Chapter 3
The Child as 'Primitive'

Like turn-of-the-century ethnology, developmental psychology of the same period was shaped by the paradigm of the 'primitive' and followed the principle of analogy.[1] In contrast to early ethnology, however, it equated 'prehistoric man' and the contemporary child (instead of indigenous peoples) under the heading of the 'primitive.'[2] Consequently, the analogy required a different temporal model whereby the desired relation is not inscribed by allochrony and arrested development, but rather by recapitulation of a past developmental process in the present. Whereas the ethnological concept of survival is best understood in idealist terms (in the sense of a transmission of older cultural properties), the model of recapitulation is exclusively materialist and must be understood in biological terms. Drawing on popularized evolutionism, the new field of child psychology presumed that children's thought is systematically programmed to steadily and progressively mature into adult thinking. This course of development was thought to recapitulate a phylogenetic cultural development all the way from 'primitive' to 'civilized' thinking.

1 Developmental psychology emerged in the late nineteenth century in tandem with "folk psychology" (*Völkerpsychologie*) and animal psychology; at the time, it was largely referred to as "child psychology." See Georg Eckardt, Wolfgang G. Bringmann, and Lothar Sprung, eds., *Contributions to a History of Developmental Psychology: International William T. Preyer Symposium* (Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton, 1985), Part I.

2 One of the few monographs on the child against the background of the broader historical discourse on primitivism is George Boas' book, *The Cult of Childhood* (London: Warburg, 1966). Boas sees the cult of the child/childhood as a substitute for the cult of the 'primitive' (or, more precisely, the "noble savage") after contradicting experiences had rendered the latter impossible (8–9). See also Wittmann, *Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien*, which deals with the recapitulationist concept of a "Neolithic childhood" in historical treatments of children's drawings (187–243). Yet she emphasizes that after 1910 the significance of the theory of recapitulation for embryology and anatomy quickly waned and that growing criticisms of its adaptation to other fields were mounted by cultural historians as well (230–237). See also Elisabeth Wesseling, ed., *The Child Savage, 1890–2010. From Comics to Games* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), which discusses the "child-savage analogy" as a "root metaphor" of "modern Western culture" (5); the first part of the volume examines "how the child-savage analogy was fleshed out by children's media during the heyday of imperialism" (14).

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Recapitulating Phylogeny

The most important point of reference here is Ernst Haeckel. His writings – *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen* (General Morphology of the Organisms, 1866), *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* (1868; *The History of Creation*, 1873), and *Anthropogenie* (1874; *The Evolution of Man*, 1876) – had established the "biogenetic law" whereby the individual life recapitulates the life of the species.

> Ontogeny is a brief and rapid recapitulation of Phylogeny, dependent on the physiological functions of Heredity (reproduction) and Adaptation (nutrition). The individual organism reproduces in the rapid and short course of its own evolution the most important of the changes in form through which its ancestors, according to laws of Heredity and Adaptation, have passed in the slow and long course of their palaeontological evolution.[3]

For Haeckel ontogeny and phylogeny are not just similar processes; rather, the latter represents the mechanical cause of the former.[4] This sets his perspective apart from those of the natural philosophers before him who affirmed that similarities exist between ontogeny and phylogeny due to the grand-scale unity of nature, not to causal relations.[5] By contrast, Haeckel's thesis of a mechanical cause is based on two assumptions: First, he follows Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's conviction that acquired traits can be passed down by inheritance. (The textbook example runs like this: giraffes needed to stretch their necks to gather leaves from trees. Then their offspring were born with longer necks. The parents had transmitted this actively acquired trait to their young.) Second, Haeckel does not claim that ontogeny repeats every stage of phylogeny. Some stages get skipped, and only the most important ones are retained. Otherwise, ontogeny would extend to impossible lengths over the course of a human's development. As it is, its duration is the same from individual to individual and generation to generation.[6]

Haeckel's biogenetic law originally only concerned embryonic development. But as his theory quickly spread and became popularized, child psychologists applied it to infants and toddlers as well. One of the earliest works in child psy-

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3 Ernst Haeckel, *The Evolution of Man: A Popular Exposition on the Principal Points of Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (New York: D. Appleton, 1897), 1–2. On the "pervasive influence" of this "law" on "criminal anthropology, racism, child development, primary education, and Freudian psychoanalysis," see Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 115–166.

4 Haeckel, *The Evolution of Man*, 4.

5 Cf. Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 33–46, 76–84.

6 On these two basic assumptions, cf. Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 80–84.

chology – indeed, the book that has come to stand as its founding document[7] – is William T. Preyer's *Die Seele des Kindes. Beobachtungen über die geistige Entwicklung des Menschen in seinen ersten Lebensjahren* (1882; *The Mind of the Child: Observations Concerning the Mental Development of the Human Being in the First Years of Life*, 1888). Here, Haeckel's authority is invoked when Preyer explains, among other things, that

> what we know [...] of the most ancient languages shows so great an agreement in regard to [...] the language of children [...] that we may say the human race [...] has behind it a course of development [...] similar to that which every normal child goes through in learning to speak.[8]

A decade later, James Sully, the founder of child psychology in England, went even further by making the ontogenetic recapitulation of phylogeny the guiding principle of his influential *Studies of Childhood* (1895). Indeed, in his book, analogies between the child and prehistoric humanity are omnipresent,[9] a relation programmatically articulated in the introduction.

> [The] evolutional point of view enables the psychologist to connect the unfolding of an infant's mind [...] with the mental history of the race. [...] [The] first years of a child, with their imperfect verbal expression, their crude fanciful ideas, their seizures by rage and terror, their absorption in the present moment, acquire a new and antiquarian interest.[10]

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7 "Wilhelm Preyer first put the psychology of early childhood on to a scientific basis" (William Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood: Up to the Sixth Year of Age*, trans. Anna Barwell [New York: Henry Holt, 1924], 12). That said, Preyer was hardly "the first to tackle the issue of children's mental development. Indeed, the biographical and educational records published in English before Preyer provide a wealth of information on the subject" (John C. Cavanaugh, "Cognitive Developmental Psychology before Preyer: Biographical and Educational Records," in *Contributions to a History of Developmental Psychology*, 206). On "why Preyer's monograph [...] became the 'initial chapter' [...] of modern child psychology" (178), cf. Georg Eckardt, "Preyer's Road to Child Psychology," and Jaeger, "Origins of Child Psychology: William Preyer," in the same volume as above.

8 William Preyer, *Mental Development in the Child*, trans. H. W. Brown (New York: Appleton, 1894), 160.

9 E. g., James Sully, *Studies of Childhood* (London: Longmans Green, 1896), 9, 28, 61, 82, 91–94. On Sully, especially in the context of the Child Study Movement, cf. Sally Shuttleworth, "Child Study in the 1890s," in *The Mind of the Child. Child Development in Literature, Science and Medicine, 1840–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 267–289.

10 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 8.

The same view prevailed in the United States. In 1904, Sully's American counterpart G. Stanley Hall held the thesis that the child at play repeats both the biological and the cultural evolution of humankind.

> I regard play as the motor habits and spirits of the past of the race, persisting in the present [...]. The best index and guide to the [...] activities of adults in past ages is found in the instinctive, untaught, and non-imitative plays of children [...]. In play every mood and movement is instinct with heredity. Thus we rehearse the activities of our ancestors, back we know not how far [...]. It is reminiscent [...] of our line of descent, and each is the key to the other.[11]

On this basis, Hall concludes that "the child is vastly more ancient than the man. [...] Adulthood is comparatively a novel structure built upon very ancient foundations."[12] From this conviction his followers drew some daring conclusions. For example, in Switzerland, the child psychologist Pierre Bovet asserts the pedagogical value of Haeckel's notion of recapitulation as follows:

> Many of the child's instincts and likings, which were formerly a dead weight on his teacher's hands, take on a positive interest, as soon as the latter ceases to regard them as individual and passing whims, and accustoms himself to look on them as the living prolongation of the great forces which have fashioned mankind for thousands of years.[13]

Accordingly, Bovet contends that combat skills develop along phylogenetic lines. Young children, he claims, do not fight or show aggression until about the age of three – which corresponds to the peaceful and paradisiacal life imagined to have been in existence at the beginning of human history. After that, skills such as scratching, kicking, hitting, and the use of weapons supposedly develop in phylogenetic order.[14] Likewise, Karl Groos, in Germany, wrote in his introduction to *Das Seelenleben des Kindes* (The Inner Life of Children, 1904):

> We can also [...] hope that through our study we will be able to uncover the many connecting threads between the growth of the individual soul and the first beginnings of the human species. [...] [Child psychology] should [...] have the vocation to fathom the myster-

11 G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (New York: Appleton, 1904), 1: 202.

12 Hall, quoted in Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny,* 141.

13 Pierre Bovet, *The Fighting Instinct*, trans. J.Y.Y. Greig (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1923), 150.

14 Bovet, *The Fighting Instinct*, 152–154. Gould adduces the same examples from Bovet and Hall (*Ontogeny and Phylogeny,* 140–141).

