word "razor." The patient used to watch his father shave with a straight razor and used to follow the motions of the razor at the neck with amazement and fear. These impressions were functionally anchored in the attitude of ducking the head. The anxiety reflex in pelvis and legs was coupled with the attitude of ducking the head, corresponding to the coupling of the idea that the razor might cut the throat with the idea that it might as easily cut off the genital.

This case illustrates in a particularly clear manner the mechanisms of infantile castration anxiety as discovered by Freud; but it illustrates, in addition, the sex-economic concept of the somatic anchoring of repressed memories in present-day pathological bodily attitudes and reflexes.

Projeto Arte Org

Redescobrimo e reinterpretando W. Reich

Caro Leitor

Infelizmente, no que se refere a orgonomia, seguir os passos de Wilhelm Reich e de sua equipe de investigadores é uma questão bastante difícil, polêmica e contraditória, cheia de diferentes interpretações que mais confundem do que ajudam.

Por isto, nós decidimos trabalhar com o material bibliográfico presente nos microfimes (Wilhelm Reich Collected Works Microfilms) em forma de PDF, disponibilizados por Eva Reich que já se encontra circulado pela internet, e que abarca o desenvolvimento da orgonomia de 1941 a 1957.

Dividimos este “material” de acordo com as revistas publicadas pelo instituto de orgonomia do qual o Reich era o diretor.

01- International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research (1942-1945).

02- Orgone Energy Bulletin (1949-1953)

03- CORE Cosmic Orgone Engineering (1954-1956)

E logo dividimos estas revistas de acordo com seus artigos, apresentando-os de forma separada (em PDF), o que facilita a organizá-los por assunto ou temas.

Assim, cada qual pode seguir o rumo de suas leituras de acordo com os temas de seu interesse.

Todo o material estará disponível em inglês na nuvem e poderá ser acessado a partir de nossas páginas Web.

Sendo que nosso intuito aqui é simplesmente divulgar a orgonomia, e as questões que a ela se refere, de acordo com o próprio Reich e seus colaboradores diretos relativos e restritos ao tempo e momento do próprio Reich.

Quanto ao caminho e as postulações de cada um destes colaboradores depois da morte de Reich, já é uma questão que extrapola nossas possibilidades e nossos interesses. Sendo que aqui somente podemos ser responsáveis por nós mesmos e com muitas restrições.

Alguns destes artigos, de acordo com nossas possibilidades e interesse, já estamos traduzindo.

Não somos tradutores especializados e, portanto, pedimos a sua compreensão para possíveis erros que venham a encontrar.

Em nome da comunidade Arte Org.

Textos da área do desenvolvimento infantil

Texts from the area of child development

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research

Children

01 Ernst Walter. A Talk With a Sensible Mother 1936

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number
1 1942

Interval 16-22 Pag. 11-17

02 Paul Martin. Sex-Economimic Upbringing 1942

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number
1 1942

Interval 23-37 Pag. 18-32

03 Editorial. Physiological Anchoring of Psychic Conflicts 1942

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number
2 1942

Interval 83-85 Pag. 177-179

04 A.S.Neills. The Problem Teacher I 1939

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number
2 1942

Interval 86-90 Pag. 180-184

05 A.S.Neills. The Problem Teacher II 1939

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number
3 1942

Interval 90-96 Pag. 282-288

06 A High School Student. The Sexual Behavior of Adolescents in a New York
Borough 1943

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 2 Numbers
2 3 1943

Interval 61-65 Pag. 153-157

07 Theodore P. Wolfe. A Sex.economist Answers I 1943

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 2 Numbers
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Interval 66-73 Pag. 158-165

