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Following the Red Thread of Wilhelm Reich: A Personal Adventure

I read Dr. Wilhelm Reich's book, *Selected Writings*, when still an undergraduate student, and found it both exciting and stunning. I could hardly put it down. The book outlined an entire set of new discoveries, ranging from the biology of sexuality, to emotions and cancer, and hence into biophysics, atmospheric science, and cosmology. With amazement, I learned his books had been banned and burned, first in Europe, then later by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which also engineered Reich's death in prison. This only fed my curiosity. Only scientists of historical significance suffered such a fate. His life-energy science, called *orgonomy*—after the *orgone energy* he discovered—offered so many hopeful developments for a suffering humanity. I could not rest easy without knowing for certain: Was it true? Or not? And so I followed the red thread Reich left behind, as in the myth of Ariadne in the Labyrinth, following wherever it led.

I began by obtaining photocopies of his banned and burned journal articles and books, plus articles by others, such as those published in the *Journal of Orgonomy*, which reported experiments by various MDs and PhDs from around the world that verified Reich's findings. If it was all madness, as Reich's critics claimed, then what of this large body of published empirical evidence? The critics simply ignored it.



Human-Sized Orgone Energy Accumulators Inside a Metal-Lined Orgone Darkroom at the author's high-altitude Orgone Biophysical Research Laboratory near Ashland, Oregon.

So I built his devices, including several orgone energy accumulators, using Reich's plans, and confirmed many of the subjective parameters he reported. I experienced the radiant warmth from the walls, which sensibly penetrated deep inside one's organism; the increased visual perception; and the luminous anomalies not described in any textbook. I found that it

also promoted the healing of small cuts and burns, sometimes with a speed significant enough to observe directly during treatments.



Orgone Charged Mung-Bean Seedlings (left), versus Control Seedlings (right), from a typical experimental run under optimal conditions.

Going from the subjective to the objective, I tried simple seed-sprouting experiments, charging up one group of mung beans with another control group, and observed up to a 50% increase in sprout lengths. I came into closer contact with other scientists doing the Reichian research, such as Dr. Richard Blasband. Several decades later, I would undertake more robust plant growth experiments in my laboratory near Ashland, Oregon, a location thought to be optimal for such tests—high altitude, low humidity, forested, with very low electromagnetic fields. There, I made more exacting controls over temperature, light, and humidity, yielding over several years a 38% increase in the orgone-charged seedlings over the matched controls ($p < 0.0001$). I tried Reich's other experiments, using millivoltmeters and electroscopes to document laboratory anomalies he reported, nearly all of which were reproducible. The accumulator not only enhanced biological growth but also displayed a measurable increase of electrical charge inside as compared to outside.

At one point I worked as laboratory assistant in the Blasband laboratory, caring for cancer mice in a study he was undertaking on the effects of the orgone energy accumulator. Reich's own work, as reported in *The Cancer Biopathy*, showed a three-fold increase in the lifespans of orgone-treated cancer mice, as compared to a control group. Blasband's work basically reproduced these effects, increasing orgone-charged cancer-mice lifespans from 50% to a doubling of lifespans over control groups. Other associates of Reich and later investigators showed similar positive results, extending the life of cancer

mice merely by putting them inside the orgone energy accumulator for a few hours daily.

I also assisted Dr. Blasband with several cloudbusting experiments, using his apparatus as constructed according to Reich's designs. A cloudbuster is a large antenna-like instrument that can be aimed at any point in the sky, whereupon it can alter the dynamics of clouds, to grow or shrink them using various techniques, even to the point of bringing rains during drought. On my first experience, a fully stagnant atmosphere choked with "smog" and visibility limited to one mile at best was opened up where the sky had been scanned within 15 minutes of work, as if some giant theatre curtains had parted, revealing clear blue skies and well-defined clouds. Rains came shortly thereafter. During the operations, many birds reacted to the biological field effects of the cloudbuster, flying around the apparatus with loud chirping. I also could sense its effects. It was as Reich had described some 30 years earlier.



