

A SAMPLING OF GESTALT PSYCHOLOGISTS' REMARKS ON PSYCHOANALYSIS

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WERTHEIMER and other Gestalt psychologists at times made critical remarks about psychoanalysis in seminars at the New School. These remarks may have led Abraham MASLOW, who attended the seminars, to form the opinion, which will be cited more fully later, that none of the Gestalt psychologists „had any use for psychoanalysis in any of its varieties.“ There follows a sampling of observations of WERTHEIMERs views and of remarks and related materials from the writings of KÖHLER, KOFFKA, LEWIN, and GOLDSTEIN on psychoanalysis and on FREUD.

Max WERTHEIMER

It has been said that WERTHEIMER was not open to psychoanalysis. Erika OPPENHEIMER FROMM of the University of Chicago, who had been WERTHEIMERs student at the University of Frankfurt, in 1973 dictated her recollections of him onto a tape that she sent to us. Included was the following account of how WERTHEIMER viewed psychoanalysis and its reliance on free association:

„He had an open mind and a lively interest in anything that was going on in the field of science. There was only one field where he was not open-minded and that was the field of psychoanalysis. To him psychoanalysis belonged to those parts of psychology which approached the human being in piecemeal fashion, not as a whole, and the reason for that was that psychoanalysis works on the basis of free association. Association theory was for him what the red cape is for the bull. He charged it. I mean he charged at it. He denounced it as piecemeal, as not getting at the essence of human life, and so on and so on. This is the more amazing as WERTHEIMER himself originally invented an association test, the same kind of association test that I think JUNG invented, and in the same year.... I often talked to WERTHEIMER about psychoanalysis, which as a younger student I was interested in too, but to no avail. He just wouldn't hear of it. Even when I tried to point out to him that there were really great parallels between Gestalt theory and psychoanalysis, he just would not hear of it.“ (cited in LUCHINS and LUCHINS, 1986, p. 215).

WERTHEIMERs apparent negative attitude to psychoanalysis was shown in a seminar in which he participated at the New School together with psychoanalysts. Erwin LEVY, who had been WERTHEIMERs assistant at the University of Frank-

furt, sent us an account of WERTHEIMERS teaching in Europe and in America, which included the following description:

„An innovation in N.Y. was a course he gave together with Karen HORNEY, and in which another psychoanalyst, [Bernard] GLÜCK, Sr., participated. This was not repeated, possibly because it turned out to be very difficult, because W's attitude to psychoanalysis, even in HORNEY's modification, was essentially negative. I recall one tour de force: he was going FREUD one better by giving his own interpretation of the Schreber case. (This was the one area in which, after his death, I had to part company; I do not feel that he was ever really open to psychoanalysis, and he lacked the practical experience with it which would have been necessary to really understand. His often passionate attacks were essentially based on methodological arguments and a strong reluctance to recognize the role of sexuality as FREUD had proclaimed it. In some way, I think, he would have been much more open to later developments in psychoanalytic ego psychology, but these had begun just a few years before he died, and I do not think that he was acquainted with this work.)“ (LEVY, letter of May 31, 1969, cited in LUCHINS and LUCHINS, 1987, p.76)

Referring to M.J. LEICHTMAN (1979) and to our citations from LEVY and OPPENHEIMER FROMM, Anne HARRINGTON in *Reenchanted Science* (1996a, p. 250, note 130) wrote:

„When WERTHEIMER first arrived at the New School, he let himself be talked into offering a seminar on the relationship between Gestalt psychology and psychoanalysis, which he taught in collaboration with fellow immigrant Karen HORNEY and psychiatrist Bernard GLÜCK, Sr. This seminar was never repeated because WERTHEIMERS unremitting hostility towards the theory of psychoanalysis made all dialogue essentially fruitless. The fact that the clinical method of psychoanalysis was based on free association was most irritating.“

It is our impression that most seminar members, including some who were psychoanalytically inclined, did not take offense at WERTHEIMERS criticisms, although a few might have done so. It was a „passionate“ disagreement over foundational and methodological principles as well as over differences between psychoanalysis and Gestalt psychology in their doctrines of man, doctrines of society, and the relationship between the two. (WERTHEIMER was concerned with such doctrines and their relationships in all his seminars on social psychology and on personality.) Some seminar members regretted that WERTHEIMER emphasized the differences and downplayed or ignored the similarities between Gestalt psychology and psychoanalysis.

