

# The Child's Relations with Others

## Part 1. The Problem of the Child's Perception of Others

### 1. 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—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 very 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 which I witness.

The question thus becomes this: How does it happen that, in the presence of this mannequin that resembles a human, in the presence of this body that gesticulates in a characteristic way, I come to believe that it is inhabited by a psyche? (I am using this vague word, “psyche,” on purpose in order not to imply, by using a more precise word, some particular theory of consciousness.) 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 conceptions of the body and the consciousness we have of it are 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, 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 to yourself how I feel my own body, and it is impossible for me to represent to myself how 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?

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 set of signs thus given, the set 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 reconstitute 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. The 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 sense 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 see itself from the 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 first 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 behaving 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 these actions a sense, because they are themes of possible activity for my own body. Guillaume, in his book *Imitation in the Infant*,<sup>1</sup> 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 someone 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 as a spectacle 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 schema” 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 *The Image of Our Body*.<sup>2</sup>

For these authors, my body is no agglomeration of sensations (visual, tactile, “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 the milieu in which it finds itself.

In addition, the different sensory domains (sight, touch, and the 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 transferable 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 behavior in a relation with the world, he offers himself to the grasp of my motor intentions and to that "intentional transgression" (Husserl) by which I animate him and transport myself into him. Husserl said that the perception of others is like a "phenomenon of coupling." The term is anything but a metaphor. In perceiving the other, my body and the other's body are coupled, resulting in a sort of action which pairs them. This conduct which I am able only to see, I live somehow from a distance. I make it mine; I take it up or understand it. Reciprocally, I know that the gestures I make myself can be the objects of another's intention. It is this transference 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. 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, correlative, 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. 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 constitution, a correlation of me and the other as two human beings among all others.

While the first *me* is both at once 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 go out from 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 the "other" and "other"; it does not assume that the differences between myself and the other are abolished.

## 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 the 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 totality. This does not mean that the experience of this total phenomenon in the child cannot privilege first one of these aspects; rather, any progress realized on one side unbalances the whole and is the dialectical ferment that results in subsequent progress in the system. There 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 that the perception of others and the perception of one's own body always go hand in hand or that they develop at the same rhythm. On the contrary, we shall see that the perception of one's own body is ahead of the recognition of the other, and consequently if the two form a system, it is a system that becomes articulated in time. To say that a phenomenon is one of "form" (*Gestalt*) is in no way to say that it is innate in its different aspects or even in regard to a single one of its aspects. Rather, it is to say that it develops according to a law of *internal* equilibrium, as if by *auto-organization*. Gestalt theorists have by no means limited the use of the notion of "form" to the instant or to the present. They have, on the contrary, insisted on the phenomenon of form in time (melody). I said that the perception of one's own body comes earlier than perception of the other. The child takes notice of his own body sooner than he does of the physiognomic expressions of the other. That does not prevent the two phenomena from being internally linked. The perception of one's own body creates an imbalance as it develops: through its echo in the image of the other, it awakens an appeal to the forthcoming development of the perception of others. It echoes in another phase, in which the perception of others appears predominant, and so on throughout the development. The two phenomena can easily form a system, although they are emphasized only successively. Each of the phases of this development contains the germs which prepare the way for its being surpassed. And to say that the phenomenon is a formal one



is by no means to say that it is, in each of its stages, completely at rest. Any form (e.g., those we perceive in space—colored forms) is actually subject to a play of forces from different directions. The imbalance can be infinitesimal at first and give rise to no appreciable change. Then, when it passes a certain threshold, a change occurs. In the same way there may well be something at the core of each phase of development which anticipates the next phase and which will animate a series of restructurations. The notion of form is essentially dynamic.

Let us now consider the state of the perception of one's own body and the state of the perception of others, each in its turn.

### 1. *One's Own Body from Birth to Six Months*

The body, as Henri Wallon suggests in his excellent analysis in *The Origins of Character in the Infant*,<sup>3</sup> begins by being introceptive. At the beginning of the child's life there emerges an entire phase in which extroceptivity (i.e., vision, hearing, and all other perceptions relating to the external world), even if it begins to operate, cannot in any case do so in collaboration with introceptivity. At this age the latter is the best-organized means for bringing us into relation with things. In the beginning of the child's life, external perception is impossible for very simple reasons: visual accommodation and muscular control of the eyes are insufficient.

As has been often said, the body is at first "buccal" in nature. Stern has even spoken of a "buccal space" at the beginning of the child's life, meaning by this that the limit of the world for the child is the space that can be contained in, or explored by, his mouth. One could say more generally, as Wallon does, that the body is already a respiratory body. Not only the mouth but the whole respiratory apparatus gives the child a kind of experience of space. After that, other regions of the body intervene and come into prominence. All the regions linked to the functions of expression, for example, acquire an extreme importance in the months that follow. While waiting for the union that will arise between the data of external perception and those of introceptivity, the introceptive body functions as extroceptive. In another context, this is what psychoanalysts say about the origin of the child's experiences when they show, for example, that the child's relations to the mother's breast are the child's first relations with the world.

It is only between the third and sixth month that a union occurs between the introceptive and the extroceptive domains. The different neural paths are not yet ready to function at birth. Myelinization, which makes their functioning possible, is late in taking place; this is particularly true of the connective fibers we are speaking of right now. It occurs between the third and sixth month, connecting the mechanisms which furnish the

various sensory data as well as those which correspond respectively to extroceptivity and introceptivity.

Up to that moment perception is impossible for yet another reason: it presupposes a minimum of equilibration. The functioning of a postural schema—that is, a global consciousness of my body's position in space, with the corrective reflexes that impose themselves at each moment, the global consciousness of the spatiality of my body—all this is necessary for perception (Wallon). In fact, the effort at equilibration continually accompanies all our perceptions except when we are lying on our back. But also, observes Wallon, it is above all in this position that the child's thinking and perception fade away; it is sleep. This link between motility and perception shows at what point it is true to say that the two functions are only two aspects of a single totality and that the perception of entering and of the world and that of one's own body form a system.

When the necessary neural paths have been acquired, there remains a considerable gap between the precision of the consciousness of the body in certain domains and in others. You know, for example, that myelination occurs much later in the nerve fibers corresponding to the activity of the feet than it does in those which correspond to the activity of the hands. The delay is about three weeks long. All the same, in the case of the hands there is a slight lag of about twenty-six days in the myelination of the left hand as compared with the right. Consequently there is a phase in which the child calls up the physiological conditions for a precise perception of the right hand's movements but not yet those for a precise perception of the movements of the left hand.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the child does not really interest himself in his body or in its parts until relatively late. It is only on the 115th day of his life, or around the fourth month, that one notices the child actually paying attention to his right hand. Only in the twenty-third week of life, or around the sixth month, does one find the child systematically making the experiment of exploring one hand with the other. At that moment—having clasped his right hand with his left hand, for example—he interrupts his movement and gazes attentively at his hands. At the twenty-fourth week, or at the end of the sixth month, the child is perplexed at the sight of a glove placed next to his hand. He is seen comparing the glove and his hand, gazing attentively at the moving hand. All these experiments are aimed at familiarizing the child with the correspondence between the hand which touches and the hand which is touched, between the body as visible and the body as felt by introceptivity.

The consciousness of one's own body is thus fragmentary at first and gradually becomes integrated; the corporeal schema becomes precise, restructured, and mature little by little.

## 2. *The Other from Birth to Six Months*

This entire putting of the corporeal schema in place is at the same time a putting of the perception of others in place. Reactions to others, according to Guillaume in *Imitation in the Infant*, are extremely precocious. To tell the truth, it seems that the first forms of reaction to others described by Guillaume are not connected with a visual perception of others; they correspond, rather, to the data of introceptivity. Guillaume says that between the ninth and the eleventh day, he noticed an astonished and attentive expression in the child, directed toward faces and fleeting smiles. At sixteen days he found differences in the attitude of the child according to whether he was in the arms of his mother, his wet nurse, or his father.

In Wallon's view, it is not a question, in these different attitudes, of a genuine extroceptive perception of the mother, the father, and the nurse. Instead, it is a question of differences felt by the child in the state of his body—differences in his well-being according to whether the nurse's breast is present or absent and also according to the way in which the child is held in the arms of each of the persons involved.

Up to the age of three months, according to Wallon, there is no external perception of others by the child, and what ought to be concluded when, for example, the child is seen to cry because someone goes away is that he has an "impression of incompleteness." Rather than truly perceiving those who are there, he feels incomplete when someone goes away. This negative experience does not mean that there is a precise perception of the other qua other in the preceding moment. The first external contact with others can be truly given only through extroceptivity. Insofar as others are felt only as a kind of state of well-being in the baby's organism because he is held more firmly or more tenderly in their arms, we cannot say that they are actually perceived.

The first active extroceptive stimulus would be the voice. With it begin the reactions that can be called without any possible doubt reactions *in regard to others*. At first the human voice as heard by the child provokes only cries when the child is afraid; then, at two months, it provokes smiles. At two or three months one observes that deliberately gazing at the child makes him smile. At that moment there will be in the child at least one perception of a gaze as of something that makes him complete. At the same age the child responds to the cries of other children by calling out himself; there is a kind of contagion of cries that disappears later as the visual perception of others develops. Around that same age, too, the child cries when anyone at all leaves the room and not, as in the beginning, only at the departure of the wet nurse or the person who is feeding him.

At two months and five days one observes, says Wallon, an unmistakably visual experience of another—a recognition of the father at a dis-

tance of two yards. This assumes that the father presents himself in his habitual environment; in an unfamiliar setting, he would not be recognized. At three months the child cries out at all persons who come into his room, even when they are not persons from whom he can expect care.

Concerning relations with other children, here is roughly what happens: I said that at two to three months there is a contagion of cries among babies and that afterward this contagion disappears, to the extent that visual perception of the other develops. Consequently, for a child older than three months the contagion of cries is much rarer than before, and a baby of this age can gaze with cool detachment at another baby who is crying.

