ONE OF THE more curious by-products of the political and social unrest of the late 1960s, has been the emergence of and survival of interest in the writings of Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957). In the last few years, new translations of his books have appeared and some of his early work has been translated for the first time. A biography, magazine articles, and various surveys of his work convey the impression that his ideas are timely, or at least that they are historically important. However, I believe that the current enthusiasm for Reich owes more to the problems that interested him than to the light he shed on them. His great appeal for radical youth is based on his advocacy of social and sexual reform, for which he provided ideological support through a Marxist-psychoanalytic synthesis. By the technique of anthropological, economic, and psychological analysis, Reich tried to provide a scientific justification for revolutionary hopes.

Although famous for the Marxist beliefs which he abandoned, and the orgone research for which he was martyred, it was with psychoanalysis that Reich began his troubled career. He first encountered Freud's writings in 1920, while a medical student in Vienna. In an interview with Freud, "the professor" encouraged him to begin psychoanalytic studies, and by the time of his graduation from medical school in 1922, he was already a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. The energetic Reich was soon writing and presenting his findings to the Society, where he was accepted and respected. It is said that at first Freud thought Reich his most gifted pupil. By 1924, he was conducting a seminar on technique, which he continued until 1930. During this period, he exercised considerable influence on the thinking of his colleagues, especially those younger than he. His "radicalization" occurred in 1927, when he witnessed the famous burning of the Ministry of Justice and was horrified at the massacre of workers by the police. While remaining a member of the Austrian Socialist Party, he joined the medical group of the Arbeiterhilfe, an affiliate of the Austrian Communist Party. He devoted the next few years to Marxist education of analysts, the psychoanalytic education of Marxists, and, with apparently greater success, the sexual education of the workers. Although he succeeded for a time in gathering around him a coterie of Marxist-psychoanalysts, his relations with Freud, the Psychoanalytic Society, and the Communist Party progressively worsened. By 1933, according to the "received" version of his life, his communism had become too compromising for the psychoanalysts and his sexual politics too embarrassing to the communists. Reich was expelled from both groups in a little over a year (I. O. Reich, 1969, pp. 24, 31).

It is to Reich's credit that at a time when more naively optimistic people still believed in accommodation with Hitler, or in a workers' revolution, he realized that their hopes were futile. He went into voluntary exile, first to Denmark, and then to Norway. His Scandinavian period lasted until 1939, and was dedicated to the
orgone research which occupied him to the end of his life. On the basis of writings and "research" of his later years in the United States (1939-1957), he was labeled a genius by some, a madman by others, and a criminal by the federal authorities. He died at Lewisburg Penitentiary while serving a sentence for violating an injunction against the distribution of orgone energy accumulators and literature. This was surely a tragic episode, in which Reich offered himself as a sacrifice to his vision of his own genius. Incredibly, the courts accepted the sacrifice.

Now, as a glance at this outline of his history shows, Reich's work falls neatly into three periods and categories, a division which allows his admirers and detractors alike to split him into convenient portions for acceptance and rejection. Thus, analysts are inclined to praise his psychoanalytic contribution and bemoan his subsequent "deterioration," while the heirs to the orgone and sexual politics divide the remainder. I leave it to others to determine how much Reich's later Marxist and "biophysical" theories have enriched these fields. The significant point is that through all three phases the organizing concept was that of energy — sexual and life energy — analogous to Freud's conception of libido. In Reich's theories, however, the energy idea became at once concretely physical and mystical. He summarized his ideology succinctly in a preface to The Sexual Revolution:

It is sexual energy which governs the structure of human feeling and thinking. "Sexuality" . . . is the life energy per se. Its suppression means disturbance of fundamental life functions. . . . The most important social expression of this fact is irrational human action, mysticism and readiness to engage in wars, etc. . . . Society forms, alters and suppresses human needs; in this process, human structure is formed. . . . Sexual suppression creates the structure of the serf who obeys and rebels at one and the same time. [p. xxv]

