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S(t)imulating a Social Psychology

G. H. Mead and the Reality of the Social Object
Social psychology is often said to be a scientific discipline aiming at the observation and explanation of actions between human beings or, more generally, between the human individual and the environment. This general proposition holds for most social psychologists, irrespective of allegiance. Accepting this, it is implied that we are observing the social aspect of a human individual. This text will ask for the conditions under which this social psychology is possible. Indeed, what has to be the case for the observation and explanation of the sociality of the individual to occur?

On the basis of G. H. Mead, generally considered the hub around which modern social psychology developed, it will be argued that for a social psychological science to be possible, conditions are implied that make it impossible. Less rhetorically put, accepting or returning to Meads social argument and trying to co-ordinate it with basic premises of scientific conduct, one will find oneself caught between two Meadian facts. On the one hand each individual must be considered social, i.e., appearing to experience as two objects at once. On the other hand, however, explaining an object is to state the object in an unambiguous fashion, i.e., as an independent, hence individual, object.

It will be argued here that Mead’s epistemology does not support a scientific and social psychology. Rather a scientific social psychology based on Mead constitutes a contradiction in terms, stemming from a series of misinterpretations. It is the objective of this text to demonstrate these misinterpretations with respect to attempts at a scientific social psychology based on the social vision of this scholar.

Key words: social psychology, social, sociality, relativity, object, time, space, George Herbert Mead

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Our mind, which seeks for solid points of support, has for its main function in the ordinary course of life that of representing states and things. It takes, at long intervals, almost instantaneous views of the undivided mobility of the real. It thus obtains sensations and ideas. In this way it substitutes for the continuous the discontinuous, for motion stability, for tendency in process of change, fixed points marking a direction of change and tendency. This substitution is necessary to common sense, to language, to practical life, and even, in a certain sense, which we shall endeavor to determine, to positive science.

H. Bergson in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*

This relation of the event to its situation, of the organism to its environment, with their mutual dependence, brings us to relativity, and to the perspectives in which this appears in experience. The nature of environment answers to the habits and selective attitudes of organisms, and the qualities that belong to the objects of the environment can only be expressed in terms of sensitivities of these organisms. And the same is true of ideas. The organism, through its habits and anticipatory attitudes, finds itself related to what extends beyond its immediate present. Those characters of things which in the activity of the organism refers to what lies beyond the present take on the value of that to which they refer. The field of mind, then, is the larger environment which the activity of the organism calls for but which transcends the present.

G. H. Mead in *Philosophy of the Present*
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Preface

I suppose most doctoral dissertations stem from a more or less dynamic debate between a student and his or her peers and teachers, as well as friends and strangers dropping an intriguing phrase. This is true also of this text. But it is also true that this text is the result of a relationship between me, myself and I. For many years, it seems, this was all there was. But of course there were those who managed to make their way into this semi dialogue. To you I owe my gratitude.

Johan Asplund, whose style, quite in the middle of ambiguity and clarity, got me interested in social psychology in the first place – and still does. I cannot overestimate your importance. My supervisor, Kaj Håkanson, without your support I am quite certain that I would not have had the courage to pursue the argument put forth here. It goes without saying that your words confused me in a similar, but yet wholly different, sense as those of Asplund. This goes also for Christer Rathsman. The fact that you appeared as my lecturer in my undergraduate studies of course enhanced the seriousness of my confusion and, in fact, my general medical status. So strong was my desire to understand. I remember staggering between your universal trinity and the equally universal oneness maintained by Håkanson, not knowing how to fit it all together. It was impossible for your debate not to enter this work. I can but regret not to have matched your wit.