Wolfgang KÖHLER

KÖHLERs *Gestalt Psychology* (1947) has the following footnote in the chapter on insight:

„At this point a remark about psychoanalysis seems indicated. According to the analysts, people often do not know at all why they behave in one way or another. Their actual motivations may be quite different from those which, they believe, are operating. Now, we can admit that some such instances occur in normal life, and there may be many more under pathological conditions. I doubt, however, whether observations of this kind justify the

general pessimism which is so often derived from them.... We ought to distinguish between two things: in some cases the Freudians may be right, while in others people merely fail to *recognize* their inner states. I am inclined to believe that many observations which the Freudians interpret in their fashion are actually instances in which recognition does not occur. Recognition, which operates with perfect ease in perceptions, is surprisingly sluggish in the case of inner processes. Incidentally, this is true whether or not the inner facts in question deserve to remain unrecognized." (p. 335n)

In „Obsessions of Normal People“, a paper KÖHLER read at the inauguration of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Brandeis University in 1959 (reprinted in 1971), he said the following:

„I now turn to psychoanalysis, the source of more, and of darker, Smog than any other doctrine has produced. It takes some courage to speak of analysis in such terms, for nobody likes to be regarded as a reactionary, and at the present time acceptance of the tenets of psychoanalysis is taken for granted among those who must, under all circumstances, have so-called advanced views. One also hesitates to criticize psychoanalysis for better reasons. In the first place, FREUD did reform psychology by placing motivation, which was then badly neglected, into its very center.... What, then, is to be criticized in psychoanalysis? The original thesis that sex lurks behind all our actions and thoughts can no longer disturb us seriously. It has been repeated too often and now begins to sound stale.... But we have a far more serious reason: according to the analysts, we seldom know why we act as we do, because our real motives are hidden in the unconscious. Psychoanalysis and certain forms of Marxism have two things in common: first, the thesis that one motive alone is of paramount importance - although the two views differ as to what this motive is; and, secondly, the claim that, over and over again, we are utterly unaware of the fact that this one power is at work - whichever it may actually be. How is a person to feel responsible for his actions once he has accepted such statements?The voice of conscience, we are told, is only that of the censor, and the censor is a mere coward. He always insists on behavior of which the Joneses approve. But, then, what other guide are we to follow? There is only one left. We have to go to the analyst.... The main point is that, in this fashion, the right way of living becomes a matter of which a specialist has to take care for us....

The Smog produces a curious symptom. Soon, those who are strongly affected become unable to distinguish clearly between one intellectual food and another - provided the food fulfills this main condition: it must taste bad. In fact, the affected people fairly search the markets for food that would be rejected by others. After a while, sex in a less attractive form no longer fully satisfied their appetite, and so they added the death instinct to their program. In the twenties, they even discovered that actually other motives may be more important than sex.... analysis now offered a new fruit, which also had a bitter taste, namely anxiety [which] fulfilled the necessary condition that man be shown to be a pathetic figure. Thus, according to some, it was the wish to succeed in society which makes man run. We are all climbers; and, since we cannot all climb as high as we wish, we constantly try to invent excuses for our failures, to avoid further tests so that we do not fail again, and to find substitutes for our real goals. What, after all, is greatness in the arts?we discover to our satisfaction that greatness correlates with a neurotic condition.

By now, all this has filtered into millions of minds by way of innumerable channels. I regret to say that it has also affected the minds of quite a few psychologists. If it is not anxiety about which these people write, then it is frustration; and, when it is neither, then it is likely to be aggression. Death instinct, anxiety, inferiority complex, frustration, aggression - what a vocabulary!Never will they mention cheer, joy, happiness, hope, or fortitude. It is as though, among the chemists of our time, there were a fashion to talk endlessly about

sulphur and arsenic, but never about iron and nickel, silver and gold.... Quite recently, I read in an essay that artists are distinguished from other people by being able to shape the pain from which we all suffer. Is there nothing else they might occasionally be tempted to shape?" (1971, pp. 401-404)

Kurt KOFFKA

In *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (1935), KOFFKA distinguished the geographical from the behavioral environment. He claimed that the behavioral environment is insufficient to account for the totality of our behavior, describing „at least three different types of behavior for which no proper behavioral environment can be found“ (p. 50).