This plausible formulation was one of a number of efforts to provide the Marxist views of society with a biopsychological foundation through psychoanalysis. The broad ideological outline of this approach, with its stress on the sex-negative orientation of patriarchy and the anti-authoritarian character of matriarchy, had been popular in radical circles for many years. Some of the more romantic aspects of these views had been elaborated by Otto Gross, an early psychoanalyst and anarchist, who, along with others, had appreciated the subversive, anti-establishment potential of psychoanalysis (Green, 1974). Subsequently, following the October revolution, the relationship of Marxism and psychoanalysis became a topic for scholarly consideration. Reich's contributions took their place among the related studies by the members of the Frankfurt School, including such well-known figures as Fromm and Marcuse. While many people shared the conviction that the link between social custom and character structure helped to perpetuate the social system, Reich insisted that sexual inhibition built into character was the essential mechanism. In contrast to those who believed that civilization required the curtailment of sexual freedom, Reich argued that only oppressive, authoritarian capitalist society was built on this crippling process. What was really unique in Reich's approach was his effort to provide a psychophysiological mechanism through which social factors exerted their effects. The concrete physiological meaning that Reich gave to libido — the sexual energy concept of psychoanalysis — became the cornerstone of his orgasm theory, and was essential both to his theory of character and his theory of society. In taking this concrete, physicalist position about the nature of libido, Reich was, of course, not alone. However, he became the champion of this approach at a time when the most advanced psychoanalytic thinkers were beginning to appreciate the psychological foundations of their theory. Reich's search for somatic mechanisms in neurosis and character led eventually to a direct physical approach to treatment, and from there to a search for orgone energy. Reich was right when he later said that his interest from the first was biological — the nature of life — and that a red thread ran through his work (I. O. Reich, p. 9).

Among present-day analysts, whatever reputation Reich still has rests on his book Character-Analysis — excluding part 3, "From Psychoanalysis to Orgone Biophysics." Most analysts do not read the part of Reich's earlier work which dealt with the "impulse-ridden characters" and the orgasm theory. Those contributions form
the theoretical underpinnings of Character-Analysis and their exposition is generally ignored where it appears in that book itself. Because of this selective reading of Reich, it has become a commonplace among psychoanalysts that Reich's papers on character analysis, written in the late 20s, although inevitably bearing the stamp of the age in which they were conceived, nevertheless offer insights that no student of psychoanalysis can afford to miss. The late Robert Fliess was only voicing a widely held view when he wrote:

There are few contributions to be called as unhesitatingly as these, a must for the student . . . . These papers attack a fundamental clinical problem concerning the psychology of the age, by approaching it as a problem of technique. It is this approach, and its single-minded pursuance, that renders them indispensable as a supplement to the technical writings and some of the clinical papers of Freud. [1948, p. 104]

That this view is somewhat overgenerous soon becomes apparent with a careful reading of the texts. Fliess himself noted the looseness of theoretical thought and the fact that "the essential premise for Reich's argument we owe to Karl Abraham (p. 105). This is by no means to say that Character-Analysis has nothing to offer the student or Reich did not contribute in any way to the development of psychoanalysis. However, it is perhaps time to see that his reputation as an analytic innovator owes perhaps as much to his ability to ignite controversy as to the originality of his ideas.

There is bound to be continuing controversy about Reich's psychoanalytic work as long as it is not read as a whole. Character-Analysis contains many striking passages — technical aphorisms, apt generalizations, sensitive insights, and clinical descriptions. Most readers, grateful for these valuable comments, are willing, on the one hand, to accept too readily Reich's own distorted polemical presentation of contemporary psychoanalysis, and on the other, to overlook his confused theoretical formulations. Fliess was no doubt right in using the original versions of three of the papers that were collected in Character-Analysis because in those papers, Reich was still willing to acknowledge that his method was an elaboration and a more systematic application of established principles. However, as one reads through the reams of current reviews and summaries of Reich's work, one finds only a monotonous repetition of Reich's later claim that before him analysts analyzed symptoms, after him character traits.

