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*Love, work and knowledge
are the well-springs of our life.
They should also govern it.*

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ORGONOMETRY

Orgonomic Functionalism. Part II* On the Historical Development of Orgonomic Functionalism

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1. INTRODUCTION

The thought technique of orgonomic functionalism was not a finished creation when orgonomy made its first functional formulations. This method of thinking has forced its own development, from the first predominantly intuitive coalescing of scientific processes up to its present-day status of logical thought operations. Since nothing serves better to introduce one into a new realm than the presentation of its development, I will now attempt to introduce the reader into orgonomic functionalism by showing the logical sequence of orgonomic results over three decades.

I have presented the essentials of the thematic and historical background

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in various previous publications. Now we shall arrange the known material, the many observations, the clinical and experimental findings, the theoretical conclusions, differently and in a new way; we shall arrange them so that the RATIONALITY inherent in consistent scientific research leads us in logical fashion from observation to hypothesis, to experimental confirmation, and to the new finding. This new arrangement of orgonomic facts will finally lead us to the formulation of *functional orgonomic equations*. These equations will find corroboration in the thought operations of classical, mathematical physics and in this way will permit a satisfying insight into the mode of working of a thinking human being who attempts to understand his surrounding nature. Observer and natural function, subjective sensation and objective stimulus, perception and object will appear to us in the new light of a functional unity of all nature. We will finally have to conclude that the biological structure of the observer cannot be excluded from his scientific research and from the critical judgment of the results of his research. There is a logic and rationality in the process of scientific thought which is an expression of the harmony of nature, hitherto celebrated only in great poems. We shall also be able to show irrationality its place and follow up its history a bit further.

2. PSYCHIC FUNCTIONING IS NATURAL FUNCTIONING

In the early stages of the development of the functional thought technique, I had only one *unverified* conviction: human emotional life is not of supernatural origin. It lies within the boundaries of investigable nature. It obeys, as does all nature, the functioning laws of matter and energy.

This conviction had to contend with two gigantic facts which contradicted it:

a) The laws found in chemistry, physics and mathematics concerning the natural process cannot be brought into harmony with the special functions of emotional life. The *mechanistic-materialistic* viewpoint deals with unessential functioning realms of the living, if it is judged from the standpoint of basic natural science.

b) The overwhelming majority of human animals had anchored the wide domain of emotions, perceptions, philosophies of life and practical modes of living in mystical, supernatural powers, which generally, whatever the particular form may be, are based upon the idea of a godlike entity existing beyond all sense perceptions. This idea strictly contradicted the

concept that human emotional life lies *within* the comprehensible natural process.

Thus functional thinking, even before it began to operate properly, hit upon the rigid walls of the two thought systems of humanity, *mechanism* (materialism, atomism, chemism, etc.) and *mysticism* (idealism, metaphysics, spiritualism, etc.), both of which had several thousands of years of development and powerful social organizations in back of them.

A purely philosophic grounding of the *this-sidedness* of emotional life was out of the question. It would not have really solved the problem and sooner or later would have quietly disappeared. There was only one way: that of the direct observation of natural processes and of the functional mastery of the observations. To be sure, the words "function" and "functional" were in use, but they did not mean anything in the context of our basic problem; on the contrary, they often led astray, as in psychiatry where "functional" sicknesses were considered "imaginary" ones. And between the medical and the physical comprehension of functioning yawned a deep, unbridgeable chasm.

