

have shown us that in speaking to and with another person, addressing to him and receiving from him intellectual information, it might be quite unnecessary that this person himself should do more than communicate without our knowledge, at the very moment of our intercourse with him, with a distant thinking person; himself acting only as a point of transference of thought and intelligence which he may not understand.

The fact that when observing other persons the infant learns to imitate is a phenomenon quite unique. It cannot be analysed into any simpler elements, but must be taken as a fundamental property upon which intercourse with others is, to a very large extent, founded, and which in return promotes this intercourse. And even in after life we are all more or less prone to adopt, unconsciously, the manners and ways of those who surround us. And yet, even if we accept this fundamental fact as an essential property of personality, it goes only a little way in explaining the growth of our mind in the course of our earlier life. A still more peculiar phenomenon is the fact that, by repeating gestures, words, and sentences, there are created within our mind abstract notions similar to those possessed and used by other persons, and on this marvellous property depends the whole of our intelligent intercourse with others, and the whole of our behaviour throughout our whole life. We seem to possess, in common, certain general ideas, and to form them almost entirely, and unconsciously, through the influence of others.

The contemplation of this marvellous phenomenon,