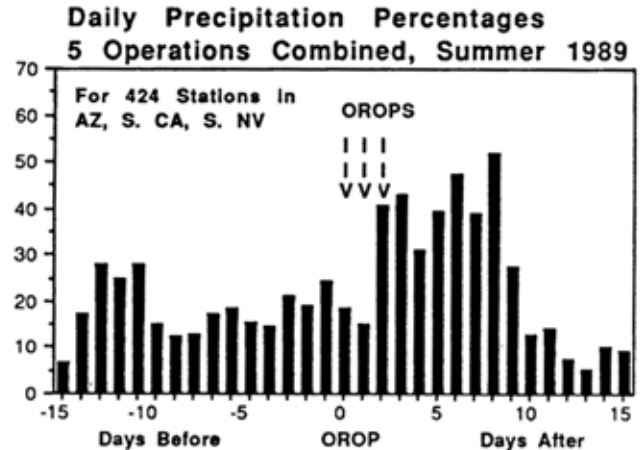
Cloudbuster *Icarus*, used in experimental trials at the University of Kansas (1977–78), and in systematic tests for rain increase in Arizona (1989). Similar apparatus was constructed overseas for successful drought-abatement experiments in Israel (1991–1992), Namibia (1992–1993), and Eritrea (1994–1999).

A year later, as a graduate student in the Geography-Meteorology Department at the University of Kansas, I undertook cloudbusting experiments for my graduate thesis, attempting to show some results—any results, in more elaborated proofs. Several of the department professors, while constructively critical, agreed to the test. The twelve cloudbusting operations I undertook to bring rain were analyzed by reviewing percent-cloud-cover and rainfall data from 278 National Weather Service weather stations in Kansas. Anomalous increases in cloud cover and significant rains developed on the days of these operations, with a persistence effect over several additional days. This was about four times more rain than on the three days immediately before operations commenced. A series of cloud-dissipation trials were also carried out on isolated cumulus clouds, which were photographed in sequence, every minute, with subsequent digital evaluation of cloud areas. After selecting and tracking a cloud with the necessary characteristics over five minutes, a coin-flip decided if the selected cloud

would be in the control group and remain untested, versus the test group affected by aiming the cloudbuster at its core. The results showed an approximate doubling of the speed of cloud-dissipation for the test group of clouds versus the control group ($p < 0.001$).

My professors were pleasantly surprised by the results. But when word of my results spread, those who felt "Reich" and "orgone" besmirched the reputation of the university unethically worked to suppress and block further research on the subject. Nevertheless, my work was formally accepted and the graduate degree program was completed. Subsequent work with the cloudbuster over the next 30 years further verified Reich's claims that his methods could bring rains even under droughty and desert conditions.

For example, a major drought-breaking operation in the southeastern United States in 1986 ended what was an historical drought of most severe conditions, and the South Carolina State Climatology Office was sufficiently impressed to include my paper on the operation in the proceedings of a conference focused upon the drought. Nobody had predicted it would end with the widespread and persisting rains that developed shortly after work with the cloudbuster had begun. This was one of the few cases where I could get my findings published, as I would later discover when a mainstream blackout descended over the subject.



An averaged *Rainfall-Doubling Effect* from Cloudbusting Experiments in Arizona, from five pre-announced dates of operations in 1989. Data aggregated from 424 National Weather Service rain-gauges. "Orops" marks the days of operations.

In 1989, a major experiment to increase rains was undertaken in Arizona with the cloudbuster, on five pre-announced dates with notifications sent to the NOAA weather modification offices. National Weather Service data from 424 rain-gauges in the region of Arizona, Southern Nevada, and South-east California were used for the analysis. An averaged *rainfall-doubling* effect was produced by the experimental work over that same large area. The results were communicated to officials in Washington, D.C., but only silence and "academic dirty-tricks" resulted. A major symposium, entitled "Wilhelm

Reich: A Reappraisal,” which I had organized through the American Association for the Advancement of Science for their annual conference in San Francisco, was undermined by the “skeptics” and censored.