3. NATURAL FUNCTIONING IS BASICALLY AN ENERGY PROCESS

In ancient Greek natural philosophy non-living nature appeared to be filled with moving *substance*. The outlook predominated that everything moves, that "all is in flux." This basic view was preserved in modern science. "Motion" and "energy process" are inseparable, since movement or overcoming of space presupposes a "force which impels the substance." Today, I could not explain why in my natural-scientific orientation the "energy" process received priority over "substance" or "matter." This concept was rather apt to create difficulties since the main trend in physics and chemistry was atomistic, i.e., *materialistic*; since, in other words, all nature was thought of as having emerged out of *moving atoms*. From that time (around 1919) on, this outlook was taken over in the comprehensive electronic theory. Even the smallest units of electricity possessed mass and thus were "material particles," even if of a very special kind. The contradiction encountered by embryonic functionalism was the following:

If the natural process is *basically* an energy process, it follows logically that there is also a *primary* or *primordial* energy process. But since the electrons already possess mass, "substance" or the "particle" is also *primarily* present. Purely logically, it is improbable that two so different entities as

energy and mass should be simultaneously primary, and classical physics, including the modern energy-mass relation, conceived of both mass and energy as primordial natural phenomena. To be sure, the absolute distinction between mass and energy had already been eliminated by Einstein. Energy (E) was now mass moving with the speed of light (mc^2), but it was still "mass" and neither *purely* primary nor *mass-free*. True, since Becquerel and Curie it was understood that matter changes or decomposes into energy and how this happens, but only some other philosophers suggested that *mass could be formed from energy*. The matter with its mass (m) was and remained a *primordial*, irreducible natural phenomenon. I had no inkling at that time that this limitation lies in the very nature of mechanistic thinking. It would have been of little use to have known this, for immediately a new problem would have arisen: *how* has mass, if it is not primordial, evolved from energy?

Embryonic functionalism gave energy priority in natural development without being able to prove this priority. At that time one could not have explained anything at all about the origin of this preconceived opinion of a young natural scientist. It was not mystical inclination, for young functionalism sharply rejected any metaphysical view of nature such as that of "entelechy" or spiritualism. Today it appears as if it were simply the *sensations of motility in the scientist's own organism* which were at the bottom of this preference. It was nothing but a preconceived idea which later was proven correct.

From the first supposition that emotional processes lie within comprehensible natural functioning, and from the second assumption that all natural functioning is primarily of an energetic nature, it follows logically that emotional and psychic functioning are also primarily ascribable to an energy process.

4. THERE IS A "PSYCHIC ENERGY"

Around 1919, my first functional assumptions connected with the formulations of psychoanalysis, which at that time had not yet lost its energetic, i.e., natural-scientific orientation. Freud was, I believe, the first researcher in psychology to assume the existence of a "*psychic energy*." As a consequence of this concept, it followed that psychic ideas and perceptions were accompanied with varying "quantities of affect." And the affects, later simply called "emotions," were expressions of biological drives. A process

of repression could sometimes only work upon an idea, as in hysteria, and leave the corresponding affect unrepressed; or it could block only an affect and leave untouched the idea, as in compulsion neurosis. It could also repress both the idea and the affect, as in certain amnesias. In this outlook there was no connection either functionally or genetically between ideas and affects. "Idea" and "affect" were completely different and sharply distinct psychic entities.

At that time, psychoanalytic theory thought according to the principle of classical physics. Just as in non-living nature "substance" or "mass," which were unchangeable, were moved and shifted by "forces," so in psychic life static ideas were moved and shifted by "energy quantities." The ideas corresponded to the "substance," the "drives" to the "forces" or "impulses" of classical physics. This first attempt at the formulation of a truly *natural-scientific* psychology at the beginning of the 20th century has since been squelched completely in a maze of utterly unscientific "opinions" about human nature.

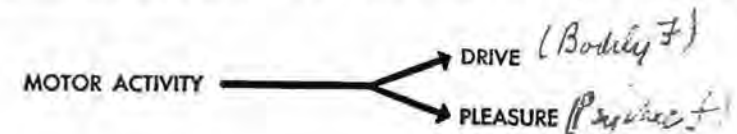
Here the first essential application of the functional technique of thinking was made:

The then embryonic sex-economy thoroughly investigated the function of the orgasm and found, among other things, that a sexual idea, such as that of the sexual act, could not be produced if the corresponding emotions were absent or if the organism had just lost its high tension through satisfaction, i.e., through "*energy discharge*." Thus an idea was in some way more closely linked to the energy process than psychoanalytic theory supposed.

