

DOCUMENTS
OF
GESTALT
PSYCHOLOGY

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

At the 1959 convention of the American Psychological Association, Wolfgang Köhler delivered a presidential address whose text serves as an introduction to the present volume. In his brief survey of "Gestalt Psychology Today," Professor Köhler, one of the founders of this movement, indicated certain differences in outlook and assumptions between Gestalt psychology and some other trends in American psychology. He also expressed confidence in the possibility of fruitful collaboration by representatives of the various approaches. Given this situation, it seems opportune to make available in a single volume a number of recent papers in which the principles and methods of Gestalt psychology are clearly expressed by a group of authors for whom this approach has been central.

The present volume is intended to supplement the fundamental texts of Gestalt psychology, for example, those by Köhler, Wertheimer, and Koffka. A forerunner of the present collection is *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, edited by Willis D. Ellis, which contains abbreviated translations into English of a number of the early theoretical and experimental publications of Gestalt psychologists. The present book brings together more recent contributions by the founders of Gestalt psychology and by some of their immediate collaborators and students. With the exception of the essays by Wertheimer, which are not elsewhere easily accessible to the psychologist, most of these papers have been published since 1950. They thus illustrate the recent thinking and

findings of the authors. They include work in the fields of social psychology, motivation, and art, in addition to new developments in the exploration of the cognitive processes, for which Gestalt psychology used to be best known.

The concepts of Gestalt psychology have been central for some workers in the field, have markedly influenced others, and have slightly tinged the work of hundreds more. Limitations of space have dictated the omission from the present volume of authors whose inclusion would have given a more rounded picture of the scope and influence of contemporary Gestalt psychology. Perhaps the most conspicuous omission is that of Kurt Lewin, whose work developed out of Gestalt psychology and whose approach and assumptions remained in many respects similar to those of Gestalt psychologists working in other fields. Lewin's recent papers are excluded because they have been collected elsewhere and are readily available in book form. For the same reason the work of Fritz Heider and of Lewin's students is not included.

In a sense this has become a volume of work from the New School for Social Research. As the reader will notice, all the senior authors whose work is included have had some connection with the New School, whose graduate psychology department was founded by Wertheimer in 1933 as part of the University in Exile. It must be mentioned, however, that the New School is presently the principal academic connection of only one of the authors, and that this volume by no means represents the varied points of view of all the psychologists at this institution. Still, the New School has in some sense provided a center for Gestalt psychology in America. This is, of course, not the first instance in the history of psychology in which one or a few universities have provided a home for a particular approach to our science.

This book was edited while the editor was a Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. It is a pleasure to call attention to an additional debt this book owes to the Foundation. Four of the studies in this collection were made while their authors were Guggenheim Fellows.

MARY HENLE

CONTENTS

✓	GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY TODAY	1
	<i>Wolfgang Köhler</i>	
	PART I. ESSAYS BY MAX WERTHEIMER	
✓	ON TRUTH	19
	<i>Max Wertheimer</i>	
✓	SOME PROBLEMS IN THE THEORY OF ETHICS	29
	<i>Max Wertheimer</i>	
	ON THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY	42
	<i>Max Wertheimer</i>	
✓	A STORY OF THREE DAYS	52
	<i>Max Wertheimer</i>	

Max Wertheimer

LATE OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY,
NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

A STORY
OF THREE DAYS

I shall report what happened in the course of three days to a good man who, facing the world situation, longed for a clarification of the fundamentals of freedom.

He saw: ideological devaluation of freedom had spread; freedom in the humane meaning of the word was proclaimed false, outworn, useless; and the radiance of the old idea was often exploited for other ends. Some men seemed to have lost sight of it entirely, without realizing what they had lost. Confused by the complexity of actual situations many became uncertain, basically unclear with regard to the very concept of freedom, its meaning, value, actuality. Even men who loved freedom deeply often felt helpless in the face of actual arguments. So it was with our man; not that he felt uncertain in many or most of the concrete issues; but he felt impelled to reach a fundamental clarification. What at bottom is freedom? What does it require? Why is it so dear to me? He was a humble empiric, open-minded, thirsting for information.

