

4 / The Child's Relations with Others¹

Translated by William Cobb

INTRODUCTION

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION I should like to indicate to you, in this lecture and the next, what place this year's subject occupies within the study of child psychology in general.

1. "Les relations avec autrui chez l'enfant," from the series *Cours de Sorbonne* (Paris, 1960).

The subject of child psychology is of more than casual interest in any philosophical attempt at understanding individual and intersubjective existence. Freud showed that childhood is important, and in some respects decisive, for the character of adult life that follows it. This raises a serious question of principle for any account wishing both to describe the specific motivations and general nature of adult life and to acknowledge the continuity of that life with childhood. Granted that the child's early development has a profound influence on adult life, how, in principle, is that influence possible?

If, as has often been done, we begin with a naturalistic view of the child, in which the acquisition of such things as reflectivity, an ideal image of oneself, values, responsibility, etc., is explained in terms of a process essentially causal in nature, then consistency and continuity demand that we maintain this naturalism in accounting for the phenomena of adult life as well. The demonstrated failure of such theories to account for the phenomena of adult existence in turn forces us to abandon naturalism and mechanism in child psychology—unless we want to hold that to grow to maturity is to pass from one ontological order to another.

If, on the other hand, the child's growth is explained in terms of a cognitive grasp of the world that is held to be the condition for any concrete involvement in the world—if immediacy is denied the child merely in order to make theoretically plausible his passage to reflectivity—such a view overlooks important facts of adult as well as child existence. Psychologists have often spoken of learning in the child as though relations with self, world, and others originate in contemplative knowledge. Yet ordinary experience shows that, in imitating others, in learning to walk, in becoming familiar with an environment, what occurs cannot be explained by the notion that there is first an intellectual act of "knowing" rules, maps, or words and then a move to use them. Intellectualism of this kind is, therefore, an unsatisfactory alternative to naturalism in explaining the nature of childhood existence as well as its influence on adult life.

Merleau-Ponty has elsewhere criticized these two modes of explanation in at-

You can easily see the relation between this year's proposed subject and the subject we dealt with last year. Last year we attempted a study of certain aspects of the child's relations with nature—for example, the child's perception. These included the child's knowledge of external natural facts, also his representation of external facts (e.g., in drawing), the way his imagination makes use of perceptual experiences, his organization of these experiences into causal relations, and, finally, what has sometimes been called the child's conception of the world—that is, the group of ideas (if such they can be called) that would permit the child to have a view of the world.

The last paragraph brings us to the question of intelligence in the child, and you can see that, regardless of the diversity of questions we raised last year, they all involved not the relation between the child and other living beings but rather the child's relations to nature.

This year, on the contrary, in discussing the child's relations with others, we will be concerned with his relations with his parents, his brothers and sisters, other children, and even, if there is time, with his school environment, his social class, and, in general, his relation to culture, to the civilization to which he belongs. It is quite likely that we will not be able to treat these last questions this year, since to do so would take us too far and we have enough to occupy ourselves in the child's relations to parents, brothers and sisters, and other humans.

It might seem as though the question we shall treat this year is *more special* than last year's question. It might seem that last year we studied the "infrastructure" of the child's understanding, the collection of processes that enable him to feel, perceive, and understand; whereas this year we are interested in a fairly narrow sector of this perception and understanding—the perception and understanding of others. It might seem that last year we were concerned with the psychology of understanding in the child, while this year we will concern ourselves with the much more limited subject of affectivity.

This, however, is not the relation between the two kinds of question. I do not at all believe that the question of relations with others is a

tempting a description of adult existence. In "The Child's Relations with Others" his task is less critical than descriptive, less occupied with the refutation of theories which would reduce existence to either Nature or Thought than with finding terms for a positive description of the origin of intersubjective relations. Throughout the essay he endeavors to describe these relations in a language that avoids either of the reductions mentioned above.

The essay itself is a fragment of a larger lecture course in child psychology. Its rather abrupt ending suggests that the inquiry was extended in further lectures. No other texts on the subject by Merleau-Ponty are available, however, and for reasons indicated above it was decided to publish this essay in English as it stands.

I am grateful to Michèle Jacquemain and Robert V. Stone for checking the translation and making many improvements.—*Trans.*

secondary and more particular problem, more strictly confined to affectivity than the problem with which we occupied ourselves last year.

The very results of last year's study prevent us from treating the problem of relations with others as secondary and subordinate.

In speaking of the child's perception or of causal relations as grasped by the child, what struck us was the fact that, in the case of the child's perception, it is not a matter of a simple reflection of external phenomena within the child or of a simple sorting of data resulting from the activity of the senses. It seemed to us to be a question of an actual "informing" [*Gestaltung*] of experience in the child. For example, in the case of causal relations, which have traditionally been thought to have been learned by an intellectual operation in the child, we have seen instead, with Michotte, that such relations are anchored in the child's very perception of external events and that perception in the child is not a simple reflection nor the result of a process of sorting data. Rather, it is a more profound operation whereby the child organizes his experience of external events—an operation which thus is properly neither a logical nor a predicative activity.

When we considered the child's imagination, it appeared likewise that we could not assimilate what is called the *image* in the child to a kind of degraded, weakened copy of preceding perceptions. What is called *imagination* is an emotional conduct. Consequently here again we found ourselves, as it were, *beneath* the relation of the knowing subject to the known object. We had to do with a primordial operation by which the child organizes the imaginary, just as he organizes the perceived.

When we examined the child's drawing, one of the faults we found with the famous book by Luquet was precisely this: The child's drawing is considered by Luquet to be an abortive adult drawing, and the development of the child, viewed through the stages of his drawing, appears as a series of frustrations of the attempt to represent the world as the adult does (at least the white, "civilized," Western adult)—that is, according to the laws of classical geometrical perspective. We tried to show, on the contrary, that the child's processes of expression could not be understood as simple breakdowns on the road to "visual realism" and that, instead, these processes testified to the presence in the child of a relation with things² and with the sensible very different from the one that is expressed in the perspective projection of drawing in the classic style.

Finally, it appeared to us, following certain indications of Wallon, that there is perhaps no place for the question of the child's conception of the world. In order to be able to speak of a conception of the world,

2. In the text "*droves*" appears to be a misprint for "*choses*."—*Trans.*

the child would actually have to totalize his experience under general concepts. But, as Wallon remarked, an entire sector of this experience is fragmentary [*lacunaire*] for the child; it contains what Wallon called "ultra things," i.e., entities of which the child has no direct experience, which are at the horizon of his perception—like the sun, the moon, etc. These entities remain for the child in a state of relative indetermination; he has, strictly speaking, no conception of them. With respect to nearby objects, the child often has a conception that is very close to that of the adult (Huang). The concepts of animism and of artificialism, employed a bit recklessly, are adult ways of expressing the child's confusion in the face of "ultra things"; they are the expedients sometimes used by the child in replying to the adult's questions and perhaps do not arise in his own experience.

