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The paper enquires into some aspects of the concepts of responsibility, reality and determinism in order to examine the relationships of these elements with educational theory and practice. It reviews the current views on responsibility and reality as determinate and principal causative factors in mental health and maturity and suggests a mode of human functioning in which a meaningful synthesis of these concepts is possible. Included in the discussion are some of the educational implications for teachers and parents.

P. S. Fry*

Reality, Responsibility and Determinism in Educational Development[1]

The field of humanistic education and humanistic psychology is undergoing a critical degree of expansion. It is critical in that it represents both special opportunities and special dangers. This expansion has been going on for some time, especially in European countries, and is related to ideas that have deep roots and origins in the history of Western philosophical thinking. Recently there have also been some interesting auguries in the North American Continent which has been slow to recognize the value of this concept.

It is especially at a time of such critical expansion that there is a need for careful, rigorous and fundamental examination of the directions and assumptions that prevail in the field. There is a dangerous temptation for educators in the expanding field of humanistic learning to talk in terms of the ideal, the abstract, and the less immediately attainable needs in which operational clarification is not immediately sought nor expected. It is in exactly such a developing field that rigorous investigation of educational and philosophical dimensions of humanistic learning will bear greatest fruit. One need only make a cursory sweep through the professional journals to see how vivaciously the professionals and public are responding to the philosophically humanistic aspects of the helping professions. A great stirring is evident. It is sincere, thoughtful and searching. It is addressed to the human condition, to life as lived.[2]

The prevailing momentum in the field of humanistic education should not necessarily be viewed as self-justifying. Thoughtful scholars, practitioners and educators should be concentrating on satisfying some of the more personal and practical exigent needs of youth in the context of a humanistic education. A prolonged and unbalanced delay may tend to produce despair or discouragement, especially among the young who expect so much from the expanding conditions of a humanizing learning process.

For more than half a century educators and psychologists under the aegis of a falsely sophisticated and "soft" pedagogy have come to regard terms such a 'control', 'determinism', 'responsibility', 'reality', and 'discipline' as something

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[1]This paper is a summary of an extended report previously prepared for the Humanization Mission of The Alberta Human Resources Research Council.

[2]E. B. Beck, *Guidelines for Guidance* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, Co., 1966), p. IX.

quite repressive and unenlightened. The not-so-new emphasis on training for personal and social responsibility, for adjustment to social reality, and discipline in human affairs has, in the minds of many humanistic educators, implied force and coercion in education, and a corresponding lack of compassion and understanding. For many, raised in the tradition of a 'soft' theology which speaks of unconditional love, unconditional positive regard, and existential freedom for all individuals, concepts such as social responsibility, discipline, control and training for reality imply an almost "Skinnerian" manipulation and deterministic management of behavior. These terms have come to be so permeated with the old fashioned conceptions of punitive controls that it is necessary to start reinterpreting them in the light of more contemporary formulations in humanistic education.

In the meantime, scientific interest in the concepts of responsibility, social control and behavior management has steadily mounted. Authors such as Glasser[3], London[4], Mowrer[5], Shaw[6], and Szasz[7] are presenting viewpoints about human nature and human interaction in which the humanistic dimensions of love, empathy, and self-awareness on the one hand, and the concepts of responsibility, control and obligation and duty on the other hand, have been at least tacitly linked together. It is repeatedly evident in the body of their writings that these authors are intent upon creating and preserving conditions which promote discipline, order, freedom and meaningful existence in the best sense of these terms. As a significant addition to Rogerian thinking with its focus on the acceptance and understanding of the individual's subjective reality, these authors go further and call for responsibility, concern, commitment, action and also the legitimate use of power and authority to discipline and control when necessary.