(a) So-Called Reflexes. At every moment of our life the tonus of our musculature is regulated. Were it not, we could neither sit nor stand nor walk. But all these adjustments take place without our knowing about them; there is no behavioral environment for them. What is true of the tonic reflexes holds also for the so-called phasic ones: I send a strong beam of light into a person's eyes, and his pupils contract; I remove the light, and they expand again.... The pupils of a boxer knocked unconscious will still react....

(b) Forces That Determine Behavior Outside of Behavioral Environment.

The forces which determines our behavior may not always be those we believe to be the determinants. We may do something in order to please X as we think, when in reality we do it to spite Y, when Y need neither be present nor in our thoughts. Psychoanalysis in its various forms has brought to light many such facts, and perhaps its general tendency may be said to be the proof that all our actions are of that type... However far the psychoanalysts may overshoot the mark, it remains true that this type of action exists, that it cannot be explained in terms of behavioral environment, and that it is so similar to the rest of behavior that it needs a common explanatory concept. Since the field concept is applicable to all behavior, it appears again that the psychological field cannot be identical with the behavioral environment.

(c) Memory. There is memory. Now memory determines to a great extent our behavioral field, and in so far cannot serve as an argument against its universality. That I speak to A whom I met yesterday and not to B whom I never saw before is due to the fact that A is, in my behavioral environment, a familiar person, B a stranger. But there are other ways in which memory determines behavior without the mediation of a behavioral field. The rapid and accurate activities of a trained typist are not explainable in terms of the actually present behavioral environment, as little as the playing of Kriesler... But skills are not the only memory effects that fall outside the scope of behavioral environment. I think of a person, a city, a mountain, but cannot recall its name. I want to very badly, but no effort seems to help. So I give up and do something else, when suddenly the name will appear. Again a type of behavior which takes place without a behavioral environment but must, nevertheless, be the result of operative forces, a field process.

„Unconscious.“ To call the facts adduced sub (b) and (c) unconscious or subconscious does not help us.... And since we agreed that the word consciousness should be used only as an equivalent to direct experience, containing the behavioral environment and the phenomenal behavior of the Ego, we must renounce the use of the terms un- and subconscious. However, there must be a reason why these words were coined and so widely accepted; why did not all psychologists simply distinguish between conscious and merely

physiological processes? I believe the answer lies in the fact that the physiological processes were not treated as field processes, whereas the processes called un- or sub-conscious had very definite properties which in our terminology we call field properties. (1935, pp. 50-52)

KOFFKA raised questions about the Ego: What are the conditions for an experience to be incorporated in the Ego? What accounts for the unified and segregated nature of the Ego and for its relative constancy? He pointed out that the Ego problem cannot be properly treated in the three dimensions of space without taking time into consideration.

„Even though we have, at the moment, no real knowledge of the forces which keep the Ego unified and segregated from the rest, we must assume the Ego to be a particular field part in constant interaction with the rest of the field... no Ego would exist, as a special system, unless it segregated itself from other systems....

If vision supplies us with many objects spatially distributed and clearly articulated, then vision must supply us mainly with non-Ego things. What then about the visible parts of our body, why are they drawn into the Ego? ... For we have knowledge of our limbs not only from vision but also from those other sources which give us notice about the non-visible parts of our body. These processes, aroused in the entero- and proprio-ceptors, form probably, as we have explained, the first material for the organization of the Ego. If, then, the place of the visual body data coincides with the place of the other data belonging to the same part of the body („coincides,“ of course, in behavioral space), then we should be able to apply our law of proximity to explain why the visual data are experienced with the Ego character, „my hand,“ „my leg,“ etc.

[Needs are] states of tension which persist until they are relieved. Our most general aims are therefore permanent, tensions which last through great parts of our lives. These needs being our needs, they belong, of course, to the Ego system.“ (pp. 328-330)

KOFFKA drew conclusions about the Ego system and related them to psychoanalytic theory:

„Our conclusion is clear: the disappearance of the Ego from the behavioral world does not mean for the normal adult an annihilation of the Ego. It survives as a part of the psychophysical field even when it is not represented in consciousness, and that forces us to the conclusion that normally, when the Ego exists in our behavioral world, this phenomenal, or conscious, Ego is not the whole Ego. It is probable that the Ego is first formed in organization which proceeds on the conscious level. But after it has been formed it becomes more and more stable, more and more independent of momentary conditions of organizations, so that eventually it is a permanent segregated part of our total psychophysical field. This is, as I see it, the true justification of the various psychoanalytic theories which investigate the particular properties of this permanent Ego, the strain and stresses within it. The psychoanalytic terminology is, at least, misleading. The psychoanalysts' use of the term unconscious was unfortunate. We have briefly referred to it in our second chapter (p. 50f), where we said that the reason for this terminology would disappear if we treated the phenomena so designated as field events. Our Ego concept has fulfilled this promise. The Ego being a sub-system in a larger field, its states are field events even when this field is not the behavioral field, when it is not conscious....

