

CHAPTER XVI

THE EMOTIONAL PLAGUE

The term "emotional plague" is not a derogatory phrase. It does not connote conscious malevolence, moral or biological degeneracy, immorality, etc. An organism whose natural mobility has been continually thwarted from birth develops *artificial forms of movement*. It limps or walks on crutches. In the same way, a man goes through life on the crutches of the emotional plague when the natural self-regulating life expressions are suppressed from birth. *The person afflicted with the emotional plague limps characterologically*. The emotional plague is a chronic biopathy of the organism. It made an inroad into human society with the first mass suppression of genital sexuality; it became an endemic disease which has been tormenting people the world over for thousands of years. There are no grounds for assuming that the emotional plague is passed on from mother to child in a hereditary way. According to our knowledge, it is implanted in the child from the first days of life. It is an endemic illness, like schizophrenia or cancer, with one notable difference, i.e., it is essentially manifested in *social life*. Schizophrenia and cancer are biopathies which we can look upon as the results of the ravages of the emotional plague in social life. The effects of the emotional plague can be seen in the human organism as well as in the life of society. Every so often, the emotional plague develops into an epidemic just like any other contagious disease, such as the bubonic plague or cholera. Epidemic outbreaks of the emotional plague become manifest in widespread and violent breakthroughs of sadism and criminality, on a small and large scale. One such epidemic outbreak was the Catholic Inquisition of the Middle Ages; the international fascism of the twentieth century is another.

If we did not look upon the emotional plague as an illness in

the strict sense of the word, we would run the risk of mobilizing the police against it, instead of medicine and education. The nature of the emotional plague necessitates police force, and this is how it spreads. The emotional plague does indeed represent a grave threat to life, but not one that will ever be eliminated by police force.

No one will take it as an insult if he is told that he is suffering from a cardiac disease or that he is nervous. No one *should* take it as an insult if he is told that he is suffering from an "acute attack of the emotional plague." We sometimes hear it said among orgonomists: "No sense wasting your time with me today, I'm pesty." In our circle, when someone is afflicted with a minor case of the emotional plague, he deals with it by isolating himself and waiting until the attack of irrationalism passes. In acute cases, where rational thinking and friendly advice are of no avail, orgone therapy is used to remove the infection. It can be seen again and again that such acute attacks of the emotional plague are always produced by a disturbance in the person's love life. They disappear upon the elimination of the disturbance. The acute attack of the plague is such a familiar phenomenon to me and to my circle of co-workers that we accept it as a matter of course and deal with it objectively. It is extremely important for students of orgone therapy to learn to perceive acute attacks of the plague in themselves before such attacks go too far, to know how to keep such attacks from getting the best of them, to prevent them from spreading into the social environment and causing damage there, and, by means of intellectual detachment, to wait until they pass. In this way, we succeed in keeping harmful effects in our cooperative work at a minimum. Sometimes such an attack cannot be dealt with and the afflicted person causes a certain amount of harm or even resigns. We take such misfortunes in the same way one would take the acute physical ailment or demise of a beloved colleague.

The emotional plague is more closely related to character neurosis than to organic heart disease, for example, but it can lead to cancer or heart disease in the long run. Just like the character neurosis, it is sustained by secondary drives. It differs from physical defects inasmuch as it is a function of the character and, as such, is strongly *defended*. As opposed to a hysterical attack,

an attack of the emotional plague is not sensed as a symptom and as ego-alien. True enough, character-neurotic behavior is usually highly rationalized, but this is true of the emotional plague reaction to a far greater extent. One is hardly aware of it at all. How do we recognize a plague reaction and how do we distinguish it from a rational reaction, the reader will want to know. The answer is that we distinguish it in the same way that we distinguish a rational reaction from the reaction of a neurotic character: *as soon as the roots or motives of the plague-afflicted reaction are touched, the result is invariably anxiety or anger.* Let us go into this in more detail.

A man who is essentially free of the emotional plague and is orgasmically potent is not overcome by fear when a physician discusses the dynamics of natural life processes. On the contrary, he develops a lively interest in such a discussion. The man afflicted with the emotional plague will become restless or angry when the mechanisms of the emotional plague are discussed. Orgastic impotence does not always lead to the emotional plague, but every person afflicted with the emotional plague is either lastingly orgasmically impotent or becomes impotent shortly before the attack. This makes it easy to distinguish the plague reaction from rational reactions.

Furthermore, a natural and healthy behavior cannot be disturbed or eliminated by any genuine medical treatment. For example, there is no rational means of "curing," i.e., disturbing, a happy love relationship. But a neurotic symptom can always be eliminated. A plague reaction is accessible to and can be eliminated by the genuine character-analytic art of healing. This is how we recognize it. Thus, avarice, a typical character trait of the emotional plague, can be cured, but pecuniary generosity cannot be cured. Insidious cunning can be cured; characterological openness cannot be cured. Clinically, the emotional plague reaction is comparable to impotence; it can be eliminated, i.e., cured. Genital potency, on the other hand, is "incurable."

An essential and *basic characteristic of the emotional plague reaction is that action and the motive of the action never coincide. The real motive is concealed and a sham motive is given as the reason for the action.* In the reaction of the natural and healthy

individual, *motive*, *action*, and *goal* form an *organic unity*. Nothing is concealed. This unity is immediately evident. For example: the healthy individual has no other motive for his sexual acts than his natural need for love, and no other goal than its gratification. The ascetic, plague-ridden individual, on the other hand, uses ethical codes to justify his sexual debility. 'This justification has nothing to do with the manner in which he lives, which *is there before the justification*. The healthy person will not want to impose his way of life on anyone, but he will cure and he will help others when he is asked and when he is capable. In no case will a healthy individual *legislate* that everyone "*has to be healthy*." First, such a demand would be irrational, for a person cannot be ordered to be healthy. Second, the healthy individual has no urge to force his way of life upon others, for the motives of conduct are related specifically to his own life and not to anybody else's. The person afflicted with the emotional plague is distinguished from the healthy individual by the fact that he makes *his* demands of life not only on himself but, *above all, on his environment*. In situations in which the healthy individual makes suggestions and helps, in which he uses his experiences as an example to others, leaving it up to them whether they want to follow, the person afflicted with the emotional plague imposes his mode of life upon others *by force*. Individuals afflicted with the emotional plague do not tolerate views which threaten their armor or unmask their irrational motives. The healthy person is happy to be given an insight into his motives. The plague-afflicted individual is seized by frenzy. When views contrary to his own disrupt his life and work, the healthy individual puts up a strong rational fight for the preservation of *his* way of life. The plague-afflicted person fights *against other* modes of life even when they don't concern him in any way whatever. He is impelled to fight because he senses the very existence of other ways of life as a provocation.

The energy which sustains the emotional plague reaction always derives from genital frustration, whether it is a matter of sadistic deeds of war or the defamation of friends. Stasis of sexual energy is what the plague-afflicted individual has in common with all other biopathies. I shall have a word to say about the differences shortly. The basic biopathic nature of the emotional plague

is revealed in the fact that, like every other biopathy, it can be cured by establishing the natural capacity for love.

Susceptibility to the emotional plague is universal. There is no clear-cut line of distinction between those afflicted with and those uncontaminated by the plague. Just as every man somewhere in the depths is susceptible to cancer, schizophrenia, or alcoholism, so even the healthiest and most life-affirming among us is susceptible to irrational plague reactions.