> ies of the spiritual development of humanity; conversely, what we know about the development of the species should shed a bright light on many phenomena of childhood life.[15]

Later studies in the field of developmental psychology were just as much shaped by the conviction that phylogeny repeats itself in ontogeny and that therefore the child is to be understood as a contemporaneous 'primitive.' In 1914, William Stern deemed it self-evident that children exhibit "psychic life" that is "primitive."[16] Right at the beginning of *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes* (1918; *The Mental Development of the Child*, 1924), Karl Bühler refers to how child psychology may greatly inform research on the "history of the species,"[17] where the "science of prehistory," he writes, may reap "its best source of information."[18] Throughout the work, he also refers to indigenous peoples – for instance, when treating the "animalistic phase" of the child in light of Leo Frobenius's discussion of "personifications [...] in the fairy tales of half-civilized North African tribes."[19] And chapters dedicated to children's art (a topic of great interest to child psychology ever since Sully's publication[20]) explore "ethnological parallels."[21] The figure of the 'child-primitive' remains in force in studies from the 1920s. In *Einführung in die Entwicklungspsychologie* (Introduction to Developmental Psychology, 1926), Heinz Werner cites structural similarities between forms of thinking shared by children and "children of nature," who he understands as two different manifestations of the same "primitive type" and its "primordial thought-processes."[22] Jean Piaget's studies of child psychology from the

15 Karl Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1904), 10.

16 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 36.

17 Karl Bühler, *The Mental Development of the Child: A Summary of Modern Psychological Theory*, trans. Oscar Oeser (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.

18 Bühler, *The Mental Development of the Child*, 2.

19 Bühler, *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes* (Jena: Fischer, 1924), 139. Though this volume is available to the English reader in translation, it is abridged; therefore this passage and others where the German edition is cited have been translated by Erik Butler.

20 Cf. Barbara Wittmann, "Johnny-Head-in-the-Air in America: Aby Warburg's Experiment with Children's Drawings," in *New Perspectives in Iconology: Visual Studies and Anthropology*, ed. Barbara Baert, Ann-Sophie Lehmann, and Jenke Van den Akkerveken (Brussels: AspEditions, 2012), 120–142, and *Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien*, 161–171, 187–241.

21 Bühler, *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes*, 291. Strikingly, however, Bühler draws far fewer parallels between children and 'primitives' than he does between infants and animals. In general, he is inspired by "animal psychology," which emerged around the same time as child psychology. Accordingly, he speaks of early mental development as "the *humanization* of the child" (*The Mental Development of the Child*, 1).

22 Heinz Werner, *Einführung in die Entwicklungspsychologie*, 131, 140.

same period (and still relevant today) also repeatedly point out such similarities and use ethnologically inflected terms (e. g., participation) to describe the child's worldview.[23]

These examples from the early decades of developmental psychology demonstrate that the 'child-primitive' – constructed on the basis of the theory of recapitulation – represents a fundamental paradigm in the early stages of the field. In this case the 'primitive' also takes the form of a contemporary 'prehistoric human'; however, this time they are contemporary not in the figure of indigenous peoples, but in the figure of the child, who recapitulates phylogenetic development.

Othering: The 'Bad' Child

Conceiving of the child in the paradigm of the 'primitive' alienated the former. Suddenly – and especially against the backdrop of psychoanalysis, which considers the child to be driven by impulses – the child emerged as a wild, strange, and even threatening being inhabiting a world barely accessible to adult minds.[24] Examples include Sully's remarks on children's "crude fanciful ideas" and "seizures by rage and terror," as well as the parallels Bühler draws between them and animals (in his eyes, the child only becomes a human being over time).

For Freud, children are not just subject to the same urges as adults; they live out these urges directly because their inhibitions have not yet developed. Not only do children, according to Freud, have an infantile sexuality of their own, but this manifests itself as paraphilia, i. e., sexual ideas, needs, or activities associated with one's personal suffering or that of one's victims (sadomasochism). Whereas Freud's early theory of drives can only grasp this destructive form of sexuality as perversion (the child is "polymorphously perverse"), in the context

23 Jean Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child* (London: Routledge, 1999), 255 – 256, and *The Child's Conception of the World*, trans. Joan and Andrew Tomlinson (Lanham, MD: Littlefield Adams 1989), 133.

24 On the history of the 'wild child,' cf. Nicolas Pethes, *Zöglinge der Natur: Der literarische Menschenversuch des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 62 – 122; and Dieter Richter, *Das fremde Kind: Zur Entstehung der Kindheitsbilder des bürgerlichen Zeitalters* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987), 139 – 174, which draws parallels to ethnological discourse; and Reinhard Kuhn, *Corruption in Paradise: The Child in Western Literature* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1982). On the motif of the 'brute,' or 'insane child,' against the backdrop of recapitulation and degeneration theory in the English-speaking world, see also Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child*, 181 – 206.

of his later theory it can be understood as an expression of *thanatos*, the death drive. The latter's effects are also more evident in the child than in the adult: children act out destructive desires, whether in the form of aggression directed at the self or others, more openly than adults do. Thus, in *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (1920; *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1922), where Freud develops the concept of the death drive, he speaks of the destructive game of a small child that repeatedly hurls objects away from himself (*fort-da*). In Freud's estimation, the child uses the game to reproduce the painful absence of his mother; the "gain in pleasure" (*Lustgewinn*) lies in the child's taking control of the situation (by playing the active role) on the one hand, and on the other hand in his taking revenge on the mother herself. Incidentally, William Stern had already seen a striving for control at work in the "destructive games" of children in *Psychologie der frühen Kindheit* (1914; *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 1924). For him the child's pleasure lies in "being the cause, which [...] can never be exhibited in a more elemental form than in destruction."[25]

Groos even devotes two entire chapters to children's destructive activities in *Die Spiele der Menschen* (1899; *The Play of Man,* 1901). These first of all represent part of an analytical game, which dissects things and living beings in order to understand their structure. Yet they also express a "destructive impulse" that is particularly evident in fighting. His examples of such "wild destructiveness" include the tendency of infants to "tear paper, pull the heads off of flowers, rummage in boxes, and the like."[26] The child, in the use of such analytical-destructive acts against other living creatures, is likened to the 'child of nature': "since the child, like the savage, has not our clear perception of the difference between what is living and the lifeless, he will pull to pieces a beetle, a fly, or a bird with the same serenity which accompanies his demolition of a flower."[27] Groos adduces particularly drastic examples in the subchapter on "the destructive impulse." For him, a destructive act is characterized as game like whenever it is "continued simply for the sake of its intoxicating effects."[28] Like Freud and Stern, he explains it in terms of gaining power. For instance:

> An eight-year-old girl with an angelic face secretly put some pins in her little brother's food, and calmly awaited the catastrophe, which fortunately was averted. [...] A girl twelve years

25 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood,* 311.
26 Groos, *The Play of Man,* trans. Elizabeth A. Baldwin (New York: D. Appleton, 1913), 98.
27 Groos, *The Play of Man,* 98.
28 Groos, *The Play of Man,* 217.

> old pushed a child of three, with whom she was playing, into a pile of paving stones for no other reason than that she might have the opportunity to tickle him cruelly.[29]

The fact that both cases concern girls heightens Groos's transformation of the "loveable"[30] child into a cruel one; for the pedagogical and psychological literature of the day usually credited girls with being less inclined to violence than boys.

Groos also sees affinity between the destructive child and the criminal adult inasmuch as he identifies a play-impulse at work in their misdeeds.

> Among criminals murders may sometimes result from following this impulse. Some time ago three peasants were tried for the murder, with incredible cruelty, of a servant. They were father, son, and mother. After the old man had throttled his victim he said to his accomplices, "Now he is dead enough." But the woman, to make sure, dealt a hard blow on the poor fellow's head. "Now I think he has had enough, this fine rabbit that we have caught." Here the bounds between play and earnest are hard to place, but probably belong at the point where the prearranged plan is no longer the leading thought, it having given place to mad delight in inflicting injury.[31]

Hall offers a biogenetic explanation for this affinity between the child and criminal, describing children's destructive actions as a phase that recapitulates phylogeny: "The child revels in savagery." However, he argues that children should not be denied their inclinations because they need to repeat this primal state in order to mature into civilized adults. As a kind of "catharsis,"[32] this stage needs to be lived out. Otherwise, he warns, development will either stop at this level[33] or "wild destructiveness" will return later: "Rudimentary organs of the soul now suppressed, perverted or delayed, [will] crop out in menacing forms later in adulthood."[34] After all, Hall contends, "criminals are much like overgrown children."[35] For him, the "child torturer"[36] and the "torturer" recapitulate the behavior of "primitive man."

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29 Groos, *The Play of Man,* 219 – 220. Groos takes both examples from Friedrich Scholz's *Die Charakterfehler des Kindes: Eine Erziehungslehre für Haus und Schule* (Leipzig: E. H. Mayer, 1891), 148 – 149.

30 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 2.

31 Groos, *The Play of Man,* 220. Groos takes this case from Scipio Sighele's *Psychologie des Auflaufs und der Massenverbrechen* (Dresden: Reissner, 1897), 13 – 14.