The term "Character Analysis," often attributed to Reich, was in use when he became an analyst.[1] A number of different procedures were given this name, but all attested to the general awareness that character traits could and in some cases must be analyzed. Reich was unique, however, in making the analysis of character the cornerstone of his method and in concentrating on problems of this technique. The focus of his attack was certain types of behavior expressing hidden attitudes toward analysis. These attitudes were characteristic of the patient's dealing with other people as well as the analyst. In analysis, they became powerful resistances — in part, because they were so natural to the patient as to cause him no discomfort. Abraham had described the difficulty of treating a group of patients whose apparent volubility and compliance with the rule of free association hid an intensely defiant attitude. He had realized that this attitude was "narcissistic" — that is, it served to preserve self-esteem by avoiding unpleasant self-exposure. Such patients could overcome the humiliation of being in analysis by using the couch as a stage on which to exhibit their talents, or as a means of becoming like the idealized analyst.

Freud, too, had described the latent negative transferences, emphasized by Reich and associated with his name. A young woman's superficial compliance masked her intention to thwart her father's wish that she be treated. Her cold and distant superior manner indicated that she was politely accepting Freud's interpretations without taking them seriously (1920). These observations are merely representative of those that had established the notion that the "how" of behavior, as Reich called it, concealed important negative attitudes toward the analyst behind ostensible cooperation.
Building on these and related observations, Reich believed that even when the analysis seemed to be going well, such attitudes and traits were ubiquitous. Furthermore, he thought that various aspects of posture were an integral part of these attitudes — e.g., rigidity of posture reflected such attitudes even when the patient gave verbal indications of being cooperative. While others recognized the complexity of these attitudes, physical behaviors, and body language in a variety of ways, Reich made the analysis of these traits — the attempt to trace them to their infantile origins — the core of his method from the very beginning of the analysis. This meant that aspects of the patient's behavior which the patient did not experience as disturbing or "symptomatic" had to be forced on his attention until they were experienced as disturbing. Reich thus became an early advocate of a technique called "confrontation." Some of the reaction against Reich's technique was based on the feeling that such an approach, too vigorously applied, in itself aroused the patient's anger because it was really an attack. Reich, however, thought that the anger of the patient was simply the release of aggression which had been "bound" by character resistance. Later, he thought that working directly on the muscular tensions would release the feelings. He seems to have had little concern for the fact that handling the patient and doing things to him might have an important meaning to the patient beyond the physical effects, and that the consequences might not be analyzable. The physical aspects of the treatment became important in later Reichian therapies. Other somatic therapies of the touch, contact, and relaxation varieties have drawn inspiration from Reich's work. On the other side, the body language and transactional schools undoubtedly owe much to Reich's approach of systematic concentration on here-and-now transactions and nonverbal behavior in therapy. It is the intense therapeutic focus on these aspects of behavior and the attempt to reorient analytic therapy around early confrontation that constitute his originality in this area. The technical emphasis has been a useful stimulus, although it has not been employed with the determination advocated by Reich.

The principles of character analysis that I have outlined, are, in Reich's book, embedded in a theory of character formation involving his sexual energy concepts. Although much of the language of libido theory that Reich uses is the language of psychoanalysis, the theory is importantly different in a number of ways. Most modern readers of Character-Analysis are willing to treat the language of sex-economy as mere metaphor, much as they are likely to ignore the footnotes alluding to orgone theory. Approached in this way, the broad outlines of character development are reasonable enough.

There are, as well, some good descriptions of character types. The description of the genital character, based on the contemporary concept of genital primacy, gave a picture of what many analysts then considered normality. However, these descriptions and their theoretical explanations are burdened by some of the worst features of psychoanalytic theory and explanation at that time: reductionism, pseudophysiology, reification of concepts, and anthropomorphism of psychic structures.

