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**"PULSATION" -  
a contribution to a model of psychosomatic functioning**

As the heart opens sucking blood in and contracts pumping it out in thrusts the body resounds with its rhythm everywhere, as our breath flows in and out of the lungs the whole organism is moved from the soft waves of expansion and relaxation. The silent pulsation of the cerebro-spinal fluid and other rhythmic movements of fluid systems and organs join and are superimposed on each other as well as the larger repetitive cycles of activity and passivity, wake and sleep, need and satisfaction, curiosity and rest. Something moves all the time, in small cycles of back and forth, out and in, up and down, in large cycles, and in very small and very large ones...

Rhythmic movements have always fascinated mankind as early testimony of astronomical observations or time recordings show. Outside of us in nature we meet the pulsatory movement also, whether it is a single cell contracting and expanding or the rhythm of day and night, winter and summer, cycles of life and death. Pulsation is present in every realm of nature, of existence, whether we consider biological processes or physical ones, whether we look into the micro- or the macrocosm, inside or outside ourselves...

How emotions can be understood as expressions of pulsation illustrates the expansion and outgoing quality of feelings like love and anger or the contraction and introvert quality of feelings like anxiety, fear and trust. Manic depressive functioning points to an emotional pulsation stuck in extremes which have lost their inner connection while other behaviour pattern or disorders can be seen as caught on either direction. The realization how worthwhile it can be to understand emotional and physiological processes as expressions of pulsation we owe to the work of W. Reich.

His basic hypothesis of the functional identity of psyche and soma can be developed into a model of organismic pulsation which integrates our understanding of psychic and somatic functioning, psychological and physiological knowledge, verbal and physical skills.

Instead of a symbolic use of the body by the psyche we take psycho-somatic symptoms, for example, as expressions of the organismic pulsation or, more precise, of pulsatory functions. S. Keleman has shown the somatic manifestations with their psychic equivalent when the pulsation is stuck in one or the other direction<sup>1</sup>. Whether the emphasis is more psychic or somatic points to a specific developmental stage and success of psyche-soma differentiation and integration.

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<sup>1</sup> S. Keleman, Emotional Anatomy, Berkeley, Ca. 1985

What Piaget had postulated for the development of cognitive structures<sup>2</sup> is assumed here for the whole organism: "invariant", constant functions in exchange with the environment produce different, evolving structures, mental and physical. In this paper I want to present a contribution to a model of pulsation, outlining especially the involved functions.

In contemporary western societies, the emphasis of life is more on progress and a lineal perception of history and time, and so the insight into the repetitive processes has been somewhat lost, which pulsation is usually associated with. Yet, the pulsatory movement integrates the repetition with the forward movement: there is no absolutely closed system, and every new heart-beat continues and answers the last.

From these observations of such a common property of nature it is not far off to suggest that there is a driving "force" underlying these phenomena. From the experience of a pulsatory force within and without us it is but a small step towards the grasping of a life-energy which pulsates.

The notion of the pulsation of the life-force as it has been described by W. Reich always felt very appealing to me. In my mind, it has served as the connecting link between the Reichian "energy-paradigma" and that of contemporary science. Lately, the systemic approach shows remarkable similarities by emphasizing similar functions<sup>3</sup>. Developing it further, the concept of pulsation allows the integration of observation, human experience and thinking, of physical, biological and mental processes, the grasping of the very simple as well as the complicated and highly differentiated life-processes. This is, after all, what made Reich's energy-paradigma so fascinating and promising.

In the growth-oriented body work and the body-psychotherapy evolving from the Reichian tradition, many have found the notion of pulsation useful without realizing the full potential of a more elaborated concept.

It was Charles Kelley who, more than any other of Reich's successors, picked up on the pulsatory property of the orgone energy ( or "radix" as he chose to call the life force)<sup>4</sup> . Consider the human organism as an energy-system: consisting of an instroke phase when charge is accumulating (convergence) and an outstroke phase when the accumulated charge is being discharged or "spent", Kelley conceptualized life processes as continual cycles of in-and outstrokes. Some of these cycles are slow, others are fast, and many different cycles and rhythms are superimposed on each other.

Regarding the human body, there are fast pulsatory cycles like brain-waves, while the heart-beat is a slower one, the breathing still slower, and the cycle of sexual arousal and release is slower still. Some of these cycles are rather fixed in their frequency whereas others are more flexible and changeable. Depending on whether the in- or outstroke is stronger, the continuing pulsation may charge the whole system (e.g. by breathing in more than out) or discharge it ( e.g. by breathing more out than in) - and a "larger" pulsation is being created.