32 Hall, *Adolescence*, x.

33 E. g., Hall, *Adolescence*, 338.

34 Hall, *Adolescence*, x.

35 Hall, *Adolescence*, 338.

36 Hall, *Adolescence*, 359.

> The savage is a good father, perhaps husband and tribesman, with a kindly nature, but all his virtues are expended on those nearest him, and for all others he has suspicion, enmity, and bitter hostility. In the torturer the boundary between these two sentiments is disturbed. [...] He places the neighbor in the same position as the alien and enemy, whom he would capture and torture.[37]

Indeed, the turn of the century witnessed a spate of works of criminal anthropology based on the notion of a biogenetic law of crime. Examples include the criminologist Erich Wulffen's *Psychologie des Verbrechens* (Psychology of Crime, 1908), *Gauner- und Verbrechertypen* (Types of Crooks and Criminals, 1910), a handbook on sexual criminals (*Sexualverbrecher*, [Sexual Criminals, 1910]), and the 500-page book *Das Kind. Sein Wesen und seine Entartung* (The Child: His Nature and Degeneration, 1913). The author introduces the latter study by highlighting his professional interest in "the criminal soul and the origins of crime." "The task," he begins, "was to eavesdrop on emergent crime in the child's soul and determine its direct relationship to instincts, drives, and inclinations that the human being brings forth from nature's womb."[38] In Wulffen's estimation, "pedagogical doctrine and criminal psychology" confront the same "cardinal problem": "How do we learn to do good and avoid evil?" In this light, pedagogy actually represents for him a domain at the margins of criminal psychology. After all, "most young people go through a sort of half-criminal phase"; the task for educators, then, is to redirect "antisocial instincts and drives."[39]

Hall and Wulffen's reflections on the criminal nature of the child owe a great deal to the theories of Cesare Lombroso, whose influence persisted well into the twentieth century. The premise of his *L'uomo delinquente* (1876; *Criminal Man*, 1911) is that lawbreakers have remained, both physically and psychically, at an early stage of human development. Accordingly, Lombroso likens their behavior to that of children, whose natural antisociality and violence he describes in detail.[40]

> This fact, that the germs of moral insanity and criminality are found normally in mankind in the first stages of existence, in the same way as forms considered monstrous when exhibited by adults, frequently exist in the foetus, is such a simple and common phenomen-

37 Hall, *Adolescence*, 360.

38 Erich Wulffen, *Das Kind. Sein Wesen und seine Entartung* (Berlin: Langenscheidt, 1913), xix.

39 Wulffen, *Das Kind*, xxi.

40 In so doing, he refers to Paul Moreau, *De l'homicide commis par les enfants* (Paris: Asselin, 1862), among others.

> on. The child [...] represents what is known to alienists as a morally insane being and to criminologists as a born criminal.[41]

For him, children and criminals are equally prone to anger, vengeance, jealousy and envy, lying, cruelty, sloth, imitating others' actions without foresight, and any number of other vices, all of which culminate in criminal activity.[42] He supports his thesis with numerous case histories to show children who he views already as "criminals." In contrast to Freud, Groos, and Stern, he freely evaluates children's actions in moral terms, which he explains as the result of "evil impulses,"[43] the intensity of their passions resembling those of "savages."[44] At the same time, Lombroso distinguishes between children who are "wicked" due only to their age from those who have inherited "perverse instincts." In the latter case, nothing can stop the child from becoming a criminal in adulthood: "the best and most careful education, moral and intellectual, is powerless to effect an improvement on the morally insane."[45]

For Lombroso, then, crime is the outgrowth of inherited moral atavism and of the "degeneration" of civilized European adults to an earlier onto- and phylogenetic stage of development. Moral atavism is attended by physical abnormalities that the author uses to identify born 'degenerates' and that he interprets as the result of "arrested development."[46] Thus, "the true criminal type is characterized by jug ears, low forehead, plagiocephaly or protuberances on the sides of the skull, large jaw, facial asymmetry and fuzz on the forehead," and delinquent children exhibit anomalies in "a proportion equal to that of adult criminals."[47]

Lombroso tries to support his thesis by examining the role of crime among "savages" and even animals. His discussion of "Moral Insanity and Crime among Children" is preceded by chapters entitled "Crime and Prostitution among Savages" and "Crime and Inferior Organisms." "Here" – among indigenous peoples

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41 Cesare Lombroso and Gina Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man According to the Classification of Cesare Lombroso* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), 130. Because different translations are based on different editions of Lombroso's Italian original, which were themselves substantially revised, my citations of this source refer to different translations, differentiated in subsequent footnotes by co-authorship and date.

42 Lombroso and Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man* (1911), 130 – 140.

43 Lombroso and Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man* (1911), 206.

44 Lombroso and Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man* (1911), 130, 131, 135, 136.

45 Lombroso and Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man* (1911), 143.

46 Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, trans. Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 222.

47 Lombroso, *Criminal Man* (2006), 195.

and animals, that is – "crime is not the exception but almost a general rule."[48] Inasmuch as he views crime as the exception in modern-day Europe, it represents a relapse to early stages of evolution when criminal behavior is supposed to have been the norm. Lombroso's work thus gives the "wicked" nature of children a biological basis and attributes it to their recapitulation of primal humankind's amorality. Similarly, criminals are criminals because they have remained at the level of the 'child-primitive': "The concept of atavism helps us to understand why punishment is ineffective against born criminality."[49]

This barbarization and criminalization of children marked a serious departure from the Romantic ideal of the child, whose traces, though still perceptible around 1900, were now contradicted and put into question by a new figure. The appearance of the 'bad child'[50] is especially pronounced in contemporary literary works that carry out a characteristic reinterpretation, or rather re-evaluation, in which they recognize a creative potential in children's destructive activities. Consider, for instance, Walter Benjamin's remarks about the child as a "dehumanized being" or Robert Musil's fascination with children's cruelty (both of which I will return to in chapters 9 and 8, respectively). Another example is Joachim Ringelnatz's game manual *Geheimes Kinder-Spiel-Buch* (1924; *The Secret-Games-for-Children Book*, 1989),[51] which affirms the supposedly amoral and violent tendencies of children by inviting his little readers to stamp a fish to death and then perform experiments on it,[52] toy with homemade bombs,[53]

48 Lombroso, *Criminal Man* (2006), 175.

49 Lombroso, *Criminal Man* (2006), 338. Lombroso remained influential well into the twentieth century. In March 1928, for example, a child psychology conference was held on his concept of the "born criminal." "In the discussion, two opposing positions emerged: a biological-psychiatric viewpoint [...] advocated by Karl Birnbaum, Hans Walter Gruhle and Johannes Lange, among others, who considered disposition to be of decisive importance, and that of Krames and von der Leyens, who insisted on the inseparable combination of milieu and disposition" (Wolfgang Rose, Petra Fuchs, and Thomas Beddies, *Diagnose "Psychopathie": Die urbane Moderne und das schwierige Kind. Berlin 1918 – 1933* [Vienna: Böhlau, 2016], 260).

50 Of course, the idea of the 'bad child' existed before this point, but until the end of the nineteenth century it was usually still based on religion and determined, directly or indirectly, by the doctrine of Original Sin. This changed around 1900, even if some aspects of moral-religious discourse undoubtedly continued. On the further history of the 'bad child,' see Nicola Gess, "Böse Kinder. Zu einer literarischen und psychologischen Figur um 1900 (Lombroso, Wulffen) 1950 (Golding, March) und 2000 (Hustvedt, Shriver)," in *Kindheit und Literatur. Konzepte – Poetik – Wissen*, ed. Davide Giuriato, Philipp Hubmann, and Mareike Schildmann (Freiburg i. Br.: Rombach, 2018).

51 As indicated, an English translation of Ringelnatz's book exists (trans. Andrew Lee), but it could not be obtained for reference.

52 Joachim Ringelnatz, *Geheimes Kinder-Spiel-Buch* (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer, 1924), 19.

spit at each other,[54] and produce clumps made of urine and excrement and then throw them onto the ceiling.[55] To summarize, the Romantic focus on the 'good child,' as the embodiment of innocence and naïveté, had given way to interest in the 'bad child,' in whom, according to the theory of recapitulation, the 'primitive' was present. In other words, the premise that children's development recapitulates phylogeny served to other them. As Barbara Wittmann has observed, a peculiar "hybridity" emerged whereby children were treated as something "between paleontological fossil and historical document, myth and history, and nature and culture."[56] And since, according to the 'biogenetic law', the "savage"[57] is fated to return, developmental psychologists such as Groos deemed it necessary to take appropriate measures in education and upbringing to ensure that children's transition to the final stage of phylogeny/ontogeny would proceed successfully, yielding rational and moral adults – along the very same lines as the 'civilizing mission' of colonial projects.[58] Without these appropriate steps, moral atavism – biologically predetermined stasis at the level of 'savagery' – would condemn children to a life of perversion, antisocial activity, and criminality.

The reversal of this othering of the child, however, was the nostrification of the 'primitive.' When embodied as the European child, the 'primitive' was incorporated even more powerfully into the modern self than it had been by ethnology. Even more than indigenous peoples, children brought the stakes of the 'primitive' close to home. The 'primitive' now represented not so much a survival of European culture's ancient origins as what every single civilized adult had once been themselves – primal conditions are to a certain extent permanently present in every childhood and thus an integral part of each life story and mem-

53 Ringelnatz, *Geheimes Kinder-Spiel-Buch,* 10.
54 Ringelnatz, *Geheimes Kinder-Spiel-Buch,* 15.
55 Ringelnatz, *Geheimes Kinder-Spiel-Buch,* 5.
56 Wittmann, *Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien*, 192.
57 Groos, *The Play of Man,* 98.
58 Perceptively, in his critique of contemporary pedagogical doctrine Walter Benjamin speaks of "colonial pedagogy" ("Kolonialpädagogik," in *Gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991], 3: 272–274); see also Gould regarding the dubious ambivalence of this position's roots in biological determinism: "On the one hand, recapitulation is cited in the name of greater individual freedom and liberation from ancient constraints – mold education to the child's nature, for he is repeating his ancestry and it must be so; do not impose adult criteria for discipline and morality upon a savage child. On the other hand, it is used to deny freedom by consigning certain individuals to biological inferority – criminals and 'lower' races" (*Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 164–165; also quoted in Wittmann, *Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien*, 240).

ory. The othering of the child by means of the 'primitive' corresponds to the nostrification of the 'primitive' by means of the child.[59]

Moreover, through its (con)figuration as a child, the 'primitive' is removed from culture. Instead of viewing customs and thought in their cultural and social contexts, developmental psychology focused on individuals as though they were independent of the collective.[60] The consequences were twofold: For one, it meant that the thought and conduct of individuals were considered innate qualities to be evaluated in universal terms – that is, they were neither dictated by culture or society, nor the result of personal development. In other words, the relativism that the Durkheim school or Lévy-Bruhl adopted when examining 'primitive thinking' is nowhere in evidence in the discourse of developmental psychology. Instead the 'child-primitive's' conduct is embedded into a quasi automatic course of development. In contrast to ethnology, this theoretical framework of developmental psychology did not look for the motivations and purposes behind child development so much as predispositions and tendencies – in keeping with its underlying biological materialism. While contemporary ethnology lent more attention to how primal substance is handed down on the level of ideas and practices, the analogies devised by developmental psychology relied on biological foundations. From this perspective, phylogeny repeats itself in children due to a biogenetic law, not due to cultural institutions (e. g., language and customs). By the same token, the 'child-primitive' isn't seen as a survival frozen in a permanent state of arrested development. Instead it is understood as a recapitulation of that earlier time in an ontogenetic course of development determined by phylogenesis.