What is perhaps Reich's most famous term, the "Character Armor," is a curious concept, difficult to pin down. It is somehow the "how" of behavior, physical muscular rigidity, something physical restraining something called "discharge." It may be flexible or rigid, controlled by or controlling the ego. It takes on a life of its own and we cannot remember where in behavior to look for it, if indeed we should. We find the clue when Reich calls it the "narcissistic armor." This is a fine metaphor for "narcissistic" defensiveness for it captures the way in which certain neurotic individuals seem to protect themselves from being hurt by others. Nothing so much describes certain "narcissistic" people as their apparent imperviousness to the desires, pressures, enticements of others. They seem totally self-contained. Reich understood well the other side of this: the hypersensitivity, feelings of impotence, and the need for constant compensatory adulation, power, achievement. It seems, therefore, that what Reich called "Character Armor" or "Narcissistic Armor" was what everyone else was writing about as the patient's narcissistic resistances or the narcissistic aspects of character. Reich saw these aspects of personality as anchored in muscular rigidity and fed by concrete sexual "energy" which was thus robbed of satisfactory "discharge" in orgasm.
Energy is really the key concept which unifies Reich's diverse interests. Reich tried to confront the still unsolved psychosomatic issues in human sexuality by a conceptual "tour de force." If psyche and soma could be thought of as "functionally identical," everything could be explained in terms of dammed-up sexual energy. Ultimately, the "functional identity" of all energy allowed him to make the leap from the psyche-soma to the cosmos. Ironically, at a kind of turning point in psychoanalysis, when Freud saw that the energy concepts of psychoanalysis were really to be taken psychologically, Reich headed for the more concrete somatic view. Reich's "functional identity" concept, whatever its philosophical merits, points to the need for understanding psychosomatic problems in sexuality, while obscuring the underlying mechanisms. For Freud the role of meaning in the mental life became more important, and the complexity of human functioning then was not viewed as revolving about a physiological limitation as it was for Reich. Rather than becoming simpler, the Freudian view of psychosexual function became more complex. It may be that in leaving to one side the question of the physiological and psychological effects of sexual abstinence, something important has been untouched by psychoanalysis. Freud's view, and most other people's, too, was that issues having to do with the nature — i.e., physical nature — of drives and anxiety were not accessible to study via the psychoanalytic method itself, and this is methodologically correct. Nothing can be learned about these things by the psychoanalytic method alone. Perhaps greater understanding of the ways in which hormone function is affected by sexual activity will shed some light on those problems.

Part of Wilhelm Reich's mission as he saw it was to save Freud from Freud, for he claimed to be the heir to and savior of the fundamental discoveries of Freud's early years. While, then as now, Freud's new formulation of ego psychology (1923) and his related theory of anxiety (1926) were viewed as important advances in psychoanalysis, Reich found in them only a betrayal of the true concrete biological base of the libido theory. As psychoanalysis continued its development as a psychology, that is as a theory of a mental life, Reich's view, the developing theory of sex-economy, moved farther in the direction of what might be called social biology. The character armor, concretely expressed in the musculature of the body, came more and more, in that theory, to replace the conception of a mental apparatus with that of character as a shield between the drives and the environment. In contrast with Freud's view of the ego-as-agent, to be freed for action, Reich's "character" was a cage to be smashed in order to free the drives.

In somewhat overstating this contrast, I have perhaps fallen into the very pattern which characterizes Reich's work and creates special problems for its evaluation. In just this way, from his earliest papers on, it was not his aim merely to present new ideas but to claim for them a special status, and for himself as well. Terms that he appropriated to tag his ideas, such as "character analysis" and "genital libido," eventually in a sense became slogans associated with his name. They pointed, as it were, to both the man and his ideas.