But rightly interpreted the principles of psychoanalysis cannot be dismissed by a shrug of the shoulders, much as the special claims of any psychoanalytic school may be open to just and severe criticism. The development of psychoanalysis has been influenced by the two poles which have affected the whole of psychology, the pole of mechanism, which was paramount in FREUDS earlier work, and the pole of vitalism, vitalism, even with a mystical

tinge which became so prominent in the later development, particularly in the hands of JUNG. Psychoanalysis will, I dare to predict, enter a new and healthier state of development when it frees itself of the mechanistic and the vitalistic biases.“ (pp. 330-331)

One of the consequences of the concept of the Ego as constant and developing in time is a foundation of a theory of personality.

„In the first place it gives us a real basis for the scientific understanding of the development of a personality. For in all changes of the behavioral field the Ego remains as a segregated part. The segregation will not proceed along the same boundary lines all the time, it will not invariably be of the same strength, and the relative importance of the Ego in the field will change. Still the Ego within the total field seems comparable to the physical organism in its geographical environment. Both are strongly organized stable subsystems within a larger system, and just as in all changes the organism maintains its identity and thereby produces its growth and development, so will the Ego grow and develop by maintaining itself in the flux of the behavioral environment, or more generally of the psychophysical field.“ (p. 331)

In a chapter on society and personality, KOFFKA also described properties of sociological groups:

„Two Gestalt Characteristics Of Sociological Groups. In this respect groups have a number of very definite characteristics, they are gestalten of a very particular kind. I shall only mention two closely related particularities. In the first place the „strength“ of the gestalt may differ over an enormously wide range. The strength of the gestalt character is defined by KÖHLER by the degree of interdependence of the parts. The stronger the gestalt, the more will each of its parts depend on all the others, and the more will this dependence affect every aspect of the parts. From this point of view practically all of the groups with which we are familiar are relatively weak, but groups in other cultures are much stronger. The difference which BECKER calls that of a sacred and secular society is a good illustration. The stronger the group, the more not only will the behavior, but the entire status, of its members depend upon their relation to the other members. Thus, in primitive societies, laws of connection with the group may bring about the isolated member's death. To stay nearer home, we may compare the village with the city to exemplify differences in gestalt strength of groups. The strongest groups that we encounter are probably teams in games like football.

The fact that groups may have a very low degree of gestalt coherence derives from the second peculiarity that I want to point out. The group is composed of individuals, and the existence of individuals, though largely group-determined, is not exclusively so. The fact that the members of groups are not then completely determined by the group is the same as saying that the group is not of the strongest gestalt type possible. (p. 650)

The Reality Of The Psychological Group. The „We.“ And now we turn to the behavioral group. In what sense does it exist? Here the answer is easier. The reality of the psychological group finds its expression in the pronoun „we“. „We“ means not simply a plurality of persons which includes myself, it means in its most proper sense a unified plurality of which I and the others are true members. Otherwise expressed: when one says, „We do this,“ then one means not that the persons included in the „we“ are doing this each for himself and independently of the others, but that we do it jointly. The speaker experiences himself as part of a group, and his actions as belonging to this group. Of course, the word „we“ can also have the other meaning. „We have assembled here because we were all born on the same day“. The two we's in this sentence are not quite identical. Only the second is a purely summative plural, while the first would carry at least the beginning of a true „group-we“.

...In all these cases, however, the word „we“ refers to a reality. It is never a mere abbreviation of „they and I,“ or „he and I.“ For the I to which it refers is dependent upon the „we“. In other words, the plurality to which the word „we“ refers is not composed of a number of members which would be identical in all possible pluralities, but codetermines its own members.“ (p. 651)¹

Kurt LEWIN

In *A Dynamic Theory of Personality* (1935), LEWIN wrote:

FREUDs doctrine especially (and this is one of its greatest services) has contributed largely to the abolition of the boundary between the normal and the pathological, the ordinary and the unusual, and hereby furthered the *homogenization* ... of all the fields of psychology. (p. 22)

LEWIN studied the interrelationships between psychological systems:

„... one must try to get hold of them experimentally because they are most important for understanding the underlying reality of behavior and personality differences. In doing this we often find facts which FREUD first brought to our attention, thereby rendering a great service even though he has not given a clear dynamic theory in regard to them. One such fact is that of substitution.

