

SELF REGULATION

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Introduction

Although virtually every age and culture must concern itself to some extent with the rearing of its young, it is only during the twentieth century that scientific researchers have begun systematically to disentangle some of the almost limitless variables influencing the relationships between parents and children. Attention has focused not only on the variations in family constellations, but on alternatives outside the family as well, such as communal child rearing on *kibbutzim* or in various day care arrangements. This paper will review the literature of one particular intentional theory of child rearing, labeled by its proponents "self regulation."

Self regulation's best-known exponent was probably A. S. Neill, the author of a book called *Summerhill* and principal of a school of that name in Leiston, England. Numerous articles appeared in a wide variety of publications dating from the 1940s to the present written by Neill and others to amend and amplify his original formulations. They are composed of theoretical explications, prescriptions and descriptions.

Essentially, self regulation consists in responding to the primary needs of the infant and child such that secondary needs emerge to the least extent possible and so that the child's organism functions biologically without inner resistance or conflict (Raknes, 1970).

Although the practices of self regulation have been described and elaborated extensively in a number of publications, the most succinct description appeared in a *Journal of Orgonomy* article by Barbara Koopman. She stresses the centrality of healthy sexual functioning for the child and then mentions some of the practices which follow from it:

Basic to this concept is the acceptance of a sex life for children at an age-appropriate level. Reich believed that allowing children to discharge their sexual energy

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with peers would divest the oedipal wish of its libidinal charge. With decathexis of the wish, there would be no need to repress it. It should be clearly understood that Reich never advocated sexual activity between children and adults, incestuous acting out, parental masturbation of children, or the salacious promotion of childhood sexual activity by adults. Rather, his concept entailed the non-interference with, as well as the protection of peer-related sexual expression as part of the natural life functioning of children. Thus, children were to be allowed privacy to masturbate, to embrace, or to explore each other sexually. They should not witness adult intercourse or adult nudity, since they lack the energetic capacity to tolerate them; but, if they came upon them accidentally, no fuss should be made. Above all, a wholesome non-por-nographic attitude of the parents was important here. Sexual matters were to be treated with delicacy (not prudishness), seriously (not jokingly), and above all, with a sense of responsibility.

Infants were to be fed on demand; routine circumcisions were taboo; children were to be allowed to eat what they wished and toilet train themselves when ready. The basic need for loving contact was to be met, but not the willy-nilly gratification of every whim. Children were to be taught to respect the rights of others, measures for their own safety, and freedom with responsibility (1973, pp. 43-44).

In a 1976 lecture given in a course of Reich's work at New York University, Morton Herlowitz, a practicing medical organonist, amplified some of Koopman's points. He recommends that mother and child be allowed to retain visual and tactile contact following the baby's birth. He repeated that male babies should not be circumcised. The baby should be fed on demand, as much as it wants, and be allowed to suck for as long as it wants. The child should be allowed to wean itself. When solid foods are appropriate, the child should be provided with an assortment of nourishing and appetizing foods and allowed to choose his own menu. The child should optimally be allowed to toilet train himself, in no case before sphincter control develops at about one and a half. If the mother cannot tolerate waiting until the child trains himself when most

children will, between about three and four, she should train him gently, with a great deal of positive reinforcement. When the child reaches the phallic stage, between three and six years, he will want to explore his own genitals and to experiment with other children, mostly of the opposite sex. Parents should be accepting and casual about the child's sexuality, but never themselves inhibitionistic or provoking to the child. At all stages of development the child should be allowed free expression of negative (as well as positive) emotions, such as anger, rage, crying, hatred, sadness, without, however, allowing him to injure others (Martin, 1942, p. 20). The adults in the child's environment should express their own natural feelings, including anger and annoyance; but the child should be protected from unreasonable anger, fright, or moralizing (Martin, p. 28).

Underlying these principles is the assumption that if the child is allowed to gratify his normal, healthy drives, he will not have to develop destructive, secondary drives (Wolfe, 1944, p. 70). "Gratification of natural needs...will never make spoiled children; it will only make independent, contented personalities" (Martin, 1942, p. 30). The goal of self regulation, then, is not mere adjustment, but rather the ability to make the environment acknowledge one's own needs and personality development; and to do this rationally and fully, not neurotically and inhibitedly (Martin, 1943, p. 178).

The main outlines of the concept of self regulation, it should be pointed out, were forged in the early part of this century as an antidote to the excessive authoritarianism and repressiveness of the Victorian era (Greene, 1974, p. 184). Child rearing practices generally, however, are believed to have changed somewhat since Neill and Reich first began to evolve their ideas (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Erlanger, 1974). These differences are reflected in an article in the *Journal of Orgonomy* describing the Fifteenth Street School, a day school reflecting organomic principles and patterned to some extent on Summerhill. Patricia Greene, its director, contrasts her own policies with those of Neill:

To compensate for the harsh rigidity and repressiveness of their early lives, Neill allowed children to rule the school and submitted himself to majority regulations established by the student government. Sometimes he

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would encourage children to break windows and steal, knowing that once their angry rebellion had been expressed, the natural, creative, life-positive forces would take over...

Whereas the battle for life had to be fought in those days against excessive structure and rigidity, today we are faced with the opposite, a battle against the forces of disintegration – things seem to be coming apart at the seams.

Due to permissiveness at home, to the abandonment by parents of their natural authority, to the loss of energetic and emotional content in life, and to an intellectualization of feelings, parents are raising children whose structures are very weakly held together, who are holding on to themselves and to life by a slender thread... Children subjected to such intellectual strains and permissiveness in place of the freedom to express natural feelings are understandably not very capable of self regulation. Freedom itself and any kind of excitement rouse in them great anxiety and cause outbreaks of anger or brattiness which they simply cannot handle. So, at the same time that we allow the children expression of their basic energetic functions, we also try to hold them together so that this opportunity for real expression won't frighten them to the point where they fall apart (pp. 184-185).