The first beginnings of an observation of others consist in fixations on *the parts of the body*. The child gazes at the feet, the mouth, the hands; he does not gaze at the person. The difference is intuitively quite noticeable between a mere scrutiny of the parts of the body and a gaze oriented toward the other's gaze, which seeks to grasp the other as such. The scrutiny of the parts of the other's body considerably enriches the perception that the child can have of his own body. We see him systematically relating to himself, after six months, the different things he has learned about the other's body from looking at him. Still, at five months there is no fraternization with children of the same age. At six months, at last, the child gazes upon the other child in the face, and one has the impression that here, for the first time, he is perceiving another.

### 3. After Six Months: Consciousness of One's Own Body and the Specular Image

It is now up to us to describe the phase intervening after six months, which will be characterized by a sharp opposition to the first phase. It involves the development of the perception of one's own body—a step which is considerably aided by the child's becoming acquainted with the image of his body in the mirror. This is a phenomenon of great importance, since the mirror furnishes the child with a perception of his own body that he could never have gotten by himself. On the other hand, there is an extraordinarily rapid development of contacts with others—so rapid, in fact, that Wallon was led to speak of and characterize the period between six months and one year as one of “incontinent sociability.”

#### 1. *The Syncretic System “Me-and-Other” (After Six Months)*

At this point we propose to examine simultaneously the development of the experience of one's own body (in its introceptive aspect and in the specular image) and that of the consciousness of the other, beginning at six months.

a. *The specular image.* The major fact that concerns the development of consciousness of one's own body is the acquisition of a representation or a visual image of the body itself, in particular by means of the mirror. We are going to concern ourselves first with the study of this specular image, the recognition of this image and the different stages it passes through.

On this point there is a contrast between the behavior of animals and of children. We cannot say that animals pay no attention to their images in the mirror or that they show no reaction to their specular images. But the conduct of animals is very different from that of children. The first information on the subject was given by Preyer in his now outdated book. The story concerns a duck who, deprived of his mate's company by her death, developed the habit of sitting in front of a windowpane in which his body was reflected. This behavior, according to Wallon (*The Origins of Character in the Infant*), would not be comparable to what one finds in the child. The animal, "made incomplete" by his mate's death, completes himself with his image in the windowpane. He does not take it to be an image of himself, since it is capable of taking the place of another living being; it is like a second animal facing him. Again, inversely, one could say that if in truth the reflected image represents for the animal what was formerly represented by the presence of his mate, the mate was, while he was perceiving her, only a kind of mirror image of himself. In both cases the conduct characteristic of the child (which we shall define shortly) does not yet appear.

Wallon describes the reactions of two dogs to their images in the mirror. One of the dogs displays reactions of fear and avoidance; when he sees his image in the mirror he turns and runs. The other dog, caressed by his master while looking at his image in the mirror, calmly stands still and at the same time turns his head toward his master, who caresses him. The image he sees in the mirror is not, for him, another dog, but neither is it *his own* visual image. The visual image is a kind of complement for him, and as soon as his master's caress recalls him to his body as given in introceptivity, he neglects the mirror image and turns toward the master.

Here again, in other words, the animal does not display conduct that is characteristic of the symbol, of the external image as such. In the presence of the mirror he is disoriented, confused, and turns away hastily in order to return to the objects that for him are fundamental—that is, to return to introceptive experience.

The behavior of chimpanzees toward the mirror was studied by Köhler in his fine book, *The Mentality of Apes*.<sup>4</sup> There the author shows that when the chimpanzee is placed in front of a mirror and finds an image in it, he passes his hand behind it and shows signs of dissatisfaction at finding nothing behind the image. From then on he stubbornly refuses to

interest himself in the mirror. Wallon interprets this as follows. At the moment when—through the manual exploration that could convince him that there was really only a simple image instead of another body—the chimpanzee was about to reach consciousness of the image or treat what is in the mirror as a simple reflection or symbol of his real body, he recoils from the object and treats it as foreign. Consciousness of the image qua image scarcely appears, and is only roughly outlined in him.

Köhler, however, indicates that the chimpanzee seems to recognize himself in a portrait of himself when presented to him. A repeated experimental study of this phenomenon might well be made in order to see whether in fact chimpanzees are conscious of their portraits and, if so, why they do not achieve a full consciousness of the specular image.

These conducts, we have said, must be contrasted with those of the child.

Let us begin by considering not the child's image of his own body in the mirror but instead the image he has of others' bodies. One notices, in effect, that he acquires the latter much more rapidly, that he distinguishes much more quickly between the other's specular image and the reality of the other's body than he does in the case of his own body. Thus it is possible that the experience he has of the other's specular image helps him arrive at an understanding of his own specular image.

According to Guillaume (*Imitation in the Infant*), the consciousness of the other's image in the mirror comes at an early age. Guillaume observes grimaces before a mirror in the first weeks of life. Wallon thinks, however, that clear reactions to the specular image are not noticeable before the end of the third month.

At first there is a reaction of simple fixation on the specular image (around four or five months). This is followed by reactions of interest in the same image. At the same moment, one notices reactions in the child, e.g., to a portrait by Frans Hals. Finally, after six months, reactions other than the mimic or affective are seen to appear. These are genuine conducts. After five or six months, for example, there occurs the following.

A child smiles in a mirror at the image of his father. At this moment his father speaks to him. The child appears surprised and turns toward the father. As a result it seems that at this moment he *learns* something. What exactly does he learn? He is surprised, because at the moment before his father spoke, he did not have a precise awareness of the relation of image to model. He is surprised that the voice comes from another direction than that of the visible image in the mirror. The attention he gives to the phenomenon shows, in effect, that he is in the process of understanding something, that it is not a question of simple training. One might be tempted to say that we are here present at the formation

of a conditioned reflex and that the mirror image becomes "comprehensible" by becoming the conditioned stimulus of responses that were formerly evoked by the father. In Wallon's eyes there can be no question either of a blind training or of an intellectual mastery of the image. Certainly one cannot say that the child comes into possession of a perfectly clear relation between the image and the model or that he learns to consider the mirror image as a spatial projection of the visible aspect of his father. The experience of which we are speaking occurs at about five or six months and does not give the child possession of a stable conduct. Just as the child studied by Wallon turned away from the specular image toward his father after a week, so several weeks later he still tried to grasp the image in the mirror with his hand; this means that he had not yet identified this image as a "simple image" that was nothing other than visible.

We should say that in this first phase of his apprenticeship, the child gives the image and the model an existence relatively independent of each other. There is the model, which is the father's body, the real father; there is in the mirror a sort of double or phantom of the father, having a "secondary existence" without the image being reduced to the simple state of a reflection of light and color in external space. When the child turns away from the mirror toward his father, we may indeed say that he recognizes his father in the image but in an altogether practical way. He turns toward his father because that is where the voice is coming from; but it cannot be said that at this point he has divested the specular image of its quasi-reality, the phantom existence it first had for him, which we can try to render with the aid of certain analogies borrowed from primitive thought. The image thus has an existence inferior to that of the father's real body—but it does have a sort of marginal existence.

Let us now consider the acquisition of the specular image of one's own body. It is around the age of eight months—hence later than in the case of the specular image of the other—that one clearly finds a reaction of surprise when the child sees his own image in the mirror. At thirty-five weeks the child still extends his hand toward his image in the mirror and appears surprised when his hand encounters the surface of the glass. At the same age he happens to look at his image in the glass when he is called. The illusion of reality, the quasi-reality he lends to the image, still remains, just as after several weeks the child still turns away from the specular image and toward his father. This confirms the fact that, if the child has an adaptive reaction, this does not entail that he has acquired a symbolic consciousness of the image.

Why does the specular image of one's own body develop later than that of the other's body? According to Wallon (whose analysis we are fol-

lowing here), it is because the problem to be solved is much more difficult in the case of one's own body. The child is dealing with two visual experiences of his father: the experience he has from looking at him and that which comes from the mirror. Of his own body, on the other hand, the mirror image is his only complete visual evidence. He can easily look at his feet and his hands but not at his body as a whole. Thus for him it is a problem first of understanding that the visual image of his body which he sees over there in the mirror is not himself, since he is not in the mirror but here, where he feels himself; and second, he must understand that, not being located there, in the mirror, but rather where he feels himself introceptively, he can nonetheless be seen by an external witness *at the very place at which he feels himself to be* and with the same visual appearance that he has from the mirror. In short, he must displace the mirror image, bringing it from the apparent or virtual place it occupies in the depth of the mirror back to himself, whom he identifies at a distance with his introceptive body.

Consequently, in the case of the image of his own body, we must admit, says Wallon, that the child begins by seeing the specular image as a sort of double of the real body—much more so indeed than in the case of the image of the other's body.

Many pathological facts bear witness to this kind of external perception of the self, this "autoscopy." First, it is found in many dreams, in which the subject figures as a quasi-visible character. There would also be phenomena of this kind in dying people, in certain hypnotic states, and in drowning people. What reappears in these pathological cases is comparable to the child's original consciousness of his own visible body in the mirror. "Primitive" people are capable of believing that the same person is in several places at the same time. This possibility of *ubiquity*, difficult for us to understand, can be illuminated by the initial forms of the specular image. The child knows well that he is there where his introceptive body is, and yet in the depth of the mirror he sees the same being present, in a bizarre way, in a visible appearance. There is a mode of spatiality in the specular image that is altogether distinct from adult spatiality. There is here, says Wallon, a kind of space clinging to the image. All images tend to present themselves in space, including the image of the mirror as well. According to Wallon, this spatiality of adherence will be reduced by intellectual development. We will learn gradually to return the specular image to the introceptive body and, reciprocally, to treat the quasi-locatedness and pre-spatiality of the image as an appearance that counts for nothing against the unique space of real things. Our intelligence would, so to speak, redistribute the spatial values, and we would learn to consider as relevant to the same place appearances which, on first sight, present them-



selves in different places. Thus an ideal space would be substituted for the space clinging to the images. It is necessary, in effect, that the new space be ideal, since for the child it is a question of understanding that what seems to be in different places is in fact in the same place. This can occur only in passing to a higher level of spatiality that is no longer the intuitive space in which the images occupy their own place.