Detailed phenomenological investigations, especially of the pleasure sensation, left no doubt that it could not be separated from the function of the drive. Thus it was not a drive *here* striving after a pleasure *there*, but the drive was nothing else than the motor function of pleasure itself.

Since the pleasure sensation represented a *psychic* function, and since, on the other hand, the drive undoubtedly represented a *bodily* one, a hitherto isolated functioning pair in the organism was welded together by one concept into a "functional unity":

Drive and pleasure were now one and the same with regard to motor activity.



Motor activity was no longer a function of the "drive," but the drive was the function of a still undefined biological motor activity. The same was true for the pleasure sensation.

Bodily excitation, i.e., the drive, was identical with a psychic sensation in reference to a definite biological process, sexual motor activity. At that time it was not clear just *what* moved in the body. And it was just as vague what one meant when one spoke of the "sexual function." Freudian sexual psychology was fully aware of these uncertainties. Freud assumed that the drives "develop from biological processes," and that these processes are of a "chemical nature." The later psychoanalytic school has lost its orientation completely in regard to such basic questions of science and its methods of thought operation.

But orgonomic functionalism had won a first important position in its thought technique:

Ideas can arise and pass away. Their existence depends upon the state of energy movement in the body.

Sensation and excitation are identical in a still undetermined common functioning principle. Sensation is a function of excitation, and excitation in turn is a function of sensation. They are inseparable, form a "functional unity," and simultaneously they are not the same, but are different from one another, indeed, antithetical to one another. Thus resulted the first formulation of the "SIMULTANEITY OF IDENTITY AND ANTITHESIS."

This advance took place between 1919 and 1923. At that time it was not clearly understood as an innovation in thought technique, but the fruit of it was published in my article, "Über Triebenergetik" (1923) and in my psychoanalytic investigations of "genitality" from 1923 on.

In these first observations, the formulation that was to be so important for my later concept of consciousness had its origin: IDEAS ARE "CONCENTRATIONS OF ENERGY QUANTA," and thus psychic ideas can be traced back to energy processes.

This innovation in thought technique had no predecessor in natural science. What was basically new was the assumption of a *simultaneity of identity and antithesis of two functions*. In natural philosophy there existed only the monistic conception of the unity of body and soul, the dualistic view of psychophysical parallelism, the mechanistic-materialistic one-sided dependence of the psyche on the soma, and the spiritualistic (idealistic-metaphysical) dependence of matter on a supernatural world spirit. In its

essence Freud's methodology was purely materialistic, but also dualistic. It operated with *two* kinds of drives which had no connection with one another in the depths: at first with the "sexual instincts" and the "ego instincts," later with the "sexual instincts" and the "death instinct." I became acquainted with the dialectical materialism of Friedrich Engels (ANTI-DÜHRING) only many years later, around 1927.

In my article on "Orgonotic Pulsation" ("Talks with an electrophysicist"¹) I tried to show that the diverse, mutually contradictory methods of thinking can be pictured as particular representations of individual, objective natural functions and that they can be united. Schematically this can be seen in the following functional symbol:

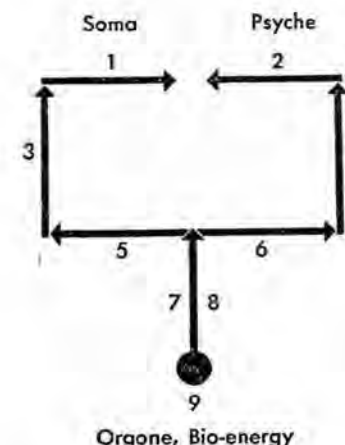
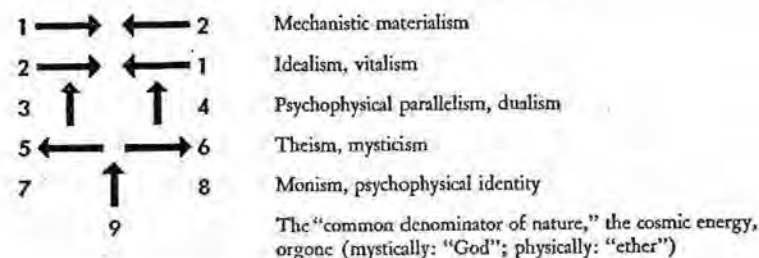