Barbara Koopman notes similar problems in many children in her psychiatric practice:

Hyperpermissiveness in non-sexual matters is another pitfall of modern child-rearing. For emotional health, the child does not require instant gratification of every whim and wish. Many parents who are capable of real warmth lavish material supplies upon their children as a substitute contact. They fail to teach the child to be considerate of the rights of others. They also abdicate from guidance and instilling a sense of responsibility. The child grows up a self-centered little monster who thinks the world owes him a living without his having to exert himself in the slightest. He has been overindulged, but at the same time has never experienced any real, meaningful contact, so is love-starved at the core, tense, and miserable with his horn of plenty, without even knowing

why. This is a far cry from the self-regulation proposed by Reich, where basic needs are met but limits are set. Here the very opposite prevails (p. 53).

These quotations demonstrate the assertion made above that self regulation is seen by its proponents as an alternative to both authoritarian and permissive styles of child rearing, and that the central concept remains essentially as originally formulated by Reich and Neill:

...freedom is the opportunity to express all the basic energetic impulses emanating from the core (emotional, physical, and intellectual), and that this expression becomes license when the movement is from the secondary layer. One has the freedom to express one's rational core self (as long as it doesn't interfere with the rights of others). The emotions that derive from the secondary layer are irrational and always interfere with life, and hence with the rights of others. They are therefore always licentious... The unchannelled expression of these secondary emotions (contempt, hatred, greed, jealousy, and stubbornness), which were caused originally by emotional deprivation and the inability to express the anger resulting from it, is license (Greene, p, 186).

As noted initially, the concept of self regulation or freedom for children is perhaps best known in the United States through the works of A.S. Neill, especially his book, *Summerhill* (1960). Neill was not, however, the first exponent of these ideas in the twentieth century. His direct antecedent was Homer Lane, the American founder of a self-governing reform school in Dorset, England, called the Little Commonwealth. In his introduction to a collection of Lane's lectures entitled *Talks to Parents and Children*, Neill acknowledges his debt to Lane in his characteristically "fireside" style:

Homer Tyrell Lane, of all the men I have known, was the one who inspired me most. I first met him in 1917, when I visited his Little Commonwealth in Dorset, England, where in 1913 he had been appointed superintendent of a colony of delinquent boys and girls who governed themselves in a small democracy, each person – including Lane himself – having one vote... He showed

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me...that the only way was to be, as he phrased it, "on the side of the child." It meant abolishing all punishment and fear and external discipline; it meant trusting children to grow in their own way without any pressure from outside, save that of communal self government... Lane showed me that emotions were infinitely more powerful and more vital than intellect (p. 5).

He introduced me to child psychology. He was the first man I had heard of who brought depth psychology to the treatment of children (p. 8).

When, in 1927, Neill founded his own school, it incorporated most of Lane's principles. At Summerhill, education was directed not toward the traditional goals of achievement of any predetermined pattern of adult life, or even set of skills, but rather toward valuing the process of living, the process of creating, with the child "designing his own way of living and following through the implications of this design" (Hemmings, 1973, p. 74). In other words, Neill is not professing a new developmental pattern; he is rejecting all patterns.

In 1937, ten years after he established Summerhill in Leiston, Neill was invited to give a lecture at Oslo University and there met the second of the two men whom he counted as his mentors—Wilhelm Reich (Hemmings, 1973, p. 108). After their first evening's conversation, Neill quotes himself as saying, "Reich, you are the man for whom I have been searching for years, the man to link the soma with the psyche. Can I come and study under you?" (Neill, 1972, p. 190). For the next two years, Neill spent all of his school vacations in Oslo undergoing therapy with Reich. Their relationship rapidly became an intimate friendship (Hemmings, 1973, p. 118), which lasted until the end of Reich's life. They continued to exchange ideas and manuscripts, and Neill was Reich's guest for an extended period after he moved from Norway to Rangeley, Maine. Neill was active in Reich's defense when Reich was jailed in the United States for failure to answer the accusation of the Food and Drug Administration that he had fraudulently advertized his orgone accumulator (Neill, 1972, p. 191). After Reich's death in 1954, Neill continued his association with Reich's followers, cooperating in the publication of a volume of memoirs of Reich and continuing to contribute to the *Journal of Orgonomy*.

For Neill and Lane, the central concept of healthy child rearing had been freedom. For Reich and his followers (orgonomists), the central concept was self regulation, the extension of freedom back to the moment of birth or even conception. As Neill later noted in an article he wrote for the *Orgone Energy Bulletin* in 1950, very few of the children at Summerhill were in any sense free or self regulated. This, he felt, posed problems for his own daughter, Zoe, self-regulated from birth.

A considerable literature has developed on freedom and self regulation for children, especially in the orgonomic journals. More than forty articles, many of them of considerable length, were published in the United States between 1942 and the present. These are in addition to all of A.S. Neill's works, as well as two books by authors peripheral to but acquainted with orgonomy: Paul and Jean Ritter's *The Free Family* is an account of raising their own children with statements by the children themselves; A.E. Hamilton's *Psychology and the Great God Fun* is a description of the author's work with children in an urban day school setting and in a rural boarding school.

Self Regulation: A Socio-Political Perspective

Beginning around 1936 Wilhem Reich gradually became convinced that the only hope for the future of the human species was to radically change the nature of family life: the way children are born, raised, and in their time become parents. By 1940, Reich was convinced that the single most important work to be undertaken was the study of the child: the newborn, healthy organism. At that time he and his co-workers established a group for "The Study of the Healthy Child." The object of this group was to study and differentiate "health from sickness in newborn infants," (Reich, 1950, p. 195) and to observe children's natural development. He became increasingly concerned with the way various institutions, affected their development. He encouraged educators and social workers, as well as physicians, nurses, teachers, parents, and other lay persons, to report on their work and make observations of children. It was at this time that he developed a close personal and professional relationship with A.S. Neill, the leading exponent and

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theorist of "a free education" or what Reich termed, and Neill took up, "self regulation."

