SEX-ECONOMY†
A Theory of Living Functioning
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At first glance it may seem strange that a theory about living functioning should have been named "sex-economy." One reason for the name has to do with the growth of the theory itself; but the name is also characteristic of the core of the theory, as we shall see later.

The originator of both the theory and the name is the Austrian physician and psychologist, Dr. Wilhelm Reich, born in 1897. He wrote the works which later became the basis of the new field of research during 1925-38. After receiving his M.D. in Vienna in 1922, Reich began to practice as a psychoanalyst in that city and soon had a large practice and a great reputation as a therapist. The founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, foresaw a brilliant future for the young doctor. Reich became the leader of the technical seminar at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Vienna and soon was known as a leading analyst, in regard to practical therapy, technique, theory, and as a teacher. At the same time he took part in the socialist youth movement of Vienna and also established sex hygiene clinics. The experiences and impressions of this many-sided work-period caused him to expand and deepen Freud's psychological theories, particularly those relating to mass-psychology. Later this led to a break with the master of psychoanalysis and to the development of a theory and a technique of his own based upon new foundations; a development which resulted in the growth of all that is true and viable in psychoanalysis.

In 1930 Dr. Reich moved to Berlin and continued his work. He did mental hygiene work in various organizations and had a large following particularly among young Communists. Many of the older leaders were afraid that he would draw the interest of youth away from the class-struggle; and he was therefore expelled from the party. When the National-Socialists came to power, Dr. Reich had to flee Germany. He went first to Denmark, then to Sweden, but he did not receive a permit for permanent residence in either country. In the autumn of 1934 he went to Oslo, where he worked for a time with the Psychological Institute of the University of Oslo (Prof. Harald Schjelderup). In 1936, together with students from Norway, Denmark, and Germany, he established his own organization, the "International Institute for Sex-Economy." Since Reich's move to the United States, this organization has had its headquarters in New York.

The most important sources for the following exposition of sex-economy were all written by Dr. Reich. These books are:
- DIE FUNKTION DES ORGASMUS (1927);
- DER EINBRUCH DER SEXUALMORAL (1931);
- DIE MASSENPSYCHOLOGIE DES FASCHISMUS (1933);
- DER SEXUELLE KAMPF DER JUGEND (1932);
- CHARAKTER-ANALYSE (1933);
- PSYCHISCHER KONTAKT UND VEGETATIVE STRÖMUNG (1935);
- DIE SEXUALITÄT IM KULTURKAMPF (1936);
- EXPERIMENTELLE ERGEBNISSE ÜBER DIE ELEKTRISCHE FUNKTION VON SEXUALITÄT UND ANGST (1937);
- ORGASMUSREFLEX, MUSKELHALTUNG UND KÖRPERAUSDRUCK (1937);
- DIE BIONE (1938);

Besides these printed sources, I have

† Translated by Marika Myerson.
* This is a pseudonym. Present conditions force us, unfortunately, to withhold the names of our European co-workers.
used the knowledge I gained from Dr. Reich during the several years I spent with him in my training and as co-worker in his technical seminar for character-analysis and vegetotherapy. Finally, I have used personal experiences, both those myself have gone through, and the observations made during 12 years of therapeutic work with patients. This work began with about 8 years of psychoanalytic technique; then I changed to the technique developed by Dr. Reich, which is called character-analytic vegetotherapy.

First, a few words about the term “sex-economy.” Like many other scientific terms it is a combination of Greek and Latin—Latin: sexualis, meaning sexual; and Greek: oikonornia, meaning management, or economy. Accordingly, the term means “the teaching and study of the use of sexual energy.” In the following, I hope to make clear how such a teaching and study came to be a theory of living functioning.

As the name makes clear, the new theory springs from a study of sexuality. All modern research in the field of sex, which does not solely concern itself with the biological, anatomical and physiological manifestations of sexuality, but also considers the psychological and social aspects, is based on Sigmund Freud's basic work. This is true even of sex-economy, and therefore it is necessary to briefly review some of the most important phases of the development of Freud's theory of sex.

It was his work with the neuroses, primarily with hysteria, that first drew Freud's attention and interest to sexual problems. His study of the psychoneuroses, i.e., those neuroses having a primarily psychic basis and psychic symptoms, forced him to conclude that these neuroses originated in sexual impulses or memories which had been inhibited. Originally Freud used the word “sexual” in the meaning it had at that time: simply, that which had to do with sex life, the sexual organs, and procreation. At that time he believed that the psychoneuroses were caused by sexual experiences, mostly in childhood, which the patient later forgot, pushed out of his consciousness, or repressed. Freud had seen such inhibited memories and emotions become conscious during hypnosis. But Freud stopped using hypnosis for reasons which it is not necessary to explain here. Instead, he worked out another method, which he called the psychoanalytic, for making the inhibited emotions and memories conscious again. Primarily, this method seeks to make the patient say everything that comes to his mind: free association, it is called. The material thus revealed, together with the patient's dreams, is thereupon interpreted by the analyst. The purpose of psychoanalysis was—and still is—to make the unconscious, particularly the inhibited feelings, conscious, so that the conscious mind can make its decision, agreeing with or rejecting the material thus revealed, and in this way ridding itself of the neurosis. This process is often accompanied by emotional outbursts, and this more than anything else caused the psychoanalytic method to be called a method of abreacting. It is not necessary to discuss this further. I merely wish to point out that it was through this method that Freud discovered infantile sexuality and the fundamental role it plays in the lives of neurotic as well as healthy people.

The unconscious emotional life discovered by Freud through his new method was filled with sexuality, or, as he later discovered, with sexuality and aggression. I shall leave the question of aggression alone and discuss here only sexuality. Each step in analysis revealed sexual impulses, wishes, and fantasies, clearly connected with childhood memories and childhood situations. Freud's first conclusion was that these wishes and impulses originated in actual sexual experiences that had occurred during childhood, but a closer scrutiny of
a series of cases revealed that the acts Freud had under consideration had never been fulfilled except in the fantasy of the patient, i.e., they constituted wish-fulfillment. In other words, desires and fantasies had played the role which Freud first attributed to actual sexual experiences. Certainly in many cases there were also sexual experiences per se, in that the child had either participated in sexual acts and as a result had come up against interference from adults; or adults had made the child a party to sexual acts of which he was later ashamed and which he tried to forget; or else the child had witnessed the sexual act among adults with a resulting emotion which it was unable to control. As soon as Freud discovered these facts, he enlarged his concept of sexuality to include not only sexual acts, but all other sexual impulses as well, including wishes and fantasies. Thus the origin of a neurosis must be sought in the suppression and inhibition of all kinds of sexual impulses and fantasies in the wider meaning of the word.

Soon it became clear that the concept of sexuality had to be widened even more. Analysis showed that much of the material which undoubtedly originated in childhood had to be classified as perversions or sexual aberrations in adult life. Sexual sensations and impulses are felt not only in the sexual organs but in many other parts of the body, particularly in the mouth, the anal and urethral openings, and in the breasts; in many cases also in other parts of the body, such as the feces, the throat, nose, a foot, or a toe, to name examples from my own practice. Sexual sensations can also occur during certain acts which seemingly have nothing to do with sexuality, as for example during a fist fight, in exhibitionism, and curiosity about what other people do when they think they are alone (Peeping Toms), also putting out or looking at a fire, again examples taken from my own practice. All these acts are felt immediately as sexual by the patient in question, or else as improper, wicked, which for most people is synonymous with sex. These acts have in common the fact that under certain circumstances they lead to a sexual release: ejaculation in men, a more or less recognizable orgasm in women. Freud had no doubt but that all these manifestations should be included in the concept of sexuality, and psychoanalytic literature has ever since used the expression in this wider sense.

