

Concepts of Life Energy and Vitalism Through the Ages

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Introduction

In what follows I have tried to present the major concepts on this subject given through history, highlighting those that really contributed functionally to the development of our understanding of Life. Of course, much more could have been written and has been by various authors and scientists. For those interested in contemporary thinking on the subject I highly recommend Rupert Sheldrake's books. Not only are they informative, but he has a depth of understanding that is hard to find in others I have read, and his ego does not seem to be involved. It is impossible to convey the breadth and depth of the work of Wilhelm Reich and Nicolai Levashov in this brief paper, but their work has had a profound influence on my personal development. Another great thinker, who has had a major influence on my thinking is Roger Weir. I have not included Roger's work here, but do highly recommend it for those who wish to understand how ancient wisdom can be recalibrated for our modern age.

Pre-Renaissance Concepts

The concept of a life energy or life force that animates life has been with us since antiquity in the Chinese concept of "chi", and the East Indian concept of "prana". In pre-modern times Aristotle thought such concepts were necessary in order to understand the origin of life. He asked, "Why cannot the seed at its origin be so created, that it can turn into blood and flesh without itself having to be blood and flesh?" and "How do these parts come into being: does the one form the other or do they simply arise one after the other?" His answer was the soul. "The soul cannot exist without a body, yet it is not the body but rather something inherent in the body." It is, "...the principle of all things living". "If the eyes were a living being, then eyesight would be its soul, this being the substance as notion or form of the eye; and the eye would be the matter of the eyesight". Aristotle maintained that mere stuff or matter is not yet the real thing; it needs a certain form or essence or function to complete it. Matter and form, however, are never separated; they can only be distinguished. Thus, in the case of a living organism, for example, the sheer matter of the organism (viewed only as a synthesis of inorganic substances) can be distinguished from a certain form or function or inner activity, without which it would not be a living organism at all; and this "soul" or "vital function" is what Aristotle in his *De anima* (On the Soul) called the entelechy (or first entelechy) of the living organism. Aristotle's assertions held sway until well into the 17 and 18th centuries.

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Renaissance

Galileo's (mid 1500s to mid-1600's) work wrought major changes in how to conceive of ourselves and our universe. He championed a quantitative, analytic view of natural processes which dominates most scientific thought to the present time. In essence he found nature to be a process whereby mechanical principles were at work. This included the theory of life. The appeal of mechanism was that much could be done with it both theoretically and practically. Little could be done with so called "vitalistic theories" of the time.

Nevertheless certain problems could not readily be solved by mechanistic thinking. These pertained primarily to problems of the origin of life and/or its evolution. Addressing these problems in the Pre-modern era (1500's to 1800's) in vitalistic terms were physicians and scientists such as William Harvey, who discovered the circulation of blood, Georg Ernest Stahl, who gave us the "phlogiston" theory, Caspar Friedrich Wolff, considered the father of "epigenetic descriptive embryology", who described a "vis essentialis" as a force endowed with qualities, which could direct epigenesis and the conservation of the mature body and could unite in a common work with agents of the inorganic. Albert Haller objected to Wolff's concept of the vis essentialis, as described by Wolff in that it could not account for the form of things unless we accepted that the embryo is already there when conception takes place and the vital energies then organize and imbue it with Life.

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, (1752-1840) was considered the father of modern anthropology. A professor of medicine at the University of Gottingen, he was considered to be among the first to apply scientific principles to the study of man. According to Hans Driesch, who wrote the first scholarly history of vitalism,² Blumenbach was the only one of the above-mentioned investigators to take a step beyond Aristotle. Blumenbach described fundamental physiological properties such as contractibility, irritability and sensibility which, working together with a "vita propria" established the specific vital activity of the systemic parts of the living organism. His was the first real system of vitalism. With respect to embryogenesis he describes how the "formative impulse" first comes into being after the mingling of the "sex-liquids" in the uterus during conception. He compared this formative impulse to gravity, constantly there and effective, but whose cause, "is for us a quality occulta".

