

ABOUT REICH AND RADIX: A MEMOIR¹

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Parts One and Two

Part One

When David Barstow, the Editor of *Pilgrimage*, first suggested that I do this article, he asked me to write, not about the concepts and techniques of Radix, the system that I have developed, but rather to describe the way in which I arrived at my views and way of working. What was the process - A fragment of the personal journey? He felt *what* I believed would be secondary to *how* I came to believe it. I could refer readers who wished more information about the concepts and techniques involved in Radix work to my previous writings.

I was too busy at the time to do the article, but the suggested approach intrigued me and started a process of thought. My teacher, Wilhelm Reich, was a psychoanalyst and student of Freud. His work departed from the work of Freud because instead of focusing on the content, the meaning, the history of the associations of his patients, Reich began to pay special attention to the expression; not to *what* the patient was saying but *how* he was saying it. This inevitably brought him from dealing with the history, the background and interpretation of the material into what was happening here and now. Reich noted the process going on, what the body was doing, the breathing, how the patient held himself, what he did with his eyes. This led him to his first major discovery, the *muscular armor*, those chronic patterns of body tension through which feelings are blocked. Observing the muscular armor then carried him on to the second major finding in his life, the discovery of the life force which Reich came to call *orgone energy*.

Reich's concept of the life force differed from the life force concept of predecessors because of the way he observed it and tied it to real natural processes. Reich went from Freud's *libido* and the energy of the instincts to the pulsation of the body, charge and discharge, emotion and the action of the muscular armor in blocked emotion.

He saw all of these as natural processes expressing the life force. Reich's life force was real, natural, of the body and so of nature and not of a spiritual world. The Reichian life force lacked the mystical and religious element with which many life force concepts have been associated. And again this was due to the fact that Reich's focus was always on process rather than content, on expression rather than meaning, on what was going on in body and mind at the present moment of time rather than what went on in the past. Reich, like David Barstow, asked not why, but how, not the meaning but the process.

I didn't believe in the existence of a life force that autumn in 1950 when I met Wilhelm Reich. I did believe in the muscular armor; that was true to my experience of my own body. As a university student I had read Reich's books avidly. I was trained as a psychologist with a special interest in vision. During World War II I gained some "hard science" background in meteorology. The life force, even as Reich presented it, seemed too "far out" as a concept for me. Yet at *Orgonon*, as Reich called his property, in his observatory on top of that hill in the remote

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Rangely Lake region of Maine, Reich could speak to me of nothing but orgone energy and his work with the life force. He learned with interest that I had been a weather forecaster during World War II, and he brought me outside to show me his weather control apparatus. The apparatus was a kind of directional antenna consisting of several parallel metal tubes 12 or 15 feet long, leading through hollow flexible tubing down to a lake. *"This is my most important invention,"* Reich told me in September 1950, the occasion of our first meeting. With that he unsheathed his apparatus and pointed the tubes at a small group of cumulus clouds about three or four miles distant. After less than five minutes he sheathed the apparatus again and put it away. I watched the clouds the tubes had been pointed to. They seemed to be expanding. Reich said, *"I've withdrawn the orgone energy from them; now they will dissipate."* I watched, fascinated, as the clouds lost their clear boundaries, disintegrated, evaporated into the air and disappeared from the sky. It was hard to believe my own eyes. Reich said, *"We can destroy clouds in the same way that we eliminate symptoms in orgone therapy. We withdraw the orgone energy from the symptom and the symptom disappears. That's just what I've done with those clouds. I've withdrawn their orgone energy and so the clouds have disappeared. It's very simple."*

I was astonished by Reich's demonstration, and still unbelieving. One short demonstration could not convince me of something so foreign to the way of thinking that I had developed in my years of scientific training and practice. I had to build and experiment with my own version of Reich's apparatus, to use it over several years of time before my beliefs changed. I have written about my own weather experiments elsewhere (Kelley, 1961). Here I want to focus on how I was introduced to the life force concept and how I came to believe it myself.

The early fifties were a time of ferment in the Reichian movement. Reich was under heavy and continuing attack from the Food and Drug Administration of the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The orgonomists (who were all medical doctors trained by Reich) and some of their patients were being harassed by government agents asking them questions about orgone accumulators and the treatment of cancer. The orgone accumulator was the metal-lined box that patients were sometimes asked to sit in by their orgonomists to increase the orgone energy charge of their bodies. The use of the accumulator seemed to be the focus of the government's interest in Reich's work.

Though Reich lived and worked now on his property near Rangely, Maine, the center of the Reichian movement was still New York. It was in New York where most of the doctors that Reich had trained had their practices, and so it was there that most of us who were involved in Reichian therapy lived, took therapy, met with each other and talked about Reich's work. We were a small group, thought kooky by most of our friends. The firm of applied scientists for which I worked considered my interest in Reich to be my particular eccentricity. Because I was bright and good at my job my colleagues tolerated my eccentricity, but certainly didn't take it seriously.

Small groups of Reichians, many of us living in Greenwich Village, met and talked, shared experiences and supported each other in a world generally hostile to the beliefs that we had adopted in whole or in part. Almost all of us believed in Reich, his techniques of therapy, and the muscular armor. Some of us, myself included, had problems with the concept of the life force, but were interested, were considering it. We talked about it at length.

When I say *we*, I don't mean an organized group. There were informal groups of people drawn together by the commonality of interest in Reich's work. They were small groups at that. There were perhaps a dozen orgonomists active at the time, fifteen at most. Reich no longer practiced therapy himself. The Reichians I knew in Greenwich Village were in therapy with one or other of the orgonomists. The orgonomists were not themselves part of any group I took part in. It

was a creative intellectual group of people that I knew best. A central figure was Adam Margoshes, a columnist for the radical new Village newspaper, the *Village Voice*. Adam later worked as a psychology professor. He was in therapy first with Elsworth Baker and then with Michael Silvert, one of the doctors most heavily involved with the tragedy of Reich's final years. Adam, together with his wife Virginia, ran a bookstore, the Phoenix, on Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village. One summer I took over and operated the bookshop while he and Virginia took a vacation in San Francisco. Adam was one of the most brilliant men I have known. We would often play monopoly and talk all night at the Margoshes' flat on MacDougall Street. In addition to Adam and Virginia there might be Barbara Goldenberg, who is now Dr. Barbara Koopman, psychiatrist, orgonomist, Associate Editor of the *Journal of Orgonomy* (Barbara is now a colleague of Elsworth Baker, best known of the orgonomists); Peter Frank, a mathematician and life-long personal friend, one of the original trustees of the Radix Institute; and Eileen Walkenstein, a young physician training to be a psychiatrist, who aspired to become an orgonomist and who also was in therapy with Dr. Baker. There were others, some not as deeply involved in Reich's work, of course.