Freud's continued research soon led him to discover that the sexual aberrations or perversions named above, or some of them, are present in all children, and that they continue until a certain age. The child, he stated, is polymorphously perverse, from the point of view of the adult. On the basis of this research he laid down his basic theory of sex, in his famous and bitterly contested work, *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*. In this work he shows the development of the sexual impulse from birth to maturity—the first presentation of this development in history. The three most important stages of development he termed the oral, anal-sadistic, and genital or phallic stage. The child remains in the last-named stage until the age of 5 to 6; then comes a period of some years during which sex seems to play a lesser part, at least in the conscious emotional life. After this so-called latency period, sexuality awakens to new life during prepuberty. There follows a period of seeking and difficulties during the years of puberty, until the sexual life reaches its mature form, characterized by sexual relations with a person of the opposite sex. I cannot here go into detail about this development or about the numerous abnormal deviations found in the various stages of development, or their various reasons. I wish only to stress four points which play an important part both in Freud's theory of sex and of the neuroses,
and in the later development of these theories.

1. By far the greatest number of pathological sexual developments are the result of encroachments by parents, families, teachers. These aberrations form the basis for neuroses, which therefore have their origin in a conflict between biological impulse and social environment—or, as popularly expressed: neuroses are due to sexual inhibition.

2. Freud regarded the various sexual aberrations as special impulses. These “partial impulses” were of a manifold nature. Together they formed the sum-total of sexual energy, libido, as Freud called it, so that when one partial impulse became strong, the result was a corresponding weakening of the others.

3. Freud showed that a part of the sexual energy, of the libido, could be transferred from sexual objects to others that were not sexual. If these objects were useful to society, or at least accepted by society, Freud called this shift of energy sublimation. The name alone implies a depreciation of sexual objects compared with others. Freud also came to believe that there existed a certain conflict between sublimation and sexual satisfaction, between free sexuality and culture. Sex-economy holds another view for reasons explained below.

4. Freud demonstrated the sexual attachment existing between parents and children, which he called the Oedipus complex. I do not wish to touch here upon the outcry and persecution which resulted for Freud and psychoanalysis because of this teaching of the Oedipus complex. Neither do I wish to bring out the reasons for placing certain limits upon this theory. I only wish to emphasize Freud’s demonstration that the Oedipus complex is at first unitary, both “tender” and “sensual” at the same time, as Freud put it. This relationship between parents and children becomes, because of sexual restrictions, threats, and cries of “shame,” split in two parts, one tender, the other sensual. The sensual element often becomes completely suppressed at an early age, while the tender, at least for a while, remains conscious. But the suppression of the sensual side often carries with it such anger and bitterness that even the tender side disappears and the only conscious feelings remaining between children and parents are those of indifference, or of hatred and enmity. In any case, the usual antiseXual upbringing leads to a split in the emotional life between love on the one side and sensual desire on the other, between eros and sexus, as it has been called. In its extreme form this split often causes a person to be impotent with a mate he really loves, while he is unable to feel love for a partner to whom he is drawn by sexual desire. It can be expressed thus: “I would not be so wicked as to desire to sleep with the girl I love.” This split also lies at the root of many speculations about eroticism and sexuality.

Psychoanalysis worked along on this theoretical basis during a quarter of a century, from about 1900 to about 1925. During this period many minor discoveries of detailed nature were made, resulting in certain corrections of the theory and in a certain development, but nothing of a basic nature came to light. The most important was perhaps the discovery of the “instinctual basis” of certain isolated character traits, and of certain neurotic symptoms and inhibitions. Two fields of research occupied the psychoanalysts: the therapy of the neuroses, practical and theoretical; and the study of cultural life in the light of psychoanalysis—ethnography, history, art, literature, religion, and science. In this field there was a great deal of careful research, which we cannot take up here.

The new ingredient in the theory of sex which was discovered later, had, like all other important discoveries in analytical psychology, its root first of all in clinical
work, and, in addition, in pedagogy and social work based on psychology. The new discovery was Wilhelm Reich's orgasm theory, brought out around 1925. This theory was based on certain clinical experiences which at that time had awakened a general interest in the field of psychoanalysis. These experiences consisted of the cases of failure in psychoanalysis among patients, both those that psychoanalysis was unable to affect and those who appeared improved by treatment, but very soon, for unknown reasons, relapsed into their old neurosis or developed a new one instead. It was the study of these cases that caused Freud to add to his theory of sex the theory of the death instinct and which caused Reich to build a new theory based upon Freud's original theory, which at the same time made Freud's theory more unified and consistent.

Freud based his new death instinct theory upon a particular type of patient whom he was unable to cure or affect, i.e., one who showed what he called "a negative therapeutic reaction." Such a patient reacted to each step of the analysis, each new discovery or correct analysis of his problem, even when he felt that it was a correct analysis, by an aggravation of his neurosis. Freud believed that what he had succeeded in freeing in such a patient was a desire which he had hitherto neglected: the desire for destruction or death. This desire, he believed, belonged to the natural instincts with which each man is endowed at birth, but usually was so hidden among the various expressions of sexual desire that it had not been noticed before; it merely gave to the other desires a special, aggressive tone. But in certain cases, which Freud tried to clarify, this fusion of desires became separated ("Trieb-Entmischung") and then it might happen that the death instinct became the strongest. This death instinct theory of Freud's was never generally accepted, for both theoretical and practical reasons which I cannot go into here. I cannot speak for the present attitude of the International Psychoanalytical Association.

Reich took a different path. He gathered all the case material he could find of both successful cases and failures, those who had more or less finished their analysis with and without relapses, those who had remained cured, and those who remained hopelessly ill. He thereupon discovered that the successful cases were those who had succeeded in establishing and maintaining a satisfactory sex life, which the relapsed cases and the failures had not done. His next step was to try to discover what a satisfactory sex life consisted of and what role it plays in life. The result of this research was his orgasm theory, first described in Die Funktion des Orgasmus, published in 1927. This orgasm theory is the basis of sex-economy, and I wish to describe it in more detail.

The genital sex life had hitherto been the stepchild in psychoanalytic research, in any case as far as adult genitality went; the situation was a little better in regard to children. Sex life was regarded as a step in a person's development like any other step, with the difference that it was normally the ultimate step and that it led to procreation. How genital sex life differs from other forms of sexuality, how it expresses itself among the ill and among the healthy, aside from such gross disturbances as impotence or frigidity, what role it plays both in itself and in relation to other expressions of sexual desire—these questions had been seldom, if at all, the subject of research.