Second, refraining from the cultural-historical and sociological perspective prompted developmental psychologists to speculate about the disruptive, norm-violating potential of 'child-primitives.' Positing a biologically determined

59 Ruth Murphy points out the tensions within this construction, which the child simultaneously assigns to the other and – in keeping with the imperative of development (that is, more or less automatically) – to itself: "The child is both a colonized Other, allied with animals, savages and primitives against the power of the civilized adult, and a proto-colonialist who will soon assume the imperial power of the white adult over the 'lesser' animals and 'lower' races" ("Kipling's Just So Stories: The Recapitulative Child and Evolutionary Progress," in Wesseling, *The Child Savage,* 44).

60 An exception is Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (who I discuss in Chapter 9), a representative of the field who was open to socio-psychological factors, and therefore important for authors like Benjamin. His *Myshlenie y rech* (1934; *Thinking and Speech*, 1962) adopts a historical and sociological perspective that, like the approach taken by French ethnologists, yields a genealogy of the way both children and adults think. In this light, mental activities are legible as products of culture or, more precisely, of culture mediated by language.

course of development opened the prospect of a phylo- and ontogenic phase distinguished by *shaping* the world, not simply adapting to it. The importance of this creative activity becomes particularly clear in developmental psychologists' engagement with children's ways of thinking as it expresses itself through play. For them, child's play does not represent collective thinking – or thought shaped by the collective – and, as such, does not fuel reflection on the constitution of contemporary society, as it was approached, for example, by the Collège de Sociologie. Instead, at issue is the thinking of individuals who, by means of sovereign play, release themselves from prescribed norms and their corresponding worldviews. For developmental psychologists, the play-based thinking of 'child-primitives' represents a platform reflecting the possibility of dealing creatively with the world, a place where researchers can speculate on the essence of creativity and art production (see chapter 5). In this context, one question stands front and center: does the child at play perceive the game to be real or a mere illusion? For children's play can only be understood as a creative handling of their environment if they can differentiate play from reality and exercise sovereignty through play, an ability that the child deceived by illusion completely lacks.

The Question of Conscious Deception

How Children Think

Most studies of child psychology from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries offer normative descriptions of child development with the goal of communicating age-appropriate milestones against the backdrop of an established and defined sequence of developmental levels and phases. As a rule, these are based on endogenous theories that understand maturation to be genetically predetermined. It follows that thinking was held to result not from external (environmental, social, and/or cultural) sources or to be something children themselves work out; instead, it was viewed simply as a matter of inherited biological programming.

According to Karl Groos in *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, the early stage of intellectual development is characterized by the tendency of thought to wander along lines of vaguely intuited association. Concepts are formed only with difficulty. He holds that prone to illusion and combining heterogeneous elements illogically, children have trouble grasping concepts and are highly suggestible. As much is evident in their fondness for inventing stories, up to the point of devis-

ing an "explanatory mythos"[61] for the world at large. William Stern notes similar qualities in *Psychology of Early Childhood*, but he does much more than his contemporary to situate them in the context of intellectual development. In other words, Stern does not describe the actual state of children's thinking, but focuses instead on its steady maturation, which begins in his estimation with the discovery of the "meaning of speech and the will to achieve it."[62] Characteristics of the early stages of this journey are the child's development of individual representations and concepts shaped by affect,[63] affective self-expression,[64] substantialization,[65] a lacking consciousness of relationality and of one's own mental processes,[66] surprise, and wonder.[67]

Karl Bühler, in *The Mental Development of the Child,* lists similar characteristics to those named by Stern, but he stresses a new feature: mastery of the principle of analogy is a key step in the systematic development of the non-thinking infant into a thinking child with nascent judgment abilities.[68] Analogical thinking translates into the child's belief that all beings and objects exist to serve human beings.[69] Bühler calls this "most primitive" form of worldview "purely teleological and egocentric – or, at any rate, anthropocentric."[70] Bühler emphasizes that children, unlike poets, do not give life to inanimate matter so much as they assume that everything is alive, since they do not know otherwise. Corresponding with the anthropocentric judgment above, there is a phase of object perception during which things are apprehended in such a way that they are enlivened by empathy (*Einfühlung*). Invoking Théodule-Armand Ribot, Bühler speaks of the child's "animistic phase" and compares it to the use of personifications in the tales of North African tribes.[71]

This is only one of many examples of how children's thinking was explained with traits attributed to indigenous peoples. That said – and in contrast to ethnological discourse – developmental psychologists rarely give a thorough answer to the question of what motivates children to think as they do. Sully is a bit of an exception when he makes the same assumptions typical of ethnologists in

61 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 136.
62 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 162.
63 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 162–164, 171–173.
64 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 165.
65 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 172.
66 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 380–383.
67 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 383–397.
68 Bühler, *The Mental Development of the Child*, 133.
69 Bühler, *The Mental Development of the Child*, 140.
70 Bühler, *The Mental Development of the Child*, 155.
71 Bühler, *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes*, 139.

tracing how the "primal wonderment" at the "confusion of novelties" triggers intellectual development, which in turn gives rise to the "impulse to comprehend things, to reduce the confusing multiplicity to order and system."[72] In other words, Sully understands children's mental life in the same way that Frazer views that of indigenous peoples, as a kind of pre-scientific operation; accordingly, he refers to children as "young investigator[s]" or "little philosophers."[73]

At the same time, he takes a cue from German ethnology – which, as we have seen in chapter 2, focuses on emotion – and indicates that intense affect provides the impetus for cerebral activity. Though intellectualistic in orientation, Sully's thesis is that children will only begin thinking about a concrete item if they absolutely want it because of an existential need.[74] Thus, the scholarly debate about the primacy of intellect or affect is present in his work, but it does not play much of a role overall. The same ambivalence holds for the majority of studies by the developmental psychologists who followed him: a certain leaning toward the intellectualist position is often in evidence, but no significant discussion is pursued.

This is the case, first, because the endogenous orientation of developmental theories excludes external factors, and, second, because their background in individual psychology discounts research oriented in genealogy and sociology alike. Also, the authors shifted the debates over the relative significance of affect and intellect to a dispute over the origins of language. In the corresponding chapters of their studies, these points are controversially and exhaustively discussed. By turns, language is thought to develop in response to the urge to classify, in order to communicate or release affective experience, as the outcome of social interaction or as an always already given (by means of transmission) and learned cultural property. Chapter 6 will discuss these debates at length.

Deception – or Not?

A further and more significant difference between the theories of developmental psychology and those of ethnology lies in the former's thematization of the relationship between 'primitive thinking' and the question of (self-)deception, which is barely addressed by ethnologists. Preyer had already described the child's first

72 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 70.
73 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 79.
74 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 70.

concepts as "becom[ing] real existences, like the hallucinations of the insane"[75]; in other words, children do not recognize mental phenomena for what they are, but take them for physical reality. Sully expresses a similar view. Once the intellect has begun developing, it is guided by fantasy: the child's "thought [...] grows out of the free play of imagination."[76] Standing, like Frazer, in the English tradition of associative psychology, he assumes that it is not the understanding so much as the imagination that answers the need for order by seeking out similarities in the welter of phenomena, which enable what is new to be assimilated into what is already known: "The child [...] is ever on the look-out for likeness."[77] He proceeds to say that the resulting "analogical" or "metaphorical" mode of "apperception" at work here leads to pictorial thinking, which is defined above all by concreteness, not abstraction.[78]

The only difficulty with this early form of thought, as Sully sees it, is that the imagination dominates empirical observation, which ultimately results in a faulty understanding of objects.[79] He elaborates that when contemplating an object, a child will pick out one attractive or interesting feature and disregard all others in order to connect it by association with another, already familiar object – in a manner that seems completely arbitrary by the standards of the adult observer. But instead of dismissing the child's fantasy-rich thought as a fundamental "falsehood" (as Frazer does when discussing 'primitive thinking'), he reframes this operation as part of play. In his estimation, the mismatch between fantastical thinking and reality leads to the child's fantasy life splitting in two different kinds of imagination: First, a playful activity that gives itself over to images of fantasy that are not subjected to any verification process, and second, a reflective attitude to reality that first tests and ultimately gives way to understanding.[80] In this manner, play becomes the site where taking-images-for-reality – (self-)deception, that is – can occur without further consequence or ill effect and where researchers can just as easily indulge their own fascination with this activity. This applies in any case to Sully, who seems quite charmed by the free play of fantasy. He celebrates the "selective activity in children's observation"[81] for its poetic quality and devotes the first chapter of his study to imagination and play in early life.