- 08 Paul Martin. Reviews Which Kind Progressive Education 1943
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 2 Numbers
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- 09 A.S.Neills. The Problem Teacher III 1939
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 2 Numbers
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Interval 106-112 Pag. 198-204
- 10 Theodore P. Wolfe. A Sex.economist Answers II 1943
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Number
1 1944
Interval 67-75 Pag. 62-70
- 11 Theodore P. Wolfe. Reviews The Boy Sex Offender 1943
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Number
1 1944
Interval 87-91 Pag. 82-86
- 12 A.S.Neills. The Problem Teacher IV 1939
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Number
1 1944
Interval 92-101 Pag. 87-96
- 13 Paul Marting. Sex Education in the Schools
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Numbers
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Interval 92-94 Pag. 188-190
- 14 Notes. Some Observations of Children 1944
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Numbers
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Interval 101-107 Pag. 197-203
- 15 A.S.Neills. That Dreadful School I 1944
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Numbers
2 3 1944
Interval 124-136 Pag. 220-232
- 16 A.S.Neills. Coeducation and Sex 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Number
1 1945
Interval 56-60 Pag. 54-58
- 17 Felicia Saxe. A case History 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Number
1 1945
Interval 61-73 Pag. 59-71
- 18 Alexander Lowen. Adolescence A Problem in Sex-Economy 1945

- International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Number 1 1945
Interval 74-97 Pag. 72-95
- 19 Notes Editorial. Sexuality Before the Law 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Number 1 1945
Interval 102-105 Pag. 100-103
- 20 A.S.Neills. That Dreadful School II 1945
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Interval 117-130 Pag. 115-128
- 21 Elena Calas. Studyng the Childrens Place 1945
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Interval 34-50 Pag. 156-172
- 22 Lucille Bellamy Denison. The child and his Struggle 1945
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Interval 51-68 Pag. 173-190
- 23 A.S.Neills. That Dreadful School III 1945
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Interval 107-130 Pag. 228-251
- 24 Felicia Saxe. Armorede Human Beings Versu the Heathy Child 1947
McF 207 Annals of the Orgone Institute, Number 1. 1947
Interval 21-40 Pag. 35-72
- 25 Ilse Ollendorff. About Self-Regulation in a Healthy Childe 1847
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Interval 44-49 Pag. 81-90
- 26 Elizabeth Tyson. The Armored Teacher 1947
McF 207 Annals of the Orgone Institute, Number 1. 1947
Interval 49-51 Pag. 91-94

Orgone Energy Bulletin

Children

- 01 Elsworth F. Baker. The Concept of Self-Regulation 1949
McF 302 Orgone Energy Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 4. Oct. 1949
Interval 12-14 Pag. 160-164

02 Richard Singer. Play Problema of a Healthy Child 1949
McF 302 Orgone Energy Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 4. Oct. 1949
Interval 14-16 Pag. 165-168

03 A. E. Hamilton. Reviews The Problem Family by A. S. Neill 1949
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Interval 26-28 Pag. 189-193

04 Wilhelm Reich About Genital Self-satisfaction in Children 1927
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Interval 10-12 Pag. 63-67

05 A.S.Neill. Self-Regulation and the Outside World. 1950
McF 304 Orgone Energy Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 2. Apr. 1950
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06 Meyer Silvert Editorial Note. Critique of an Attitude Expressed by Anna Freud
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McF 304 Orgone Energy Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 2. Apr. 1950
Interval 21-22 Pag. 84-87

07 Wilhelm Reich Children of the Future I 1950
McF 306 Orgone Energy Bulletin. Vol. 2, No. 4. Oct. 1950
Interval 22-28 Pag. 194-206

08 Wilhelm Reich Armoring in a Newborn Infant 1950
McF 309 Orgone Energy Bulletin. Vol. 3, No. 3. Jul. 1951
Interval 3-13 Pag. 121-138

09 Editorial. Protection of Life 1953
McF 315 Orgone Energy Bulletin. Vol. 5, No. 1,2. Mar. 1953
Interval 3-4 Pag. 2-4

Wilhelm Reich Orgonomic Functionalism

02 Wilhelm Reich The Biological Revolution from Homo Normalis to the Child of
the Future 1950
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Interval 21-43 Pag. 30-74