The first thing Reich needed to clarify was the nature of a satisfactory sex life. He asked a number of people, who seemed to have a satisfactory sex life, and a comparison of their answers showed that the sexual act is not fully satisfactory unless it follows a certain living development: the act begins with a spontaneous excita-
tion, which grows, first slowly and later more quickly during the preliminary caresses and the first stage of coitus. During this stage the movements are voluntary and to a certain degree it is possible to control the growth of excitation through control of these actions. When this stage reaches a certain point there is a sudden rise in excitation, the movements become automatic, consciousness is concentrated entirely on the perception of the pleasure sensations until the highest point is reached, the orgasm, with a moment of unconsciousness. After that, the excitation subsides rapidly, consciousness returns, and a stage of tranquil happiness intervenes, a sensation of contentment and peace, which slowly changes to a desire for sleep, work, or play. The ability to experience this kind of a sexual act was found by Reich only in persons free from neurotic symptoms or inhibitions. He called this ability *orgastic potency*. In this way orgastic potency became the indication of freedom from neurosis and thereby the goal of the therapy of neuroses.

Before I continue I should like to emphasize that it is on the basis of these clinical experiences, continually corroborated, that Reich and sex-economy lay such great stress upon orgastic potency, and not on the basis of more or less theoretical speculations. I wish to repeat what these experiences have shown: that all persons, who have themselves experienced the sort of sex act which I have just described, agree that it is more satisfying than any other form of sexual activity, and that the capacity for experiencing this act, called "orgastic potency," is found only in persons without neuroses, and that hitherto we have not found any case of freedom from neurosis without orgastic potency.

After having determined what an adequate, completely satisfying sex act is and that no neurotic person is capable of attaining this satisfaction, Reich investigated the various forms of emotional disturbance of the capacity for orgasm and found reason to believe that each type of neurosis has its own form of disturbance of the orgastic potency. I cannot here further describe that investigation. Instead I wish to describe Reich's general discussion of how neuroses are formed at all, in what way and why they always are accompanied by disturbances of the genital function and a lowering of orgastic potency; also the question of the source of energy of the neuroses.

Reich proceeded from the difference Freud had shown to exist between "actual neuroses" and "psychoneuroses." Actual neuroses Freud called such as seemed to have their origin in a present-day disturbance in sex life, particularly coitus interruptus, conflicts about masturbation, or sexual continence, and which ceased when the sexual disturbance was corrected. Freud believed, at first, that the sexual disturbance in these cases caused an accumulation of "sexual substances" as he named this supposed state of the body. When the patient succeeded in having a normal sex life, this accumulation ceased, and the neurosis was cured. Since this type of neurosis had a present-day causation, i.e., the sexual disturbance, he called it actual neurosis.

The psychoneurosis, on the other hand, has its origin in unconscious, inhibited impulses, wishes, and memories, which go back to the patient's childhood; conflicts which were never solved, but pushed aside and repressed. Freud also discovered with the passage of the years that the difference between actual neuroses and psychoneuroses is not absolute; closer study reveals that behind each actual neurosis there lies hidden something of a psychoneurotic nature, and on the other hand, that each psychoneurosis has an "actual-neurotic core."

Reich, as I have stated, proceeded from the difference between the two. He showed that the symptoms in an actual neurosis
chiefly are anxiety and a series of vasomotor reactions: palpitation of the heart or other disturbances in the action of the heart, perspiration, feelings of hot and cold, shakiness, dizziness, diarrhea, often a dry throat, or an excessive amount of saliva.

Note that the origin of actual neurosis is a disturbance of the sex life, i.e., a sex life with excitation but without adequate release. According to Freud's theory, there occurred damming-up of "sexual substances." Reich called this a stasis of sexual energy. The lack of an adequate release was found always to result in anxiety and the physiological symptoms which often accompany anxiety. On the other hand, a patient with actual neurosis loses his anxiety and the accompanying symptoms as soon as he obtains sexual release. Actual neuroses thus clearly demonstrate an antithetical relationship between sexuality and anxiety.

This relationship shows itself in other ways as well. During treatment of other neuroses, one sees that each time the patient gives up a neurotic symptom, he develops anxiety. It is clear that the function of the various symptoms is to diminish or "bind" the anxiety. When the symptom is given up the anxiety is released so that the patient experiences it fully. Whenever it is possible to discover how a neurosis started, it is shown that it began with anxiety. This is what we mean when we say that each psychoneurosis has an actual-neurotic core. The actual neurosis which in this way appears during the treatment of each psychoneurosis vanishes when the patient achieves a satisfactory genital sex life with orgasmic release.

The discussions of his own clinical experiences and those of other analysts confronted Reich with a new series of problems, which he was the first to formulate and examine and try to solve. I therefore wish to give a brief review of the most important of these, in approximately chronological order in which they occurred in Reich's work.

The first of these problems was the psychological one, What is the function or functions of genital sexuality, and particularly of the genital orgasm? Until then psychologists, physicians and biologists, not to mention moralists and philosophers, had written and spoken about the sexual life of the individual as if it had no other function than that of procreation. Many of them well knew that the strongest feelings of pleasure are tied up with the sexual act, and that it is in great measure to achieve these that people and animals seek mates. But they regarded this desire lightly; it was primarily a bait created by nature in order to make people and animals accept the burden of bringing up their young. A person who took life seriously and wished to raise himself above the level of the animal ought not to seek his happiness in the satisfaction of his low, animal desires, but ought instead to do his duty—and for some people this meant bringing children into the world and taking care of them. The psychologists were unable to get away from the fact that some people became extremely unhappy when they were forced to give up their sexual desires, and both physicians and laymen could not close their eyes to the relationship that seemed to exist in these cases between an unsatisfactory sexual life and certain illnesses. But these were facts which science preferred to leave to poets, moralists and theologians to fight about as best they could. A storm of indignation arose, among physicians and psychologists as well as among churchmen and moralists, when Freud declared that the origin of neuroses was to be found in the suppression of sexual desires, or in wrongly directed sexual desires. In addition, Freud believed that it was necessary not only to make the sexual desires conscious, but also to satisfy them, as long as nothing stood in the way and the satisfaction of them did not take
away energy from cultural work. If there were hindrances in the way of satisfaction of one's sexual desires, one could do one of two things: deny them and fight against them without repression; or sublimate them, giving them a non-sexual goal accepted or at least tolerated by society. Because of this idea of the denial and "sublimation" of sexual desires, the opposition to Freud's teachings became less violent, so that not only psychologists who did not practice psychoanalysis, but even moralists and churchmen, were able to find something valuable in Freud's theories. Everything was on the way to an ideal state of affairs.

But at this point Reich came on the scene and disturbed this idyllic state of affairs with his orgasm theory. This theory states that if a person is to remain healthy, i.e., free from neurotic symptoms and inhibitions, he must have a satisfactory sexual life with adequate release of sexual excitation, which means, for a mature person, sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex, with complete orgasm. (How children achieve release is not yet clear; possibly in the beginning through being sucked and sucking their fingers, toys, etc.; and later, from the age of 3-4, through masturbation to which they can give themselves wholly and thus experience pleasure.) If one accepts this theory—and it is confirmed by all clinical experience—it is clear that the sexual life has quite a different function besides procreation, i.e., it regulates the excitations of the psychophysical organism; it regulates the energy household, the sexual economy, of the organism. The neuroses—inhibitions as well as neurotic symptoms—are therefore the result of a disturbed energy household in the organism.