In Kelley's concept, the charging and discharging process is by far the most important function of pulsation. Still, as the term in- and outstroke suggests, the charging happens by an

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<sup>2</sup> J. Piaget, *Biologie und Erkenntnis*, Frankfurt 1974. Original: *Biologie et connaissance*, Paris 1967

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., F. Simon, *Unterschiede*, Frankfurt 1993

<sup>4</sup> Ch. Kelley, *Education in feeling and purpose*, S. Monica 1974

incoming *movement* of the radix (coming in towards the center) and the discharging by an outgoing *movement* (moving out from the center). Kelley associates this movement inwards and the accumulation of charge with contraction, and the outgoing movement and discharging process with expansion. Reich, of course, had observed how, with the accumulation of charge an organism *expands* and how it contracts with the discharge.

From our observation of human beings, we know that both are right: some people, for example, when they emphasize their inhalation (instroke), will clearly contract, their skin turns pale, hands and feet get cold, the extension of the organism seems to shrink... while with others, doing the same breathing, just the opposite happens, the skin gets colored, their periphery becomes warm and radiant, the organism *expands*. This suggests that something is going on within the body that is profoundly different in both cases.

At this point we need some clarification of the pulsatory process. It has been Kelley's contribution to introduce the terms instroke and outstroke for the two different phases of pulsation. Using these, we can distinguish four different aspects of the process of pulsation in living systems. One is, of course, that energy is being accumulated or dissipated: the dimension of *charge* (1). The second is that the energy inside the system moves towards the center or the periphery: the dimension of *movement* (2). The third is how the organism expands or contracts: the dimension of the *extension* (3). And the fourth is how the organism interacts with the environment: the dimension of *interaction* (4).

The first three of these constitute Kelley's concept of pulsation without being conceptualized there, though, as different dimensions interacting. The fourth one springs from my understanding of Reich's observations on energetic functioning<sup>5</sup> as well as my insight that the dimension of contact (inter-action) often seems to be neglected in Reichian or neo-reichian approaches.

To tie the instroke to the accumulation of charge (1), movement towards the center (2) and contraction, and the outstroke to the dissipation of charge (1), movement to the periphery (2) and expansion (3), as Kelley does, not only contradicts experience. It expresses a mechanic understanding of pulsation which may be adequate for non-living systems without a membrane. But with a living system the pulsatory process evolves into a new differentiation. The internal pulsation as well as the contact with the environment move on to a new quality: the internal process is not just a function of outside stimuli. This difference in systems theory is conceptualized as that between a "trivial" (mechanic) and "non-trivial" system<sup>6</sup>. By introducing this difference and the unique existence of an internal pulsation we contend that principally we cannot fully understand, foresee or control the functioning of another human being.

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<sup>5</sup> In "Cosmic superimposition" (New York 1973) Reich describes different energetic functions in living organisms which constitute this dimension: metabolism, radiation, attraction, superimposition.

<sup>6</sup> See H.v.Foerster, *Wissen und Gewissen*, Frankfurt 1993

<sup>7</sup> See W. Reich, *Cosmic Superimposition*, N.Y. 1973, p. 179

For W. Reich, this new quality was the property of the convulsive discharge (orgasm), regulating the energy-metabolism and reproduction<sup>7</sup>. Along with this, though, the biological pulsation is at the root of a differentiation of life-processes that eventually lead to self-consciousness. What seems important here is that in living systems we need to differentiate between an *internal* pulsation of the organism and the interdependence/interaction of this with the environment, including other organisms (*exchanging* pulsation). So, when we take *in* energy from the outside this might connect with an internal outstroke process, charging the periphery and expanding the organism, or it might connect with an internal instroke process charging the center and relaxing the periphery leading to contraction<sup>8</sup>. This, then, explains the different effects of breathing in the example above.

And even without any added inflow of energy (more than is the usual metabolism) the internal pulsation moves on. So, the energy can move internally towards the center, charging the center but not the whole organism, and, with an internal outstroke the organism can expand without added energy.

In Kelley's concept, in- and outstroke are profoundly different not only in their direction. Conceptualizing "radix" as a substratum of nature, the instroke is accumulating a radix potential and the outstroke or discharge is "the conversion of the radix into something else. In the case of the human being the conversion is into feeling and movement"<sup>9</sup>, awareness and consciousness. The idea of "conversion", of course, is important and needs to be introduced into the Reichian concept of pulsation of a life-energy that manifests itself in so many ways. Limiting it only to the discharge or outstroke as Kelley does, though, it remains unclear how we take in radix or energy, e.g. with inhaling (unless we inhale pure radix). Reducing the instroke to an accumulation of charge not only leads to explanatory states of distress, it also restricts our ways of working with people to outstroke processes.

