Some Notes on Art Inspired by Reich

By William Steic*

Life is creation—the ceaseless movement of cosmic creativity orgone energy weaving the universe. We, being nothing but vessels of cosmic orgone energy, continually, inevitably create—or we die. We create pies, gestures, chairs, houses, thoughts, songs, pictures, ourselves, our societies—and when we create without impediment, we feel the wonder that always accompanies flowing creation.

When the creative flow is blocked in an activity, the sense of wonder turns to bewilderment and we feel an imminence of death. In conversation, for example, anxiety sets in if nothing is being formed—a friendship, or a truth, or just a new sentence.

Living is creating. We move about in relation to an environment; and we must sense and feel—and being "conscious" animals we must "know"—if we are to remain fluid and mobile. An alive man is a proving-ground for all that goes on about him; he is in a constant creative activity of "sizing things up," recreating them in his own body. He "imitates" and he rehearses, as he moves. He imitates the path he is about to take, the branch he is about to bend under, the cloud his truth-loving wonder turns upon. (It is an unfortunate circumstance that the sense of wonder is confronted with armored human life. But we must imitate that too and understand it, since we live with ourselves.)

Internally everyone functions like an artist, constantly creating mental pictures of his moving, changing whereabouts. These pictures are not "photographic" but "abstract," the emphasis being on movement, direction, shape, texture, etc.—the feel of things. This mental picture-making function is a practical necessity of our everyday lives. (Everyone knows the feeling of emergency embodied in the phrase "Where am I?.")

The artistic activity of human beings is creative, form-making energy exercising its fullest powers, just as it does throughout the universe—without "practical" intention. Art is a life function, it is "mysterious"; so the work of the artist is regarded by people at large with a religious awe, or else shunned and derogated, as all life functions are, because it disturbs civilized inertia. (Considering the lives that people lead, it's appropriate that they tiptoe through museums.)

Real scientific activity is of the same order as real artistic activity. It arrives at its truths—its creations—by re-enacting the movements of nature. Perhaps these human functions even enlarge the powers of nature. Who knows but that the orgone energy, having passed through us and acted on us on canvas and through all our other apparatus, flows back again into the great orgone ocean with new ideas.

The ability of a bird to do as he pleases in the air is his talent. Creativity is natural and easy—and inevitable. The so-called struggle of artistic creation is nothing but the struggle against the impediments, internal and external, of our irrational way of life.

A great artist is "ahead of his time"—he does not get hemmed in it. He plays with and understands the work of the past; he studies the life of his own time to get his bearings; and he finds nature—moving ahead, ever seeking undiscovered modes of free, beautiful functioning. Nature too must in some way play over, caress, and understand its already created forms—trees, hills, etc.—feeling its way to new activity.

People speak of "distortions" in art. Distortions of what? It is true that our art bears marks of the disturbances of our crippling way of life: interrupted flow, perverted movement, self-consciousness, preciousness—that kind of untruth. But most people mean by "distortion" deviation from the kind of image a camera might make. They mean that the painted arm is longer in proportion to the painted body than a real arm is to a real body, that there are two eyes on one side of the nose, or that the vase is not symmetrical, and so forth. But since when is it the function of art to copy camera-eye vision?
Even natural seeing can be said to give us a distorted version of the facts. We see things in perspective, foreshortened; we see only the side of an object which is presented to us, and one object hides another. But we know better, through experience, than to accept the mere optical image. We use all our senses; and we use knowledge. Art has to use its own devices to create worlds on a two-dimensional surface, accessible only through the eye.

The artist must cope with the fact that while nature moves, paint stays in one place.

The notion that the function of art is to represent is one of the ditches that a sick society has pushed us into—a way of keeping us off the path of truth. People have been taught to look for a face, a scene, a story instead of for a creative act. This misunderstanding is the reason why painting is for most people the most inaccessible form of artistic expression when it could be the clearest. It is as if the spectator were trying to hear French when the artist is speaking English.

Why should people know how to look at paintings? They do not know how to look at nature. Reich has shown how badly people see. They either search aggressively, with an act of will, or they passively record impressions—being satisfied merely to recognize objects: cat, dog, house, etc. Very few look with an attuned eye. Good seeing is creative—it loves, and it works and it wonders.

It is not the function of art to create optical illusions of recognized objects any more than it is the function of music to repeat the sounds of a brook, a bird, a train, a breeze, etc. If it were, art would not mean very much. Nature presents herself all about us—in fact there is nothing else, and if we look with an unimperialistic eye, the world is full of pictures for our enjoyment. What we want to realize is what we can do. When we look at paintings we do not say that we see a “still-life” or a “landscape,” but we see a “Cézanne” or a “Van Gogh.” In any case, what we see and delight in is human creativity—our function, and through that, creation in general.