What sort of energy are we dealing with here? Psychoanalysis gave this energy of the sexual desire the name of libido, which really means "desire." But that which we experience psychologically as desire and pleasure, must also find expression organically, biologically. As far as sexual pleasure goes, it can occur on any sensitive spot on the body. Biologically, feelings of desire and pleasure are tied to the vegetative nervous system, which is functionally and partly even anatomically, divided in two parts, the parasympathetic (vagus) and the sympathetic system. Feelings which are psychologically libidinous, are biologically vegetative.

The clinical experiences I mentioned above show that when sexual desire is hindered and is not permitted to attain its goal, a state of anxiety occurs (which later may be bound to or exchanged for, various neurotic symptoms). The physiological expression of sexual desire is a preponderant innervation of the parasympathetic (vagotonia) which shows itself in fresh, ruddy color of face and body; the skin is smooth and warm, without perspiration, the eyes clear, there is ample secretion of saliva, heart and pulse are normal, the sphincter muscles of the bladder and anus are relaxed, an increased secretion of the sex glands is evident, the sexual organs are warm and filled with blood. The physiological expression of anxiety, on the other hand, is a preponderant innervation of the sympathetic (sympatheticotonia); pale, cold skin with cold sweat, goose pimples on the body, a dry mouth, the eyes wide-open, pupils large, pulse fast, palpitation of the heart, spasm of the sphincter muscles of the bladder and anus, the sexual organs dry and wrinkled. Pleasure sensations, even if not of a consciously sexual character, have, nevertheless, the same physiological expressions, even though not as outspoken. This points to a basic identity of sexuality and pleasure. A wealth of psychological experiences points to the same conclusion: one can see this in children, but also among adults, during analysis. Children who have been prohibited from their early years, or very strongly, from seeking pleasure, even in
non-sexual activities, feel a kind of prohibition against all kinds of desire. If this inner prohibition is not removed, they will grow up into adults with a diminished capacity both for seeking and experiencing pleasure, sexually and in other ways; for example, in their work. Many adults who begin to experience natural pleasure during treatment, for example in the deep breathing, feel at first that this pleasure is something forbidden (that is to say, sexual) in spite of the fact that in thinking about it they cannot find anything terrible in it. Thus Reich arrived at the conclusion that sexuality and the function of pleasure are fundamentally the same, and that the opposite of sexuality, both physiologically and psychologically, is anxiety. This antithesis he called the basic antithesis of vegetative life.

Physiologically, it can be shown that in vagotonic reaction the blood flows towards the periphery of the body, the skin. Psychically this is felt as a turning outward of one's interest: one wants to do something or to come into contact with other people. If this desire meets any opposition—and this happens practically always, if only the opposition of inertia—the flow towards the periphery is dammed in several places, creating a local sympathicotonic reaction with an increased inner tension. With the help of this tension the opposition is overcome, or else the dammed-up stream of energy is released in movements. As the energy is used up a new vagotonic reaction occurs, and the same process is repeated, so that it is possible to say that normal, free, vegetative activity consists of a rhythmic alternation between the parasympathetic and sympathetic functions.

But the regular, everyday change between the parasympathetic and sympathetic functions does not give release to the whole vegetative energy. At longer or shorter intervals there seems to be a gathering of energy, which seeks release through a discharge of both parasympathetic and sympathetic, a discharge in which the complete psychophysical organism is involved. Such discharges occur on the one hand through sexual orgasm; on the other hand through feats of strength or work which demand all one's energies. In the first case the vagotonic reaction, the experience of pleasure, is uppermost, but even the sympathicotonic reaction is seen in the strong feelings of excitement and need for release. In the second case the feeling of striving, of putting one's strength to the test, of suspense (i.e., sympathicotonic reaction) is the strongest, while the vagotonic reaction is felt here as the accompanying pleasure and satisfaction of having used one's energies well. In both experiences is felt, when the highest pitch is reached, an element of risk, of danger, of anxiety, in the midst of pleasure. Isolated, this element can become a desire for anxiety, a sense of daring, of adventurousness; or, in a negative sense, it can become pleasure anxiety.

Clinical experience shows that these two kinds of experience always go together, so that in the same degree that a person has the capacity for work (in the sense of wholly giving himself to it, of concentrating upon it), he also has the capacity for experiencing the sexual orgasm completely. This was to be expected, considering the close relationship of the two parts of the vegetative nervous system, the vagic and the sympathetic. If the vagotonic functions are free and capable of release, the sympathetic ones must be the same, and vice versa. This point of view has shown itself very valuable in clinical work. Often our patients declare that nothing is wrong with their sexual potency, but they are dissatisfied with their work or with their way of life in other ways. When we have discovered enough about what is wrong with their work or their methods of living and working, it is possible as a rule to discover a certain disturbance of the sexual function. From my own experience with
patients, I may say that a further examination of the sex life of such patients has always proved me right. On the other hand it happens that persons who are extremely satisfied with their capacity for work and with life in general, come for treatment because of diminished sexual potency. In such cases closer examination of the sexual disturbance makes it possible to point out corresponding disturbances in the working capacity, of which the patient had been unaware. In this way we are also able to decide when a treatment is successfully finished. In order to be considered finished, we must find in the patient complete orgastic potency, complete capacity for concentration in work, and, I should like to add, a certain spirit of enterprise and daring. The first two abilities are not found, at least not for long periods, except in persons who have a satisfying sexual life; in regard to the third characteristic, it is common, among persons without orgastic potency, to find it taking up either an unreasonably large or an unreasonably small place in their lives. Such persons are usually extremely daring, i.e., wild speculators, proposers of grand projects or hypotheses, or else they are lacking in initiative and are overcautious.

To the question, “What is the function of the genital sexual life?”—we can therefore answer: It is the only complete regulator of the vegetative and therefore of the psychic energy tensions. The capacity for genital sexual experience, that is, orgastic potency, is identical with the capacity for a maximal and concentrated working ability and with courage to meet the difficulties which life brings.

At the same time as he reached this psychological result, Reich was faced with a series of new problems. The first was the therapeutic problem: how to help patients to overcome the inner difficulties which impede a satisfying sexual life and destroy their natural orgastic potency? Since a disturbance of the sexual life is identical with a disturbance of the vegetative functions, the first thing was to discover how these functions became disturbed and broken. Since Reich had approached the problem from a psychoanalytic point of view it was natural for him to begin with the emotional causes. Even psychoanalysis had shown that the origin of the difficulties was not to be found in the neurotic symptoms, which instead were really attempts to solve or flee from the difficulties, usually by giving satisfaction to certain inhibited desires and thus camouflaging these desires so that they were unrecognized. One concrete example: a patient suffering from a compulsive desire to stare at everything that looked the least bit different, was proved to experience during staring an immediate feeling of pleasure, although weak and of short duration, of the same kind experienced by the patient during secret masturbation. Sometimes this compulsive desire to stare camouflaged the visual fantasies which had accompanied the masturbation. Like all such symptoms, it gave little satisfaction and was a great deal of trouble. Obviously it was not a good solution to the conflict between masturbation and the desire to stare on the one hand, and the normal inhibitions on the other; but it saved the patient from experiencing and acknowledging desires which he believed were sinful and shameful. This is, in the main, the function of all neurotic symptoms and inhibitions. At an early date Freud had shown that the origin of both symptoms and inhibitions lay in such conflicts, and he believed at first that if the conflict and the meaning of the symptom were made conscious, the symptom would vanish. In some cases this was true, but not for the majority. Usually there was a strong resistance to giving up the unconscious desires and even more to acknowledging them and experiencing them, even when the analyst was able to explain their
content. In this way it became necessary to first analyze the resistance, and Freud laid down various principles for this "analysis of resistances"—principles which in practice were seldom or never followed before Reich developed the technique of consistent resistance analysis. After awhile it became apparent that not even "resistance-analysis" could succeed with the great majority of neuroses, because the resistance stemmed not only from conscious or unconscious desires and affects, but from the very character of the patient; and here analysis did not get any further, at least in the majority of cases. It was here that Reich's great pioneering work in the therapeutic field set in.

