

# The Moral Judgment of the Child

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CHAPTER II  
ADULT CONSTRAINT AND MORAL  
REALISM<sup>1</sup>

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Moral realism seems to us to be due to the conjunction of two series of causes—those peculiar to the spontaneous thought of the child (childish “realism”), and those belonging to the constraint exercised by the adult. But this conjunction, far from being accidental, seems to us to be characteristic of the most general processes of child psychology as they occur in the intellectual as well as in the moral domain. For the fundamental fact of human psychology is that society, instead of remaining almost entirely inside the individual organism as in the case of animals prompted by their instincts, becomes crystallized almost entirely outside the individuals. In other words, social rules, as Durkheim has so powerfully shown, whether they be linguistic, moral, religious, or legal, etc., cannot be constituted, transmitted, or preserved by means of an internal biological heredity, but only through the external pressure exercised by individuals upon each other. To put it in yet another way. As Bovet has demonstrated in the field of morals, rules do not appear in the mind of the child as innate facts, but as facts that are transmitted to him by his seniors, and to which from his tenderest years he has to conform by means of a *sui generis* form of adaptation. This, of course, does not prevent some rules from containing more than others an element of rationality, thus corresponding to the deepest functional constants of human nature. But whether they be rational or simply a matter of usage and consensus of opinion, rules imposed on the childish mind by adult constraint do begin by presenting a more or less uniform character of exteriority and sheer authority. So that instead of passing smoothly from an early individualism (the “social” element of the first

preceding discussion. In other words, let us not any longer regard the results of our interrogatories as self-contained, but rather as the final and indirect outcome of a primitive and far more diffused tendency. It is this spontaneous moral realism—of which the children's theoretical talk is only the reflection—which we must now examine so as to establish its origin and conditions.

Moral realism seems to us to be due to the conjunction of two series of causes—those peculiar to the spontaneous thought of the child (childish "realism"), and those belonging to the constraint exercised by the adult. But this conjunction, far from being accidental, seems to us to be characteristic of the most general processes of child psychology as they occur in the intellectual as well as in the moral domain. For the fundamental fact of human psychology is that society, instead of remaining almost entirely inside the individual organism as in the case of animals prompted by their instincts, becomes crystallized almost entirely outside the individuals. In other words, social rules, as Durkheim has so powerfully shown, whether they be linguistic, moral, religious, or legal, etc., cannot be constituted, transmitted, or preserved by means of an internal biological heredity, but only through the external pressure exercised by individuals upon each other. To put it in yet another way. As Bovet has demonstrated in the field of morals, rules do not appear in the mind of the child as innate facts, but as facts that are transmitted to him by his seniors, and to which from his tenderest years he has to conform by means of a *sui generis* form of adaptation. This, of course, does not prevent some rules from containing more than others an element of rationality, thus corresponding to the deepest functional constants of human nature. But whether they be rational or simply a matter of usage and consensus of opinion, rules imposed on the childish mind by adult constraint do begin by presenting a more or less uniform character of exteriority and sheer authority. So that instead of passing smoothly from an early individualism (the "social" element of the first

months is only biologically social, so to speak, inside the individual, and therefore individualistic) to a state of progressive cooperation, the child is from his first year onwards in the grip of a coercive education which goes straight on and ends by producing what Claparède<sup>1</sup> has so happily called a veritable "short-circuit".

As a result of this we have three processes to consider : the spontaneous and unconscious egocentrism belonging to the individual as such, adult constraint, and cooperation. But—and this is the essential point—the spontaneous egocentrism of the child, and the constraint of the adult, far from being each other's antitheses on all points, so far agree in certain domains as to give rise to paradoxical and singularly stable compromises. For cooperation alone can shake the child out of its initial state of unconscious egocentrism ; whereas constraint acts quite differently and strengthens egocentric features (at any rate on certain points) until such time as cooperation delivers the child both from egocentrism and from the results of this constraint. We shall attempt to verify these statements with regard to moral realism, after which we shall compare this phenomenon with the precisely parallel processes that present themselves in the domain of child intelligence.

The first group of factors that tend to explain moral realism is therefore based on one of the most spontaneous features of child thought—realism in general. For the child is a realist, and this means that in almost every domain he tends to consider as external, to "reify" as Sully put it, the contents of his mind. And he has a systematic propensity for the reification of the contents of consciousness that are shared by all minds, whence his tendency to materialize and project into the universe the realities of social life.

Without going as far back as Baldwin's "projective" stage which is defined precisely by complete realism or the indissociation between what is subjective and what is

<sup>1</sup> Claparède, *Experimental Education and Child Psychology*.

objective, we could cite in support of our contention a large number of phenomena contemporary with moral realism itself.