Of course, those three days of his search were only a beginning for

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A Story of Three Days : 53

him. He touched only some of the issues involved, for it was by chance that he met just those men and read just those books. They represented only certain points of view and the discussions were by no means exhaustive, yet I think that what he experienced was in many respects characteristic, typical of some fundamental trends in actual thought.

Those were dramatic days for him, in which he became more and more bewildered, but at the end of those three days he felt that he had gained some clarification, that he now saw more clearly something that only his heart had told him before.

He sought out a sociologist who was immersed in studies of this very problem, and he asked his question. The sociologist was very kind. He told him about the investigations of modern sociology, about the history of societies, how ideas of freedom had developed in them and what freedom had meant to them; he told him how different were the ideas of freedom and the ways of realizing them, etc. Our man was fascinated by the richness of what he heard. He felt that here were men with an honest, sincere approach; these were serious studies, and he became more and more hopeful. "You are the right man," he said. "I am sure you feel as I do in the actual world situation," and he told him how he felt.

"I share your feelings," said the sociologist. "I too hold proudly and passionately to our traditional values."

"But why?" he was asked. "What is it that makes freedom so dear to you also, and what is freedom essentially?"

"I am at one with the traditions of our people," said the sociologist. "But if you ask me about the fundamentals, I must answer: It became more and more clear in our studies that the standards, the evaluations, the goals, that an individual has are shaped, determined, by the social group, the society of which he is a part. Different periods in history, different societies, different nations, have different views. Ethical standards are relative."

There was a long pause. After a time our man asked in a low tone: "Is that all? Should what these others assert be true? Are our ideas of freedom merely the historical standards of a certain time, now perhaps outworn? Are there no fundamental standards; are the requirements of freedom a fairy tale?"

"No fairy tale," said the sociologist, "but developed in and characteristic for certain historical, cultural, and social settings."

"And nothing more?" asked our man. "Is no decision possible among

various systems? Are there no features that are basic in men with regard to questions of freedom, no requirements for men, as men should be? No features that are desirable, required in human society?"

"Here you are touching upon very difficult things," said the sociologist. "Some of my friends would say that the fight for freedom was always a fight against certain concrete restraints or compulsions and meant, necessarily, different things in different times. Society in its rules and institutions necessarily permits freedom, imposes restraints that with time change in different directions. There are no axioms which would allow me to speak of fundamental standards. To speak of 'the man' or 'the society' is only a pale abstraction."

Our man became more and more bewildered. "Was this," he said, "what your friends wrote and taught? And was this not one of the factors in the developments we now face, one of the factors that paved the way for political leaders proclaiming new and other national or racial ethics, willfully and efficiently?"

"Do not overestimate the role of the opinions of sociologists," said the sociologist quietly. "I told you that this is the position that most of my friends take. And certainly they were sincerely driven to these conclusions by their findings, which contain great factors in their favor. We cannot lightly dismiss them. I myself would not dismiss your questions with their answer. I feel that these are genuine questions; that as sociologists we must face not only diversities in various cultures but also must seek for fundamentals, for identities in the requirements of man and in the dynamics of society—in a doctrine of man and in a doctrine of society. There have been approaches in this direction. I feel as you do that in this context the problem of freedom will play a genuine role. But these are scientific Utopias, my friend; we are far from any real insight, far from even a real method of approach. There are some young sociologists who are groping in this direction and grappling with the problem.

"But if you ask for a definition of freedom, not in terms of the full reality of a specific society, which, of course, I should prefer to give you, then my answer would have to be: absence of restraints, of compulsions, of external hindrances from doing what one desires to do, and maybe I should add absence of imposed internal inhibitions. . . . Though I might say that such a definition certainly lacks concreteness."