As Mowrer[8] remarks: The whole phenomenon of personal competence, integration to 'adjustment' has been so permeated with the medical conceptions of health and disease . . . there is today a growing tendency on the part of psychologists to abandon the whole medical model in this domain and to think in terms of good and bad decisions, choices, actions for which the individual must himself take complete responsibility. In a provocative lecture entitled "Our search for Mental Health", Mowrer takes the position that we must not condone irresponsibility even in the neurotic individual. Whereas the Freudian view considers neurosis a disease, the causative factors of which lie *outside* the individual, Mowrer contends that neurosis is a way of life which is largely determined by the individual himself. The neurotic individual *is* responsible in the same sense that his neurosis is his 'own idea'. "It is a way of behaving, a life style, which is probably just as much the choice of the individual himself". Discerning critics of this position have been shocked by the so-called antihumanistic overtone and been quick to ask how an individual who becomes neurotic can be held responsible for behavior that is caused by factors outside him.

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[3]W. Glasser, *Reality Therapy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

[4]P. London, *Modes and Morals of Psychotherapy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

[5]O. H. Mowrer, "Some Philosophical Problems in Mental Disorder and its Treatment", *Harvard Educational Review* 23 (Spring, 1953) pp. 117-127.

[6]B. W. Shaw, "A Scientific Interpretation of the Concept of 'Individual Responsibility' in Psychology", *The Canadian Psychologist* 11 (1970) pp. 146-151.

[7]T. Szasz, "Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychology", *Archives of General Psychiatry* 1 (1959) pp. 455-463.

[8]Mowrer, *op. cit.* pp. 117-127.

But Mowrer takes a firm stand. Neurosis according to him is an individual's "own idea". The individual becomes neurotic by resorting to deception and evasion and by turning against his conscience in the face of misdeeds and socially disapproved behavior. Mowrer contends that if a person is responsible for *any* action then he is neither more, nor less, responsible for the steps that lead to a neurotic breakdown. But there is an important sense in which the neurotic is *not* responsible: he tries to engage in certain forbidden actions and at the same time avoid the normal consequences of his behavior and his actions. Irresponsibility is his greatest offense and one of the main objectives of education and the teacher is to get the individual, little by little, to become increasingly willing to be responsible, to take rather than evade the consequences, and in this way to be changed by reality instead of trying to live in a false world of his own creation.

Mowrer's position on the responsibility of the individual for his way of life is supported by Mainord[9] and Glasser[10]. Their sociological approach puts an unavoidable stress on such concepts as responsibility, obligation, integrity and merit. While using predominantly objective and naturalistic language, these authors seem to be recapturing some of the great insights of traditional morality and ethics. Perhaps, a psychological and moral revolution is in progress but one which emphasizes naturalistic and humanistic considerations rather than the traditional metaphysics and mythology.

Shaw[11] points to the basic dilemma of our times when he observes that the pursuit of a scientific analysis of human behavior and the application of our understanding of human behavior both continue to be confused and impeded by various concepts of attitudes towards 'individual responsibility'. We study the determinants of behavior on the basis of lawful causality and yet the prevailing *Zeitgeist* includes a fairly strong commitment to the position that an individual must be held 'responsible' (at least to some degree) for his own behavior, and therefore what he does is a result of what he 'chooses to do'. Discussions of the widely inclusive area of determinism and freedom have thus far not led to any clear acceptance of a model of man. Both Shaw and Hitt[12] suggest that it is high time that educators bring together a set of viewpoints on responsibility, reality, control and determinism which represent the more contemporary formulations of humanistic thinkers and educators, and which assist in our accepting a model of man that combines the scientific with the philosophical; makes use of behavioral determinism in attempts to predict and control behavior as well as allowing for the humanistic experience of self-will and free choice. Rather than treat the two approaches as antagonistic, existential behaviorism as we view it here maintains a syzygic view considering either one alone as an incomplete account of human behavior.

The issue of determinism versus free choice in behavior has always been keen, but it is persuasive to think that it is more troublesome now than it has been before. Kelly[13] in his discussion of free will *vs.* determinism presents a popular

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[9]W. Mainord, "A Therapy", Research Bulletin of Mental Health Research Institute, Fort Stilacoom, Washington, 5 (1962), pp. 85-92.