All this, I believe, converged on the following idea: What classical academic psychology calls "functions of cognition"—intelligence, perception, imagination, etc.—when more closely examined, lead us back to an activity that is prior to cognition properly so called, a function of organizing experiences that imposes on certain totalities the configuration and the kind of equilibrium that are possible under the corporeal and social conditions of the child himself.

In another course, moreover, we examined the problem of the acquisition of language, and there again we reached the same kind of conclusion: The acquisition of language appeared to us to be the acquisition of an open system of expression. That is, such a system is capable of expressing, not some finite number of cognitions or ideas, but rather an indeterminate number of cognitions or ideas to come. The system that is speech is learned by the child, not at all by a genuine intellectual operation (as though by means of intelligence the child understood the principles of speech, its morphology, and its syntax). Rather, what is involved is a kind of *habituation*, a use of language as a tool or instrument. The employment of language, which is an effect and also one of the most active stimuli of intellectual development, does not appear to be founded on the exercise of pure intelligence but instead on a more obscure operation—namely, the child's assimilation of the linguistic system of his environment in a way that is comparable to the acquisition of any habit whatever: the learning of a structure of conduct.

These results lead us to think that between the functions of understanding we studied last year and affectivity itself there must be an altogether different relation than that of the simple subordination of the latter to the former.

However, I would like to show this more directly by means of two examples. First, recent studies have tended to show that even external

perception of sense qualities and space—at first glance the most disinterested, least affective of all the functions—is profoundly modified by the personality and by the interpersonal relationships in which the child lives. The second example has to do with the learning of language. Certain authors show that there is a very close and profound relation between the development of language and the configuration of the human environment in which the child develops.

1. *Psychological rigidity*

ON THE FIRST POINT, I have in mind the interesting work of Else Frenkel-Brunswik, described in an article entitled "Intolerance of Ambiguity as an Emotional and Perceptual Personality Variable."³ This work is connected with a whole series of earlier studies. In particular, it recalls the work of the German psychologist Erich Jaensch, who twenty-five years ago was well known for his research on eidetic imagery⁴ and who has since turned to research on perception designed to show a close relation between the way a person perceives objects and the general characteristics of his personality and, in particular, of his relations with others. Ambiguous perceptions (the same drawing of a cube seen now from one standpoint, now from another) would be more frequent in "liberal" subjects (meaning subjects who are likely to recognize several aspects of things even if, on first glance, these different aspects are not easily reconciled with one another). Actually the research by Jaensch is in this sense very hasty and bold. Mrs. Frenkel-Brunswik, on the contrary, endeavored to carry out a rigorous experimental study. She bases her approach firmly on the principle of projective techniques. Rorschach constructed his test on the idea that the subject's perception is entirely altered by his personality, since he relied on the subject's manner of perceiving certain visual data in order to deduce from it certain personality traits.

Mrs. Frenkel-Brunswik chose a precise personality trait in order to study its correlation with certain types of perception. She called this trait "psychological rigidity," and we are going to define it shortly. The author endeavored to study the correlation between this trait and certain modes of perception by means of an experimental method. A study was made by the University of California on 1500 schoolchildren between the ages of 11 and 16. Of these children she chose 120 who represented the extreme limiting-case of psychological rigidity. She submitted them to interviews, clinical examinations, and tests. The parents of these children were visited, and one third of them were

3. *Journal of Personality*, vol. 18 (September, 1949), pp. 108-43.

4. Cf. Erich Jaensch, *Eidetic Imagery and Typological Methods of Investigation*, trans. Oscar Oeser (New York, 1930).—*Trans.*

submitted to exact perceptual experiments of a kind designed to show the link between the type of perception and the personal and interpersonal factors I spoke of earlier.

The personality variable chosen for these experiments, "psychological rigidity," is a notion that originated in psychoanalysis, although it is far from being an orthodox Freudian conception. It means the attitude of the subject who replies to any question with black-and-white answers; who gives replies that are curt and lacking in any shading; who also is generally ill disposed, when examining an object or a person, to recognize in them any clashing traits; and who continually tries, in his remarks, to arrive at a simple, categorical, and summary view.

In the eyes of the author this "psychological rigidity" is by no means the sign of an actual psychological force, as people who know the subject sometimes believe. It is only a mask. Beneath this rigidity one could easily enough find real chaos or at least a deeply divided personality. Psychological rigidity, according to Mrs. Frenkel-Brunswick, is what the Freudians call a "reaction formation"; that is, a façade interposed by the subject between his psychological reality and others who are there to examine him. The principle of this formation is well known: If the individual is very aggressive he conceals his aggression under an acquired veil of politeness, and often the most apparently polite people are, at bottom, the most aggressive. The author brings to light the "reactional" character of rigidity. Rigid subjects are in reality, when more closely examined, likely to be profoundly divided in their personality dynamics. If they are questioned about their families, in general they reply with categorical affirmations. Either the family is perfection itself—one could not wish for a better—or it is horrible. In any case there are never any nuances. More often than not, such persons are traditionalists. They declare that their families—and their parents in particular—are perfect. For them their parents represent an absolute. What allows us to say that beneath this rigidity there is no psychological force or genuine conviction is this: First, when these subjects analyze and describe their parents, they always confine themselves to mentioning the inessential, external traits, as though they are afraid to enter into a more detailed analysis and to recognize imperfections in the persons around them. Second, each time one tries to catch them unawares and obtain responses whose real significance escapes them they are generally negative toward their parents. Instead of being asked directly what they think of their parents, they are asked, for example, to make a list of the people they would take along if they had to live for several years on a desert island. It is significant that many of them who are absolutely in favor of the family regularly exclude

their parents from the list. Third, when they are given the Thematic Apperception Test, one notices that their descriptions of their parents emphasize their coercive, punitive aspects. These different indications, when joined with the evidence from clinical experiments, permit us to say that their wholesale affirmation of the merits of the family is, rather, a mask behind which a fairly lively aggression may be found. When aggression against the parent figures becomes too urgent and agonizing, these subjects superimpose a phenomenon of reaction to that aggression. They systematically avoid lifting the mask; hence their refusal to admit shading into the picture of their parents. If they begin to admit any shading at all, they will admit too much.