Besides these scholars, I would like to mention two different groups of colleagues and friends. Starting with Uppsala, there was Mikael Carlsson who enabled me to appreciate the philosophy of Mead. I am quite certain that this enterprise would not have been even considered without Mikael’s intensity. Sanna Tielman and Tomas Kumlin, who like Mikael and myself, appeared at Håkanson’s doctoral seminar. You were genuinely kind and exceedingly skilled in the ways of attending matters requiring more than the brute force of sheer intelligence. I can but regret that I learned this too late. As for the other group of friends and colleagues, moving now from café Fågelsången in Uppsala to café Hollandia in Malmö, I would like to thank Mikael Sandgren, Elin Lundin, Frans Oddner and Emma Engdahl. Our afternoons meant a lot to me, in ways more than one. Equally important, though in the early years, was the companionship of Jonas Lindblom. A most annoying thinker; always questioning, always getting excited, always there.
I also would like to thank Hans Nilsson and Lajos Toth for the lessons learned at RPK, Östra Sjukhuset, in Malmö. There are many ways in which lessons can be learned, and some rougher than others. You made the roughest smooth. Needless to say, working with the criminally insane together with you really helped me put things in perspective.

Finally, I would like to thank Eva Buskas for allowing me to voice my concerns while falling asleep, timing your affirmative responses with a precision never failing to amaze me. And for being there when I needed you the most. Last, but not least, there is Soda, who kept me company during all those late nights with her 110 pounds of snoring, snorting and farting. I can but hope that her intoxicating presence will not be too obvious.

Malmö, September 2003

Olle Westlund
1 Introduction

1.1 Proctor’s Pleasure Palace

Comparison of the definitions of metaphysics and the various concepts of the absolute leads to the discovery that philosophers, in spite of their apparent divergences, agree in distinguishing two profoundly different ways of knowing a thing. The first implies that we move round the object; the second, that we enter into it. The first depends on the point of view at which we are placed and on the symbols by which we express ourselves. The second neither depends on a point of view nor relies on any symbol. The first kind of knowledge may be said to stop at the relative; the second, in those cases where it is possible, to attain the absolute.¹

With formulations such as “Scientific Marvel” and “The Most Perfect Device yet Invented for the Photographic Portrayal of Life in Motion” the advertisement outside Proctor’s Pleasure Palace boldly announced what in 1897 promised to be the advent of a new era; the cinematic era. Looking closely, however, the very last part; “for the Photographic Portrayal of Life in Motion” has a ring to it that today seems antiquated and reflects in a rather odd manner what “Life” actually referred to: “The Baby’s First Lesson in Walking, The Electric Carriage Race from Paris to Bordeaux, A Gondola Scene in Venice, The Charge of the Austrian Lancers, Fifty-Ninth Street, opposite Central Park, The Fish Market at Marseilles, France, German Dragoons Leaping the Hurdles (also a reverse view of this picture), Negro Minstrels Dancing in the London Streets, A Sack Race Between Employees of Lumière & Sons Factory, Lyons, The Baths of Minerva, at Milan, Italy, (also a droll effect obtained by reversing the film).”²

² The first film projected on screen, Workers Leaving the Lumière Photographic Factory (December 28th 1895 at Cinematographe Lumière in Paris) was shot with a hidden camera so as not to startle the workers. Before this Edison had invented the cinematoscope which was based on moving photographs, but did not allow for screen projection. Yet even more rudimentary innovations, like the laterna magicas, of course existed even before that. Robinson, D. The History of World Cinema. p. 22.
Many of these events seem perfectly commonplace, but the mere fact that they took place projected onto a screen seem to have brought to them a quality that somehow made them peculiar. Admittedly, looking at “Negro minstrels dancing in the London streets” probably manifested a magical, not to say surreal, experience at the time; but “A sack race between employees of Lumière & Sons factory” or “The Baby’s First Lesson in Walking”? Perhaps it was the making possible of an observation that brought out in the spectator a tendency to experience an object in two alternative and simultaneous realities? This had been possible since the advent of theatre, but unlike theatre the cinematograph could actually make the spectator see himself in motion from the distance of rest; to be able to view oneself in motion while yet sitting at perfect rest.

For social psychologists the Lumière cinematograph appears not only as a technological invention but, more importantly, a social one. The cinema also had the unique feature of non-physical or ethereal mediation across time and space of an encapsulated everyday reality that, from an observational point of view, made possible an endless manipulation. An event once recorded could be repeated, reversed, decelerated and accelerated. The movie depicted an everlasting reality, a reality without change, virtually independent of the observer’s presence.