Reich was the first psychoanalyst to take up the problem of character for general discussion. Earlier, much good work had been done to clarify the instinctual basis of certain isolated characteristics, particularly by Freud, Abraham, and Jones. But no one had considered character as a whole, the question of which character traits go together and why, the whole structure of character; and least of all had anyone considered the function of the character. In spite of the fact that analysts had seen various isolated characteristics grow in the soil of certain drives and under certain given circumstances, it seemed to be taken for granted that once a certain character trait existed in a patient, there was nothing to be done about it except to make the best of it. To be sure, it sometimes happened that one or more character traits changed during treatment, but this was regarded as accidental, as occurring by chance. The usual procedure was that, when during analysis it had been discovered that the patient had a particular tendency, that a particular partial impulse had "become part of the character," there remained nothing else for the patient to do about it than to continue living with his personality as best he could.

Here Reich made his first basic therapeutic advance. Taking the central function of sexuality, and particularly the orgasm, as a point of departure, he asked himself: what role do the different characters play in relation to this function? All types of character have in common that they make it possible for the individual to protect himself from stimuli that are too painful, so that they may be held at a distance until there is time and opportunity to react in a more convenient manner and not blindly. It is a truism that most of the more or less useful methods of reacting have a tendency to become habits, which easily become unconscious and hinder a person from reacting thereafter in the manner which would, under the circumstances, actually be the most useful. When Reich began to compare the different characters and their effect on the function of the orgasm, he soon saw that they fell into two main groups: those who had the capacity for orgasmic potency, and those who did not. He named the first group the genital character; and the second, the neurotic character. I cannot take the space here to give a detailed description of the two groups, but I wish to say a few words regarding the difference between them.

The genital character enjoys a sexual life that has attained full flowering, so that all sexual desires are gathered into the one heterosexual desire to have intercourse with complete surrender, without any wish to torture or to be tortured, and without having the other partner—consciously or unconsciously—see in him whichever of the parents had been the love-object during childhood. Without exceptionally strong reasons this type of person does not tolerate living in celibacy; when he has a partner, to whom it is possible to give himself completely and without fear and who can receive fully, he will stay with this partner as long as the full relationship lasts.

In the neurotic character, on the other hand, the pregenital desires are so strong that they prevent a full genital orgasm, or
else the genital desires are so hedged about with prohibitions and guilt feelings that he finds it impossible to have a mature sex life, or if he has one, it is so inhibited that it does not give full satisfaction and release. This lack of complete release causes a feeling of emptiness and uselessness which we call inferiority feeling, and which is so common that there is a more or less general belief that a feeling of sadness or dissatisfaction is normal after intercourse ("post coitum omne animal triste"). If this feeling of inferiority, as often happens, leads a person to work hard, this will either become compulsive work out of duty, or else a seeking after power and honors rather than happiness. The genital character finds work a natural result of his desire for constantly increasing contact with other people and of a healthy participation with his fellowbeings in sorrow and joy. Since orgastic potency is identical with the ability to concentrate wholly upon an object or a piece of work, and since each neurosis brings with it a disturbance of this ability, it follows that for the genital character life and work is a realization of these natural tendencies, or a struggle for these goals; while work and life for the neurotic character becomes infiltrated with the struggle to hold down both the original, and even more, the secondary desires and tendencies. The varying forms of the neurotic character are varying ways of suppressing the desires or tendencies of which he is ashamed or which he regards as dangerous.

Using this knowledge of the role played by character, Reich began to look for a method of influencing and changing character. Bit by bit he worked out a new technique to attain his goal, the character-analytic technique. I will not go into detail about this technique but merely point out that he inaugurated, or rather builds upon two points of view which are related to the psychoanalytical viewpoint, and yet take an important step forward. While psychoanalysis seeks to make the unconscious desires conscious through free association and through analysis of unconscious desires and the resistance to them, character-analysis, on the one hand, attacks the character and makes the patient conscious of the way in which he acts in word and deed; and on the other hand the character-analyst encourages him not only to say what comes to his mind, but also to do it, within certain limits. The unconscious, which in this way is made conscious, is experienced in quite a different manner and with quite another sense of reality than most of the material brought out during free association and interpretation. This technique, as worked out by Reich, made evident that most characters consist of several layers, which are expressed and made conscious one after the other, until the patient himself feels that he has arrived at the manner of behavior natural for him. When the patient comes far enough along so that this behavior is stable, he also achieves orgastic potency—an achievement which naturally does not occur at once, but little by little, as the sexual elements of his behavior undergo treatment along with the other elements.

During treatments employing the character-analytic technique, Reich noticed that patients regularly experienced a series of bodily movements and sensations hitherto unknown to them; and with which the medical world had not concerned itself, although much of this had already been observed occasionally. No one had ever thought of doing anything about these movements. They began, as Reich noticed, often without the knowledge of the patient, and most often as jerking or pulling movements, many times reminding one of certain kinds of tics. Often they began locally, but spread further and further throughout the body. After a while it was possible to distinguish two kinds of movements: those that looked soft, free, organic,
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and others, which were swifter, spasmodic or mechanical. When the soft, organic movements reached a certain stage before they were broken off by the other movements or by resistance, they were accompanied by "flowing" feelings in the body. Often these feelings began on the inside of the thighs, in the chest, stomach or the face. One condition for the development of both the free movements and the flowing feelings was more or less free, deep breathing by the patient. With these experiences as a basis, Reich began to study the relationship between deep breathing and spontaneous bodily movements, and at the same time the reason for the muscular spasms and mechanical or automatic movements which acted as a brake, or stopped altogether, the spontaneous movements and flowing sensations. He then discovered that as the spontaneous movements and flowing sensations increased, as the breathing became freer, as the patient had less muscular spasm and less mechanical, automatic movements, he understood much more clearly his difficulties and the reasons for them, and was able more and more to overcome them, in his work, sexuality and his manner of living in general.

This formed the basis for a new step forward in therapeutic technique and led to what Reich called character-analytic vegetotherapy. We will refer to the method only by the last-named word, vegetotherapy, but emphasize that we always mean character-analytic therapy and not an independent therapy which has little or nothing to do with character-analysis. Whether it will in the future be possible for the vegetotherapeutic technique to become independent of character-analysis and achieve cures of character faults solely by its own methods, is a question I do not wish to discuss here.