This constitution of an ideal space would include all kinds of degrees. First, there would be, as we have just mentioned, the reduction of the image to a simple appearance lacking its own spatiality. This reduction occurs fairly early, at around one year. Guillaume describes an observation made on his own daughter, who steps before a mirror with a straw hat which she has been wearing since morning. She puts her hand not to the image of the hat in the mirror but to the hat on her head; the image in the mirror suffices to call forth and regulate a movement adapted to the object itself. In this case one can say that the reduction has been accomplished, that the mirror image is no longer anything but a symbol, and that it returns the child's consciousness to the reflected objects in their proper places.

A counterproof: each time there occur troubles with the symbolic consciousness—as, for example, in cases of aphasia or apraxia—one also finds troubles with spatiality. Apraxic subjects are known in particular for their difficulty in ordering movements adapted to objects by means of a mirror (or in imitating a subject who is facing them). For them the relation of the image to the model is disturbed and confused.

At one year, according to Wallon, one could say that this development is essentially complete. But this does not mean that the system of correspondence between the image of the body and the body itself is complete or that it is precise. This is shown by a whole series of events, certain of which come fairly late. For example, from twelve to fifteen months of age, the child is seen practicing a series of exercises that prepare for the habit of performing movements in front of the mirror. He is trying out the kind of movements that the apraxic is asked to perform. And this occurs after the first year, at between twelve and fifteen months; that is, the system at this moment is still quite fragmentary and the child needs to confirm it by repeated experiments. At sixty weeks (i.e., at more than a year), when the mother is sitting beside the child with a mirror in front of them and the child is asked to point to his mother, the child points to her in the mirror *while laughing* and turns back to her. The specular image has become the subject of a game, an amusement. But the very fact that the child thinks of using his specular image to play with shows that he is not so far removed from the experiments that first introduced him to the specular image. The apprenticeship is not yet very stable. At fifty-seven weeks (thus

at more than a year) Preyer's son looked at himself in the mirror, passed his hand behind the mirror, brought his hand back, and contemplated it. This, as we have seen, is exactly what chimpanzees do. The next day he turned away from the mirror, just like the chimpanzees. All the same, this fact would appear a bit difficult to admit if, as Guillaume thinks, the consciousness of the specular image has already been acquired at the age of one year. How could one revert after that age to the conduct of chimpanzees, which, as we have seen, is inferior to the level of consciousness of the image? Wallon proposes an explanation: in the case we are considering, he says, it is not so much a misunderstanding of the specular image; it is on the mirror, not on the image, that the inquiry bears. The child would have discovered once for all that what is portrayed over there on the mirror is only an appearance, a reflection, but it remains for him to understand *how* an object (the mirror) is capable of obtaining a duplicate of the surrounding objects. Wallon's interpretation is not entirely convincing. In order for there to be an exact consciousness of the image in its relation to the model, it seems necessary for there to be some understanding of the role of the mirror. Insofar as the mirror is not at all understood, to the extent that the child expects to find in back of it something like the objects which outline themselves on its surface, he has not yet fully understood the existence of the reflection; he has not yet fully understood the image. If his consciousness of the image were entirely perfect, the child would no longer search behind the mirror for real objects similar to the ones reflected in it. The constitution of a specular image that would be in the fullest sense a *reflection* of the real object presupposes the gradual constitution of an entire naive physics, into which would enter the causal relations that are designed to explain how the phenomenon of the reflection is possible. The facts set forth by Preyer thus would seem to show that at fifty-seven weeks there is still no full understanding of the specular image. Hence we will not be astonished that even at sixty-one weeks Preyer's son still touched, licked, struck, and played with his image. Like the game of the child who laughed at his mother's image, this game seems to show that the child is not far from the time when the image was still a double, a phantom of the object. Wallon says that a child of twenty months kisses his image very ceremoniously before going to bed and even at thirty-one months is seen to play with his own image.

We have seen that Wallon considers that these games played by the child with his own image represent a phase beyond the simple consciousness of his specular image. If the child plays with his own image in the mirror, says Wallon, it is because he is amusing himself by finding in the mirror a reflection which has all the appearances of an animated being and yet is not one. Here it would be a question of "animistic games," an ac-

tivity which proclaims that animistic *beliefs* have been suppressed. But why should it be so amusing somehow to verify the animistic appearance if there remained in the subject no traces of this amazing phenomenon which on first encounter so fascinated the child—namely, the presence of a quasi-intention in a reflection? The child happily makes a sort of fairy dance before it and clings to it, although it is not “for real.”

This leads us to make a remark which perhaps will have to be recalled in concluding. For adults like ourselves, the mirror image has really become what Wallon would like it to be in an adult mind: a simple reflection. Nonetheless, there are two ways in which we can consider the image—one, a reflective, analytic way according to which the image is nothing but an appearance in a visible world and has nothing to do with me; the other, a global and direct one, of the kind which we use in immediate life when we do not reflect and which gives us the image as something which *solicits* our belief. Let us compare the mirror image to a picture. When I see a picture of Charles XII of Sweden, with his elongated face and that head which, according to his contemporaries, only one idea could enter at a time, I know very well that Charles XII has been dead for a long time and that what I am looking at is no more than a picture. Nonetheless there is a *quasi-person* who is smiling; that line joining nose and lips, that flashing in the eyes are not simply things. This congealed movement is, all the same, a *smile*. In the same way the image in the mirror, even for the adult, when considered in direct unreflective experience, is not simply a physical phenomenon: it is mysteriously inhabited by me; it is something of me.

This experience allows us to understand the significance attached to images. In certain civilizations, one is forbidden to make images of humans because this is similar to deliberately creating other human beings—and this is not what humans are supposed to do. This group of beliefs related to images can be understood only if images are more than black-and-white sketches or simple signs of a person who remains absolutely distinct from them. In a singular way the image incarnates and makes appear the person represented in it, as spirits are made to appear at a *séance*. Even an adult will hesitate to step on an image or photograph; if he does, it will be with aggressive intent. Thus not only is the consciousness of the image slow in developing and subject to relapses, but even for the adult the image is never a simple reflection of the model; it is, rather, its “quasi-presence” (Sartre).

This also explains why the work of “reduction,” even when done by the child in respect to the image in the mirror, never ends with a *general* result, such as a concept. The child must do the work all over again in respect to other analogous phenomena—shadows, for example. Wallon

remarks that Preyer's son, at the age of four years, noticed for the first time that he cast a shadow and noticed it with fright. A little girl, four and a half years old, observed by Wallon, pretended that when she stepped on Wallon's shadow she was stepping on Wallon himself. The participationist beliefs with which, as we have said, the specular image is at first endowed have not been reduced by an intellectual critique that would apply indifferently to all phenomena of the same order. The progress consists in a restructuration of the specular image. The child puts this image at a distance, but this distance is not that of the concept.

Wallon would like to say that in the case of the shadow it is a matter of beginning the same development that has already been acquired in the case of the specular image. But this would be to say that the progressive reduction of the specular image is not, properly speaking, an intellectual phenomenon. A genuine intellectual event would obey the "all or nothing" law: either one knows or one does not know. One cannot "slightly know" the sum of two and three. The intellectual phenomenon is not susceptible to that series of gradations that one observes in the development of the specular image.

This leads us to ask whether, in the light of several other facts, there is room to reattempt to interpret the development of the specular image and relate it to phenomena other than those of knowledge.

Wallon's book also contains indications along these lines. Wallon himself, in certain passages in *The Origins of Character in the Infant*, suggests that the progress in experiencing one's own body is a "moment" in a global development that also involves the perception of others.

At the end of his analysis Wallon sharply criticizes the notion of cenesthesia, considered as a series of images given directly and immediately by my organs and bodily functions and representing these organs and functions to me. According to Wallon, this cenesthesia, when it exists, is the result of a very long development; it is a fact of adult psychology and altogether fails to express the relation between the child and his body. The child distinguishes at first absolutely between what is furnished by introception and what comes from external perception. There is no distinction between the data of what the learned adult calls introceptivity and the data of sight. The specular image, given visually, participates globally in the existence of the body itself and leads a "phantom" life in the mirror, which "participates" in the life of the child himself. What is true of his own body, for the child is also true of the other's body. The child himself feels that he is in the other's body, just as he feels himself to be in his visual image. It is this that Wallon suggests in showing by the examination of pathological cases: *that disorders in "cenesthesia" are closely linked with troubles in my relations with others.*

Sick people feel a voice speaking in the region of the epigastrium, in the throat, the chest, or the head. Classical psychiatrists thought that this must be a question of hallucinations involving different regions of the body. They translated and "put into images" the complaints of the sick, taking quite literally what the patients said.

Modern psychiatry shows, however, that what is essential and primary about the phenomena in question is not the location of voices in the subject's body, but rather a sort of "syncretism" that intervenes in his relations with others and causes alien voices to inhabit his own body. If the patient hears voices in his head, this is because he does not absolutely distinguish himself from others and because, for example, when he speaks, he can just as well believe that someone else is speaking. The patient, says Wallon, has the impression of being "without boundaries" in relation to the other, and this is what makes his acts, his speech, and his thoughts appear to him to belong to others or to be imposed by others.

This interpretation of the so-called cenesthetic disorders is closely connected with the analyses of Daniel Lagache in *Verbal Hallucinations and Speech*.<sup>5</sup> Lagache thinks that the question, "How can we understand a subject who believes that he is hearing when it is he who is speaking?" can be answered only if one conceives language to be a kind of "pair-operation." There is a sort of indistinction between the act of speaking and the act of hearing. The word is not understood or even heard unless the subject is ready to pronounce it himself, and, inversely, every subject who speaks carries himself toward the one who is listening. In a dialogue, the participants occupy both poles at once, and it is this that explains why the phenomenon of "speaking" can pass into that of "hearing." It is this primordial unity that reappears in pathological cases.

What this observation reveals when we rid ourselves of sensationalist prejudices, says Wallon, is the "inability to distinguish the active from the passive," myself from the other. Here we come very close to what the psychoanalysts call "projection" and "introjection," since these mechanisms consist, for the subject, in assuming as his own the conduct of another or in attributing to the other a conduct that is really his own.