As noted, the peculiarity of cinema and the cinematic experience seems related to the possibility of people being able to experience themselves from the “outside”. The possibility of perceiving oneself visually without the implication of tactile sensations of pressure, temperature and bodily motion; without the implications of what we might call the “inside” of our being - the recognition of our body as a definite body among others. It enabled the individual to be in two places simultaneously; to be in cinematic motion and yet, simultaneously, perceive this motion from the distance of rest supplied by the armchair. Thus, the cinematograph offered the spectator a dislocation of visual and manipulatory experiences of himself, forcing the spectator to pass between two perspectives referring to a singular object - the self.

D. Robinson observes in World Cinema: a short history that at the advent of motion pictures there were no theatrical or fictive aspects. The camera was perceived as a recording instrument only and shows kinship to, not only Naturalism in contemporary literature, but to an idea conceived by N. Triplett the very same year; namely to observe human life and its changes in the presence of others. His intentions as a scientist differed however, from that of the director, in that he sought to measure a social effect generated by their presence. Considering this the prime difference appears to have been that life in the first case was recorded in motion whereas, in the second, it is recorded in motion (on bicycles) aware of being watched. A similar, almost

voyeuristic, fascination of looking at a man is there and in both cases the
man is observed from the “outside”. In the case of film, the observation is
conducted indirectly through a visual machine. In the scientific case the
observation is made by means of the temporal machine we call the clock.

Reminiscent of techniques developed in literature during the late 19th and
early 20th century, directing and experimenting appears to benefit from an
intersection of fiction and realism. In novels such as *The Sound and the Fury*
and *Ulysses* the idea of realism was transformed by W. Faulkner and J. Joyce
when shifting from classical or objective narration to subjective or per-
spective realism by moving between 1st, 2nd and 3rd person views. In doing
so they approximated different experiences of common objects or occurren-
ces. These were new ways of depicting reality and novels such as these
appear, as does Cubism at this time, as advanced attempts at making contact
with reality by *shifting views* upon it. Let me make a brief illustration of a
particular, and presumably quite commonplace, shift in perspective.

During my work on this dissertation I often found myself sitting in coffee
shops. One of my favorite spots was Hollandia, near the window serving as a
wall of glass against the shopping street stretching through central Malmö. I
chose this location mainly because people often stop outside the window;
either to make use of its reflections in order to see to their hair or clothes or
to admire the 19th century perambulator in the window. In either case, it
enabled me to watch straight into people’s faces without having to deal the
consequences.

One day a girl stopped outside this window and began to inspect herself.
Sitting at one of the two small tables on each side of the window, little more
than the glass itself separated us. She leaned forward and detailed her hair in
the area of her ears and I looked into her eyes as they met mine. Apparently
she did not notice that they did so. I sat there and enjoyed the situation, when
suddenly she saw *through* the glass and into my eyes. She jumped back-
wards and through the glass I heard her scream. Then she began to laugh and
ran off-screen to her girlfriend who had waited for her. A couple of seconds
later I heard two high-pitched screams and laughter.

This episode is quite in the vein of that particular kind of sociality of
which G. H. Mead wrote in terms of a social consciousness or role-taking.
How a shift in perspective can reveal and set events off seemingly without
past and future, without “incomes” and “outcomes”. Rather, the event was
both cause and effect, if such terms are at all relevant. The *meaning* of the
past and future emerged from this passage. I found myself smiling and then,
moments after, embarrassed for having done what her reaction made me
think I did. Needless to say, I felt like a peeping tom.

The spectators of early cinema approximated this social event when
looking at events depicted as Life. The screen of glass in which the girl saw
herself became something else wherein she saw herself not from her per-
spective but from mine. And simultaneously, I saw not her but me, through
her perspective. At this moment, were there really two individuals, was there perhaps but life, or mere meaning in an event of significance?

Had the girl and I not simultaneously exerted what Mead called a double consciousness\(^4\) we would hardly have had the experiences we had. Surely the girl would not have felt awkward and I would not have enjoyed the event in the way I did. It is quite difficult to imagine the event at all without the assumption of double consciousness of “here” and “there”. Whatever the case, these occurrences would certainly not have been written down without a double consciousness. What had been possible, but an observation of life on the silver screen at Proctor’s Pleasure Palace?

