Orgonotic Contact
Part I

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The functional investigator views nature dynamically in terms of *mass-free energy functions* and sees the biological functions associated with material particles (molecules, ions, etc.) as *determined by them.* By placing full emphasis on energy functions as the basis for material functions, the researcher in natural science is in a unique position to identify the development of the material functions operating in the secondary material realm. Reich made enormous progress in this respect. Many of these functions have been described elsewhere (1). One that requires continued careful and thorough study involves the capacity of biological orgone energy to *recognize* or *perceive* itself. Correctly understanding this perceptual function is critical for the biological sciences and medicine. It is also at this point that the materialistic (as opposed to the functional energetic) viewpoint loses its natural scientific orientation and mysticism as well as mechanism

It will be shown that the incorrect formulation of the so-called "psychosomatic relationship" by contemporary science is a result of the misunderstanding of the perceptual function. Armor distorts and blocks accurate perception of the individual's sensory experience of both the external world and of himself. To the extent that armor interferes with perception the armored scientist cannot apprehend the perceptual function accurately. As a result, armored thought allows for only two interpretations of natural functioning: either the perceptual function is determined by inert matter as mechanistic science asserts, or, apart from any physical basis, nature is fundamentally endowed with the attributes of consciousness, the contention of mysticism. Unless these errors in thinking are identified and eliminated there can be no hope of ever arriving at an accurate understanding of fundamental biological processes, including such pivotal functions as perception. If these errors are eliminated a fully integrated and consistent picture of our world will emerge, a world picture not riddled with the distortions introduced by and inherent to the mechano-mystical dichotomy.

In this article the function of orgonotic contact will be discussed using the tool of Orgonometry. Through the abstraction of Orgonometry it will be demonstrated that the perceptual functioning of the investigator is capable of comprehending itself objectively. A basis for a comprehensive understanding of biological functions in general and the somatic biopathies in particular will also be provided.

Historical Background

Reich first discussed contact in "Psychic Contact and Vegetative Current," read at the International Psychoanalytic Congress in Lucerne, Switzerland in August 1934 (2). This monograph continued the discussion of characteranalytic problems outlined in his book *Character Analysis* published one year earlier and focused on the relationship between psychic contact and vegetative excitability, the phenomenon of contactlessness (absence of contact) and substitute or distorted contact.

Reich discovered the relationship between psychic functions and biological excitability through investigation of the orgasm function. His assertion that the orgasm is not exclusively a psychic (conscious) activity but rather a basic biological function was at variance with the mechano-mystical attitudes of his psychoanalytic contemporaries. Reich noted that in the orgasm there is a *momentary suspension of consciousness.* He therefore reasoned that consciousness must belong to the more superficial realm of psychic activity. It cannot be used to explain functions deeper than the psychological realm.

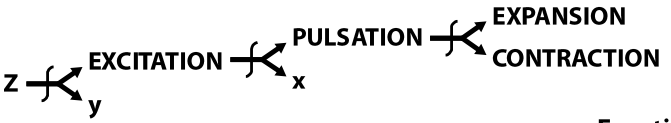
The phenomenon of contact could not be further investigated because it is related to deeper, mass-free, orgonotic functions and not to superficial psychological activity. Because Reich's conclusions were always grounded in observation, he had little more to say about contact at this time. He did, however, extensively discuss disturbances of contact and the individual's resultant substitute contact since these are important psychic manifestations of armor readily observable in clinical practice.

The Basic Antithesis of the Living

In Reich's scientific investigation of pleasure and anxiety he was able to demonstrate that the subjective experience of emotion could be objectified by measuring changes of potential at the skin surface. He showed that only when the experimental subject felt pleasure in response to pleasurable stimuli did the recording instrument register a deflection in a positive direction. With stimuli that produced a subjective feeling of anxiety there was a negative deflection of the recording apparatus. What Reich discovered from his clinical observations and these experimental findings he called "the basic antithesis of vegetative life." In other words, in pleasure "something" moves out towards the skin and in anxiety that "something" moves away from the skin toward the center of the body. He also realized that from the perspective of the whole organism pleasure or expansion "toward the world" is anchored in the parasympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system and anxiety or contraction "away from the world" in the sympathetic division. He concluded that the antithesis of vegetative life is present at every level of life function from the cellular to that of the total organism.

This important discovery shed no further light on contact itself. It was only with Reich's discovery of biological and atmospheric orgone energy around 1940, together with the development of the technique of functional thinking, that his investigation of this deeper function could be carried further. The antithesis of vegetative life was found to be based, not on bioelectricity as he originally thought, but on the pulsation of an actual energy with physical properties, called by Reich "biological orgone energy." His functional thought technique provided a solution to the relationship between the clinical and the biological realms: expansion and contraction are paired functional variants of the common functioning principle (CFP) orgone energy pulsation. Pulsation is a deeper, more inclusive function than either of its variations, expansion and contraction. The common functioning principle pulsation defines the variations of expansion and contraction. The question arises: What is the deeper function that constitutes the CFP of pulsation? Or, to put it differently: *what pulsates?* Placing the question in this form points to the correct answer: *excitation pulsates.* Therefore, excitation and pulsation belong in different domains.