It is easier to distinguish the emotional plague from the structure of the genital character than to distinguish it from the structure of the neurotic character. While the emotional plague is indeed a character neurosis or character biopathy in the strict sense of the word, it is also more than that, and this "more" distinguishes it from biopathies and character neuroses. *We can define the emotional plague as human behavior that, on the basis of a biopathic character structure, operates in an organized or typical way in interpersonal, i.e., social, relations and in social institutions.* The emotional plague is just as widespread as the character biopathy. In other words, wherever there are character biopathies, there is also at least the possibility of a chronic effect or an acute epidemic outbreak of the emotional plague. Let us briefly outline a few typical areas in which the emotional plague is either chronically rampant or capable of breaking out in an acute way. We shall see immediately that it is precisely the most important spheres of life in which the emotional plague is active: mysticism in its most destructive form; passive and active thirst for authority; moralism; biopathies of the autonomic nervous system; party politicking; familial plague, which I have designated as "familitis"; sadistic methods of education; masochistic toleration of such methods or criminal rebellion against them; gossip and defamation; authoritarian bureaucracy; imperialistic war ideologies; everything that falls under the American concept of "racket"; antisocial criminality; pornography; profiteering; racial hatred.

We see that the compass of the emotional plague coincides approximately with the broad compass of social abuse, which has always been and still is combatted by every social freedom movement. With some qualifications, it can be said that the sphere of the emotional plague coincides with that of "political reaction"

and perhaps even with the principle of politics in general. This would hold true, however, only if the basic principle of all politics, namely thirst for power and special prerogatives, were carried over into those spheres of life which we do not think of as political in the usual sense of the word. For example, a mother who resorts to political methods to alienate her child from her husband would come under this extended concept of the political emotional plague. The same would apply to an ambitious scientist who works himself up to a higher social position not by concrete accomplishments but by intrigue.

We have already stated that biological *sexual stasis* is the common biophysiological core of all forms of the emotional plague. On the basis of our present experiences, we can say that a genital character is incapable of using the methods of the emotional plague. This constitutes a great disadvantage in a society ruled to such a large extent by plague-ridden institutions. There is another common denominator in all forms of the emotional plague: *the lack of the capacity for natural sexual gratification leads to the development of secondary impulses, particularly sadistic impulses*. There is abundant clinical evidence in support of this statement. Hence, it does not surprise us to find that the biopsychic energy which sustains the emotional plague reactions always derives from *secondary drives*. In pronounced cases, specific human *sadism* is never missing.

Thus, it is not surprising that *truthfulness* and *straightforwardness*, though highly extolled modes of behavior, are rarely encountered in human intercourse; they are so rare, indeed, that most people are amazed when they occasionally prevail. To judge from our "cultural" ideals, one would expect truthfulness and straightforwardness to be everyday, self-understood attitudes. The fact that they are not, that they are looked upon with astonishment, that truthful and straightforward men and women are considered freaks, a bit "touched in the head", that, indeed, being truthful and sincere often entails severe social dangers—all this cannot be explained on the basis of the ruling cultural ideology. To arrive at an understanding of these contradictions, we must turn to our knowledge of the organized emotional plague. This knowledge alone is capable of providing an insight into the reasons why *objectivity* and *truthfulness*, the driving forces of all

strivings for freedom, have been frustrated again and again over the centuries. It cannot be assumed that any freedom movement will have any chance of achieving its goals if it does not sharply and clearly confront the organized emotional plague with truthfulness.

The fact that the emotional plague was not previously recognized was its surest protection. An exact investigation of its nature and its dynamics will demolish this protection. The champions of the emotional plague will be right in interpreting this declaration as a mortal threat to their existence. This will be clearly brought out in the way the champions and perpetuators of the emotional plague react to the following objective representations. On the basis of these reactions, we shall be able to and shall *have to* distinguish those who want to help in the fight against the emotional plague from those who want to preserve its institutions. We have seen again and again that the *irrational* nature of the emotional plague unwittingly reveals itself as soon as one attempts to go to the root of it. This is understandable because the emotional plague can only react irrationally. It is doomed to extinction when it is sharply and clearly opposed by rational thinking and the natural feeling for life. It does not have to be attacked or fought directly. The plague will automatically and inevitably work itself into a rage when the natural functions of the living organism are objectively and truthfully described. There is nothing it hates more than this.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GENITAL CHARACTER, THE NEUROTIC CHARACTER, AND EMOTIONAL PLAGUE REACTIONS

a) In thinking

The genital character's thinking orients itself on *objective facts and processes*. The genital character distinguishes the essential from the non-essential or less essential; he attempts to think out and eliminate irrational emotional disturbances; he is, in terms of his nature, *functional*, i.e., capable of adapting himself; *he is not mechanistic and he is not mystical*. His judgments are the result of a thought process. Rational thinking is open to *objective* arguments, for it has difficulty functioning without *objective* counter-arguments.

To be sure, the *neurotic character* also attempts to orient himself in objective facts and processes. In the neurotic character, however, rational thinking is interfused with and affected by chronic sexual stasis, as a result of which he also to some extent orients himself on the principle of the avoidance of unpleasure. So the neurotic character will use various means of avoiding processes and events which, if he examined them, would produce unpleasure or would be at variance, for example, with a compulsive character's system of thinking; or he will probe these processes and events in such a way, i.e., irrationally, that the rational goal becomes unattainable. Let us cite an example. Peace and freedom are universally desired. However, since the average character structure is neurotic in its thinking, *fear of freedom and fear of responsibility* (pleasure anxiety) become intertwined with ideas of peace and freedom, and these goals are therefore discussed in a formalistic rather than objective manner. It is almost as if the simplest and most immediate facts of life, i.e., those facts which obviously represent the natural building material of peace and freedom, are intentionally avoided. Important relations and connections are overlooked. For example, it is certainly no secret that politics is ruinous and that humanity is sick in the psychiatric sense of the word. Yet no one seems to see the connection between these facts and the demand for a viable democratic order. Thus, two or three well-known and generally valid facts exist side by side, without any connection. Showing how these facts are related to one another would immediately necessitate *radical changes in the practical affairs of everyday life*. *Ideologically*, the neurotic character would be prepared to *affirm* these changes. However, he *fears* their *practical* realization. His character armor forbids a change in the life pattern that has become rigid. Thus, he will, for example, agree with the critique of irrationalism in society and in science. In a practical and objective way, however, he will refashion neither himself nor his surroundings in keeping with this critique. He will not create a model social center reflective of the ideology he affirms. It often happens, indeed, that the same individual who says yes when it is a question of ideology becomes a vehement opponent in practice when someone else brings about actual changes. At this point, the boundaries between the neurotic character and the individual afflicted with the emotional plague become blurred.

The individual afflicted with the emotional plague is not content to take a passive attitude—he is distinguished from the neurotic character by a more or less life-destructive *social activity*. His thinking is completely muddled by irrational concepts and governed almost exclusively by *irrational* emotions. In the neurotic character, thinking and acting do not coincide. This is not true of the plague-afflicted character. As in the genital character, his thinking is in complete agreement with his actions, but there is a significant difference, i.e., his conclusions are not the result of his thinking. They are always *predetermined* by his emotional affliction. In the person afflicted with the emotional plague, thinking does not, as in the rational individual, serve to help him arrive at a correct conclusion; on the contrary, it serves to confirm and rationalize a predetermined irrational conclusion. This is generally known as “prejudice,” but one fails to see that this prejudice has detrimental social effects on a large scale. It is universally disseminated and characterizes just about everything that is called “tradition.” It is intolerant, i.e., it does not countenance the rational thinking which could pull the ground out from under it. Hence, plague-afflicted thinking is not accessible to arguments. It has *its own technique in its own sphere*, its own “*coherence*,” so to speak, which impresses one as “logical.” In this way, it creates the impression of rationality, without in reality being rational.

For instance, a strict authoritarian educator will tell you that children are difficult to teach and that is why his methods are necessary. In this *narrow* framework, his conclusion seems to be correct. If a rational thinker comes along and points out that the intractableness of children which the strict authoritarian cites to justify his methods is itself a social consequence of precisely this irrational thinking in education, he will find himself face to face with a mental block. Precisely at this point the irrational nature of plague-afflicted thinking emerges.