At first, Reich was at pains to acknowledge his link with Freud's work, and confined himself to criticizing those who shared Freud's views on the Death Instinct, libido theory, and issues related to character and society. By the time he wrote Character-Analysis, he drew a very sharp distinction between psychoanalysis pre-Reich and his own technique, the "correct" technique. In his later years, Reich was to complain that only watered-down and fragmented aspects of character analysis were taken over by psychoanalysts, while his real discoveries, the orgasm theory and the somatic core of neurosis, were ignored. Furthermore, since "character-analytic technique required the full recognition of the laws of sexual economy" (Higgins and Raphael, p. 263), Reich in effect claimed the true path of psychoanalysis for his own. To some colleagues he wrote (1934): "He [Freud] once said to me after a lecture: 'Either you are completely wrong, or you will soon have to carry the heavy burden of psychoanalysis alone.' I knew that I was not basically wrong, and today I know that the second part of Freud's prediction has come true for me" (ibid., p. 173). From his early days as psychoanalyst, Reich demanded recognition for his ideas as the only right way in psychoanalysis. Others must follow his lead or be numbered among the betrayers of the original Freudian dream. To make matters still more
difficult, he interlaced the presentation of his own ideas with criticisms of the related ideas of others. He often exaggerated the difference between his own position and that of others so that his own concepts achieved their significance as replacements for others' views. He was not offering himself as an addition, but as an alternative. He was, in effect, saying "My orgasm theory continues where Freud's early libido theory left off. Those, including Freud, who do not see this are moving away from the revolutionary discovery of psychoanalysis."

Really, then, to take Reich's ideas seriously, one cannot simply ask whether this or that point is correct. It matters little if we agree with him that the ways people express themselves bodily are as important in understanding them as the content of their thoughts — that the motoric medium carries a mental message. We may accept the idea that society controls its subjects through the suppression of their sexual drives. We might be willing to acknowledge that mental health requires a healthy sex life. None of these generalizations is what Reich saw as his contribution, and indeed they were all derivative. If he made an original contribution, it was the theoretical structure, such as it was, that became the context for these widely held views. The importance of analyzing defenses, of securing genital discharge, of expression of conflict through motoric style and even of character analysis was known to analysts. His combination of these and their "single-minded pursuance" was his own. His theoretical system linking society, character, analytic technique, and orgasm joined Freud and Marx and was their offspring. Reich's insistence that his entire theoretical structure be accepted whole, that "character-analytic technique required the full recognition of the laws of sexual economy," must be recognized as part of the meaning of the specific ideas mentioned above. To take the individual formulations or aphorisms about defense analysis or character analysis, for instance, from Reich's theoretical context and place them in a different one changes their meaning. Had this not been the case, his fate as both communist and psychoanalyst might have been quite different.

Can anyone really justify the suggestion that a man's evaluation and judgment of his own theory are in some way a part of that theory? After all, any fair-minded person knows that in evaluating ideas, we separate the man from his ideas and the commentaries from the contents. We judge the truth or falsity of concepts, their utility or even their beauty, but the evaluation of their author's intentions is a separate enterprise. It would be unthinkable, for example, to include in our evaluation of Newton's gravitational theory whatever religious significance he may have attached to that theory. However, there are important differences to be noted between experimental sciences and psychoanalytic formulations, a point developed by others. When Freud abandoned the view that "sexual energy" was converted to anxiety, it was not because of new experimental findings. Instead he had realized that there was another way to look at mental conflict, with anxiety as a signal of danger and not as the product of quasi-somatic transformation. His new view was more consistently psychological and seemed to organize his clinical observations better. When Reich argued against Freud's views, he misunderstood the purely conceptual nature of these formulations and insisted that Freud was wrong for experimental reasons. As proof, he adduced the fact that men who have their spermatic ducts tied become anxious (Reich, 1926, p. 382). Aside from the question of Reich's scientific understanding in assuming that the mental effects of physical procedures are the results of the procedures themselves, rather than of their meaning, there is a conceptual issue, as well. That is, there is a problem in assuming that libido — a hypothetical mental energy — somehow resides in the testicles. While Reich was only too willing to insist on the necessary assumption that this mental energy was, after all, physical, he seemed not to recognize that it was an assumption. It might be a useful assumption or not, but this conviction that it was fact was essential to his orgasm theory, and to those aspects of his character formulations which were theoretical, rather than clinical, descriptions. Still more, he believed that psychoanalysis required his orgasm theory. They belonged together "organically." This was Reich's final claim to be recognized as a psychoanalyst, for once he proceeded to the development of sex-economy and sex-politics, there were only "points of contact with psychoanalysis" (Higgins and Raphael, p. 197). Now, once we consider claims that psychoanalysis and a theoretical contribution to it are necessarily connected, we are dealing with what is essentially an interpretation by Reich of both psychoanalysis and his own theory. The essential point is, then, that in contrast to an experimental science, in formulations such as Reich's, the commentaries are an important part of the concepts because they clarify and interpret them and provide an
indication of their meanings. On the other hand, to consider a notion like "character armor" apart from Reich's theoretical interpretation and elaborations is to reduce it to a clinical metaphor — clever but ordinary.