The event that occurred at Hollandia was a completely reciprocal one, whereas the event at Proctor’s Pleasure Palace was not. The two screens were, one might say, of different kinds. At Hollandia, the screen of glass had two sides \textit{contemporaneously} whereas the silver screen at Proctor’s Pleasure Palace had only one. Of course, it might be argued that it had two sides, but then only \textit{sequentially}. This would have been the case if the spectator took the role of the actor or actress. But since the actor or actress did not respond to the spectator there is only one \textit{actual} side to the screen. For there to be two sides, the spectator had to give up his individual point of view and take that of the actor or actress and thus obtain two \textit{virtual} sides in a sort of sequential maneuver of imagination.

Still, do not both events illustrate social events? Are they not both relationships between an individual and its environment? Is it not our very interpretation of these events that makes the one resemble the other? Surely, therefore, they are not entirely different kinds of events. We respond to an environment in both cases and in both cases we will have experiences that enter our responses to subsequent situations in the form of memories, associations, stimulations or whatever we choose to call this reference to a happening demarcated by a \textit{before} and \textit{after}.

The idea hinted at here is a characteristically social psychological one. It is the implication of a certain mode or style of interpretation in which events are conceptualised as in terms of a \textit{connection and disconnection between the individual and the environment}. This conceptual frame of the social psychologist shall henceforth here be referred to as the “social psychological \textit{dis/connection}”.

Remembering the event at Hollandia, it makes sense to say that I am not the girl and that the girl is not I. Furthermore, it makes sense to say, I am not Hollandia and neither is the girl, nor am I or the girl the glass through which our eyes met. On the other hand, our eyes did merge in terms set by the window's glass. Without some kind of connection between us the event that took place is inexplicable, even nonsensical. We did respond to one another and we did so simultaneously and reciprocally. Both these views, connection

\(^4\)Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Present}. p. 78
and disconnection, apply also in the case of Proctor’s Pleasure Palace, though in a sense different from that used in the context of the Hollandia window. When the spectator recognises the patterns on the screen as persons, as co-workers or perhaps, as the case would have been for some, themselves, the question arises as to what is happening. It arises when we try to understand how the spectator responds to seeing a person on the screen finding out that it is him- or herself or that it could have been. Evidently, it is not the same individual in the system called Proctor’s Pleasure Palace; there is a disconnection. This is evidenced also by the fact that the individual at any time may choose to leave Proctor’s Pleasure Palace (and his mediated self). On the other hand, it makes perfect sense to say that the spectator becomes aware of or recognises himself only by way of some kind of connection with the screen. If there were no connection, the spectator would hardly pay money for the experience, let alone find it pleasurable.

This is both trivial and subtle. It is trivial as long as we take the (idea of a) relationship between individual and environment for granted. It is subtle if we recognise that this (idea of a) relationship is dependent upon our way of interpreting the examples. That you find yourself capable of comprehending what I am writing adds to the subtleties involved. In more detail, how could the individual be (considered) affected by the environment, and the environment by the individual, without assuming a dis/connection? Statements regarding the relationships between individual and environment are nonsensical without the assumption of a dis/connection; without the assumption, that is, of distributive and collective effects appearing in the perspective of the individual observer. We seem to refer to such effects of perspective whenever we imply, directly or indirectly, that an occurrence is social.

1.2 The Puzzle Picture of Social Psychology

A separate individual is an abstraction unknown to experience, and so likewise is society when regarded as something apart from individuals. […] So far, then, as there is any difference between the two, it is rather in our point of view than in the object we are looking at: when we speak of society, or use any other collective term, we fix our minds upon some general view of the people concerned, while when we speak of individuals we disregard the general aspect and think of them as if they were separate.⁵

Contrary to what one might suspect, it is a rare experience to come across a cogent discussion of the meaning of the term “social” in social psychology. What one does find, en masse, are general declarations of social psychology.

⁵ Cooley, J. Human Nature and the Social Order. p. 36-7.
Let me present a handful, picked more or less at random from a bookshelf in a social scientific library.