Adam and Virginia, Barbara and Eileen all had orgone accumulators in their Greenwich Village apartments. We talked a lot about these accumulators. Did we really believe that orgone energy was accumulated inside them? What was it that they did to the atmosphere of a place? Rooms got heavy and unpleasant with doors and windows closed when there was an orgone accumulator inside. A person felt strange if he sat in an accumulator for long. What was it that went on? Was it a life force?

The others were interested in my experiments with Reich's weather control apparatus. I went sometimes to the country to a lake in the Berkshires where I could use the apparatus, pointing it at cumulus clouds and observing the results. Yes it worked, I had to admit. The clouds I pointed the tubes at disappeared while others observed as controls did not. I didn't understand it, but I was trying to understand. Talking all night with a sympathetic interested intelligent group of people was a good way to develop and refine my understanding, establish what I believed and what I remained skeptical of. There was no doubt that there was something to Reich's concept of orgone energy. But what was the "something," the reality that Reich had glimpsed "through a glass, darkly" that the rest of us were striving to see for ourselves?

Reich's journal, the *Orgone Energy Bulletin*, which came out four times a year, had Reich's latest work in it, and contributed to our search for understanding. The work was much broader scientifically than I had dreamed when I became involved in 1950. Reich was dealing, not just with a new technique of psychotherapy, not just with muscular armor, not just a way of working that finally brought mind and body together and established a bodily basis for work with the feelings. He was dealing with something much broader, so fundamental it reached the very root of existence. Yet it was difficult to conceptualize and grasp with clarity. Reich was dealing, in fact, with the creative process in nature; this was the conclusion that I was gradually forming.

How, then, did I come to believe in the existence of a life force? The process was gradual and many factors led to it. It was not merely that I experimented successfully with Reich's apparatus and that I felt the effects of orgone accumulators when I used them. My own Reichian therapy contributed much to the gradual development and change in my system of beliefs in the fifties. It was like no psychotherapy I had ever experienced and I had tried traditional therapies. I had always been a person who remembered a great deal of my childhood. I could talk about it in therapy indefinitely. I would remember, intellectualize, report early experiences, some of them traumatic, but talking about them left me strangely unmoved emotionally. I never cried, I never

felt any deep feelings in talking about my experience. In Reichian work instead of talking I lay nude on a couch. Dr. William Thorburn, who was my Reichian therapist for many years, worked with my body and with my breathing with very few carefully chosen words. Gradually, patterns of muscular tension holding in my body released and then the emotions began to pour out. For example, after two years' work with Dr. Thorburn, I cried deeply for the first time since the age of nine, twenty years before. And as my armor softened I was becoming freer and more open emotionally. These deep-seated changes confirmed like nothing else could have my confidence in Reich's approach in his fundamental concepts. I became able to experience in my body the activities and processes expressing my own life force.

Gradually my belief system became reorganized about the concept of the life force. Conceptually it was Reich's writing that played the central role. The most influential single book was *ETHER, GOD AND DEVIL* (Reich, 1949). It came out first as a volume of the *Annals of the Orgone Institute*, one of the publications burned by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare in their action against Reich. It is the most influential single book in my whole scientific development. Interestingly enough, in *ETHER, GOD AND DEVIL*, Reich endeavors to talk, not about the content of his beliefs, but the process, not *what* he believed as much as *how* he came to believe as he did. He endeavors to "take us into his workshop," and show us how his discoveries came about rather than what the discoveries are. Reich's descriptions of his experience corresponded so well to my own when I dealt with the same things that I became more and more confident of his essential correctness.

In *ETHER, GOD AND DEVIL*, Reich describes how human knowledge is dominated by two primary unconscious intellectual forces: *mechanism*, which underlies most of science and technology, and *mysticism*, which underlies most religion and spiritual philosophy. Mechanism objectifies nature, striving to reduce everything to chemistry and physics. Mysticism subjectivises nature, striving to establish a primary reality of spirit. Mechanism treats men as machines and mysticism focuses on disembodied personalities. We are thus given a choice between a world of zombies without conscious control over what they do, or a world of spooks where what matters is the soul which is supposed to survive bodily death. These two mutually supporting intellectual tendencies arise from the character, the pattern of muscular armor in millions of human beings. From them have come the belief systems that have dominated the history of the human race. Together they have kept the human race from looking at the reality of the life force, the connecting link between mind and body which forms the basis of a unified view. I became able to understand mechanism and mysticism as a result of reading *ETHER, GOD AND DEVIL* (see Kelley, 1975).

Reich's Death

When I read the injunction obtained by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration against Reich, it struck me like a thunderbolt. I couldn't believe my own eyes. Reich had told us he didn't care if they enjoined the use of orgone accumulators; it was mankind's loss if they did, but there was nothing he could do about it. The complaint for injunction by the FDA questioned the existence, nature and properties of the life force. Such questions, Reich said, could never be decided in a court of law and one would be foolish to try. He refused to appear in court in response to the Food and Drug Administration's complaint against him and they obtained this unbelievable injunction.

The injunction wasn't only or even primarily an attack on orgone accumulators, although that was the excuse and the form of the complaint. The injunction ordered Reich's scientific

publications burned and banned. There were only two or three hundred orgone accumulators in existence, and they had very little significance to people other than those who used them therapeutically. The tens of thousands of Reichian publications were something else. Those of us involved in Reich's work considered them the most important publications in the world.

ETHER, GOD AND DEVIL as it appeared in the *Annals of the Orgone Institute* was ordered burned. *The Orgone Energy Bulletin*, with Reich's important recent work on weather control, was ordered burned. The *Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research*, Reich's first American journal, was probably the most awkwardly titled journal in American psychology, but it was full of excellent material, all of which was to be burned. Dozens of issues, tens of thousands of copies, were to be destroyed. Reich's ten hard cover books weren't ordered burned but were banned until references to orgone energy were deleted from them. Any reference to the existence of orgone energy was forbidden.

Many of the books and publications enjoined never once mentioned the orgone accumulator. Reich's books dealt with the discovery, the nature and the properties of the life force, which Reich called "orgone energy." To say that these books could only be used if all references to the existence of orgone energy were deleted made my hair stand on end. At that time I was so astounded, so indignant, so enraged, I was speechless.

A scene from the summer before up at Reich's observatory in Orgonon came back to me. Reich had looked at me with deep concern. We had been talking about the Food and Drug Administration's impending attack. I knew very little about what was going on although I had read the vicious article attacking Reich in the *New Republic*, (Brady, 1947) and I knew that the Food and Drug Administration had been investigating Reich since the article appeared. Reich said to me, "*Can't you make them stop? Can't you make them leave me alone?*" I didn't know what they were doing, much less how to make them stop. The consequence of what they were doing was this injunction in my hands. Reich had asked for my help. I had not helped. How could I help now?

I went to Washington. I walked the halls of government bureaus. I spoke to the highest officials of the Food and Drug Administration. I discovered to my absolute horror that these officials knew exactly what they were doing in burning Reich's writings. They were doing it consciously and deliberately. I thought bookburners were hideous people out of despotic nations and ugly old chapters of history. Here I met them face-to-face, and they were ordinary Washington bureaucrats, no different from a million others in the same city.