If the outstroke is a function of the differentiating and diversifying property of the energy, creating new manifestations by a transformation process, it makes perfect sense to conceptualize the instroke as a process of conversion from the diverse and differentiated back to the simple, the oneness, being a function of the unifying property of the energy. When thus the energy "comes back to itself" it seems evident that in our experience things get quieter, simpler, deeper, and that consciousness goes through different states of less and less differentiation. This process is, for example known from meditation, and is just as "important" as the other.

So far, I have talked about pulsation as if it was only a discontinuous process. This, I believe, is a shortcoming of Kelley's model. It is, of course, one important aspect and brings us in touch with our very existential experience of repetitive cycles in nature and within ourselves. The constant in and out, contraction and expansion is a vital part of our life's experience, the heart beat, the breathing cycles, life cycles, the seasons etc. With this cyclical understanding of pulsation, we conceptualize our experience of space (extension of the energy-system) and a notion of time as a repetitive before/after.

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<sup>8</sup> The term contraction has no negative connotation here but is used only in the literal sense of "pulling together".

<sup>9</sup> Ch. Kelley, Education in feeling and purpose, S. Monica 1974, p. 24

But if pulsation of the life energy is such a basic concept for our work it needs to include a notion of evaluation, growth, direction and progress which evolves from basic energetic processes<sup>10</sup> .

When Reich described the movement of orgone energy as a "Kreiselwelle", he was able to show how both aspects - the repetitious, cyclical and the forward thrusting - originate in that one movement of the energy. The amoeba is not only pulsating in terms of energy moving towards the center and periphery, charging and discharging, expanding and contracting, but it is also moving forward (in time and space), and so every pulsatory cycle repeats itself and moves forward at the same time. It is only when these two aspects of movement of energy are not experienced and thought of as really being one movement that we experience as a threat what we have lost connection with: the unified, self-regulating, self-directed energy-flow within ourselves.

And if we experience and think of only the cyclical aspect of the energy-movement as a vital force, then we need to create programs for ourselves to ensure "progress" in our life, forward moving and self-direction. And if we get stuck with the forward thrusting aspect, we need to create programs for our security, maintaining our identity. I do not want to discount the need for such efforts: they are very necessary when the pulsation is not complete enough and life demands progress or security. But as a goal we want to free the pulsation to such an extent that progress, evolution and maintaining the identity can grow naturally out of it. If the pulsatory process is indeed repetitious and forward moving at the same time we eventually don't need to create these programs because their content is happening naturally.

There are different levels to the discontinuous and continuous aspects of pulsation which are unfolding in the process of energy movement, and it is evident that a basic theory of pulsation will need to show how these are stemming from properties of the life energy<sup>11</sup> .

For a closer look at pulsation, we need to come back to properties of the life-energy that are of relevance here. For this paper, I will only look at living energy-systems since for now I am interested in the practical implications for body-psychotherapy and growth-work.

Generally, as Reich observed, the energy is in constant motion, moving from the lower to the higher potential, forming energy-systems that have a certain capacity-level, being maintained by charging from and discharging into the surrounding energy ocean. The energy moves in the form of a spinning wave which unites the functions of circular and forward movements.

Living organisms which have a membrane and a core, function according to these properties and have developed the "new" function of convulsion which is a total event that not only does not threaten the integrity of the system, it enhances its well-being and constitutes, as an integral physiological part of the whole, a basic function of the energy metabolism<sup>12</sup> , the complete discharge of excess energy. Depending on their position, Reichians also emphasize a

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<sup>10</sup> Kelley certainly was aware of this conceptual and practical need, but he failed to develop this out of the pulsatory property of the life energy. Instead, he introduced the concept of purpose and suggested a program of purpose work ( Kelley *ibid*) which in many ways seems to be "put on" the concept of pulsation.

<sup>11</sup> I use the terms "life energy", "orgone energy", "energy" and "radix" interchangeably here because I believe they are all describing the same phenomenon.

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that Kelley's term "radix" expresses conceptual differences that need not be discussed here.

<sup>12</sup> W. Reich, *Cosmic Superimposition*, p. 178f.

property of "unity", that is the energy wants to stay together<sup>13</sup>, or of differentiating, transforming into manifestations as Kelley does. In my understanding, we can develop, out of the motion of the spinning wave, the pulsatory function which integrates both opposite functions of the energy in living systems.

Reich had noted that "the mechanical pulsation results from the functional pulsation of the orgone", and that "since the movement of fluids is mechanical, it can only be the expression and consequence of the pulsatory function of orgone energy."<sup>14</sup> It is precisely this mechanical resistance or organismic inertia, though, that results in a differentiation of the pulsation up to the capacity for counter-pulsation (see below). Pulsation, from this point of view, is connecting life-energy with matter, energetic (in Reich's sense) functioning with mechanical, and it's depth, harmony and quality is expressed in the well-being of the individual.