FREUD uses the concept of substitution extensively to explain both normal and abnormal behavior. Moreover, sublimation, which is closely related to substitution, is according to him an important foundation of our whole cultural life....

At present we have no theory which really explains the dynamics of substitution. FREUD avoids giving a definition of substitution and, according to the opinion of prominent psychoanalysts, he develops no real theory for it.“ (pp. 180-181)

It is noteworthy that LEWIN and his associates carried out a series of experiments on substitution and sublimation with feebleminded children and with psychopathic children.

LEWIN distinguishes between two meanings of the question „Why“ in psychology:

„1. Why, in a given momentary situation, that is, with a given person (P) in a certain state and in a certain environment (E), does precisely this behavior result?

2. The more historical question: Why at this moment, does the solution have precisely this structure and the person precisely this condition or state? It is important to separate these two questions more clearly than is done, for example, in association psychology and in FREUDs theory. The center of gravity of our experimental work lies, as a rule, in the first kind of why...

As regards content, no action is referred either to the person on the one side or to the psychological situation. Nearly all the investigations are therefore occupied with both problems.“ (pp. 241-242)

¹ It is instructive to compare KOFFKAs discussion with WERTHEIMERs remarks in the social psychology seminars concerning the Gestalt conception and FREUDs conception of the group: LUCHINS and LUCHINS, 1978, Volume II, especially Chapter 5, „The Group: A Gestalt Thesis,“ Chapter 6, „Types of Groups,“ and Chapter 7, „Groups and Libidinal Ties.“

LEWIN described in detail the punishment situation:

„The threat of punishment creates necessarily a situation in which child and adult stand over each other as enemies. Herein lies one of the most important differences between this situation and that in which the child undertakes the task because of interest in the task itself.

... In essence, the strife of the child may be directed against the task, against the punishment, or against the barrier thwarting the attempt to go out of the field.

...Not infrequently the struggle is carried on by means which [Alfred] ADLER would designate as „arrangements,“ the difficulty which the adult must recognize consists in the fact that the child has developed a headache, a phenomenon that is frequently to be observed before school examinations.“ (pp. 142-143)

A reference to ADLER occurred in LEWINs discussion of the punishment situations. LEWIN also referred to ADLER in other contexts. For example: „Experiences of success and failure have, as ADLER correctly emphasizes, an extremely marked effect upon the child's encouragement and discouragement, and hence upon his later performance“ (p. 100).

The authoritative book, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*, by Heinz and Rowena ANSBACHER (1956) (she was a student in Max WERTHEIMERs first class in the Graduate Faculty and both attended other seminars by WERTHEIMER at the New School) discussed the relationships between Adlerian concepts (cf. DREIKURS, 1950) and Lewinian experiments, e.g., level of aspiration (goal-setting and finished and unfinished tasks).

In *Field Theory and Social Sciences* (1951), LEWIN wrote:

„Psychoanalysis has probably been the outstanding example of a psychological approach which attempts to reach the depths rather than the superficial layers of behavior.... Psychoanalysis has not always kept in line with the requirements of scientific method when making its interpretations of behavior. What is needed are scientific constructs and methods which deal with the underlying forces of behavior but do so in a methodologically sound manner.“ (p. 60)

Kurt GOLDSTEIN

Referring to WERTHEIMER, KÖHLER, KOFFKA, and other Gestalt psychologists, MASLOW wrote the following:

„None of these people ever had any use for psychoanalysis in any of its varieties, and my impression was that none of them ever understood it at all. By contrast, Kurt GOLDSTEIN did understand psychoanalysis even though he disagreed with it in many points, most of the time quite justly, I thought. Yet he was knowledgeable enough and understanding enough and sympathetic enough so that a psychoanalytic institute in New York City invited Kurt to give a series of lectures critical of psychoanalysis. GOLDSTEIN felt much closer to FROMM and HORNEY than he did to the classical Freudians.“ (MASLOW, 1969, cited in LUCHINS and LUCHINS, 1988, p.137)

In his New School seminars, WERTHEIMER mentioned the work of Adhemar GELB and Kurt GOLDSTEIN (1918, ELLIS, 1938) as an example of using the social field to help the patient. A footnote to the paper noted that the practical

motivation for the work „was the need for helping the patients regain a place in the world of normal affairs...to discover what they could do and secure work for them in this field“ (ELLIS, 1938, p. 315n).