It is particularly necessary to remember at this point the definite attitude taken up by children with regard to the products or the instruments of thought (see *C.W.*, Sect. I.). Dreams, for example, even when the child already knows that they are deceptive as to their contents, are, till about 7-8, systematically considered as an objective reality, as a sort of ethereal, rarefied picture floating in the air and fixed before our eyes. Names (comparable to moral rules in that they are transmitted and imposed by the adult surrounding) constitute an aspect of the objects themselves: each object has a name, co-substantial with its own nature, having always existed and been localized in the object. Finally, thought itself, instead of consisting in an internal activity, is conceived as a sort of material power in direct communication with the external universe.

In the domain of drawing, M. Luquet has given an admirable analysis of the phenomenon known as "intellectual realism". The child draws things as he knows them to be, not as he sees them. Of course such a habit is primarily a proof of the existence and extent of that rationalism that belongs to all thought and which alone can adequately account for the nature of perception. To perceive is to construct intellectually, and if the child draws things as he conceives them, it is certainly because he cannot perceive them without conceiving them. But to give up gradually the spurious absolutes situated away and apart from the context of relations that has been built up during experience itself is the work of a superior kind of rationality. When the child comes to draw things as he sees them, it will be precisely because he has given up taking isolated objects in and for themselves and has begun to construct real systems of relations which take account of the true perspective in which things are connected. Thus "intellectual realism", though it is

the forerunner of authentic rationalism, also implies a deviation which consists in isolating too soon and therefore in "reifying" the early products of rational construction. It is therefore still "realism" in our sense of the term, that is to say, it is an illegitimate exteriorization of intellectual processes, an illegitimate fixation of each moment of the constructive movement.

Being therefore a realist in every domain, it is not surprising that the child should from the first "realize" and even "reify" the moral laws which he obeys. It is forbidden to lie, to steal, to spoil things, etc.—all, so many laws which will be conceived as existing in themselves, independently of the mind, and in consequence independently of individual circumstances and of intentions. For this is the place to recall the fundamental fact that, just because of the general realism of his spontaneous thought, the child, up to the age of about 7-8, always regards the notion of law as simultaneously moral and physical. Indeed, we have tried to show (C.W. and C.C.) that until the age of 7-8 there does not exist for the child a single purely mechanical law of nature. If clouds move swiftly when the wind is blowing, this is not only because of a necessary connection between the movement of the wind and that of the clouds; it is also and primarily because the clouds "must" hurry along to bring us rain, or night, etc. If the moon shines only by night and the sun only by day, it is not merely because of the material arrangements ensuring this regularity; it is primarily because the sun "is not allowed" to walk about at night, because the heavenly bodies are not masters of their destiny but are subject like all living beings to rules binding upon their wills. If boats remain afloat on the water while stones sink to the bottom, this does not happen merely for reasons relating to their weight; it is because things have to be so in virtue of the World-Order. In short, the universe is permeated with moral rules; physical regularity is not dissociated from moral obligation and social rule. Not that the last two are to

be deemed more important than the first. Far from it. There is simply non-differentiation between the two ideas. The idea of physical regularity is as primitive as that of psychical or moral regularity, but neither is conceived independently of the other. It is only natural, therefore, that the moral rule should retain something physical about it. Like names, it is a part of things, a characteristic feature, and even a necessary condition of the universe. What, then, do intentions matter? The problem of responsibility is simply to know whether a law has been respected or violated. Just as if we trip, independently of any carelessness, we fall on to the ground in virtue of the law of gravity, so tampering with the truth, even unwittingly, will be called a lie and incur punishment. If the fault remains unnoticed, things themselves will take charge of punishing us (see following Chapter, § 3).

In short, moral realism seems to us from this point of view to be a natural and spontaneous product of child thought. For it is not nearly so natural as one would think for primitive thought to take intentions into account. The child is far more interested in the result than in the motivation of his own actions. It is cooperation which leads to the primacy of intentionality, by forcing the individual to be constantly occupied with the point of view of other people so as to compare it with his own. Indeed, one is struck to see how unconscious of itself and how little inclined to introspection is the egocentric thought of very young children (*J.R.*, Chap. IV., § 1 and 2). It may be objected to this that primitive thought seems, on the contrary, to be directed to a sort of universal intentionalism: childish animism consists in attributing intentions to all things, so also do the "whys", artificialism leads to the notion that nothing exists without a motive, etc. But this does not in any way contradict our thesis. For to attribute stereotyped intentions to every event is one thing, and to subordinate actions to the intentions that inspired them is another. The intentionalism that characterizes animism, artificialism, and the



"whys" before 6-7 comes from a confusion between the psychical and the physical, whereas the priority of intentions over external rules implies an increasingly delicate differentiation between what is spiritual and what is material.