Subsequently, I was subjected to the mud-slinging fury of the professional “skeptical clubs.” They harassed my family and me; we were threatened with burglary and death. And smear-hate mail was sent to the department chairmen in the university where I was employed, and to editors of journals that published my papers. I later learned that NOAA offices had purged their files of all the publications I had sent them that documented the effectiveness of the cloudbuster. Dr. Blasband and several of his associates also suffered similar abuse. Still, I pursued the topic.

My dissertation at the University of Kansas was on a different subject, a global cross-cultural survey of 1,170 different human cultures, with world-maps created of the distribution of social factors positively correlated to warfare and social violence. The findings corroborated Reich’s claims that traumatic and abusive care of infants and children, plus severe sexual repression of young unmarried people, predicted the appearance of sadism and social violence in the adult world. This was another controversy, but it was proven beyond doubt, and those findings were quickly picked up by scholars researching the “origins of violence” question, as well as by women’s groups worldwide. It provided another base of support outside the academy.

By the early 1990s, I had verified several more of Reich’s findings about the orgone accumulator and met various physicians in Europe who openly treated their patients with it, obtaining very good to remarkable results for both injuries and degenerative diseases. Severe burns in particular responded very well to the orgone radiation, which could speed healing and dramatically reduce pain. Pain reduction in cancer patients was also remarkable by all accounts, something which paralleled results from the controlled experiments with cancer mice. Physicians in the U.S. also worked with the orgone accumulator but typically concealed their activities from the FDA and medical licensing agencies.

I wrote *The Orgone Accumulator Handbook*, instructing people on Reich’s history, my experiences, and how to build and self-treat their ailments using the orgone accumulator. I recounted several instances of people experiencing “spontaneous” remissions of cancers and other serious diseases when using the orgone accumulator. Efforts to try and organize more systematic studies in the U.S. were impossible. However, there were two double-blind, controlled studies with the orgone accumulator in Europe, which tested for changes in basic human physiology as originally reported by Reich. Dr. Stefan Müschenich, who led one such effort at the University of Marburg in Germany, showed clear physiological reactions of volunteer subjects to the orgone accumulator, which were not reproduced when they were exposed to an identical looking but non-accumulating dummy-box. Body core temperature, blood pressure, and pulse rate all anomalously changed during the orgone accumulator sessions, which produced a subtle parasympathetic relaxation-reaction in the organism, exactly

as Reich described. No such reactions occurred in the dummy box. Neither the volunteer subjects nor those tasked with acquiring the data knew anything about Reich or the orgone question. While the sample-size was not large, the results were favorable to Reich’s claims and were statistically significant ($p=0.01$). This stimulated another identical trial at the University of Vienna in Austria by Günter Hebenstreit, also with statistically significant results favorable to Reich. These findings were discussed in my *Handbook*, which eventually was translated into eight languages, some by mainstream publishing houses in Europe, but in the U.S., what can only be described as a publishing and academic blackout has persisted on the subject.

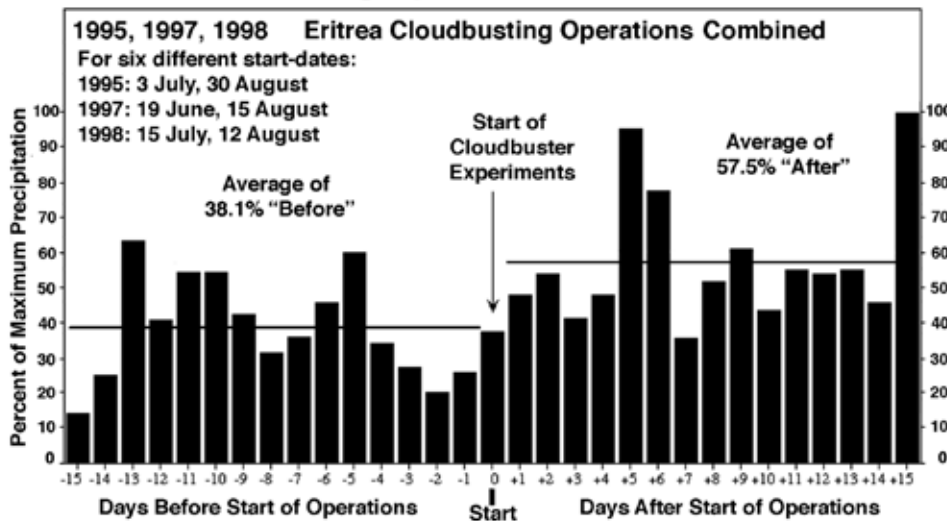
Serious scientists globally have increasingly shown respect for Reich’s work and dismay at the miserable way he was treated. I was gratified to be invited to speak by private physician’s groups and scientific organizations, and even at a few leading universities, generally by the diminishing number of gray-ing “maverick eccentrics” still surviving within the academy. More significantly, however, I was invited to carry out new experiments, working against critical drought situations using Reich’s cloudbusting methods, which were as big a breakthrough in atmospheric science as the orgone accumulator was in medicine and biology.

