Self-Regulation and the Outside World

By A. S. Neill*

Recently *Picture Post* published an article with photographs of our Zoë, now aged 2½. The journalist-photographer who suggested the article said: "I select Zoë because of all children in England she has the best environment for self-regulation. . . . Summerhill School and two parents who believe completely provide a chance that few children ever have."

Alas, he was too optimistic. In the school we have 70 children who were not self-regulated in infancy. Some were spanked; some were "trained" to be clean; some were given a conscience about sex . . . and Zoë mixes with the lot. She had absolutely no fear of animals, and loved to be with cows and horses and dogs. The other day I took her out in the car and I stopped at a farm.

"Shall we go and look at the moo cows?" I asked, but she suddenly looked frightened.

"Pardon," she said, "moo cows eat you."

I asked her where she had got that idea.

"The Cottage kids told me," she said. The Cottage is our infant house where the up-to-sevens live.

She often plays with Gertrude, aged eleven, a girl who has a fussy mother. I found Gertrude and Zoë playing with dolls. Gertrude divided them into two sections, the good ones and the bad ones.

"Now, you are a naughty baby," she lectured one of them, "and I'm going to spank you and shut you up in the dark box" (ironically enough it was the orgone accumulator). My wife and I had to tell Gertrude severely that she wouldn't be allowed to play with Zoë if she talked such nonsense.

The chief offender is Liz, a girl a year older than Zoë, a child who came with a very stiff stomach. Her mother had "trained" her so that she was house-clean at 6 months and off the bottle somewhere about the same time.

Liz takes Zoë into water closets and they do oo-hos together. . . . no harm in that, but then Liz says guiltily: "You mustn't tell your Mummy though." Then Liz has an exaggerated interest in her vagina and is always putting things into it. Zoë came in one day saying: "I have a stone in my fanny. Liz told me to put it in," and my wife found a longish stone in her vagina. Up to this time Zoë has had no special interest in her sexual apparatus. She loves to be tickled on the back, and only now and again says: "Tickle my fanny, Mummy." She has much interest in my sex organ and asked what it was called and was of course told, but complications arise when, in a teashop, she informs sundry strangers that "I've got a fanny but Daddy has a penis."

Today on a crowded beach she refused to put on her bathing costume, demanding over and over again: "Why should I?" To that most sensible question we could only give the same reply: "Because everyone bathing here has to wear one." I add that a year ago, when she was naked at the seaside, a few mothers of children complained of the "immodesty."

We all are aware, of course, that sooner or later our self-regulated babies will have to come up against the emotional plague, but we keep hoping to delay the contact as long as possible, fearing to allow our babies to meet it before they are strong enough to ignore or conquer it. And we fail in England just as you do in America. Yet so far I have not had experience enough to know how much damage the outside world can do if the home situation is one of freedom and love. I often get letters from parents . . . "I don't want my child to be taught religion in the State school. Should I claim exemption?" I answer: "If you do the child will have to sit alone while the class gets religion. He will feel himself odd, and hate to be a thing apart. Safer, I think, to let him attend the class, and you can counteract any stupid ideas when he brings them home." I have known cases where the segregated child began to have an abnormal interest in religion because it was forbidden fruit.

I discussed this question with fathers and mothers in U. S. A. last summer. A few orgone therapists were alarmed about having to send their children to the wrong schools . . . and here I am, worried about having my own child in the right school! I see no way other than compromising a little for the child's own sake. If we say to a son of 5: "Tommy, you can play with your wee wee as much as you like at home, but don't do it in school or the street or a store," we are of course doing something bad, but the alternative

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is worse, the stiff-stomached disapproval of other parents who won't let their children play with the "dreadful child."

This brings up the vexed question of sex play with other children. When our girl is five the boys of that age, un-self-regulated, will have a sadistic attitude to sex play, and her natural feelings may get bad shocks. Reich says that she will automatically reject the wrong sex play, and I hope he is right. Yet, even if she does, where is she to get her natural tender sex play? Unfortunately we can't have a central school that will contain Peter Reich and Erica Wolfe and Wendy Hamilton and Zoë and the other children of orgone therapists in New York. If we had, the plague outside would look for opportunities to step in and kill natural childhood. The later problem of how they are to find love mates in a sick world we cannot even conjecture about.

All the same I remain optimistic. Self-regulated children will never walk backwards, for their faith in life will be unconscious and fundamentally immune from the moralists and religionists and life-killers. Difficulties they will have, must have, but they will never subscribe to hatred and social death. But we must be on our toes all the time to support them. When the outside enemy gives them fears and complexes, we must always attack with every weapon we have, and, fortunately, the voice of a parent is of greater force than that of the parent over the garden wall. Until I met Reich I thought that it was enough to give the child freedom, trusting that freedom alone would save the child. Reich said: "No, that isn't enough." He was right. With the enemy at the gate we must be positive, not only, for example, taking self-sex play for granted (as we would do in a sane society) but positively showing the child that we are fighting for its natural right to self-sex play and heterosexual play.

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Children in a future age
On reading this indignant page,
Know that in a former time
Love, sweet love, was thought a crime.—William Blake
Projeto Arte Org
Redescobrindo e reinterpretando W. Reich

Caro Leitor
Infelizmente, no que se refere a orgonomia, seguir os passos de Wilhelm Reich e de sua equipe de investigadores é uma questão bastante difícil, polêmica e contraditória, cheia de diferentes interpretações que mais confundem do que ajudam.
Por isto, nós decidimos trabalhar com o material bibliográfico presente nos microfilmes (Wilhelm Reich Collected Works Microfilms) em forma de PDF, disponibilizados por Eva Reich que já se encontra circulado pela internet, e que abarca o desenvolvimento da orgonomia de 1941 a 1957.

Dividimos este "material" de acordo com as revistas publicadas pelo instituto de orgonomia do qual o Reich era o diretor.
01- International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research (1942-1945).
02- Orgone Energy Bulletin (1949-1953)
03- CORE Cosmic Orgone Engineering (1954-1956)

E logo dividimos estas revistas de acordo com seus artigos, apresentando-os de forma separada (em PDF), o que facilita a organizá-los por assunto ou temas.
Assim, cada qual pode seguir o rumo de suas leituras de acordo com os temas de seu interesse.
Todo o material estará disponível em inglês na nuvem e poderá ser acessado a partir de nossas páginas Web.

Sendo que nosso intuito aqui é simplesmente divulgar a orgonomia, e as questões que a ela se refere, de acordo com o próprio Reich e seus colaboradores diretos relativos e restritos ao tempo e momento do próprio Reich.
Quanto ao caminho e as postulações de cada um destes colaboradores depois da morte de Reich, já é uma questão que extrapola nossas possibilidades e nossos interesses. Sendo que aqui somente podemos ser responsáveis por nós mesmos e com muitas restrições.

Alguns destes artigos, de acordo com nossas possibilidades e interesse, já estamos traduzindo.
Não somos tradutores especializados e, portanto, pedimos a sua compreensão para possíveis erros que venham a encontrar.

Em nome da comunidade Arte Org.
Textos da área do desenvolvimento infantil

Texts from the area of child development

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