In this section, self regulation will be examined: first, as it was defined, elaborated, and applied in the work and teachings of Reich, Neill, their co-workers and students; second, as it has been revised and reconsidered by contemporary writers, students of Reich's and Neill's work, and students of self regulation as a basis for childrearing and education; and finally, as it serves to define those who accept these principles and practices as separate and different from the mainstream population.

As mentioned above, self regulation was first and foremost a condition of the individual's character structure, (Reich, 1971, pp. 155-163) and the individual's ability to, as a result of his or her health (or degree of natural genitality), (Reich, 1971, pp. 156-158) function with a genuine openness, spontaneity, and rationality.

The healthy, self regulated individual does not adjust himself to the irrational part of the world and insists on his natural rights (Reich, 1971, p. 156)..

The goal of character analysis and orgonomy were and are to help the individual resolve the blocks (both psychic and somatic) to the re-establishment of the natural processes of human life, the self-regulatory processes (Reich, 1971, p. 146-163).

As early as 1930, when Reich wrote the original version of his *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, he was clear that the only hope for a new society was to reach the masses and help them free their children.

The suppression of the natural sexuality of children and adolescents serves to mold the human structure in such a way that masses of people become willing upholders and reproducers of mechanistic authoritarian civilization (Reich, 1970, p. 322).

It was when Reich turned his attention to the problem of early childhood and development that he became more and more focused on how the newborn grows and develops, free of irrational suppression of its natural primary drives. Reich himself was not much interested in formulating a step by step definition of self regulation. As was typical of his approach, he was more interested in finding out what self regulation was by watching children,

recording the data and studying it to discover the true nature and function of these natural biological processes (Reich, 1950, pp. 194-206).

For Reich, self regulation was, as a matter of fact, not a concept at all, but a biologically observable fact (Reich, 1971, pp. 255-265) which should govern the role of adults:

The newborn infant, if no severe damage has been inflicted upon it already in the womb, brings with it all the richness of natural plasticity and developmental productivity. The newborn infant is not, as so many erroneously believe, an empty sack or a chemical machine into which everybody and anybody can pour his or her special ideas of what a human being ought to be. It brings with it an enormously productive and adaptive energy system which, out of its own resources, will make contact with its environment and *will begin to shape it according to its needs.*

The basic and paramount task of all education, which is directed by the interest in the child, and not by interest in party programs, profits, church interests, etc., is to remove every obstacle in the way of this naturally given productivity and plasticity of the biological energy. These children will have to choose their own ways of being and will determine their own fates. We must learn from them, instead of focusing upon them our own cockeyed ideas and malicious practices which have been shown up as most damaging as well as ridiculous in every new generation. It is here only for the first time that a positive and broad base of operation has been found (Reich, 1950, pp. 204-205).

For Neill, self regulation is always used as it applies to working (teaching) with children:

Self regulation means behavior that springs from the self, not from outside compulsion (Neill, 1966, p. 26).

His advice and views were all elaborations of how to deal with situations (individual children in situations) in ways that maximize a simple guiding principle (Neill, 1948,1960,1966).

**What do they, his students, know of birth and sex and death,
of their real feelings about family and school?
What are their real loyalties, as opposed to the loyalties**

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they have got from their teachers? One of my girls left Summerhill and was sent to a girl's school.

"How was it?" I said.

"Oh," she said with a chuckle, "I had a good time. You see, I was the only one who knew about babies and how they were made, and I spent my time as a sort of underground teacher, telling them all about it. Lord, they were an ignorant crowd."

"So, you corrupted the poor dears?" I said.

"Not me. I got fed up with their questions but they wouldn't leave me alone. Sex was the only thing they were interested in" (Neill, 1948, p. 198).

Like Reich, Neill was insistent that a child could not grow up self regulated unless his or her parents, and the other adults around were self regulated, or at least able to tolerate self regulation:

...a child cannot be more self regulated than his mother is.

Every mother must regulate herself first before she can rear a self regulated child (Neill, 1966, p. 26).

It was not enough to accept the principles of self regulation: one had to have a character structure that could tolerate genuine freedom.

Once we turn from the writings of Neill and Reich, we find that almost all the other work presents clearly defined principles and practical suggestions. Paul Martin develops a model for self-regulatory upbringing (Martin, 1942, p. 18). In his "Sex-Economic Upbringing," he gives what amounts to a program to follow: 1) treat the child as an individual, with rights equal to your own; 2) let the parent and child make contact with each other, and allow equal expression and particular support for the child's need to reach out; 3) allow the child's own organic rhythms of natural life functioning to develop freely and fully. Martin then built a methodology for bringing up babies that would actualize the objectives: 1) breast-feeding, on the babies' own schedule, was a primary need; 2) the parent and the educator must protect the child's natural sense of bodily pleasure in his or her own functions of elimination, sleep, play, washing, and dressing; 3) it is important "that the child's pleasure in his own body and its capacity for sexual gratification not be destroyed"; 4) masturbation in the

infant must be supported and respectfully treated as a natural function and supported and allowed to function (affirmed, not neurotically rejected or suppressed, or overly emphasized); 5) the child must be allowed to find and explore its place in the world with the help, but not the direction, of adults; 6) to the extent their own character structures allow, the parents and other adults must not interfere with the child's normal rhythms (self regulation) (Martin, 1942, pp. 18-32). Martin's article sets the pattern for the other writers on the methodology of self regulation.