The point of departure for vegetotherapy as a special technique for treating neuroses and character difficulties was the discovery of what Reich has called the orgasm reflex. This discovery has been described by Reich in ORGASMUSREFLEX, MUSKELHALTUNG UND KÖRPERAUSDRUCK, Oslo, 1937. In a patient who clearly and quickly developed the spontaneous movements just discussed, these became little by little more and more unified, so that finally the whole body was involved. They then exhibited the form of wavelike movements over the whole body which grew in intensity until they became clonic movements, as in a free orgasm. It was this that Reich called the orgasm reflex. When he had seen this reflex in its fully developed form and remembered its development, he was struck by the fact that all the movements we have mentioned here as spontaneous movements, are parts of orgasm reflexes, and when they are given an opportunity to develop, are gathered together in this one reflex. During clinical treatment the development of the orgasm reflex goes hand in hand with the ability to overcome resistances in the character to the free impulses, and with the release of the muscular spasms of the body. Thus the achievement of the complete, free orgasm reflex can be regarded as the goal of the therapy of neuroses.

The new element in the therapeutic technique which Reich introduced after this discovery, was that he took particular notice of the spontaneous bodily movements and of that which acted as a brake upon them, or stopped them, or hindered them from developing. Something of these movements is found in each human being in connection with breathing and the action of the heart. The action of the heart is difficult to influence except by drugs, but breathing can be controlled by will-power. Further, it seems that changes in heart-rhythm are the result of other vegetative processes rather than the reason for the occurrence of these processes, while breathing is able to start, to act as a brake upon, or to stop altogether, many vegetative movements and sensations. If one ob-
serves the spontaneous breathing of a person, it is possible, with some experience, to quickly notice several places on the body where there is more or less muscular resistance, either constantly or at intervals, of which the person himself is often unaware. After gaining a certain experience, it is also possible to notice that many of these muscular resistances are part of a way of carrying the body, of an expression of the face, which bears witness to either a state of emotion or to a character trait. All this can be conscious, unconscious or only partly conscious, if it is possible to use such an expression.

The function of vegetotherapeutic treatment is that of freeing the spontaneous, vegetative movements. To achieve this, the patient must consciously experience both the constant and varying muscular spasms of his body, which hinder the spontaneous movements, as well as the spontaneous movements themselves as they occur. In other words, it is necessary to make him consciously experience what is happening in his own body, both what he himself does and what occurs spontaneously. The methods used are partly direct, partly indirect. Directly, the therapist tries to make the patient feel what is happening in his body, or make him conscious, for example, that he is lying with a muscular spasm in the throat or in the forehead. Indirectly, the therapist points out, perhaps, that for a long time the patient has not accepted a single thing that has been said, not even the most obvious facts, and in this way it may be possible to make the patient relax his stiff-necked attitude somewhat. A combination of the two methods occurs when the therapist first succeeds in making the patient experience and acknowledge a certain way of holding himself or a certain muscular spasm and then lets him discover by himself what lies behind all this; preferably also, discovering what particular expression this has had in his recent behavior. In working these things out there occur also, during most treatments, forgotten or half-forgotten memories, often clearly related to the muscular spasms, or to the facial or bodily expression. Some spasms, often in parts of the body which are difficult to observe or to reach from the outside, are made conscious through dreams. By utilizing the hints offered by dreams, it is often possible to get a patient to experience and to try to relax such spasms.

Each time the patient experiences a new sensation in this way, a new vegetative movement is released. This is true whether the new experience deals with present problems or those of the past; very often there is a combination of the two. When the vegetative movements have reached a certain strength or a certain inclusiveness, the patient experiences them, partly together with the flowing currents felt in the body, partly simply as such currents. These currents are often described by patients as waves of warmth, or a slight sucking or pulling of a clearly pleasurable nature. Patients who previously have had religious experiences express these sensations in religious terms, streams of grace, blessedness, joy and peace. Others, who are used to religious expressions but have not had any personal religious experiences, say that now they understand what it means to be blessed, or that they have had a "foretaste of heavenly bliss." The experiencing of these bodily currents gives the patients a greater feeling of security and new hope of becoming healthy.

As soon as the patient is able to experience and follow along with his vegetative movements, he is able to cooperate in the treatment in a different manner than before, by more and more being able to feel both how and why he puts the brake on his own vegetative movements, and in this way more consciously cooperating in the work of overcoming the hindrances, both bodily ones and those which stem from his character. As this work proceeds and suc-
ceeds, he sees more and more clearly both the outer difficulties and conflicts which have shaped his inhibitions and his neurosis, and also which inner and outer difficulties he must fight, if he wishes to become free and healthy once more. The complete experiencing of these difficulties sometimes causes him to lose courage and become so depressed that he is unable to see his way clear to overcoming them. If such depressions become too severe, before the patient has learned to give expression by word and action to his feelings, he may stop treatment without having improved noticeably, or even commit suicide in a fit of depression. It is especially important for him to become conscious, at an early stage, of his suppressed anger and learn to vent it; once he has learned how to do this, the danger of stopping treatment because of inner conflicts or the danger of suicide becomes small or nonexistent. It might be wise to point out in this connection, that these dangers, even the danger of suicide, exist in all neuroses, whether the patient is being treated or not. The fact that the patient becomes more and more conscious of the scope of his difficulties and how deeply imbedded they are, regularly causes the last stage of treatment to become the most difficult, both for the patient and the therapist. This is also true of psychoanalysis and character-analysis.

As the vegetative movements become released, the patient begins to feel more free in other ways; in particular, he begins to feel more alive. His capacity for living, for entering into activity, for giving himself to the present, grows tremendously, in regard to work, relations with other people, and sexual relations. His work, social life, and sexual experiences are freed from most of the restraints that previously impeded them, such as feelings of duty, compulsion, guilt, and rivalry for honors. They become natural functions to which he is able to devote himself freely and surrender himself to, in his own way and in his own time. Opposition no longer depresses or discourages him, but acts as a spur to greater efforts, to anger, if necessary, or, when the opposition is actually overpowering, to a seeking of new ways or new goals. He feels, in general, much more alive. This does not mean that he feels more satisfied or happier, sometimes quite the opposite: if circumstances make it impossible for him to keep on with his new way of life, he will suffer more deeply. On the other hand, he will give up trying to improve on a way of life that is impossible both for himself and those in his environment. For he who is vegetatively healthy has a much greater capacity for contact with others, for feeling with them, and thus he suffers if they suffer. It can be said that the capacity for suffering grows in about the same ratio as the capacity for happiness; this is what one would expect when one recalls that the suppression of the vegetative life, the inhibitions, originated as a protection against anxiety and suffering.

The vegetatively free person experiences all his own needs, desires and impulses in a different way and much more strongly than the person who is vegetatively inhibited, except for those special occasions, when the inhibited person's dammed-up impulses break out with unnatural strength. The vegetatively free person does not tolerate outer bonds and limitations which he finds unreasonable. And he longs to surround himself with free people, feels uncomfortable among superiors or co-workers who are unable to accept all that he has to give, or to give that which he needs. In a society based on inequality and oppression, he therefore becomes a revolutionary. He demands a social system that will permit free people to exist, and a system of education that will permit children to retain the natural, vegetative freedom which is theirs at birth. On the basis of Reich's findings, Paul Martin has drawn up the basic principles for sex-economic
pedagogy in a little book, "Upbringing for Living." It is impossible to give more than basic principles at the present time; the details will be filled in after observation of sex-economic education over a longer period of time.