In particular, social psychology directs its attention to understanding the influences producing regularities and diversities in human social behavior […] The distinctiveness of social psychology arises from two major factors: first, its interest in the individual as a participant in social relationships; and, second, its emphasis on understanding the social influence processes underlying these relationships.6

The term “understanding” includes several levels of meaning, from simple description, through analysis and accuracy of prediction, to explanation of phenomena.

With few exceptions, social psychologists regard their discipline as an attempt to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings. The term “implied presence” refers to the many activities the individual carries out because of his position (role) in a complex social structure and his membership in a cultural group.7

Social psychology […] is concerned with every aspect of the individual’s behavior in society. Social psychology may therefore be broadly defined as the science of the behavior of the individual in society.8

Social psychology is the scientific field that seeks to understand the nature and causes of individual behavior in social situations.9

In formal terms, social psychology is a discipline devoted to the systematic study of human interaction. […] The unit of analysis. The entity selected for study in social psychology is typically the individual actor or the small group. The major questions in social psychology concern relationships among individuals. […] The base of explanation. The focus of interest in social psychology is most frequently the internal processes of the individual.10

It seems to me that these definitions assume that there is a relationship between the objects of individual and environment and that this relationship refers to some sort of interdependent change. What require further qualification are the dimensions of the interdependence and change taking place and how such dimensions can be isolated and subjected to determination. The relationship per se is not at issue. It would seem therefore that when

6 Hollander, E. P. Principles and methods of social psychology. p. 4.
social psychologists explain why people do the things they do, the explanation consists of references to a certain and determining relationship between the individual and the environment. Thus, what we observe as social psychologists is assumed to be an effect of a relationship between the individual and the environment. And although we cannot see or touch it, we somehow know it is there. What happens cannot be explained only by referring to the individual, nor can the event be explained by referring only to the environment. That would amount either to “psychologism” or a “sociologism”. Consequently, the social psychologist infers a particular relationship between the individual and the environment generating meaning to what happens to these dis/connected objects.

Or less strongly put, the crux of social psychology is to detect the particular character of a relationship explaining why the individuals acted the way they did, or the way in which they acted. The problem facing the social psychologist is in other words that of how to infer and how to demonstrate this relationship in such a fashion that other social psychologists grant the explanation significance. Still, the very idea that there is a relationship and how this relationship appears in the experience of the social psychological observer often remains unaccounted for. Rather it is acted upon in observation and explanation as a premise rather than a result or a subject matter in itself. This would seem to suggest that the social events of observation and explanation are external, along with the matter of how these social events are related to the social event observed and explained.

A more interesting avenue to social psychological thought is offered by J. Asplund. In his book *Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv* he proposes two conditions for the appearance of social psychology as a scientific mode of observation. The first of these are the recognition of individual and society as separate phenomena. This recognition is suggested to have appeared hand in hand with large cities during the industrialization of Western Europe. The argument is made that the movements in this change of the social structure made for differentiations between societal slabs, such as: between home and work, and between working and leisure time and between family and co-workers. Temporal, spatial and social conditions were cut up into pieces and subsequently became objects to be managed. Still, differentiations may have been present before that; quite possibly since the advent of the concept of mankind. The second criterion states that the differentiation between the individual and its environment has to be perceived as problematic. The question arose, Asplund suggests, as to what it was that moved between the various contexts of home and work, between family and co-workers. We say

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11 I am here using the term *environment* in a general manner. As I move along this term will be discussed at length, particularly in connection to “physical” and “social” objects. This holds also for *individual*.

it is the individual and as soon as we have done so we imply that there is a
something that differentiates or makes explicit the individual qua individual.
This comes naturally for most of us, but the point advanced by Asplund is
that this has not always been the case. Thus he moves on to a medieval
community called Montaillou in order to envisage the alternative; the
absence of self, a consciousness without the implication of an experience of
individuality.