In a more general way, not only with their parents but with regard to all moral and social problems as well, these subjects proceed by dichotomizing—the dichotomy of authority and obedience. The child must be absolutely obedient, or else the very principle of authority is called in question. Another example is the dilemma of cleanliness and dirtiness. The mania for cleanliness (a familiar trait) can make certain women into passionate house cleaners and fanatic polishers of furniture, etc. All this has its roots in the rigidity of the child. Thus we have the dualism of good and evil, virtue and vice, and even that of masculinity and femininity. Of course, nobody denies that each of these differences is considered to be an *absolute* difference, founded in nature, excluding any appearance of transition, degree, or change. Mrs. Frenkel-Brunswik thinks that these subjects have acquired this attitude in their initial relations with the family, inasmuch as these relations are also their first relations to values and to the world. The parents are the means by which they first communicate with the world. The families in question are usually authoritarian; they are the ones in which the child is strictly “trained,” the “frustrating” families in which the child feels insecure and in danger.

Psychological rigidity can be found occasionally in all subjects, but it is only in an especially authoritarian environment that it becomes a constant conduct, of which the child cannot rid himself. In this kind of authoritarian atmosphere the child divides the parent figure in half. On the one hand there is the kindly image of his parents that is willingly avowed, and on the other there is the image he is struggling against. As Melanie Klein has said, two images (the “good mother” and the “bad mother”), instead of being united in relation to the same person, are arranged by the child with the former prominent and the latter completely concealed from himself. When questioned, the child overtly recognizes only the favorable image, and this is what, according to Melanie Klein, defines ambivalence. Ambivalence consists in having two alternative images of the same object, the same person, without

making any effort to connect them or to notice that in reality they relate to the same object and the same person.

Melanie Klein has established a profound distinction between ambivalence of this kind and ambiguity. As opposed to ambivalence, ambiguity is an adult phenomenon, a phenomenon of maturity, which has nothing pathological about it. It consists in admitting that the same being who is good and generous can also be annoying and imperfect. Ambiguity is ambivalence that one dares to look at face to face. What is lacking in rigid subjects is this capacity to confront squarely the contradictions that exist in their attitudes toward others.

The families in which these children are found are authoritarian, as we have said, and they are equally the "socially marginal" families (here we are extending the social aspect of this phenomenon). There also exists a social marginalism in France. The *nouveau riche* is marginal in the sense that he is placed in a category in which he does not feel himself thoroughly integrated. It is the same with the "newly poor." This latter category is much more important in the United States because of its national minorities.

When conjoined with social conditions, rigidity has social consequences. Unaware of his double attitude, refusing even to recognize in himself the image of "bad parents," the rigid child tends to project outside himself the part of himself he does not want to be. The aggression he wants to be rid of is projected outside by a process of externalization that in certain cases is evident beyond any doubt.

According to the best observers, the legends in America and French Africa concerning the sexuality of Negroes display a mechanism of this type. Subjects project onto the Negro (considered to represent a "natural" sexuality that is stronger and more violent than their own) something of themselves that they would like not to have. The same mechanism is called into play with the Jews; the construction of the Jewish character often proceeds by a division of this kind. The anti-Semite throws off onto the Jew the part of himself he does not want and is most ashamed of, as others do with the Negro. This is true also of other minorities. The minority is all the more hateful for representing the behavior whose germs the subject carries within himself and will not admit are his own. Simone de Beauvoir has analyzed a mechanism of the same kind in the phenomenon of the "battle of the sexes."⁵ From age ten on, this phenomenon appears in schools where boys and girls are reared together. If the boys and girls are asked the reasons for this social dichotomization (for this is what it already is), one is forced to admit something like this: Each attributes to the other the character-

5. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley (New York, 1952).—*Trans.*

istics of his humanity that he does not want. For example, men who, by virtue of the established myths as well as certain tendencies of their own physiological constitutions, do not want to be weak and sensitive and want to be self-sufficient, decisive, and energetic, project on women exactly those personality traits they do not themselves want to have. Women, who are accomplices in this masquerade, from their side project on men the personality traits they wish to be rid of or are unable to assume. There is thus a mutual disparagement which is at the same time the basis of a pact concluded between the two sexes. The very women who proclaim their hatred of men also admit that it is, after all, men's business to make decisions, pay taxes, carry the bags to the station, and hold positions, etc. In reality it is scarcely necessary to say that even men are frivolous and capable of being mistaken; by the same token, women are as decisive as men and as capable of being in business or a profession. But by a sort of tacit agreement men and women are at the same time accomplices and enemies, and thus they continue to live side by side, in a love that is hate, a hate that is love.

It remains for us to see how the type of personality and of interpersonal relations designated by the term "psychological rigidity" express themselves in the anonymous functions of external perception. Let us now turn to the experiments designed to make evident the relation between psychological rigidity, as a mode of relation to self and others, and perception in its own right.

A study was made of 1500 schoolchildren between eleven and sixteen years old, and, in particular, of 120 of them who were remarkably "rigid." These subjects showed very strong racial and social prejudices—prejudices which, you recall from what we have already said, bear witness to a sort of interior schism between what the subjects admit and recognize in themselves and what they do not admit, do not recognize, and are unwilling to see in themselves. The latter traits are projected on external subjects who play the role of scapegoat; while, on the contrary, the subject appears in his own eyes as immune to the defects he finds in external groups.

The experimenters asked a certain number of questions designed to reveal psychological rigidity. Here are some examples of the test questions. Subjects were asked to evaluate the following phrase: "People can be divided into two categories—the weak and the strong." Or again, "Teachers should tell their students what to do, rather than trying to find out what the students want." This last sentence served to test for the authoritarian tendencies of the subjects. Again, "Girls should learn only about household matters." Another test sentence (this test was given in the United States) was "We should deport all

refugees and give their jobs to veterans." Finally, "There is only one way to do something properly." Psychologically rigid subjects agreed immediately with this last proposition.

After these tests for "rigidity," experiments were made to show the characteristic ways in which the subjects perceive. Psychologically rigid subjects could be expected to show, in the same way, a sort of perceptual rigidity. It would be hard for them to modify their attitude and to adopt a new account of new aspects of a problem. They would have a tendency to refer any new experience of a different type that might be presented to them back to already familiar experiences. For example, they were shown films in which the images gradually changed, e.g., the image of a dog transformed little by little into a cat. Members of the strongly prejudiced group held more firmly, in general, to their antecedent mode of perception and saw no appreciable change in the figure which was presented to them, even when the changes were already objectively noticeable.