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75 Preyer, *Mental Development in the Child*, 17.
76 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 70; cf. 29.
77 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 72.
78 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 72–73.
79 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 66–67; cf. 32.
80 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 115.
81 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 67.

Here, he offers another account of how sensory perception and imagination interact: the imagination assimilates or associatively links sensory data to what is already familiar. As a result, the object perceived seems to come alive or acquire a personality: "the child sees what we regard as lifeless and soulless as alive and conscious."[82] Sully underscores that this is a complete illusion that (prior to the split) is not tested against reality: "Children [...] quite seriously believe that most things [...] are alive and have their feelings."[83] The child's transformation in play into another person or thing is attended by their complete forgetting of the "real environment" and the "real me." Consequently, these "illusions," as Sully emphatically calls them, may last for days on end – far beyond the duration of a normal game.[84]

On the basis of his observations, Sully concludes that the creations of fantasy in general – that is, not just those arising from play – derive from cross-pollination between sensory perception and imagination: either the unknown world rouses curiosity and triggers the impulse to "understand" it by means of fantasy, or, alternatively, the intensity of images within makes the latter materialize in the outer world.[85] Being tricked by one's ideas results in the "enchantment" of the external world, which is especially pronounced in play. Later in life, play becomes its sole province. Throughout his study, Sully makes lavish use of the concept of "enchantment" – for instance, when he speaks of the "magic transmuting of things through [...] childish fancy."[86]

Compared to the fascination Sully exhibits for children's fantasy thinking in his logs, the standpoint adopted by later developmental psychologists is more sober, in keeping with the wish to emphasize the scientific nature of the new discipline. Yet these colleagues were also taken with the phenomena Sully described. Groos takes up delusion in *Das Seelenleben des Kindes* (The Mental Life of the Child, 1904) in a chapter on illusion, distinguishing between complete illusion, which tends to affect children much more than adults, and conscious self-deception. The latter he ties to aesthetic pleasure (a concept taken from Konrad Lange, as we will see in chapter 5). Groos considers conscious self-deception to be realized first of all in the hallucinations into which children sink when listening to stories or reading. Yet it is carried out above all in games of make-believe, when they "complete what is given by the senses in a twofold,

82 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 30.
83 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 32.
84 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 38.
85 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 53, 54.
86 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 35.

illusory manner." Thus, a child will recognize a shape in an object (e. g., the form of a horse in the back of a sofa) and project a mental state onto it. Invoking Sully, Groos calls this process "personification,"[87] but unlike Sully, Groos distinguishes between the deception described here and actual delusion by affirming that, in addition to "incorrect apperception, the correct understanding is also present in consciousness."[88] The child actively seeks out deception and enjoys it. However, Groos cannot quite maintain the proximity between the child at play and the adult's reception of art because he is forced to acknowledge that children's illusions, especially in the act of personification, come very close to real error. Ultimately, he concludes that children occupy a middle position somewhere "between the mythological mindset of the 'primitive' and the aesthetic personification [enjoyed] by cultured adults,"[89] a location that would become momentous for the artistic appropriation of the child, e. g., by Walter Benjamin (see chapter 9).

As in Sully's work, fantasy is essential to Stern's concept of childhood. It is most active in play, which is ascribed a decisive function in childhood as a whole. Indeed, he calls childhood "the age of play."[90] In the central section of his study ("Fantasy and Play"), Stern distinguishes fantasies from other forms of concrete images, insofar as the spontaneity of the former sets them apart. At the same time, and like Sully, he stresses the connections between the two: the imagination, Stern observes, gains its material by means of contemplation and memory, and conversely, "the perception and reproduction of objective facts [...] are not without their subjective moment of imagination."[91] Among children, Stern argues, this intermingling is particularly pronounced, inasmuch as they cannot distinguish "between subjective and objective experiences." Here, in Stern's estimation, lies the "key to the most important characteristics of the child's psychic life."[92] In contrast to Sully, he does not leave this peculiarity unexamined, and he traces it back to the child being a "creature of the moment": children measure reality by the intensity of experience. "'Real' for this early stage of life is simply what is keenly felt [...]. The child is engrossed in an imaginary concept, and whilst it lasts its content is no less real for him than, at other times perhaps, his food."[93] Over time, he notes, children take distance from such

87 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 175.
88 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 165.
89 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 176.
90 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 265.
91 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 267.
92 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 273.
93 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 273 – 274.

wholesale illusion and come to infer the "idea of reality possessed by [...] adults."[94] In his account of the resulting condition, Stern also enlists Konrad Lange's notion of conscious self-deception;[95] in contrast to Groos, however, he affirms that the latter does not exist alongside actual deception but replaces it at a subsequent phase of development.

Another feature specific to child fantasy, for Stern, is its "untrammelled" nature, that is, children's ability to spin their fantasies out of little or no outside material.[96] He illustrates this quality by attending to the dynamic, fleeting, and quickly changing nature of fantasy images, as well as the child's budding sense of symbolism, which takes the raw stuff of experience and bends it at will. Discrete fantasy images are chained together in a purely associative fashion, Stern observes, which is why they demonstrate singular "caprice" and "perseveration."[97] Though a "determining impulse" is said to develop here over time – which counteracts the passive principle of association – it is much less pronounced and sets in later than other mental activities.[98] After Stern's extensive exposition on the "conscious condition" during play, he takes up play's "personal function" in the child's life, which, like Groos, he equates with self-training.[99] By his own account, Stern's attitude to child fantasy falls in the middle between criticism ("nonsense, lack of method and judgment") and celebration ("wonderful, almost creative power").[100]

Like the ethnologists discussed in chapter 2, Preyer and Sully are convinced that a complete deception is brought about by the imagination during play, whereas Groos and Stern, in their developmental psychology, sway between that conjecture and one of a "self-aware" deception. Bühler – despite his claims about the child's "anthropocentric" perspective and the occurrence of "hallucinations and illusions"[101] – eventually assumes that imaginary events possess a wholly illusory character (*Scheincharakter*) in play: "When [a child] [...] treats a piece of wood as a mother does her child, we can see in this treatment of the object [...] an act of interpretive pretending [*Scheindeutung*]."[102] Though he introdu-

94 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 274.
95 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 274–275.
96 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 268.
97 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 285.
98 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 283.
99 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 296.
100 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 295.
101 Bühler, *The Mental Development of the Child*, 155.
102 Bühler, *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes*, 325; cf. 326, 327, 334, 337.

ces repeated examples that suggest the opposite,[103] he explains them as (pathological) deviations from normal (healthy) behavior. For instance, "when a child [...] asks whether a blade of straw can talk, or if both the grandmother and Little Red Riding Hood have enough room in the wolf's belly."[104] Bühler does not follow the middle course of conscious self-deception that Groos and Stern had taken, then. Likewise, Jean Piaget, in *La représentation du monde chez l'enfant* (1926; *The Child's Conception of the World*, 1929), excludes from consideration "all that belongs strictly to play" because, even though such activity is "continuously interwoven with participations,"[105] it lacks the dimension of conviction. Since he does not believe that children take ludic thought and activities very seriously, his research focuses on the non-playful sphere of early life.

Studies from the first decades of the twentieth century dedicated exclusively to the theory and history of play disagree with that decision, pointing out that *no* area of the child's life lies beyond the sphere of play. In *The Play of Man*, Groos himself contends that "the child's whole existence [...] is occupied by play"; indeed, it represents "the single, absorbing aim of his life."[106] Against the background of this totality of play, it is suggestive to think that children's peculiar way of thought also first develops by means of play.[107] But this does not mean for Groos, that these thoughts are only 'feigned.' Though in this book he distinguishes between illusions that "appear as a substitute for reality" and those that are "products of conscious self-deception," he nevertheless postulates various "transitional stages" between the two forms of illusion. He also locates children's play in such a stage of transition. Thus he writes that "illusion is often so strong for playing children [...] that it forms a perfect substitute for reality"[108]; "even in half-grown children the power of detachment is much greater than in adults."[109] In contrast to colleagues who assume that children's perceptions occupy positions oscillating between appearance and reality, Groos declares that the child enters a state similar to hypnosis, in which the awareness of unreality is only present in the sense of a "subtile [sic] consciousness of free, voluntary

103 Bühler, *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes*, 331, 337.

104 Bühler, *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes*, 337; cf. 334.

105 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*, 133.

106 Groos, *The Play of Man*, 369.

107 The conception of the game at issue can be described as mimicry, in the sense it is used by Roger Caillois (*Man, Play, and Games*, trans. Mayer Barash [Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), where *paida* predominates and elements of *ludus* are excluded. Caillois points to split personality disorder as one of the dangers that mimicry poses and thus points the way to pathology and the process of pathologization, which I will explore in the next chapter.