Let us give another example. Moralistic sexual repression produces secondary drives, and secondary drives make moralistic suppression necessary. Any number of logical conclusions can be drawn on the basis of this relation. But if the clear thinker points out that the secondary drives can be eliminated by making possible the *natural* gratification of needs, the plague-afflicted individ-

ual, though his frame of reference has been shattered, will react not with insight and correction but with irrational arguments, silence, or even hatred. In short, it is *emotionally* important for him that *both repression and secondary drives continue to exist. He is afraid of the natural impulses.* This fear operates as an irrational motive for his entire, in itself logical, frame of reference and drives him to commit dangerous actions when his social system is seriously threatened.

b) In acting

In the genital character, motive, goal, and action are in harmony with one another. The goals and motives are rational, i.e., *socially oriented*. In accordance with the natural character of his motives and goals, i.e., on the basis of their primary *biological* foundation, the genital character strives for an *improvement in his own conditions of life and in the conditions of life of others.* This is what we call "social accomplishment."

In the neurotic character, the capacity for action is always limited, because the motives are devoid of affect or are contradictory. Since the neurotic character has usually deeply repressed his irrationality, he is constantly forced to keep it under control. And this very repression constitutes the limitation of his capacity for action. He is afraid to become fully involved in any activity, for he is never sure whether sadistic or other impulses might break through. He usually suffers because he is aware that he is inhibiting his own life, but he is not *envious of healthy people.* He can be characterized by the attitude: "I was unfortunate in life; our children should have it better than I did." This attitude makes him a sympathetic, though sterile spectator of progress. He is not detrimental to progress.

In the individual afflicted with the emotional plague, the motives of the action are always counterfeit. The ostensible motive never tallies with the real motive, whether the latter is conscious or unconscious. Nor does the ostensible goal tally with the real goal. In German fascism, for example, "salvation and pacification of the German nation" was given as the goal, whereas the real goal—grounded in the character structure—was imperialistic war, the subjugation of the world, and nothing but that. It is a basic characteristic of the plague-afflicted individual that he seri-

ously and honestly believes in the ostensible goal and motive. I should like to stress that the character structure of a person afflicted with the emotional plague can be comprehended only if it is taken seriously. *The plague-afflicted person acts under a structural compulsion.* No matter how good his intentions may be, *he can act only in the manner of the plague.* His action is in keeping with his nature just as much as the need for love or truth is in keeping with the nature of the genital character.

But the plague-afflicted individual, protected by his subjective conviction, does not suffer from insight into the harmfulness of his act. A father who, out of hatred for his wife (who, let us say, was unfaithful to him), demands custody of their child is seriously convinced that he is acting "in the best interest of the child." But if the child suffers under the separation from the mother or even begins to go to pieces, such a father will prove to be totally impervious to any form of remedy. The plague-afflicted father will find all kinds of superficial arguments in support of his conviction that he "means well" by the child in keeping him away from his mother. It will be out of the question to convince him that the *real* motive is sadistic punishment of the mother.

The person afflicted with the emotional plague, in contrast to the neurotic character, always develops as a part of his structure an envy coupled with a deadly hatred of everything healthy. A character-neurotic spinster lives a resigned life and does not interfere in the love life of young girls; a plague-afflicted spinster, on the other hand, cannot endure the sexual happiness of young girls. If such a spinster is a teacher, she will be sure to *make* the girls entrusted to her care *incapable* of experiencing sexual happiness. This holds true for every life situation. The character afflicted with the emotional plague will attempt, under all circumstances and with every available means, to change his environment so that *his* way of life and *his* way of seeing things are not jeopardized. He senses everything that is at variance with his way of life as a provocation and, therefore, persecutes it with bitter hatred. The ascetic is a good illustration. Under one guise or another, the ascetic's basic attitude is: "Why should others have it any better than I had it? Let them suffer as I suffer." In every case, this basic attitude is so well concealed in a logical,

well-thought-out ideology or theory of life that only someone having wide practical experience and capable of incisive thinking can unmask it. It is distressing but necessary to record here that, as recently as the beginning of this century, the greater part of official European education was modeled along these lines.

c) In sexuality

The sexuality of the genital character is essentially determined by the basic natural laws of biological energy. He is so constituted that he naturally takes pleasure in the sexual happiness of others. In the same way, he is indifferent to perversions and has an aversion to pornography. The genital character is easily recognized by the good contact he has with healthy children. He considers it quite natural that children and adolescents are essentially *sexually* oriented. In the same way, he fulfills or at least strives to fulfill the (often socially restricted) demands which result from these biological facts. This attitude exists spontaneously, whether a corresponding knowledge has been acquired or not. In our society, these very mothers and fathers, unless they happen to live in a milieu which supports their views, are exposed to the serious danger of being looked upon and treated as criminals by authoritarian institutions. They deserve the exact antithesis—the greatest possible social protection. They constitute centers of society from which rationally acting educators and physicians will one day proceed. The basis of their life and actions is the sexual happiness which they themselves have experienced. Parents, for example, who would allow their children to experience sex in keeping with completely healthy, natural laws, would be in danger of being accused of immorality (or “moral turpitude”) and of being deprived of their children by any ascetic who happened to have power.

The *neurotic* character lives a sexually resigned life or engages in secret perverse activities. His orgasmic impotence is accompanied by a yearning for sexual happiness—he is indifferent to the sexual happiness of others. He is more likely to be ruled by anxiety than by hate whenever he comes into contact with the sexual problem. His armor relates solely to his own sexuality and not to the sexuality of others. His orgasmic longing is very often incorporated into cultural or religious ideals, which are neither very

useful nor very detrimental to the welfare of the community. The neurotic character is usually active in circles and groups which do not have any great social influence. There can be no doubt about the cultural value of some of these groups. But the neurotic character is not capable of making any significant contribution to creating healthier structures on a mass scale, for the broad masses are far more intimate with the question of natural sexuality than he is.

This basic attitude on the part of the sexually innocuous, neurotic character is capable, at any time and under corresponding external conditions, of changing into a plague-ridden attitude. The process is usually as follows: the secondary drives held in check by the cultural and religious ideals break through. *The sexuality of the character afflicted with the emotional plague is usually sadistic and pornographic.* It is characterized by the *parallel existence of sexual lasciviousness* (owing to the incapacity to achieve gratification) and *sadistic moralism*. This dualism is a part of his *structure*; the plague-afflicted individual could not change it even if he had insight and knowledge. *In terms of his structure, he cannot be anything but pornographically lascivious and sadistically moralistic at the same time.*

This is the core of the character structure of the plague-afflicted person. This structure develops bitter hatred against every process which provokes its own orgasmic yearning and, hence, orgasm anxiety. *The demand for asceticism is directed not only against oneself but, above all and in a sadistic way, against the natural sexuality of others.* Persons afflicted with the emotional plague have a strong tendency to form social circles. These circles become centers for the molding of public opinion. Their most outstanding characteristic is their strong intolerance in questions of natural sexuality. They are widespread and well known. Under the banner of "culture" and "morality," they persecute to the extreme every expression of natural sexuality. Over the years they have developed a *special technique of defamation*. We shall speak of this later.

Clinical investigations leave no room for doubt that sexual gossip and defamation afford these emotionally plagued individuals a kind of perverse sexual gratification; they can thus attain sexual pleasure without the natural genital function. It is pre-

cisely in such circles that we often find homosexuality, sexual intercourse with animals, and other forms of perversion. These Vehmic courts direct their sadistic attacks against the *natural* sexuality of others, *not against perverse sexuality*. They take an especially sharp stand against the *natural* sexuality of *children* and *adolescents*, whereas, strangely enough, they are purblind to every form of perverse sexual activity. They have many human lives on their consciences.

d) In work

The genital character takes an active interest in the development of a work process which is allowed to take its *own* course. His interest is focused essentially on the *process* itself. The result of the work is achieved without special effort, for it ensues spontaneously from the work process. *The shaping of the product through the course of the work process is an essential feature of the biological pleasure of work*. This leads to a sharp criticism of all methods of educating children through toys which spell out the child's activity. The predetermination of how the toy is to function and the rigid prescription of how the toy is to be put together stifle the child's imagination and *productivity*. Compulsive moralism tolerates only mystical ecstasy; it has no patience with genuine enthusiasm, and this is the reason why enthusiasm with regard to work is always lacking. A child who has to put together a *preplanned* house with *preplanned* building blocks in a *preplanned* way cannot apply his imagination and cannot develop any enthusiasm. We can easily understand that this basic characteristic of authoritarian education is part of the pleasure anxiety of adults. It has a stultifying effect upon the child's pleasure in work. *The genital character influences the work performance of others by setting an example and not by prescribing the product and the method of work*. That requires the ability to tolerate vegetative streaming and to be able to let himself go.