A severe three-year drought of historical proportions was ended in Israel by a team effort using the cloudbuster. That work, which I organized and directed in 1991-92, was supported by private foundations with logistical support and approvals from the Israeli government. The experiment resulted in widespread and saturating rains that quickly developed across the entire eastern Mediterranean and ending the historical drought with equally historical unprecedented rains. However, the meteorologists dismissed the results as the consequence of Mt. Pinatubo erupting six months earlier on the other side of the planet, so our proposal for a follow-up “Negev Greening Project” went nowhere.



Author James DeMeo standing near the trailer-mounted Cloudbuster Kiremti (Tigrinya word for “good rains”), during field work in Eritrea, Africa. Apparatus is packed-up for transport.

Aggregate Data Analysis for Cloudbusting Operations in Eritrea, Africa



I was subsequently invited to lead a team of scientists into Namibia and later Eritrea, again with private foundation funds and full logistical supports from the respective governments. A 12-year drought pattern in Namibia, with an acute 3-year situation approaching widespread famine conditions for southern Africa, was abruptly reversed by our work with the cloudbuster, with excellent and persisting rains spreading over the region. However, political reactions by the head meteorologists blocked our plans for a more prolonged effort at drylands greening. A pattern developed, where those in charge of weather forecasting or who ran well-financed cloudseeding operations—and who could do nothing about severe drought situations—became irritated by our successful work. But this was not uniformly so.

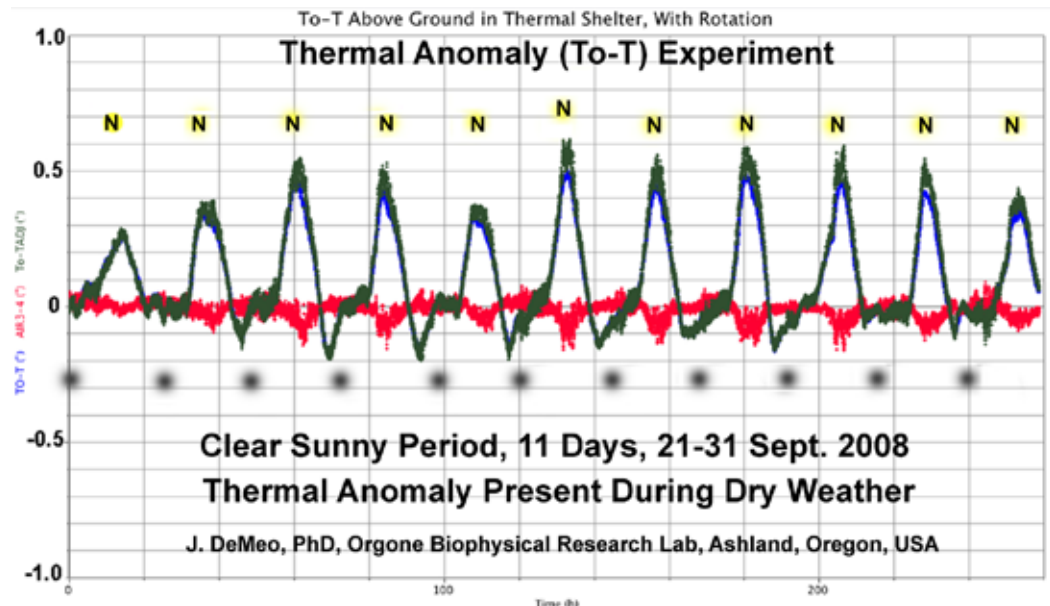
The operations in Eritrea were even more fantastic, nearly “unbelievable” in fact, given how that nation had been suffering under 30 years of chronic below-normal rains before our research team arrived and started working. In that case, however, the first year of results was so dramatic, producing above-normal rains after decades of drought, that officials delightfully agreed to finance a *five-year project*. And so every summer over the following years, I would assemble and lead a team of professionals in Asmara to work against the chronic drought conditions. At the height of our experi-