But these considerations are not sufficient to account for the phenomena we have observed, and we must now turn our attention to the second aspect of moral realism. For moral realism is also the product of adult constraint. Nor is there, as we have already pointed out, anything mysterious in this double origin. The adult is part of the child's universe, and the conduct and commands of the adult thus constitute the most important element in this World-Order which is the source of childish realism.

But there is more to it than this. It looks as though, in many ways, the adult did everything in his power to encourage the child to persevere in its specific tendencies, and to do so precisely in so far as these tendencies stand in the way of social development. Whereas, given sufficient liberty of action, the child will spontaneously emerge from his egocentrism and tend with his whole being towards cooperation, the adult most of the time acts in such a way as to strengthen egocentrism in its double aspect, intellectual and moral. Two things must be distinguished here, differing considerably in theoretical importance but of equal moment practically—the externality of adult commands and the lack of psychological insight in the average adult.

In the first place, moral commands almost inevitably remain external to the child—at any rate during the first years. Most parents burden their children with a number of duties of which the reason must long remain incomprehensible, such as not to tell lies of any kind, etc. Even in the most modern education, the child is forced to adopt a whole set of habits relative to food and cleanliness of which he cannot immediately grasp the why and the wherefore. All these rules are naturally placed by the child on the same plane as actual physical phenomena.

One must eat after going for a walk, go to bed at night, have a bath before going to bed, etc., exactly as the sun shines by day and the moon by night, or as pebbles sink while boats remain afloat. All these things are and must be so; they are as the World-Order decrees that they should be, and there must be a reason for it all. But none of it is felt from within as an impulse of sympathy or of pity is felt. So that from the first we have a morality of external rules and a morality of reciprocity—or rather of the elements which will later on be utilized by moral reciprocity—and so long as these two moralities do not unite, the first will almost inevitably lead to a certain amount of realism.

But in the second place, and this unfortunately is no less important a consideration, the majority of parents are poor psychologists and give their children the most questionable of moral trainings. It is perhaps in this domain that one realizes most keenly how immoral it can be to believe too much in morality, and how much more precious is a little humanity than all the rules in the world. Thus the adult leads the child to the notion of objective responsibility, and consolidates in consequence a tendency that is already natural to the spontaneous mentality of little children.

It would be difficult, to be sure, to embark upon an objective enquiry in such matters. But if systematic investigation is lacking we have some precious sources of information which often enable us to plumb greater depths than are ever revealed by a mere accumulation of incomplete observations. Literature is at hand, moreover, to supplement scientific psychology. Edmund Gosse's autobiographic study, *Father and Son*, not to mention the many novels that revive almost unaltered the memories of childhood, tells us more than many a learned treatise on the subject. The individual examination of youthful delinquents or of "difficult" children is equally illuminating. Finally, it is impossible to psycho-analyse an adolescent or an adult without discovering that the subject's spontaneous anam-

nesia (always so full of interest) is crowded with the most definite memories relating to the mistakes which his parents made in bringing him up.

But although such methods alone will put exceptionally illuminating cases within our reach, it might perhaps be possible to set afoot an enquiry into the mentality of the "average parent" and to accumulate observations made in certain homogeneous and comparable situations, such for example as those in trains, especially on Sunday evenings after a day's outing. How can one fail to be struck on such occasions by the psychological inanity of what goes on: the efforts which the parents make to catch their children in wrong-doing instead of anticipating catastrophes and preventing the child by some little artifice or other from taking up a line of conduct which his pride is sure to make him stick to; the multiplicity of orders that are given (the "average parent" is like an unintelligent government that is content to accumulate laws in spite of the contradictions and the ever-increasing mental confusion which this accumulation leads to); the pleasure taken in inflicting punishments; the pleasure taken in using authority, and the sort of sadism which one sees so often in perfectly respectable folk, whose motto is that "the child's will must be broken", or that he must be "made to feel a stronger will than his".

Such a form of education leads to that perpetual state of tension which is the appanage of so many families, and which the parents responsible for it attribute, needless to say, to the inborn wickedness of the child and to original sin. But frequent and legitimate in many respects as is the child's revolt against such methods, he is nevertheless inwardly defeated in the majority of cases. Unable to distinguish precisely between what is good in his parents and what is open to criticism, incapable, owing to the "ambivalence" of his feelings towards them, of criticizing his parents objectively, the child ends in moments of attachment by inwardly admitting their right to the authority they wield over him. Even when grown up, he

will be unable, except in very rare cases, to break loose from the affective schemas acquired in this way, and will be as stupid with his own children as his parents were with him.