In their writings and lectures, the people who worked on the issue of self regulation subscribe to Martin's basic methodological approach. In the articles by Ilse Ollendorff Reich (1944, pp. 81-90), Felicia Saxe (1944, pp. 35-72), Richard Singer (1949, pp. 165-168), Elizabeth Tyson (1944, pp. 91-94), Ernst Walter (1942, pp. 11-17), we see the same basic points made over and over again. There is in these works, and Neill's as well, a clear statement to the effect that: This is what you do if you want your child to be self-regulated. This is what sets this process off from other, more repressive ways of raising children. There is a clear and consistent sense of noting the difference between "our ways" and "their ways" (Ollendorff, 1944, pp. 81-90; Martin, 1942, pp. 18-32).

But, as mentioned above, by the time we come to the more recent writings on self regulation and its application, we are faced no longer with the strict authoritarian order against which Reich, Neill, and their co-workers were waging war. In the sixties, students and followers of Reich and Neill saw many of the ideas of Reich and Neill "superficially" accepted and applied on a wide scale. The problem in the 1960s became how to deal, not with authoritarian, repressive rigidity, but chaotic permissiveness.

The response of some workers, who continued to apply Reich's and Neill's ideas to child rearing and education, was to become themselves more concerned with setting limits and maintaining "rational order." This trend is seen particularly in the work of people like Patricia Greene (1974, pp. 181-203), Richard Blasband (1969, pp. 120-123), and Michael Ganz (1976, pp. 249-262). Patricia Greene, who ran The Fifteenth Street School, had already, by the 1960s, abandoned Neill's idea of self-government, and rejected the idea of both Reich and Neill and their earlier co-workers that all that was needed was for adults to allow for self regulation to

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survive in the new organism, and to protect the child as it grows and learns. This is very different from Greene's position that:

Due to permissiveness at home, to abandonment by parents of their natural authority, to the loss of energetic and emotional contact in life, and to an intellectualization of feelings, parents are raising children whose structures are very weakly held together.

And thus that:

We can only give the children as much freedom as they can tolerate (Greene, 1974, p. 185).

While Reich and Neill and their co-workers would have supported the analysis of the problem of permissiveness, they would have differed profoundly on the idea that the adult could, or should, decide on how much genuine freedom (as opposed to license) a child should be allowed.

What is asserted in these recent writings, and particularly in Barbara Koopman's extensive examination of these recent developments, (a major reference for most of the recent work on self regulation) is that: 1) Reich's ideas are sound and still demonstrably accurate; 2: there have been real distortions of Reich's and Neill's work; 3) the fundamental ideas and methods of self regulation are still applicable; but 4) we are faced with more and more individuals who have been "reared with the illusion of freedom" and who suffer an "intolerable tension which they cannot comprehend" (Koopman, 1973, pp. 56-57) Such individuals are not seen as the genuine product of self regulated freedom. Neither are they seen as proof of the failure of Reich's and Neill's ideas, or the justification for changing drastically those ideas to deal with child rearing in this day and age. What is needed is, on the contrary, a more active application of these ideas, to the extent possible, in any given situation (parent-child relationship, and the child's peer relating).

We see that Reich's shining dream of a sexual revolution has not come about. Sexual repression has indeed given way, but license – not freedom with responsibility – has been the outcome. This is due to the distortion of self regulation and sex-economic principles by armored man (Koopman, 1973, p. 57).

Those who read past and present literature on self regulation will have no trouble seeing that there is a clear set of principles and a specific methodology. The object of these principles and practices is seen as the effecting of a profound and radical change in the whole nature of human existence.

What Reich felt toward the end of his life, and what others like Neill and Koopman have elaborated on, was that this radical change would take a long time and that true change would only occur as more and more children were raised more and more in keeping with principles of self regulation

We shall not be the ones to build this future. We have no right to tell our children how to build their future since we proved unfit to build our own present. What, as transmission belts, we can do, however, is to tell our children exactly where and how we failed. We can, furthermore, do everything possible to remove the obstacles which are in the way of our children in building a new and better world for themselves (Reich, 1950, p. 195).

Three Types of Childrearing Literature

By 1945 there was a growing body of literature written in journals, pamphlets, and books published by the Orgone Institute Press, and one of the key features of all these publications was the focus on the child.

There are three broad types of childrearing literature that we can identify:

I. *Theoretical Writings of an Innovative Nature*

These are the writings which draw on a wide range of data and theory from many diverse disciplines, and develop a comprehensive new paradigm: the concept of "self regulation. Here we are dealing with Reich's own work and to a lesser degree, that of A.S. Neill.

II. *Writings Which Elaborate, Interpret and Explicate Reich's Major Theories and Technical Developments*

Here there are a number of writers who popularize, present, and review the material and give concrete examples from their own work. As Kuhn says in *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions*: ...when the individual scientist can take a paradigm for granted, he need no longer, in his major works, attempt to

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build his field anew, starting from first principles and justifying the use of each concept introduced. That can be left to the writer of textbooks (Kuhn, 1970, pp. 19-20).

III. *Practical Applications and Ethnographic Descriptions*

Firsthand accounts of teachers, social workers, parents, doctors, nurses, and children about their experiences in the world, and their applications of the principles of self regulation in their interaction with children and other complex educative social configurations of school, home, agency, treatment room, and hospital.

I. *Theoretical Writings of an Innovative Nature*

When we consider the theoretical and innovative writings that lead to the creation of the paradigm of "self regulation," we are dealing primarily with the writings of Wilhelm Reich and A.S. Neill.¹

Reich's written work specifically addressed to self regulation is to be found in a limited number of articles published in various organomic journals. In 1950, Reich published the article "Children of the Future" (Reich, 1950, pp. 194-206). This is in effect a manifesto. It announces the establishment of a major research undertaking to study "the healthy child." He acknowledges the debt he and his co-workers owe to the early psychoanalytic breakthrough in the understanding of the child, but he goes on to say:

...the psychoanalysts have failed to distinguish between primary and secondary perverse, cruel drives; they have left them together in one pot, so to speak, in accordance with the general "cultural" ideology, and they are continuously killing nature in the newborn while they try to extinguish the "brutish animal." They are perfectly ignorant of the fact that it is exactly this killing of the natural principle which creates the secondary and cruel nature, "human nature" so-called, and that these artificial cultural creations, in turn, make compulsive moralism and brutal laws necessary (Reich, 1950, p. 203).