In the 1880's August Weismann proposed that organisms consisted of two functional parts, the body or somatoplasm and the germ-plasm. The latter was described as a highly complex structure with the power of developing into a complex organism. According to Rupert Sheldrake³, Weissman believed that the germ-plasm, "is the repository of all the specific causes of form observed in the adult organism: each particular part of the organism is caused by a particulate material unit, called a determinant". The

² Driesch, Hans *The History & Theory of Vitalism*, Trans. By C.K.Ogden, Magdalene College, Cambridge, 1914.

³ Sheldrake, Rupert, *The Presence of the Past*, Times Books, N.Y. 1988.

continuity of the germ-plasm through the generations became the “central dogma” of molecular biology in the 20th Century, in which Weismann’s scheme is interpreted in terms of DNA and proteins.

Hans Dreisch

Hans Dreisch was an experimental biologist whose work spanned the turn of the 19th-20th Centuries. His studies and books on vitalism were the most comprehensive and discerning for that time. For Dreisch vitalism was the theory of *the autonomy of the processes of life*. This is effected according to Dreisch by what he calls an “individualizing agent”, an “entelechy” to use Aristotle’s term, which is neither an energy nor a material substance of some special kind, but is non-material and non-spatial, acting “into” space. In this context Dreisch mentions Descartes and Hartmann who defend the view that a “non-mechanical agent –the ‘soul’-may alter the direction of material particles, and by this action also alter the directions of all forces which go out from them.” (Dreisch, 1914). Dreisch mentions the known fundamental laws of physics, the conservation of energy, etc, and shows how his theory can conserve these laws.

Dreisch argues and presents evidence from nature to show that contrary to the mechanistic view of life, vitalism shows that life is not only not a mere field of chance, but that its phenomena are not even covered by a machine-theory. It is not sufficient for an explanation of what happens. One piece of evidence is the fact that in many kinds of embryonic organs or even animals, if you deprive part of their cells, the rest of the organ or animal will always develop in the normal manner, though in miniature. That is, what develops is not just a part of the organization, but the whole, only on a smaller scale. Dreisch provides further examples from nature and goes on to write the “The harmonious system, (the whole being) then is not a ‘machine’; it is in fact, as it seemed to be from the beginning, a something that is governed by individualizing causality. ‘Entelechy’ as a non-mechanical agent of nature, is at work in the ...system” (Dreisch, 1914.)

The facts of embryonic regulation, regeneration, and reproduction, according to Rupert Sheldrake, writing about Dreisch’s views, show that something with an inherent wholeness acts *on* the living system, but is not a material part of it. Entelechy was considered by Dreisch as purposive or teleological, directing physical processes under its influence towards ends or goals contained within itself. “According to Driesch, entelechy guides the morphogenesis of the developing organism towards the characteristic form of its species. The genes, according to Sheldrake, commenting on Dreisch, are responsible for providing the material means for morphogenesis, the chemical substances to be ordered, but the ordering itself is due to entelechy. According to Dreisch, development and behavior would never be fully understood mechanistically, but would be comprehensible in terms of purposive organizing principles. Sheldrake writes, “At least so far, this prediction seems valid. Very little is actually understood about morphogenesis in physical and chemical terms; and the organizing principles of vitalism, which were denied by the mechanistic theory, have returned in such guises as “selfish

genes” and genetic programs. The central paradigm of modern biology has in effect become a kind of genetic vitalism” (Sheldrake, 1988, P.83).

With respect to Sheldrake’s own contribution to the field, morphogenetic fields, we will return a bit later after a presentation of the work of Wilhelm Reich.

Wilhelm Reich

Wilhelm Reich, psychoanalyst, scientist, and developer of the discipline of orgonomy was born in 1897 in Bukovina of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and died 60 years later in prison in the U.S. after a life of bold intellectual adventure and remarkable scientific discovery. Reich’s brilliance as a clinician and theoretician as a psychoanalyst brought him into Freud’s inner circle at the early age of 22 years in Vienna. Anything but an “armchair analyst” Reich recognized how poverty and mis-information, especially about sexual matters contributed to individual and social neurosis. He set up public clinics, provided contraception and advice about their use and lectured to thousands of people about sexuality and sexual hygiene and empowered people to assume responsibility for their lives.