It is clearly by this constraint exercised by one generation upon the other that we must seek to explain the rise and persistence of moral realism. Moral realism, rooted as it is in the whole of the child's spontaneous realism, is thus consolidated and stylized in a hundred ways by adult constraint. Such a meeting of the products of adult pressure with those of child mentality is no accident; it is not the exception but the rule in child psychology. And this can be only too easily explained, since it is through the age-long action, groping its way down the centuries, of the generations one upon the other that the essential elements of common morality and pedagogy have been formed by a mutual adaptation of the two mentalities thus confronted.

In order to show how natural is this double aspect of moral realism, let us compare it to a phenomenon which is its exact counterpart from the intellectual point of view—verbal realism, or verbalism, which results from the union between the spontaneous linguistic syncretism of the child and the verbal constraint of the adult.

One of the most striking features of the egocentric mentality from the intellectual point of view is syncretism, that is to say, perception, conception and reasoning by general ("global")<sup>1</sup> and unanalysed schemas. This phenomenon has been described by Decroly and by Claparède in the domain of perception, and it reappears in every aspect of child thought—explanation, understanding, reasoning, etc. (see *L.T.*, Chap. IX.). We found it to be particularly prevalent in the domain of verbal understanding. A sentence, a story, a proverb will give

<sup>1</sup> In *L.T.* (1st Ed.) we translated the word *global* by "general" as the use of "global" had not yet been incorporated into current psychological terminology. It means, of course, the opposite of "analysed." [Trans.]

the child the impression that he has completely understood it as soon as he has succeeded in constructing out of it a sort of general inclusive schema, or "global" meaning, even when individual words or groups of words are still quite incomprehensible to him. Such an attitude is closely bound up with egocentrism. For it is discussion and mutual criticism that urge us to analyse things; left to ourselves we are quickly satisfied with a "global", and consequently, a subjective explanation. Now "global" syncretism quite naturally leads the child to verbalism. Since every word obtains its meaning as a function of these syncretic schemas, words end by acquiring a substance of their own independently of reality. What, now, are the effects of adult constraint with regard to this verbalism? Does it progressively diminish this product of egocentrism or does it consolidate it? In so far as the adult can cooperate with the child, that is to say, can discuss things on an equal footing and collaborate with him in finding things out, it goes without saying that his influence will lead to analysis. But in so far as his words are spoken with authority, in so far, especially, as verbal instruction outweighs experiment in common, it is obvious that the adult will consolidate childish verbalism. Unfortunately it is the second alternative that is most often realized in the teaching given in schools and even in the home. The prestige of the spoken word triumphs over any amount of active experiment and free discussion. Schools have been held responsible for the verbalism of children. This is not quite correct, as verbalism arises out of certain spontaneous tendencies in the child. But the school, instead of creating an atmosphere favourable to the diminution of these tendencies, does base its teaching upon them and consolidate them by making use of them.

All this will have served to show the parallelism between moral and intellectual facts in the domain of realism. Moral realism and verbalism are therefore the two clearest manifestations of the way in which adult constraint combines with childish egocentrism.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.—The results obtained in the course of our study of moral realism confirm those of our analysis of the game of marbles. There seem to exist in the child two separate moralities, of which, incidentally, the consequences can also be discerned in adult morality. These two moralities are due to formative processes which, broadly speaking, follow on one another without, however, constituting definite stages. It is possible, moreover, to note the existence of an intermediate phase. The first of these processes is the moral constraint of the adult, a constraint which leads to heteronomy and consequently to moral realism. The second is cooperation which leads to autonomy. Between the two can be discerned a phase during which rules and commands are interiorized and generalized.

Moral constraint is characterized by unilateral respect. Now, as M. Bovet has clearly shown, this respect is the source of moral obligation and of the sense of duty: every command coming from a respected person is the starting-point of an obligatory rule. This has been abundantly confirmed by our enquiry. The obligation to speak the truth, not to steal, etc., are all so many duties which the child feels very deeply, although they do not emanate from his own mind. They are commands coming from the adult and accepted by the child. Originally, therefore, this morality of duty is essentially heteronomous. Right is to obey the will of the adult. Wrong is to have a will of one's own. There is no room in such an ethic for what moralists have called "the good" in contrast to "the right" or pure duty, since the good is a more spontaneous ideal and one that attracts rather than coerces mind. The relations between parents and children are certainly not only those of constraint. There is a spontaneous mutual affection, which from the first prompts the child to acts of generosity and even of self-sacrifice, to very touching demonstrations which are in no way prescribed. And here no doubt is the starting point for that morality of good which we shall see developing alongside

of the morality of right or duty, and which in some persons completely replaces it. The good is a product of cooperation. But the relation of moral constraint which begets duty can of itself lead to nothing but heteronomy. In its extreme forms it leads to moral realism.