108 Groos, *The Play of Man*, 131.

109 Groos, *The Play of Man*, 134.

acceptance of the illusion."[110] Groos' considerations thus mean to say that children's play is on the one hand always already every bit as serious as claimed by developmental psychologists about children's 'primitive thinking.' And on the other hand this other thinking is always already invested with the seed of demystification, which the illusory character of the game brings with it. To put it differently, play brings about both belief and disbelief in the reality that the child's own 'primitive thinking' has created.[111]

With this conception of children's play, the 'child-primitive' of developmental psychology and pedagogical discourse became associated with the figure of the artist and the reception of art.[112] This process involved the resurrection of old ideas, particularly those of Friedrich Schiller,[113] to affirm the relationship between art and play. Groos places the two activities in analogy by claiming that "aesthetic behavior" only concerns a "partial phenomenon [*Teilerscheinung*] out of the realm of games of illusion."[114] In *Der ästhetische Genuss* (Aesthetic Pleasure, 1902), he even writes that "aesthetic pleasure" should be understood "directly as play."[115] Groos concentrates on the analogy between children who are partially deceived while at play and *recipients* of art. Nonetheless, he also mentions that the "joy of being the cause," which Stern and Freud would later posit in connection to the child's destructive act, is relevant to artistic *production*.[116] Similarly, in "Der Dichter und das Phantasieren" (1908; "Creative Writers and Day-dreaming," 1959), Freud asks,

> Should we not look for the first traces of imaginative activity as early as in childhood? [...] Might we not say that every child at play behaves like a creative writer, in that he creates a

110 Groos, *The Play of Man,* 368.

111 Rainer Maria Rilke found a fitting expression for such experience in a fragmentary elegy where the child's subjectivity develops as it plays with an animated doll until it is finally recognized as a lifeless object ("Unvollendete Elegie 'Lass dir, daß Kindheit war,'" *Werke II* [Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987], 459–460). Chapter 9 will also return to this notion of play in relation to Benjamin.

112 On Groos in the context of other theorists of play at the time and in relation to literature, cf. Thomas Anz, *Literatur und Lust. Glück und Unglück beim Lesen* (Munich: DTV, 2002), 33–76.

113 E.g., Groos, *Der ästhetische Genuss* (Giessen: J. Ricker, 1902), 19.

114 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 172. In his earlier book *The Play of Man*, the author adopts a narrower perspective, claiming that the relationship exists primarily for "artistic pleasure" and less for "artistic production" (Groos, *The Play of Man*, 390).

115 Groos, *Der ästhetische Genuss*, 24.

116 Groos, *Der ästhetische Genuss*, 19, 21.

> world of his own, or, rather, re-arranges the things of his world in a new way which pleases him?[117]

These suggestions in turn are informed by the convinction that children do not consider the world of play to be real. Instead, Freud, like Groos, believes they are partially aware of their creative activity in shaping this world.[118]

Against these backgrounds, contemporary works of pedagogy credited the child with a particular capacity for appreciating and creating art. An entire branch of Reform pedagogy, the so-called art-education movement (*Kunsterziehungsbewegung*), was based on this premise.[119] One representative of this line of thought was Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub's *Der Genius im Kinde* (The Genius within the Child, 1922), which celebrates the child's "unsuspecting superiority [...] to competent but mediocre art" by adults. Simultaneously, the reverse argument is also carried out and the artist is described as a grown-up child. As Hartlaub puts it, "only the poet and artist preserves the general, imaginative vigor of the child. [...] Only the artist is able to salvage, to varying degrees, the immense inner life of childhood."[120] In chapter 5, I will discuss at length how art reception and above all production were modeled after the play-based thinking and behavior of children.

Jean Piaget and the Magical Thinking of Children

Piaget's concept warrants discussion in some detail here because he has superceded almost all the authors I have been examining, both in terms of method

117 Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writing and Day-Dreaming," *The Freud Reader,* ed. Peter Gay (New York: Norton, 1995), 437.

118 Groos observes that enjoying art also involves "the pleasure of being the cause" insofar as "the state that emerges is itself, in a certain sense and in part, an effect we ourselves produce." In his estimation, this is implied by the very term "conscious self-deception" (Groos, *Der ästhetische Genuss*, 21).

119 In its first phase, this movement sought above all to train the child's aptitude to appreciate art; in its second phase, it promoted artistic creativity. For an impressive array of documentation of the movement, cf. *Kunsterziehung. Ergebnisse und Anregungen der Kunsterziehungstage in Dresden, Weimar und Hamburg* (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1906); as well as the following exhibition catalogs: Carl Götze, *Das Kind als Künstler* (Hamburg: Kunsthalle zu Hamburg, 1898); and *Die Kunst im Leben des Kindes. Katalog der Ausstellung im Hause der Berliner Secession, März 1901* (Leipzig and Berlin: E.A. Seemann, 1901). On teaching children to draw, cf. Wittmann, *Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien*, 141–186; and Götze, *Das Kind als Künstler*, 214–222.

120 Hartlaub, *Der Genius im Kinde*, 69, 30.

and theory. In contrast to his forebearers, Piaget remains an influential figure in the field of developmental psychology. On a structural level, his approach resembles that of theorists focused on the maturation process, inasmuch as his own explanation of the development of thought during childhood dismisses the influence of external factors. In lieu of hereditary programming, however, Piaget gravitates toward constructivism. He premises that by means of discovering and structuring activities, the child constructively uses the stimuli from its surroundings, not with conscious intentionality (the precondition for a fully constituted subject), but in an ongoing process of modifying the boundaries between the self and the world. This modification is initiated through confrontations with the environment, which call the operative models gained from prior experience into question. In contrast to most of the developmental psychologists before him, Piaget held that the 'magical thinking' of children is furthermore not guided by an epistemological interest. Instead, this thinking consists first of all in a belief "in the automatic realisation of our desires."[121] This connects to the psychoanalytic notion of the primary function of the pleasure principle, which I will treat in greater detail in chapter 4.

Already in 1920, Piaget's article, "La psychanalyse dans ses rapports avec la psychologie de l'enfant" ("Psychoanalysis in Its Relations With Child Psychology"), enlists Freud's dream theory to propose the idea of another way of thinking that consists of an "inextricable network of symbol-associations whose only logic is that of the emotions,"[122] shared by neurotics, dreamers, artists, mystics, and indigenous peoples alike. At the same time, he refers to Lévy-Bruhl, whom he credits with having investigated thought of this kind under the label of "prelogical thinking." In doing so, Piaget makes clear that the difference between the magic practiced among indigenous peoples and the symbolism invented by children concerns content alone: one violates the laws of reality, the other those of logic. More important is his view of what they share structurally: "they all are governed by the laws of the dream itself." Following Eugen Bleuler's lead, Piaget describes such dreamlike mental activity as "autistic thought" insofar as it is (in contrast to scientific thinking) "strictly personal and incommunicable"[123] and distinguishes it as also still serving an essential role in adult life.

This early article can be regarded as the nucleus of Piaget's foundational studies of the following decade: *Le langage et la pensée chez l'enfant* (1923; *The Language and Thought of the Child*, 1932), *Le jugement et le raisonnement*

121 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*, 152.

122 Piaget, "Psychoanalysis in Its Relations with Child Psychology," in *The Essential Piaget*, ed. Howard E. Gruber and J. Jacques Vonèche (London: Routledge, 1977), 56.

123 Piaget, "Psychoanalysis in Its Relations with Child Psychology," 56.

chez l'enfant (1924; *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, 1928), *The Child's Conception of the World*, and *La causalité physique chez l'enfant* (1927; *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality*, 1929). All of them orbit around the "egocentric thinking" of children and its consequence for their sense of logic and conception of causality and reality. These books abandon the diary-writing approach of early developmental psychology with its literary and philological overtones. Instead, they are oriented in the conventions of the natural sciences, based on the so-called "clinical method" whereby large samples of children were questioned in detail about their thoughts and mental images.[124]

Judgment and Reasoning in the Child maps out the essential principles of egocentric thinking. These include, for instance, the principle of "juxtaposition," whereby only one of two contradictory pieces of information is processed, and the principle of "syncretism," which is at work when two things appear to be connected in arbitrary fashion. Each of these operations, Piaget argues, takes the place of the child's inability to synthesize data and also demonstrates that the law of non-contradiction does not apply to children's thought.[125] Piaget recognizes the first and most spontaneous manifestation of this thinking in children's play, which he also refers to as the "quasi-hallucinatory form of imagination which allows us to regard desires as realized as soon as they are born."[126] It follows for Piaget that children consequently operate on two different levels of reality: First, on the level of play, where the child is not concerned with adapting to outer reality but only with satisfying its needs and interests. This satisfaction is achieved through the child's transformation of its external reality: "reality is infinitely plastic for the ego, since autism is ignorant of that reality shared by all, which destroys illusion and enforces verification."[127] Second, on the level of "true" reality, where the child does not play so much as observe. In keeping with the principle of juxtaposition, the two levels and modes of engagement exist side by side. No hierarchy exists between them because they are not present at the same time.[128]

For this reason Piaget considers Groos' thesis of "conscious self-deception" inadequate, since it presupposes that the child is simultaneously aware of both levels – i.e., that it has an adult's awareness of fiction. For his own part, Piaget posits that the reality of child's play is autonomous and that even "true" reality has only a very slight dependence on the principles of observation and experi-

124 See the introductory remarks by Gruber and Vonèche, in *The Essential Piaget*, 63 – 64.
125 Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, 209 – 232.
126 Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, 202.
127 Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, 244 – 245.
128 Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, 242.

ence. This is because this reality too "is made up almost in its entirety by the mind and by the decisions of belief."[129] Referring to studies on children's drawings, Piaget calls this phenomenon the child's "intellectual realism." In other words, the child's reality is intellectually determined: populated by phenomena of mental origin that are considered to be real. Piaget defines such realism in terms of "precausality," the mentality "most in agreement with ego-centrism of thought," that is to say, the child's tendency to believe motifs stemming from its own psyche are the cause of phenomena. It is quite possible that Piaget here found inspiration in Lévy-Bruhl's notion of the "pre-logical mentality." Indeed,

> [i]t is [...] our belief that the day will come when child thought will be placed on the same level in relation to adult, normal, and civilized thought, as "primitive mentality," as defined by Levy-Bruhl [sic], as autistic and symbolical thought as described by Freud and his disciples.[130]

Whereas Piaget's first two studies are primarily dedicated to the formal characteristics of children's thinking, *The Child's Conception of the World* takes up matters of content: ideas about dreams, names, and life. This work simultaneously marks a shift away from explaining egocentric thinking in terms of social psychology, as the expression and result of lacking communication with others. Instead, it now represents a primary feature of the still undeveloped thinking of children, of which the communication deficit is only a secondary result.[131] Three characteristics of the child's worldview grow out of its egocentrism: "realism," "animism," and "artificialism."