Reich's small group of followers was galvanized into action. Letters were written. A letter went out to all Senators and members of Congress, and to other politicians. Scientific organizations were contacted as were civil liberties groups. Nobody really cared aside from the handful of devoted followers.

Reich didn't believe the injunction. "*In America they don't burn books,*" he told us. Reich had acquired a faith in American government. After his misfortunes in Europe at the hands of the fascist, communist and socialist organizations and the different climate he found in this country he had developed a naive faith in America and the American system.

Images from the years that followed come back. A large truck pulls up to the office of the Orgone Institute Press in New York City. Box after box of Reich's publications are put on the truck, 6 tons according to Greenfield (1974). All copies of the *Journal of Sex Economy, Annals of the Orgone Institute, Orgone Energy Bulletin, Core*, monographs and other publications are loaded on the trucks under the supervision of Federal Agents. The truck is driven down to lower

Manhattan to the Gansavoort incinerator where, under the Agent's watchful eyes, the boxes are thrown into the incinerator and burned.

I have a personal curiosity. How many copies of the issue of the *Orgone Energy Bulletin* that contains my article, "Causality and Freedom" go up in smoke? How many of the issues of *Core* containing the article I wrote on weather control? I feel a bitter pride in having my own work burned by the United States Government because Reich published it alongside his own.

I see an earlier scene, when Reich was arrested for contempt of court for failing to carry out the injunction, brought to criminal court to trial. He was supposed to carry out the provisions of the injunction. To ask that man to burn his life work, his publications, was like asking him to kill his own son.

Eventually it was done anyway and because he hadn't cooperated Reich faced a federal judge, charged with contempt of court. The only issue the judge would consider was had he or had he not obeyed the injunction. What the injunction required of him didn't matter. So Reich stood before the judge and was sentenced to two years in Federal prison for failing to burn his own writings. His conviction was appealed to every court, finally to the Supreme Court of the United States. The conviction stood; book burning in the U.S.A. was upheld!

Reich had said that going to prison would mean his death. He was right. Reich was imprisoned in March, 1957. He was found dead in his cell in Lewisberg Federal Penitentiary on the morning of November 3, 1957.

Those were for me years of heartbreak, defeat, and bitterness. I remember the publications and public statements from the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association who cooperated in the persecution of Reich by the Food and Drug Administration and applauded the outcome of their efforts. They were evidently pleased and proud to be accessories to the burning of Reich's writings and his imprisonment. I remember my futile appeals to organization after organization before, during and after the event. I asked the American Association for the Advancement of Science, America's major organization of professional scientists, to investigate the government's burning of scientific writings on behalf of their members. They could not spare the effort. As a member of the organization, I wrote an article myself and submitted it for publication in their journal, *Science*. They could not spare the pages for it. I published the article myself (Kelley, 1961b) and asked that they review it in *Science*. They refused. As token to my diligent efforts, they printed a reference listing my article, buried in a bibliography. I received one inquiry from the listing. Like the bureaucrats and politicians of Washington and the official representatives of organized medicine and psychiatry, America's major scientific organization was not interested in the burning of Reich's scientific writings. And it certainly had no concern about the imprisonment of the scientist who wrote them, convicted of the heinous crime of refusing to cooperate in the incineration of his work.

I have no doubt that if Reich had been a recognized, orthodox, establishment physician and scientist instead of a lonely pioneer, the APA, AMA and AAAS would have rushed to his defense against even a mild threat to suppress his work. But recognized orthodox establishment types rarely require such defense. It is the lonely, unorthodox pioneer who so often needs and so seldom receives such protection.

So Reich's writings were burned, Reich imprisoned, and his dead body carried from his cell in Lewisberg Penitentiary. The bureaucrats of the FDA triumphed. The great majority of the scientific writings that went into the Gansavoort incinerator have never been republished, although they include the last and most important of Reich's published work, and the few available copies

are valued like rare jewels. I felt utterly crushed, impotent. Reich had asked for my help and I had tried, I had tried hard, for a long time in every way I could think of. The defeat was so painful it sometimes felt like more than I could bear.

Moving On

The future will have to decide whether or not Wilhelm Reich was the greatest psychologist in history and the most important scientist of his time. Certainly he was these things to me at the time of his death. But now he was dead and there was absolutely no one to take his place. He did not seem to have a single colleague of real stature. He had written bitterly about the eagle who kept hatching eggs, thinking he would raise a small eagle, but discovering time after time that the eggs only produced little chickens that grew up into clucking hens. There was no individual and no organization to carry forward his work.

I had never seen myself as a person to carry on Reich's work, important as it was. I was a junior person in the Reichian movement, neither a "true believer" or leader of others, but a student by nature. My problem was to find my own work, to discover how to do that work within the framework of belief that had been so changed as a consequence of my experience with Wilhelm Reich. It had been seven years since the fall I met Wilhelm Reich. Through him my belief system had been turned upside down. It would take me another seven years to establish my own identity.

At the time Reich died I was doing experiments with his weather control apparatus. In the following year, 1958, I bought a piece of property in Connecticut in the country by a stream. It was to serve as a home for my family and as a laboratory for continuing my experiments. I knew that Reich's apparatus was powerful and dangerous in ways that I only partly understood. I knew also that having a stream flow through the property would help protect against the dangerous, stagnant concentrations of the life force which Reich had called *dor*, which so plagued his experiments in Maine, contaminating the area, making animals and people deathly ill. I felt I had enough understanding of *dor* that I would be able to deal with it in my own work. I was wrong.

The atmosphere in and around the house and the garage of my Connecticut property grew increasingly heavy, strange and oppressive with my experiments. Our pets became ill and lost their hair. My wife and our infant daughter suffered poorer and poorer health. I was away much of the time with my job, and so exposed less, but I was also affected. After hours of work with the weather apparatus I would be overcharged and unable to sleep. There was a feeling of headache, a vague nausea and a kind of swollen tightness. Then my heart began to pound. Medical examinations could find nothing wrong with any of us. Our symptoms corresponded to Reich's descriptions of "dor sickness."

The trees of the property began to be affected. They turned black and died from the top down in a way that exactly repeated what had happened at Reich's property in Maine. The cause, Reich had said, was *dor*. A few months later rocks in the foundation wall in the cellar of our house began to turn black, again repeating a pattern of the effects of *dor* that happened to Reich in Maine and had been described by Reich in his scientific publications.

At the same time, weather control experiments with Reich's apparatus had given me resoundingly positive results. I had succeeded in producing unpredicted rain in five out of five controlled experimental attempts. The evidential value of the experiments I had done seemed to me to be great and I wished to communicate my work to others. There was no medium for communication among Reichians. There were no conferences, no publications, no scientific

journals, not even a newsletter, nothing. When I suggested we organize such meetings I was met with resistance, jealousy, antagonism. I decided, quite reluctantly, to form my own organization.

