

prickling sensations were caused by the free-flowing orgone which had been kept latent because of the chronic muscular tensions.

Gradually, by experimentation, Reich concluded that these energies also existed external to people. He believed that he had discovered an energy which is part of the living, pulsating world, a basis and source of life. This bio-electric energy streams among persons, earth's environment and the stars. There is, therefore, a cosmic stream of orgone energy which can be experienced in the organism, demonstrated in the laboratory, visible as "bions" and also seen in the atmosphere.

From 1940 onwards, Reich's work shifted from a clinical and therapeutic interest to what he felt was an increasingly biological and natural science endeavor. This resulted in increasing ostracism and antagonism toward him. Notable here was his work in cancer (*The Cancer Biopathy*, excerpted in the Writings, 9). He felt that cancer was a matter of biological frustration, an organismic shrinking and withdrawal, which occurred, as did other somatic diseases, in just those areas where armoring was most severe. This view of cancer, along with his use and advocacy of an "orgone energy accumulator"—a box-like device he believed could increase the orgone energy surrounding a person and help to relieve illness--brought on the wrath of the medical establishment.

As if these threats to current biological and medical thought were not enough, he also researched an area which he called "cosmic orgone engineering" (C.O.R.E.), which led him to speculations about smog, storm-control, weather in general, drought and desert conditions. He even produced a tentative technique for the production of rain in arid areas.

I am in no position to evaluate his biological and engineering research, but it is relevant to note that the attack which he received for his views was formidable--even though he described in detail how his experiments were conducted and asserted a natural science basis. None of his critics sought to replicate his work. This attack finally led to his imprisonment and death: a concrete and tragic example of emotional plague.

It is important to ask how isolated was Reich in what he discovered? His energy concept is remarkably similar to that described in East Indian, Asian, and western occult literature, even to the parallel of his armor segments with the chakra centers. Reich's vegetative streamings are not unlike the vertical meridians of acupuncture or the energy experienced in Kundalini Yoga. Reich seemed not to know of these parallels. Indeed, he showed no interest in comparing his findings and views with other material in contemporary or ancient physiology or psychology. His biological conception of core and periphery seems overly simple to biologically trained people, and his language often seemed too authoritarian and alienating.

Yet his work was vast and profound. All the body therapies of today owe much of their origin to his thinking and discoveries. Reich's personal and social isolation was tragic and one still does not know when his theories and discoveries can be put to an adequate outside test.