In more general terms, such a subject rebels against all aspects of the phenomenon of transition. Even if, in effect, he is not immediately acquiescent to the changes in the stimuli that are presented to him, he might at least notice that something has changed. Without altering his perception of the whole he might, all the same, recognize that the figure is in the process of disorganization. But this recognition of the phenomenon of transition is exactly what is repugnant to him.

In sum, the subjects who carry within themselves extremely strong conflicts are precisely those who reject, in their views of external things, the admission that there are particular situations that are ambiguous, full of conflicts, and mixed in value. This occurs in such a way that one can say that a very strong emotional ambivalence shows up, at the level of understanding or perception, as a very weak ambiguity in the things perceived or in the subject's ideas of them. The more emotionally ambivalent the subject, the less it suits him that there should be any ambiguity in things and in his view of things. Emotional ambivalence is what demands the denial of intellectual ambiguity. In subjects whose intellectual ambiguity is strong it often happens that the emotional foundation is much more stable than in other subjects.

Another series of experiments was designed to measure the speed with which a subject adapts to a new type of problem. The subject was trained to solve a certain number of elementary tasks that implied a certain method of solution. He was then presented with other problems that were apparently of the same form but in reality could be solved much more easily by another method. Only, in order to find the other method, the subject must be supple and capable of responding to the situation in a way appropriate to its new content. One finds in the same

way that psychologically rigid subjects in general react against this modification of their techniques.

Here we must interject two remarks that are indispensable for an understanding of the exact scope of these investigations.

1. Mrs. Frenkel-Brunswik does not say that psychological rigidity, or rigidity in psycho-social relations, necessarily appears in an unequivocal manner in the domain of perception. The relation established by the author between affective life and intersubjectivity, on the one hand, and the functions of understanding or of perception, on the other, is much more subtle and fluid. There is always a relation between these two domains, but it is not always that of a single relation of analogy. There are subjects who, although psychologically rigid, *compensate* for that rigidity by great flexibility in the perceptual domain. The two phenomena always occur together, but they may be united in several different ways. Sometimes the same structure is met with in both domains—psychological rigidity appearing as perceptual rigidity—and sometimes, in other cases, the perceptual phenomenon compensates for (rather than simply resembles) the affective phenomenon. What is important in both cases, however, is that the two phenomena always comprise a single whole.

2. In outlining a social psychology of social and political opinions,⁶ Mrs. Frenkel-Brunswik does not propose that psychology *alone* is in a position to solve political problems. There are, in her view, subjects who are without social prejudices of any kind, who are perfectly "liberal" in the sense that they admit that all men are brothers, that one cannot concentrate all the characteristics of evil in Negroes, Jews, or any other minority and yet who, for all that, are rigid subjects because they refuse to see among men even the most striking differences of *situation*—differences which pertain to the collectivity in which they have lived and received their initial training. There is an abstract or rigid liberalism which consists in thinking that all men are *identical*. There are also liberals who are truly liberal, in the sense that they conceive very well that there can be differences of historical situation among men and different cultural environments. This does not prevent them from treating each man (in so far as his situation permits him to be a man) like any other. But the fundamental identity of men does not close their eyes to the cultural differences which may develop and which must be understood in action, if they do not want to arrive at results that are sometimes contrary to the ones they aimed for.

6. Cf. Else Frenkel-Brunswik and R. N. Sanford, "Some Personality Factors in Anti-Semitism," *Journal of Personality*, vol. 20 (1945), pp. 271-91. Merleau-Ponty cites at this point a partial French translation of this article under the title "La personnalité antisémite," which appeared in *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 60 (October, 1950).—*Trans.*

Racist opinions, on the other hand, are necessarily linked to psychological rigidity, since they rest on a myth and can thus be explained only by a psychological mechanism. But most political opinions, unlike these, are not reducible to psychological factors. Not every political question can be cut short with a psychological analysis. What betrays psychological rigidity is not the adoption of this or that conception of the state or of history; it is the *manner* in which one adopts this thesis and tries to justify it. Similarly, what characterizes a psychologically mature subject for Mrs. Frenkel-Brunswik is not that he does or does not have ambiguities; it is the *way in which he treats his ambiguities*. If he hides them from himself, if he flees them, if he does not confront them, he is psychologically rigid. If, on the contrary, he faces them squarely, he has arrived at maturity. Everyone is ambiguous in one way or another; it is just that there are subjects who refuse to take into account, to "interiorize," their ambiguities. This is ambivalence properly so called. Other subjects consent to see problems that arise on account of the discordant traits that are to be found in each and every individual.

To appreciate thoroughly the nature of anti-Semitism or prejudice against Negroes, it is not enough merely to be a psychologist, any more than an appreciation of this or that political doctrine necessarily requires a psychological study of those who adopt it. Psychology describes conducts; it cannot inform us about the internal content of the theses to which they address themselves. It can only describe attitudes.

My aim, as well as the aim of the author whose work I have been utilizing, has not been to show that the cognitive functions, like perception, are *explained* by the social structure in which the individual finds himself and in which he has the task of adjusting his perception to his environment and vice versa. The question of causality is not resolved by these investigations. They merely establish a correlation between the manner of perceiving and that of structuring the social world. But this correlation can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, we might decide that it is because the subject perceives in a rigid fashion (on account of his constitutional make-up) that he is predisposed in social matters to a dichotomization of things and to the prejudices I have already mentioned. On the other hand, one might decide that it is because the subject has organized his relations with others and with the social world in this or that way that he is brought to perceive them in the same way. The establishment of a correlation does not allow us to resolve this issue.

What must be understood, moreover, is that the question of a causal sequence of the two phenomena is *meaningless*. For it to be meaningful would require that the two phenomena be capable of stand-

ing in isolation. But this is never the case. In fact, from the time of his birth the child who will have prejudices has been molded by his environment, and in that respect has undergone a certain exercise of parental authority. Consequently there is no moment at which you could grasp, in a pure state, his way of perceiving, completely apart from the social conditioning that influences him. Inversely, you can never say that the way in which the child structures [*met en forme*] his social environment is unrelated to the hereditary or constitutional dispositions of his nervous system. He himself is the one who structures his surroundings, after all. It is as though there is in the child a sort of elasticity that sometimes makes him react to the influences of his surroundings by finding his own solutions to the problems they pose. And so the internal characteristics of the subject always intervene in his way of establishing his relations with what is outside him. It is never simply the outside which molds him; it is he himself who takes a position in the face of the external conditions. If, therefore, we refuse to answer yes or no to the problem of causality, it is not simply because we lack necessary information; rather, it is for reasons of principle. It is because, in fact and in principle, it is impossible to establish a cleavage between what will be "natural" in the individual and what will be acquired from his social upbringing. In reality the two orders are not distinct; they are part and parcel of a single global phenomenon.