Then comes an intermediate stage, which M. Bovet has noted with great subtlety<sup>1</sup>; the child no longer merely obeys the commands given him by the adult but obeys the rule itself, generalized and applied in an original way. We have observed this phenomenon in connection with lying. At a given moment the child thinks that lies are bad in themselves and that even if they were not punished, one ought not to lie. Here, undoubtedly, is a manifestation of intelligence working on moral rules as on all other data by generalizing them and differentiating between them. But the autonomy towards which we are moving is still only half present: there is always a rule that is imposed from outside and does not appear as the necessary product of the mind itself.

How does the child ever attain to autonomy proper? We see the first signs of it when he discovers that truthfulness is necessary to the relations of sympathy and mutual respect. Reciprocity seems in this connection to be the determining factor of autonomy. For moral autonomy appears when the mind regards as necessary an ideal that is independent of all external pressure. Now, apart from our relations to other people, there can be no moral necessity. The individual as such knows only anomy and not autonomy. Conversely, any relation with other persons, in which unilateral respect takes place, leads to heteronomy. Autonomy therefore appears only with reciprocity, when mutual respect is strong enough to make the individual feel from within the desire to treat others as he himself would wish to be treated.

And this is the subject we shall try to analyse in the course of the next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> See also Baldwin's *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development*.

CHAPTER III  
COOPERATION AND THE DEVELOP-  
MENT OF THE IDEA OF JUSTICE<sup>1</sup>

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These obviously spontaneous remarks, taken together with the rest of our enquiry, allow us to conclude, in so far as one can talk of stages in the moral life, the existence of three great periods in the development of the sense of justice in the child. One period, lasting up to the age of 7-8, during which justice is subordinated to adult authority; a period contained approximately between 8-11, and which is that of progressive equalitarianism; and finally a period which sets in towards 11-12, and during which purely equalitarian justice is tempered by considerations of equity.

The first is characterized by the non-differentiation of the notions of just and unjust from those of duty and disobedience: whatever conforms to the dictates of the adult authority is just. As a matter of fact even at this stage the child already looks upon some kinds of treatment as unjust, those, namely, in which the adult does not carry out the rules he has himself laid down for children (*e.g.* punishing for a fault that has not been committed, forbidding what has previously been allowed, etc.). But if the adult sticks to his own rules, everything he prescribes is just. In the domain of retributive justice, every punishment is accepted as perfectly legitimate, as necessary, and even as constituting the essence of morality: if lying were not punished, one would be allowed to tell lies, etc. In the stories where we have brought retributive justice into conflict with equality, the child belonging to this stage sets the necessity for punishment above equality of any sort. In the choice of punishments, expiation takes precedence over punishment by reciprocity, the very principle of the latter type of punishment not being exactly understood by the child. In the domain of immanent justice, more than three-quarters of the subjects under 8 believe in an automatic justice which emanates from physical nature and inanimate objects. If obedience and equality are brought into conflict, the child is always in favour of obedience: authority takes precedence over justice. Finally, in the domain of justice

between children, the need for equality is already felt, but is yielded to only where it cannot possibly come into conflict with authority. For instance, the act of hitting back, which is regarded by the child of 10 as one of elementary justice, is considered "naughty" by the children of 6 and 7, though, of course, they are always doing it in practice. (It will be remembered that the heteronomous rule, whatever may be the respect in which it is held mentally, is not necessarily observed in real life.) On the other hand, even in the relations between children, the authority of older ones will outweigh equality. In short, we may say that throughout this period, during which unilateral respect is stronger than mutual respect, the conception of justice can only develop on certain points, those, namely, where cooperation begins to make itself felt independently of constraint. On all other points, what is just is confused with what is imposed by law, and law is completely heteronomous and imposed by the adult.

The second period does not appear on the plane of reflection and moral judgment until about the age of 7 or 8. But it is obvious that this comes slightly later than what happens with regard to practice. This period may be defined by the progressive development of autonomy and the priority of equality over authority. In the domain of retributive justice, the idea of expiatory punishment is no longer accepted with the same docility as before, and the only punishments accepted as really legitimate are those based upon reciprocity. Belief in immanent justice is perceptibly on the decrease and moral action is sought for its own sake, independently of reward or punishment. In matters of distributive justice, equality rules supreme. In conflicts between punishment and equality, equality outweighs every other consideration. The same holds good *a fortiori* of conflicts with authority. Finally, in the relations between children, equalitarianism obtains progressively with increasing age.