The driving force behind Reich’s work was to understand the nature of life. As a young man he thoroughly read the work of the scientists and thinkers who had preceded him in this quest. He wrote, " I am well aware that the human race has known about the existence of a universal energy related to life for many ages. However, the basic task of natural science consisted in making this energy usable. This is the sole difference between my work and all preceding knowledge."⁴

Reich became aware of the existence of this energy, which he called "orgone", not through cosmology or astronomy, but through his studies in sexuality, specifically the function of the orgasm. As a psychoanalyst, practicing in Vienna in the 1920's he found that the elimination of neurotic symptoms followed rapidly upon the patient's capacity to experience a satisfying discharge of all sexual tension during the genital embrace. Following Freud's initial hypothesis Reich realized that there was an economy to the libidinal charge within the organism. Through food stuffs and exposure to the atmosphere we build up an energetic charge, which had to be discharged at periodic intervals lest potential neurotic complexes become charged and neurotic symptoms and behavior ensues. Discharge could be effected by any of several sexual practices, work, menstruation, and childbirth, but most satisfactory on a regular basis was the genital embrace with a loved partner.

"Something" was discharged and Reich set out to understand what it was. First he succeeded in objectifying the phenomenon by measuring bioelectrical charge on the skin surface when subjects were in emotional states, sadness, anxiety, sexual pleasure. The oscillograph consistently demonstrated that

⁴ Reich, Wilhelm *Man’s Right to Know*, Film by Wilhelm Reich Infant’s Trust fund, Directed by Kevin Hinchey, 2002.

states of anxiety were always associated with a drop in charge on the skin surface, states of pleasure with an increase of charge, and anger with a blocking of charge at the muscular apparatus.

The bioelectrical experiments verified something that Reich had seen when working purely clinically: The organism is in a constant state of spontaneous pulsation, of expansion and contraction, of reaching out to its environment in a state of biophysical expansion or contracting away from it, much like an amoeba extending a pseudopod towards food, a comparison that Freud had made some years before.

For Reich the discovery of the “orgastic plasma pulsation” was, comparing himself to Columbus’s discovery of America, “..the coastal stretch from which all else developed”⁵ Reich had hoped that one thing that the bioelectric experiments would reveal is the nature of the life energy. Extant at the time was a bioelectrical theory of life, which Reich had embraced. With the bioelectric experiments he realized, however, that electrical energy as it was known at that time had an irritating effect on living substances, therefore it could not be the life energy per se. He began a series of experiments searching for the source of LE by examining boiled food-stuffs under a microscope reasoning that food and some form of energy from the atmosphere were the primary sources of energy for living processes. He also examined single celled organisms to understand the processes of pulsation that he had seen in patients and in the bioelectric experiments.

When Reich examined boiled foodstuffs he found, to his surprise, that with extensive boiling no matter the food source, fats, proteins, carbohydrates, they all broke down into similar forms. These were microscopic vesicles that moved from place to place, pulsated, and had a bluish glow. The vesicles, which he named “bions”, were two to three times the size of bacteria, but could not be bacteria because of the extensive boiling process. And, unlike bacteria which move rapidly across the field of vision under the microscope the bions moved only a short distance from place to place about a central point. Reich found that he could culture the bions on standard media under strictly sterile conditions. Bion cultures strongly radiated “something” which could be felt as a tingling sensation on the skin or registered as a burn of the skin when directly applied. The laboratory space began to glow with a bluish radiation, film packets registered anomalous light impressions and metallic objects in the laboratory became spontaneously magnetized.