Our man thanked the sociologist. He felt sad, puzzled, bewildered. He came home, sat down, and reached for one of the books he had ordered for his search. It was a novel by a famous writer of 1936. He

was too disturbed to read thoroughly. A certain page caught his eye. He read, more and more excitedly, these sentences:

Anthony . . . turned over the pages of his latest notebook . . . he began to read.

"Acton wanted to write the History of Man in terms of a History of the Idea of Freedom. But you cannot write a History of the Idea of Freedom without at the same time writing a History of the Fact of Slavery. . . .

"Or rather of Slavery. For, in his successive attempts to realize the Idea of Freedom, man is constantly changing one form of slavery for another. . . .

"Abolish slavery to nature. Another form of slavery instantly arises. Slavery to institutions. . . .

"All modern history is a History of the Idea of Freedom from Institutions. It is also the History of the Fact of Slavery to Institutions. . . .

"Institutions are changed in an attempt to realize the Idea of Freedom. To appreciate the fact of the new slavery takes a certain time. . . .

"The honeymoon may last for as much as twenty or thirty years. Then . . . it is perceived . . . that the new institutions are just as enslaving as the old. What is to be done? Change the new institutions for yet newer ones. . . . And so on—indefinitely, no doubt.

"In any given society the fact of freedom exists only for a very small number of individuals. . . . For them, institutions exist as a kind of solid framework on which they can perform whatever gymnastics they please. . . ."

Anthony shut his book, feeling that he couldn't read even one line more. Not that his words seemed any less true now than they had when he wrote them. In their own way and on their particular level they were true. Why then did it all seem utterly false and wrong?

"Utterly false and wrong," our man said passionately. How was it possible at all, he asked himself, for a man to formulate such assertions! What he had read seemed unbelievable. At the same time he felt strangely reminded of remarks he had encountered in the last years on one or another occasion, for which these unbelievable formulations seemed somehow fundamental. Now his longing for clarification changed into a passionate drive. I must, I must see through all this. Somehow it is a strange distortion—to view the facts in this way seems to press them into a blind and wrong direction. *What* is it that is wrong in the fundamentals of this picture?

He took up the next book. It was a book from the year 1928 by a famous psychoanalyst and dealt with culture. He read it through from beginning to end. Again and again he turned back to some basic formulations in it. There were some remarks of another character added here and there, but in the main those formulations seemed to him nakedly

to express basic assumptions which led straight to those bewildering passages he had encountered in the novel.

. . . every culture must be built up on coercion and instinctual renunciation.
 . . . abandoning coercion and [abandoning] the suppression of the instincts
 . . . would be the golden age, but it is questionable if such a state of affairs
 can ever be realized. . . . the psychical sphere of culture . . . frustration
 . . . prohibition . . . privation . . . the instinctual wishes that suffer under
 them are born anew with every child.

. . . Such instinctual wishes are those of incest, of cannibalism, and of murder.

. . . It is in accordance with the course of our development that external compulsion is gradually internalized.

. . . Every child presents to us the model of this transformation; it is only by that means that it becomes a moral and social being.

. . . Those people in whom it [the internalization of external compulsion] has taken place, from being foes of culture, become its supporters.

. . . [but] a majority of men obey the cultural prohibitions in question only under the pressure of external force, in fact only where the latter can assert itself and for as long as it is an object of fear. This also holds good for those so-called moral cultural demands.

. . . We have spoken of the hostility to culture, produced by the pressure it exercises and the instinctual renunciations that it demands. If one imagined its prohibitions removed, then one could choose any woman who took one's fancy as one's sexual object, one could kill without hesitation one's rival or whoever interfered with one in any other way, and one could seize what one wanted of another man's goods without asking his leave: how splendid, what a succession of delights life would be!

. . . [but] only one single person can be made unrestrictedly happy by abolishing thus the restrictions of culture, and that is a tyrant or dictator who has monopolized all the means of power. . . .