We can now come back to the development of the organismic pulsatory functions. As stated earlier, the organismic pulsation functions within the four dimensions of charge (1), movement (2), extension (3) and interaction (4) which can be seen as dimensions of the human experience as well: causality and existence (1), time and growth (2), space and boundaries (3) and object constancy and contact (4).

In each of the dimensions the energetic principles cited above function in a specific way on an energetic and organismic level. The relationship of energetic and organismic functioning, of course, is of utmost importance: it is not a mechanical, "automatic" one as the pulsatory dimensions are interacting within a living organism with it's differentiation of times. The relationship is a dynamic interaction of functions which are not reduceable as they regulate each other in a pulsatory equilibrium. For example, when an organism radiates (extension) it may do so because a forward movement of the energetic function interacts with a slight contraction of the periphery - instead of expanding and moving into action. The following scheme summarizes the pulsatory functions within the dimensions and adds the dimension of the connected (mental and emotional) *experience*

<b>Dimension of Pulsation</b>	<b>Energetic function</b>	<b>Organismic function</b>
(1) charge, <i>causality/existence</i>	accumulation <i>power</i>	tension <i>potency</i>
	discharge <i>action/surrender</i>	relaxation <i>softness/weakness</i>

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<sup>13</sup> see especially Will Davis, Collected works, private press 1989

<sup>14</sup> W. Reich, Cosmic Superimposition, p. 205

(2) movement <i>time/growth</i>	cyclical movement <i>repetition</i>	centripetal movement <i>self-contact</i>
	forward movement <i>change</i>	centrifugal movement <i>(e-)motion</i>
(3) extension <i>space/boundaries</i>	contraction (staying together) <i>inner cohesiveness</i>	density (reduction of space) <i>protecting</i>
	radiation  <i>reaching out</i>	expansion (increase of space) <i>extending</i>
(4) interaction <i>object constancy /contact</i>	conversion <i>assimilating</i>	taking in <i>taking</i>
	transformation <i>creating</i>	putting out <i>giving</i>

The functions of the organismic pulsation can also be described in successive order, delineating a *pulsatory cycle* ( see diagram 1), a model for understanding perceptual, cognitive, emotional, physical, and motoric processes.

### **The Instroke**

With the instroke, things become clearer, life becomes simpler and deeper, experiences go through a transformation and the important is separated from the unimportant, thoughts lose their confusion, feelings their urgency and struggle, and when the instroke is complete and touches our core we come back with a deep acceptance and insight, refreshment and courage, a connection with the "secret of life"...

In the **interactive** pulsatory dimension we take in a perception, an experience, an object, and digest it, absorbing what we need, connecting it with our own energy in a process of conversion from the differentiated to the simple, from meaning to function, from the separated to the united... This can go along with a deep sense of being in contact and connection...

With the centripetal **movement** of the body fluid the energy moves back on itself and it may feel as a process of "homecoming", getting a feeling of satisfaction, contacting the security of

the cyclical energetic movement. It is no accident that many meditative techniques suggest the endless repetition of a word or sentence.

When the boundary contracts and our **extension** is being reduced we can experience how our energy is holding us together, concentrating our sense of self, sometimes up to the focal point where "all is one, and one is all".

Finally, with the accumulation of **charge** in the center we can experience inner power, internal warmth and strength.

What we call instroke energetically is pointing at the centripetal movement towards and into the center of the energy systems. With this process of convergence, the charge in and around the center is rising. A complete instroke also includes the taking in of energy from outside of the organism, and if this is happening the charge of the whole system is rising. Yet, although there always is some energetic exchange of an organism with its environment, we need to differentiate these two aspects: the taking in (more than is released into the environment) and the internal movement of the energy from the periphery towards the center. I will try to point out shortly the different functions of the instroke-process:

We begin with what I call "**intake**". The organism actually takes inside of its boundaries energy in different forms. This is happening through our senses, our body openings and the skin; we hear, smell, see, eat and breath in. We take in air, sounds, pictures, food, drinks and sensory experiences. With all this, we add energy to our system, and if it is more than we give out at the same time, we can expect the organism to get charged. Yet, at this point we can, in accordance with Reich's orgasm-formula, only talk of more tension in the organism: i.e taking in food doesn't necessarily mean we actually absorb the energy of the food. The intake is a "mechanical" action and *extends* the organism. In a way it seems the most simple function in the pulsation, and yet already here we find many variations as to whether at all an organism is taking in, what and how. (A complete refusal, of course, leads to death.)

In order to illustrate the different steps in the pulsatory process, I will consistently refer to a simple example that nevertheless is of great importance for our work since it represents a link between physical and emotional, voluntary and involuntary, conscious and unconscious processes: that of breathing.