Tests at the local hospital for radioactivity proved negative. Following a series of experiments testing the effect of bion preparations on electroscopes and other devices that detect “static” electricity Reich realized that he had discovered an energy or force that originated in living substance, was released from living substance, and could exert an impression on a variety of substances. To his mind this was the life energy per se. Further research fortified this impression: tests of the energy’s healing qualities were positive. Reich was also able to create bions by heating inorganic materials such as carbon, iron, and ocean sand (silicon) to incandescence and culturing the heated, sterile product in sterile media. The result in the case of sand was large packets of bions with a strong glow and the capacity to burn the

⁵ Reich, Wilhelm *Ether, God, and Devil* Orgone Institute Press, 1949.

skin through a glass test tube. In the process of his studies on the bions Reich discovered a natural process whereby bions obtained from grass in solution spontaneously developed into protozoa through reorganization.⁶

Reich's basement laboratory in Oslo in mid-Winter exhibited anomalous light phenomena-bluish fogs and small lightening-like streaks of light. Thinking that these were due to the presence of the numerous petri dishes filled with sand bion cultures Reich placed cultures into a box made of alternating layers of non-metallic and metallic materials with the metal on the inside. He hoped that the non-metallic material would prevent the radiation, whatever it was, from leaving the box while the metal would reflect the radiation back in toward the center of the box. A glass wall permitted observation of the radiation. Reich did, indeed, see the radiation in higher concentration, but was puzzled when it persisted even after removing the cultures from the box. He then realized that the radiation was everywhere, but concentrated in the box by virtue of the materials in its structure. This radiation was named orgone energy from the fact that its discovery came about from Reich's original studies of the function of the orgasm and because the radiation could be absorbed by organic materials. The enclosure was named the orgone energy accumulator. Orgone energy was life energy as manifested in the atmosphere. Later experimental work and theoretical deductions convinced Reich that it was also the cosmic energy, per se.

In 1940 Reich moved from Oslo to New York City, where he continued research and taught at the New School for Social Research. In 1950 he moved to Rangeley, Maine where he had vacationed for several years. He devoted the remaining years of his life to experimental work with physical orgone energy. He discovered that it had an anti-entropic quality, was antithetical to electromagnetism, could slow the progression of cancer in mice and ameliorate cancer in humans, run motors, nullify and transform radioactivity, create and modify the weather through manipulation with grounded long metal tubes, and be transformed into variants that had noxious qualities. All of these discoveries were published in his journals, the Orgone Energy Bulletins, and many of the experiments have been replicated by responsible scientists worldwide.^{7,8}

Two qualities of orgone energy, which Reich described and are directly germane to our understanding of vitalism are its functions as a field around living things and how streams of energy can superimpose upon each other and in the process create mass.

⁶ Extensive replication of this phenomenon including videotaping in well-controlled conditions leaves no doubt of its reality.

⁷ J. of Orgonomy

⁸ Heretic's Notebook, Pulse of the Planet # 5, Edited by James DeMeo, Ph.D. Natural Energy Works, Ashland, 2002.

Through the use of a “field meter” Reich was able to determine that a field of orgone energy surrounded humans up to a distance of six feet, the depth of the field a function of the biophysical health of the person. Experimenting with plants Reich saw that the field disappeared with death.⁹

Reich discerned the superimposition function of orgone energy when observing orgone “particles” in movement within a room built as an orgone accumulator. The “particles” moved in a spinning wave manner. Based upon these observations and others, theoretical determinations revealed that the superimposition of energy streams could well be the basis for galaxy formation, the aurora borealis, hurricane formation, and life energy fields.

Unfortunately, in a great travesty of justice, Reich was prosecuted for transporting orgone energy accumulators across state lines in the U.S He died in prison weeks before he was to leave on parole. His books and experimental apparatus were destroyed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.¹⁰

Harold Saxton Burr

Harold Saxton Burr, was a professor of anatomy at the Yale University School of Medicine when he made his major discoveries about bio-electric fields surrounding living things. I find it interesting that both Reich and Burr became involved in this kind of research in the same year, 1932, and that while Reich was interested in charting the immediate changes in bioelectric charge on the surface of the skin during emotional states, Burr was more interested in electrical potentials that persisted through time. Both Reich and Burr, independently, built the world’s first direct current millivoltmeters with which they conducted their research.

