

## On the Common Cold: Notes by a Layman Based on Wilhelm Reich's Concept "Orgone Energy Metabolism"

Ever since medicine accepted (after a long, plaguë struggle) the discovery of the connection between bacteria and certain infectious diseases, it has tended to stick to the bacteriological line of investigation of all diseases, even where the weight of evidence suggested other causes. The common cold is still generally regarded as infectious although carefully controlled attempts

to infect human subjects with the sputum and mucous discharges of cold sufferers have shown quite clearly that colds are not "catchy."

Physicians, for the most part, have not accepted the results of these experiments; and they take refuge in the words "virus disease," a *portmanteau* expression which is applied to puzzling nonstructural maladies for which no bacterial cause has been found.

A line of investigation of the common cold that will probably prove more fruitful than the virus approach is provided by the folk observation that the cold is caused by *cold*. The very name of the illness indicates its origin: English, *cold*; German, *Erkältung*; Italian, *raffredore*; French, *froid*; Spanish, *resfriado*. The cold is caused by an actual physical chilling of the body. The fact that only one of several persons subjected to the same chilling condition may catch cold, and the fact that a person will on one occasion catch cold when chilled and on another occasion successfully readjust to the experience, indicate that other, subjective, factors play a role in determining the body's reaction to being chilled.

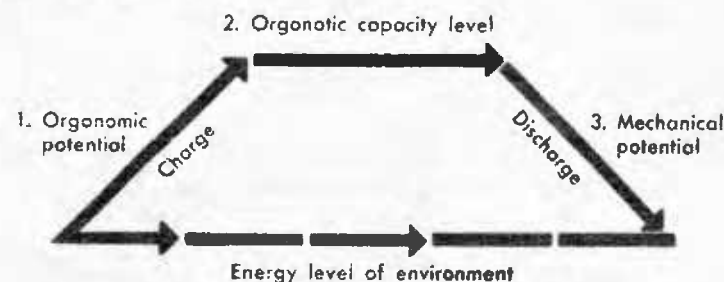


Diagram of the ORGONE ENERGY METABOLISM in living bodies.

Reich's diagram of the orgone energy metabolism in living bodies<sup>1</sup> provides the answer. When one is chilled there is a comparatively rapid loss of heat to the environment. To correct this heat loss and maintain normal body temperature some of the orgone energy of the body is converted into heat. (The loss of heat could not be made up nearly quickly enough by the oxidation of food.) To maintain the normal orgonotic capacity level the orgone energy thus used must be immediately made up by an increase in the rate of orgonomic charge from the atmosphere. It is at this point in the chain of energy exchange that a malfunctioning may occur, and that one may catch

<sup>1</sup> ETHER, GOD, AND DEVIL, 1949, p. 114.

cold<sup>1</sup>. The common cold is a failure of the body, after being chilled, to regain its normal orgonotic capacity level.

What lies behind this failure? The most common cause of the failure of the body to respond to cold by an increased rate of orgone energy absorption from the air is *anxiety*. It has been generally observed that one does not catch cold when one is "feeling good," that one is most likely to catch cold when one is depressed, anxious, "nervous." In anxiety, due to a contraction of the body orgone energy away from the periphery toward the center, there is a failure of orgonotic contact with the environment and hence a loss in the efficiency of orgone energy absorption from the atmosphere: The body surfaces which absorb orgone energy from the atmosphere are, in anxiety, relatively low in orgone charge and hence less able to attract and absorb atmospheric orgone energy. Reich's discovery that orgone energy transfer does not obey the second law of entropy but that orgonomic charge takes place in the direction of the more highly charged body is the key to the understanding of this phenomenon.

To recapitulate: 1) Anxiety causes a drop in the orgonotic charge at the periphery of the body, including the orgone-absorbing surfaces. 2) Chilling of the body produces a mechanical heat loss which is made up by conversion of bodily orgone energy to heat energy. 3) The orgonotic capacity level of the body is lowered by this sudden drain of orgone energy. 4) The orgone-absorbing surfaces, due to their anxiety-reduced orgone charge, fail to respond to the body's need for an increased rate of orgone-absorption. 5) The normal orgonotic capacity level of the body is not maintained, and the cold symptoms occur until the orgone energy metabolism of the body returns to normal functioning.