With the first term, Piaget refers to the concept of "intellectual realism" previously discussed in *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*. He shows, for example, that the young child is convinced of the realism of names, that is, that the name for an object is part of that object and belongs to it just as any of its other features do (e. g., color and shape). As the mindset that Piaget considers "most in agreement with ego-centrism of thought," realism occupies the central position in the child's worldview and provides the explanatory groundwork for the phenomena of artificialism and animism.[132] For both, the concept of "partic-

129 Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, 248.
130 Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, 255.
131 Cf. the introduction by Hans Aebli in Jean Piaget, *Das Weltbild des Kindes* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978), 9.
132 Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, 255.

ipation" plays an essential role because it represents a sense of causality suited to the developing mind.

> Following the definition of M. Lévy-Bruhl, we shall give the name "participation" to that relation which primitive thought believes to exist between two beings or two phenomena which it regards either as partially identical or as having a direct influence on one another, although there is not spatial contact nor intelligible causal connection between them.

As Piaget conceives it, participation is closely related to "magic" – in other words, "the use the individual believes he can make of [...] participation to modify reality."[133] Whereas not every instance of participation implies magic, every act of magical thinking requires participation and in one of four possible variants: the participation of actions and things, of thoughts and things, of substances, or of intentions (which often amount to magical commands).[134] Hence, as Piaget writes, magical acts often evince a "tendency towards symbolism."[135] Accordingly, Piaget observes, this tendency follows the law that governs the child's linguistic development.

> Signs begin by being part of things or by being suggested by the presence of the things in the manner of simple conditioned reflexes. Later, they end by becoming detached from things and disengaged from them by the exercise of intelligence which uses them as adaptable and infinitely plastic tools. But between the point of origin and that of arrival there is a period during which the signs adhere to the things although they are already partially detached from them.

This is the "magical stage":

> What the magical stage itself shows [...] is precisely that symbols are still conceived as participating in things. Magic is thus the pre-symbolic stage of thought. From this point of view the child's magic is a phenomenon of exactly the same order as the realism of thought.[136]

The child's realistic ideology encompasses both causality determined by participation as well as the use of symbols that are magically intended to influence those participatory connections.

The child clings to magical thinking for a relatively long time, according to Piaget, because of its seeming success. To understand this supposition, he maps

133 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World,* 132.
134 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World,* 133–134.
135 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World,* 134.
136 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World,* 161.

out two structures of gratification: For one, the "social environment" or parents play a decisive role, who respond to the child's screams from birth onward: "Every cry of the baby leads to an action on the part of the parents, and even the desires it can least express are always foreseen."[137] Accordingly, the child becomes convinced that, by means of sounds, or even thoughts, it can influence the surrounding world. A "class of things" that obey its wishes ("the parents, like the parts of its own body, like all the objects that can be moved by the parents or by its own actions" – in other words, what most interests the child) becomes the model for organizing the rest of the universe, so that from the child's perspective everything is subject to the law of magic. Piaget also contends that magical gestures are "simply ritual." Thus, mistaking signs for causes, "the child makes sure the bed-clothes are tucked in"[138] and takes this fact as the source of its security. Yet this inference is not to be explained as mere madness because the satisfaction is considered real. Even among rational thinkers, the performance of pure rituals during a state of anxiety provides the longed-for reassurance because they are signs of normality.

Compared to developmental psychologists whose work was familiar to him, Piaget generally assumes – especially in this work and his next study – that an initial unified state precedes any separation of the self and the world: "During the first stage, the self and things are completely confused."[139] "During the early stages the world and the self are one: neither term is distinguished from the other."[140] In regard to this unified phase, there is no need for Piaget to address the question of deception that preoccupied earlier theorists. This is because the label of deception would not be applicable to the first (and at that point only) state of being. The same argument applies to the peculiarity of thought (e.g., participation) during the phase that follows the first but incomplete division between the self and the world. The question of deception is not relevant for Piaget at this stage either because no alternative to participation is available to the child's mind. It would only make sense to speak of the child being mistaken if they had another way of thinking available to them. In brief, magical thinking lies beyond the realms of truth and error. Along lines similar to how Lévy-Bruhl parted ways with English ethnologists, Piaget abandons the "adult standpoint," which can always only recognize the unity of self and world, or the power of participation, in retrospect. For the same reason, Piaget

137 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*, 153.
138 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*, 156.
139 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*, 250.
140 Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1930), 244.

does not take for granted the analogy between children's magical thinking and adult artistic activity taken up by many of the developmental psychologists named above. Unlike the artist, the child has no alternative to magical thinking at its command. It occurs beyond the space of deception and play – and therefore also beyond the realm of art.

Between Natural Science, Philology, and Literature: The Methodological Dilemma of Developmental Psychology

Developmental psychology others the child by means of the paradigm of the 'child-primitive' embedded in its methodology. Stern, for example, claims alterity to be a precondition for his scientific research: only by viewing children from a distant perspective do scientists feel motivated to study and explain their behavior and thought patterns. At the same time, this observation prompts him (like Groos) to call the methods of child psychology into question. He identifies the same dilemma here as the one confronting ethnology: How is it possible for adult minds to grasp a way of thinking that is so alien?[141] How can any judgment be made about a "psyche" accessible only indirectly through observation of an inarticulate body and by means of imperfect analogies with the psyche of "cultured adults"?[142]

Early developmental psychologists had answered this question through a combination of philological and natural scientific methods and a more properly literary approach to writing: journal writing. This genre indeed inaugurated the field of child psychology with the publication of Preyer's *Mental Development in the Child* in Germany, which researchers referred to, time and again, as the founding document of the profession.[143] This work is based on the author's systematic observation of his son, which he wrote down and interpreted daily.

141 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 35 – 38.

142 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 12. Cf. Fritz Mauthner, "Kinderpsychologie," in *Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Leipzig: Meiner, 1923).

143 E. g., Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 12. However, many others preceded him, for instance, Dietrich Tiedemann, "Beobachtungen über die Entwickelung der Seelenfähigkeit bei Kindern," *Hessische Beiträge zur Gelehrsamkeit und Kunst* 2 (1787): 313 – 333; 486 – 502; other figures who recorded their children's development include Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Charles Darwin, and Hyppolite Taine. Cf. Wittmann, *Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien*, 122 – 125; Cavanaugh, "Cognitive Developmental Psychology before Preyer"; Jaeger: "The Origin of the Diary Method in Developmental Psychology," in *Contributions to a History of Developmental Psychology.*

> I have [...] kept a complete diary from the birth of my son to the end of his third year. Occupying myself with the child at least three times a day [...] and guarding him, as far as possible, against such training as children usually receive, I found nearly every day some fact of mental genesis to record. The substance of that diary has passed into this book.[144]

As Stern notes, many others followed Preyer's lead: "America, above all, was flooded with descriptive records of little children; of these, by far the most comprehensive are the studies of Miss Shinn, but the records of Moore, Major, Chamberlain are deserving of mention."[145] Indeed, Stern's own *Psychology of Early Childhood*, as the title page indicates, is "supplemented by extracts from the unpublished diaries of Clara Stern," documenting her children's activities; to this day, the work sets the standard for the diary method in developmental psychology.[146]

The labeling of such records as diaries is as vexing as it is revealing. Counter to what one would expect after 1800, these diaries are not a medium of self-analysis and contain hardly any reflections on the writer's thoughts and feelings.[147] As a rule, this diarist only observes others (children), and as matter-of-factly as possible – the very opposite of the soul-searching that the word implies today.[148] A similar paradox is evident in the text's status as readerly. Whereas the modern diary primarily serves to bring about self-understanding in the author, most examples of this genre in child psychology were intended from their inception to be read by others.

For those reasons, the diaries at issue more closely resemble an earlier form of the modern diary, namely the private chronicle, a chronologically ordered and factual record of information and events of potential interest to a family and its descendants but with little reflection on the writer's inner life.[149] Still, one might

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144 Preyer, *Mental Development in the Child,* x.

145 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood,* 27.

146 Heike Behrens and Werner Deutsch stress "differences from earlier diary entries" in the context of a "method [that] already had a more than 100-year history in Germany" ("Die Tagebücher von Clara und William Stern," in *Theorien und Methoden psychologiegeschichtlicher Forschung*, ed. Helmut E. Lück and Rudolf Miller [Göttingen: Hogrefe, 1991], 68). Stern himself, the authors note, distinguished between two traditions of journal keeping: that of professional educators interested in the child from age six onward, and that of psychologists focused on development prior to this age. Behrens and Deutsch credit the Sterns with moving beyond this convention and breaking with the rigid scheme of observation dictated by Preyer (whose method was considered authoritative) (68–69).