The neurotic character is more or less restricted in his work. His biological energy is essentially consumed in the warding off of perverse fantasies. The neurotic disturbance of work can always be traced back to a misuse of biological energy. For the very same reason, the work of the neurotic character, no matter

how rich in potential it may be, is perfunctory and joyless. Since the neurotic character is incapable of genuine enthusiasm, he will look upon the child's capacity for enthusiasm as "unseemly" (if, for instance, he happens to be a teacher). In a compulsive neurotic way, nonetheless, he insists on determining the work of others.

The individual afflicted with the emotional plague *hates* work, for he senses it as a burden. Hence, he runs away from any responsibility and especially from small jobs which require patience. He may dream of writing an important book, of painting an outstanding work of art, of running a farm, etc.; however, since he is incapable of work, he shuns the necessary step-by-step, persistent organic development inherent in every work process. This predisposes him to becoming an ideologue, mystic, or politician, i.e., to engage in activities which do not require any patience and organic development. He is just as likely to become an idle vagrant as the dictator of this or that sphere of life. He has created a picture of life made up of neurotic fantasies and, since he himself is incapable of doing things, he wants to force others to work toward the realization of this sick picture of life. The American's negative concept of the word "boss" is a product of such a constellation. A genital character who is in control of a collective work process will spontaneously lead the way by his good example: he will work *more* than the others. On the other hand, the character afflicted with the emotional plague will typically want to work less than the others. The smaller his capacity for work and, consequently, the lower his self-esteem, the greater is his insistence on being a labor *leader*.

This comparison necessarily took the form of clear-cut distinctions. In reality, every genital character also has his neurotic inhibitions and his plague reactions. By the same token, every plague-afflicted individual bears in himself the *possibilities* of the genital character. Experiences in orgone therapy leave no doubt that persons afflicted with the emotional plague, those who come under the psychiatric concept of "moral insanity," are not only curable in principle but are capable of developing exceptional capacities for work, sexuality, and intellectual activity. This again gives us the opportunity to stress that the concept "emotional plague" does not imply a disparagement. In the

course of almost thirty years of biopsychiatric work, I have come to realize that a predisposition to the emotional plague is indicative of very high quantities of biological energy. Indeed, the *high tension of the individual's biological energy* makes him sick with the emotional plague if, because of a rigid character and muscular armor, he cannot realize himself in a natural way. The person so afflicted is a product of authoritarian compulsive education. Because of the frustration of his unrealized talent, he wreaks *revenge* on compulsive education far more successfully than the quiet and resigned neurotic character. He differs from the genital character inasmuch as his *rebellion is not socially oriented* and is therefore incapable of effecting any rational changes for the better. He differs from the neurotic character inasmuch as he *does not become resigned*.

The genital character controls his emotional plague reactions in two ways: (1) Since the structure of his character is of an essentially rational nature, he senses his own plague reaction as alien and senseless. (2) He is so immersed in rational processes that he is immediately aware of the danger to his life process which could ensue from his irrational tendencies. This awareness enables him to keep himself in control. The person afflicted with the emotional plague, on the other hand, derives so much secondary, sadistic pleasure from his own behavior that he is inaccessible to any correction. The acts of the healthy individual flow directly from the reservoir of biological energy; the acts of the plague-afflicted individual stem from the same source, but they have to break through the character and muscular armor each time and in the process the best motives become antisocial and irrational actions. In its passage through the character armor, the original goal of the act changes its function: *the impulse begins with a rational intention; the armor thwarts a smooth and organic unfolding of the impulse; the plague-afflicted character senses this obstruction as an intolerable inhibition; the impulse must first break through the armor in order to become at all manifest; in this process the original intention and the rational goal are lost. When finally realized, the act contains little of the original rational intention; it is an exact reflection of the destructiveness which had to be brought into play in the process of breaking through the armor. The brutality of the*

plague-afflicted individual is a result of the failure on the part of the original impulse to get through the muscular and character armor. A loosening of the armor is impossible, for the plague-ridden act neither discharges energy orgasmically nor produces rational self-confidence. This "failure" enables us to comprehend some of the contradictions in the structure of the individual afflicted with the emotional plague. He has a strong desire for love; he finds a woman whom he believes he can love; he proves himself incapable of the experience. This drives him into a sadistic rage against himself or against the desired woman, a rage which not infrequently ends in murder.

Basically, therefore, *the individual afflicted with the emotional plague is characterized by the contradiction between an intense desire for life and the inability (because of the armor) to achieve a corresponding fulfillment of life.* To the careful observer, Europe's political irrationalism was clearly characterized by this contradiction. With the logic of a compulsion, the best intentions led to destructive ends.

It is my opinion that the gangster type constitutes a simple demonstration of the mechanism of the emotional plague, if the result of the gangster act is taken into account along with the *inhibition of the rational impulse* which turns it into a plague-ridden act.

Now let us endeavor to examine these differentiations in simple examples from everyday life.

Let us take as our first example the *fight for the child* which usually occurs when parents sue for divorce. There are three possible reactions: the rational, the inhibited reaction of the neurotic character, and the emotional plague reaction.

a) Rational

Father and mother fight for the healthy development of the child with rational arguments and means. It is possible that they agree in principle—then it is easy; but it is also possible that they will have very different ideas about the matter. Nonetheless, in the interest of the child, they will shun underhanded methods. They will speak openly with the child and allow him to make his own decision. They will not allow themselves to be governed by selfish interests; they will, instead, be guided by the child's incli-

nations. When one or the other parent is an alcoholic or is mentally ill, this information will be communicated to the child as a misfortune that has to be borne bravely, taking the greatest possible care to spare his feelings. *The motive will always be to prevent the child from being damaged.* The attitude is dictated by the sacrifice of one's personal interest.

b) Character-neurotic

The fight for the child is inhibited by all kinds of considerations, essentially fear of public opinion. Conformity to public opinion takes precedence over the child's best interest. In such things, character-neurotic parents abide by the prevailing practice: the child remains with the mother under all circumstances, or they submit the case to legal authorities. When one of the parents is a drinker or is mentally ill, then the tendency exists to sacrifice oneself, to conceal the fact, with the result that the child as well as the other parent suffer and are endangered. *Divorce is avoided.* The motive of their behavior is epitomized in the sentence, "We don't want to make a stir." *Their attitude is determined by resignation.*

c) The individual afflicted with the emotional plague

The welfare of the child is always a spurious and, as the results show, *unfulfilled* motive. *The real motive is to wreak revenge on the partner by depriving him or her of the pleasure of the child.* Hence, in the fight for the child, one partner resorts to defamation of the other, whether he or she is healthy or sick. The absence of any consideration for the child is brought out by the fact that his love for the other parent is not taken into account. As a means of alienating the child from one or the other parent, he is told that his mother or his father is an alcoholic or is mentally ill, a statement which usually does not correspond to the facts of the case. The result is that the child is the one who *suffers* most; *the motive is revenge* on the partner and domination of the child. Genuine love for the child is not at issue.

There are any number of variations on this example, but its basic features are the same and they are of general social importance. In making decisions, a rational jurisprudence would have to give priority to such differentiations. It can be assumed that

there will be a significant increase in the number of divorces; and it is my opinion that only a correctly trained psychiatrist and educator is capable of measuring the extent of the damage caused solely by emotional plague reactions in cases of divorce.