Excitation is in a deeper domain than pulsation. In the function of pulsation, excitation alternately pulsates to the periphery and to the center. We can write the correct functional formulation as follows:



Equation 1

Every natural function has a paired function which is in the same domain. In the above functional equation we see that the paired function of pulsation, x, and the paired function of excitation, y, as well as the common functioning principle of excitation, z, and its paired function, y, are unknown. These unknown functions are designated here by the letters x, y, and z. In this investigation we proceed along the research path taken by Reich. We will first focus on the unknown function, y, paired with excitation as well as their common functioning principle, z. This will then place us in a better position to find the paired function of pulsation, x. Accordingly, we ask: What is the paired function of excitation? The answer to this question came from an unexpected source, from Reich's biopsychiatric investigation of the schizophrenic biopathy.

Reich treated a severely disturbed schizophrenic patient in whom delusions and hallucinations were a prominent feature. He carefully observed the patient's biophysical appearance and saw that her statements describing delusional ideas and sensations identified, albeit in a distorted fashion, actual somatic energy functions. By accurately describing these energy functions in natural scientific terms, he made a monumental discovery: the specific disturbance that is pathognomonic of schizophrenia. One important consequence of his discovery was the development of his understanding of the energetic function subsumed by the term "contact." Focusing on disturbances of contact he found that in the schizophrenic illness there is a split between the functions of self-perception and biological excitation. In a brilliant flash of insight he discovered that perception and excitation are paired functions.[1] It follows that in health perception and excitation occur simultaneously, that is, they are "in contact." In all biopathic states there are different manifestations of disturbances of contact depending on the type of biopathy. (See later.)

[1] If perception and excitation are paired natural functions they have to be heterogeneous as they are qualitatively different.

In schizophrenia natural functions are disturbed in a specific manner that is

characteristic of this biopathy. In the mechanism of psychotic projection, for example, when *excitation* in the brain increases beyond a certain threshold specific for that individual, it becomes intolerable and is experienced as panic. Because of ocular armoring excitation is "split" from the perceptual function with which it is normally united and instead of being accurately *perceived* as belonging to the self it is perceived as something alien, as belonging to the outer world. During sexual excitation, for example, the organismic orgone energy becomes intensely excited and the individual's energy field luminates and expands greatly. In the schizophrenic this increase in excitation, as with any sensation or emotion beyond a particular intensity, is intolerable. As a result excitation is perceived as originating externally.[2] The schizophrenic, in an effort to prevent being flooded with feeling, tries to avoid increases in excitation. This is accomplished by inhibiting respiration and by withdrawing contact with the environment.

Reich's discovery brought about a great leap forward in our understanding of schizophrenia in particular and of biopathic processes in general. It demonstrated that:

- The perceptual and excitatory functions are distinct physical entities and that they are primary functions of biological orgone energy. In general, the perceptual function, a *qualitative* property of biological orgone energy, defines the capacity of orgone energy to perceive itself. The excitatory function, a *quantitative* property of biological orgone energy, defines the capacity of orgone energy for spontaneous movement. Perception does not belong exclusively to the superficial psychological realm as is commonly (but mistakenly) believed, although it is recognizable prominently there. It originates from the deeper biological realm. Similarly, the function of biological excitation is not confined exclusively to the somatic realm. *Perception and excitation occur in both the psychological and biological realms.*

- The perceptual and excitatory functions are paired heterogeneous variations. They belong to the same domain of natural functions. They appear at the very beginning of life. The unknown paired function, y, of excitation is perception.

[2] The individual, for example, may ascribe internal orgonotic sensation ("currents") to external "electrical" influences.

- The unknown common functioning principle of the perceptual and excitatory functions, z, has somehow to do with orgonotic contact between these two functions. Reich identified this common function as the *streaming movement* of orgone energy.

Equation 2

Let us discuss each of the points in greater detail.

l. The perceptual function originates from the biological realm in association with the excitatory function.

There is ample evidence to indicate that the perceptual function is identifiable at the very beginning of life and in all biological functions. It is present in the simplest biological systems such as protozoa and also in individual metazoal cells. However, in order to investigate the perceptual and excitatory functions microscopically, it is necessary to observe *living* cells. The mechanistic approach to biology systematically excludes any possibility of encountering these basic functions of nature because it confines its observations to *dead* tissue. The photographs of a living ameba proteus in Figure 1, for example, clearly demonstrate the functions of perception and excitation. In this series a pseudopod, formed by protoplasmic streaming, extends toward and then retracts from bionous matter.