The Radix Institute was founded in Connecticut in 1960 as the Interscience Research Institute. Several years later the name was changed to Radix. The Institute's first publication was A NEW METHOD OF WEATHER CONTROL (Kelley, 1961a). In it, I described my weather experiments and the effects of the overcharged "dor" condition at the property in Connecticut including the sickness of my family, the dying of the trees, the blackening of the rocks. I launched a scientific journal that same year which I named *The Creative Process*. I had come to conceptualize the life force as the creative process in nature. I meant the term "creative" literally. I still consider my field of study to be that process by means of which the physical world and psychological experience come into being, i.e., are created in the most literal sense.

I wasn't aware of it at the time but in those years I hadn't achieved my intellectual independence from Reich. I wrote as a Reichian within the framework of his ideas. While I was struggling to develop my own ideas, my struggle had not yet succeeded. Looking back with the advantage of more than twenty years of perspective on the issue, I can see that my real independence from Reich came only as I came to differ from him in significant respects, when my own concepts solidified in their departure from his. The most important single step in my independence came when I made the decision to abandon most of Reich's terminology and to develop and employ terminology of my own.

New terminology for the life force and its expressions freed my thought process in a way I had never expected for I had quit using Reich's terminology for another reason. I had been subject to unremitting petty backbiting and jealousy from many of Reich's disciples including those who considered themselves his official representatives. A primary motive in changing the terminology I used in my work was to disassociate myself from these people (see Kelley, 1965). I found that the use of new terms let me rethink basic questions about the life force and to clarify and consolidate my concept of it apart from Reich's. This marked the end of my years as a student of Reich and the beginning of the work I have done in the years since through the Radix Institute. The properties I ascribe to the radix are different in certain important respects from the properties Reich ascribed to orgone energy, while in other important respects I agree with Reich entirely. *Orgone energy* and *radix* are distinct but similar life force concepts, the first being the predecessor and starting point in the development of the second.

The problems and difficulties, the upheavals in my life in the early 1960's contributed to my finding myself and my own way of thinking and believing. I had not recovered from the defeat at the hands of the FDA. A twelve-year marriage that had produced two children was coming to an end. I ate and drank too much and did not get enough exercise, so became fifteen or twenty pounds overweight. I had become disillusioned with orgonomy, which had become a cult after Reich's death. I left the East Coast where I had moved to become involved in the Reichian movement in 1950, and returned to California. I had grown up in California and considered it to be my home. I had lost all respect for Washington politicians and bureaucrats and for the medical and scientific establishment as a result of the experience of Reich's persecution and death. My political views were undergoing a radical change away from Welfare State collectivism. The Institute I had formed for my work on the life force was not making it. Only my hard earned money and personal administration, research and writing kept it alive at all. The Institute's scientific journal, *The Creative Process*, for which I had such hopes, never had more than two hundred subscribers. It cost me hundreds of dollars to publish each issue.

I had been successful in the job I held as a research psychologist, but the work did not satisfy me. I was the Chief Scientist and Director of a small research laboratory in the West Coast office of the applied science firm that had hired me originally when I went to New York. The work was enjoyable and well paid. It gave me the status and the privileges of the successful scientist. Yet the work itself lacked significance, at least to me. It made little real difference whether it was done or not. It was like doing puzzles and games, enjoyable but for the most part not truly important. All that I had learned from Reich and since the time of Reich were important, but I had been unable to put them together in a way that would let me earn a living through my Institute. I had wanted to use the weather control research and the work that I had done with Reich's physical concepts to gain research funding. I felt that my weather control report would bring in federal research funds, but my grant proposal was denied even though the amount I had asked for was absurdly small. Congress had allocated \$120,000,000 for weather control research and I had asked for \$14,000 to test Reich's apparatus. It was a good proposal. I was skilled in writing and presenting proposals. Still I was turned down.

My life seemed in a shambles personally and professionally. In 1965 I began to make the painful decisions necessary to get my life on track. I divorced my wife, suspended publication of *The Creative Process*, quit overeating and drinking, and formulated a rigorous program of diet and exercise to improve my health. I finished writing a book on applied psychology that had been dragging on for three or four years.

Intellectually I had become excited over the work of Ayn Rand. I met Nathaniel Branden, who became a personal friend. His philosophy and political ideas (he was a student and colleague of Rand) contributed to the development process that I was undergoing. I formed a relationship with my present wife Erica, the most important and satisfying personal relationship of my life. I began plans to launch a new career as a practitioner of my own form of Reichian work, giving up dreams of doing research on the creative process as a means of livelihood.

In 1966, while re-reading the book *THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ATTENTION* by T. A. Ribot, I suddenly realized that the muscular tensions underlying voluntary attention that were described by Ribot in the 1890's were, in fact, Reich's muscular armor. The function of the muscular tensions as described by Ribot, however, was not the blocking of feeling but the support of voluntary attention and voluntary movement, i.e., the human will. The link between the muscular armor and the will was a connection that I had been seeking for years. I had published repeatedly on the problem of the origin and function of the muscular armor in *The Creative Process*, but had never found the crucial link. Now I had discovered it. It was the most exciting and important intellectual discovery that I had made. But *The Creative Process* was defunct, and it would be another four years before I ventured again into publishing.

Still the insights came. Quite suddenly a whole host of perplexing and important scientific problems in psychology became clear. Why was it that man alone of all the animals had developed a muscular armor? Because man alone developed a will, and the armor was the mechanism of the will. What was the function of the muscular armor? To block and channel the flow of the life force as required for voluntary attention and voluntary activity, which is the way the will operates. Why was the muscular armor, the mechanism of the will, so terribly destructive, so damaging to health and to rationality? Because it was new (in an evolutionary sense) and partial and imperfect in its development. When an important and new evolutionary step is made, there often must be a long difficult period of adaptation when the old is being relinquished and the new is not yet perfected. Why was it that many of those individuals that I could see were highly armored were also people I considered interesting, attractive, admirable in their character structure, when Reichian theory

would predict the opposite? It was because these people had a high degree of will power, and often exhibited an unusual degree of self-discipline and ability to do difficult things, to control the direction of their lives. Ayn Rand was an admirer and champion of armored human beings.

The discovery of the nature and origin of the muscular armor was a major advance over the views of Reich. Reich had never understood the origin of the armor although he made it a subject of study for many years of his life. When I read Ribot's little book I was sitting in my apartment in Santa Monica, California. The connection between the muscular armor and voluntary attention suddenly came to me. I literally felt like running through the streets shouting "*Eureka!*" It was the first important independent discovery I had made as a scientist dealing with the life force. I first published the discovery in 1970. The significance and ramifications of the finding are developed much more fully in *The Radix Journal*, 1980.