Let us cite another example from the sphere of private life in which the emotional plague rages far and wide: the infidelity of a love partner.

a) Rational

In cases in which one of the partners in a love relationship wants to be or is unfaithful, the healthy individual reacts principally in one of three ways: factual separation from the partner; competition and the attempt to regain the partner's love; or toleration when the other relationship is not too serious and is of a temporary nature. In such cases, the healthy person does not take flight into neurosis, does not make any legal claims, and becomes angry only if the affair is carried out indecently.

b) Character-neurotic

The infidelity is either suffered masochistically or the armor shuts off its cognizance. There is acute fear of separation. Resignation, flight into a neurotic illness or alcoholism, and hysterical attacks are typical reactions.

c) Individual afflicted with the emotional plague

As a rule, infidelity occurs not for reasons of love for another person but because one has become weary of one's partner. The injured party attempts to hold the partner in the house, to wear him or her out with hysterical attacks, dominate him or her with scenes of the lowest sort, or even have him or her watched by a detective. Flight into alcoholism often occurs as a means of facilitating the brutalizing of the partner. The motive is not love for the partner but thirst for power and possessiveness.

Reactions of emotional plague are quite prevalent in tragedies of jealousy. At the present time, there are neither medical nor social nor legal views and measures which take this vast and desolate sphere of life into account.

Now let us turn our attention to an especially striking and typical mode of reaction of the emotional plague which we shall designate as "*specific plague reaction.*"

The specific plague reaction has a special preference for the use of sexual, i.e., moralistic, defamation. It functions in a way similar to the projection mechanism in delusions of persecution; i.e., a perverse impulse which has broken through the armor is transferred to persons or objects in the outer world. What in reality is an inner impulse is misinterpreted as an external threat. The same applies to the sensations which originate in the orgonotic plasma currents. The healthy individual experiences these currents as something joyful and pleasurable. The schizophrenic on the other hand, because of the contradictions which result from his character armor, perceives these currents as the secret workings of an evil fiend intent upon destroying his body with electrical currents. These insane projection mechanisms are well known. However, psychiatry makes the error of limiting such projection mechanisms to the mentally ill. It fails to see that precisely the same mechanism is rampant in social life in the form of the specific plague reactions of ostensibly normal people. This is our next topic of discussion.

The biopsychic mechanism is the following: compulsive moralism in upbringing and in life produces sexual lasciviousness, which has nothing to do with the natural need for love, and constitutes a real secondary drive like, for example, sadism or masochism. Since orgonotic aliveness in the natural experience of pleasure has atrophied, lasciviousness and the thirst for sexual gossip become unbridled secondary needs. Just as the mental patient projects his orgonotic currents and his perverse impulses onto other persons and experiences them as a threat issuing from them, the plague-afflicted individual projects his own lasciviousness and perversions onto other persons. In contrast to the mental patient, he does not masochistically experience as a threat the impulses which he projects onto the other person; rather, he makes use of gossip in a sadistic way as a defensive mechanism, i.e., he imputes to others what he cannot take cognizance of in himself. This applies to natural genitality as well as to the secondary perverse impulse. The mode of life of the genitally healthy person painfully reminds him of his own genital weakness and, as such, constitutes a threat to his neurotic balance. Thus, in conformity with the principle, "What I can't have, you can't have," he is forced to cast a slur upon the natural genitality of others. Moreover, since he is not capable of wholly concealing

his own perverse lasciviousness behind a façade of ethical moralism, he imputes it to the victim of his gossip. In every case of this form of plague reaction, one comes to realize that the healthy individual is reputed to have precisely those characteristics against which the plague-ridden individual struggles in vain or indulges in *with a bad conscience*.

The mechanism of the specific plague reaction is easily carried over from the sexual to the non-sexual sphere. It is characteristic that something one does oneself, would like to do, or is on the verge of doing is attributed to someone else. We shall use a few typical, everyday occurrences to illustrate the specific plague reaction.

There are young intellectuals who were once known as "cultural snobs" among the serious intellectual circles of Europe. They are clever, but their intelligence is devoted to a kind of sterile artistic activity. Their acquaintance with the magnitude and seriousness of the problems probed by a Goethe or a Nietzsche is less than superficial, but they take great pleasure in quoting classical literature. At the same time, they are full of cynicism. They regard themselves as modern, liberal, free of any conventions. Incapable of serious experience, they look upon sexual love as a kind of child's play. They spend their summer vacations in communes, little boys and little girls living together. At nights, there are amusing diversions, i.e., the "child's play." At the breakfast table, the child's play is joked about in a care-free and very clever manner. Possibly, the "sinful woman" will be made to blush by ambiguous allusions. All this is very much part of today's "liberal" and "unconventional" way of living. One is "jolly"; one is "hip." One intimates how often one has engaged in the "play" the night before; and one lets it be known, everything described in the "choicest" figures of speech, that it was "very nice," that *she* was "delightful," etc. The serious listener, who is all too familiar with the abysmal sexual misery of masses of people and the destructiveness of sexual triviality, comes away with the impression that the lasciviousness of these "bright" young men and women is the result of sexual hunger due to orgasmic impotence. Such cultivated "Bohemians" typically look upon the serious efforts of sex-economy to fight the emotional plague in masses of people as the fabric of a sick

mind. But then these young "geniuses" are well versed in the art of "high politics." Forever prattling about the cultural "values" that have to be upheld, they become furious as soon as one begins to translate their talk into social action among masses of people.

One such Bohemian met a woman who wanted to come to me to study. Naturally, the conversation turned to my work. He gave her fair warning, saying that he would send neither his best friend nor his worst enemy to me, for I was, so he said, the "owner of a public brothel, without license." To conceal the flagrant plague-ridden nature of this statement, he immediately added that I was a very able clinician. This defamation, patterned along the lines of the specific plague reaction, made the rounds. Notwithstanding, the woman came to me to study sex-economic pedagogy and soon grasped what we call the emotional plague.

It is difficult to maintain an objective and correct attitude in such situations. One cannot give into the impulse, which arises spontaneously and for which there is good reason, to give such a plague-ridden individual a good thrashing so that he will not go around defaming people any more, for one wants to keep one's hands clean. To ignore the incident in a noble way is to do precisely what the plague-afflicted individual counts on so that he can continue to perpetrate his social mischief with impunity. There remains the possibility of a libel suit against him. However, this would be to fight the emotional plague on its own level and not in a *medical* way. Thus, one allows the matter to take its own course. In so doing, however, one runs the risk that another such plague-afflicted person, perhaps a "scientific historian," will take up the matter and pass one on to posterity with the "objective historian's authority" as the owner of a secret brothel.¹

¹ I should like to point out that, to me, a woman of easy virtue having a decent character is socially and humanly preferable to such a plague-afflicted person. Women of easy virtue have no pretenses; social conditions, material necessity, and the prevailing social chaos lead them into a profession which requires them to gratify the sexual needs of sailors and soldiers, i.e., men who risk their lives. Countless princes and priests have had to visit houses of prostitution to satisfy their needs or to escape their misery. This is neither reproach nor praise but merely an establishment of fact.

The matter is important because the emotional plague has succeeded again and again, by means of such rumors, in crushing honest and important accomplishments. The fight against the emotional plague is socially necessary, for it causes more damage in this world than "ten thousands canons." Read, for example, Friedrich Lange's account of the defamations to which the pioneer natural scientist of the seventeenth century, de la Mettrie, was subjected by the emotional plague. In his great work *Histoire Naturelle de l'Ame*, de la Mettrie clearly grasped the essential relations between perception and physiological stimuli and correctly divined and described the connection between the body-soul problem and the biological sexual process. This was too much for the Philistines, who far outnumber bold and honest scientists; they circulated the rumor that de la Mettrie was able to arrive at such views only because he was a "libertine." And thus the rumor was passed on to posterity that de la Mettrie died from a pastry which, in true voluptuary fashion, he had consumed too voraciously.