Towards 11-12 we see a new attitude emerge, which may be said to be characterized by the feeling of equity, and which is nothing but a development of equalitarianism in the direction of relativity. Instead of looking for equality in identity, the child no longer thinks of the equal rights of individuals except in relation to the particular situation of each. In the domain of retributive justice this comes to the same thing as not applying the same punishment to all, but taking into account the attenuating circumstances of some. In the domain of distributive justice it means no longer thinking of a law as identical for all but taking account of the personal circumstances of each (favouring the younger ones, etc.). Far from leading to privileges, such an attitude tends to make equality more effectual than it was before.

Even if this evolution does not consist of general stages, but simply of phases characterizing certain limited processes, we have said enough to try to elucidate now the psychological origins of the idea of justice and the conditions of its development. With this in view, let us distinguish retributive from distributive justice, for the two go together only when reduced to their fundamental elements, and let us begin with distributive judgment, whose fate in the course of mental development seems to indicate that it is the most fundamental form of justice itself.

Distributive justice can be reduced to the ideas of equality or equity. From the point of view of epistemology such notions cannot but be regarded as *a priori*, if by *a priori* we mean, not of course an innate idea, but a norm, towards which reason cannot help but tend as it is gradually refined and purified. For reciprocity imposes itself on practical reason as logical principles impose themselves morally on theoretical reason. But from the psychological point of view, which is that of what is, not of what should be, an *a priori* norm has no existence except as a form of equilibrium. It constitutes the ideal equilibrium towards which the phenomena

tend, and the whole question is still to know why, the facts being what they are, their form of equilibrium is such and no other. This last problem, which is of a causal order, must not be confused with the first, which can be solved only by abstract reflection. The two will coincide only when mind and reality become coextensive. In the meantime let us confine ourselves to psychological analysis, it being understood that the experimental explanation of the notion of reciprocity can in no way contradict its *a priori* aspect.

From this point of view it cannot be denied that the idea of equality or of distributive justice possesses individual or biological roots which are necessary but not sufficient conditions for its development. One can observe in the child at a very early stage two reactions which will play a very important part in this particular elaboration. Jealousy, to begin with, appears extremely early in babies : infants of 8 to 12 months often give signs of violent rage when they see another child seated on their mother's knees, or when a toy is taken from them and given to another child. On the other hand, one can observe in conjunction with imitation and the ensuing sympathy, altruistic reactions and a tendency to share, which are of equally early date. An infant of 12 months will hand his toys over to another child, and so on. But it goes without saying that equalitarianism can never be regarded as a sort of instinct or spontaneous product of the individual mind. The reactions we have just alluded to lead to a capricious alternation of egoism and sympathy. It is true, of course, that jealousy prevents other people from taking advantage of us, and the need to communicate prevents the self from taking advantage of others. But for true equality and a genuine desire for reciprocity there must be a collective rule which is the *sui generis* product of life lived in common. There must be born of the actions and reactions of individuals upon each other the consciousness of a necessary equilibrium binding upon and limiting both "alter" and "ego". And this

ideal equilibrium, dimly felt on the occasion of every quarrel and every peace-making, naturally presupposes a long reciprocal education of the children by each other.

But between the primitive individual reactions, which give the need for justice a chance of showing itself, and the full possession of the idea of equality, our enquiry shows the existence of a long interval in time. For it is not until about 10-12, at the age where, as we saw elsewhere, children's societies attain to the maximum of organization and codification of rules, that justice really frees herself from all her adventitious trappings. Here, as before, we must therefore distinguish constraint from cooperation, and our problem will then be to determine whether it is unilateral respect, the source of constraint, or mutual respect, the source of cooperation, that is the preponderating factor in the evolution of equalitarian justice.

Now on this point the results of our analysis seem to leave no room for doubt. Authority as such cannot be the source of justice, because the development of justice presupposes autonomy. This does not mean, of course, that the adult plays no part in the development of justice, even of the distributive kind. In so far as he practises reciprocity with the child and preaches by example rather than by precept, he exercises here, as always, an enormous influence. But the most direct effect of adult ascendancy is, as M. Bovet has shown, the feeling of duty, and there is a sort of contradiction between the submission demanded by duty and the complete autonomy required by the development of justice. For, resting as it does on equality and reciprocity, justice can only come into being by free consent., Adult authority even if it acts in conformity with justice, has therefore the effect of weakening what constitutes the essence of justice. Hence those reactions which we observed among the smaller children, who confused what was just with what was law, law being whatever is prescribed by adult authority. Justice is identified with formulated rules—as indeed it is in the opinion of a great many adults, of

all, namely, who have not succeeded in setting autonomy of conscience above social prejudice and the written law.

Thus adult authority, although perhaps it constitutes a necessary moment in the moral evolution of the child, is not in itself sufficient to create a sense of justice. This can develop only through the progress made by cooperation and mutual respect—cooperation between children to begin with, and then between child and adult as the child approaches adolescence and comes, secretly at least, to consider himself as the adult's equal.