Burr found these charges, in the form of what he called a “field” around all living things and was able to correlate changes in the field with a variety of external events including the weather.¹¹ Trees in Lyme, Connecticut where Burr lived responded to hurricanes in the deep South, or it may have been that some deeper, vaster atmospheric or cosmic event was common to them both. One of Burr’s most remarkable experiments involved the study of the bioelectrical fields, called “L-fields” for “life-fields” surrounding single cells in the early embryological phase of amphibians. Burr was able to define the long electrical axis of the single cell prior to the differentiation of any organs. He always found that the long axis of the central nervous system of the amphibian developed beneath the electrical axis, indicating that the *formal aspect of the central nervous system followed the electrical pattern*. This was a tremendous finding, but I never saw it followed up in subsequent years in the scientific literature. I met Burr at Yale while I was doing my training in psychiatry. He was a delightful fellow, who told me that his work with bioelectricity afforded him the most pleasure of all his work in his life.

⁹ Reich, Wilhelm, *The Cancer Biopathy*, The Orgone Institute Press, Orgonon, 1948.

¹⁰ Reich, Wilhelm, *Cosmic Superimposition*, Orgone Institute Press, Orgonon, 1951.

¹¹ Burr, Harold Saxton *Blueprint for Immortality*, 1972, Out of Print

Rupert Sheldrake

Rupert Sheldrake is a British biologist, who, through a good deal of his work life has been an exponent of a new, holistic, vitalistic way of looking at living things. He is the author of several books^{12,13} where he describes his theory of Morphic Resonance and experiments supporting the theory.

Sheldrake is well aware of the various theories of vitalism from Antiquity to the present time and writes eloquently about them. Of all contemporary biologists he writes most persuasively about the flaws in mechanistic thinking and how more contemporary concepts such as his own and others are far more explanatory in helping us understand morphogenesis and other intrinsic qualities of life.

He writes, “All attempts to force the organizing principles of life into material objects such as genes have failed: they keep bursting out again. The concept of purposive organizing principles which are non-material in nature has been reinvented again and again. In fact this duality of matter and non-material organizing principles has been implicit in the mechanistic theory of life all along. It is an essential feature of the machine metaphor. All machines involve a duality between the material components of which they are made and the purposive designs that were conceived in the minds of their designers and makers. As a contemporary theoretical biologist, Francisco Varela, has expressed it: ‘What defines a machine organization is relations, and hence . . . the organization of a machine has no connection with materiality, that is, with the properties of the components that define them as physical entities. In the organization of a machine, materiality is implied but does not enter per se.’

This duality of form and matter is in fact inherent in all traditional philosophies of form. In the modern context, it is usually conceived of in terms of the duality of matter and *information*. Information is what *informs*; it plays an *informative* role, as Norbert Wiener, the founder of cybernetics, emphasized in his concept of the primacy of information over matter and energy. He saw this distinction as essential for the doctrine of materialism: ‘No materialism which does not admit this can survive at the present day.’ This may sound like a radical position, but in fact ever since the seventeenth century, the survival of materialism has depended on its combination with the Platonic notion of non-material organizing principles: the laws of nature.

But if biological ‘information’ cannot be understood in terms of the material structures of the genes alone, then what is it? Is the information Platonic, somehow transcending time and space? Or is it immanent within organisms?^(Sheldrake, 1988 p.88)

Sheldrake’s answer is that information is immanent in morphogenetic fields, inherited in non-material manner by organisms from their predecessors. As Sheldrake informs us, in the early 1920s the field concept was introduced into biology by Hans Spemann, Alexander Gurwitsch, and Paul Weiss. They were called developmental, embryonic, or morphogenetic: they both organized normal development and guided the process of regulation and regeneration after damage.

¹² Sheldrake, Rupert, *A New Science of Life*, Blond & Briggs, London, 1981

¹³ Sheldrake, Rupert, *The Presence of the Past*, Times Books, N.Y., 1988.