In breathing, the Intake is the pushing of air into the lungs, expanding the chest. It is a mechanical act, by which the organism expands (gets bigger), but the energy-metabolism of the body is not being changed.

Every organism, if it wants to preserve its identity and enhance its growth needs to have control over what and how it wants to take in. It says a lot about the functioning of a person how she deals with the Intake.

Anorexia is an example of someone blocking the Intake to an extent that life itself may be threatened. It may seem that it is only food that she refuses to take in, but with closer examination one will detect that even though this is the most obvious instance, the pulsatory function of Intake is blocked generally, having lost the capacity for a flexible response. So, not taking in food or oxygen (reduced inhalation) may seem as a desperate attempt to control the Intake out of an experience of not being able to handle the processes following the Intake. When the identity is threatened and boundaries are blurred by the kind of (family-) interaction

one usually finds then, the blocking of the Intake-function happens on the very basic level of (psyche-soma) differentiation the organism has been arrested in experientially.

The next function is what I call "**Conversion**". Whatever we take in (food, sound, etc.), after the mechanical Intake it connects with our body. This is when the processing, the assimilation of the material (energy) starts. Again, it is of importance here whether this conversion happens at all, what or how (much) of it is being processed.

A little stone that we eat will most likely not connect with our body tissue but will travel unchanged through our intestines and out: it has added tension but no charge. Similarly, a sound or a picture might be taken in but not be connected with the processing system of the brain. In "conversion" the incorporated is being changed and by this process it's energy connects with our own. This is when charge is being added and the organism actually charges (as a whole).

In breathing, "conversion" takes place when the oxygen of the incoming air (not all, but most) connects with the red blood cells. The example of breathing illustrates a process of sorting out or choosing (oxygen) which is true for other realms as well: the perceptual input is being organized, important aspects are emphasized, others deemphasized.

Physically and emotionally, the conversion process is the basis for digestion, for processing: if an experience doesn't connect to the organism's energy-system but moves towards the center virtually unchanged it adds tension and is felt as somehow "alien". Instead of assimilating a model's behaviour into one's own and such changing, "digesting" it, people might report about instances when they behave like "someone else" - when the conversion doesn't function<sup>15</sup>. Learning for an exam and not integrating the learned is another example just like any compensation, which can be understood as an performance not connected with the core of the personality.

The intake and conversion together from the incorporating function of pulsation, going along with an *expansion* of the organism and the *tension* turning into *charge*. It is of importance here to note that with human functioning we observe a lot of variations as to if and how the organism incorporates. For various reasons the pulsation of human beings is less "fixed" or stable than that of animals: pulsation patterns of different people vary quite a bit. As stated before, with the breathing we can observe this quite nicely: of two people who breath in the same pace and rhythm, expanding their lungs towards the same volume, who might take in the same amount of air, one gets charged very quickly (either on the periphery or in the center) and the other very slowly or not at all. Without the distinction of Intake and Conversion this is difficult to explain.

The other function of the instroke process I call the centralization, consisting of a *gathering* of energy and *contact with the core*. This process of centralizing might happen without prior incorporation, and indeed a considerable amount of energy in the body quite naturally just moves into the center (and back, see: "Outstroke"). So, centralisation essentially means the movement of energy (moving the body plasma) towards (gathering) and into (core contact) the core.

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<sup>15</sup> This can be associated with the psychoanalytic difference between introjecting an object as a whole vs. the later process of identification.

**"Gathering"** describes the flow of the energy from the periphery towards the core, so the periphery, the membrane relaxes, contracts. With the suction of energy towards the core, the charge around the core is rising. This is the process of going inside: food goes into the digestive organs, pictures, sounds, sensory experiences are being taken to the inside of our sensual and emotional history.

Oxygen is being taken into the blood-stream and being transported to the cells of the organism. We often observe a gathering when people close their eyes and begin to shiver and get cold on the periphery as the energy moves toward the center and the periphery is less charged.

The gathering process then accumulates charge around the core and, like a wave, passes it into the vegetative core of the organism - or it may not. If the organism is faced with an amount of charge or rush of energy towards the core it can't handle, it might contract, constrict the membranes of the cells and muscles or organs before the wave reaches the core. Again we need to look if, how much and how this process is happening. When an information or experience moves in with the gathering it is the *simplifying* in this process which is most obvious: it is when a complex information is being reduced to one message, the world is becoming simpler but not simplified ( this may be the case when this function is over-emphasized).

Finally, the energy comes into the vegetative center, the center of our cells, the inner organs and the center of the vegetative nervous system: the "material", organized aspect of our core.