This of course is medical nonsense. More than that, it is a typical example of plague-afflicted rumor-mongering which, when seized upon by human organisms incapable of pleasure, becomes a specific plague reaction and is passed on to posterity, defiling, without rhyme or reason, a decent name. We readily recognize the catastrophic role played by such plague reactions in social life.

I should like to cite another example in which the projection mechanism of the emotional plague, in the form of defamation, is even more clearly manifested. In Norway, I heard that a rumor was being circulated that I had become schizophrenic and had spent some time in a mental institution. With some effort we succeeded in tracing the source of the rumor. When I came to the United States in 1939, I ascertained that this rumor was very widespread, much more so than in Europe, where my work was better known. In America, the source of the rumor was even more obscure than it had been in Europe, but certain signs clearly indicated that it stemmed from the same European source.²

²Footnote, 1945: One of our prominent physicians returned from Oslo to the U.S.A. in 1939. He spent a few days in Zürich, where he told a former psy-

The situation was not devoid of humor. Shortly after my expulsion from the International Psychoanalytic Association, the person who had originally started this rumor suffered a nervous breakdown and was forced to spend several weeks in a mental institution. This fact was directly communicated to me by a university professor who was well informed on the situation. Evidently, the nervous breakdown gave this slanderer a terrible fright. He found himself at that time in a difficult situation: on the one hand, he recognized the correctness of my development; on the other, he could not detach himself from an organization that was sharply opposed to that development. As is usual in such cases, he took advantage of the circumstances to divert attention from himself and focus it on me when I was in the center of a critical controversy. He thought that I was finished, and the opportunity to give me another kick was too tempting. His reaction was a specific plague-afflicted projection.

I have never been mentally ill, nor have I ever been confined to a mental institution. I have borne until the present day one of the heaviest burdens ever imposed upon a man, without any disturbance to my capacity for work and love. To become mentally ill is no disgrace. I, like every self-respecting psychiatrist, have deep sympathy for mental patients and often admiration for their conflicts. As I have stressed elsewhere, a mental patient appears to me far more serious, far closer to what is alive than a Philistine or a socially dangerous individual afflicted with the emotional plague. This defamation was intended to ruin me and my work and it did result in a number of serious situations that were not easy to master. With some students, for example, I had the additional difficulty of persuading them that I was *not* mentally ill. In certain phases of orgone therapy, a specific mechanism of the emotional plague inevitably appears. As soon as the patient or pupil comes into contact with his plasmatic currents, severe

chiatric colleague that he had been working with me. Much surprised, he said: "But So-and-So said Reich had become schizophrenic." "So-and-So" was the person in question. Soon after his return to the States, he learned from an acquaintance that his analyst had told him the same thing: "So-and-So [again the same person] told me Reich was schizophrenic." This rumor-monger died a few years later from heart failure. I had known for a long time that he suffered from impotence.

orgasm anxiety appears. What happens is that the orgone therapist is looked upon as either a "dirty" sexual pig or an "insane" man. I want to emphasize that this reaction appears regularly. Most of my students had indeed heard about the rumor. Some aspects of the theory of sex-economy are so revolutionary that it is extremely easy to regard the theory itself as insane. I must state that, as a result of this rumor, certain complicated situations became mortally dangerous. There should be clear-cut legal possibilities for precluding such consequences of a plague-afflicted reaction. I have only my clinical experience to thank for my being able to weather—in addition to the already existing difficulties of my work—the dangers which derived from the rumor about my mental illness.

The affair was not without comic after-effects. When it was realized some years later that my scientific work clearly indicated that I was not schizophrenic, a new rumor was circulated and again from the same source. Now it was said that, happily, I had "recovered" from my schizophrenic illness.

Specific plague reactions are encountered particularly in the sphere of politics. Again and again during the last few years we have seen that, with every fresh conquest, dictatorial-imperialistic governments attribute to the victim precisely the intention they themselves have carried out. For instance, it was said that Poland had been secretly planning an attack on the German empire, that this had to be anticipated, and therefore Germany was justified in attacking Poland. The attack on the Soviet Union was "justified" in the same way.

Also illustrative of this specific plague reaction are the now famous "Moscow trials" of Lenin's early co-workers. At these trials, the charge of high treason was lodged against functionaries hostile to the Russian Communist Party; the defendants were accused of having maintained direct contact with the German fascists and, together with them, of having planned the overthrow of the government. To those who knew the backgrounds of those accused, it was clear that the charges against them had been trumped up. But in 1936 no one could explain the purpose of such an obviously spurious accusation. The Russian government was strong enough to eliminate any troublesome opposition with less transparent arguments. It wasn't until 1939 that the mystery

was cleared up, at least for those who were already familiar with the specific plague mechanism. In 1936 the accused were said to have committed precisely that crime against the state which the government itself actually did commit in 1939. It signed a pact with Hitler that precipitated the war with Poland and divided Poland with the German fascists. Only then was it understood that, by defaming others, the state had succeeded in clearing itself of the pact with Hitler, so well, indeed, that the implications of its action remained unknown to the public. This case was yet another confirmation of the fact that the public acts as if it had no memory. Such political plague reactions in fact count on this very irrationality in mass thinking. It makes no difference that this pact did not help, that eventually the German dictatorship became engaged in a war with the Russian dictatorship. Nor could the subsequent rationalization change the fact that a pact had been signed.

Let us cite another example from the sphere of the emotional plague. Leon Trotsky had to defend himself against the accusation that he was involved in a plot against the life of his rival. This was incomprehensible, for the murder of Stalin would have only damaged the Trotskyites. It became comprehensible when Trotsky was murdered in 1941. (These facts have nothing to do with political points of view for or against the Trotskyites.)

If we go back only a few decades in the history of politics, we find the famous Dreyfus case. High-ranking military men of the French general staff had sold plans to the Germans; to cover themselves, they accused the unsuspecting and respectable Captain Dreyfus of the very crime they were guilty of. They succeeded in having their victim convicted, and he languished in jail for more than five years on a faraway island. Without Zola's courageous intervention, this specific plague reaction would never have been combatted. That Dreyfus was subsequently honored does not erase in any way the atrocity committed against him. If policies of state were not ruled to such a large extent by the laws of the emotional plague, it would be a self-understood principle that such catastrophes should never happen in the first place. However, since the emotional plague governs the molding of public opinion, it always succeeds in passing off its atrocities as regrettable errors of justice, only to be able to continue its mischief with impunity.

In the case of a government figure, his personal character has enormous importance for the social life as a whole. If, for instance, the girl friend of a king is French, one can be assured that in a world war during this king's reign, his country will be on the side of France *against* the German "arch enemy." If that same king should forfeit his throne shortly before or at the beginning of the second world war, and if his successor had a personal relationship with a German woman, the same country would fight the war on the side of its former arch enemy, Germany, against France, its former ally.

Whoever takes pains to scrutinize the workings of the emotional plague in the sphere of politics will become more and more immersed in a condition akin to acute confusion. Is it possible, one will ask oneself, that the clericalism of a political dictator or the love affair of a king can determine the weal and woe of several generations? Does irrationalism in social life go that deep? Is it really possible that millions of industrious adults are not aware of this, indeed refuse to be aware of it?

These questions seem peculiar only because the effects of the emotional plague are too fantastic to be perceived as something tangible. Human intelligence evidently refuses to admit that such absurdity can predominate on such a massive scale. It is this stupendous illogicality of such social conditions that represents their strongest protection. We must realize just how enormous the effects of the emotional plague are and understand that this enormity makes them appear incredible. I firmly believe that not one social evil of any magnitude can ever be eliminated so long as the public refuses to recognize that this absurdity does exist and is *so* enormous that it is *not* seen. Compared with the enormity of social irrationality, which is constantly nourished by the deeply rooted emotional plague, the basic social functions of *love*, *work*, and *knowledge*, which govern the life process, appear infinitesimal; indeed, they appear socially ridiculous. We can easily convince ourselves of this.