There is thus a system (my visual body, my introceptive body, the other) which establishes itself in the child, never so completely as in the animal but imperfectly, with gaps. It is founded on the indistinction of the several elements that enter into it, rather than on an ordered relation and a two-way correspondence of its different elements. One may presume that, just as there is a global identification of the child with his visual image in the mirror, so also will there be a global identification of the child with others. If the child under six months of age does not yet have a visual notion of his own body (that is, a notion that locates his body at a certain

point in visible space), that is all the more reason why, during this same period, he will not know enough to limit his own life to himself. To the extent that he lacks this visual consciousness of his body, he cannot separate what *he* lives from what *others* live as well as what he sees them living. Thence comes the phenomenon of “transitivism,” i.e., the absence of a division between me and others that is the foundation of syncretic sociability.

These remarks made by Wallon at the end of his book go much further than does his analysis of the specular image, and allow us to correct and complete the latter.

Wallon’s study of the specular image scarcely characterizes it in a positive way. It shows us how the child learns to consider the mirror image as unreal, to reduce it; hence the disillusionment with which the child deprives the specular image of the quasi-reality he gave it at first. But we must also ask why the specular image interests him and what it is for the child to know that *he has a visible image*. Wallon himself says that the child “amuses himself” with his image “to the point of excess.”<sup>6</sup> But why is the image so *amusing*?

It is this that the psychoanalysts have tried to understand. Dr. Lacan begins by observing exactly what Wallon noticed: the child’s extreme amusement in the presence of his image, his “jubilation” at seeing himself moving in the mirror. The child is not yet walking; he stands sometimes with difficulty. All traces of prenatal life have not yet been effaced in him; all neural connections have not yet matured. He is still far from being adapted to the physical world around him. Is it not surprising, under these conditions, that he takes such a lively, universal, and constant interest in the phenomenon of the mirror? Dr. Lacan’s answer is that, when the child looks at himself in the mirror and recognizes his own image there, it is a matter of *identification* (in the psychoanalytic sense of the word)—that is, of “the transformation occasioned in the subject when he assumes.”<sup>7</sup> For the child, understanding the specular image consists in *recognizing as his own* this visual appearance in the mirror. Until the moment when the specular image arises, the child’s body is a strongly felt but confused reality. To recognize his image in the mirror is for him to learn that *he can have in it a spectacle of himself*. Hitherto he has *never seen himself*, or he has only caught a glimpse of himself in looking out of the corner of his eye at the parts of his body he can see. By means of the image in the mirror he becomes capable of being a *spectator of himself*. Through the acquisition of the specular image the child notices that he is *visible*, for himself and for others. The passage from the introceptive *me* to the visual *me*, from the introceptive *me* to the “specular *I*” (as Lacan still says), is the passage from one form or state of personality to another. The personality before the advent of the specular image is what psychoanalysts call, in the adult,

the “ego” [*soi*], i.e., the collection of confusedly felt impulses. The mirror image itself makes possible a contemplation of self. With the specular image appears the possibility of an ideal image of oneself—in psychoanalytic terms, the possibility of a superego. And this image would henceforth be either explicitly posited or simply implied by everything I see at each minute. Thus one sees that the phenomenon of the specular image is given by psychoanalysts the importance it really has in the life of the child. It is the acquisition not only of a new content but of a new function as well: the narcissistic function. Narcissus was the mythical being who, after looking at his image in the water, was drawn as if by vertigo to rejoin his image in the mirror of water. At the same time that the image of oneself makes possible the knowledge of oneself, it makes possible a sort of alienation. I am no longer what I felt myself, immediately, to be; I am that image of myself that is offered by the mirror. To use Dr. Lacan’s terms, I am “captured, caught up” by my spatial image. Thereupon I leave the reality of my lived *me* in order to refer myself constantly to the ideal, fictitious, or imaginary *me*, of which the specular image is the first outline. In this sense I am torn from myself, and the image in the mirror prepares me for another still more serious alienation, which will be the alienation by others. For others have only an exterior image of me, which is analogous to the one seen in the mirror. Consequently, others will tear me away from my immediate inwardness much more surely than will the mirror. The specular image is the “symbolic matrix,” says Lacan, “where the I springs up in a primordial form before objectifying itself in the dialectic of identification with the other.”

The general function of the specular image would be to tear us away from our immediate reality; it would be a “de-realizing” function. The author insists that it is astonishing that such a phenomenon appears in a subject of whom we have said earlier that he is very far from maturity in the biological and motor spheres. The human child is that being who is capable of sensitivity to others and of considering himself one among other similar men long before the true state of physiological maturity. “Prematuration” and anticipation are essential phenomena for childhood; childhood makes possible both a development unknown to animality and an insecurity that is proper to the human child. For inevitably there is conflict between the *me* as I feel myself and the *me* as I see myself or as others see me. The specular image will be, among other things, the first occasion for aggressiveness toward others to manifest itself. That is why it will be assumed by the child both in jubilation and in suffering. The acquisition of a specular image, therefore, interests not only our *relations of knowledge* but also our *relations of being*, with the world and with others.

Thus in this phenomenon of the specular image, so simple at first

glance, will be revealed to the child for the first time the possibility of an attitude of self-observation that will develop subsequently in the form of narcissism. For the first time the *me* ceases to confuse itself with what it experiences or desires at each moment. On this immediately lived *me* there is superimposed a constructed *me*, a *me* that is visible at a distance, an imaginary *me*, which the psychoanalysts call the superego. Henceforth the child's attention is captured by this "*me* before the *me*." From this moment on, the child also is drawn from his immediate reality; the specular image has a de-realizing function in the sense that it turns the child away from what he actually is, in order to orient him toward what he sees and imagines himself to be. Finally, this alienation of the immediate *me*, its "confiscation" for the benefit of the *me* that is visible in the mirror, already outlines what will be the "confiscation" of the subject by the others who look at him.

An analysis of this kind extends what we have found in Wallon, while at the same time it is different. It is different mainly because it emphasizes the affective significance of the phenomenon. In reading Wallon one often has the feeling that in acquiring the specular image it is a question of a labor of knowledge, of a synthesis of certain visual perceptions with certain introceptive perceptions. For psychoanalysts the visual is not simply one type of sensibility among others; it has an altogether different type of significance for the subject's life from those of other modes of sensibility. The view is the sense of spectacle, it is also the sense of the imaginary. Our images are predominantly visual, and this is no accident; it is by means of vision that one can sufficiently dominate and control objects. With the visual experience of the self, there is thus the advent of a new mode of relatedness to self. The visual makes possible a kind of schism between the immediate *me* and the *me* that can be seen in the mirror. The sensory functions themselves are thus redefined in proportion to the contribution they can make to the existence of the subject and the structures they can offer for the development of that existence.

In addition, the study of the phenomenon made by the psychoanalysts stresses both the anticipations and the regressions contained in its development.

"Pre-maturation," the anticipation by the child of adult forms of life, is for the psychoanalysts almost the definition of childhood. It is an advance made by the subject beyond his present means. The child always lives "beyond his means"; birth itself is "premature," since the child comes into the world in a state in which independent life in his new environment is impossible for him. The first Oedipal impulse is a "psychological puberty," in contrast to the organic puberty of the individual, and is awakened by his relations with the adult world. The child lives in relations that belong to his future and are not actually realizable by him.



But while the child may anticipate, the adult may regress. Childhood is never radically liquidated; we never completely eliminate the corporeal condition that gives us, in the presence of a mirror, the impression of finding in it something of ourselves. This magical belief, which at first gives the specular image the value not of a simple reflection, of an "image" in the proper sense, but rather of a "double" of oneself—this belief never totally disappears. It re-forms itself in the emotional makeup of the adult. For this reduction to be possible, the "reduction" of the image must be not so much an irreversible progression of the understanding as a re-structuration of our entire manner of being continually exposed to the accidents of emotional experience.

If the understanding of the specular image were solely a matter of cognition, then once the phenomenon was understood its past would be completely reabsorbed. Once the purely physical character of the reflection or of the phenomenon of the image was understood, there would remain nothing of the "presence" of the person reflected in his image. Since this is not the case, since the image-reflection is unstable, the operations that constitute it involve not only the intelligence proper but, rather, all the individual's relations with others.

Moreover, what distinguishes the psychoanalysts' remarks concerning the specular image is that they relate the specular image to identification with others. I understand all the more easily that what is in the mirror is my image for being able to represent to myself the other's viewpoint on me; and, inversely, I understand all the more the experience the other can have of me for seeing myself in the mirror in the aspect I offer him.

Wallon, we have said, accounts for the reduction of the specular image in terms of an intellectual operation. I first see in the mirror a double of myself; then an act of intellectual consciousness of my own experience makes me withdraw existence from this image and treat it as simple symbol, reflection, or expression of the same body that is given in introceptivity. Intellectual activity operates at every moment of these reductions and integrations, and detaches the specular image from its spatial roots, transferring this visual appearance and introceptive experience to an ideal place in a space that is not the spatiality adhering to the sensed but the spatiality constructed out of the intelligence.

It is altogether undeniable that such a reduction occurs. But the question is one of knowing whether the intellectual operation in which it culminates can offer a *psychological explanation* for what takes place. The emergence of an ideal space, the redistribution, by the intelligence, of the spatial values that makes me withdraw from the image its own location in order to treat it as a simple modality of a unique placement of my body—is all this the *cause* or the *result* of the development?