Consequently our aim has not been to connect the functions of intellect to the subject's relation to society, as they depended on it in an unequivocal way, but to bring to light the profound relation of the two phenomenal orders that are part of a single global project of the individual—a global project in which are established his relations with the neutral perceptual fields that can be given in his experience, as well as his relations with his human and social surroundings.

2. *Affectivity and language*

I PASS to the second fact that appeared to me to be worthy of mention by way of introduction to this course: the relation that can be established between the development of intelligence (in particular, the acquisition of language) and the configuration of the individual's affective environment.

I call your attention to a short article by François Rostand entitled "*Grammaire et affectivité.*"⁷ Rostand begins by remarking that from the start there is a correlation between the age at which the child is most dependent on his parents (i.e., about two years) and the age at

7. *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, vol. 14 (April-June, 1950), pp. 299-310.

which he begins to learn language. There is a period when the child is "sensitive" with regard to language, when he is capable of learning to speak. It has been shown that if the child up to two years of age does not have a linguistic model to imitate, if he does not find himself in an environment in which people are speaking, he will never speak as do those who have learned language during the period in question. This is the case with those children who are called "savages," who have been raised by animals or far from contact with speaking subjects. In no case have these subjects ever learned to speak with the linguistic perfection that is found among ordinary subjects. Deaf children whose retraining has been delayed and who consequently have not learned to speak during the "sensitive" period never speak their language in exactly the same way as do those who can hear. One can show, in fact, that in their syntax or their morphology there exist, after retraining, some very odd peculiarities: for example, the absence or rarity of the passive voice in verbs. This allows us to presume that there will be a profound link between the acquisition of language (which would seem to be a strictly intellectual operation) and the child's place in the family environment. It is this relation that Rostand seeks to define exactly.

It is a commonplace that the child's acquisition of language is also correlated with his relation to his mother. Children who have been suddenly and forcibly separated from their mothers always show signs of a linguistic regression. At bottom, it is not only the word "mama" that is the child's first; it is the entire language which is, so to speak, maternal.

The acquisition of language might be a phenomenon of the same kind as the relation to the mother. Just as the maternal relation is (as the psychoanalysts say) a relation of *identification*, in which the subject projects on his mother what he himself experiences and assimilates the attitudes of his mother, so one could say that the acquisition of language is itself a phenomenon of identification. To learn to speak is to learn to play a series of *roles*, to assume a series of conducts or linguistic gestures.

Rostand mentions an observation made by Dr. Dolto-Marette in a case of jealousy in a child. The younger of two children shows jealousy when his new brother is born. During the first days of the newborn child's life, he identifies with it, carrying himself as though he himself were the newborn baby. There is a striking regression in language as well as in character. In the following days one notices in him a change of attitude. The subject identifies himself with his older brother and overcomes his jealousy; he adopts all the characteristics of the eldest, including an attitude toward the new baby that is identical to what, until now, had been his older brother's attitude toward him. Thanks to

a fortunate circumstance his jealousy is overcome. By chance, just as the baby is born, a fourth child comes to stay in the family. This fourth child is bigger than all three brothers in the family. The presence of a child who is older than the eldest brother robs the latter of his status as the "absolute eldest." The eldest is now no longer "absolutely big," since there are others who are bigger than he is. The fourth child aids in the middle brother's transition and assimilation of the role of the eldest.

It is in this way that a case of neurotic stuttering is cured and a marked linguistic progress realized from day to day. The subject acquires the use of the simple past tense, the imperfect, the simple future, and the future with the verb *to go* ("I am *going* to leave"). Coming back to this observation, Rostand interprets it in the following fashion: The jealousy that invades the subject when he confirms the arrival of a new brother is essentially a refusal to change his situation. The newcomer is an intruder and is going to confiscate to his own advantage the place in the family that was held until now by our jealous subject. It is in the phase of the "surpassing" of jealousy that one notices the appearance of a link between the affective phenomenon and the linguistic phenomenon: jealousy is overcome thanks to the constitution of a scheme of past-present-future. In effect, jealousy in this subject consists in a rigid attachment to his present—that is, to the situation of the "latest born" which was hitherto his own. He considered the present to be absolute. Now, on the contrary, one can say that from the moment when he consents to be no longer the latest born, to become in relation to the new baby what his elder brother had until then been in relation to him, he replaces his attitude of "my place has been taken" with another, whose schema might be somewhat like this: "*I have been* the youngest, but *I am* the youngest no longer, and *I will become* the biggest." One sees that there is a solidarity between the acquisition of this temporal structure, which gives a meaning to the corresponding linguistic instruments, and the situation of a jealousy that is overcome. For the subject the situation of jealousy is the occasion both for re-structuring his relations with the others he lives with and at the same time for acquiring new dimensions of existence (past, present, and future) with a supple play among them.

Speaking Piaget's language, one might say that the whole problem of overcoming jealousy is a problem of "de-centering." Until now the subject has been centered on himself, centered on the situation of the latest born that he has occupied. In order to accept the birth of a new child, he must de-center himself. But the de-centering involved here is not, as it was for Piaget, a primarily intellectual operation, a phenomenon of pure knowledge. It is a matter of a lived de-centering, aroused by the situation of the child inside the family constellation.

One might even say that what the child learns, in solving the problem of jealousy, is to relativize his notions. He must relativize the notions of the youngest and the eldest: he is no longer *the* youngest; it is the new child who assumes this role. He thus must come to distinguish the absolute "youngest" from the relative "youngest" which he now becomes. And in the same way he must learn to become the eldest in relation to the newborn child, whereas until now the notion of "eldest" had only an absolute meaning.

In Piaget's language, the child must learn to think in terms of reciprocity. Rostand himself cites Piaget's terms. But these terms take on a new meaning from the fact that training in reciprocity, relativity, and de-centering occurs here not by intellectual acts of "grouping" but by operations within the vital order, by the manner in which the child restores [*réétablit*] his relations with others.

To this preliminary observation Rostand adds the following personal one: He noticed in a little girl of thirty-five months an interesting linguistic phenomenon that followed a frightening emotional experience (an encounter, while walking alone, with a big dog). Two months later this experience seemed to bear fruit. There was an abrupt acquisition of certain modes of expression (in particular, the imperfect tense of verbs) which until then the child had not used.

This step occurred at the birth of a younger brother. What we have to understand is the exact relation between this linguistic phenomenon, the birth of the younger brother, and the emotional experience of two months earlier.

