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Centre for Genetic Epistemology

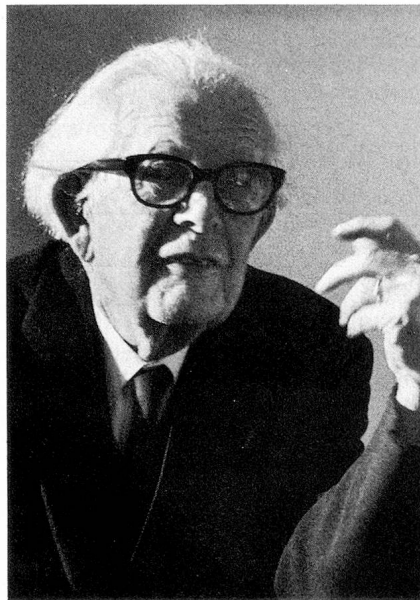
In the «Year of the Child», we should like to present a personality who has devoted all his life to the psychology of the child. It is Professor Jean Piaget, the world-renowned authority in the field of human behaviour in genetics.

Jean Piaget was born in Neuchâtel on 9th August 1896. As a child he was first interested in mechanics, then in birds, fossils and seashells. At the age of 10, he wrote his first scientific essay; it was an article on «An Albino Sparrow», which was published by a magazine on natural history. During the following four years, he was allowed to study birds at the Natural History Museum in Neuchâtel, apart from going to school. By the time he was 21, when he completed his studies with a doctorate on zoology, he had already published over twenty articles on molluscs. A few years previously, his knowledge had brought him a flattering offer to take on the post as curator of the mollusc collection of the Natural History Museum in Neuchâtel; he had to refuse the offer, since at that time he had still two years to go to matriculation.

After he had written his thesis on zoology, Piaget turned to philosophy, and immediately, it was the field of epistemology (theory of the grounds of knowledge) which fascinated him. He decided to devote his life to the «biological explanation of knowledge». Since he was at first unable to do any experimental research, he established a system which was to serve him as a guide for his future work. He began with the tests of his theories at the Binet Institute in Paris. He conducted methodical discussions in the course of which

he made the surprising discovery that the most simple reflections which imply fitting a part into a whole, presented difficulties for children up to 11, of which adults have no idea.

After he had been nominated leader of this work at the Rousseau Institute in Geneva, Piaget decided to concern himself with the psychology of the child, in order to gain experimental knowledge of the structures of intelligence. Subsequently, he wanted to establish a scientific epistomo-



Jean Piaget

logy. What was intended as a preliminary only, occupied him for more than 30 years and resulted in a complete renewal of the theories on psychology and intelligence. In 1925, Piaget accepted a call to the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Neuchâtel, where he lectured on «the study of development of ideas as observed in the history of research as well as in

child psychology. In 1929, he was appointed professor of history on scientific thinking at the University of Geneva, where he was also involved in the foundation of the International Office on Education. In 1939, when the chair of sociology became vacant, Piaget was nominated for the post without his knowledge. Nevertheless, he accepted and subsequently wrote his work «The Moral Judgment of a Child». He was appointed director of a series of research projects and initiated his experiments on fundamental concepts of physics regarding time, movement and speed. The study in the field of the beginning of intuition about speed had been recommended to him by Einstein in 1928; the latter, while he was leader of the first international courses on philosophy and psychology at Davos, advocated the theory that the psychological notion of speed was older than the notion of time.

From 1952 to 1963, Piaget taught child psychology at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1956, he received a notable financial gift from the Rockefeller Foundation, which enabled him to create an International Centre for Epistemology at the University of Geneva, which unites specialists in various fields (logicians, mathematicians, physicists, biologists, experts on cybernetics, psychologists and linguists), who combine theoretical investigations with experimental analysis.

At the age of 83, Jean Piaget has honorary doctorates from over 30 universities. He gave up his lecturing at the University in 1971 and has since devoted his time entirely to research. For some years now, he has been preoccupied with the basic processes and mechanisms of psychogenesis.

Piaget's Work

Jean Piaget has written an impressive number of books and is co-author of the 36 volumes published so far by «Presses Universitaires de France» under the title «Etudes d'épistémologie génétique». Below are mentioned some of his works:

- Le langage et la pensée chez l'enfant, Neuchâtel and Paris, Delachaux & Niestlé, 1923.

- La naissance de l'intelligence chez l'enfant, Neuchâtel and Paris, Delachaux & Niestlé, 1936.
- La construction du réel chez l'enfant, Neuchâtel and Paris, Delachaux & Niestlé, 1937.
- Le développement de la notion de temps chez l'enfant, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1946, 8^e éd. 1973.
- Les notions de mouvement et de vitesse chez l'enfant, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1946.
- Traité de logique. Essai de logistique opératoire, Paris, Colin 1949; réédition, Paris, Dunod, 1972.

- Les relations entre l'affectivité et l'intelligence dans le développement mental de l'enfant, Paris, C.D.U., 1954.
- Traité de psychologie expérimentale, t. I et VII, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1963.
- Biologie et connaissance, Paris, Gallimard, 1967.
- Le structuralisme, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968; coll. «Que sais-je?».
- Psychologie et épistémologie (choix d'articles), Paris, Denoël, 1970.

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C'est aux Rochat expatriés dans ces derniers que s'adresse cet appel. Les 1, 2 et 3 août 1980, en effet, les personnes portant ce patronyme se retrouveront à L'Abbaye pour célébrer le 500^e anniversaire de l'arrivée de Vinet sur le territoire combier. Ce retour aux sources devrait permettre de nombreuses et sympathiques rencontres et retrouvailles au gré des diverses manifestations auxquelles il donnera lieu. Mais pour que cette fête revête toute sa signification, il est très important que le plus grand

nombre possible de Rochat y participent. C'est la raison pour laquelle les organisateurs tiennent à y associer ceux «des leurs» qui, momentanément ou de manière permanente, depuis peu ou depuis plusieurs générations, résident à l'étranger. Car pour ceux-là comme pour ceux qui vivent en Suisse, cette manifestation sera, d'une certaine manière, le moyen de retrouver leurs origines.

Les personnes intéressées sont donc priées de faire parvenir au plus vite, à l'adresse ci-dessous, leur demande de renseignements pour l'inscription. Par ailleurs, le comité d'organisation serait reconnaissant à tous les Suisses de l'étranger qui liront ces lignes de bien vouloir les signaler à l'attention des Rochat qu'ils pourraient connaître dans leur pays d'adoption.

*Comité d'organisation du 500^e anniversaire des Rochat
CH- 1341 L'Abbaye*



Apart from these articles, we have pleasure in informing you that the book by Hans Tschaeni «Mini-Profil der Schweiz» published in 1974, has been translated under the auspices of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad. It has been illustrated by André Paul. An additional chapter regarding the Swiss abroad has been put in the French version. 140 pages, pocket-size, price Sfr. 10.-.

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