On the basis of long and extensive medical practice, we know that, unresolved as it is, the problem of adolescent sexuality plays an incomparably greater part in the molding of our social and moral ideologies than some tariff law or other. Let us imagine that a parliamentarian, who happened to be a physician, ap-

proached his government and demanded the opportunity to give a thorough presentation of the problem of puberty at a parliamentary session and to have it debated as a tariff bill is debated. Let us further imagine that this same outstanding person resorted to a filibuster because his request was denied. In a simple way, I believe this example shows the basic contradiction between everyday life and the administrative form which rules it. If we consider the matter calmly and objectively, we shall find that there is nothing very special about a legislative debate on the problems of puberty. Everybody, every member of parliament included, has gone through the hell of the adolescent neurosis brought on by sexual frustration. No other conflict compares with this one in magnitude and importance. It is a problem of general social interest. A rational solution to the difficulties of puberty would eliminate at one blow a multitude of social evils, such as juvenile delinquency, public care of mental patients, the misery of divorce, the misery of child rearing, etc.—thousands of formal bills on budgets and tariff systems could never even approach the problem.

So we regard the demand of our medically oriented parliamentarian as unequivocally rational, progressive, and useful. At the same time, however, we ourselves shy away from it. Something in us is opposed to the possibility of a public, parliamentary debate on this topic. This "something" is precisely the effect and intention of the social emotional plague, which is constantly striving to preserve itself and its institutions. It has drawn a sharp distinction between official and private life, and the latter has been denied access to the public platform. Official life is asexual on the surface and pornographic or perverse beneath the surface. If this dichotomy did not exist, official life would immediately coincide with private life and correctly mirror everyday life in large social forms. This unification of everyday living and social institutions would be simple and uncomplicated. Then, however, that sector in the social framework would automatically perish which not only does not contribute to the preservation of social life but, rather, periodically brings it to the brink of the abyss. We can place this sector under the heading of "high politics."

The continuation of the gap between the real life of the com-

munity and its official façade is one of the emotional plague's bitterly defended intentions. There is no other way to explain the fact that the emotional plague always resorts to force of arms when an effort is made to touch upon this gap in an objective and rational way. Representatives of high politics, whether personally affected or not, always attempted to thwart the dissemination of the sex-economic recognition of the relationship between man's biological organism and the state. In their *mildest* form, their attacks were somewhat as follows: "These 'sex philosophies' are immoral abscesses on the social body which break open from time to time. It is true that the human animal has a sexuality, but this is only to be regretted. After all, sexuality is not everything in life. There are other, far more important problems, i.e., economics and politics. Sex-economy exaggerates. We would get along far better without it."

This is a typical argument, some variation of which is regularly encountered in curing a person of a biopathy and even in training a student. We are convinced that this argument springs from orgasm anxiety and that its aim is to prevent a disturbance of the person's resigned attitude. Faced with the same argument at a public meeting on mental hygiene, one cannot disarm the advocate of cultural and other "values" by pointing to his personal armor and pleasure anxiety. A sex-economist who used such an approach would have the meeting *against him*, for the opponent of sex-economy shares this character trait and the irrational argument that springs from it with the others. Many a physician and teacher has floundered here. There is an incontestable, purely logical counter-argument which, on the basis of our experience, is successful.

We concur with the opponent: sexuality is not everything in life. We even add that, in healthy people, sexuality is not a topic of conversation or the center of their thinking. But how do we explain that sexuality, which is not everything in life, actually assumes the most prominent place in man's life and thinking? This fact cannot be gainsaid. Let us cite another example to illustrate this.

The circulation of steam in the steampipes of a factory is an unquestioned precondition of the factory's operation. However, the workers in a factory hardly give a moment's thought to the

circulation of the steam. Their attention is completely concentrated on their work. The energy engendered by the steam is "not everything" in the factory. There are other important interests, e.g., the manufacture of machines and similar things. Let us imagine that all of a sudden one or more steam valves became clogged. The flow of energy engendered by the steam would cease immediately. The pistons would stop; the wheels would no longer turn; work would be out of the question. All the workers would have to direct their attention with dispatch to the obstructed flow of steam in the pipes. All thinking would be centered on one question: how a regulated circulation of steam could be reestablished in the quickest way. Let us further imagine that some workers began to argue about this situation as follows: "This confounded theory of heat exaggerates the role of steam. Sure, it's true that steam is necessary, but it's far from being everything in this factory. Don't you see that there are other things to worry about? What about the economy?" In a breakdown like the one described, these "brainstorms" would merely be laughed at, and one would quickly attempt to eliminate the basic disturbance in the circulation of the steam before turning one's thoughts to "other things." It would serve no purpose to consider the interests of economy when the steam valves are clogged.

This example illustrates the nature of the sexual problem in our society. The flow of biological energy, i.e., sexual energy, is disturbed in most people. The biosocial mechanism of society therefore functions poorly and sometimes not at all, and we have irrational politics, irresponsibility on the part of masses of people, biopathies, homicide—in short, the emotional plague. If all people fulfilled their natural sexual needs in a natural way, there would be little talk of the sexual problem; there would be no sexual problem. Then one would be justified in contending that there are "also other things."

Because sex-economy is interested in seeing these so-called *other things come into their own*, it spends much time and effort trying to eliminate the basic problem. The fact that today everything revolves around sex is the surest indication that there is a severe disturbance not only in the human animal's flow of sexual energy but, as a consequence of this disturbance, in his biosocial

functioning. Sex-economy is striving to open the valves blocking the flow of biological energy in the human animal so that *other* important things, such as clear thinking, natural decency, and pleasurable work, can function and pornographic sexuality will no longer occupy *all* of one's thinking, as is the case today.

This disturbance of the flow of energy has a profound effect on the basis of biosocial functioning and thus governs both limited and higher functions of the human animal. I believe that the fundamental biological character of this disturbance has not been comprehended in its full scope and depth, even by some orgonomists. Once again let us cite an example to illustrate this depth and the relationship of orgonomy to other sciences.

Let us compare the natural sciences, which disregard this basic biological disturbance, to a group of railroad engineers. Let us imagine that these engineers write thousands of highly technical books describing the construction of trains, their size and the material of the doors and windows, the seats and sleeping accommodations, the specific chemical composition of the iron and wood, the strength of the brakes, the speeds at which these trains are to travel and the time schedules, the stations, every detail of every single track. In every book, however, these engineers regularly omit *one* detail—they make no mention of the dynamics of steam. The natural sciences are not familiar with the study of life processes from a functional point of view; they are therefore comparable to these engineers. The *orgonomist* cannot perform his work unless he has fully realized that he is the *engineer of the living apparatus*. It is not our fault that, as engineers of the living apparatus, we are first and foremost concerned with biosexual energy. We have not the slightest reason to feel demeaned because of this. Quite the contrary: we have every reason to be proud of our difficult task.

One will ask in amazement how it was possible to have so completely overlooked a disease that has so ravaged mankind for such a long time. He who has gone to the very core of the emotional plague knows that concealment is part of its nature. It owes its success to the impossibility of getting at it, seeing through it, comprehending it—all part of its intent. I stressed earlier that the disease was *too obvious to attract attention*. (Hitler: "The bigger the lie, the more readily it is believed.") Be-

fore character analysis, there was no scientific method for the discovering and unmasking of the emotional plague. Politics and the expression of political opinion appeared to have a special kind of reason; one was miles away from an intuition of the irrational character of the political plague. And the emotional plague itself was in control of the most important social institutions and was, therefore, in a position to prevent the recognition of its nature.

We have to deal with the emotional plague every time we cure biopathies and every time we have to restructure a teacher or physician. So, even in the fulfillment of this training program, the emotional plague obstructs our efforts in the form of resistance reactions on the part of the character. This is how we learn to know it clinically, and upon these experiences we base our contention that it has left no human being unscathed.