Diagram of orgonomic functionalism comprising mechanistic, vitalistic, parallelistic, mystical-theological and monistic natural philosophies



¹ Cf. *International Journal of Sex-economy and Orgone Research* 3, 1944, pp. 97-150.

I reprint here the explanation of the orgone biophysicist:

Now, if we consider the constituent parts of the schema separately, we find the following:

At the surface, at 1 and 2, there is an *absolute antithesis of psyche and soma*. This is the realm of the mechanists who derive psychic functioning one-sidedly from chemico-physics; it is also the realm of the vitalists who, conversely, believe that the vital energy creates and determines the soma. "The soma determines the sensation," say the mechanists; "the sensations (the entelechy) determine matter," say the vitalists. It all depends on whether your point of departure is 1 or 2.

3 and 4 run parallel, and—considered apart from the rest of the diagram—without any connection between each other. These lines correspond to the parallelistic mind-body theory, according to which somatic and psychic processes are independent of each other and run a parallel course.

5 and 6 run *apart* from each other. They correspond to that concept which contends that matter and spirit, soma and psyche, instinct and morals, nature and culture, sexuality and work, earthly and divine things are incompatible; more than that, that they are antithetical. They represent the thinking of every kind of mysticism.

At 7 and 8 there is only *one* line of direction, which can be viewed either from the left or the right side. It corresponds to the concept of monism, of psycho-physical identity, according to which psychic and somatic are merely different aspects of the same thing. We must admit that the monists, in their thinking, came closer to the truth than the mechanists, vitalists, dualists and others. They have come very close to the common origin of all other functions. But they overlooked the antitheses which result from the splitting up of the unitary, as for instance that of nature into living and non-living matter, animals and plants, or that of the organism into autonomous organs. In overlooking the antithesis, they also overlook the mutual interdependence of the somatic and the psychic.

Our functional schema, on the other hand, takes into consideration the many autonomous functions of a *functional unit*. According to this concept, the various functions derive from a common source (9); in a certain realm, different functions are identical (7, 8); in a different realm, they are divergent (5, 6); or they run parallel, independent of each other (3, 4); or, finally, they are convergent, that is, attract or influence each other on the principle of antithesis (1, 2).

To illustrate in concrete terms: The animal organism derives from a single unitary cell which is equipped with the function of orgonotic expansion and contraction (9). From this unitary cell develops, on the basis of the function

of tension and charge, the somatic as well as the psychic function of what is going to be the complicated total organism, in a *unitary* branch (7/8) which manifests as yet no differentiation into independent psychic and somatic functions.

Then we see a differentiation taking place: the somatic functions develop by themselves, forming, in the course of embryonic development, the various independent organs. In this period, the emotional functions are not developed beyond the primitive stage of pleasure and unpleasure perceptions. At birth, soma and psyche already form *two branches* of a unitary apparatus (5, 6), the organ functions on the one hand and the pleasure-unpleasure functions on the other. The bio-energetic branch which they have in common (7/8) continues to exist.

From this point on, the two developments run independently of each other, i.e., "parallel" (3, 4), at the same time influencing each other. The various body organs have been formed and continue to grow. Independently of this, the pleasure-unpleasure function branches off into the three basic emotions of pleasure, anxiety and rage, and the various functions of perception. The development and differentiation of the function of perception is autonomous, independent of the growth of the organs. Nevertheless, both series of development are provided with biological energy from the *common* branch (9 and 7/8) in the form of the autonomic nervous system. For the growth of the organs as well as the development of the emotions depends on the total function of the autonomic life apparatus.