Wallon remarks incidentally that we should not suppose that the child *begins by locating his own body in two places* or that there is a certain place where the tactile, introceptive body is situated and another place for the aspect, or visual appearance, of the body. If this were done, one would be realizing twice over in the child a rigorous form of spatiality that in fact belongs only to the adult. The child at first sees the image “over there” and feels his body “here.” This does not mean that when he visually perceives the image and tactually perceives his body, he actually places each one at a distinct point in space in the same sense in which the adult, for example, perceives this microphone and that lamp *as being in two distinct places*. The two “spaces,” says Wallon, are not immediately comparable, and any precise intuition of their mutual exteriority would require a sort of common denominator between them which is not immediately given by sense experience. In the case of the specular image, instead of a second body which the child would have and which would be located elsewhere than in his tactile body, there is a kind of *identity at a distance, a ubiquity* of the body; the body is at once present in the mirror and present at the point where I feel it tactually. But if this is the case, the two aspects that are to be coordinated are not really separated in the child and are in no way separated in the sense in which all objects in space are separated in adult perception. Wallon’s analysis then is to be taken up, since it rests on the idea that what is at issue is a *redistribution* of spatial values, the substitution of an ideal space for a perceived space, and that, as we catch sight of it now, an absolute duality of visual image and sensed body does not have to be surmounted. The reduction to unity is not a dramatic surprise, if it is true that there is no genuine duplicity or duality between the visual body and the introceptive body despite the phenomenon of distance that separates the image in the mirror from the felt body.

If the presence of others were allowed a role in the phenomenon of the specular image, one would have a better idea of the difficulty the child has to surmount. The child’s problem is not so much one of understanding that the visual image and the tactile image of the body—both located at two points in space—in reality comprise only one, as it is of understanding that the image in the mirror is *his* image, that it is what others see of him, the appearance he presents to other subjects; and the synthesis is less a synthesis of intellection than it is a synthesis of coexistence with others.

In looking at the matters more closely, moreover, we see that the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive. For we must consider the relation with others *not only as one of the contents of our experience but as a genuine structure*. We can admit that what we call “intelligence” is only another name for designating an original type of relation with others (the relation

of "reciprocity") and that, from the start to the finish of the development, the living relation with others is the support, the vehicle, or the stimulus for what we abstractly call the "intelligence."

Thus understood, the phenomenon will necessarily be fragile and variable, as are our affective relations with others and with the world. The anticipations as well as the regressions are more easily conceivable. Lacking this kind of concrete and effective interpretation, we should then have to suppose an intellectual control of our experience that never ceases—an activity which, as Wallon holds, operates at every moment to produce the reductions and the integrations. But in no way are we conscious of such an activity; while gazing at the image in the mirror we are not conscious of judging, of doing intellectual work. We must thus suppose that there is an unperceived activity in us that would constantly reduce the perceptual space or the space of the image, and would succeed in redistributing spatial values. On the contrary, if we suppose that the conquest of the image is only one aspect in the total continuum in which all of our lived relations with others and the world participate, it becomes easier to understand at once how this continuum, once realized, functions as though all by itself and how, participating in all the contingencies of our relations with others, it is susceptible to degradations and regressions.

In our hypothesis it is a question of the acquisition of a certain *state of equilibrium* in our perception which, like any privileged state of equilibrium, tends to maintain itself unsheltered from the intervention of experience. Our interpretation would permit us to understand how the adult state can be distinct from the state of childhood without being sheltered from relapses into childhood.

b. *Syncretic sociability*. Between the ages of six and twelve months, says Wallon, there occurs an outburst of sociability. Wallon speaks of an "incontinent sociability." From the sixth to the seventh month the child, one notices, abandons the behavior of fixation—without gestures—on others. While this attitude formerly represented a good half of the child's conduct toward others, its frequency now falls to one quarter. Gestures toward his partners (other children) multiply, as do gestures oriented toward his own body. Movements aimed at the other are now four times as frequent as in the first six months of life. In the same period (between seven and twelve months), there are one third more movements directed toward others than there will be during the entire second year. Thus there is an abrupt forward thrust in relations with others, a sharp increase in the quantity and quality of these relations. The very nature of the child's conduct is modified. For example, it is at about seven months that the child begins to smile when he is looked at (and not merely when he is spoken to). Rarely at this time does the child smile at an animal or when alone.

Social sensibility develops in an extraordinary manner, and it is remarkably more advanced than relations with the physical world, which at this time are still quite inadequate.

The general character of these relations with others has been competently described by Charlotte Bühler in her 1927 book, *Sociological and Psychological Studies of the First Year*.<sup>8</sup> Ms. Bühler observed children who found themselves together in the waiting room of a consultation clinic. She first remarks that before the age of three years, it is extremely rare that children are very interested in other children much younger than themselves, probably because until the age of three the child does not emerge from his own situation or at least not enough to interest himself in subjects who are in an altogether different situation. This is why relations will be established only among children of relatively close ages, as elsewhere the most ordinary observation shows. Among other children of similar ages a frequent relation is that of the child who shows off before another child who gazes at him. Often one sees pairs of children, one of whom exhibits himself in his most remarkable activities (playing with this or that latest toy, talking, holding forth) while the other gazes at him. This relation is often at the same time a relation of despot and slave. In general this despotism requires a gap of at least three months between the children's ages, with the biggest child usually the master. This is not, however, an absolute rule. There are also cases of active despotism on the part of the smallest. This occurs often when the smallest has been brought up with special attention. When, for example, his approval is always sought, he becomes condescending and immediately adopts an attitude which is complementary to the one taken toward him. As Wallon remarks, there is an automatic logic of affective situations; any attitude taken toward the child immediately provokes in him the complementary attitude. Like all weak persons, he takes the signs of excessive interest to be a mark of weakness. What characterizes the relation between the child who shows off and the child who gazes at him, says Wallon, is that the two children find themselves founded in the situation. The child who contemplates is truly identified with the one he contemplates; he no longer exists except through his favorite comrade. As for the despot, his despotism is naturally founded on the weakness of the slave, but also and above all it is founded on the feeling that the slave has to be a slave. As Wallon observes, what really counts, in order for a despotic relation to be established, is not that one party be stronger or more clever than the other; it is that the other recognize that he is weaker, less clever. What the despot seeks, following Hegel's famous description of the relation between master and slave, is recognition (*Anerkennung*) by the slave, the consent of the slave to be a slave. The despot is nothing without the humiliation of the slave; he would not feel

alive without this abasement of the other. The relation in question, says Wallon, would include a confusion of self with another in the same situation of sentiments. The despot exists through the recognition of his mastery by the slave, and the slave himself has no other function than to be there to admire and identify with the master. We have here a state of "combination with the other," as Wallon says, which defines childish affective situations.

Under these conditions, we understand the importance of the relation of jealousy for the child. In jealousy the couple constituted by the child creating a spectacle and the child admiring him is of concern to the latter: the jealous child would like to be the one that he contemplates. Wallon takes as an example the jealousy of dogs. If one is caressed, the other jumps forward to take his place. The desire to be caressed is not so much a positive desire as the feeling of being *deprived of the caresses* given the other. What is essential to jealousy is this feeling of privation, frustration, or exclusion. This jealousy appears at seven months, according to Guillaume, at nine months, according to Wallon. In any case, it appears around the critical period we are speaking of. It is later that this jealousy is expressed in sulking. Sulking is the attitude of the child who renounces what it wanted to be and who consequently accepts the anxiety of a repressed action.

One might say that the jealous person sees his existence invaded by the success of the other and feels himself dispossessed by him, and that in this sense jealousy is essentially a confusion between the self and the other. It is the attitude of the one who sees no life for himself other than that of achieving what the other has achieved, who does not define himself by himself but in relation to what others have. According to Wallon, all jealousy, even in the adult, represents a nondifferentiation of that kind between oneself and the other, a positive inexistence of the individual that gets confused with the contrast that exists between others and himself. Thus, says Wallon, we must consider adult jealousy as a regression to the mode of childish affectivity.

In relations of jealousy we often find phenomena of cruelty. The child tries to make the other suffer precisely because he is jealous of him, because everything the other has is stolen from him. In fact, however, cruelty is even more complex. I would not covet, in right and principle, what others have if I did not sympathize with them, if I did not consider others as "other myselfes." Cruelty must, then, be understood as a "suffering sympathy" (Wallon). When I hurt the other, therefore, I am hurting myself. Consequently to like to hurt the other is to like to hurt oneself also. Here Wallon reaches the psychoanalytic idea of sadomasochism. "If sadism is a pursuit of the other's suffering, it is, however, a suffering felt to the point of pleasure as well as pain by the person who inflicts it."

It is thus with the jealous person. He likes to make himself suffer. He multiplies his investigations, he seeks information, he forms hypotheses that are always designed to stimulate his anguish or uneasiness. Wallon even indicates that in jealousy there is a sort of complacency that has as its end a heightening of the intensity of sexual passion. Wallon points out that the psychological explanation of certain *ménage à trois* is to be found here. The trio would have no other meaning than to organize permanently an experience of jealousy that is sought by its initiators as an increase of anxiety and because it intensifies the reactions of aggressiveness and sexuality.

For the child, jealousy represents a stage wherein he participates in a total affective situation and senses the complementary life of his own without yet knowing how to isolate or affirm his own. He thus allows himself to be inwardly dominated by the one who plunders him. Having, all told, nothing of his own, he defines himself entirely in relation to others and by the lack of what the others have. Here again we converge with psychoanalytic thought and its definition of jealousy.

Freud admits that a jealousy which seems to be directed toward one person is in reality directed toward another. A man's jealousy of his wife is the rivalry between that man and that woman in the presence of a third person who is the occasion of the jealousy. This leads us to say that in all jealous conduct there is an element of homosexuality. Wallon takes this kind of view when he admits that the jealous man is the one who lives, as his own, not only his own experiences but those of others as well, when he assumes the attitudes of the other (and, for example, the attitudes toward a third). Our relation with another is also always a relation with the other persons whom that other knows; our feelings toward another are interdependent with his feelings toward a third, and blend with them. Relations between two people are in reality more extensive relations, since they extend across the second person to those with whom the second person is vitally related. Likewise, when Wallon writes of jealousy, "This feeling is the feeling of a rivalry in a person who does not know how to react except as a spectator possessed by the action of the rival," he is very close to the psychoanalytic considerations of the attitude of the "voyeur" (of which the voyeur, in the current sense of the term, is merely an extreme case). The jealous person allows himself to be trapped or captured by the other, and inversely, moreover, he would like to trap or capture the other in his turn. In his mind he plays all the roles of the situation he finds himself in and not only his own role, of which he has no separate notion.