If we now agree that the value and meaning Reich attached to his ideas is an essential part of his system, we are left with a paradox. If we leave his concepts in his framework, they are useless for psychoanalysis. If we place them in our context, they are of value but have a different meaning. This then was the dilemma of Reich's contemporaries, who were challenged to accept his system whole. While many could accept his strict defense analysis, his criticism of the Death Instinct or his Marxist psychoanalysis, it was as a modification of psychoanalysis, not as a substitute, that they did so. They could, therefore, remain comfortably in a psychoanalytic society with its divergent viewpoints. Naturally, such a compromise would not be possible if one accepted the view, as did Reich, that sex-economy and sex-politics had supplanted psychoanalysis.

Reich had hoped to preserve the great insights of psychoanalysis by turning "Freud against Freud" (Higgins and Raphael, p. 179) — by splitting off the pioneer Freud from the revisionist Freud, "the scientist Freud" from the "bourgeois philosopher Freud." What I have tried to suggest is that Reich resisted all such attempts to split him but that in the end the fact that he could be split into three such different parts has preserved his popularity.

There is implicit in this approach to Reich the view that his ideas and personality are related in an especially intimate way. This does not mean that I am about to explain away the man's theories by discussing his character or giving him a diagnosis. His motives are not my concern either. Instead, I suggest that, in forging a viewpoint that could only be called his if accepted in his way, and completely, Reich built himself into his theory — and into a corner. If this is true, his expulsion from both the psychoanalytic and communist groups becomes understandable not only as a reaction to personal differences or to the discomfort of having a politically dangerous member in the group. The dichotomizing necessity inherent in his approach to both theory and personal relationships required that he be expelled — or accepted as the leader. By the time of his expulsion, his scientific views had become politicized, his intellectual differences had become personal differences, and he appears to have identified himself completely with his ideas. Still later, he did so explicitly. This is a problem found in many creative people and interferes with both creativity and objectivity. It thus often precedes the transformation of theory into ideology and enthusiasm into fanaticism. One can easily sympathize with Reich in surveying these tragic events, and there is a great temptation to see in him a prophet, driven from the corrupt temples of orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, suffering for one's ideas does not guarantee their veracity. In any case, by that time, Reich's views, whether true or false, were certainly no longer psychoanalytic, nor did he continue to apply that method. Reich's contribution to psychoanalysis was, after all, time-locked. Its residue is, perhaps, a handful of clinical aphorisms and the stimulus he gave to the thinking of some of his contemporaries. While this is more than most people achieve in this profession, it is less than the legend, and far less than Reich's dream.

An overview of Reich's psychoanalytic has certain implications beyond the problem of psychoanalysis. It would be easy to say of Reich that he was one of a number of brilliant contributors to the development of psychoanalysis during the 20s. In this respect one could say that he raised some as yet unanswered questions about the biological function of the orgasm, correctly attacked the clinical relevance of the Death Instinct, stressed the importance of the narcissistic aspects of character, emphasized and perhaps exaggerated a direct approach to the analysis of character traits, and, finally, left us with some interesting descriptions of character types. However, Reich was not simply another contributor to psychoanalysis. He was from the first a controversial figure. Although he was well regarded, admired, and respected, there was, as I have tried to show, something askew in his understanding of psychoanalysis and his efforts to reformulate theory and technique. His orgasm theory was not merely a fundamentalist revival of libido theory. It was really a radical revision and reinterpretation. Similarly, his technical innovations, consistently followed, are regarded as radically distorting
the analytic process. Whether or not this is a good thing, as some have of course argued, my point is simply that it was a significant deviation. Moreover, these deviations in theory and technique came to full fruition in the abandonment of psychoanalytic theory and technique. There is enough psychoanalysis in Reich's work so that he falls within its sphere, enough that is unpsychoanalytic so that he falls outside it. Controversy surrounding his achievement persists because one can take a stand on either side of this dichotomy. But if Reich was a deviant within psychoanalysis, he was no less a deviant among the communists. His fate, of course, was a deviant's fate.