What do the cold symptoms express? In understanding the cold symptoms it is necessary to distinguish between the pure-and-simple cold symptoms and those symptoms often associated with a cold (for example, the sore throat) which are in fact due to ("secondary") infection. The real cold symptoms are a "running" nose, the feeling of being low in energy, fatigue, and sometimes "rheumatic" pains in various parts of the body. The fatigue and lack of energy are clearly understandable on the basis of the lowered orgonotic level of the organism. The rheumatic pains are experienced in those areas of the body which are armored to begin with and which undergo an increase in spasticity due to the lowering of the general bodily orgone energy.

The running nose, which is the primary symptom, is not so readily ex-

plained. However, if one looks for the *function* of the nasal mucous secretion, some fruitful, if theoretical, answers will appear. When one goes from a warm house into the cold, one's nose begins to run. This is a perfectly normal phenomenon. The running of the nose stops when one returns to the warmth, or when one has "got used" to the cold. The increased nasal mucous secretion does not get rid of waste; it does not provide lubrication; it does not serve the function of cooling-by-evaporation. In the case of response to cold it does not serve the same function as it does in the case of response to irritants, such as pepper or soap powder. It is not enough to say that the nasal mucous membranes are "irritated" by the cold air. The organism does nothing without a good reason. Since mechanical and chemical questions do not help here, perhaps the orgonomic approach will.

When one has caught a cold the organism continues to react, in respect to the running nose, like a healthy organism freshly exposed to a cold atmosphere. It is as though the condition experienced by the organism in the cold atmosphere were indefinitely prolonged. That condition is the need of the organism to increase the rate at which it absorbs orgone from the atmosphere. The "running nose" is apparently related to this need.

In the case of the healthy person exposed to cold the function of increased nasal mucous secretion goes on while the adjustment in orgone energy metabolism is taking place; once the normal balance has been re-established the phenomenon stops. In the case of the person who "catches cold" it is as though he literally were *seized* by the cold: the attempt at adjustment in orgone energy metabolism is not successful, and the nasal mucous secretion continues. The organism reacts as though it were continually newly subjected to a cold atmosphere: the person *has a cold*, he has "*eine Erkältung*" (German for "a chilling").

The function of increased nasal mucous secretion appears to be to assist, under the special conditions of a cold atmosphere, the absorption of orgone energy from the atmosphere. The respiratory passages unquestionably serve not only the function of oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange but also the function of orgone energy absorption. The increased mucous secretion takes place because orgone energy absorption is more difficult from a cold than a warm atmosphere. (The nasal passages receive the fresh, cold air and protect their orgone-absorbing function with mucus; the deeper orgone-absorbing surfaces receive air that has already been warmed by passage over a large area of warm surfaces.)

How does increased mucous secretion enhance orgone absorption from cold air passing through the nasal passages? In two ways: 1) The mucus provides an orgone energy "sponge" in the form of an aqueous film. (Water absorbs orgone energy.) 2) The rapid flow of mucus maintains a warm film over the membranes that insulates against the cold. This prevents the orgone energy in the nasal tissues from *shrinking away from the cold*,<sup>2</sup> and thus maintains in these tissues the orgonotic level necessary for normal orgone attraction.

When a person has a cold, the running nose, unlike that of a healthy person exposed to actual cold, is a *malfunctioning*. It has begun as a normal response to being chilled, but continues without its functional concomitant, a cold atmosphere, until the condition it has the purpose of protecting (normal orgonotic capacity level) has been regained.

The effectiveness of the orgone energy accumulator in preventing and speeding recovery from colds is due to its function of maintaining, and restoring, the normal orgone energy metabolism of the body.

The immediate relation of orgone energy to colds is further seen in the connection between climatic conditions and colds. Even a person who is in a state of anxiety, and hence predisposed to catching cold, is much less likely to catch cold in an atmosphere that is rich in orgone energy. The damp winter atmosphere of New York City is more likely to produce colds at a temperature of, say, 45 degrees Fahrenheit than the dry air of the Alps at 0 degrees. Moisture in the air "sops up" orgone energy, makes less available to terrestrial life. It is this phenomenon that explains the higher incidence of sickness in damp (especially inconsistently damp) climates, and the fact, observed for hundreds of years, that the damp Mediterranean sirocco always brings a sharp increase in the incidence of illness in general.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *International Journal of Sex-Economy and Orgone-Research*, 4, 1945, p. 137, on the behavior of orgone energy in freezing bion water.

## **Projeto Arte Org**

### **Redescobrimo e reinterpretando W. Reich**

Caro Leitor

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

Por isto, nós decidimos trabalhar com o material bibliográfico presente nos 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 Bipysical Orgonomy

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02 Wilhelm Reich. The Discovery of the Orgone 1941  
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Interval 12-36 Pag. 108-130

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16 Notes Editorial. Free Love 1945

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