According to his argument the notion of an individual was once a
threatening one, making inquiry and control necessary. The question seemed
to have been, trusting Asplund’s argument: what is the nature of this indi-
vidual and what was he capable of? Following this line of reasoning, the two
World Wars might have augmented this fear. As suggested by D. Cartwright,
the Second World War might be thought of as due to the particular
relationship between A. Hitler and the rest of the world.¹³

Asplund’s argument is interesting not merely as an attempt at approxi-
mating the birth of social psychology. The rationale used by Asplund in this
temporal approximation and definition regarding social psychology deserves
attention, particularly the allusions to perspective and relativity with which
Asplund furnishes his account regarding the conditions for social psycho-
logy. The first condition is framed as the juxtaposition of two systems: the
individual and the environment, being reciprocally related insofar as an
account of occurrences is made in terms of their relationship. The second
condition is construed by appealing to another relativist notion, namely the
operation with which one creates or achieves form by positioning a pheno-
menon in different contexts of reference. The individual appears as a
separate, unknown and threatening form first having disconnected itself from
a social structure by moving between various systems or contexts. The indi-
vidual, then, appeared as a problem in the sense of being both connected and
disconnected from society. In other words, the question seems to have arisen
as to what had emerged between these societal slabs.

Asplund’s characterisation of social psychology lends itself to the follo-
wing rewording: social psychology appeared as a mode of observation
proceeding upon a dis/connection between individual and environment and
whose explanations are directed towards ascertaining the particular and
general characters of this dis/connection. In this fashion the question of the
individual is approached as a social phenomenon.

Some may argue that it is possible to develop a social psychology also within
and for such relationships in which the individual and society are not
separate. Would it not be possible for a social psychology to exist for an
undifferentiated community?

¹³ Cartwright, D. Contemporary Social Psychology in Historical Perspective in Social
Psychology Quarterly 42. (1979). p. 84.
My initial response to this question would be, in a way both yes and no, since social psychology for an undifferentiated community would not constitute what is intended here as “social psychology”.

But I would like to go one step further and respond with a ‘no’ to the question concerning the feasibility of the implied type of social psychology. If we are not prepared by “social psychology” to mean more or less anything, we should say that each form of social psychology in one way or another has to investigate the relationship between the individual and his/her surroundings. If there is no individual, however, - and there is none in a completely undifferentiated community – nor can there be any relationship between the individual and society. [translation mine]

For there to be a social psychological observation there has to be a relationship between the individual and society (or environment, more generally speaking). And yet, however problematic it might be, this relationship is not at issue. What is at issue is rather what sort of relationship there is and how it may account for the objects appearing in the way they did during observation. Therein lies the social psychological problem. We can see and hear the objects, perhaps we can even feel and smell them, but we believe that they are somehow related. That is to say, we believe that they respond to or adjust to one another. Thus, though apparently individual, they are somehow social. Understood in this fashion, the explanatory task of social psychology resides therefore in ascertaining the characters of the relationship connecting the disconnected objects observed. Differently put, the task of social psychology is to identify the characters of this relationship in order for the conduct of the dis/connected objects observed to make sense. This, however, is not as straightforward as it might seem.

While psychology investigates the separate individual (in isolation from society) and sociology investigates society (in isolation from the individual), social psychology examines the relationship between the individual and society, separately and in general.

Elementary. It is just that the relationship between the individual and society in a conventional textbook of social psychology would very rapidly after the introductory declaration, slip out of the picture. One is tempted to say that the relationship between the individual and society is just what conventional social psychology is not about. Most frequently it is about the individual in isolation from society or society in isolation from the individual.

Bastards are problematic. [translation mine]

How then to study the individual and its environment (or society more specifically) in a fashion without abstracting the one from the other?

In the chapter mentioned above, devoted to the medieval village of Montaillou, Asplund introduces a distinction with which he differentiates

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15 Ibid. p. 48-9.
between two different modes of experience; the ocular and the binocular. Judging from the interview protocols produced by the Inquisition, there seemed to have existed no sense of self in Montaillou. Or more precisely, there seemed to have existed no me qua me and you qua you.

This distinction is of particular interest in so far as it takes seriously the notions of simultaneity and reciprocity. It directs attention to the distinctly social idea that the individual and the environment depend upon one another in order to be what they are thought to be.

I will quote Asplund’s elaboration of this distinction at some length, as it will serve to set the theme of this text.

One can view a society in ‘ocular’, terms, that is, with one eye and with the other. In this way one perceives the individual in isolation and society in isolation, and perhaps one will come to observe society as the ‘form’ and the individual as the ‘content’. One could also attempt to establish a binocular perspective. If we look with both eyes simultaneously we should be able to perceive individuals and society as a vital unit, as an organism, if you will.