True, we study nature and speak of painting it. We set up easels before a particular tree or person. But we use those objects as clues. We apprehend workings of nature and find similar workings in ourselves.

The artist makes a man of paint, not a man of flesh and blood; he makes a tree of paint and a flower of paint and a sky of paint. If he paints what appears to be the representation of a particular tree or person, it is because he has been moved by an insight into what went into making that tree or person, into what animates them and gives them particular and changing appearances. He has had emotions. If we refer from a painting to nature and feel the same emotions from both it only confirms the fact that the artist has functioned well.

In painting a “portrait” of a person the artist may be motivated by the fact that he has just seen the ocean—in which case there will be more ocean than sitter in the picture.

Painters do not help us shed our tears, but demand of us joy in creation. Art becomes clumsy when it tries to deal with strictly human emotions (emotions arising out of temporary immobilization, emotions involving painful thought and painful memory). The artist acts. He works with tools and with materials, and the emphasis is on making, on “emotions” shared by man with external nature.

Art (like architecture and sculpture) differs from the other arts in that a painting is a completed act, an object like a tree; and does not have duration and an ending like a piece of music or a dance. Certainly no one in his right senses wants a cry of anguish or a forever uncompleted episode in a story hanging on his wall.

The weird life of modern man is a truth of nature—a distressing truth. Confronted with it, the artist may suffer as a human being; yet in expressing his vision of this truth he can look with nature’s detachment, discover nature’s movement, and experience the joy of creation. He can keep moving.

The finished painting is a new part of nature, a piece of creation; and when we look at a painting what moves us is the painting and not the sight, or experience, that may have inspired it. (Yet it may help us love that sight, or experience, and the visible world in general.) The active, ardent spectator re-creates the painting, following the paths of energy laid down by the artist. He experiences again what the artist experienced in making the painting: movement, emotion, a glorying in man’s boundless creative power, and wonder—which is respect for life.

Only that which goes into a thing can come out of it. What goes into a painting are colors and brush strokes—movements of the arm creating forms. No matter what the “subject,” what moves us in real painting is form and
color. A painting is a \textit{made} object and we experience its \textit{madeness}. We look at forms and unlock the movement and emotion that went into their creation.

Art and science progress through the accumulated experience of their creations. Man continually succeeds in expressing things that before seemed inexpressible. These accomplishments bespeak a growth of power and consciousness in people at large. We are, after all, orgone energy—and whatever \textit{it} can do \textit{we} can do, or can learn to do.

The birds do not \textit{respond} to the dawn; they come alive and \textit{move}, with it.

A man creating with his full powers, as in music or painting, is at one with nature, participating on the same level with free cosmic orgone energy in the shaping movement of the universe. Society ceases to hem him in. His identity shifts from the psychological and biological to the cosmic, and he becomes both godlike and modest. Immersed in nature's brightness, flowing with the flow of creation, he experiences felicity and no longer sickly craves the affection and protection of his fellow men.

"What," it will be questioned, "When the Sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea?" O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly hosts crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty." I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro' it & not with it.—Blake

\textit{Any man can make the sun into a yellow ball. Ah, but to make a yellow ball into a sun!}—Picasso

The genuine artist, the tradition builder, strives for artistic truth; the other, who obeys merely a blind itch to create, strives for natural resemblance. —Goethe

Art passes beyond the object, the real as well as the imaginary! It plays an innocent game with objects. Just as a child imitates us in play, so do we in play imitate the forces which created and create the world.—Klee

... But folks expect of the poet to indicate more than the beauty and dignity which always attach to dumb real objects... they expect him to indicate the path between reality and their souls.—Whitman

... They are no longer two people, you see, but forms and colors: forms and colors that have taken on, meanwhile, the idea of two people and preserve the vibration of their life.—Picasso
Projeto Arte Org
Redescobrindo 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 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 Física.
Texts from the area of Physical Orgonomy.