Gurwitsch wrote:

“The place of the embryonal formative process is a field (in the usage of the physicists) the boundaries of which, in general, do not coincide with those of the embryo but surpass them. Embryogenesis, in other words, comes to pass inside of the fields...Thus what is given to us as a living system would consist of the visible embryo (or egg, respectively) and a field.”¹⁴

Weiss wrote:

“A field is a condition to which a living system owes its typical organization and its specific activities. These activities are specific in that they determine the character of the formations to which they give rise...In as much as the action of fields does produce spatial order, it becomes a postulate that the field factors themselves possess definite order. The three-dimensional heterogeneity of developing systems, that is, the fact that these systems have different properties in the three dimensions of space, must be referred to a three-dimensional organization and heteropolarity of the originating fields.”¹⁵

Each species of organism has its own morphogenetic field, although fields of related species may be similar. Within the organism there are subsidiary fields within the overall field of the organism, in fact a nested hierarchy of fields within fields.

Sheldrake writes, “The concept of morphogenetic fields...differs from Driesch's idea of entelechies in that the field concept implies the existence of profound analogies between the organizing principles of the biological realm and the known fields of physics. By contrast, Driesch, as a vitalist, stressed the radical difference between the realm of life and the realms of physics and chemistry. However, there is no doubt that many features of entelechies were carried over into the concept of morphogenetic fields. Like entelechy, these fields were endowed with properties of self-organization and goal-directedness; and like entelechy, they were assumed to play a causal role, guiding the systems under their influence towards characteristic patterns of organization. For example, Weiss thought of the fields as complexes of organizing factors which “cause the originally indefinite course of the individual parts of the germ to become definite and specific, and furthermore, cause this to occur in compliance with a typical patterns.” And Waddington's concept of chreodes canalizing development towards particular goals strongly resembles the pulling or attracting of pathways of development towards ends given by entelechy. The ends or goals of the chreodes from the point of view of a developing system lie in the future, and Waddington described them in the language of dynamics as "attractors." Modern mathematical dynamics is

¹⁴ Gurwitsch, A. *Ueber den Begriff des embryonalen Felds*. Archiv für entwicklungsmechanik 51:383-415.

¹⁵ Weiss, Paul *Principles of Development*, Holt, N.Y. 1939.

teleological in that it involves the idea of "basins" within which are "attractors" representing the states towards which dynamical systems are drawn." (Sheldrake, 1988, P.101)

Sheldrake describes how the field concept is being modeled more and more with many variations on the basic theme from being completely virtual to Sheldrake's own "hypothesis of formative causation" which "starts with the assumption that morphogenetic fields are physically real, in the sense that gravitational, electro-magnetic, and quantum fields are physically real." He maintains that "each kind of cell tissue, organ, and organism has its own kind of field and that these fields shape and organize developing microorganisms, plants, and animals, and stabilize the forms of adult organisms. They do this on the basis of their own spatio-temporal organization.

The temporal aspect of morphogenetic fields is brought out most clearly in the concepts of chreodes¹⁶ and morphogenetic attractors. The morphogenetic fields relate developing organisms to future patterns of organization, towards which chreodes guide the developmental process... What is new in the hypothesis of formative causation is the idea that the structure of these fields is not determined by either transcendent Ideas of timeless mathematical formulae, but rather results from the actual forms of previous similar organisms. In other words, the structure of the fields depends on what has happened before. Thus, for example, the morphogenetic fields of the foxglove species are shaped by influences from previously existing foxgloves. They represent a kind of pooled or collective memory of the species. Each member of the species is molded by these species fields, and in turn contributes to them, influencing future members of the species. Sheldrake postulates that this kind of memory works on a kind of resonance, called by him "morphic resonance", which takes place on the basis of similarity. "This is a non-energetic transfer of information...but does resemble known kinds of resonance in that it takes place on the basis of rhythmic patterns of activity."^(Sheldrake, 1988 p.108) In his book Sheldrake describes experiments confirming this hypothesis and applies it to several fields of human endeavor and sociality.

