



## The Skeptics SA guide to Mysterious Energies

**When it was announced** in July 1999 that the New York cyclotron RHIC (Relativistic Heavy-Ion Collider) was to be used to ‘recreate’ the big-bang scenario, it led to hysterical headlines claiming that if the test ‘got out of control’ it could create a black hole which would suck in the entire Earth. From a scientific perspective, such a claim is totally ridiculous. As was pointed out, the tests involved single atoms, and the amount of energy involved was similar to that expended when a mosquito lands on a screen door.

While such dramatic claims show the journalist’s great level of ignorance, even worse was the fact that many people believed him. What this revealed was the deep level of public ignorance about science, for it was obvious to anyone, even with the smallest understanding of scientific principles, that such an event would have been impossible. The amount of energy in a black hole is beyond human comprehension. It requires the energy generated when a massive star collapses to generate a black hole. Such an amount of energy is far beyond our scientific capabilities, and indeed, it seems very unlikely that humans could ever possess the technology, or enough power to create a black hole. Thus, the idea that it could be done with our present technology, even accidentally, is completely absurd.

Skeptics SA

However, what this does illustrate is that energy, in its various all its forms, tends to be a difficult subject for most people to properly comprehend. As a result, from earliest times, humans have conceived strange, fanciful ideas about ‘energy’: especially as a life-giving force.

From earliest times there appears to have been a belief in some form of spiritual life, a generative energy that inhabited human, animal and plant life. They appear to have even attributed life-energy to the rocks and even the Earth itself, an idea that and recently reemerged as the Gaia theory.

One of the earliest forms in which this ‘energy’ was conceived was as blood. Early hunters seeing blood escaping from the body of a wounded animal or a fellow tribesman, then seeing the death, came to believe that the blood contained some form of ‘life-energy’ and that when it escaped from the body, the person, or the animal, died.

Another source of perceived energy was the air or the wind. In primitive times air was a mysterious force. Although invisible, people were aware of its existence, able to feel its ever-changing aspects, from balmy breezes to howling winds. Seeing the wind moving trees, they came to believe that the wind had some strange power, and, in ancient times

it was widely accepted that the air, or wind, or breath, was the source of all forms of life. Remnants of this belief persist in the saying, ‘There is something in the air.’

Many cultures believed that the gods had created humans from some inanimate material, and then, after breathing their mystical energy into that material, life had sprung from the lifeless substance. This idea is expressed in Genesis 2:7 “Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” This ancient term, ‘the breath of life’ is still used.

In time, other ideas evolved concerning the many forms of this ‘breath of life.’ To the ancient Greeks it was Nous, Apeiron or Pneuma. Nous was the purest, most powerful substance in the cosmos, possessing universal knowledge, it had power over all living things. Even today we talk of people having Nous. Apeiron was the fifth element, a force able to take any shape, and to take on the properties of any substance. It was this substance which gave life to the cosmos, to, all the heavens and the worlds within them. [Anaximander]. The Logos, or Pneuma, (literally meaning, the ‘breath of life’), the substance mentioned in the NT at John 1, was believed to be a universal substance that animated the whole universe.

There was an ancient concept, summed up in the phrase, 'As above, so below': the idea that all things that existed in the heavens, (the Macrocosm) were paralleled on Earth, (the Microcosm). Thus, since they believed that these strange energies existed in the cosmos, they believed they also existed in all humans and sometimes in other forms of life.

To the Hindus and Buddhists this energy was called Prana, a form of breath or a life-current. The air itself merely conducts this subtle energy, and as we breathe, we draw this force into our body.

To the Chinese this mysterious energy was known as Qi, or ch'i, a substance connected with an ancient belief that 'evil influences' or demons, caused illness in humans. Early texts such as the Ma-wang-tui, mention eleven mo or body vessels, which were believed to contain blood and ch'i.

The Chinese claimed that ch'i travels throughout the human body in channels, or, 'meridians'; this energy flow, the sheng or ko cycles, controlled health. Good health was attributed to a regular flow of ch'i, while physical and mental disorders were blamed upon excesses or deficiencies in ch'i. Some illnesses were 'caused' by blockages of the flow of ch'i in various meridians. Treatment involved inserting needles into certain acupuncture points to remove the blockages, and to restore the flow of ch'i in and out of the holes in the skin where the ch'i 'lived.'

Many of these primitive claims of mysterious 'healing energies' have survived in a variety

Skeptics SA

of forms. Indeed the number of these bogus 'therapies' has even increased in recent years.

The following is a list of some of the major forms of pseudo-treatments; there are others, less well known that have not been included:

- Absent Diagnosis and Healing: scanning patients from a distance, and projecting "cures"
- Acupuncture: treatment to release blockages of ch'i in the channels or meridians
- Amma: relaxation involving ch'i
- Astara: New Age healing using crystals and magnetic energy
- Aura Cleansing: flicking away bad vibes
- Aurasomatherapy: using coloured bottles to revitalize the patient's aura
- Ayurvedic Medicine: claims the energy within the body must be kept balanced
- Bioplasma Reading: practitioners claim to be able to detect the 'bioplasmic' (the life-force) field, and interpret it
- Chakra Balancing: balancing your chakras to ensure proper reception of a universal life force
- Etheric Surgery: aura balancing and psychic surgery, without touching the body
- Jin Shin Jyutsu: form of Shiatsu, designed to free blocked energy channels
- Magnetic Therapy: using magnets to stimulate blood flow and 'accelerate' healing
- Polarity therapy, which claims to release energy blockages and restore energy balance

- Pranic Healing: using the hands to detect and 'sealing' holes from which the prana, the life force of the body, is escaping
- Qi Gong: treating blockages in the flow of Qi
- Radiance Therapy: touching and brushing and laying on of hands. Similar to Pranic Healing
- Reiki: balancing and strengthening the body's energy, to increase healing
- Shiatsu: a form of finger-acupressure, purports to stimulate the flow of energy through the meridians and autonomic nervous system
- Spiritual healing: various techniques of projecting energy or healing power, often through prayer
- Therapeutic Touch: an updated version of the practice of laying on of hands, but without making actual contact with the body
- Toning: releasing the 'god-energy' when we become attuned to the music of the spheres

None of these 'energies' or 'therapies' has any scientific basis. They all claim to utilize various energy forms to produce physical and mental healing. However, despite numerous claims, apart from magnetism, none have been able to produce evidence of such energies. Genuine forms of energy have been known and studied extensively for hundreds of years; yet even with the most sophisticated modern instruments scientists have been unable to locate any of these 'mysterious energies'. The reason for this is simple: they do not exist! They are

merely the ploys of disreputable con-merchants, or by deluded individuals.

It is a travesty of modern health legislation that such charlatans are permitted to call themselves therapists and to practice, without having any training or qualifications whatsoever.

Reports from their patients reveal the most profound ignorance of even the most basic concepts of medicine.

The greatest danger is that these practitioners, for fear of being exposed as charlatans, discourage patients from seeing proper doctors. As a result serious health problems may go undetected. People are well advised to avoid such swindlers and their mysterious energies!

**Laurie Eddie**

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