These analyses also remind us of Proust. As a child, Proust begins to love Gilberte one day when he has been taken out to play in the Champs-Élysées and sees before him the group of children to which Gilberte, but

not himself, belongs. His feeling of love is at first the feeling of being excluded. It is not so much that he finds Gilberte lovable as it is that he feels himself outside the group of children.

One is also reminded of the famous analysis of the narrator's jealousy toward Albertine. He cannot tolerate the fact that something of Albertine escapes him completely—for example, her past before he met her. The sole fact that she has a past suffices to make him suffer, and this suffering almost confuses itself with his love. When she is not there he no longer feels anything for Albertine and even believes that he no longer loves her; he can only love her without suffering when she is inanimate in sleep (or, later, when she has disappeared in death). But even at this moment his love consists in *contemplating* her in sleep; that is, it remains under the law of jealousy, which is identification of oneself with a seen spectacle.

The negative attitudes of jealousy and cruelty are not the child's only attitudes, although they are quite frequent. There are also attitudes of sympathy. Sympathy must, in Wallon's eyes, be understood as a primordial and irreducible phenomenon. It appears in the child on a foundation of mimesis, at the moment when, all the same, consciousness of self and consciousness of others begin to be distinguished from one another. Mimesis is the ensnaring of me by the other, the invasion of me by the other; it is that attitude whereby I assume the gestures, the conducts, the favorite words, the ways of doing things of those whom I confront. Wallon shows great insight in relating mimesis to the postural function that allows me to govern my body. It is a manifestation of a unique system which unites my body, the other's body, and the other himself. Mimesis, or mimicry, is the power of assuming conducts or facial expressions on my own; this power is given to me with the power I have over my own body. It is the "postural function appropriate to the needs of expression" (Wallon). The constant regulation of bodily equilibrium, without which no function (and in particular no perceptual function) would be possible in the child, is not merely the capacity to reunite the minimal conditions for balancing the body but is more generally the power I have to realize with my body gestures that are analogous to those I see. Wallon speaks of a kind of "postural impregnation" that is resolved into gestures of imitation. He cites the example of a child who is observed watching a chirping bird for a long time and who, after this "postural impregnation," sets himself to reproducing the bird's sounds as well as something of the bird's bearing. Not only the perception of another child but even that of an animal quite different from the child himself shows up, thanks to the postural function, in attitudes which resemble those of the other and have their same expressive value. In sum, our perceptions arouse in us a reorganization of motor conduct, without our already having learned the gestures in ques-

tion. We know the famous example of the spectators at a football game who make the proper gesture at the moment when the player would make it. Authors like Guillaume have tried to explain this phenomenon in terms of the awakening of the memory of gestures already made. On such accounts we would substitute ourselves for the other in thought; we would perform, on our own, acts we already knew how to perform. In fact, however, we observe phenomena of this kind even when what is at issue are acts that have never been executed—as, for example, in the case of the child just mentioned who imitates a bird. In Wallon's eyes there is, as a result, a necessity for acknowledging that the body has a capacity for "collection," for the "inward formulation" of gestures. I see unfolding the different phases of the process, and this perception is of such a nature as to arouse in me the preparation of a motor activity related to it. It is this fundamental correspondence between perception and motility—the power of perception to organize a motor conduct that Gestalt theorists have insisted on—that allows the perception of fear to translate itself into an original motor organization. This is what would be the function of mimesis, or mimicry, in its most fundamental and irreducible form.

Sympathy would emerge from this. Sympathy does not presuppose a genuine distinction between self-consciousness and consciousness of the other, but rather the absence of a distinction between the self and the other. It is the simple fact that I live in the facial expressions of the other, as I feel him living in mine. It is a manifestation of what we have called, in other terms, the system "me-and-other."

Before passing to the crisis at three years, let us try to shed light from another viewpoint on what we were able to say about the period from six months to three years, by insisting on two points: first, on the conception of the personality that seems to be immanent in this phase of childhood development; and finally on the expression which the phenomenon of pre-communication finds in the language of the child.

In the period of pre-communication, of which we spoke earlier, the personality is somehow immersed in the situation and is a function of the child himself or the other beings with whom he lives. A frequent example is that of children who fully recognize their father only on condition that he is found in his customary setting. A child said, for example, that his real father was in Vienna and that the father on vacation with him in the country was not his real father.

But the child confuses himself with his situation. One recalls the example of a child who had a glass in his hand (against his father's wishes), put it down and, on hearing the sound of breaking glass five minutes later, started and became just as agitated as if he still had the glass in his hand. He created a sort of magic link between the forbidden thing he had done several minutes earlier and the breaking of the glass, far away from him.



In a case like this one, there is in the child no distinct conception of moments of time, nor is there any distinct conception of causal relations. The child confuses himself with his situation. He is someone who has been holding a glass in his hand, someone who has had a relation with the glass, so that the subsequent breaking of the glass concerns him.

Elsa Köhler, in her book on the personality of the three-year-old, tells the story of a child who had eaten her brother's candy while her brother and parents were away.<sup>9</sup> The moment the father returned, the little girl ran up to him, telling him enthusiastically how much fun she had had eating her brother's candy and trying to make him share her pleasure. The father reprimanded her; the little girl cried and appeared convinced that she had done something wrong. A short time later the mother appeared, and *the same scene was repeated*. How are we to explain this? At bottom it is the problem of children who, as their parents say, "go right back and do it again." In order to understand why—immediately following a scene of repentance, tears, and good resolutions—the child repeats exactly the same offense, it is necessary to think that she establishes no connection between the arrival of her mother and that of her father; the two events must be absolutely distinct in her eyes. The child *is*, in fact, the situation and has no distance from it. The situation is taken in its most immediate meaning, and all that happened before is nothing, canceled from the time when a new situation—the mother's return—arises. This incapacity to distinguish between different situations, to adopt a conduct that is autonomous in its relation to the situations and constant in relation to the variable conditions, is what makes the child's attitude understandable. The child is really not the same even when she underwent her father's reproaches, deferred to them, and made good resolutions as when her mother returned several minutes later.

William Stern tells of how his son, at the birth of a younger sister, suddenly identified himself with his elder sister, pretended to have her name, and gave her another name. This seems to show that the child identifies himself absolutely with his family situation; and from the birth of the new child, which makes the youngest into a relatively older child, he takes over absolutely the role of the eldest, even to the point of usurping the place of the rightful eldest.

Hence, perhaps, the possibility of understanding how the child can feel himself to be several persons and can simultaneously play several roles—resembling the ill in this respect. Wallon mentions the case of a patient of Janet who declared that she was at the same time both the daughter of the Virgin and the Virgin herself and who showed this, in effect, by all her mimicry, playing the roles of both the expectant mother and the child.

Hence also the real meaning of the child's dialogues with himself.

When the child chats with himself (a familiar occurrence to anyone who has raised children), there is an actual plurality of roles; one role converses with another.

Finally, we have the possibility of understanding the frequent phenomena of what is called “transitivism” in the sick and also in the child. Transitivism consists in attributing to others what belongs to the subject himself. For example, a patient will pity another patient for having had a crisis which, in fact, he himself underwent during the night—as though it were the other who had suffered the crisis. Transitivism is also the attitude of hypochondriacs who look for signs of ill health in the faces of others. All that we are, all that happens to us can furnish us with explanatory categories and in every case plays the role of exploratory tools for knowing the other. Everything that happens to us makes us sensitive to a certain aspect of the other and makes us seek in the other the equivalent of, or something that corresponds to, what has happened to us. This is why Goethe was right in saying that for each of us our circle of friends is what we ourselves are. Our *Umwelt* is what we are, because what happens to us does not happen only to us but to our entire vision of the world. Transitivism is, in other words, the same notion that psychoanalysts are using when they speak of *projection*, just as mimesis is the equivalent of *introjection*.

There are striking examples of transitivism in children, too. Wallon mentions one of them, borrowed from the work of Charlotte Bühler. It is the case of a little girl who, when seated beside her maid and another little girl, seemed uneasy and unexpectedly slapped her companion. When asked why, she answered that it was her companion who was naughty and who hit her. The child's air of sincerity ruled out any deliberate ruse. We have here a manifestly aggressive child who gives an unprovoked slap and explains herself right afterward by saying that it is the other child who slapped her. Psychoanalysts have stressed the childlike attitude that consists in imputing the wrong to the other (“You're the one who's lying!”). The child who seemed uneasy was passing through a phase of anxiety, and this anxiety impregnated her entire view of things and people around her—in particular her view of the little girl sitting beside her. This little girl appeared to her to be surrounded by the same anguishing aura. The child was living her anxiety, and the gestures appropriate to lessening it, not as interior events but as qualities of things in the world and of others. In the absence of a reduction of the anxiety to its subjective source and a concentration of the anxiety within the child in whom it was actually located, the anxiety was lived as something that has an external origin as well as an internal origin. Slapping her companion was the little girl's response to the aggression of the anxiety that came from outside. The child's own personality is at the same time the personality of the other,

that indistinction of the two personalities that makes transitivity possible; this presupposes an entire structure in the child's consciousness. The guilty act of taking the glass, that has just occurred, and the breaking of the glass are now joined in a quasi-magical way. Similarly there is a sort of spatial syncretism—i.e., a presence of the same psychic being in several spatial points, a presence of me in the other and the other in me. In a general way, there is an inability to conceive space and time as environments that contain a series of perspectives which are absolutely distinct from one another. The child switches from perspective to perspective, erasing them in the identity of the thing, unaware even of the different profiles or different perspectives in which space can present itself. It is an aspect of the same structure of consciousness that expresses itself in certain childish persons we studied last year (sudden change of direction [*rabattement*]). The reduction of external perception to what is visible from a single point of view—in short, the perspective given—is possible only much later. There is also an indistinction between the symbol and what it symbolizes. Words and things are not absolutely distinguished; of this we have already had more than one reminder.

The absence of what we call in the adult the symbolic consciousness, the fusion of the sign and the signified, the different moments of time and of space in the thing are so many evidences of the same fact.