In **"Contact with the Core"** the energy reaches our innermost center: this is the link where we feel most connected to the free-pulsating energy within (and without) ourselves and at the same time get the deepest sense of our identity as individuals. With this, we might understand why a new experience only can change something in our view of the world or ourselves if it can reach our center and connects with the core, the uninhibited flow of energy within us which "reminds" the organism of the self-regulating properties of the life energy. This is the phase where the sensory, emotional and cognitive experiences are reaching beyond our history into our "primary organismic response"<sup>16</sup>, the unspoiled innermost response to an experience. When this happens we might have an "aha" experience which can change our body, our mind, our emotions and actions profoundly.

For our breathing example, the contact with the core means the oxygen of the inbreath reaches the cells, the mitochondria and exchanges CO<sub>2</sub>.

At the same time, contact to the core is the turning of the pulsation:

up to here the wave of the energy has come inside, raised the charge in the center, it now begins to move outward again.

### **The outstroke**

In the outstroke we reach out to the world, to people, to nature. With the outward movement things get exciting, we act and produce. When energetic impulses from our core move out they transform into ideas and actions, the simple evolves into differentiated structures with meaning and focus, we are extending ourselves into different realms, moving forward with the

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<sup>16</sup> This term comes from Will Davis (verbal communication)

momentum of thrusting motion... contacting and changing the world. When the outstroke is complete we have extended, but not lost ourselves, we have been creative, powerful and productive, contacted the richness, diversity and excitement of life.

When the **charge** moves out toward the periphery it creates the tonus and tension necessary for action, production, reaching out. It may be experienced as a feeling of potency and power, anticipated joy, and when it is being discharged we can get a sense of surrender, relief and relaxation.

With our radiation and expansion of the boundaries (**extension**) goes the experience of having space and a place, a sense of concrete body (skin, bones, muscles etc.) and identity grounded in a 3-dimensional world. At the same time we can feel an energetic reaching out, having boundaries and an energy-field. The centrifugal and forward **movement** may result in a feeling of pleasure and excitement, a sense of focus and the accelerating speed of a forward push, up to the joy of ecstasy...

Finally, in the **interactive** pulsatory dimension, we may feel productive and creative with the satisfaction of meeting the world, another person through words, ideas, deeds, contact... bringing back an experience that we *take in*, starting a new pulsatory cycle...

With the outstroke of pulsation the life energy flows from the center towards the periphery and out of the organism into the environment. In doing so it also moves the organism, giving direction and focus. This process goes along with a release of energy from the center into the periphery and then a discharge into the environment where contact is made. If contact with the core has happened before, the outstroke carries the primary organismic response towards the periphery, organizes it into feelings, thoughts and translates it into action, expression, contacting the environment. Again, I see two functions in this process: one being a decentralisation process where the energy gets released from the center and organizes it's flow, the other being the discharge of the whole organism with release into environment, making contact. At this point I want to introduce a practically motivated differentiation in terms: what I call release is an "internal" discharge of an energy system while discharge is pointing at the release of energy into the outside. A tension may be released internally or translated into action.

Decentralisation then first means the **flow** of energy **towards the periphery**: the center releases the charge and the organism as a whole begins to expand. Moving towards the periphery, the energy goes into the musculature, the CNS, the outer layer of the body. This flow, of course, happens in different ways depending on how the organism handles the charge. It might be, for example, a fast or a slow movement. When it is felt directly we feel streamings as the energetic wave moves the body-plasma. In breathing, the cells have exchanged oxygen for CO<sub>2</sub> and now transport it back to the heart.

The experience of this movement, if it is not streamings, is often an experience of release or relaxation from the center, of warmth coming into the limbs and head or that of sudden impulses that come to the periphery. If the organizing function (see below) is disturbed the outward flow can result in chaotic spasms that seem to tear the body apart. Generally, as the energetic wave moves the body-plasma, tension is created at the peripheral areas of the body,

being of higher density than the internal organs. Reaching the limit the plasma won't move as freely anymore, but the outward moving energy keeps it in this direction, creating tension and boundaries.

The primary response, when moving outward, is "**organizing**" in a specific way. Generally, as Reich noted, pulsation moves as a peristaltic wave through the smooth, and as spasm through the "strident" musculature, unifying, for example, in the orgasmic convulsion<sup>17</sup>. This movement is further being organized by the specific structure of the organism, areas of higher charge which might attract the flow and those of lower charge, channels that are open for the flow carrying it into thinking, feeling, action. Depending on the flexibility of the structure, the nerve-connections, the muscle-tonus etc. the outward-flow might express the primary response in the individuals own way quite fully or it gets deformed and changes the primary response considerably.

If this is the case, of course, we are talking about armor or blocks. I believe that for this process it makes an important difference whether the outward flow comes from core contact, as this means a strong pulsatory impulse which can change the organizing pattern because a genuinely new experience has been made.