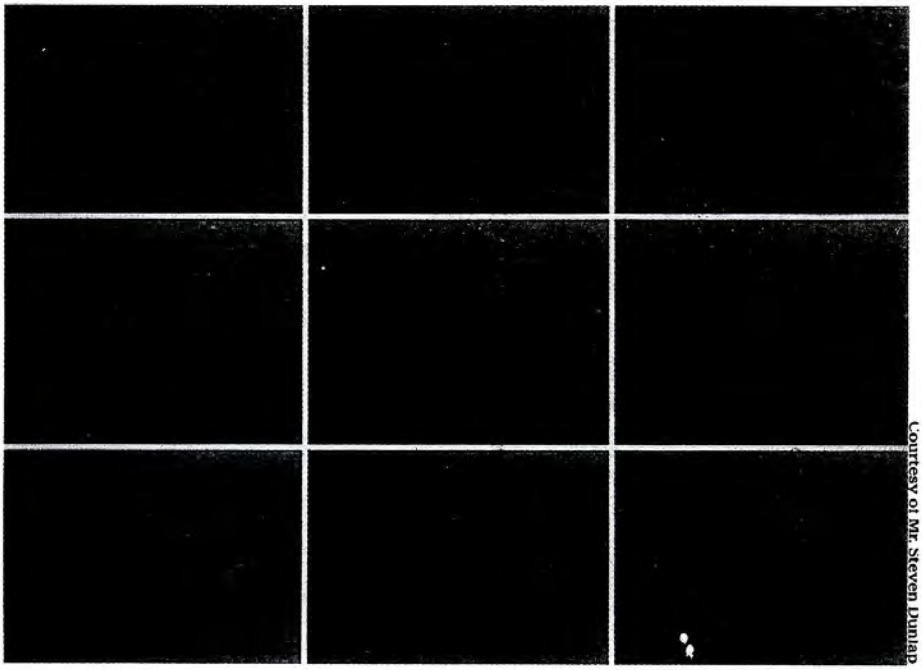


Figure 1

The perceptual and excitatory functions are present in the somatic as well as in the psychic realm. (The psychic and somatic realms will be defined later.) There is overwhelming evidence for the existence of the perceptual function at every level of biological functioning. In the special sensory *receptor* organs that function in the service of the psychic realm, the perceptual function is recognizable in structuralized cellular elements such as those found in the retina of the eye, the cochlea of the inner ear, and the sense organs at the skin surface etc., located abundantly at the periphery of the organism. These organs function in the service of total organismic functions. (See below.) In the *somatic* realm the perceptual function is identifiable in the numerous specific *receptor* sites of the various organs and organ systems. *These receptor sites are a manifestation of the perceptual function in the somatic realm in the same manner as the sensory receptors are in the psychic realm.* The only difference between the perceptual function in the psychic and the somatic realms are the *specific organismic functions* that are perceived. (See later.)

The perceptual function is an orgonotic function, an *intrinsic* property of biological orgone energy. We can deduce this because it involves more than just mechanical reception as, for example, in the case of a telephone receiver or a computer.

Similarly, the function of *excitation* is an orgonotic function, an *intrinsic* property of biological energy. And, unlike mechanical forms of energy, the movement of orgone is spontaneous, also an intrinsic property of the energy itself.

The importance of the perceptual function in biological processes has begun to be realized by some identified with the prevailing mechanistic materialistic approach. Moy, for example, acknowledges its significance as follows:

> The elaborate organization of life requires specific molecular recognition. Although non-specific interactions may contribute to adhesion in molecular and cellular assemblies, *the selectivity of ligand and receptor interactions provides the specificity required to regulate multicomponent systems.* (4) [Italics added]

There is a mystical implication in the phrase "molecular recognition." Other scientists approach the perceptual problem in a strictly mechanistic-materialistic fashion.

> In unicellular organisms, protein-based circuits act in place of a nervous system to *control behavior;* in the larger and more complicated cells of plants and animals, many thousands of proteins functionally connected to each other *carry information* from the plasma membrane to the genome. The imprint of the environment on the concentration and activity of many thousands of proteins in a cell is in effect a *memory trace,* like a 'random access memory' containing ever-changing information about the cell's surroundings. Because of their high degree of interconnection, systems of interacting proteins act as neural networks *trained by evolution* to respond appropriately to patterns of extracellular stimuli. The 'wiring' of these networks depends on *diffusion- limited encounters* between molecules, and for this and other reasons they have unique features not found in conventional computer-based networks.(5) [Italics added]

In this passage the perceptual function is ignored entirely. Mechanistic thinking imbues inert matter, such as the biochemical substances contained in living systems, with life-like qualities. These biochemical substances participating in biological pulsation, however, do not *in and of themselves* pulsate, nor do they perceive. When incorporated into biological (orgonotic) systems, they then become pulsatory.