"Could this be true?" our man exclaimed. "Is this Man? Society? Freedom? Is freedom lack of restraint of 'instinctual impulses,' external or internal? Is Man essentially so determined, impelled by fear of punishment or by habits, by internalized rules imposed on him by compulsion?"

"I must see a philosopher!"

He went next day to see a philosopher and asked, "Will you tell me please what freedom is, philosophically?"

The philosopher smiled. "This," he said, "is an old and famous topic of philosophy down through the centuries. If you like, I can give you

the names of a great number of books which you can study—are you interested in the history of philosophy? There are a number of philosophers who still deal with these questions, but if you like, I can try to tell you briefly how the problem lies in modern philosophy as I see it, and, I may say, as it has been well established in modern philosophy.

"The concept of freedom, of free will, of free choice, played an important role in various religions and in various philosophies. It was wish-thinking. Modern developments in science and philosophy have shown that there are no free acts. Causality governs them or, as we formulate it, all actions take place under the principle of determination, are determined by their causes; there is no such thing as an action leaping into existence uncaused, and so what is going to happen, happens by necessity. It is mere blindness if men believe that they are free to act or to make decisions without realizing that their actions are the necessary outcome of forces which determine their choice.

"You might look into the modern textbooks of psychology. In most of them you will not even find mentioned such terms as free will, free decision, etc.

"There have been discussions about this principle of determinism. Some tried to save the old, outworn ideas by trying to defend a kind of psychological indeterminism. But there are few who would still hold these views to be defensible. There are some philosophers nowadays who believe that the newest developments in physics, viz., the uncertainty principle and statistics of probability, are again giving a foothold to indeterminism. But one should not misunderstand the meaning and role of these concepts in modern physics: they may make for some uncertainty or chance happenings but they give no basis for the existence of free will."

Our man lapsed into deep thought. "I think," he said, "I realize that important consequences are involved in this philosophical discovery of determinism. In looking, for example, at a man who has committed a crime, we should not forget to look for the causes which made him commit it. And we may find that his deed was due to factors which were beyond his control. We must try to understand his deed from the factors of causal necessity."

"Yes," answered the philosopher, "but don't forget that it is not only in cases in which you may discover an external force that compelled him, but also in cases in which it would have been said in olden times that he acted of his own free will, on his own decision, with nothing external to compel him. Such a description is utterly superficial. A man is

determined even in these cases by the set of causal forces within him, by his desires, instincts, acquired habits."

"Is there not this important factor," asked our man humbly, "that man, after all, in a situation which calls for decision does not know of the forces that will determine him and, therefore, practically will have to choose, to decide? That everything is in fact determined may be of value to someone looking into the past, after the decision has been made, after the deed is done, but not before? And so the principle of determinism does not perhaps do away with the questions of free decision."

"There are some," said the philosopher, "who try to make use of this factor of past and future for our problem, again in connection with new developments in modern physics. But don't you see, this does not help—indeed this may be the very reason why man is deceived about himself, why he may appear to himself as free, which is nothing other than that he does not know how in his seemingly free decisions he is lawfully and by necessity determined by causes."

Our man felt uneasy about this answer, but, unable to clarify the issue, he proceeded with another question. "Aren't those ideas of determinism somewhat dangerous?" he asked. "I should guess that a man who really comes to believe in determinism and to act sincerely in accordance with this belief would not only change his philosophical opinions, but his very actions. He would become a fatalist, relieved of all troubles in facing a situation that calls for a decision . . . it will happen anyhow. . . ."

"True," said the philosopher with a sly twinkle. "But fortunately men believe in their will, and even if they are philosophically convinced of determinism, they will not make use of it in actual situations. On the other hand, you may see in your remark a profound confirmation of the very principle of determinism: even your belief or disbelief in the principle may be a determining factor."