[10]W. Glasser, *op. cit.*

[11]B. W. Shaw, *op. cit.*

[12]W. D. Hitt, "Two Models of Man", *American Psychologist, 24* (July, 1969) pp. 651-658.

[13]W. A. Kelly, *Educational Psychology,* (Milwaukee: Bruce), 1956.

definition of controls and restraints that is important to psychological and sociological theory and practice:

> Duty, obligation, merit, all imply responsibility and freedom. The world's social system is based upon the assumption that every normal person has a free will. Codes of law and legal trials *assume* that man has the power of self-determination, that he is, therefore, answerable for violations—Man knows that he has elected to act as he did, that it was possible for him to do otherwise (p. 146).

The central point in Kelly's discussion is that in dealing with human behavior it is our assumption that there is a measure of basic freedom of choice available to the individual. Within limits he can move in given directions. These ideas are congruent with Glasser's[14] development of the concepts of responsibility, reality and determinism.

According to Glasser, consequences of certain behaviors must be set in light of current knowledge of human behavior and environment in order to optimize the probabilities of achieving defined individual or social goals. Individuals must be made aware of the consequences as part of the processes of increasing the probability of achieving the goals for which the consequences were designed. When failure to achieve personal and social goals is evidenced, we would not be guided by the free will — responsibility position. Rather we would examine the consequences and see where more success may have been expected now or in the future and what alternative paths of action would be required for the individual. This position emphasizes the analysis and management of the determinants of the individual's behavior and while it is completely congruent with a sound scientific basis of behavior it concentrates equally on the humanistic concepts of love, involvement, and personal identity. While training in self-control is emphasized and social control is encouraged the central point in Glasser's writing is that the nurturing atmosphere of the classroom and consulting room, the incredible investment of one person in another, the almost total address to the student's emotional life: these are the important preconditions of change.

In examining the question as to what is wrong with those who need psychiatric treatment, Glasser contends that they have not been satisfying their needs. While for Freud, the needs which were presumably unfulfilled are those of sex and aggression, for Glasser, the basic needs are for relatedness and respect. From the standpoint of education and the teacher it may be hypothesized that children become delinquents or neurotic if they do not satisfactorily fulfill these two basic needs. They behave irrationally, irresponsibly and with hostility for seemingly unexplainable reasons; they often act out character problems without seeming regard for the rights and feelings of others or normal social values. If we examine this behavior in terms of need fulfillment, we would discover that the purpose of their behavior is to gain recognition and attention or it is an angry reaction to their inability to gain recognition through socially acceptable pathways. Most often it is a combination of these conditions. Rather than draw into a psychosis, most individuals with character problems deny the reality of their environment and fight the reality of the world in an attempt to wrest a need fulfillment from it forcibly. Thus axiomatic to the concept of need fulfillment are the concepts of human involvement, closeness, and psychological warmth and it would follow that

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[14]Glasser, *op. cit.*

all education directed to student maturity, conscientiousness, responsibility, and reality, must be based upon the two elements of love and self-worth.

In the home and school it would follow that love must best be thought of as a social responsibility. When children do not learn to be responsible for each other, to care for each other, and to help each other, not only for the sake of others but for their own sake, then love becomes a weak and limited concept. Education for social responsibility should be a part of every school programme so that it is in the context of social responsibility alone that a child fulfills his basic need for a successful identity which, in turn, rests upon the fulfillment of the basic needs for love and self-worth.

Thus the job of the teacher, or educator, is not only to get involved with the person but to get involved with him in a way that he is able to present *reality* to him.

In order to educate for reality, Glasser contends that natural consequences are relevant to the behavior of children. Although implied and embedded in this paper as a whole, there is a way of thinking about the question of what is realistic and what is not, which can perhaps be made more explicit by pointed references to the remote and immediate consequences of the behavior which is being judged or evaluated.