Finally, in his work in Orgone Physics he was a deviant in the scientific community at large, and ultimately in the eyes of the law. Back in the 20s Reich was already arguing that the sexual hang-ups of his contemporaries blinded them to his new discoveries. Then he could argue that sexual theory was political. Later, conspiracy and "emotional plague" explained his social and scientific persecution.

So Reich raises for us the problem of what scientific orthodoxy is to do about its deviants. The issue has been approached in different ways in Reich's case. Schatzberg has discussed some aspects of Reich's trial as they reflect the interaction between the deviant and society's intolerance (1972.). He cites the particular problem posed by Reich's claims — for example, that there was no authority on the knowledge and methods he used since they belonged to the future. To the question of why Reich had to dig his own grave, he counterposes the question of why society made it so deep. Rycroft, too, discusses the difficulty of assessing the ideas of a man who is ahead of his time, or claims to be. He resolves the problem by suggesting that Reich's claim of adhering to scientific method can be dismissed, as can his belief that his insights were based on science. We can, he suggests, keep our respect for Reich anyway if we regard his later theories as a kind of religious system. This would hardly have made Reich happy. Reich would have regarded this as little improvement over calling him crazy, which Rycroft wishes to avoid.

The problem is fundamental. What is the scientific community — within which I include psychoanalysis — to do with the ideas of people who make scientific claims which seem totally at variance with conventional scientific wisdom? What are we to do about the findings of the small army of people who report observations which seem highly improbable according to all known mechanisms? The history of great discoveries is overburdened with tragic tales of martyrs who achieved postmortem sainthood. Similar tales fill the annals of great frauds and hoaxes.

Only recently have some of yesterday's far-out ideas begun to find themselves the object of intensive research by orthodox science — acupuncture, ESP, meditation.

Of course, the more improbable the observation, the more rigorous must be the demonstration. Until the scientific community undertakes a systematic test of Reich's claims, we are left only with his own unsatisfactory published accounts, various testimonials (see some letters in Boadella), and the effort to link orgone energy to scientific oddities such as Kirlian photography (see Mann). I suspect that whatever one thinks of Reich as a discoverer of life energy, scientist, philosopher, Marxist, or analyst, he will always have some appeal as someone who was willing to martyr himself in the name of human betterment. By attempting to root his ideology in scientific theory, he politicized his science. Through his own alienation, he exemplified his politics. [4]

45 Oak Ave.
TENAFLY, N.J. 07670

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\[1\] See, for example, Ferenczi, "The Further Development of an Active Therapy in Psycho-analysis [1920]." In a fragment of a letter (1925) to Ferenczi (Higgins and Raphael, Reich Speaks of Freud, pp. 145-148), Reich cites this paper and notes the "generally accepted opinion that we are progressing from symptom analysis to a therapy that investigates the characterological foundations of the symptom neurosis. . . ." Character-Analysis and its conceptual and methodological problems, including the idea of character as resistance, were discussed by Glover in 1924.

\[2\] For this discussion, read: people whose primary orientation in their relationships is to enhance or protect their feelings of worth. The implication is that ordinary people don't need to be preoccupied with self-esteem because they are secure. They are, therefore, free to love and to be loved and otherwise enjoy life.

\[3\] See Paul Edwards in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

\[4\] Frederick Crews (1974) offers a perspective on Reich similar to the one developed here. In his perceptive essay, the relationship of Reich's subjectivity to his politics and orgone research is developed further.