Suddenly our man jumped up from his chair. "Now," he said excitedly, "permit me another question. If we state that all is determined, does this change anything in regard to the real problems of freedom (with the only possible exception of this problem of the realization of fatalism)? Suppose we attach to every deed, to every action, to every attitude, the quality, 'It is determined,' would not all real concrete problems of freedom remain just the same? The discussions between determinism and indeterminism do not touch the real problem, in fact they obscure it. Should the essence of free action be that it is in no way deter-

mined? Or if all actions are determined, that there are no free men?"

"Let us not mix up such practical problems with the philosophical issue," said the philosopher. Here from the fullness of his heart our man told the philosopher about his troubles, facing the world situation, about his meeting with the sociologist and about the formulas in the books he had read.

Said the philosopher, "Like you I am a lover of political freedom. Certainly there is the very important problem of how much the State should or should not restrain the freedom of individuals. These are questions with which the sociologists and men of political science may properly deal; but don't you see that the very foundation of all that you have told me about the sociologist and the formulations in the books is the modern discovery of determinism, of realizing it as basic in all these questions?"

Our man realized this and was more bewildered than before.

The next day he said to himself, This is what I have learned:

1. There is no freedom because all is determined, is the consequence of causes. Or,
2. Freedom is absence of external restraints, of compulsion, freedom to pursue whatever wish may come to one's mind. Or,
3. Because such wishes may be due to whatever standards may have been internalized on the basis of compulsion, freedom means to be able to follow these instinctual impulses without inhibitions.

Suddenly all he had heard in this context seemed to him utterly strange, narrow, inadequate; superficial, oversimplified, wrongly directed, blind to all the real problems of freedom, appropriate neither to the nature of man nor society, out of focus on both. He felt the desire to get away from all these terms and definitions, he wanted to face again the real situation, to restate the problem in full view of life.

He first thought of what the sociologist had told him and soon felt lost in the manifold features of history, its complexities, its diversities.

"First let me realize," he said passionately, "what I have seen with my own eyes. Have I not seen in my experience strong and indeed very characteristic cases of men, of children, who were free, who were unfree? What were the essentials? My experiences, of course, are no sufficient basis for statistical generalizations; nor do I wish to make any now. What I want is to grasp, to realize, what I have seen."

He recalled a number of cases. Then he said, "Sometimes one sees a man, and by the way he goes through life, by his attitudes, by his behavior in dealing with life situations one feels: this is a free man, he lives in an atmosphere of freedom. And so in observing children.

"On the other hand, one sees men or children, and feels strongly: in their behavior there is no freedom—there is no air of freedom in their world."

It is, he thought, not easy to put into words what one faces so vividly in these extreme cases. Let me think—what were these cases concretely?

The free man, he recalled, frank, open-minded, sincerely going ahead, facing the situation freely, looking for the right thing to do and so finding where to go.

The opposite—he first thought of children he had often seen—inhibited, pushed, or driven, acting by command or intimidation, one-track-minded, chained to certain ways of acting and of thinking, even in viewing situations—the very curves of their actions, of their movements, often showed these features, especially in meeting new situations. They often looked like sorry products of external influences or like slaves of any desire that might have come to their minds. Often they looked like robots, somehow crippled, robbed of essential abilities, narrow-minded, stiff, rigid, mechanical, their movements and postures often had the effect of puppets on strings. And grownups still more so. (Even slave drivers—he had seen such in our times—were they free? No, they belonged here.) Of course, many thus enslaved did not overtly behave timidly at all—just the opposite, brutal and overproud. But one sensed the same unfreedom, sometimes one saw what happened when they had to face a new situation in which their coat of armor was futile. . . .

And what experiences he had had in observing *transitions!*

If a child, if a man, having lived as that kind of slave, came to live in another social field in which there was the real air of freedom, what marvelous happenings had he not observed in such cases! Very similar indeed to regaining health after a long illness.

Suddenly the whole problem appeared to him to be no longer a problem of philosophical schools of whatever standards or evaluations, but a problem of hygiene—it seemed to require the biologist studying health conditions. This is a task of scientific investigation, he thought. But not in terms of those previous theses. What conditions, what institutions, make for the free? What for the unfree? And what price is paid in the change?