The syncretic relations with others that show up in the child's conception of personality also show up clearly in the child's use of language. The child's first words, considered by the psychologists and the linguists as standing for sentences (word-sentences), can be the equivalent of entire sentences only through the effects of syncretism. The first word-sentences, as we have already seen, aim just as much at the actions of others as at one's own actions or conducts. When the child (even the very young child) says "hand" (hand-hand), this means his father's hand as well as the hand represented by a photograph or his own hand. This seems to presuppose a kind of abstraction, a recognition of the same object in a plurality of cases. And in fact the object identified is greatly different (for example, there is not a great resemblance between a child's hand and the photograph of an adult's hand). In reality, however, there is no abstraction here. There is simply no radical distinction in the child between his own hand and that of another. The child's extraordinary facility in recognizing the parts of the body in a drawing or an even rougher sketch, the promptness and skill with which he identifies parts of his own body in the bodies of animals that scarcely resemble the human body or familiar domestic animals, the plasticity of vision that allows him to recognize homologous structures of the body in quite different organisms—all this can be explained by the state of neutrality in which he lives, in regard to the

distinction between the self and others. The child's own body is for him a way of understanding other bodies through "postural impregnation" (Wallon). The child's person, says Wallon, is in a way scattered through all the images his action gives rise to, and it is because of this that he is apt to recognize himself in everything.

This explains the relative ease with which children understand the modern way of painting and drawing. It is altogether startling to see certain children much more apt to understand this drawing or that painting by Picasso than the adults around them. The adult hesitates before this kind of drawing because his cultural formation has trained him to take as canonical the perspective inherited from the Italian Renaissance, a perspective that works by projection of different external data on a single plane. To the extent that the child is a stranger to this cultural tradition and has not yet received the training that will integrate him within it, he recognizes with great freedom in a number of traits what the painter meant to show. If you like, childhood thought is general from the start and at the same time is very individual. It is a physiognomic thought that gets to the essentials by means of a corporeal taking up of objects and given conducts.

This allows us to understand why the use of the word *I* comes relatively late to the child. He will use it when he has become conscious of his own proper perspective, distinct from those of others, and when he has distinguished all of the perspectives from the external object. In the initial state of perception there is consciousness not of being enclosed in a perspective and of guessing—picking out across it a thing which would be beyond—but of communicating directly with things across a personal-universal vision. The *I* arises when the child understands that every *you* that is addressed to him is for him an *I*; that is, that there must be a consciousness of the reciprocity of points of view in order that the word *I* be used.

Guillaume points out that in the early months of the second year the child is first seen to acquire a large number of names of persons. Finally, around the sixteenth month, he acquires his own name, which at first he uses only in very limited cases, i.e., in answering questions like "What is your name?" or to designate the situations in which he is placed along with other children—for example, in the distribution of gifts. In this case the child can employ his own name because of the collective operation in which he is involved just like one of the others. The use of his own name in these circumstances does not indicate that he is conscious of his privileged perspective, which seems to escape him completely at sixteen months or thereabouts. For example, when he wants to say "I want to write," he uses the infinitive, without a subject. Guillaume's son said "write" for

"I want to write," but he said "Papa write"; that is, he used the subject only when the subject was another person. When it was he himself who was involved, he never expressed the subject at all. And the "Paul writes" that he finally came to say grew somehow within the formula "Papa writes." The use of his own name was learned from the use of other people's names.

Use of the pronoun *I* comes still later than use of the proper name, at least as it is understood in its full meaning, i.e., in its relative meaning. The pronoun *I* has its full meaning only when the child uses it not as an individual sign to designate his own person—a sign that would be assigned once for all to himself and to nobody else—but when he understands that each person he sees can in turn say *I* and that each person is an *I* for himself and a *you* for others. It is when he understands that even though others call him *you* he can nonetheless say *I*, that the pronoun *I* is acquired in all its significance. Thus it is not because a child of around nineteen months finds he has used the sound "I" that we say that he has acquired the use of the pronoun. In order for it to have been a real acquisition, he must have grasped the relations between the different pronouns and the passage from one of the meanings to the others. In other cases the sound "I" is used mechanically, as its materiality [*physique*], but it is not used in its fullest linguistic and grammatical meaning. Only at nineteen months did Guillaume's son use *me* or *I* in their fullest senses. At nineteen months he used *mine* and *yours* in a systematic way; at twenty months he used *mine*, *yours*, *his*, *everybody's*. At this moment the operation of distribution is conceived in the same way whether it is addressed to the child or to others. The use of *I* takes the place of the child's first name and occurs regularly only at the end of the second year. While the name is an attribute of the person alone, the pronoun designates either the speaker or the person he is speaking to. The same pronoun can serve to designate different persons, while each person has only one proper name.

## 2. The "Crisis at Three Years"

This crisis has been well described by Elsa Köhler in her book on the personality of the three-year-old, as well as by Wallon in *The Origins of Character in the Infant*.

At around three years the child stops lending his body and even his thoughts to others, as we have seen happen in the phase of syncretic sociability. He stops confusing himself with the situation or the role in which he may find himself engaged. He adopts a proper perspective or viewpoint of his own—or rather he understands that whatever the diversity of situations or roles, he is *someone* above and beyond these different situations and roles.

The acquisition of perspective in drawing (which will occur later)

can serve us here as a symbol; it will be possible only for a subject to whom the notion of an individual *perspective* is a familiar one. The child cannot understand what it is to portray the things before him as one sees them from a single viewpoint, unless he has come to the idea that he sees them from a single point instead of living in them. There must thus be a kind of duplication of the immediately given sensory spectacle in which the child was at first engulfed and of a subject who is henceforth capable of re-ordering and redistributing his experience in accordance with the directions chosen by thought. Wallon indicates a certain number of typical attitudes by which one can disclose the advent of this distance between the child on the one hand and the spectacle of others and the world on the other. It is at around the age of three years that one sees in the child the deliberate decision to do everything all alone. Wallon also shows the change in the child's reactions to the look of the other. Up to the age of three years, in general, except in pathological cases, the other's look encourages the child or helps him. Beginning at three years a whole quite different set of reactions is seen to arise; they bring to mind certain pathological reactions. The other's gaze becomes an annoyance for the child, and everything happens as though, when he is gazed at, his attention is displaced from the task he is carrying out to a representation of himself in the process of carrying it out.

This is related to certain pathological phenomena.<sup>10</sup> Wallon mentions the case of a hemiplegic described by Davidson, in whom a convulsive laugh broke out, shaking him all over, whenever he was gazed at. Wallon also mentions the case of a subject whose job was testing automobiles. When alone the subject drove skillfully at ninety miles an hour, but when he had a passenger he was tormented by irrepresible tics. This extreme sensitivity to the other's gaze had shown up very early in this subject—after convulsions at the age of two and a half years. Wallon again recalls the case of general paralytics who, when gazed at, show questioning, approving, or satisfied expressions, as though it were absolutely necessary that their faces show something, as though the other's gaze demanded these expressions of them.

Some subjects who are perfectly normal are afraid of seeming insignificant when being photographed. We can also mention idiots who howl when anyone gazes at them. If the three-year-old child is inhibited by the other's gaze, it is because from this point on he is not simply what he is in his own eyes; he feels himself also to be that which others see him to be. The phenomenon of the specular image, mentioned earlier, becomes generalized. The specular image teaches the child that he is not only what he believed he was by inner experience but that he is in addition that figure he sees in the mirror. The other's gaze tells me, as does the image in

the mirror, that I am *also* that being who is limited to a point in space, that I am that visible "stand-in" [*doublure*] in whom I would recognize only with difficulty the lived *me*. To be sure, as we have seen, this *me* scarcely distinguishes itself from the other before the age of three years. But for this very reason there was never any question of being controlled or inhibited by others; and when this phenomenon appears, it is because the indistinction of myself and the other is at an end.

The *ego*, the *I*, cannot truly emerge at the age of three years without doubling itself with an *ego in the eyes of the other*. In the case of this phenomenon it is not a question of shame, in the sense in which it exists later on as the shame of being naked (which appears only around the age of five or six), any more than it is the fear of being reprimanded. It is simply a question of the fear experienced by the child when he is gazed at.

At the same age the child wants attention and will go to the point of misbehaving in order to get it. Conducts of duplicity that until now were absent are seen to emerge at this time. The child interferes with the play of others for the sake of his own pleasure. He also changes his attitude toward giving. When he gives an object away, he often does it while saying that he does not like the object anymore. The thoughtless gift of the previous stage disappears. The child takes things away from others solely for the fun of it; as soon as he has taken them he abandons them. The gift is transformed into transaction.

In sum, the child constantly calls into play the relation of "me-and-other," which therefore stops being indivision, indifferentiation, as it is in the preceding phase.

These remarks lead us to ask ourselves to what extent the crisis at three years brings about a transformation and a total restructuring in the child and whether the state of indivision, of pre-communication, of which we have been speaking until now, is visibly abolished. Wallon himself writes that the already surpassed forms of activity are not abolished. Syncretic sociability is perhaps not liquidated in the third-year crisis. The state of indivision from others, this mutual encroachment of the other and myself within situations in which we are confused, this presence of the same subject in several roles—all are met with again in adult life. The crisis at three years pushes syncretism farther away rather than suppressing it altogether. Certainly after three years, a neutral or objective ground is set up between me and the other: a "lived distance" divides us, as Minkowski says. There is no longer that dizzying proximity of others which made possible certain disorders, certain hallucinations, as well as transitivity.

The child understands, for example, that there is a way of accusing the other that amounts to a confession. Unlike the child, an adult will no longer say, "You're the one who's lying." The adult understands that

certain resentments disclose in the person expressing them precisely the faults for which he reproaches another. He must be capable of certain meannesses in order to suspect others of them. The adult is conscious of transitivity and the projections whereby we lend others our own ways of being. But if transitivity is thus pushed out of a whole sector of his life, does this mean that it has completely disappeared? The indistinction between me and the other does not inevitably reappear except in certain situations that for the adult are limiting situations but are quite important in his life.