With the discovery of the origin and function of the muscular armor I established myself as an independent scientist studying the nature and properties of the life force. True, others did not understand the significance of my discovery. That I felt would come in time. Of much more practical import to me was that I had not established myself as a practitioner and so as yet had developed no means of livelihood that made use of my growing knowledge of the life force. In 1966 this gained a high priority in my life. I began working out the kind of practice I would create and how I would offer it. I knew that it would deal with the muscular armor and would resemble Reichian therapy but differ in fundamental ways just as my life force concept differed from that of Reich's. I made four decisions about the practice I would offer:

1. *Educational Model*. I would work as an educator, not as a therapist, since the muscular armor was not a sickness but reflected an evolutionary development in progress.
2. *Vision*. The armoring of the eyes would be my starting point, and work with vision would be central to my practice as it had been throughout my education and professional life.
3. *Group Work*. I would work at least in part in groups.
4. *Purpose*. The human will and its relation to the armor meant that the development and use of the will would play a role in the practice. I would call this aspect of my practice *purpose* work.

These four decisions expressed the nature of the practice I wished to found. It was the start of Radix work as we do it today.

Part Two

The Educational Model

Reich's work demonstrated that a multitude of problems of the human species can be traced to the muscular armor. This included severe disorders of function and serious physical diseases, from heart disease to cancer. It was natural enough that Reich, a physician, considered the armor itself to be a sickness. In the Reichian view the muscular armor was an endemic, virtually universal pathology. It predisposed its victims to other secondary diseases and disorders of function. This point of view shaped the Reichian movement.

As a matter of fact, a similar point of view affects psychotherapy generally, and for the same reasons. I want to focus here, however, on the effect of this medical model of the armor and problems stemming from the armor on the Reichian movement and on my own development.

There were several important corollaries to the medical view that muscular armor was an almost universal disease of the human race. For one, the professionals dealing with the armor had to be physicians, for only physicians were qualified to deal with curing the sick. This led Reich and Elsworth Baker, whom Reich appointed to do training, to cease training non-medical practitioners of Reichian therapy. Reich's work was christened "medical orgone therapy" at this time. Previously Reich called his work "vegetotherapy." (The term is less awkward in German, Reich's language at the time he founded vegetotherapy.) There were lay therapists trained to do vegetotherapy. Then the medical model was reemphasized with the change in name and abolition of all lay practice. Those of us in therapy were reminded of our "sick person" status, and the authority of the organomist physician, who understood and was engaged by us to treat our illness.

Beyond this, dealing with the armor as a sickness affected every aspect of the work done. This included the characterology employed, the objectives of the work, and the attitudes and expectations important to those of us taking it.

Consider characterology. Reich's characterology was an adaptation of Freud's and, as with Freud, the character types served as diagnostic categories of illness. Some illnesses are more serious than others, but all are undesirable. Thus some character types were worse to belong to than others, but all were pejorative. No-one wanted to be an oral or an anal character type. To be a phallic type was a little better, but that was also sick. Of course, all types were sick, and all of us had to have some kind of illness; the model required it to explain why we needed therapy. And so we accepted that we were ill. "Neurotic" was the most general catchall label for our sickness. The various types or subcategories of neurosis or psychiatric classification defined our particular illness category. Reich had introduced modifications in these categories that adapted them better to his theories, but the principle of their use was the same. I didn't understand at the time that mythical illness categories had been created to fit the medical model and justify the treatment. What Reich did was done generally in the field of psychotherapy, and I took it for granted.

And just as the medical model required that mythical illnesses be created for us to be cured of, it required that a mythical state of wellness be defined which served as a goal of the treatment. In the Reichian movement this state of wellness, and those ex-patients believed to have achieved it, occupied a special place. The *well* person in Reichian theory was the "genital character" who was supposed to have been stripped of armor and rendered orgasmically potent as a result of successful Reichian therapy. I have written about the effect of this belief on Reichian movement in another context, and can do no better than to quote my earlier article here:

In 1950 I arrived in New York to enter Reichian therapy and to study Reich's work. I found the Reichian movement to be structured hierarchically around Reich's "genital character" concept. At the pinnacle was Reich, viewed almost as a God. His close associates and the therapists trained by him served as angels, for they were surely genital characters, freed of armor and neurosis by Reich himself. Those who had completed therapy successfully also had angel status, but somehow we saw very few of these. However, there were therapists in training and advanced students, -- apprentice angels, and below them the mass of novitiates, patients like myself, the bottom of the hierarchy, although its financial base. -- We were surely a cut above the balance of armored humanity, because we had seen the light, and had taken the necessary steps to put ourselves on the path toward an unarmored genital character structure.

And this hierarchy based on the mystique of the genital character persists to this day in the orthodox Reichian movement, predominantly among those who call themselves "medical orgone therapists" and their patients. Only a few of Reich's therapists have had the courage to correct Reich's concept of the "genital character."

It is time that this be said in print. Reich's concept of the unarmored genital character is a fiction, based on an unwarranted extrapolation of trends and tendencies he saw in his patients. Reich was not an unarmored genital character, nor are the doctors he trained, nor are patients concluding their Reichian therapy. There are no genital characters, not in the real world. The concept of the unarmored genital character has exactly the same kind of reality as the Scientology "clear," or Janov's "Post-Primal" who is completely devoid of defenses. It is time that these notions be recognized for what they are, mystical fictions. (Kelley, 1972)

And finally:

Because of the medical model they have adopted, psychiatrists and psychologists like Reich and Janov have been forced to think in terms of unreal diseases and unreal cures. Thus we have the paradox of doctors who are not "well" by their own criteria endeavoring to "cure" "patients," who are not genuinely sick. The super-well state of the "genital character" or "post-primal" has been invented to fit the medical model, to make it appear that a cure is really accomplished. The "cured" individual, the genital character or post-primal, is nothing more than the fictional outcome of the process of "therapy" applied to people who are not genuinely sick in the first place. (*Ibid.*)

The same publication goes on to state:

What is the problem here? Neo-Reichian techniques of deep emotional release, whether applied by Reich or Janov or others, are enormously powerful. When used in a directed way, they can and do bring about profound changes in personality and the body, and character and physique. Reich's statement that the "whole being changes" is not an exaggeration; it happens, -- not always, but often. I have seen it again and again. The voice drops, the body structure changes, the person becomes more open and expressive emotionally. What does *not* happen is that he becomes unarmored, free of his defenses, "cured." He does not change into some new and different kind of human being that is "real" and "well" or a "genital character" instead of "unreal" and "neurotic" or armored. To allege that he does only establishes an unreal hope for the newcomer that must bring eventual disillusionment or worse, self-deception. Pity most those unfortunates who wear the mantle of "genital character" or "post-primal" or "clear," and are thus forced to pretend, over the years of their lives, to a nonexistent state of being, superior to that of ordinary humans. (*Ibid.*)

Though I had been drawn into Reich's belief system and his use of the medical model, I was able to free myself of it after I ceased using Reichian terminology, and particularly after I discovered the nature and origin of the armor. Since the armor was not a sickness, I understood that my work to change it would not be therapy.