This, it was now clear to him, was not to be viewed piecemeal, in

terms of a choice, of a wish, of an "instinctual impulsion," etc. One's whole attitude towards the world, towards the other fellow, towards one's group, towards one's own momentary wishes was involved. And suddenly those theses dealing only negatively with freedom appeared to him like saying that growth, that maturing, *is* absence of impediments to growth; that beauty *is* absence of ugliness; that good thinking *is* absence of mistakes; that genuine achievement is due to absence of inhibitions; that kindness, or friendship, is nothing but absence of hostility; that justice is any legal rule imposed arbitrarily. "What we face," he said, "is not a problem to be dealt with in such a piecemeal, negative way."

After a while he found himself thinking of his experiences in certain specific situations in which there was clearly the one or the other kind of behavior. He recalled discussions. What differences! In the way a man faces a counterargument, faces new facts! There are men who face them freely, open-mindedly, frankly, dealing honestly with them, taking them duly into account. Others are not able to do so at all: they somehow remain blind, rigid; they stick to their axioms, unable to face the arguments, the facts; or, if they do, it is to avoid or to get rid of them by some means—they are incapable of looking them squarely in the face. They cannot deal with them as free men; they are narrowed and enslaved by their position.

For a moment he himself objected, Why are you connecting the issues of freedom with all these features? With questions of being blind or narrow-minded in contrast to facing situations with open eyes and dealing with them honestly? Yes, he decided, I must; these things are most closely and intimately correlated with the meaning and the facts of freedom.

How was it in history, in the times when people honestly fought for freedom? Those men fought against the arbitrary, willful acts of their governments, they fought for fair and honest dealing. To those men freedom was envisaged and endeared in these terms. Freedom was sought and longed for *not* in terms of being able to do whatever might come to one's mind, to act in as one-sided and as blind a way as one might wish, to be free to brutalize the other fellow willfully. Were not those praisers and lovers of freedom those very men who demanded enlightenment for everyone, who fought for just dealing in courts, and just laws?

Thinking of the three theses he had written down earlier, he felt as if the scales had fallen from his eyes. The real question was, what kind

of attitude, what rules, what institutions make for the free, what for the unfree? The real problem is not as in thesis (1), which seemed to say that all determination, all causes and influences, are factors against freedom; the problem is which ones are? This is a matter of causes and consequences; some make for freedom in men, some for unfreedom!

"What nonsense!" he said. "If a man is blind, or sees things in a distorted way and you open his eyes, give him knowledge, make him see, you may thereby strongly influence him, change him, determine him, but are you thereby limiting his freedom?"

"And do not men have a healthy desire not to be blind or blinded, at least in the long run? *Are* there not, thank God, some tendencies of this kind in men? And in the dynamics of society?"

Thinking of theses (2) and (3), he said to himself, There *is* something in formulating freedom as absence of restraint, of compulsion; a price is paid when spontaneity, genuineness, are impaired or destroyed. Yet the very term compulsion means willful, arbitrary force. And spontaneity, genuineness, are certainly not adequately viewed in terms of "whatever wish may come to one's mind" or in those "instinctual impulses." What he had read about happiness was not happiness, was a crude caricature of happiness.

The assertions that "cultural institutions by necessity restrain, limit, freedom" now appeared to him astoundingly superficial. Is limiting freedom the essence of institutions for true education? of the roads that society constructs? Likewise of the development of law and of courts—if understood not in terms of any arbitrarily imposed law, but of making possible some degree of confidence in fair, just dealing? Is it not sheer piecemeal thinking to say "restraint is restraint," if a kidnapper restrains, imprisons, a child in order to extort ransom, and if another restrains the gangster from doing it in order to help the child? Is there not in the very birth of cruelty, of brutality, the factor of being blind, of being narrowed down?