This first, still explorative tracing of a psychic idea to a state of energy movement decided the course of my work until the discovery of the cosmic orgone energy and the orgonometric functional equations of 1947. It is not easy to present this here in a simple way. However, the following schema may help explain why the psychoanalytic and my first functional formulation of the emotional process had to lead in two opposite directions, which today are clearly recognizable to everyone.



Schema of the relationship between idea and instinctual energy

Very soon psychology disregarded the emotional *quantity* "which was contained in the idea," and concentrated more and more on the *CONTENTS*, the experiences, conflicts, human relationships, etc. True, it knows very well

that there are experiences, conflicts, etc., of more or less emotional richness. But it is not interested in the origin of the emotions. Indeed, it often commits the tremendous error of having the wealth of affects itself develop, say, from a mother-fixation. In so doing, it forgets that the strong mother-fixation is itself the result of a special energetic situation in the child's organism.

On the other hand, functionalism, which later led to the discovery of the cosmic orgone energy, concentrated its attention on the *dependence of psychic contents*, ideas, conflicts, experiences, etc., upon the *energy economy of the organism*. A strong mother-fixation on the part of the child, for example, now appeared as an expression of a "libido stasis" or "energy block"; thus it corresponded to a *disturbance in the energy discharge of the organism*. Clinical experience completely confirmed this view, for the conflict was solved if the energy discharge in the child could again occur healthily. A genitally disturbed child clings orally to his mother. A genitally *satisfied* child does not cling to his mother, but has playmates of his own age.

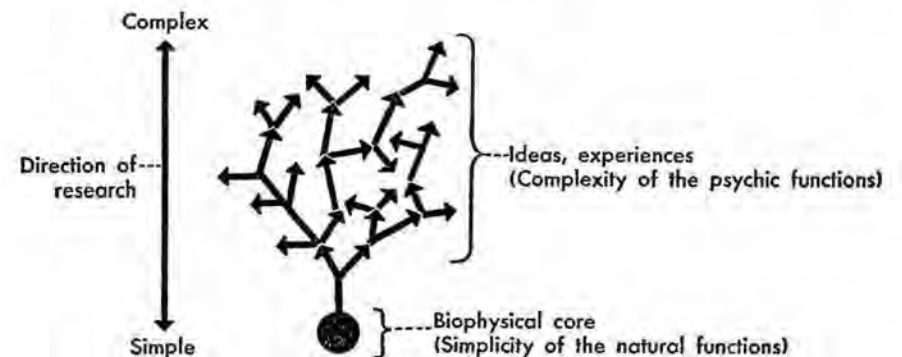
Psychology analyzes, breaks down *experiences* and conflicts and traces them back to earlier, historically important *experiences*. Present-day *ideas* and instinctual goals result in an understandable fashion from earlier or repressed *ideas* and instinctual goals.

Functional organology does not break down experiences; it does not operate with the association of ideas, but *directly with instinctual energies which it loosens from characterological and muscular blocks and allows to stream freely again*. It is not concerned with *what* experiences have led to the energy block. *The therapeutic goal of psychology is the remembering of forgotten experiences. The goal of medical orgone therapy is the mobilization of biological energy, of the orgone energy in the organism.*

A further distinction between psychology and orgone biophysics is of decisive significance even for mathematical, organometric investigations: the exclusive treatment of experiences and ideas leads to ever more *complicated* relations and processes. The treatment of the energy functions progressively *simplifies* the biological processes and with them the infinity of human experiences and ideas, since all ideational experiences are traced to *simple* biological energy processes. In order to realize this opposition between simplicity in the biological core and complexity at the psychological surface, one need only think of the extraordinary abundance and the many variations in the experiential realm of psychoses and neuroses. Yet at the

bottom of this infinite variety lies only *a single energetic condition: the stasis of biosexual energy*. The pathological ideas with all their confusion and endless complexity collapse like a house of cards when the biological energy again functions naturally, i.e., economically.