Still, this depends on how strong the armor is and a blocked primary impulse of desire can also be converted into hate, for example. Generally, with the organizing comes the conscious identification of a feeling, thought, movement or sensation. But again, this depends on whether at all the outflow is being organized (consider: seizures), how much and how.

With the organizing, the periphery generally expands, charge accumulates and creates tension, and the movement of the energy slows down. For our example, this is when the CO<sub>2</sub> reaches the avioles and connects with air.

Finally, the accumulated energy comes out of the organism, and this is the "**discharge**" function, the charge of the whole organism drops, the periphery contracts and relaxes. First, it will be the release of charge into the environment (discharge) by some kind of action, and with our action the energy makes contact with the environment.

For the discharge it is practical to differentiate again whether at all, how much and how it is happening. It can take the form of gradual discharge (for example in thoughtful talking) partial discharge (sudden drop of charge-level, but only part of the organism is involved) or complete vegetative discharge (with involuntary participation of the whole organism). It is evident that the form of discharge depends a lot on the organizing process, yet it is a process with it's own dynamic. This is where the forward moving thrust of the "Kreiselwelle" develops the momentum. The form of this, especially in terms of focus, will determine the quality of contact with the environment. In the breathing pulsation, the CO<sub>2</sub> is being pushed out of the lungs.

"**Contact with the environment**" then completes the cycle of pulsation: our energy connects with the environment or another person, and an experience is made. If we can say that core contact changes our inner structure then in contact with the world, we are able to change the outside. (And, if we take this experience in, of course, we change ourselves again).

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<sup>17</sup> W. Reich, Der Krebs (german edition of "Cancer".), Frankfurt 19 , p 170

As core contact is a turning point in the pulsatory process, so is contact with the environment as the organism takes in the new experience. This is the basis for communication, and in our breathing example, the CO<sub>2</sub> connects with the air of the environment.

Looking at the whole process of pulsation we can organize it into a few diagrams that illustrate different aspects (see below):

**Diagram 1** shows the whole pulsatory cycle.

**Diagram 2:** We may distinguish an "inner pulsation" and an "exchanging pulsation" which I believe are natural pulsatory cycles for various processes. Physically, of course it is obvious that many processes follow the model of the "inner pulsation": the blood-stream is a good example, it pulsates within the organism and yet, through exchange with the cells and the breath, is also tied to the complete pulsatory cycle. For the "exchanging pulsation" we can look at many "routine, automatic" perception - action cycles that do not touch our core but are a necessary response.

So, when you open a door and close it again this automatic perception - action cycle in most cases will be unconscious and remain a peripheral exchange with the environment. But acts like this may come deeper into our pulsatory process and become of almost existential importance, e.g. in a psychotic episode. By the same token, a deep inner experience that concerns another person may never come to the surface and into the contact. In both instances, the pulsation itself is not functioning in a life-positive way and the relationship between the inner and exchanging pulsation is not balanced.

**Diagram 3** shows the pulsatory cycle in terms of the orgasm-formula. The different terms "instroke charge" and "outstroke charge" point to the fact that no charge is stagnant, even when in a block motion is severely reduced. But with this differentiation we can distinguish whether a blocking is towards the core or periphery: I believe that in the work this is an important difference<sup>19</sup>.

Energetically (and experientially) then there are different kinds of blocks: the outstroke block when the energy is held on the way out with an "unsatisfied" decentralisation or discharge (for example hyperopia) then there is the instroke blocking when the energy is held on the way in (for example: myopia). Often, these kinds of blocks are organized in layers above each other which seems to stabilize the blocking considerably. E. Baker's distinction of an "unsatisfied" and "repressed" block is a case in point: unsatisfied when the original impuls shines through and repressed when it is (successfully) counterattacked<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> In Radix-work, too often we have looked at charge as if it was always on the outstroke - this often is not the case, though, as we have learned especially in our work with "fear-structures". At the same time, this difference of instroke-charge and outstroke-charge enables us to show that both, Reich and Kelley, with their different orgasm-formulas are right: for the instroke process it is Reich, and for the outstroke it is Kelley (Reich: tension/charge - discharge/relaxation; Kelley: charge/tension - discharge/relaxation).

<sup>20</sup> E. Baker, *man in the trap*, N.Y. 1967

**Diagram 4** shows how the pulsatory cycle is connected with a forward movement, as Reich has shown with the movement of the *Kreiselwelle*.

**Diagram 5** shows what can happen if the pulsatory cycle gets changed: getting stuck in one phase or avoiding the next the organism "jumps" and leaves out the next function, "crippling" the pulsatory cycle.