And *are* there not tendencies in men and in children to be kind, to deal sincerely, justly with the other fellow? Are these nothing but "internalized rules on the basis of compulsion and of fear"? He thought of children whom he had seen grow—how little did this blind sweeping generalization apply to their kindness, to their desire for real grasp, to their horror in the face of an act of brute injustice.

"What is needed," he said, "is a sincere study of the tendencies, the vectors, their development in children, in men, in the dynamics of society, but not in terms of such rash definitions, or of those 'instinctual

impulsions,' assumed in blind generalization. These are tasks for empirical study in the same way that problems of philosophy have become problems of modern science. Old theses, dependent on the philosophical school to which one adhered, should now be studied, discussed in scientific investigations. To be sure, superficial statistics will not help; these are deeper questions, involving the dynamics of men, of society. And if these fine tendencies are often weak, if their awakening, their growth, are often endangered, or if they are wholly overcome by other forces, does this justify constructing substitutes on the basis of their very opposites, or overlooking them, denying them entirely? There was some positive development in this direction. It needs help."

Marvelous tasks for investigations! he thought.

Then again he found himself thinking of the actual world situation. In full view of it, of the actual happenings, he reread the three theses he had written that morning. The whole line of approach appeared to him cruelly to miss the issue by focusing on "whatever wish may come to one's mind," and on those "instinctual impulses." Was this the issue? (Probably it is just blind restraint that breeds and feeds such impulses.)

Here are the basic issues, he felt, instead of in those three theses:

That human beings are exposed to injustice, to willfulness, to brutality; robbed of any hope of being treated with fairness, with kindness; that institutions are destroyed which had slowly developed, guaranteeing some justice, some fair dealing.

That men are forced to keep silent in the face of acts of injustice, with no possibility of helping the victims; forced even to help in performing those acts against their will and better knowledge.

Still more, that men, even children, by willfully distorted information become narrowed down, poisoned in their very souls, robbed of the preconditions of free judgment through being blinded, robbed of what in man and society is humane.

Now he felt more clearly why freedom was so dear to his heart.

What he had reached, he felt, was only a start. He saw that there are other problems to be faced; problems of the physical, economic constraints of men by hunger, dire lack of means of subsistence; problems of real coöperation (oh, what he had gone through were not problems of piecemeal individualism); problems of mutual justice between groups; problems of the individual called as a member of his group not only to coöperate in performing, but in facing and judging the very goals; etc. But in all these as in other urgent problems what he had

gained did not seem useless. The task he felt was to face these problems also with the attitude of the free man, productively, sincerely; real help he felt would come only this way.

He was eagerly looking forward to the further steps.

Then he took his notebook and wrote down after the three theses:

“Logical remark. This is what I have gone through, logically: In these three theses freedom is viewed in a piecemeal way and defined as a thing in itself, cut off from its living role and function, basically merely negative. Freedom is (1) a condition in the social field, and a terribly important one. In viewing such a condition we should not view it as a thing in itself and so define it, but we should view it *in* its role, in its function, in its interactions, in its consequences for men and for society. Freedom is logically (2) not just a condition; what matters is how men are and how they develop, how society is and how it develops. Freedom is a Gestalt quality of attitude, of behavior, of a man’s thinking, of his actions. (Think of the difference between the free and the unfree, the description of which was of course only a first approach to viewing the essentials.) Now logically freedom as condition (1) and freedom as Gestalt quality (2) must be viewed not as two pieces, but in their intimate interrelation. Freedom as condition is only one factor, but a very important one with regard to freedom as character quality. To put a man (or even a dog) in chains has consequences. Some men to be sure remain free in their hearts, even in chains, waiting for the moment to throw them off. But there are men whom chains enslave to the core. And here in the interaction between freedom as condition and freedom as character quality, one understands the real meaning of brute restraint and compulsion—the consequences for the victim and for the oppressor.”

What matters is not a rash and elegant definition, but really facing the issues.

PART II

GENERAL THEORY