The child had come across a dog who was nursing its young. At the time she encountered the dog, she knew already from her parents that she was going to have a little brother or sister in about two months. Meeting the dog which was nursing its litter was not an indifferent experience for the child; it was a visible symbol of something analogous that was about to happen in her own world. The pattern about to be realized two months later in the child's environment (parents, little girl, little brother) was already prefigured by the pattern (big dog; me, the little girl; the little dogs). The sight of the dogs was of paramount significance by virtue of its relation to the situation in which the child was about to find herself.

In order for her to accept the birth of a younger brother, what was basically necessary was a change of attitude. Whereas the little girl had been, until then, the object of all attention and of all caresses, she now had to accept the fact that some of this attention and these caresses would be transferred to another, and to associate herself with this attitude. She had to pass from an ingratiating [*captative*] attitude (i.e., one in which the child receives without giving) to a selfless

[*oblative*], quasi-maternal attitude toward the child about to be born. It was necessary for her to accept a relative abandonment, to turn and confront a life that would henceforth be *her* life, that would no longer be supported, as it had been until then, by the exclusive attention of her parents. In short, the girl had to adopt an active attitude, whereas until then her attitude had been passive.

The linguistic phenomenon that emerges at this same time can be understood in this perspective. I said earlier that the imperfect tense appeared in the child's language after the birth of her brother. More important, however, was the emergence of four verbs in the future tense; there was also a great increase in the use of "me" and "I." If the future is a time of aggressiveness, a time when projects are envisioned, when one takes a stand in the face of what is to come and, instead of allowing it to come, moves actively toward it—then how was it made possible by the new situation of the little girl? The answer is that this was precisely the attitude demanded of the child by the birth of her brother. The acquisition of "me" and "I" presented no problems; it indicated that the subject adopted a more personal attitude and lived to a relatively greater degree by herself. Finally, the acquisition of the imperfect tense at the birth of her little brother indicated that the child was becoming capable of understanding that the present changes into the past. The imperfect is a former present which, moreover, is still referred to as present, unlike the past definite.⁸ The imperfect is "still there." The acquisition of the imperfect thus presupposes a concrete grasp of the movement from present to past which the child, on her part, was just in the process of achieving in her relations with her family. The fact is, all the verbs she used in the imperfect after the birth of her brother had to do with the baby. The baby *is* what the elder sister *used to be* in the world of the family.

To be sure, emotion plays a role only to the extent that it gives the subject the occasion to re-structure her relations with her human environment, and not at all simply as emotion. If the problem had not been resolved, if the subject had shown herself incapable of overcoming her jealousy or her uneasiness, nothing good would have come from the experience. Inversely, there can be cases in which the subject progresses in language without apparent emotion. In such cases, however, linguistic progress always has an interrupted character; the acquisition of the modes of expression always represents a sort of crisis, in which a whole realm of expression is annexed in a single stroke.

In sum, the intellectual elaboration of our experience of the world is constantly supported by the affective elaboration of our inter-human

8. The difference in question here is that between, e.g., "I was going" (imperfect) and "I went" (past definite).—*Trans.*

relations. The use of certain linguistic tools is mastered in the play of forces that constitute the subject's relations to his human surroundings. The linguistic usage achieved by the child depends strictly on the "position" (in psychoanalytic terms) that is taken by the child at every moment in the play of forces in his family and his human environment.

Here again it is not a question of a causal analysis. There is no question of saying that the linguistic progress is *explained* by the affective progress, in the sense in which expansion is explained by heat. One might reply that the affective progress itself is also a function of the intellectual progress and that the entire intellectual development makes possible a certain affective progress. And this would also be true.

What we are seeking here is not a causal explanation, any more than before. My effort is to show the solidarity and unity of the two phenomena, not to reduce the one to the other, as is traditionally done by both empiricist and intellectualist psychologists. The child's experience of the constellation of his own family does more than impress on him certain relations between one human being and another. At the same time that the child is assuming and forming his family relations, an entire form of thinking arises in him. It is a whole usage of language as well as a way of perceiving the world.

[I] THE PROBLEM OF THE CHILD'S PERCEPTION OF OTHERS: THE THEORETICAL PROBLEM

BEFORE STUDYING the different relations established between the child and his parents, his peers, other children, brothers, sisters, or strangers, before undertaking a description and analysis of these different relations, a question of principle arises: How and under what conditions does the child come into contact with others? What is the nature of the child's relations with others? How are such relations possible from the day of birth on?

Classical psychology approached this problem only with great difficulty. One might say that it was among the stumbling blocks of classical psychology because it is admittedly incapable of being solved if one confines oneself to the theoretical ideas that were elaborated by academic psychology.

How does such a problem arise for classical psychology? Given the presuppositions with which that psychology works, given the prejudices it adopted from the start without any kind of criticism, the relation with others becomes incomprehensible for it. What, in fact, is the

psyche [*psychisme*—mine or the other's—for classical psychology? All psychologists of the classical period are in tacit agreement on this point: the psyche, or the psychic, is *what is given to only one person*. It seems, in effect, that one might admit without further examination or discussion that what constitutes the psyche in me or in others is something incommunicable. I alone am able to grasp my psyche—for example, my sensations of green or of red. You will never know them as I know them; you will never experience them in my place. A consequence of this idea is that the psyche of another appears to me as radically inaccessible, at least in its own existence. I cannot reach other lives, other thought processes, since by hypothesis they are open only to inspection by a single individual: the one who owns them.

Since I cannot have direct access to the psyche of another, for the reasons just given, I must grant that I seize the other's psyche only indirectly, mediated by its bodily appearances. I see you in flesh and bone; you are there. I cannot know what you are thinking, but I can suppose it, guess at it from your facial expressions, your gestures, and your words—in short from a series of bodily appearances of which I am only the witness.

The question thus becomes this: How does it happen that, in the presence of this mannequin that resembles a man, in the presence of this body that gesticulates in a characteristic way, I come to believe that it is inhabited by a psyche? ⁹ How am I led to consider that this body before me encloses a psyche? How can I perceive across this body, so to speak, another's psyche? Classical psychology's conception of the body and the consciousness we have of it is here a second obstacle in the way of a solution of the problem. Here one wants to speak of the notion of *cenesthesia*, meaning a mass of sensations that would express to the subject the state of his different organs and different bodily functions. Thus my body for me, and your body for you, could be reached, and be knowable, by means of a cenesthetic sense.