We also learn about its nature through the typical reactions to the scientific discoveries of orgonomy. Even if those afflicted with the emotional plague are not directly affected by the results of our scientific work; even if they are far removed from or unfamiliar with the subject; they have somehow divined and feel threatened by the unmasking of the emotional plague as it takes place in the quiet offices of character analysts and orgone therapists. In spite of the fact that they were not directly affected, they reacted with defamation and the specific plague reaction long before a single orgonomist had any idea that he was on the verge of engaging in the most difficult struggle that physicians and educators had ever undertaken. We shall go into this matter in detail when we discuss the training of physicians and educators. Here it is merely important to give a very thorough description of the emotional plague's general characteristics, so that everyone will be capable of recognizing them in himself and in others.

The emotional plague has known how to anticipate possible disclosures by well-concealed and rationalized actions. It acted like a nobly dressed murderer whose mask has been torn off. The emotional plague was successful for more than a decade; it had almost succeeded in securing its existence for centuries to come. It would have indeed triumphed had it not become so destructively and blatantly manifest as dictatorships and mass infection. It stirred up a war of unimaginable dimensions and added to

chronic, everyday murder. It endeavored to conceal itself behind high-sounding "political ideals" and "new orders," behind "ancient empires" and "racial claims." For years it was given credence by a psychiatrically sick world. But its acts of betrayal were too blatant. It insulted the natural feelings for life of all men and women, leaving no family and no profession untouched. The phenomena which character analysts and orgone therapists had learned to study and to fight so well over a long period of time in the stillness of their offices suddenly became *one* with the phenomena of the world catastrophe. Both on a small and on a large scale, the basic characteristics were the same. Thus, the emotional plague itself came to the aid of natural science, and the work of a few psychiatrists and educators. The world began to ask about its nature and to demand an answer. This answer shall be given according to our best knowledge and conscience. Every conscientious person will discover the emotional plague in himself and, in this way, better comprehend what plunges the world into tragedy again and again. The "new order" always begins in one's own house.

The unmasking of these hidden activities and mechanisms of a decadent life has two goals: first, the fulfillment of an obligation to society. If, in the case of a fire, the water supply fails and someone knows the source of the failure, it is his duty to name it. Second, the future of sex-economy and orgone biophysics has to be protected from the emotional plague. In Austria in 1930; in Germany in 1932 and 1933; in Denmark in 1933; in Lucerne in 1934; in Denmark and Sweden in 1934 and 1935; and in Norway in 1937 and 1938, my honest work on the human structure was subjected to attacks. In retrospect, I am almost inclined to feel grateful for these unjustified attacks, for they did away with my good-natured guilelessness and opened my eyes to a generally dangerous, though pathological, system of defamation and persecution. When a thief goes too far and throws caution to the wind, he runs a greater risk of being caught and rendered harmless. Until about ten years ago, those who were afflicted with and spread the emotional plague felt secure. They were too sure of their victory. For many years, indeed, victory did appear to be on their side. Great perseverance, deep involvement in experimental and natural scientific work, and an

independence from public opinion—an independence for which one can only be grateful—rendered their victory impossible. The emotional plague never lets up or rests until it has invalidated great deeds, until it has poisoned the fruits of human diligence, research, and the attainment of truth. I do not think that it has succeeded this time or that it will succeed. It is the first time that the emotional plague is confronted not only by honest attitudes but by the necessary knowledge of life processes, which always make up in clarity what they lack in strength. The strength and consistent application of orgonomic natural science enabled me to recover from the heavy and dangerous blows I received from the emotional plague. If that was possible, it seems to me that the most difficult part has been accomplished.

As far as I and my work are concerned, I should like to state one simple fact for the reader's consideration. Neurotic psychoanalysts declared that I was mentally ill; fascist communists denounced me as a Trotskyite; sexually frivolous people accused me of being the unlicensed owner of a brothel; the Gestapo persecuted me on the grounds that I was a Bolshevik (the FBI did the same on the grounds that I was a German spy); domineering mothers wanted to pass me on to posterity as a seducer of children; charlatans in the field of psychiatry called me a charlatan; would-be saviors of mankind called me a new Jesus or Lenin. However flattering or unflattering these diverse appellations may have been, this much should be clear: it is not likely that I, being but *one* person, could have been brothel owner, spy, Trotskyite, schizophrenic, and savior all at the same time. Each of these activities would have taken up a whole life. But I cannot have been all these things for the simple reason that my interests and efforts lie elsewhere, namely in work on the irrational human structure and in the extremely demanding work of comprehending the recently discovered cosmic life energy; they lie, in short, in the field of sex-economy and orgone biophysics. Perhaps this logical consideration will help to remove a misunderstanding about me.

Those who have read and really understood the works of great women and men know the sphere we characterize as emotional plague. Unfortunately, *these great accomplishments have remained without any essential social effect.* They were neither or-

ganized nor made the basis of life-affirming institutions. If that had happened, it would be difficult to believe that the emotional plague could have reached the extent it did in the catastrophes of 1934-45. True, monuments have been erected in honor of the great masters of literature, but all too often, we see that the emotional plague knows how to build huge museums in which these great accomplishments can be *locked up* and *made innocuous* through *false* admiration. Any one of these accomplishments would have been enough to build a rational world if it had been taken seriously as a practical possibility. I am not the first person to make an effort to grasp and fight the emotional plague. I merely believe that I am the first *natural scientist* who, by the discovery of the orgone, has provided a solid foundation on the basis of which the emotional plague can be *understood* and *vanquished*.

Today, five, eight, ten, fourteen years after various unexpected and incomprehensible catastrophes, this is my standpoint: *just as a bacteriologist devotes all his efforts and energies to the total elimination of infectious diseases, the medical orgonomist devotes all his efforts and energies to the unmasking and combating of the emotional plague as a rampant disease of the people of the world.* The world will gradually get accustomed to this new form of medical activity. One will learn to comprehend the emotional plague in oneself and in others and to go to scientific centers and not to the police, the district attorney, or the party leader. There are police, district attorneys, and even saviors who are interested in mastering the emotional plague in themselves and in others. For the police and the district attorney have to deal with biopathic criminality, and the human savior is concerned with the helplessness and mass biopathies of man. We want from now on to draw a sharp distinction between those who run to the police or use political persecution to settle a controversy and those who use scientific reasoning. Thus we will be in a position to distinguish who is afflicted with the emotional plague and who is not. At this point I should like to stress that we do not enter into discussions of politics and police. On the other hand, we welcome every form of scientific discussion; indeed, we wait for it.

I believe that the time has come when helplessness toward the

emotional plague is beginning to disappear. Until now, one sensed its attacks as something comparable to a tree crashing to the ground or a stone falling from the roof. Such things simply happened, and one was either lucky and got out alive or one was unlucky and was struck down dead. From this point on, we know that the tree does not tumble by accident and the stone does not fall of its own volition from the roof. We know now in both cases that well-concealed, mentally disturbed human animals cause the tree to topple and the stone to roll off the roof. Once this much has been grasped, the rest follows of itself.

Hence, when some physician or another files suit against an orgonomist because of some "illegal activity"; when a politician accuses an orgonomist of "tax fraud," "child seduction," "espionage," or "Trotskyite opposition"; when we hear rumors that some orgonomist or another is mentally ill, seduces his patients, operates an illegal brothel, etc., then we know that we are dealing with police or political tactics and not with scientific argumentation. The training requirements of the Orgone Institute and the demands of everyday work are a public guarantee that *we* are doing our utmost to combat the basic characteristics of the emotional plague.

We do not conceal, nor have we ever concealed, that we cannot believe in the fulfillment of human existence as long as biology, psychiatry, and educational science have not come to grips with the universal emotional plague, and fought it as ruthlessly as one fights plague-ridden rats. Nor do we conceal the fact that extensive, careful, and painstaking clinical investigations have led us to this conclusion: *it is solely the reestablishment of the natural love-life of children, adolescents, and adults which can rid the world of character neuroses and, with the character neuroses, the emotional plague in its various forms.*