Thus, observed from the viewpoint of natural-scientific research which tries to bring mankind into harmony with nature, psychology does not proceed beyond the *psychic processes* while the functional-energetic approach leads from the *idea* to biological energy, and from the biological energy to its origin in *general energy functions of nature*. For organomic functionalism has led in a logical fashion to the discovery of the bion and then to the discovery of the cosmic orgone energy.



Schema of the relationship between complexity in the psychic and simplicity in the biological realm

5. "PSYCHIC ENERGY"—A FUNCTION OF BIOLOGICAL CELL EXCITATION

I have already said that sexual excitation was thought of as being the result of "chemical substances," later called "sexual hormones." It was not explained in what way chemical, hormonal processes produced the sexual excitation. The functional method of thinking had to overcome this chemical prejudice:

A sexual excitation is obviously an *energetic* process. Chemical processes, on the other hand, are of a *material* nature, for they consist basically of the formation and dissolution of bonds between atoms. The processes of heat production and utilization which occur have nothing to do with the unmistakable phenomenon of "excitation." The material-chemical expla-

nation of sexual emotion sought in vain to knit *directly* together a *living* function and a function of *non-living* nature. This attempt corresponded to a short-cut in mechanistic thinking. It showed a lack of critical thinking to conceive of a function of the living developing out of an inorganic function without giving the slightest account of the details of the transition. This kind of erroneous thinking characterized quite generally the biochemical outlook in biology and medicine.

Functionalism proceeded differently. It linked together the observable phenomena in the organism which are connected with sexual excitation and in this manner took a further decisive step forward in building its functional thought technique as well as in clarifying an important phenomenon: observation showed directly and incontrovertibly that the sensation of pleasure and the sexual impulse accompany a specific excitation of the autonomic "nervous," i.e., plasmatic system. Here lay the connection, described under heading 3), between somatic drive and psychic sensation of pleasure. Instinctual urge and pleasure sensation were functionally identical with regard to living motor activity. Now it was revealed that the somatic drive is functionally identical with an excitation, i.e., with a function or a MOVEMENT (and not with a static "substance") of the nervous system.

Thus functionalism did not commit the mistake of connecting arbitrarily and unconcretely a psychic function with a somatic function; but it found through careful observation of the relevant phenomena a dependent simultaneity and hence a functional identity of psychic pleasure sensation, bodily sexual urge, and a *visible* excitation of the autonomic plasmatic system.

Today these connections are banal platitudes even outside of orgonomy. But at that time, in the 1920s, they were not self-evident. Even Müller, who was far ahead of his time, in his collected works, *DIE LEBENSNERVEN* (1931), spoke dualistically and finalistically of the "goal" of pleasure, in whose "service" the excitation of the parasympathetic nervous system stands. But for the functional view there was not an apparatus *here* and a goal *there*, and hence no "service" of the first to the second. In the functional outlook, pleasure sensation, instinctual urge, and parasympathetic excitation were only different aspects of one and the same function, the *total* excitation of the living organism. These different aspects of one function were inseparable, for there was no pleasure sensation without an instinctual urge, no instinctual urge without a pleasure sensation, and neither one in the ab-

sence of biological excitation; the reverse of this was equally true. The separate "sides," "purposes," "goals," etc., are completely non-existent. They were fabrications of human fantasy, incorrect concepts of mechanistic-mystical thinking. The sentence: "The drive stands in the service of pleasure or reproduction," is, closely considered, utterly meaningless. "Where does the drive come from? Where is the pleasure sensation located?" are our next consistent questions.