mental work, which in fact consumed more in expenses than the available funds, we had three cloudbuster devices working in different locations, coordinated by radio communications. Data analysis for the aggregate period showed a ~50% increase in the average daily percent of maximum rainfall, contrasting the quantities which fell over the entire nation before operations to the period after operations commenced ($p < 0.0042$).

Though this did not quite match the rainfall-doubling effect as seen in the Arizona experiments, it also took place in a much more difficult atmospheric situation. Eritrea sits right at the southeastern corner of the Sahara Desert. But of equal or greater significance, the increased rains over the Nile River Basin dramatically increased flows in the Nile River far

downstream, yielding the first-ever filling of Lake Nasser behind the Aswan High Dam. In fact, Lake Nasser not only

Thermal Anomaly Inside the Orgone Energy Accumulator, versus a thermally-balanced control enclosure, over 11 dry sunny days in September 2008. N (with yellow dot) = Solar Noon; Grey dot = midnight. This experiment was undertaken inside a well-ventilated but highly insulated shaded enclosure under a heavy forest canopy. The anomaly peaked at Solar Noon, with minima near midnight, unrelated to the daily temperature maximum and minimum. On overcast rainy days, even with a significant diurnal temperature variation, the anomaly basically vanished. This graphic is representative of similar results obtained by the author over several years of evaluation.

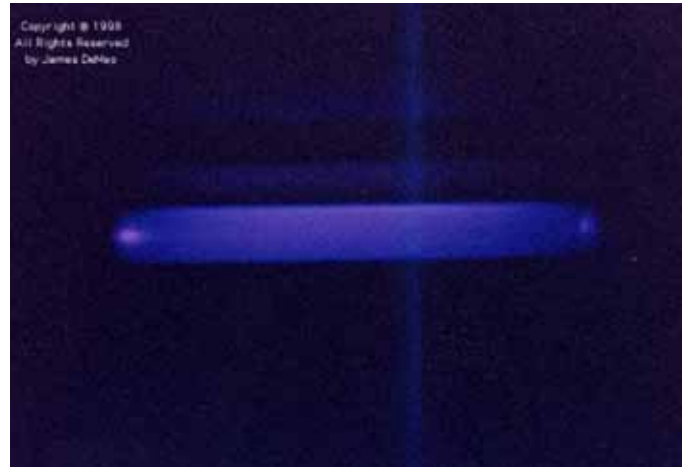


filled but overflowed out into the open Sahara Desert, creating several gigantic new lakes, which are still visible today on Google Earth just northwest of Aswan. But few people know of this work as it could not be published outside of our own in-house journal, in spite of (or because of) the excellent data and documentation. The Eritrea experiments showed that Reich's discovery could even benefit the open Sahara Desert, which is no small feat. Unfortunately, Eritrea and Ethiopia collapsed into open warfare shortly thereafter, forcing my decision to end the project, as our international team was put at risk.

Over the last decade, I have backed away from the difficult fieldwork overseas and mostly settled into laboratory investigations of the orgone energy itself, documenting its existence and physical properties. I've also investigated the old ether-drift experiments, based upon identified similarities between Reich's orgone energy continuum, which fills all space, and the cosmic ether of nineteenth century physics. Dayton Miller's interferometer experiments atop Mt. Wilson in the late 1920s, which were the most significant ever undertaken, actually measured and confirmed a real ether-drift signal. But he did so through identification of its material composition, which could be reflected or blocked by metal plate, in a manner similar to the metal composition of the orgone accumulator. Work by Albert Michelson on Mt. Wilson also confirmed this effect, but both men were defeated by the heavy-handed politics of science, as I reported in detail in several articles, and one invited presentation to a Society for Scientific Exploration conference in 2006. Newer work by Yuri Galaev at the Ukraine Radiophysics Institute has further confirmed the Miller result "down to the details." But again, only a few appear interested.