In this article he makes it clear that the purpose of this work is to develop new ways of understanding the child and ways of preventing children from developing pathologies. He is very realistic about the limits of this project. He sees it as exploratory and makes it clear that:

...if it (the study) were to fail, we would learn why such projects have to fail at this time, and something important would be gained even by a negative outcome (Reich, 1950, p. 199).

What is particularly significant about this article is that it documents the fact that Reich and his co-workers had, as early as 1940, begun a comprehensive study of "the healthy child." This is years before any such study was undertaken by others in the medical and social sciences.

As early as 1927, we can see Reich's great interest in the study of the infant. His article, "About Genital Self-Satisfaction in Children," is one of the earliest on-record attempts to study infantile sexuality on the basis of direct observation. Even more significant here is Reich's insistence on the need to "support" and "affirm" the infant's sexuality. Reich says clearly:

...It is not, as we assumed hitherto, the presence of masturbation [in childhood], but quite on the contrary, its absence which constitutes an abnormality (1950, p. 63).

This article already begins to mark a deviance from the official psychoanalytic position on the nature and function of infantile sexuality.

The study of the child, specifically infantile sexuality, self regulation, freedom vs. license, the family, and normal development are deeply embedded in all of Reich's work. In *Character Analysis*, his focus is on the origin of pathologies, but the foundation for his entire discussion is based on the impact of the family on the newborn, and its ongoing impact on the child's development:

...The character formation in the child depends, however, on the character of the parents in more than one decisive way. With a sufficiently deep-reaching analysis, much of what official psychiatry considers "hereditary" can be shown to be the result of early identifications.

We do not deny a hereditary factor in the modes of reaction; even the newborn infant has its "character." But we maintain that the environment is a decisive factor (1949, pp. 155-156).

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It is, however, in four major works that Reich addresses the issue of the family, the normal child, and the social impact of abnormal (pathological) development. In *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, while the focus is on the sociology of mass-movements and their anchoring in the individual, the key to Reich's observations and theoretical discussion is rooted in a close empirical study of the family as the means of social reproduction:

...The interlacing of socio-economic structure with the sexual structure of the society and the structural reproduction of society takes place in the first four or five years and in the ... authoritarian family ... Thus the authoritarian state gains an enormous interest in the authoritarian family: It becomes the factory on which the state's structure and ideology are molded [Sic.] (1949, p. 30).

In *The Function of the Orgasm*, Reich makes his first attempt to integrate his studies of biology, psychoanalysis, history, human sexuality, economics, and sociology. He gave the name "Or-gonomy" to the new paradigm he felt had emerged from these integrative studies. At the heart of this work, again, was his discovery that the suppression of natural human sexuality, starting with the newborn and continuing through all of the individual's development, is the basic mechanism in maintaining human misery and individuals' acceptance of their misery:

...It is one of the great secrets of mass psychology that the average adult, the average child, and the average adolescent are far more prone to resign themselves to the absence of happiness than to continue to struggle for the joy of life, when the latter entails too much pain. Thus, until the psychic and social preconditions necessary for vital life have been understood and established, the ideology of happiness must remain mere verbalization (1971, p. 324).

But even before *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* and *The Function of the Orgasm* were finished, Reich had made a study of the origins of human mass neuroses. In 1931, he wrote *The Invasion of Compulsory Sex-Morality*. Drawing extensively on the anthropological work of Malinowski (1929), and his own extensive clinical experience and political activity, he came to the conclusion that:

These facts prove that self regulation of the sexual life of the community is possible through instinctual gratification (in contrast to moral regulation) (Reich, 1971, p. 11).

In this work he dearly identifies childhood and adolescence as the key periods of human development:

The fixation on an infantile instinctual goal which is regarded by psychoanalytic theory as the basis of perversions, is itself the result of the hindering of the natural genital love life of children and adolescents by the sex negating sexual order whose executive agents are the parents (1971, p. 29).

In articulating this and going on to actively study the problem and work for the sexual rights of children and adolescents, Reich moved further and further away from his more conservative colleagues, both in the psychoanalytic movement, and in leftist political circles.

The ideas developed in *The Invasion of Compulsory Sex-Morality* became the basis for Reich's detailed clinical study of the nature of infantile and adolescent sexuality. It is in *The Sexual Revolution* that Reich brings together the data on his clinical observation of the suppression of infantile and adolescent sexuality, and goes on to see how this operates in the family, and in the socio-cultural reality. It is this work that becomes the basis for subsequent focus on infantile sexuality, the study of the child, and his discovery and development of the principles and mechanisms of self regulation as a means of maintaining health in the individual and society.

In articles like "Armoring in the Newborn Infant," it is clear that by 1950 Reich had shifted his primary focus in the treatment of human pathology to the concept of mass prophylactic treatment of the family:

We assume that in a newborn infant an unwarped highly plastic bio-energy system emerges from the womb, and that from then onward it will be influenced by a multitude of various environmental impacts. The impinging impressions will begin to form the infant's specific type of reaction to pleasure and to sorrow (1951, p. 121).

Reich, however, never offers a step-by-step description of how to use self regulation as a technique for child rearing. He is primari

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ly concerned with definitions and descriptive elaboration based on empirical study. The programs for carrying out the actual practical applications are left to trained workers in medicine, education, childcare, social work, and particularly parents, who had been trained, and introduced to the new ways of raising "free children."