GOLDSTEIN's major work is *The Organism*. First published in Germany in 1934 and in English translation in 1939, it was reissued in 1995, with a forward by the neurologist Olivier SACHS. It is reviewed by Anne HARRINGTON in *Isis* (1996, 87, pp. 578-579). She points out that an earlier review, also published in *Isis* (1949, 32, pp. 390-393) was by the physical anthropologist and humanistic, antireductionist thinker, M.F. Ashley MONTAGU, who was „effusive“ and called *The Organism* „one of the most important works on theoretical biology published during this century.“ He characterized its use of pathological phenomena for empirical and philosophical insight into the nature of organismic life, especially human life, as a „revelation.“

However, there were also negative reactions, among them B.F. SKINNER's critique. He considered the book metaphysical in the sense that the principal questions it raised cannot be answered experimentally.

The Organism (1939), has a reference to FREUD in the chapter on anxiety:

„Thus, all investigators who have dealt with the problem of anxiety have sought to distinguish between anxiety and fear. I am only mentioning the interpretations of FREUD, W. STERN and G. REVESZ. The philosophers, especially those whose interest was centered around the phenomenon of anxiety - I mention only PASCAL, KIERKEGAARD, HEIDEGGER - have been very careful to distinguish between anxiety and fear. [The latter two] consider fear as fear of something, while anxiety in their opinion deals with „nothingness“; their descriptions strongly suggest that anxiety is a state which is without reference to any object....

We have characterized the conditions of brain-injured patients, when faced with solvable and unsolvable tasks, as states of ordered behavior and catastrophic reaction. The [latter] show all the characteristics of anxiety. We have attempted to understand the origin of these reactions as the expression of shock, due to inadequate utilization of stimuli, caused by the change of structure in the patient.... Apprehending an object presupposes ordered functional evaluation of the stimulus. The fact that the catastrophic condition involves the impossibility of ordered reactions precludes a subject „having“ an object in the outer world.

Thus, we find in patients: their anxiety has no corresponding content, and is lacking in object....

The above statement, however, must be amended. It is only true as far as we consider the inner experience. But the organism which is seized by the catastrophic shock is, of course, in the state of coping with a definite, objective reality: the organism is faced with some „object.“ The state of anxiety becomes intelligible only if we consider the objective confrontation of the organism with a definite environment. Only then can we comprehend the basic phenomenon of anxiety: the occurrence of disordered stimulus evaluation as it is conditioned through the conflict of the organism with a certain environment which is inadequate for it.... Thus, we may talk of „contentless“ anxiety, only if we regard the experience alone. To be sure, it is usually in this sense that one talks of anxiety. But this is not quite correct, and is due to a false emphasis on subjective experience in the characterization of so-called psychic phenomena.... Thus what is usually described as anxiety is only [one] side of the process....

What is it then that leads to fear? Nothing but the experience of the possibility of the onset of anxiety." (pp. 294-296)

GOLDSTEIN went on to consider anxiety in the infant and the child, again referring to FREUD:

„The child behaves, in some respects, similar to the brain-injured patient. It is very frequently confronted with tasks with which it cannot cope, and which menace its existence. Thus, anxiety certainly plays a great role in the life of the child. However, it is diminished through safeguards which the adult arranges and which save the child from shocks that otherwise would be too extreme. Furthermore, the anxiety in children is reduced through a peculiarity [which] is the extraordinarily strong and general tendency to action, and the urge to solve given tasks...

As the child grows into the world of the adult, its behavior becomes more even and 'ordered'. The more it becomes fitted to its environment, the more its „wondering“ decreases, but it never disappears completely Just as in the brain-injured person, the normal adult has the urge to diminish his anxiety even though to a much lesser degree. As an expression of this urge, we find in the adult the tendency towards order, norms, continuity, and homogeneity, in principle similar to patients. But apart from this, the normal is determined by his urge (already inherent in the child) for new experiences, for the conquest of the world, and for an expansion of his sphere of activity... His behavior oscillates between these two tendencies ... The outcome of the two tendencies is the cultural reactions.