The basic principle in sex-economic education is self-regulation. By this we mean that everything that is done with and for the child must consider his needs, as he feels them and shows them, so that the child will get a chance to have his needs satisfied, to realize his desires himself, naturally with reasonable consideration of the demands of the adults and the environment. The reason we insist upon self-regulation is that in practically each case we treat, the vegetative, and therefore also the neurotic inhibitions, can be traced to childhood prohibitions enforced by adults. Self-regulation must begin the moment the child enters the world, so that from the first day of its life it may decide for itself how much and how long it wishes to eat, when and how long it wishes to sleep or remain awake, when it wishes to move its bowels and urinate, and when it needs care. Naturally it takes time and thought for an adult to discover the child's desires, but by taking this time and thought it is soon possible to discover the child's own natural rhythm and then count upon it with much greater safety than upon any habit the child may have been forced to learn through outer pressure. Further, there is the question of initiative in the child, to help it to grow and make it independent and able to help itself, as soon as age and strength permit. Thirdly, the question, so difficult for parents of today: How much love and caresses shall I give my child? The answer, for us, is quite clear: as much as the child itself wishes to have, no more or less. If it receives less than it desires, it becomes unhappy and doubtful of its own personality and of those of the adults, and develops that sense of inferiority from which so many adults suffer. And if it receives more love than it desires, it becomes spoiled; stops doing anything for itself and at last feels that there is no joy in anything that is given to it, no matter how beautiful the gifts or the care showered upon it. The same is true of everything the child receives before it shows a desire for it; this undermines the basis for one of the most important pre-requisites for a happy and successful life: the necessity for man to help himself as far as he can and to use all his talents to the utmost. Lastly, bringing up a child according to the principle of self-regulation will give parents and teachers more joy in the child than any other form of education, because this form of upbringing makes possible a wider and deeper contact between child and adults than can be had in any other way.

Practical sex-economic education has existed for only a short time, but there are some children who have lived with adults practicing the kind of upbringing I have briefly sketched. I cannot further describe how the principle of self-regulation works in the basic aspects of life, such as cleanliness, orderliness, play, and other facets of social life with children and adults, teaching and studies, work and the general development of methods of living; neither can I enter upon the role sexuality plays in the life of the child who is permitted to grow up under these conditions. I merely wish to state that those children I know, who have had this upbringing, are the healthiest, most natural, intelligent and lovable children I have ever seen.

When I described how it feels to experience vegetative movements and currents, I mentioned that people who earlier had had personal religious experiences or were used to religious expressions, often compared their vegetative feelings to their religious ones, or used religious words to describe vegetative feelings. These facts bring out the question: What role do these sensations play in the life of religious peo-
ple and thereby in religion as a whole? The scientists of our time seem to accept the belief that religion is built upon religious experiences. This question has not as yet received more than preliminary consideration, in lesser works by Reich, Karl Teschitz and myself; that which I have to offer on the subject is therefore merely preliminary results, which I hope to be able to enlarge upon in another connection.

Religious experience has always been the central problem of the psychology of religion, ever since this branch of science was created at the end of the 19th century. As I have shown in an earlier work, we are dealing here with a psychological experience of a particular kind, forming the basis and the point of departure for all that is specifically religious in religion. This experience I have called ecstasy. I have shown under what circumstances it is able to cause, and indeed has caused, a religion to be born. I wish here to state merely that ecstasy in one form or another is an integral part of religious conversion which is the religious phenomenon most thoroughly studied by psychologists, and which is of prime interest, particularly for many Christian sects. This interest is strongest in the English and American sects, and it is among them that the best research on conversion has been done.

This research, which bases itself equally upon the descriptions of living persons and literary sources, shows that at least among these sects conversion is a phenomenon of puberty—using the word puberty in its socio-psychological meaning: the period from physical sexual maturity until an adult sex life is established. This fact makes it easier for us to understand the whole process of conversion, because it forces us to ask: What is there about this period of transition that makes youth particularly susceptible to such experiences? Examination of children and adults from the viewpoint of sex-economy and with the technique of vegetotherapy gives us the answer. It shows that small children, before they have had their natural tendencies crushed, exhibit, in all their movements, the free, soft and charming vegetative manner, found in adults only in exceptional cases, or after long treatment. It shows further, that this softness and healthy spontaneity diminishes and at last mostly disappears, as the child is forced to suppress its natural impulses and natural reactions through prohibitions placed upon it by adults. In the four-five-six-year-old groups this repression of vegetative health is particularly noticeable. From five and six years on many children exchange a great part of their natural liveliness and happiness for a more or less comfortable consciousness of what adults approve of or of their own ability to hold up their end among children of their own age. This process continues for some years, usually until puberty sets in. Then, with the maturing of the sexual organs, the suppressed desire for life and particularly for sexuality receives new strength. But since all avenues of release are more or less closed, this desire becomes dammed up; this process takes a great deal of energy and binds it so that the energy at the service of the conscious personality is weakened, with the result that the young persons feel powerless, without abilities, inferior and empty or unhappy. For many, it is as if life were worthless, or at least as if they themselves were unable to get from it the things that make life worth living. This feeling constitutes for many young people the so-called difficulties of puberty. These difficulties do not always coincide with physiological puberty, which consists of the maturing and differentiation of the sexual cells. But if we include psychological puberty, which lasts from the time before physiological puberty until the young person establishes an adult sexual life, we may say that practically all people in the civilized world today have their puberty problems.

During this period, when life seems evil
and unhappy, or deserted and empty, religion enters with its “joyful message” of another, better, richer, and more blessed life for all who wish to be converted and believe. I will not describe here the methods used by religion to achieve such conversions, nor the occasions when conversion and belief seem to come by themselves, without forewarning. I shall content myself with showing that conversion and belief actually do lead to, or bring with them, a new life, experienced by the converted person and by the believer with the strongest feelings he has ever known. This experience is felt by most as something quite new in their lives; only one or the other will remember a time far back in childhood, when they felt alive in a similar way. It must have been such a memory that created the biblical sayings, “Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,” and, “This little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” This is because the new life which religion promises and gives to its believers is principally a reawakening, a break-through, of the spontaneously vegetative in life, with that joy in life that every healthy and unoppressed child has.

The scientific proof of this has not yet been established, and it is possible and even reasonable to expect that the results of my own experiences and examinations, which I have briefly described here, may look quite different after further experience and research. But I believe that everyone who has knowledge of both the therapy of the neuroses and the psychology of religion, will agree that these suggestions point to large and promising possibilities in the field of religious research.

It goes without saying that a psychological theory of emotional and bodily health as I have sketched it here, and in pedagogy and religion, must have serious consequences for our views on politics and society. There is as yet no sex-economic political organization, and we can hardly expect to have one until circumstances in the civilized world are such that practical efforts can be made to realize sex-economic principles on a larger scale. From the sex-economic viewpoint the chief goal of all political efforts must be to create a society and a way of living in which life, free, spontaneous, vegetative life, may develop as freely and as fully as possible; this is the only guarantee for a normal regulation of the sexual energy, or life energy. This requires that each person make his own decisions regarding his own body and be able to follow and put into practice his own desires, sexual and others, as long as he does not violate the desires of other people; society must provide the conditions of life necessary for this. Further, society must guarantee a form of education that will respect a child’s natural needs and will give it opportunity to develop freely in natural social life with other free children and adults. And further, conditions of work must be arranged so that each person may wholly, or at least primarily, engage in the kind of work he likes, together with people he likes, so that work will no longer hamper and kill, but quite the opposite, will express the spontaneous will to a free life.