A mass of sensations, by hypothesis, is as *individual* as the psyche itself. That is to say, if in fact my body is knowable by me only through the mass of sensations it gives me (a mass of sensations to which you obviously have no access and of which we have no concrete experience), then the consciousness I have of my body is impenetrable by you. You cannot represent yourself in the same way in which I feel my own body; it is likewise impossible for me to represent to myself the way in which you feel your body. How, then, can I suppose that, in back of this appearance before me, there is someone who experiences his body as I experience mine?

9. I use the vague term "psyche" on purpose, in order to avoid any theory of consciousness that might be implied by a more precise term.

Only one recourse is left for classical psychology—that of supposing that, as a spectator of the gestures and utterances of the other's body before me, I consider the totality of signs thus given, the totality of facial expressions this body presents to me, as the occasion for a kind of decoding. Behind the body whose gestures and characteristic utterances I witness, I project, so to speak, what I myself feel of my own body. No matter whether it is a question of an actual association of ideas or, instead, a judgment whereby I interpret the appearances, I transfer to the other the intimate experience I have of my own body.

The problem of the experience of others poses itself, as it were, in a system of four terms: (1) myself, my "psyche"; (2) the image I have of my body by means of the sense of touch or of cenesthesia, which, to be brief, we shall call the "introceptive image" of my own body; (3) the body of the other as seen by me, which we shall call the "visual body"; and (4) a fourth (hypothetical) term which I must re-constitute and guess at—the "psyche" of the other, the other's feeling of his own existence—to the extent that I can imagine or suppose it across the appearances of the other through his visual body.

Posed thus, the problem raises all kinds of difficulties. First, there is the difficulty of relating my knowledge or experience of the other to an association, to a judgment by which I would project into him the data of my intimate experience. The perception of others comes relatively early in life. Naturally we do not at an early age come to know the exact *meaning* of each of the emotional expressions presented to us by others. This exact knowledge is, if you like, late in coming; what is much earlier is the very fact that I perceive an expression, even if I may be wrong about what it means exactly. At a very early age children are sensitive to facial expressions, e.g., the smile. How could that be possible if, in order to arrive at an understanding of the global meaning of the smile and to learn that the smile is a fair indication of a benevolent feeling, the child had to perform the complicated task I have just mentioned? How could it be possible if, beginning with the visual perception of another's smile, he had to compare that visual perception of the smile with the movement that he himself makes when he is happy or when he feels benevolent—projecting to the other a benevolence of which he would have had intimate experience but which could not be grasped directly in the other? This complicated process would seem to be incompatible with the relative precociousness of the perception of others.

Again, in order for projection to be possible and to take place, it would be necessary for me to begin from the analogy between the facial expressions offered me by others and the different facial gestures I execute myself. In the case of the smile, for me to interpret the visible

smile of the other requires that there be a way of comparing the visible smile of the other with what we may call the "motor smile"—the smile as felt, in the case of the child, by the child himself. But in fact do we have the means of making this comparison between the body of the other, as it appears in visual perception, and our own body, as we feel it by means of introception and of cenesthesia? Have we the means of systematically comparing the body of the other as seen by me with my body as sensed by me? In order for this to be possible there would have to be a fairly regular correspondence between the two experiences. The child's visual experience of his own body is altogether insignificant in relation to the kinesthetic, cenesthetic, or tactile feeling he can have of it. There are numerous regions of his body that he does not see and some that he will never see or know except by means of the mirror (of which we will speak shortly). There is no point-for-point correspondence between the two images of the body. To understand how the child arrives at assimilating the one to the other, we must, rather, suppose that he has other reasons for doing it than reasons of simple detail. If he comes to identify as bodies, and as animated ones, the bodies of himself and the other, this can only be because he globally identifies them and not because he constructs a point-for-point correspondence between the visual image of the other and the introceptive image of his own body.

These two difficulties are particularly apparent when it comes to accounting for the phenomenon of imitation. To imitate is to perform a gesture in the image of another's gesture—like the child, for example, who smiles because someone smiles at him. According to the principles we have been entertaining, it would be necessary for me to translate my visual image of the other's smile into a motor language. The child would have to set his facial muscles in motion in such a way as to reproduce the visible expression that is called "the smile" in another. But how could he do it? Naturally he does not have the other's internal motor feeling of his face; as far as he is concerned, he does not even have an image of himself smiling. The result is that if we want to solve the problem of the transfer of the other's conduct to me, we can in no way rest on the supposed analogy between the other's face and that of the child.

On the contrary, the problem comes close to being solved only on condition that certain classical prejudices are renounced. We must abandon the fundamental prejudice according to which the psyche is that which is accessible only to myself and cannot be seen from outside. My "psyche" is not a series of "states of consciousness" that are rigorously closed in on themselves and inaccessible to anyone but me. My consciousness is turned primarily toward the world, turned toward

things; it is above all a relation to the world. The other's consciousness as well is chiefly a certain way of comporting himself toward the world. Thus it is in his conduct, in the manner in which the other deals with the world, that I will be able to discover his consciousness.

If I am a consciousness turned toward things, I can meet in things the actions of another and find in them a meaning, because they are themes of possible activity for my own body. Guillaume, in his book *l'Imitation chez l'enfant*,¹⁰ says that we do not at first imitate others but rather the actions of others, and that we find others at the point of origin of these actions. At first the child imitates not persons but conducts. And the problem of knowing how conduct can be transferred from another to me is infinitely less difficult to solve than the problem of knowing how I can represent to myself a psyche that is radically foreign to me. If, for example, I see another draw a figure, I can understand the drawing as an action because it speaks directly to my own unique motility. Of course, the other *qua* author of a drawing is not yet a whole person, and there are more revealing actions than drawing—for example, using language. What is essential, however, is to see that a perspective on the other is opened to me from the moment I define him and myself as “conducts” at work in the world, as ways of “grasping” the natural and cultural world surrounding us.

But this presupposes a reform not only of the notion of the “psyche” (which we will replace henceforth by that of “conduct”) but also of the idea we have of our own body. If my body is to appropriate the conducts given to me visually and make them its own, it must itself be given to me not as a mass of utterly private sensations but instead by what has been called a “postural,” or “corporeal, schema.” This notion, introduced long ago by Henry Head, has been taken over and enriched by Wallon, by certain German psychologists, and has finally been the subject of a study in its own right by Professor Lhermitte in *l'Image de notre corps*.¹¹

For these authors, my body is no agglomeration of sensations (visual, tactile, “tenesthetic,” or “cenesthetic”). It is first and foremost a *system* whose different introceptive and extroceptive aspects express each other reciprocally, including even the roughest of relations with surrounding space and its principal directions. The consciousness I have of my body is not the consciousness of an isolated mass; it is a *postural schema*. It is the perception of my body's position in relation to the vertical, the horizontal, and certain other axes of important coordinates of its environment.