147 Cf. Martin Lindner, *ICH schreiben*, Chapter 1–2: Definition der Textsorte Tagebuch, n.p.

148 Cf. Lindner, *ICH schreiben*, Chapter 1–2: Definition der Textsorte Tagebuch, n.p.

149 Cf. Lindner, *ICH schreiben*, Chapter 1–2: Definition der Textsorte Tagebuch, n.p.

read this lexical choice – and the fact that it was made in the years before and after 1900 – as a hint that the writing subject is possibly more involved than they purport to be. At play here is an implicit conflict between an impersonal and scientific bearing and personal involvement, which is reflected in the preliminary remarks to many studies of developmental psychology. Sully, for example, discusses the need for sympathetic insight[150] into the child's mind, which is why he views the mother (or nanny) as a particularly suitable observer.[151] Stern also declares that observation should be conducted by familiar parties, especially the mother and close relations:[152] "Inner understanding," a general "atmosphere" of being "on intimate terms,"[153] is required for the child to feel at ease and for the observer to "interpret" actions correctly. At the same time, however, these texts point to a problem arising from the close relationship between the observer and the observed: although mothers and other persons close to the child are granted hermeneutic superiority over strangers, it is also feared that the observer's relation to the child may distort the interpretation – for instance, when typical behavior is mistaken for precocious talent, or when facial movements that are merely reflexive are taken to represent an early attempt at communication.[154] Accordingly, it is recommended that a scientist attend the observer. Sully describes the mother as an assistant to a scientifically trained father.[155] Stern recommends that she has training herself.[156] The purpose is clear enough: "The observation which is to further understanding, which is to be acceptable to science, must itself be scientific."[157] In this spirit, at the beginning of his book Stern formulates rules that are intended to equip lay observers with the right methodological tools: First, observers should distinguish between factual matters and interpretations. Second, interpretations ought to be at a level appropriate to the child's stage of development. And third, general statements without sufficient empirical evidence are to be avoided.[158] Stern also indicates techniques

150 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 14, 16.
151 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 236.
152 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 37.
153 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 38.
154 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 11.
155 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 17, 18.
156 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 37. On the division of roles in the bourgeois family and the father's "function as an observing, controlling third party" supervising the "mental development of children," cf. Wittmann: from the late eighteenth century on, an increasing number of fathers "kept literal records of the development of their children's behavior and mental development" (*Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien*, 123).
157 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 11.
158 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 8.

that will grant the diary a proper, "scientific" status – for instance, recording raw data promptly and according to a strict chronology, all the while ensuring that the child remains unaware of the proceedings.[159]

Bound to the scientification of diaries was the hope that the individual case could be generalized into the exemplary one. The diaries tended to be treated as (collections of) case histories; that is, from the observations on an individual child, readers drew conclusions about child development in general. To this end, Groos calls for combining "individual-" and "mass observation" so that particular details might be verified in light of overall trends.[160] Sully and Stern acknowledge the virtues of statistical research, even though they preferred individual observation for its advantageous "close rapport" with the subject.[161] Small-scale experiments, with outcomes noted in the diary, contributed to the diary's drift into case history, that is, into the typical genre for reporting human experiments.[162] Such experiments had already been performed by Preyer, whose authority Sully invokes when recommending the same.[163] Groos also calls for observations to be conducted under both natural and artificial (experimental) conditions, while hoping that an ideal balance between the two might be struck so that the young child would behave normally without noticing.[164] Piaget, as I have noted, employed the "clinical interview" method, which is based on exact observation of a broad sample of children by means of questions, interviews, and tests. Stern alone evinces skepticism, especially about large-scale and longitudinal experiments likely, in his estimation, to falsify the child's behavior.[165] In sum, the ambivalence I have already noted is once again evident in respect to statistical surveys and experimentation, practices that play a central role in authenticating the scientific status of the diaries yet stand at odds with the ideal of maintaining a close relationship with the child and the 'natural' conditions for observation (which the term 'diary' implies).

That the 'case-historicization' of the diary resulted in more than its scientification offers a glimpse of the proximity of these case-studies to literary texts.

159 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 10.

160 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 14.

161 Cf. the American Child Study Movement, whose "prophet" was G. Stanley Hall (Wittmann, *Bedeutungsvolle Kritzeleien*, 207) and whose propagandists mobilized "veritable legions of teachers and parents" to "collect as much, and as varied, data on childhood as was possible" (205).

162 A clear effort at scientificity in the form of tables and statistics can also be found in Siegfried Levinstein, *Das Kind als Künstler* (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1905).

163 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 19.

164 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 14.

165 Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 39 – 40.

They follow a narrative scheme to the extent that they present a narrator (the observer), a protagonist (the child), and a notable event, often presented in the rhythm of exposition–climax–resolution. Take the following example from Preyer (chosen more or less at random):

> The twenty-third month brought at length *the first spoken judgment*. The child was drinking milk, carrying the cup to his mouth with both hands. The milk was too warm for him, and he set the cup down quickly and said, loudly and decidedly, looking at me with eyes wide open and with earnestness *heiss* (hot). This single word was to signify "The drink is too hot!" In the same week [...] the child of his own accord went to the heated stove, took a position before it, looked attentively at it, and suddenly said with decision, *hot* (*heiss*)! Again, a whole proposition in a syllable.[166]

The three-tiered ambivalence that results – personal involvement, scientificity, and literariness – matches the reaction provoked in the readers. They entertain a distance from the portrayed research and its objects of study, in keeping with the scientific nature of the text. In spite of this, the child whose multistage development the readers are following comes closer and closer to them, in keeping with the details provided in the diary and their literary cast whereby the child is given a distinct character, interests, emotions, and a story. All of this means that the reader's perspective is constantly shifting between analytical distance and personal involvement. Reading Stern, one soon gets to know his children, Hilde and Günter, and responds to the events in their lives and their overall development in an emotional manner. In the case of Preyer's son, it is hard not to feel pity for the boy, inasmuch as his father uses him as an object of research without showing him affection.

The approach taken by developmental psychologists to the observations they record in their diaries also wavers between that of the natural sciences (experimentation, statistics) and philology. Time and again, the authors reflect with approval on their ways of interpreting the events they've narrated. Sully even calls "the observer [...] a sort of clairvoyant reader of [children's] secret thoughts."[167] In such statements, we can recognize the hermeneutic operations of philology. This proximity is also evident in frequent references to literary examples, which are often mixed in with purportedly authentic diary entries. Groos cites scenes from Gottfried Keller and Goethe, among others, for example, when discussing childish destructiveness.[168] Indeed, he also advocates including poet-

166 Preyer, *Mental Development in the Child*, 144.
167 Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 14.
168 Groos, *The Play of Man*, 98.

ry and artists' autobiographies because such works combine self-observation with the observations of others. Artists, he believes, are far more perceptive when it comes to children.

> Although the artist's imagination, even for purely biographical purposes, leads to many deviations from reality, he has the ability, more than other people, to recall the emotions of childhood as though they happened yesterday and to express their characteristics most fully.[169]

The argument positing a relationship between the child and the artist – which is typical of discourse about the 'primitive' around 1900 (cf. chapter 5) – upends the hierarchy that subordinates works of imagination to scientific observation. Literature and art are granted greater accuracy because they bridge the gap to authentic (self-)observation.[170]

Charlotte Bühler adopts a different, but still largely philological approach. She seeks to acquire information on the way children think by studying the books they prefer to read (or hear), which she assumes therefore have an affinity with the child's mind. Accordingly, her work explores children's imagination by analyzing fairy tales. To ensure scientific soundness, she incorporates a statistical survey on the ages at which children are most interested in these stories.[171] Generally this takes place through a recognition of the fairy tale's typical features (characters, setting, plot, and their representation) and simply correlating them with the way children's minds work.

> This naive concatenation of the everyday, even profane, with the extraordinary and miraculous is a peculiarity inherent only in folk tales, and one that expresses a unique simplicity. Such an approach must be very close to the childlike view of life. It accepts the profane and the sacred without distinction, unbiased and with innocence; reality and wonder are not yet separated by an unbridgeable gap. The fairy tale world may be natural to the child to the same extent as it is unreal to the adult.[172]

In sum, early developmental psychology presented itself through mixed writing methods drawn from the fields of natural science, philology, and literature. Unlike texts published in ethnology at the time, those written by developmental

169 Groos, *Das Seelenleben des Kindes*, 18.
170 Sully (*Studies of Childhood*, 11) and Stern (*Psychology of Early Childhood*, 41–42) also value the authenticity of poets' memory more highly than that of other people; however, they doubt its usefulness for science because of the very "poetry" such recollections contain.
171 Charlotte Bühler, *Das Märchen und die Phantasie des Kindes* (Leipzig: Barth, 1918), 5.
172 Bühler, *Das Märchen*, 11.

psychologists start to reflect on this structure. Indeed they hint critically at the *poème*-like character of these texts, but at the same time they view the proximity to creative works and the emotional involvement of the scientists as a seal of quality insofar as they imply greater authenticity in observation and interpretation. The 'primitive,' here configured as the child, stands not only on the border between an othered self and a nostrificated other, but also on the boundary between competing scientific methods – to say nothing of the much-debated 'two cultures' of literature and science. Much the same holds for ethnological writings, but works of developmental psychology bring out the tension much more, since emotional connections to the object of study and, thus, skepticism about the natural scientific approach inspired researchers to look for alternatives to standard scientific writing techniques.