The formulation of the unity of pleasure, urge and biological excitation led to the solution of the problem posed by Freud of how sexual excitation can be transformed into anxiety. Freud had correctly observed that if sexual excitation is repressed, anxiety may appear in its place. This is a fact but Freud could not explain it. Later—to the detriment of instinct research—he completely gave up the relationship between sexuality and anxiety; moreover, he completely separated the two functions and incorrectly ascribed anxiety to the "Ego" and sexuality to the "Id." Still he admitted that the problem remained unsolved.

On the other hand, functionalism found itself on the correct path:

If pleasure sensation, sexual "instinct" and parasympathetic plasmatic excitation form a functional unity; if furthermore, as has been clinically demonstrated, anxiety arises when sexual excitation and the sensation of pleasure disappear, then anxiety belongs in a definite, though as yet unclarified manner to the functioning unity of biological excitation, bodily urge and psychic sensation. After this assumption it was no longer difficult to solve the riddle.

Biological excitation occurs in the autonomic nervous system. But this nervous system consists of two sets of nerves which function antithetically, the *parasympathetic* and the *sympathetic*. All phenomena of the pleasure function occur with excitations of the parasympathetic system. If the pleasure function cannot operate, anxiety appears. Hence it follows logically that if the parasympathetic function cannot operate, sympathetic excitation is dominant. The phenomena of anxiety accompany sympathetic functions under the condition that expansive impulses are developed against contraction. If the sympathetic system forms the functional antithesis of the parasympathetic, then logically anxiety must represent the antithesis of pleasure. Thus pleasure does not "turn into anxiety," but the biological excitation in anxiety functions in a direction antithetical to pleasure.

This signified a very important step forward in the formulation of living functioning. It could be supported by clinically controllable observations: one feels anxiety chiefly in the cardio-diaphragmatic region, and pleasure, if one is not too disturbed, mainly in the genital. Thus *heart* and *genital* areas formed the two antithetical regions in which the unitary biological excitation could be concentrated at any given time. Cardiac anxiety disappears when genital excitation develops. If the biological excitation is active chiefly in the genital apparatus, then one feels the genital drive and the corresponding pleasure sensation. If it is mainly active in the cardio-diaphragmatic region, one has anxiety and is incapable of pleasure.

With these formulations orgonomic functionalism had, at that time unconsciously, discovered the "basic antithesis of the living": the antithesis of pleasure and anxiety, of parasympathetic and sympathetic, of expansion and contraction of the life apparatus, of periphery and center of the organism. The detailed clinical and experimental development of this functioning realm of biological energy took about 12 years (1925 to 1937). It spontaneously opened the realm of bion- and orgone research.

I earlier asserted that orgonomic functionalism does not represent a different or new kind of natural philosophy, but a different and new type of tool of natural research. First of all a very incomplete tool, let us say a stone axe, made possible a discovery, e.g., the finding of iron, and the discovery of iron made possible the further development of the tool from a stone axe, to an axe of iron, and so on. Thus the method or the tool of natural research also has a development which is often far more important than the factual discovery.

With the theoretical formulation of the pleasure-anxiety antithesis, with its rooting in biological excitation and its differentiation into different *directions* of one and the same excitation, orgonomic functionalism had mastered a position that was more easily controlled and more readily manipulated. Following strict principles of thought, it could now, irrespective of what scientific facts it treated, always apply and find out how far these principles were valid, i.e., whether they could only grasp certain realms of nature or whether they were universally applicable; in other words, whether *all* nature obeyed the functional law that is manifested in the functioning of the life apparatus and its emotions.

It should be stressed that the advance in the research on the nature of

psychic emotions considered psychic life always *within* the investigable; the final results for the *total* conception of nature also paved a path which led sharply away from mechanism and mysticism, without landing in spiritualism.

July 1947

(To be continued)

When Clerk-Maxwell was a child it is written that he had a mania for having everything explained to him, and that when people put him off with vague verbal accounts of any phenomenon he would interrupt them impatiently by saying, "Yes; but I want you to tell me the particular go of it."—William James