More precisely speaking, an action can be called realistic or unrealistic only when its remote, as well as immediate consequences are taken into consideration and compared and weighed. If the evil, pain, and suffering which ultimately occur as a result of a given action exceed the immediate satisfaction which it produced, that action may be termed unrealistic; whereas if the satisfaction which ultimately occurs as a result of an action is greater than the immediate effort or sacrifice associated with it, such an action can be called realistic. In the final analysis, it is the capacity to choose between these two types of behavior that we call reason; . . . once characterized, the truly educated person who knows can appraise the consequences of his actions in terms of a temporal interpretation.

In a paper entitled "Formulations Regarding the Two Principles of Mental Functioning", Freud[15] made the distinction between what he called the pleasure principle and the reality principle: and again the distinguishing criterion was a temporal one. However, while praising the reality principle, Freud paradoxically glorified pleasure and permissiveness. For Freud 'conventional morality' is unrealistic in the sense of making demands for controls, restraints and the pricks of conscience.

However, authors such as Glasser, Mowrer, and Mainord are urging that morality be "reintroduced" and "reinitiated" and that education be directed toward getting the individual more realistic in the sense of making him more responsible, willing to make more sacrifices for long term gains and satisfactions. Thus the educational problem of our times is that of getting another person to abandon what may be called the unrealistic pleasure principle and to adopt the long-term pursuit of satisfaction which the reality principle implies.

An essential aspect of education and socialization is that of providing the immature person living in his irreality some compensation, some substitute satisfac-

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[15]S. Freud, "Formulations Regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning", in *Collected Papers* Vol. IV (London: Hogarth Press, 1946) pp. 13-21.

tion, for the primitive satisfactions he is being asked to give up in order to engage constructively in the reality of the environment.

Such a position on reality is in full accord with the observations of Buhler[16], Fromm[17], Goldstein[18], and Maslow[19]. Each of these authors gives important reasons for formulating a concept of reality that gives due weight to the human being's positive relationship with reality. The observations of these researchers show clearly how the losing, or gaining, of a foothold in reality is ultimately tied up with the thwarting or the satisfaction of the basic needs of love and acceptance.

The impact of reality on the perceiver is acknowledged by Hartmann[20] as a potentially direct one in object formation process. This impact must undoubtedly be quite positive in nature before the individual living being engages in any reality testing. This positive impact brings out what Erikson[21] so aptly calls 'trust' of the reality. Given this trust and acceptability of reality, the living being continues to engage in developing a creative constructive relationship with the reality around him and continues to engage in an exploration of the unknown, unexplained and unpredictable factors of that reality. A young bird will try his wings, a child treading on slippery ground is known to try it for safety, and so on.

Disequilibrium or unexpected disruption of an orderly relationship with reality occurs if, indeed, encounter brings on pain, loss of warmth and affection and, in general, results in a thwarting of needs. Reality may then become equated with pain, frustration, coldness and solitude. The individual is then influenced by the hindering aspects of reality and begins to deny and escape reality like Ribble's[22] babies who took to rocking or rolling because nobody ever picked them up, or who took to continuous sleeping in order to escape an unhappy reality in which nobody loved them.

The cardinal question then is how the individuals who have lost touch with reality can be helped to regain this contact. In other words, what are the practical consequences of this reality concept for the student and the teacher. For the dynamically oriented educator it will perhaps, alter the understanding of the individual's growth and development, particularly in reference to the reality concept. The teacher will not only search for the frustrations which the individual could not overcome but also for the opportunities which he did not recognize, acknowledge or utilize to advantage[23]. These observations are meant to diminish the importance of 'negative' reality in evaluating the individual's adjustment and to cultivate in the individual a positive anticipation of reality and a preparedness to cope, trust and vigilance[24] in his relationship with the real world.

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[16]C. Buhler, "The Reality Principle", *American Journal of Psychotherapy,* Vol. 8, Oct. 1954, pp. 626-647.

[17]E. Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York: Rinehart), 1955.