A.S. Neill's works are not, strictly speaking, theoretical. Neill hated theoretical writing. His works are focused on generalizations about childhood behavior, but always drawn from detailed and careful recording of his observations of children in a "free" rather than repressive environment. His books and articles fall into all three categories of Reichian literature. We can find Neill's most articulate presentation of his views on self regulation in *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Childrearing* (1960), *Freedom, Not Licence* (1966), and *Talking of Summerhill* (1971). These three books are largely drawn from ideas that had been developed in a more random manner in early works.² Selections from these appeared in *The International Journal of Sex-Economy*, and *The Orgone Energy Bulletin*. Neill's basic definition of self regulation is "behavior coming from the self, not from outside compulsion" (1971, p. 9) His writings examine what it means in terms of how we raise our children, how we teach them, how we help them grow. Unlike Reich, he tends to be less interested in the theoretical and speculative implications of his work. He focuses on the here and now. He looks at how children live their lives. In this, he performs the invaluable service of supplying a large body of data drawn from empirical (ethnographic) observation. In works like *That Dreadful School*, he gives detailed accounts of how Summerhill was run, how children behaved and interacted with adults, and always paid great attention to detailed observation of interpersonal behavior; i. e., his comments on new members to the school community and their response to freedom:

Freedom is necessary for the child because only under freedom can he grow in this natural way. I see the results of bondage in new pupils coming from prep schools and convents. They are bundles of insincerity, with unreal politeness and pseudo-manners. Their reaction to freedom is rapid and tiresome. For the first week or two they open doors for the staff, call me "Sir," wash carefully. They glance at me with "respect" which is easily recog-

nized as fear. After a few weeks of freedom they show what they are. They do all the things they have been forbidden to do in the past... It takes at least six months for them to lose their insincerity. They lose also their deference to what they think is authority, and in six months they are natural, healthy kids who say what they think without cheek or hate (1971, p. 222).

He goes on to give elaborate examples from his extensive experience and empirical observation. This is the type of careful recording that is typical of all Neill's work. It is a unique type of personal narrative with a practical pedagogic intention. Neill's data are used as a constant point of reference in Reich's development of his ideas, as well as for the ideas of students and coworkers who addressed issues of child rearing and self regulation. Neill is used as the main source of demonstrable evidence of the application and effects of self regulation.³

It is, perhaps, significant to note that it was not until 1940 that Reich and Neill began to direct their detailed and careful attention to the newborn. Much of Neill's writing focuses on children from age four or five to early adulthood. This was, of course, understandable given his daily involvement as a teacher and child therapist. But, in all of Neill's writing on children (as in Reich's), there is a profound sense that the first three or four years are the crucial period in the human being's development, and that the parents, the mother particularly, is a deciding factor in the early and later health of the individual (1960, pp. 95-240, 301-342).

II. *Writings Which Elaborate, Interpret and Explicate Reich's Major Theories and Technical Developments*

Neill's writings are an active bridge between Reich's theoretical work and the literature on the application of Reich's ideas: works that elaborate, interpret, and explicate the major issues raised by Reich and Neill in relation to self regulation and child rearing. In addition to Neill's use of Reich's ideas and his application of those ideas in his work as a teacher, therapist, and theorist/writer on child rearing and education,⁴ there is a small body of literature, mostly articles that have appeared in various journals published first by the Orgone Institute Press, and later in the *Journal of Orgonomy*.

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The most comprehensive outline, explanation, and description of the technical application of Reich's ideas on child rearing from pregnancy to adolescence appears in *Man in the Trap* by Ellsworth F. Baker.

No one can adequately understand the energetic concept of functioning unless he has worked with and carefully observed babies... When allowed to develop in the uterus of a relaxed and loving mother and born naturally, it becomes immediately an independent and efficient functioning unit. Its breathing commences immediately, and immediately it is able to observe and contact the world (1967, p. 310).

This book, which is in effect a textbook on the theory and practice of Orgonomy, devotes entire sections to bringing together and organizing Reich's (and Neill's) work on the nature of infancy (pp. 325-365), early childhood and adolescence (pp. 119-125), and reports on its practical application in Baker's own clinical practice and research studies. Baker considers and comments on each stage of development from prenatal to adolescence.

Prior to the publication of Baker's *Man in the Trap* the key sources of elaboration, interpretation, and explication of the theories and techniques of self regulated child rearing are to found in a few articles published in the various journals of the Orgone Institute.

In 1942 two articles appeared by Paul Martin.⁵ In "The Dangers of Freedom," Martin clarifies the difference between freedom and license:

Only when freedom leads to a condition that is both sick and harmful should it and must it be limited... It seems to me it would be just as insane to allow to give license to rapists and murderers to walk freely in our midst as it would to be to allow a system of upbringing to continue which creates murderers and rapists" (1942, p. 226).

This work draws heavily on Reich's and Neill's basic writings and explicates fundamental concepts, offering ample case material as a means of illustration. Martin's "Sex-Economic Up-Bringing" attempts an outline of "sex-economic (or self-regulative) pedagogy " (1943, p. 18). He draws heavily on Neill's basic teachings and

integrates them with Reich's ideas about infantile sexuality. In the long review-article of "The Healthy Child" by A.M. Nowig and "The Problem Teacher" by A.S. Neill, under the title of "Which Kind of Progress Education?" (1943) Martin shows how different the concept of self regulation is from "progressive" child rearing. This article sets the pattern for a type of piece that became a very noticeable feature in the writing on Orgonomy. There is a constant attempt to compare, contrast, evaluate, and criticize contemporary ideas on child rearing.

In Theodore Wolfe's "A Sex-Economist Answers" (1944) we see again the attempt to outline the basic principles of their approach to the whole range of child rearing problems, with constant attention to just how the proponents of this approach differ from other schools and groups who address similar problems. In this article we see another feature which becomes characteristic in the literature, the use of the question and answer format,⁶ which comes out of their active attempt to talk directly to parents, educators, and other childcare professionals.