In support of these hypotheses, one is struck by the extent to which, in child as well as in adult society, the progress of equalitarianism goes hand in hand with that of "organic" solidarity, *i.e.* with the results of cooperation. For if we compare the societies formed by children of 5-7 with those formed at the age of 10-12, we can observe four interdependent transformations. In the first place, while the little ones' society constitutes an amorphous and unorganized whole, in which all the individuals are alike, that of the older children achieves an organic unity, with laws and regulations, and often even a division of social work (leaders, referees, etc.). In the second place, there exists between the older children a far stronger moral solidarity than among the younger ones. The little ones are simultaneously egocentric and impersonal, yielding to every suggestion that comes along and to every current of imitation. In their case the group feeling is a sort of communion of submission to seniors and to the dictates of adults. Older children, on the contrary, ban lies among themselves, cheating, and everything that compromises solidarity. The group feeling is therefore more direct and more consciously cultivated. In the third place, personality develops in the measure that discussion and the interchange of ideas replace the simple mutual imitation of the younger children. In the fourth place, the sense of equality is, as we have just seen, far stronger in the older than in the younger children, the latter

being primarily under the domination of authority. Thus the bond between equalitarianism and solidarity is a universal psychological phenomenon, and not, as might appear to be the case in adult society, dependent only upon political factors. With children as with adults, there exist two psychological types of social equilibrium—a type based on the constraint of age, which excludes both equality and “organic” solidarity, but which canalizes individual egocentrism without excluding it, and a type based on cooperation and resting on equality and solidarity.

Let us pass on to retributive justice. In contrast to the principles of distributive justice, there does not seem to be in the ideas of retribution or punishment any properly rational or *a priori* element. For while the idea of equality gains in value as intellectual development proceeds, the idea of punishment seems actually to lose ground. To put things more precisely, we must, as we have already done, distinguish two separate elements in the idea of retribution. On the one hand there are the notions of expiation and reward, which seems to constitute what is most specific about the idea of punishment, and on the other, there are the ideas of “putting things right” or making reparation, as well as the measures which aim at restoring the bond of solidarity broken by the offending act. These last ideas, which we have grouped under the title of “punishment by reciprocity”, seem to draw only on the conceptions of equality and reciprocity. It is the former set of ideas that tends to be eliminated when the morality of heteronomy and authority is superseded by the morality of autonomy. The second set are of far more enduring stuff, precisely because they are based upon something more than the idea of punishment.

Whatever may be said of this evolution of values, it is possible here, as in connection with distributive justice, to assign three sources to the three chief aspects of retribution. As we saw above (§ 1) certain individual reactions condition the appearance of retribution; adult

constraint explains the formation of the idea of expiation, and cooperation accounts for the eventual fate of the idea of punishment.

It cannot be denied that the idea of punishment has psycho-biological roots. Blow calls for blow and gentleness moves us to gentleness. The instinctive reactions of defence and sympathy thus bring about a sort of elementary reciprocity which is the soil that retribution demands for its growth. But this soil is naturally not enough in itself, and the individual factors cannot of themselves transcend the stage of impulsive vengeance without finding themselves subject—at least implicitly—to the system of regulated and codified sanctions implied in retributive justice.

Things change with the intervention of the adult. Very early in life, even before the infant can speak, its conduct is constantly being subjected to approval or censure. According to circumstances people are pleased with baby and smile at it, or else frown and leave it to cry, and the very inflections in the voices of those that surround it are alone sufficient to constitute an incessant retribution. During the years that follow, the child is watched over continuously, everything he does and says is controlled, gives rise to encouragement or reproof, and the vast majority of adults still look upon punishment, corporal or otherwise, as perfectly legitimate. It is obviously these reactions on the part of the adult, due generally to fatigue or impatience, but often, too, coldly thought out on his part, it is obviously these adult reactions, we repeat, that are the psychological starting-point of the idea of expiatory punishment. If the child felt nothing but fear or mistrust, as may happen in extreme cases, this would simply lead to open war. But as the child loves his parents and feels for their actions that respect which M. Bovet has so ably analysed, punishment appears to him as morally obligatory and necessarily connected with the act that provoked it. Disobedience—the principle of all “sin”—is a breach of the normal



relations between parent and child ; some reparation is therefore necessary, and since parents display their "righteous anger" by the various reactions that take the form of punishments, to accept these punishments constitutes the most natural form of reparation. The pain inflicted thus seems to re-establish the relations that had momentarily been interrupted, and in this way the idea of expiation becomes incorporated in the values of the morality of authority. In our view, therefore, this "primitive" and materialistic conception of expiatory punishment is not imposed as such by the adult upon the child, and it was perhaps never invented by a psychologically adult mind ; but it is the inevitable product of punishment as refracted in the mystically realistic mentality of the child.