But in no way could one claim that this „ordered“ world, which culture represents, is the product of anxiety, the result of the desire to avoid anxiety, as FREUD conceives culture as sublimation of the repressed drives. This would mean a complete misapprehension of the creative trend of human nature, and at the same time would leave completely unintelligible why the world was formed in these specific patterns, and why just these forms should be suited to produce security for man.“ (pp. 303-305)

GOLDSTEIN's concluding remarks include the following, which also refers to FREUD:

„[Our procedure is rooted in] the conviction that a state of greater perfection can never be understood from that of less perfection, and that only the converse is possible. It is very feasible to isolate parts from a whole, but a perfect whole can never be composed by synthesizing it from the less perfect parts....

When centering is defective, when parts are split off from the whole, it is certainly possible that the outcome is antagonism, for example, a contest in the field of perceptions or drives, or something in the nature of a struggle between „mind“ and „drives.“ Then it is even possible that a so-called „drive“ may become so pathologically dominant that it is mistaken for a true, essential characteristic of the normal organism, as in the anthropology of FREUD. But from such partitive phenomena, it will never be possible to understand, even approximately, the inner coherence and unity of holistic behavior. From no single phenomenon does a path lead to the whole; yet it can be comprehended as a privation of the whole. The possibility of such privations is no objection to the holistic organization; rather, they express the imperfection in self-realization resulting from a lack of potency of „essential nature.“ This lack is either innate ... through a deprivation of the grace of endowments - or it is acquired through disease, or it is a sequel of overpowering demands by the environment.“ (pp. 515-516)

Concluding Remarks

From the above sampling of remarks, it seems that WERTHEIMER, KOFFKA, KÖHLER, LEWIN and GOLDSTEIN did not have the same view of psychoanalysis. It is difficult to generalize about Gestalt psychologists' views of psychoanalysis (or about psychoanalysts' views of Gestalt psychology). For example, psychologists who were concerned, in different degrees, with child development and various social phenomena, probably had more use for psychoanalytic concepts. Perhaps MASLOW overgeneralized when he said that none of the Gestalt psychologists had any use for psychoanalysis. There was a rather friendly interaction between some Gestalt psychologists and some psychoanalysts who were receptive to each others' ideas. In personal talks with Rudolf DREIKURS and traditional psychoanalysts who were consultants to the Veterans Administration, we found much on which to agree, perhaps because we focused mainly on practice: on diagnosis and treatment of the patients, rather than mainly on theory.

Summary

How did the first generation of Gestalt psychologists view psychoanalysis? Max WERTHEIMERS „essentially negative“ attitude was described by two of his former students, Erika Oppenheimer Fromm and Erwin Levy. Wertheimer „passionately“ disagreed with psychoanalysis' methodology and with its doctrines of man, of society, and of the relation between them. Abraham Maslow wrote that, with the exception of Kurt Goldstein, none of the Gestalt psychologists had any use for psychoanalysis. But this may be an overgeneralization. Examples surveyed from the writings of Wolfgang Koehler, Kurt Koffka, Kurt Lewin, and Goldstein, show that all had reservations but they differed in their evaluations of psychoanalysis and of Freud.

Zusammenfassung

Welchen Standpunkt nimmt die erste Generation der Gestaltpsychologen gegenüber der Psychoanalyse ein? M. WERTHEIMERS „grundsätzlich negative“ Haltung wurde von zwei seiner ehemaligen Studenten, Erika OPPENHEIMER FROMM und Erwin LEVY beschrieben. WERTHEIMER kritisierte „leidenschaftlich“ die Methodologie der Psychoanalyse sowie ihre Lehren über den Menschen, die Gesellschaft und die Beziehung zwischen beiden. A. MASLOW schrieb, daß mit Ausnahme von K. GOLDSTEIN keiner der Gestaltpsychologen in der Psychoanalyse einen Nutzen sähe. Diese Aussage scheint jedoch zu verallgemeinern zu sein. Beispiele der Arbeiten von W. KOEHLER, K. KOFFKA, K. LEWIN und K. GOLDSTEIN belegen zwar eine durchaus reservierte Haltung, sie weisen jedoch gleichzeitig auf unterschiedliche Bewertungen der Psychoanalyse und der Person FREUDS hin.

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