Two articles by Felicia Saxe, "A Case History"(1945) and "Armored Human Beings Versus the Healthy Child," (1944) begin to outline an organomic technique for the treatment of early childhood pathology, while simultaneously elaborating on Reich's and Neill's ideas of the healthy child.

Ellsworth F. Baker's article "The Concept of Self Regulation" offers an in-depth examination of the key issues in the study of early childhood, and articulates "the three most important factors in self regulation," focusing on nourishment, toilet training, and the sexual nature of the infant, but emphasizing that the concept of self regulation "should be carried through in all aspects of the life of the child, his play, his associates, study, choice of food, sleeping habits, etc." (1949, p. 163).

Baker says clearly that:

This paper is based on the principles of Wilhelm Reich, the teachings of A.S. Neill...and my own work with children (p. 160).

Here we are shown one of the key features in all this work, that it is to be evaluated and examined as it is applied to real interactions (in the home, the school, and other institutions) with children, and by constant comparison to other approaches and bodies of theory

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and practice (i.e., psychoanalytic, progressive, conservative-traditional, religious) in child development.

This article by Baker (along with the subsequent sections in *Man in the Trap* noted above) becomes the model for later articles by students and co-workers of Baker. In "The Rise of the Psychopath" by Barbara Koopman we have a detailed updating (1973) of Reich's and Neill's basic principles and teachings, and a locating of these ideas and practices in the contemporary literature and treatment of children. Here we have a first attempt to reevaluate Reich's theories in an historical context. She, too, draws heavily on her own experience as a psychiatrist and organonist.

What is interesting to note is that with the exception of the Koopman articles, most recent articles dealing with the principles of and teachings on self regulation and self regulated child rearing are repetitive and offer little new insight and no research data. This can be seen largely as a result of the virtual halt to all organized research, and active social programming after Reich's imprisonment and death, with many of his co-workers withdrawing into private practice and relative silence.

III. *Practical Applications and Ethnographic Descriptions*

In the period immediately after Reich's death more and more of the third type of writing appears. There is substantial and growing body of literature that gives first-hand testimony to the effects and problems of the application of Reich's principles and Neill's teachings.

It has been pointed out already that both Neill and Reich favored the technique of writing from direct observation. They both used firsthand accounts (case studies) as an active way of developing their arguments and testing their hypotheses. There is a strong "ethnographic" element in all their writings. In addition, Reich, as editor and publisher of numerous journals, pamphlets, and books, actively sought out and encouraged people in all areas of study to write about their experiences. He, in effect, encouraged them to be trained informants and offer access to a wide range of data, based on personal direct participant observation. At times, this was less than successful by "academic" standards, but what emerged is a continuous feeling for the direct relationship of

Reich's work to "the real world." Ideas were always being tested and applied and evaluated in "the laboratory of life."

There are a number of anonymous articles, usually quite short, that appear in the journals of the Orgone Institute Press that clearly fall into this third category. These articles "bear witness," they "testify" to 1) the problems of repressive upbringing, sex- negative attitudes and anti-child education, and 2) the results and gains of self regulation, sex-positive, free, pro-child education and upbringing. There is often a tone of celebration in these pieces and a straight-talking common sense approach:

These brief observations show up a few general principles which might be re-stated here. First we might say, "Enjoy your child." Then: spend time with your child. Respect his spontaneous needs. Don't be in a hurry. Try to remember what the world looks like to him at whatever age he is" (Anon., *Int., Sex Econ & Org. Res.*, 3, 1944, p. 203)

The articles were addressed to real people who lived with real problems and had real concerns. Practical application was central to Reich's approach from the beginning.

Closely related to this type of "bearing witness" are firsthand descriptions of professional work where attempts are made to apply Reich's and Neill's principles and teachings. Here we have articles like "The Child and His Struggle" by Lucille Bellamy Denison (1945, p. 203) and "Studying the Children's Place" (by Ellen Calas (1945, pp. 156-172), both of which offer eyewitness accounts of running a free school called A Children's Place and working directly with very young children. This type of description of work with children becomes a regular feature of journals. We see it also in books like Orson Beane's description of his founding of the Fifteenth Street School (1971), in Patricia Greene's report on her experiences as director of The Fifteenth Street School (1974, pp. 181-200), or in A.E. Hamilton's *Psychology and the Great God Fun* (1955).

This approach set the tone for Gladys Meyer's report on "The Making of Fascists" (1945, pp. 191-200), written years before any of the above. Use Ollendorff's, observations on child rearing in "About Self Regulation in a Healthy Child," also fit into this mode.

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...many readers will be interested in the handling of practical everyday questions of feeding, sleeping and cleanliness of an infant and small child who is brought up entirely on these principles... the self regulated child who is trained from the beginning...to be quiet, but on the other hand a healthy, active child will not need the much more strenuous and troubled attention that the quiet and broken child needs when it is crying for hours at night, when it will not fall asleep, or when it gets sick (1944, pp. 81-82).

She talks directly about her work in self regulated child rearing.

In Richard Singer's "Play Problems of a Healthy Child" (1949, pp. 165-168) we see a direct report of how children who have been raised with self regulation cope with the daily experiences of living; their learning to solve problems and their social growth. This is even more elaborated in a full length collaborative work by Paul Ritter and his family, in which both parents and children write about their experiences (1975).

In Dorothy I. Post's "Freedom Is Not So Dangerous" (1943, pp. 148-152) and Elizabeth Tyson's "The Armored Teacher" (1944, pp. 91-94) we see this approach applied to the personal experience of teachers who have attempted to use Reich's and Neill's ideas in structured non-free schools.

