

The Unhealed Healer

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.

REICH AND JUNG: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

I begin this discussion of Reich and Jung, regretfully, with Reich's feeling about Jung, to whom he, like many others, erroneously attributed both a naive, unscientific mysticism and anti-semitism. In the interview with him by Kurt Eissler (10, pp. 88-89), Reich said that Jung was correct in discovering a universal libido or energy, but Freud was right in saying that it was unscientific. Reich believed that he, himself, had proved it scientifically, being able to measure it with a Geiger counter, thus taking away its "mystical" connotation. Reich also merely accepted that Jung was labelled anti-semitic, without further inquiry.

Reich continues the misconception in *The Function of the Orgasm* (8, p. 127), in which he criticizes Jung for taking all the sexual aspect out of the concept of the libido and ending up with the concept of the collective unconscious, which Reich saw as merely mystical or in line with Nazi ideology.

Great men do not always read each other and, alas, may not understand their rivals any better than the rest of us do. But, in fairness, Reich did not have access to such works as that of Jaffe (3), who corrects in depth that mistaken impression of anti-semitism or national socialist predilections. He could have seen an earlier corrective effort by Ernest Harms, however, in 1946 (2).

Despite this negative judgment, there are a number of ideas or areas in which Reich comes close to formulating his conclusions quite parallel with those of Jung. The first of these is to be found in the basic formulation of opposites (see 9, p. 102). He observed that neurotic patients develop stiff body peripheries, while maintaining an inner core of aliveness. Such patients feel uncomfortable within themselves, inhibited, unable to be themselves, feel cut off. Sometimes they are so tense with this unexpressed energy that they feel like bursting; they long to move toward the world, but can not do so. These efforts toward contact with life are frequently so painful that disappointments are unbearable and the person prefers to crawl into himself. Reich concludes from this that the basic biological function of moving outward toward the world and life is counteracted by a moving away from it, or a withdrawal into self.

A moment later, Reich notes that these opposites are to be particularly noted in a functional antithesis between sexuality and anxiety. He observes that the very experience of pleasure, of expansion, can not be disconnected from healthy being functioning (9, p.105). Still later, he says that psychological attitudes are themselves derived from the amount of energy arising from such excitation. And at another point, he concludes that sexuality itself is equivalent of the biological function of expansion, while anxiety is the opposite of this, involving a return from the periphery toward the center, the antithesis of this process of excitation (9, 107).

Finally, he reduces the opposition "toward the world" vs. "toward the self" and anxiety vs. anxiety to the simplest terms: the fundamental pair of opposites are sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system.

Reich continues the discussion of polarities in his *Function of the Orgasm* with the chapter heading, "Pleasure (expansion) and anxiety (contraction):