[18]K. Goldstein, *Human Nature In The Light of Psychopathology,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1940.

[19]A. H. Maslow, "Self-actualizing People: A Study of Psychological Health", *Personality Symposium,* (New York: Grune & Stratton), 1950.

[20]W. Hartmann, "Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation", in *Organization & Pathology of Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press), 1951, p. 384.

[21]E. Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crises,* (New York: W. W. Norton) 1968.

[22]M. A. Ribble, *The Rights of Infants,* (New York: Columbia University Press), 1943.

[23]Buhler, *op. cit.*

[24]H. Liddel, "The Role of Vigilance in the Development of Animal Neurosis", *Anxiety,* (New York: Grune & Stratton), 1950.

If we extend the examination of this approach to the classrooms and teachers it must follow that the teacher must quickly build a firm emotional relationship with the student who has failed to establish such relationships in the past.

However, one thing which cannot be overlooked by the educator is that 'lawfulness', 'orderliness', responsibility', and 'restraint' are important to the 'reality of the environment'. While man in his 'reality' is not seen as a hapless and hopeless organism, a creature who is the victim of his surroundings, he does live in a world in which a reality is determined for him and he is answerable and responsible to others.

From the standpoint of the teacher, the child must be trained to live his life in the broad confines of this partly predetermined reality. Thoughtless conformity to the reality is not what is expected of the individual, nor a passive neutral non-responsible acceptance of the reality. In training the child for reality, we must not lose sight of his cognitive abilities, his available strengths in planfulness, ideation and perceptiveness that gives due weight to the human being's positive, creative and constructive relationship with reality. The child must recognize that there is a reality out there which is firm and unbending, a reality with laws, orderliness, demand characteristics, and that varying degrees of pain, punishment, defeat and failure must follow if the reasonable demands of the reality are violated and ignored. The fatalistic disposition to suppose that one is the victim of external forces over which one has no control produces loneliness and powerlessness. But the notion that external forces in the form of reality are always present is a kind of determinism and predeterminism which sets useful limits to human behavior. The reality of social and moral rules, regulations and expectations in our working world are firm demands to which nearly all of us can respond quite well.

In contrast to other theoretical educational frameworks which discuss a variety of means by which young individuals can be provided environmental support, the principal position of the present paper is that concepts of responsibility, reality, and determinism are equally important in a model of education and educational philosophy. In reviewing those individuals who have psychological health and maturity, it is clear they were held responsible for productivity and for accurate communication in an ever-present-manner. Quite early in life they also acquired individual autonomy: they took responsibility for who they were and what they wanted in life and they developed responsible plans to fulfill their needs and goals. But before these individuals acquired the ability to let go and relinquish environmental supports and substitute individual internal control, the psychological environment of the home, school and community provided rather generous amounts of warmth, understanding, concern and involvement. Although the means by which every responsible individual was exposed to love and discipline may not be apparent, careful investigation reveals that a close involvement and intimacy did occur fairly early in their lives. But, most importantly, there was the disciplined atmosphere in which the young individual was under steady pressure, required to assess his behavior in terms of responsibility.

The main point of discussion in the present paper is that the model of man which does not allow for man's strengths, his ability to pull himself into reality, to cope with its responsibility, and to pull himself responsibly into the future, is a most insufficient model. The emphasis is on an available element of choice for each individual to determine and correct his behavior, and the idea that a con-

siderable degree of control, regulation, order, and restraint lends dignity to human growth.

RESUME

Cet article étudie certains aspects des concepts de responsabilité, de réalité et de déterminisme, de façon à examiner les relations entre ces éléments et l'éducation théorique et pratique. Il considère les idèes courantes sur la responsabilité et la réalité comme déterminantes et comme le principal facteur causatif dans la santé mentale et la maturité; il propose un modèle de fonctionnement humain dans lequel une synthèse rationnelle de ces concepts est possible. Certains aspects de la contribution éducative des parents et des professeurs apparaissent aussi dans cette discussion.