Considering this simple pulsatory cycle and the complicated processes in the body we need to take a close look at the relationship of all the pulsations going on in the organism at the same time: on the level of cells, organs, fluid systems, the nervous system etc. It is evident that for maintaining the metabolism and a fluid equilibrium ("Fließgleich-gewicht"), the different pulsations superimposed on each other form one pulsation, with the small and large cycles in one common way of functioning. Here we have an example for the unifying and differentiating property of the energy.

For working with people in an energetically based way this is the central hypothesis: *that each individual has his/her own basic pulsation with a unique pattern*. So if you take into account a person's breathing pulsation, the heart beat, the pulsation of the brain, of movements, of life patterns, the energetic pulsation of the body as a whole etc. the question is what they all have in common in terms of the pulsatory process: the quality, the emphasis or holding up of instroke or outstroke - functions, the kind of co-ordination, the emphasis on unification or differentiation<sup>21</sup>. In order to get an idea about this co-operation I like the image of an orchestra which when playing a piece of music has a common rhythm and harmony while each instrument plays its own melody<sup>22</sup>. And there is more to that image: consider the art of the fugue ("Die Kunst der Fuge") by J.S. Bach where one instrument is starting a melody and the next is picking it up while the first continues. When we breath, a similar process is happening: While the exchanging pulsation is going on the internal one picks up, while we breath out the previously incorporated oxygen/energy is gathering towards the center. This is, I believe, at the root of the experience that we often feel our center more with the outbreath.

It is important to note, that even though we might have an emphasis on the unifying or differentiating property they always are present together: if one is minimized, of course, the organism can lose its identity or existence.

Looking at the cycle or *Kreiselwelle* of pulsatory functions it becomes evident that a change in one of them will have an impact on the whole pulsation. The ability to **emphasize** or **deemphasize** ( by "turning the pulsation around", e.g going from the instroke- to the according outstroke function) a pulsatory function is a natural ability of all living systems moving forward (growing) and maintaining their identity.

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<sup>21</sup>If the emphasis is on unification the contracted organism holds itself together so strongly that it becomes inflexible, possibly up to a point when the differentiating impulses can only live by splitting off completely. If the emphasis is on differentiation, the organism is in danger of losing the connection with its core, and possibly the unifying impulses can only live by a complete standstill, as, e.g., it happens in a stupor.

<sup>22</sup> Will Davis, who has developed a great skill in working for the unified differentiation of the pulsatory process energetically, calls this process "orchestration". see Will Davis.

This ability, when it becomes more developed as it does with man, enables the organisms to expand the possible environments they live in because they can emphasize or deemphasize the very function they need most in a certain environment. A good example for this process is the nervous system with it's ability to "correct" (emphasize or deemphasize) the incoming information. For various reasons this capacity seems to be most developed in man who at the same time is most in danger of getting stuck with an emphasis- or deemphasis-pattern that has lost it's life-positive function. In many respects, mankind is repeating evolutionary processes (see embryonic development) in a much shorter time. So, while other species need hundreds of generations to develop mechanisms of specific adaptation man does the same within one generation... with the same tendency to hold on to some structure longer than necessary. In a sense, then, the "open" human pulsation speeds up evolutionary processes like in a time-lapse-motion.

In terms of the functioning it is quite obvious that this process is going on continually. So in a time of shortage in contact, food or perceptive stimuli the organism will *emphasize the instroke*, especially the Intake, in a time of invading experiences it will naturally deemphasize the same function. But emphasis of a function that is needed very long (or extremely strong) tends to turn into structure, i. e. a pattern of emphasis or deemphasis staying on even when the shortage or the threat is over.

As this model allows a closer look at the pulsatory processes we can also focus on it's blocking possibilities. Eventually this might enable us to develop a model of character structures that evolves out of a pulsatory understanding of an organism with it's inherent dynamic, and a "red thread" of the work: understanding which step in the process a person avoids we can see what needs to happen next. This, of course, needs to be understood developmentally as well: the development of a human being unfolds in a pulsatory rhythm of emphasising in- and outstroke processes until adulthood.

At this point, I wanted to stay strictly with energetic processes even though, of course, there is a feeling, cognitive and acting manifestation of this process. I am very much aware that the scheme needs to be developed further, but here I just want to demonstrate the possibilities of this preliminary model. What can happen if an organism resists the next step in the pulsatory cycle is shown in **diagram 6**.

It will be the next effort to elaborate on these process of avoiding, jumping and being stuck in terms of the emphasis and de-emphasis of pulsatory functions. Hopefully we then can identify movements, forms of "resistance" and life-patterns in pulsatory terms. In the same fashion, we need to take a look at processes of feeling, awareness and consciousness from a perspective that I tried to develop in this paper.