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International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research
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Orgone Physics
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01 Wilhelm Reich. Thermacl and Electroscopical Orgonometry 1941
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Number 1 1944
Interval 6-21 Pag. 1-16

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International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Numbers 2 3 1944
Interval 1-54 Pag. 97-150

03 Notes. The Orgone Energy Early Scientific Literature 1944
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Numbers 2 3 1944
Interval 95-101 Pag. 191-197

04 Wilhelm Reich. Orgone Biophysics, Mechanistic Science and Atomic Energy 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Numbers 2 3 1945
Interval 3-6 Pag. 129-132

05 Wilhelm Reich. Experimental Demonstration of Physical Orgone Energy 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Numbers 2 3 1945
Interval 7-24 Pag. 133-146

06 Notes Editorial. Is the Orgone Atomic Energy? 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Numbers 2 3 1945
Interval 80-81 Pag. 202-202

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Orgone Energy Bulletin

Orgone Physics

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01 Wilhelm Reich Orgonotic Light Functions 1942-1944
Interval 5-7 Pag. 3-6

02 Wilhelm Reich A Motor Force in Orgone Energy 1947
Interval 7-9 Pag. 7-11

03 Wilhelm Reich Orgonotic Light Functions II 1947
Interval 2-4 Pag. 49-51

Interval 5-9 Pag. 52-60

05 Wilhelm Reich Orgonotic Light Functions III 1948
Interval 3-4 Pag. 97-99

06 Alexander Lowen. The Impressionists and Orgone Energy 1949
Interval 16-23 Pag. 169-183

07 Notes of the Orgone Energy Observatory 1950
Interval 26-27 Pag. 46-48

08 Jakos Baumann. Some Observations of the Atmosphere Orgone Energy 1950
Interval 16-20 Pag. 74-83

09 Wilhelm Reich Meteorological Functions in Orgone-Charged Vacuum Tubes 1949
Interval 17-21 Pag. 184-193

10 Myron R. Sharaf. From the History of Science 1951
Interval 20-22 Pag. 35-38
11 Wilhelm Reich. The Anti-Nuclear Radiation Effect of Cosmic Orgone Energy 1950
Interval 33-34 Pag. 61-63

12 Wilhelm Reich The Storm of November 25th and 26th 1950
Interval 8-9 Pag. 72-75

13 Wilhelm Reich Dowsing as an Objeet of Orgonomie 1946
Interval 13-16 Pag. 139-144

14 Wilhelm Reich Thre Experiments with Rubber At Electroscope (1939) 1951
Interval 16-16 Pag.

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Interval 4-12 Pag. 188-200

16 Wilhelm Reich The Geiger Muller Effect of Cosmic Orgone Energy (1947) 1950
Interval 12-29 Pag. 201-234

17 Wilhelm Reich The Orgone Charged Vacuum Tubes (vacor) (1948) 1950
Interval 29-45 Pag. 235-266

18 William Steig. Some Notes Inspired by Reich 1952
Interval 18-20 Pag. 32-36

19 Werner Grossmann. Observation of Orgone Energy Lumination 1952
Interval 31-32 Pag. 58-60

20 R. H. Atkin. A Space-Energy Continuum
Interval 16-21 Pag. 197-206

21 A. E. Hamilton. Childes-Eye View of the Orgone Flow 1952
Interval 25-26 Pag. 215-216

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Orgone Energy Bulletin
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Orgone Physics 2 Accumulator
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01 Walter Hoppe. My Experiences With The Orgone Accumulator 1949
Interval 10-15 Pag. 12-22

02 Notes Editorial. Regarding the Use of the Orgone Accumulator 1949
Interval 22-23 Pag. 37-38
03 Notes. Questions Regarding Orgone and the Orgone Accumulator 1949
Interval 20-23 Pag. 82-83

04 Notes. Questions and Answers Regarding the Orgone Accumulator I 1949
Interval 21-23 Pag. 131-134

05 Notes. Questions and Answers Regarding the Orgone Accumulator II 1949
Interval 24-25 Pag. 91-93

06 Administration of Cosmic Orgone Energy Accumulator 1952
Interval 9-10 Pag. 183-185

07 The Orgone Energy Accumulator, its Scientific and Medical Use, 1951
McF 518 The Orgone Energy Accumulator, its Scientific and Medical Use, 1951
Interval 1-31 Pag. 1-58

08 Construction of a Three-fold Orgone Energy accumulator and Five-fold shooter
McF 520 Construction of a Three-fold Orgone Energy accumulator and Five-fold shooter
Interval 1-11 Pag. 1-6

09 How to use the orgone energy accumulator
McF 521 How to use the orgone energy accumulator
Interval 1-3 Pag. 1-3

CORE.
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Orgone Physics
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Interval 20-35 Pag. 54-67

02 Wearner and Doreen Grossmann. Wind Flow and Orgone Flow 1955
Interval 11-18 Pag. 114-129

03 Maria Courie. Plant Respose to Orgone Energy 1955
Interval 55-56 Pag. 203-204