In retrospect I realize that there were other influences that helped me to free myself from the medical model in the practice I was developing. I came into psychology as a result of reading Carl Rogers while in the Army near the end of World War II. His use of the term "client" instead of "patient" and his deep respect for the autonomy and growth potential of his clients was away from the medical and toward a growth or educational model of his work. Twenty years later

Thomas Szasz helped me clarify the medical psychiatric model intellectually. (Szasz, 1961)
Perhaps the most important outside influence of all, however, was from a lady named Margaret Darst Corbett, who in 1946 and 1947 taught me about vision, its disturbances and their amelioration.

Mrs. Corbett was responsible for my recovery from severely defective eyesight through an approach that was consistently educational rather than therapeutic. She described herself as a teacher of eye education. Those coming to her were her students, -- not patients or even clients. Her organization for training others to do the work was a school of education, in which she trained teachers. I trained with her and became one of her teachers before I embarked on my research career, and before I heard of Reich. When I created my own practice two decades later, it was Mrs. Corbett's educational approach that I adopted.

Vision¹.

Aside from Reich himself, no one has influenced my professional life and work more profoundly than did Margaret Darst Corbett. The technical concepts and techniques of her work came from her teacher, Dr. William H. Bates. The strict educational model she insisted on in her practice served as the example I would follow in my own. Many of the techniques and ways of working that characterized my practice I learned from her. After completing her school and receiving her certificate, I practiced as a vision teacher while going to the University of Hawaii. From Hawaii I went on to study psychology and to obtain Masters and Doctors degrees, specializing in the psychology of vision, working under professors who were recognized experts in the field. None of them taught me the subject a fraction as deeply and well as Mrs. Corbett in her little unrecognized and unaccredited school for training "teachers of eye education." Let me go back to the start of that story, and to what brought about my interest in vision.

Having to wear glasses for myopia (near sightedness) was a real blow to me as a child. I was a skinny boy of 9 when I was first required to wear them. I was precocious and aggressive intellectually but fearful and shy emotionally. I was tall for my age, and awkward and uncoordinated, especially in comparison with my classmates, who were usually a year or two older. I felt myself to be weak, unmasculine, a sissy, "out of it" with my peers. Glasses contributed greatly to my bad self-image. Only two decades later as a research psychologist did I discover how typical my pattern was for a myopic child, and that the myopia derives from the fearfulness and emotional withdrawal that precedes it and forms its base.

Not every nearsighted child has the determination I did to change myself, although many do. I pushed myself into athletics, and when I went into high school, into dancing classes, social events, and into dating. I became big, muscular, and more acceptable socially. Because of my intellectual aggressiveness, I was a leader of certain kinds of activities -- manager of the debate team, president of the Young Unitarians. But what I felt to be the "real me" under the muscular and verbal front remained a thin-skinned, easily embarrassed boy, hating the metal-framed glasses I was supposed to always wear but didn't, suffering agonies when a girl turned me down when asked for a date or even a dance. And this "real me," I know now, formed the characterological base of my vision problem.

And my eyes got steadily worse. Once or twice a year I was sent to the ophthalmologist, and after duly peering through the pupils, expanded by drops, with his retinoscope, and running

¹ This section includes material revised and updated from Kelley (1971).

me through his trial lenses, his "remedy" was always the same -- stronger glasses. One year I wasn't allowed to read or do close work, and spent my school hours in pottery, wood shop and the like. It did nothing to keep my eyes from getting worse. In high school and after, they only got worse a little slower.

When I got out of the army at 23, I was able to barely read the largest letter of the eye chart at 20 feet with my better eye. My acuity was 20/200 in the left eye, 20/400 in the right, which means that an eye chart letter had to be 10 times as high for me to see it with my better eye as for a normal-sighted person. Fortunately, glasses gave me 20/20 vision, but I hated them, and had found that using them tended to make my eyes worse.

It was then that I read Aldous Huxley's book, *THE ART OF SEEING*, in which he described his experience with the Bates method, and the big improvements in vision near-sighted people had obtained through it. Ophthalmologists assured me it was quackery, and would do nothing for my myopia. I decided to check it out for myself. I contacted Mrs. Corbett, Huxley's Bates teacher, and the leading exponent of the method after Bates' death. Mrs. Corbett referred me to an instructor trained in her school, and I started Bates lessons, at first 3 times each week, 90 minutes each lesson, with a daily homework program. Later I was dropped to two, finally to once per week.

I worked diligently, and my vision responded. In six months, the eyes that had for a lifetime only gotten worse became able to read 20/20 chart letters unaided and without squinting or other tricks in virtually every lesson. These gains were temporary, but my basic test vision improved to 20/70 in the same period, with flashes of clear (20/20) vision at increasingly frequent intervals. By the end of two years I tested 20/40 under even unfavorable test conditions. I then passed my driving test without glasses, as I have done 8 or 10 times subsequently in four different states. I have lived my life for more than 35 years without glasses as a result of Corbett-Bates work. So much for the authoritative pronouncements of ophthalmology.

My vision has remained variable, and at times normal, but for the most part I have remained somewhat myopic. My optical correction to a consistent 20/20 reduced to -1.25 diopters in each eye, where originally it was -2.75 in my better and -3.25 in my worse eye. It is difficult to get a precise refractive error figure on me, as my refractive condition varies substantially, even under cycloplegia, the drops in the eyes used by doctors to paralyze accommodation and expand the pupils.

I became a Bates enthusiast during my first year, and enrolled in Mrs. Corbett's teacher training program. After completing the course and qualifying as an instructor (which took a year of work), I practiced as a Bates teacher and worked for my undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Hawaii. For more than two years Bates teaching was my primary occupation and means of livelihood.

My students improved substantially when they worked at it. Improvement was usually gratifyingly quick at the start, but then slowed down. The factors that brought improvement were mostly psychological, and increasingly so as we worked. Bates' simple drills for relaxing, sunning and mobilizing the eyes became more and more preparation and groundwork for the central problem in vision improvement, which was (as both Bates and Mrs. Corbett had taught) primarily psychological. I learned intuitively, by doing it, that when I could get my students' confidence, when I could get them to relax *emotionally*, when I could get them to develop freedom from apprehension, from anger or suspicion, and from emotional pain, and when I could get them to imagine pleasant scenes, their vision "turned on." Huxley spoke of "dynamic relaxation" as the

state that allows vision to "turn on." What he (like Bates and Corbett) failed to emphasize sufficiently was the deep emotional roots of the tensions blocking this state of dynamic relaxation.