I also discovered that the cosmic vectors of ether-drift, as determined from experimental results by these scientists, matched exactly Reich's theoretical arguments on the spiral-form motions of orgone energy streams in open space—this lesser-known part of his work is of great importance to both biology and astrophysics, being in harmony with dissenting scientists such as Frank Brown, Giorgio Piccardi, Harold Burr, Hannes Alfvén, Halton Arp, and others whose findings go against the metaphysical theories of relativistic empty-space and big-bang creationism. The same cosmic vectors also match the coordinates as detected by Rita Bernabei of the DAMA project in Italy, who upset mainstream physicists with her discovery of the "dark matter wind," which is both orgone-similar and cosmic-ether-similar.

Reich's discovery of the orgone accumulator thermal anomaly was also recently confirmed in good detail at my laboratory, where the accumulator spontaneously creates a slight interior warmth without any known source other than the postulated orgone energy which penetrates and accumulates within its interior. I employed a very robust and tightly controlled methodology that accounted for all known anticipated thermodynamic influences. The results showed an average of + 0.1°C. temperature increase inside a small sealed orgone accumulator over a thermally-matched control enclosure constructed of identical size, thermal capacity, and resistance. The effect was most pronounced at solar noon when average peak temperatures inside the accumulator were around +0.5°C



Blue-Glow from Orgone-Charged High-Vacuum Tube (VACOR), as excited only by hand-stroking with no electrical excitation. Such soft luminous phenomenon led Reich to postulate a similar orgone energy basis to other blue-glowing phenomena in nature.

higher than inside the control. The peak daytime temperature of about 3-4 p.m. showed no relationship to the experimental results, which were carried out inside a totally shaded enclosure under a heavy tree canopy in the forest, where no sunlight could penetrate. And yet, the little accumulator "knew" when the Sun was at zenith, warming maximally, in spite of how its own metal layers would have reflected any incident infrared influences. It should have been systematically cooler than the control, but wasn't. All effects vanished to zero difference between the accumulator and control during rainy conditions, exactly as Reich noted. This experiment has been reproduced many times by others, though I believe my own protocol was the most ambitious to date. The late Albert Einstein also reproduced this experiment, initially verifying it and calling it a "great bomb" for physics, but he quickly recanted, proclaiming the result to be the consequence of certain "table-top" thermal parameters, which Reich argued against and in any case were not at issue in my experiment.

Other experimental verifications of Reich's long list of orgone accumulator anomalies are worthy of mention, such as the blue glowing quality of orgone phenomenon, which I have confirmed as an emission inside special high-vacuum tubes charged up inside orgone energy accumulators. They will illuminate with simple hand stroking, without high-voltage electricity as is otherwise necessary. I've also confirmed Reich's claim about increased counts inside special Geiger-Müller tubes charged up for long periods inside an orgone energy accumulator. At my lab, we record rather constant 100-500 cpm from an orgone charged neutron counter, which normally yields less than 5 cpm. Under certain conditions, it will race upwards to 4000 cpm, which cannot be "neutrons" as classically understood.

It is easy to be a reflexive skeptic of Reich's work. The authentic experimental work is fantastic enough. Reich knew this and called it the "too much" factor, which caused some people to turn away without bothering to investigate. On top

of that are the malicious “skeptics” who have the ear of mainstream journalists and whose criticisms of Reich often elevate their standing in the scientific community. They fill the media with every kind of false and malicious claim about Reich’s biography and science. And any internet search on his name or terms also produces the most stunning array of mystically exaggerated claims and gadgets from lay enthusiasts and eBay hawkers, making quite a mess of it all.

Nevertheless, my own experiments and those of many others, too numerous to mention here, have validated the facts and truth of Reich’s science, which is reproducible and has been verified many times on the major details. And all within the best traditions of the natural sciences.

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