Could one conceive of a love that would not be an encroachment on the freedom of the other? If a person wanted in no way to exert an influence on the person he loved and consequently refrained from choosing on her behalf or advising her or influencing her in any way, he would act on her precisely by that abstention, and would incline her all the more strongly toward choosing in such a way as to please him. This apparent detachment, this will to remain without responsibility arouses in the other an even more lively desire to come closer. There is a paradox in accepting love from a person without wanting to have any influence on her freedom. If one loves, one finds one's freedom precisely in the act of loving, and not in a vain autonomy. To consent to love or to be loved is to consent also to influence someone else to decide to a certain extent on behalf of the other. To love is inevitably to enter into an undivided situation with another.

From the moment when one is joined with someone else, one suffers from her suffering. If physical pain is involved, in which one can participate only metaphorically, one strongly feels his inadequacy. One is not what he would be without that love; the perspectives remain separate—and yet they overlap. One can no longer say, "This is mine, this is yours"; the roles cannot be absolutely separated. And to be joined with someone else is, in the end, to live her life, at least in intention. To the very extent that it is convincing and genuine, the experience of the other is necessarily an alienating one, in the sense that it tears me away from my lone self and creates instead a mixture of myself and the other.

As Alain has said, to love someone is to swear and affirm more than one knows about what the other will be. In a certain measure, it is to relinquish one's freedom of judgment. The experience of the other does not leave us at rest within ourselves, and this is why it can always be the occasion for doubt. If I like, I can always be strict and put in doubt the reality of the other's feelings toward me; this is because such feelings are never *absolutely* proved. This person who professes to love does not give every instant of her life to her beloved, and her love may even die out if it is constrained. Certain subjects react to this evidence as though it were a refutation of love and refuse to be trusting and believe in an unlimited



affirmation on the basis of an always finite number of professions. The ensnaring love of the child is the love that never has enough proofs, and ends by imprisoning and trapping the other in its immanence.

The normal, non-pathological attitude consists in having confidence above and beyond what can be proved, in resolutely skirting these doubts that can be raised about the reality of the other's sentiments, by means of the generosity of the praxis, by means of an action that proves itself in being carried out.

But if these matters are as we have depicted them, all relations with others, if deep enough, bring about a state of insecurity, since the doubt we mentioned always remains possible and since love itself creates its own proper truth and reality. The state of union with another, the dispossession of me by the other, are thus not suppressed by the child's arrival at the age of three years. They remain in other zones of adult life. This is a particular case of what Piaget has called *displacement* [*décalage*]. The same conduct, acquired at a certain level, is not yet (and perhaps never will be) acquired at a higher level. Transitivity, which has been surpassed in the realm of immediate daily life, is never surpassed in the realm of feelings. That is why, as the psychoanalysts have shown, syncretic sociability can be found in the sick to the extent to which they regress in the direction of the conduct of children and show themselves incapable of making the transition to praxis, to the selfless, outgoing attitude of the adult.

We might ask what kind of relationship must be established between the crisis at three years mentioned by Wallon and the Oedipal phase of development which certain psychoanalysts locate at the same moment and which accompanies the emergence of the superego, the true "objective" relation, and the surpassing of narcissism.



# Human Engineering

## The New “Human” Techniques of American Big Business

[This is a presentation by Merleau-Ponty, signed T.M. (for *Les Temps Modernes*), of Michel Crozier’s article in *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 69 (July 1951): 44–48.]

“Culturalism” and certain investigations in American social psychology, to whose introduction in France *Les Temps Modernes* has contributed and will continue to contribute, are an important acquisition to the extent that they attempt to reveal the tacit words, unofficial, yet lived between men, beyond the ideas or official mottos that mask them at least as much as they express them. They give access to what Politzer called the interhuman “drama” amidst the living history where we find meeting up all causalities, all determinants whose objective workings economics, demographics, law, and the history of ideas study. They take on the task of applying the incontestable principle that the truth of a social system lies in the type of human relations it makes possible. Marxist sociology had already noted the correlation within a single human life of moral, juridical, and religious conceptions with the techniques, the labor, and the forces of production. But many authors seem to ground it on a mystical causality of the economy, when the notion of *culture* as a totality that has its laws of balance, its molecular changes, its crises, its restructurations—and that of a *structure of a basic personality*, sometimes stereotyped, sometimes wrought by a principle of change in every human group—comes to clarify the connection between “ideas” and “economic facts.” These investigations are a new invitation to pursue the inventory of everyday conflicts and of this latent history that silently animates the official history as it waits to manifest itself in the explosion of events.

If “culturalism” and certain investigations in social psychology are in fact such in the writings of the best American authors, they can become something else entirely in others, and in the use the economic apparatus,

the press, the radio, and common sense make of them. The article by Crozier that one is about to read admirably shows how, as an inquiry into the living dynamic that bears (and judges) official relations, social psychology can degenerate into a means of governing and an apparatus of conservation as soon as it posits as *natural* existing social relations, as *normal* the integration of the individual into these relations, and explains the difficulties it encounters through the failings of a private order. It is at that point no longer a psychology of *social life*, that is, an inquiry into the lived aspect of the social; it is psychology put in place of social life. The investigation into opinions, which ought to be a consciousness that has become aware of all conflicts, can change into a new means of masking them, if only, rather than going all the way to the real opinions men manifest in matters of business and where their lives are concerned, we merely test a certain decorum of the opinion and remain loyal to the idols of the right way. Crozier shows how the same worker, in his factory and in those work conflicts in which he is vitally invested, is an intransigent syndicalist, but he is favorable to the Taft-Hartley law if he is consulted by his newspaper or Gallup, because it is then the "American" in him who is being asked, the adherent to the ideology of the "American way of life," who is formed precisely by other Gallup polls, by the radio, and by the press. And if the workers do in fact refuse to forget their own struggle in favor of received ideas, they will be overwhelmed by the weight of the "public at large," who suffer because of a public transportation strike, but not because of the low wages paid by the corporations in charge of public transportation. The need to "communicate"—to put it another way, the will to be "recognized"—which is a motive for social creation, becomes a factor of stagnation if the worker learns to communicate with the prejudices of those who employ him rather than with the universal history of the workers' movement, if he learns to take them into account, and allows himself to be convinced by the slogans of national society qua closed society. At that point the very honesty of an employer who decides to "hide nothing" serves only to disarm his opponents, and we see the appearance of a new form of propaganda, a "propaganda through truth." Objectivity becomes the most profound of ruses. A false democracy begins to emerge, a "statistical democracy," which is to say the seductive dictatorship of the "normal," the superficial, and the conventional.

All of these analyses, which show the ambiguity of the new techniques, are in our eyes remarkable. All that remains is to draw conclusions with respect to the methods of research they utilize. In this case, too, we are in full agreement with the conclusions toward which Crozier gestures rather than develops, and which we would like to emphasize. *Mystification does not arise from the very principle of a social psychology; it arises from the fix-*

*ated and optimistic postulate we add to it:* if the situation of the employee, the worker, or the peasant in the face of the employer, the owner, or the trust, such as it results from American history, is founded on a divine decree, then the conflicts it occasions are nothing more than misunderstandings, and the only task left for social psychology is to accommodate man to it, since it is inevitable, and also good, like God himself. It is then that all revolt is neurosis and that the social engineers work to make the subjugated accept their condition, to transform, in the service of the “normal,” the energies freed by social disintegration into a force of conservatism. But no sooner have we set aside metaphysical and religious prejudices, or, more precisely, incorporated them into the social dynamic, than the study of the relations of consciousness in conflictual situations—masculinity and femininity, adult and child, employer and subjugated, white and non-white—reveals these conflicts in all of their depth, because it can—and only it can—reveal the supreme victory of the oppressor, which is, as Nietzsche said, that of giving the oppressed a bad conscience by imposing one’s own norms on them. Only a social psychology can show that the oppressor assures for himself a certain complicity on the part of the oppressed by making them accept, as Bernard Wolfe showed here, writing of American blacks, an image of themselves that, even if it is flattering, maintains them in their difference.

The truth can become propaganda only if it is a half-truth. Objectivity can become a ruse only if it is a false objectivity (by its true name: resignation). We can move from a “truth” ruse only to true truth, from a “statistical democracy” only to a more real democracy, and from a neutered psychology only to a whole, social psychology. The way to remedy superficial opinion polls is not to eliminate polls, but to extend them to vital and latent opinions. Social consciousness does not demand that we eliminate psychology, but that we go further than it, in the direction that should be its own. If Americans seek in psychoanalysis the means to satisfy a fascination with the “normal,” that is not the fault of psychoanalysis, which has done more than any other research to go beyond the notion of a statistical norm. Against a superficial psychoanalysis—an abridged analysis, a narcoanalysis—that substitutes mechanical procedures for the investigation of the interpersonal dynamic, we can have recourse only to true psychoanalysis. Humanity cannot give up on nuclear energy for the sole reason that it has up to now been used only to manufacture means of destruction. Tomorrow, perhaps, it will be used to build and produce. Similarly (on a lesser scale), one cannot give up on the knowledge of the energies that are employed in human intersubjectivity for the sole reason that these energies are, here and there, captured on behalf of an established order. Crozier indicates in passing that most of those who work on

human engineering believe in it and that, except for a few cynics, the system is accepted as true. *This means that human engineering is a ruse of big capital, but also that, past a certain point in social history, the powers and interests cannot maintain themselves without seeking to found themselves as truth*, and therefore that certain truths are going to pass through these avenues of research. When the powers, after having avoided the social question for so long, come to pose it on the terrain of truth, there is nothing left to do but take them at their word. Granted, only in a society without private interests could objectivity be without hesitations and truth be without postulates, and we would be more at ease if this return to truth were proposed by a socialist society. That is not the case. But one cannot, without obscurantism, evacuate the terrain of truth. Even socialist forms of property would not dispense us from having a social psychology, which would measure or verify the realization of socialism in human relations. A true socialism will be realized only when it will dare to give a voice to those who have always remained quiet, and will reveal to the light of recognized knowledge human relations about which only literature and testimonials had up to now informed us.