If, then, there is such close solidarity between the idea of punishment and unilateral respect *plus* the morality of authority, it follows that all progress in cooperation and mutual respect will be such as to gradually eliminate the idea of expiation from the idea of punishment, and to reduce the latter to a simple act of reparation, or a simple measure of reciprocity. And this is actually what we believe we have observed in the child. As respect for adult punishment gradually grows less, certain types of conduct develop which one cannot but class under the heading of retributive justice. We saw an example of this in the judgments made by our subjects on the topic of "hitting back" ; the child feels more and more that it is fair that he should defend himself and to give back the blows he receives. This is retribution without doubt, but the idea of expiation seems not to play the slightest part in these judgments. It is entirely a matter of reciprocity. So-and-so takes upon himself the right to give me a punch, he therefore gives me the right to do the same to him. Similarly, the cheat gains a certain advantage by the fact of cheating ; it is therefore legitimate to restore equality by turning him out of the game or by taking back the marbles he has won.

It may be objected that such a morality will not take one very far, since the best adult consciences ask for something more than the practice of mere reciprocity. Charity and the forgiving of injuries done to one are, in the eyes of many, far greater things than sheer equality. In this connection, moralists have often laid stress on the conflict between justice and love, since justice often prescribes what is reproved by love and *vice versa*. But in our view, it is precisely this concern with reciprocity which leads one beyond the rather short-sighted justice of those children who give back the mathematical equivalent of the blows they have received. Like all spiritual realities which are the result, not of external constraint but of autonomous development, reciprocity has two aspects: reciprocity as a fact, and reciprocity as an ideal, as something which ought to be. The child begins by simply practising reciprocity, in itself not so easy a thing as one might think. Then, once he has grown accustomed to this form of equilibrium in his actions, his behaviour is altered from within, its form reacting, as it were, upon its content. What is regarded as just is no longer merely reciprocal action, but primarily behaviour that admits of indefinitely sustained reciprocity. The motto "Do as you would be done by", thus comes to replace the conception of crude equality. The child sets forgiveness above revenge, not out of weakness, but because "there is no end" to revenge (a boy of 10). Just as in logic, we can see a sort of reaction of the form of the proposition upon its content when the principle of contradiction leads to a simplification and purification of the initial definitions, so in ethics, reciprocity implies a purification of the deeper trend of conduct, guiding it by gradual stages to universality itself. Without leaving the sphere of reciprocity, generosity—the characteristic of our third stage—allies itself to justice pure and simple, and between the more refined forms of justice, such as equity and love properly so called, there is no longer any real conflict.

In conclusion, then, we find in the domain of justice, as in the other two domains already dealt with, that opposition of two moralities to which we have so often drawn the reader's attention. The ethics of authority, which is that of duty and obedience, leads, in the domain of justice, to the confusion of what is just with the content of established law and to the acceptance of expiatory punishment. The ethics of mutual respect, which is that of good (as opposed to duty), and of autonomy, leads, in the domain of justice, to the development of equality, which is the idea at the bottom of distributive justice and of reciprocity. Solidarity between equals appears once more as the source of a whole set of complementary and coherent moral ideas which characterize the rational mentality. The question may, of course, be raised whether such realities could ever develop without a preliminary stage, during which the child's conscience is moulded by his unilateral respect for the adult. As this cannot be put to the test by experiment, it is idle to argue the point. But what is certain is that the moral equilibrium achieved by the complementary conceptions of heteronomous duty and of punishment properly so called, is an unstable equilibrium, owing to the fact that it does not allow the personality to grow and expand to its full extent. As the child grows up, the subjection of his conscience to the mind of the adult seems to him less legitimate, and except in cases of arrested moral development, caused either by decisive inner submission (those adults who remain children all their lives), or by sustained revolt, unilateral respect tends of itself to grow into mutual respect and to the state of cooperation which constitutes the normal equilibrium. It is obvious that since in our modern societies the common morality which regulates the relations of adults to each other is that of cooperation, the development of child morality will be accelerated by the examples that surround it. Actually, however, this is more probably a phenomenon of convergence than one simply of social pressure. For

if human societies have evolved from heteronomy to autonomy, and from gerontocratic theocracy in all its forms to equalitarian democracy, it may very well be that the phenomena of social condensation so well described by Durkheim have been favourable primarily to the emancipation of one generation from another, and have thus rendered possible in children and adolescents the development we have outlined above.

But having reached the point where the problems of sociology meet those of genetic psychology, we are faced with a question of too great moment to allow us to rest content with these indications, and we must now compare our results with the fundamental theses of sociology and psychology concerning the empirical nature of the moral life.