We also have a few examples of first-hand accounts by children who have been allowed to grow up in families that applied self regulation. These accounts are limited due to the very few incidents of such experience. There is Peter Reich's *Book of Dreams* (1973) (although deeply affected by the fact that his father, Wilhelm Reich, was imprisoned and died when Peter was only 12). We have the accounts of the Ritter children, and reports of other children as told through adults, i.e. in Neill's works. We also have examples of what a non-self-regulated upbringing was like. All this adds to a growing literature of "the healthy" vs. "the unhealthy" (armored) individual. It is a literature which is designed to demonstrate the reality of self regulation (Barrymore, 1976, pp. 263-270).

Closely related to this third category but falling within the second category are a number of review articles. These "Reviews" become a regular feature in all the journals published by the

Orgone Institute Press and have been actively maintained in the current *Journal of Orgonomy*. These reviews focus on a wide range of other child rearing techniques, theoretical literature, and educational practices. They function to: 1) keep the readers up-to-date on the latest research and new data, 2) compare and contrast self-regulative child rearing to other approaches, 3) gauge the impact of Orgonomic principles and teachings on mainstream research, writing, teaching, approach, and practice, and 4) recommend how to proceed in a manner consistent with the principles and work of self regulational child rearing.

...It is in this concentration upon the interpretation of life, the fundamental life function of pulsation, the nature of the basic life energy, Orgone, in human beings and in the cosmic universe that Reich has provided the base on which a theory of child development can be made without confusion, evasion or mystical retreat. That this leads to development of different human structure and deep-reaching changes in the ways of behaving which make up culture is inevitable...(Meyer, 1945, p. 227).

There are reviews of Neill's books (Hamilton, 1949, pp. 189-193) and of new studies of the nature of childhood (Meyer, 1945, pp. 224-227), discussions of Anna Freud's work (Silvert, 1950, pp. 84- 87), examinations of Margaret Ribble's *The Rights of Infants* (Tyson, 1944, pp. 142-159), and basic evaluations of the latest developments in psychoanalytic theory (Meyer, 1944, pp. 213-219). In recent issues of the *Journal of Orgonomy* we find these evaluative, exploratory review articles greatly expanded (Greene, 1972, pp. 253- 257). There is, for example, a long examination of John Holt's *How Children Fail* and *How Children Learn* (Blasband, 1969, pp. 120-123), which shows the most extended form of this use of the review as a means to elaboration and bearing witness.

Reading through these reviews we become aware that there is actually a rough scale that emerges for evaluating the works being considered. There are three broad levels. Works under consideration are: 1) consistent with principles of self-regulative child rearing; 2) to some degree incorporating the ideas and principle of self regulation, or offering a progressive position, although not fully committed to self regulation (although not committed, they make a genuine contribution); 3) totally representative of repressive

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sex-negative, non-self-regulation principles, and theory. In these reviews, the books or work being studied are placed in some position on this scale. All the reviews try to find some value in the work under review, and each work reviewed is seen as a chance to learn something about what to do or not to do. In her discussion of the work of Gesell and Ilg, Meyer comments on the problems, but also on the value of even a limited commitment to freedom:

Children allowed to grow in a modicum of freedom may be better able to wage their own battle for their natural needs. The mother following Gesell may not have help in understanding her positive contact with the child if she has it, and no support in real affirmation, but if she has no natural contact, under the influence of Gesell she may harry her child less (1945, p. 227).

The reviews are a particularly useful frame to constantly evaluate not only the "problems" but also the successes of self-regulative practices in comparison to other approaches. Readers have a chance to see how their views relate to the generally accepted views of the mainstream in the sciences, social sciences, and education. The reviewers all "bear witness" to the more positive effect of self-regulation, and the need for more and fuller public education. They see this body of literature as applicable to life and a constant by which to judge life. This new system is constantly examined, evaluated, studied, and used as a way of responding to other systems. Typical of this is Gladys Meyer's review of Gesell and Ilg's book:

...I believe I would give the book to some parents, those perhaps who can only accept this much. It might also be a beginning for parents and teachers just becoming acquainted with children who might grow even further in time... As it stands, *Infants and Child in the Culture of Today* will make them all too comfortable with suppressive aspects of vital areas of child life (1945, p. 227).

Conclusion

One may say then that the fundamental difference between self-regulation and almost all other consciously articulated child rearing ideologies is its lack of a morphological baseline. The best-

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known of such morphologies are psychosexual stages of development posited by Freud and modified and amplified by later theorists, such as Erikson. Virtually the entire field of child development, from whatever theoretical standpoint one views it, can be seen as a series of competing morphologies. But, for the proponents of self regulation, the assumption is that there are no guidelines: the child is not expected to conform to any timetable, no matter how broad, nor is he expected to even follow an ordinary path of development. That is to say, an individual child will probably toilet train himself around three or four, but he could also do it at age two or age seven. Fed on demand and allowed to wean himself, he might reverse the expected order of weaning, toilet training, and genital exploration. This is the true meaning of self regulation.

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Notes

1. To some extent, the work of Homer Lane as reported, explicated, and developed by A.S. Neill also has a role in the development of the general concepts of self regulation. Lane, however, wrote very little and had a relatively short career. His main contribution was the concept of self-government in educational institutions, which became central to Neill's organization of Summerhill. See Homer Lane, *Talks to Parents and Teachers*, (New York: Schocken, 1928-1960).
2. Neill published a series of books in the 1940s and 1950s. The key titles in this series are *That Dreadful School*, *The Problem Child*, and *The Free Child*. Many of these appeared in selections in the *International Journal of Sex-Economy* and the *Orgone Energy Bulletin*.
3. Excerpts from Neill's works were republished by Reich in the *International Journal of Sex-Economy and Orgone Research* from 1940-1945.
4. *Summerhill*, *Freedom Not License*, and *Talking of Summerhill* clearly show Neill's development of Reich's ideas.
5. Pseudonym for Dr Tage Philipson, a close associate of Reich's. The pseudonym was used to protect him because he was in occupied Denmark.

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