It is impossible to say today how society should be built to fulfill these needs, and neither is it possible to say how we are going to achieve such a society. What can be done today, is that all who consciously feel the spontaneous life in themselves and understand the difficulties and dangers threatening it in the society of today, should learn the laws of society, as it now functions, and together try to find out how best to work for a new, free, and natural way of life. This much we can say now: the work toward a new kind of society must consider the necessity of satisfying the natural human needs.

In yet another, actually the most important, field, sex-economic theories will soon
propose new and decisive problems. I am referring to biology and the sciences connected with it, such as pathology, physiology and therapeutics.

Using as his starting point the clinical experiences in regard to the complete orgasm and the role it plays in releasing psychic and vegetative tensions, thereby acting as the regulator of psychophysical health, Reich undertook to discover what this orgasm really is from the viewpoint of biology and physiology. He arrived at the idea that the sensations felt during orgasm as sexual pleasure and excitation and which go with a vagotonia and the flow of blood and secretions to the periphery of the body, particularly to the sexual organs, really are a mechanical tension carrying with it a bio-electrical charge, which, when it reaches a certain degree, turns into bio-electrical discharge and mechanical relaxation. Experimenting with an oscillograph, he discovered that during sexual excitation there actually developed an increase in bio-electrical charge at the erogenous zones; on the other hand he found a decrease of this bio-electrical charge when the person submitting to the experiment experienced anxiety or unpleasure. As we mentioned before, feelings of pleasure are accompanied by an increased vagotonia, while anxiety and depression, on the other hand, go with an increased sympathicotonia. Vagotonia is a flow towards the periphery of the body, a widening, while sympathicotonia is a flowing inwards, a shrinking, with a decrease of surface excitation. There is found in all forms of life, a rhythmic exchange between flowing outward and flowing inward, from the simplest monacellular organisms to the highest metazoon, with the difference that in higher organisms this rhythm is tied to a vegetative nervous system with antithetical parasympathetic and sympathetic functions, while in lower organisms it is connected with the effects of certain chemical elements. These elements form two chief groups: one with vagus effects, the other with sympathetic effects. To the first group belongs potassium, choline and lecithin; to the second, calcium, adrenalin and cholesterol. We may name the two groups potassium and calcium groups.

In the light of these and many other related facts, the formula which Reich earlier had stated for the function of the orgasm, tension → charge → discharge → relaxation, came to have a much wider interpretation. Since the rhythmic alteration which is expressed in this formula exists in all living organisms, Reich asked himself if perhaps he had not discovered the formula for living functioning itself. He immediately began experiments to try to find the answer. The first to be successful were his "bion" experiments.

These experiments were based on the consideration that if the orgasm formula is also the formula for living functioning, it should be possible to derive life from lifeless matter, if the material is mixed so that it has the same combination as living matter, and under such circumstances that it is possible to achieve the rhythm expressed in the formula. Reich mixed various sterile substances under the conditions named above; thereupon he found that in and from some of these combinations, life developed; under the microscope one could observe the same movements found in living monacellular organisms. Certain parts of the preparation organized themselves into cells with nuclei and protoplasm, and when they were placed in sterile solutions of the kind usually used for bacterial cultures, they propagated and changed more and more of the medium into living matter. In order to rule out infection through the air, the French researcher Roger du Teil created a method of both sterilizing and mixing the cultures in air-tight tubes which made infection impossible; the result was the same. The bion experiments were attacked by the press of Norway, particularly in the spring and
summer of 1938. These attacks were based chiefly on ignorance of the experiments: not one of the critics had tried to master Reich's experimental technique or had himself repeated one single experiment.

As for myself, I am not familiar enough with biological and bacteriologic methods to be able to present more than a layman's conviction, based upon my knowledge of Reich, his writings, and those of his experiments which I have observed. I shall therefore not say anything more about the controversies regarding the bion experiments, but merely try to give a brief résumé of the theories and experiments Reich has developed since.

I stated that in his bion experiments Reich used, among other things, the sterilized remains of lifeless organisms. The living matter created during the experiment was quite different from the organism from which the sterilized matter had first been obtained. In other words, an organism can die and afterwards result in a new kind of spontaneous living matter. Reich connected this fact with an idea which various pathologists had briefly mentioned before: that the living matter causing certain illnesses, such as tuberculosis and cancer, might have originated through spontaneous generation in dead or disintegrated body-tissues. Reich believed that if such were the case, it must be possible to find tiny living particles in, for example, cancerous tissue, of the same size and organization as the bions which he had discovered. He examined such tissues, and the examination showed he was right: he discovered tiny living particles which had not been seen earlier and even found it possible to cultivate them in the same kind of cultures used for the bions. He also tried to combine them with bions, and then it appeared that some of the bions were stronger than others and destroyed the tiny living organisms. During the past few years—since the autumn of 1939 in the United States—Reich has continued these experiments, partly in collaboration with American researchers. The details of this work have not yet arrived in this country, but we know enough to dare hope for important results for both cancer research and cancer therapy.

During his bion experiments, Reich observed certain phenomena which he was unable to explain other than as an unknown radiation from the bions. It seems that people who are vegetatively free radiate energy, not only figuratively speaking, or psychically, but physically. What importance this fact may have for our consideration of and our use of the vegetative energy, it is impossible to say. I will merely mention that many experiments with this energy are now going on in various countries.

I have here tried to describe the development of that branch of research called sex-economy by its founder, Wilhelm Reich, from its beginnings as a clinical theory of the neuroses until it became a theory of the function of the energy of life itself. It began by showing what sexuality means to emotional and to bodily health, thereby laying the basis for the theory of the regulation of the sexual energy (sex-economy). This teaching created a series of new problems and research goals for therapy, pedagogy, the science of religion, sociology and politics and presented new problems for biology, general and special pathology, and finally, for biophysics. The name of sex-economy was retained even in these new, ever-widening fields, although the theory itself may seem to contain much more than this word indicates. Nevertheless there are many good reasons for keeping the old name. First, the historical reason: it was the study of sexuality which was the point of departure and the basis

Editor's note: The term "spontaneous generation" is misleading. As ordinarily used, it means something like the development of frogs from rags. For this reason, orgone biophysics uses the term "natural organization."—T.P.W.
for the theory. Further, the fact that up until now the experiments have all made it clear that the sexual energy—libido, in psychoanalytic language—is nothing but the life energy itself. It can perhaps be explained in another way: there is no special "sexual energy"; "sexual energy," in a more limited sense, is really life-energy directed toward a sexual object. Sexual energy is therefore not just a part of the life-energy, sexuality is a function of the life-energy as a whole, so that when sexuality is free, the life-energy is also free in the same degree. If sexuality is more or less suppressed, the life-energy as a whole becomes suppressed in the same degree. This concept is such an integral part of our whole theory, and plays such a definitive role in those fields of research the sex-economists have entered upon, that it is reasonable to find it reflected in the name of the theory itself. Finally the name expresses our desire to bring into the light of day and to an honored place, that which unhappily for the world has been most dishonored, condemned and suppressed: sexuality—the basic human desire for happiness and joy in our own bodies and in our fellow-beings.
Projeto Arte Org
Redescobrindo e reinterpremando 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 microfilmes (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 da Orgonomia Bifísica.
Texts from the area of Biphysical Orgonomy

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