In addition, the different sensory domains (sight, touch, and the

10. Paris, 1925.

11. Paris, 1939.

sense of movement in the joints) which are involved in the perception of my body do not present themselves to me as so many absolutely distinct regions. Even if, in the child's first and second years, the translation of one into the language of others is imprecise and incomplete, they all have in common a *certain style* of action, a *certain gestural* meaning that makes of the collection an already organized totality. Understood in this way, the experience I have of my own body could be transferred to another much more easily than the cenesthesia of classical psychology, giving rise to what Wallon calls a "postural impregnation" of my own body by the conducts I witness.

I can perceive, across the visual image of the other, that the other is an organism, that that organism is inhabited by a "psyche," because the visual image of the other is interpreted by the notion I myself have of my own body and thus appears as the visible envelopment of another "corporeal schema." My perception of my body would, so to speak, be swallowed up in a cenesthesia if that cenesthesia were strictly individual. On the contrary, however, if we are dealing with a schema, or a system, such a system would be relatively transferrable from one sensory domain to the other in the case of my own body, just as it could be transferred to the domain of the other.

Thus in today's psychology we have one system with two terms (my behavior and the other's behavior) which functions as a whole. To the extent that I can elaborate and extend my corporeal schema, to the extent that I acquire a better organized experience of my own body, to that very extent will my consciousness of my own body cease being a chaos in which I am submerged and lend itself to a transfer to others. And since at the same time the other who is to be perceived is himself not a "psyche" closed in on himself but rather a conduct, a system of behavior that aims at the world, he offers himself to my motor intentions and to that "intentional transgression" (Husserl) by which I animate and pervade him. Husserl said that the perception of others is like a "phenomenon of coupling" [*accouplement*]. The term is anything but a metaphor. In perceiving the other, my body and his are coupled, resulting in a sort of action which pairs them [*action à deux*]. This conduct which I am able only to see, I live somehow from a distance. I make it mine; I recover [*reprendre*] it or comprehend it. Reciprocally I know that the gestures I make myself can be the objects of another's intention. It is this transfer of my intentions to the other's body and of his intentions to my own, my alienation of the other and his alienation of me, that makes possible the perception of others.

All these analyses presuppose that the perception of others cannot be accounted for if one begins by supposing an ego and another that are *absolutely* conscious of themselves, each of which lays claim, as a

result, to an absolute originality in relation to the other that confronts it. On the contrary, the perception of others is made comprehensible if one supposes that psychogenesis begins in a state where the child is unaware of himself and the other as different beings. We cannot say that in such a state the child has a genuine communication with others. In order that there be communication, there must be a sharp distinction between the one who communicates and the one with whom he communicates. But there is initially a state of pre-communication (Max Scheler), wherein the other's intentions somehow play *across* my body while my intentions play *across* his.

How is this distinction made? I gradually become aware of my body, of what radically distinguishes it from the other's body, at the same time that I begin to live my intentions in the facial expressions of the other and likewise begin to live the other's volitions in my own gestures. The progress of the child's experience results in his seeing that his body is, after all, closed in on itself. In particular, the visual image he acquires of his own body (especially from the mirror) reveals to him a hitherto unsuspected isolation of two subjects who are facing each other. The objectification of his own body discloses to the child his difference, his "insularity," and, correlatively, that of others.

Thus the development has somewhat the following character: There is a first phase, which we call pre-communication, in which there is not one individual over against another but rather an anonymous collectivity, an undifferentiated group life [*vie à plusieurs*]. Next, on the basis of this initial community, both by the objectification of one's own body and the constitution of the other in his difference, there occurs a segregation, a distinction of individuals—a process which, moreover, as we shall see, is never completely finished.

This kind of conception is common to many trends in contemporary psychology. One finds it in Guillaume and Wallon; it occurs in Gestalt theorists, phenomenologists, and psychoanalysts alike.

Guillaume shows that we must neither treat the origin of consciousness as though it were conscious, in an explicit way, of itself nor treat it as though it were completely closed in on itself. The first *me* is, as he says, virtual or latent, i.e., unaware of itself in its absolute difference. Consciousness of oneself as a unique individual, whose place can be taken by no one else, comes later and is not primitive. Since the primordial *me* is virtual or latent, egocentrism is not at all the attitude of a *me* that expressly grasps itself (as the term "egocentrism" might lead us to believe). Rather, it is the attitude of a *me* which is unaware of itself and lives as easily in others as it does in itself—but which, being unaware of others in their own separateness as well, in truth is no more conscious of them than of itself.

Wallon introduces an analogous notion with what he calls "syncretic sociability." Syncretism here is the indistinction between me and the other, a confusion at the core of a situation that is common to us both. After that the objectification of the body intervenes to establish a sort of wall between me and the other: a partition. Henceforth it will prevent me from confusing myself with what the other thinks, and especially with what he thinks of me; just as I will no longer confuse him with my thoughts, and especially my thoughts about him. There is thus a correlative constitution of me and the other as two human beings among all others.

Thus at first the *me* is both entirely unaware of itself and at the same time all the more demanding for being unaware of its own limits. The adult *me*, on the contrary, is a *me* that knows its own limits yet possesses the power to cross them by a genuine sympathy that is at least *relatively* distinct from the initial form of sympathy. The initial sympathy rests on the ignorance of oneself rather than on the perception of others, while adult sympathy occurs between "other" and "other"; it does not abolish the differences between myself and the other.

[2] THE PLACEMENT OF THE CORPOREAL SCHEMA AND THE FIRST PHASES OF A PERCEPTION OF OTHERS (FROM BIRTH TO SIX MONTHS)

WHAT HAS BEEN GAINED from these introductory remarks has been the correlation between consciousness of one's own body and perception of the other. To be aware that one has a body and that the other's body is animated by another psyche are two operations that are not simply logically symmetrical but form a real system. In both cases it is a question of becoming conscious of what might be called "incarnation." To notice, on the one hand, that I have a body which can be seen from outside and that for others I am nothing but a mannequin, gesticulating at a point in space and, on the other hand, to notice that the other has a psyche—i.e., that this body I see before me like a mannequin gesticulating at a point in space is animated by another psyche—are two moments of a single whole. This does not mean that the child's experience of this total phenomenon can assign a privilege to one of these aspects; rather, any progress realized in one aspect unbalances the totality and is the dialectical ferment that results in subsequent progress in the system. They are complementary operations, and the experience of my body and the body of the other form a totality and constitute a "form." In saying this, naturally I do not mean