Nicolai Levashov

Nicolai Levashov is a now-deceased theoretical physicist and master healer, who mentored me in his healing methods during the fifteen years that he resided, practiced healing, and taught in San Francisco. Nicolai had the capacity to see "energy fields" in great detail both in and around people and in nature-at-large. Exceptionally brilliant, he examined his unique qualities and their interplay in the world and wrote several books on his findings, three of which have been translated into

¹⁶ A concept created by C.H. Waddington. It refers to developmental pathways, canalized pathways of change. In an epigenetic landscape they would correspond to the valleys and lead to particular developmental end-points, say sepals, petals, stamens, and pistils in a flower. *The Strategy of Genes*, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1957.

English.¹⁷ My experience of his findings as a student and practitioner of his healing method is that he is essentially correct in his descriptions of biological functions and how they co-function with consciousness and our spirit.

On the basis of his remarkable abilities to “see” (“envision”) the other dimensions of our existence along with his scientific training Nicolai found that in addition to our physical selves we have so-called etheric and astral and mental bodies. He stresses that these bodies, which some call subtle energy bodies, are not primarily energetic, but are material, not in the sense that mass is material, but in the sense that they are palpable to him in many ways that a purely energetic structure would not be.¹⁸

According to Levashov our universe is made of 7 primary matters out of innumerable primary matters existing in the cosmos. The melding of these matters creates six spheres of “matter”. The mass of the Earth comes about through the complete melding of all 7 primary matters, the etheric sphere of the melding of 6 primary matters, and so on through the completion of astral, and first, second, and third spheres. These spheres surround and interdigitate with each other. They have functions, which have everything to do with the health and functioning of the mass of the planet, our existence after physical death, and reincarnation.

One is born with a rudimentary etheric body, which is in energetic (life energy) circulation with the physical body. Each physical cell has an etheric body counterpart, which is essentially identical to its physical cell. The sum total of the etheric cells makes up a total organismic etheric body. The development of the etheric body from its rudimentary state to a full-fledged body takes place via the infants exposure to *information* and its capacity to “take in” that information. For example, the impact of visual images on the retina results in the transmission of ionic charges down the optic nerve to the brain. When this input reaches a certain level of intensity, more than can be held by the neural tissue, it breaks down releasing its “primary matters, which explodes through a boundary between the physical and etheric levels of the neuron in question and goes towards building up the etheric body. The full establishment of the etheric body takes place by the age of 4 years.

The creation of the astral body involves a similar process, which takes place between the ages of 14 and 18 years. For this to occur the acquired “information” must be of a more complex form for excitation of the physical mass to be effected. The release of primary matters from the etheric to the astral body fills up the astral body. Now the circulation of life energy is from the physical body to the etheric body through the astral body and return to the physical body.

The continuity of the physical body depends upon cellular reproduction and regeneration with the form of the physical body reproduced via projection from the etheric body, its exact blueprint. Disease, whether from psychic trauma established in the astral body or insult to the physical body, if chronic, results in changes in the etheric body. When reproduction takes place on a physical

¹⁷ Levashov, Nicolai. *The Final Appeal to Mankind*, Vols. 1 and 2, and *Spirit and Mind*. Privately published, Dates respectively. *The Final Appeal to Mankind* is available in English to the public at his website, www.levashov.info.

¹⁸ For a description of this process as it takes place in a student one may read my paper, *Studies with Nicolai*, richardablasband@gmail.com.

level the information for the form of the new cells comes from the previously altered etheric body. This results in the creation of a damaged physical cell once cellular reproduction is complete. This is why it is difficult, if not impossible to “cure” chronic illness by surgery or drugs. They do not affect the etheric body, which must be “corrected” before lasting healing can take place on the physical level.

The astral body is the repository of emotions and has a great deal to do with short and long-term memory.

The mental bodies are involved with consciousness and spiritual development.

Most humans develop to the astral level of functioning. The astral and etheric bodies for most of us make up our spiritual body. When we pass on, as the physical body disintegrates primary matters are released freeing the spirit to move to its appropriate planetary sphere, where it abides until it reincarnates. Details of these processes may be found in Levashov’s books.

In summary

It is evident from this description that there is a close correspondence between morphogenetic fields and Levashov’s spiritual bodies, and it is quite possible that the “life energy” circulating between the material bodies and the spiritual bodies is Reich’s orgone energy. These hypotheses are eminently testable by experimentation.