Because my understanding was intuitive and not yet conceptual, I struggled blindly for better techniques to bring vision to my students. The effort required with some students was prodigious. The nearsighted students (most of my students were nearsighted) were thin-skinned and vulnerable, and especially so when they opened up and their vision "turned on." Working with them -- especially those with higher degrees of myopia -- required me to "walk tip-toed on egg shells." When I could get my myopic students to laugh, get them to trust, get them to expand, their lessons went beautifully. Improvement from 20/100 to 20/20 or better during one lesson in my studio was not uncommon. In Corbett-Bates work, such temporary improvements in the studio presage and promote lasting changes. But let me lift an eyebrow wrong, let the slightest trace of impatience or irritation creep into my voice, and there went my student's vision! It became a great strain to teach many of these students. When they called and cancelled a lesson, I felt such relief -- even though I needed the money to pay my rent.

Had I understood fully why it was such a strain, I could have coped more effectively, but I was operating on feeling. Neither Bates nor Corbett provided an adequate conceptual base for me to understand what was going on. I did not then realize that no such base existed anywhere, and I kept reading and searching, struggling after knowledge that did not exist. I soon realized the need for research, and was drawn increasingly toward a career in research in the psychology of vision.

One of the most eminent psychologists specializing in vision at that time was Professor Samuel Renshaw of Ohio State. Dr. Renshaw was the architect of the U.S. Navy's Aircraft Recognition Training Program of World War II. He was also the psychologist mainstay of the Optometric Extension Program, a radical, psychologically-oriented group of optometrists. After graduating from the University of Hawaii, I was accepted as a graduate student under Renshaw in the fall of 1949 and, after a college quarter, became a research assistant to him. I earned my master's degree under his direction the following year. Renshaw made a great deal of use of tachistoscopic techniques. Words, numbers, or patterns were employed that the student tried to reproduce from a flash (tachistoscopic) exposure of a twentieth of a second or less. This tachistoscopic training not only improved the recognition of visual form but, Renshaw observed, sometimes decreased myopia among students.

Working for Renshaw, I developed a means for generating random visual patterns of any desired level of difficulty for use in tachistoscopic training. I also learned the thoroughness, discipline and patience required of a good experimentalist, and I acquired a great amount of knowledge about the psycho-physiology and the experimental psychology of visual perception. I became familiar with the optometric and medical as well as the psychological literature on vision. Nowhere was there anything that threw light on my experience with vision improvement via the Bates method, as Mrs. Corbett taught it. Psychology, optometry and ophthalmology did not even recognize that such improvements took place, much less investigate how and why. Everyone among the orthodox was caught up with the study of mechanisms, and the mechanism of vision is exceedingly intricate and interesting, but not of the greatest importance. No one was working with the emotional functions producing the visual problems afflicting a majority of the human race.

But Wilhelm Reich and his students were into the bodily basis of such emotional functions, and were employing powerful techniques of emotional release based on Reich's discoveries. I went to New York to study Reich's work and to go into therapy with a doctor he had trained. At the same time, I worked for my Ph.D. In New York I took my first professional job as an applied experimental psychologist, and enrolled as a doctoral student in the New School for Social

Research. I had no idea what I was getting into when I made my first appointment to see Reich in September, 1950.

My major professor at the New School was Dr. Hans Wallach, a fine experimental psychologist working in the area of visual perception. My doctoral dissertation under Dr. Wallach was entitled, *Psychological Factors in Myopia*. I investigated the medical and optometric theories of myopia, and I studied research on the nature and correlates of myopia, both in the physiological and psychological realm. I went back over the improvement in vision of myopic students I had taught as a Bates teacher, on whom I had kept careful records. Most significant, I did an experimental study on the use of psychological techniques derived from the Bates method to improve myopia. Using optical instruments from the former School of Optometry at Columbia University, and working in the Optometric Center of New York, I showed conclusively that:

1. Myopia is not a fixed optical condition, but a plastic and variable one.
2. Large temporary improvements in myopia could be produced by the techniques derived from Bates.
3. The improvements were not due to improved interpretation of blur, tears on the cornea, or to changes in shape of the lens (accommodation).
4. The changes were unaffected by cycloplegia (drops in the eyes).

There is a strong presumption from my data that the improvement in myopia of the experimental subjects was due to a change in the length of the eyeball as a result of action of the extrinsic muscles of the eye. Bates had said that myopia was due to contraction of these muscles. The implication of the study was also that permanent improvements in myopia should be possible using the techniques I had employed.

The study created a minor stir. It was awarded the Alumni prize as the finest dissertation of the University in the 1957-58 academic year. It was presented to the American Psychological Association, printed in a summary article in the *Journal of the American Optometric Association*, written up in *Time* magazine and the New York Times, recorded and broadcast over radio stations in New York and California. With that, interest died. Its effect on the vision professions has been nil.

Despite my vindication of Bates' claims, techniques to change the underlying emotional factors in myopia and other visual disorders were still lacking. My dissertation provided no new methods of training, but only confirmed the effectiveness of some of those I had used as a Bates teacher. I could not, in my dissertation, go into the application to vision problems of the deep emotional release techniques of Wilhelm Reich. This was both because I was not ready, and because these techniques were too unorthodox and emotion-charged to be accepted then in even as open a university as the New School for Social Research.

What was needed was someone to put together Bates' and Reich's work in a new synthesis. I was the right person from the standpoint of knowledge, in fact the only person who could, but in 1958 I was not ready. It was the period after Reich's death. I was changing, striving to integrate what had happened to me in Reichian therapy and in my life in those turbulent years.

By 1965 I had become quite a different person characterologically. The deep myopic fearfulness was gone. Still intellectually aggressive, I was more open and spontaneous emotionally, confident in personal relations.

And I was 20 years older. I had not only weathered the pain and hardship of Reich's persecution and death, I had forged a successful career as an applied experimental psychologist. Not all of my research involved vision, but much of it did. Some of my projects were: a four-year longitudinal study of school-child vision; a research project on optical information-gathering on the Apollo mission; a series of studies of heads-up displays for naval aircraft; and what was at the time the most definitive study of motor vehicle rear vision that had been published. My vision improvement training skills had only been kept alive through the years by people who knew about my background and came to me privately with their own or their children's vision problems.

In 1967 and 1968 I acted on the decision to become a full-time practitioner. With the help of my wife Erica, plans were formulated. Erica was to co-lead groups with me. The practice was to be a marriage of vision techniques, primarily Bates techniques that I had learned through Mrs. Corbett, and techniques for loosening the muscular armor adapted from Reich. The Reichian work would be modified by the knowledge that I developed after Reich's death concerning the nature and function of the armor, and by the fact that we would do a major part of the work in groups.

In 1969 I wrote up techniques, obtained or built equipment, and built working space in our home. I practiced using techniques on acquaintances, but had no regular clients as yet. We launched the practice by recruiting a group of nearsighted volunteers for an experiment in vision improvement, using techniques from Reich, Bates, and others. There was no charge, but volunteers had to agree to stay for the three months of the experiment. They were to come to weekly 3½-hour sessions, plus monthly all-day workshops. They were also to carry out 30 minutes of homework exercises each day.

I chose myopic (nearsighted) volunteers because I understood the dynamics of myopia. Most of my Bates students had been myopic, and both my masters and doctoral research involved work with myopes. It was also easy to get standardized objective measurements of visual acuity, and so to have good data as to the effectiveness of the experiment. The subjects were tested each week, using different visual acuity targets each time.

I knew from my experience as a Bates teacher how much improvement I could expect as a result of the use of Bates techniques. I told the volunteers at the outset that I thought it likely that they would each be able to improve a full line on the eye chart in 3 months. Each successive line on the charts I used contained targets of half the area of the target above it. My secret hope was that these students would improve substantially more than one line. Bates techniques are effective, but do not get students to deep emotional places. The mix of Reichian and Bates techniques that we used affected my volunteers profoundly, going to their very roots emotionally. I had every reason to believe that the Bates techniques would free local muscular armor in the eyes and improve visual function. This was how I had come to understand how and why they worked in my years as a Bates teacher and vision psychologist. With the deeper Reichian techniques I was reaching much deeper levels of armor. My fond hope was that the myopia of my subjects would therefore improve more rapidly, perhaps dramatically. I fantasized great improvements, perhaps even a total recovery or two of 20/20 vision among my myopic – mostly very myopic --volunteers.

Five of the six volunteers stayed with the experiment as they had agreed. The techniques, Bates and Reichian alike, went well. The heart of the sessions was the small group *Intensive*, characterized by work on the deep armor, and the spontaneous emotional discharge of fear, rage and pain. All who have taken Radix work know what is entailed, as the Intensive remains the heart of Radix work today.

Before and after the Intensive, there was a mix of interactive group exercises, including body movement and stress exercises, soft and assertive eye contact exercises. Then, of course, there were the Bates drills, such as *sunning*, *palming* and *swings*, that relax and mobilize the eyes. There were Corbett-Bates *vision stretching* drills that use progressively smaller or more distant targets, exercises and images that help the myopic eye to relax, mobilize, and focus awareness on targets just below threshold acuity. Such exercises, arranged in a closely-knit sequence built around the Intensive, comprised the experimental sessions.

At the final workshop, 3 months after our first meeting, the visual acuity of each subject was measured and the subjects were asked for a written evaluation of the experiment. Did they feel their eyes had improved aside from the objective test results? Were there changes in the area of emotional functioning and personal relations? If so, what was their significance in comparison to the changes in their vision?

The objective test data showed that our subjects had improved an average of two lines in their visual acuity. This means an average improvement equivalent to a change from e.g., 20/100 to 20/50. All of the subjects improved. I should have been happy with these results I suppose, but I was not. The group was pleased, and scientific colleagues were impressed, but I was somewhat disappointed. I had often seen changes of the same order of magnitude in 3 months time by well-motivated Bates students, without deep emotional techniques. I had improved that much myself in the first three months of Bates lessons, before I had even heard of Reich. And there were no extraordinary recoveries of sight, aside from the temporary clearing spells that are the usual results of properly taught Bates work.

One subject had reported an unusually long clearing spell, 3 days of perfect vision, after a powerful Intensive. That was the most dramatic improvement reported by the group. Such extended periods of clear vision had been reported to me on occasion in my days as a Bates teacher also. Twice they were reported to follow orgasm of unusual depth and power. In fact, such reports were one item leading me into Reich's work as an avenue to vision improvement. Reich had reported that changes in the intensity and quality of the sexual experience are a usual result of extended work with his techniques. This claim is fully confirmed in my experience. But I had failed to produce the striking improvements in vision I had led myself to hope for.

I went over the written evaluations of my subjects carefully. We had them in for follow-up evaluations a few weeks later. An interesting fact had emerged from the evaluations. The subjects were highly pleased with what they received from the experiment. They were well satisfied with the improvement in vision, which was for most of them more than they had expected. All of them were either wearing weaker glasses, or had dispensed with glasses as a result of their work. They had volunteered for the study in order to improve their vision; that was the motive of every participant. -- Yet not a single subject found their improved vision to be the most significant effect of the study. What was more important to them was not their better eyesight, but the emotional changes they went through. They reported being more comfortable with their feelings, more confident of themselves and better able to relate to others emotionally. Only one subject found the vision changes to be as important as the emotional changes and she reported the two as equally important. In her view, the vision changes couldn't be separated from the emotional changes: they were different aspects of the same thing.

The message from the experiment seemed clear, once I let go of preconceptions. I should let go of vision improvement as the primary objective of my practice. There were two good reasons. Good Bates work was approximately as effective for bringing vision improvement as was my new program of work. Good Bates work was available from other people, and I did not wish to

practice Bates work as such. More important, however, was the fact that the new program did something more important than improve defective vision. The Intensive work in particular involved profound processes of change.

Thus the direction my practice would take was set. Instead of using Reichian feeling work to further the primary objective of vision improvement, the feeling work became the primary objective, and the vision techniques a principal avenue of approach to the feelings.

The change took time to get used to. Perhaps it should be explained as a middle-age identity problem. Who was I, professionally, in my work? For years I had earned my living by day in an established scientific firm and moonlighted nights and weekends with my true vocation, research on the life force inside and outside of the body. My self-image was the devoted scientist, his work too far ahead of its time to be recognized. After the upheavals in my life in 1965 and the discovery of the function of the armor in 1966, I had tried to forge a new identity. Although I couldn't earn my living doing research on the life force, I was taking an important step closer. I was to pioneer a new approach to vision improvement, using the knowledge I'd gained in the years of study of Bates and Reich. My fund of knowledge and credentials for this role were unusual. -- I don't believe anyone had the background I did.

Then my new identity was shaken before I could assume it, and what was to replace it was far from clear.

The work I did with the volunteers in the experiment was dramatic, powerful, obviously significant. The process of doing the work was in itself compelling. It had a life of its own, to be contacted and from that contact, gently shaped and directed. I had a remarkable feel for the work process in dealing with the life force in the bodies of my volunteers. Twenty years of study combined with a dozen years on the Reichian couch were as responsible as whatever innate aptitude I possessed. Still, doing the work, however dramatic and powerful and effective it might be, could never alone satisfy me. I had to also understand clearly what I was doing. Reich's own concepts were a solid foundation. Without the concepts of muscular armor and the life force, nothing about the work made sense. However, a foundation is not a building, and Reich's work was not an adequate conceptual foundation for my own work. Reich had not understood the origin and function of the muscular armor. That was my discovery. That discovery would, of necessity, change the work I would do with the muscular armor. The educational model was an important step, but just the beginning.

The discovery of the muscular armor and of the life force led Reich from his roots in psychoanalysis to his mature work, which was so different from psychoanalysis. Thus my discovery would have to lead me from my roots in the work of Reich, (and to a larger extent, Bates) to my own mature work. The direction from one to the other would be defined by the interaction between concept and intuition that came with doing the work. I knew from the outset that purpose, will, self-direction and their relation to the armor would play a central part in it. What part, I could not at that time guess.

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