If one’s perspective is sufficiently wide we would no longer see a number of component parts, which are more or less temporarily put together; rather, we would see the whole – life, the system, the organism. The events and actions we observe are not events of component parts or actions performed by the component parts. They are events within the whole and actions performed by the whole.

The wide perspective shows us neither, in part, a society and, in part, its smallest or indivisible units; individuals. What it shows us is rather an indivisible society: society ‘as individual.’

At this level it is natural to say that it is society responding to stimuli, adjusting (or becoming maladjusted), indeed, it is natural to say that it is society that ‘feels’, ‘thinks’ and ‘wants’. […]

A mountain village that thinks? At the ocular level this is nonsense, but at the binocular level it appears to have some kind of meaning. [translation mine]\[16\]

In Human Nature and the Social Order J. Cooley offers a precise perspective on how Asplund’s distinction serves the argument to be presented here.\[17\]

Society, or any complex group, may, to ordinary observation, be a very different thing from all of its members viewed one by one – as a man who beheld General Grant’s army from Missionary Ridge would have seen something other than he would by approaching every soldier in it. In the same way a picture is made up of so many square inches of painted canvas; but if you should look at these one at a time, covering the others, until you had seen them all, you would still not have seen the picture. There may, in all such cases, be a system or organization in the whole that is not apparent in the parts. In this sense, and in no other, is there a difference between society and the individuals of which it is composed; a difference not residing in the

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\[16\] Asplund, J. Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv. p. 93-4.

facts themselves but existing to the observer on account of the limits of his perception. A complete view of society would also be a complete view of all the individuals, and vice versa; there would be no difference between them.\(^{18}\)

In *Gemeinschaft och Gesellschaft*, Asplund discusses a paradox stemming from two different studies of the Mexican village Tepoztlán. Studying this contemporary village may offer Montaillou more distinction.

In the 1920s the American anthropologist R. Redfield conducted studies that led to a report published in 1930 entitled *Tepoztlán, A Mexican Village*. In 1951 another anthropologist, O. Lewis, published a report on the village, entitled *Life in a Mexican Village, Tepoztlán Restudied*. The discrepancies between the two representations were, however, of such significance that Redfield concluded that the differences were not accountable to the time having elapsed between the two studies. Nothing that had happened to the village *per se* that could account for the discrepancies. In the face of this, Asplund suggests that there were two, mutually exclusive and interdependent, pictures active. Redfield’s and Lewis’ observations should in other words be considered parts of a social scientific puzzle picture.

It is not a simple case of Redfield registering certain facts and Lewis certain other facts. Both attempted to see as much as possible and both their books are about the ‘whole’ of Tepoztlán.

This is not a question of two parallel truths which can be combined or placed side by side into a whole truth. Tepoztlán was a Gemeinschaft and Tepoztlán was a Gesellschaft – but not at the same time. […] The truth about Tepoztlán, if such a thing exists, can be attained by superimposing Lewis’ picture onto Redfield’s picture, whereupon we can see a Gemeinschaft within a Gesellschaft and vice versa. Such an image need not be especially well made – but is probably unusually well composed in this case. Redfield and Lewis were studying the same society and reached diametrically opposed results. The truth that emerges when the images are superimposed does not lie in the combination of the images, but lies equally as much in the interchange between them.

It would naturally be devastating to claim that Tepoztlán must be either the one or the other – or to claim that truth may never be ambiguous. It would be just as devastating to claim that truth is a mixture (or hash) of both the one and the other. [translation mine]\(^{19}\)

In his argument, Asplund characterises this alternation within the puzzle picture as a dialectical one, and this might provide a clue as to the meaning of ocular and binocular perceptions. Tracing this notion of alternation in the various works of Asplund, we find the following general observation on the topic of social psychology in *Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv*.


\(^{19}\) Asplund, J. *Essä om Gemeinschaft och Gesellschaft*. p. 45-6.
The history of social psychology is largely the history of the interchange between abstract individualism and abstract sociologism. (I wish not deny that knowledge can be gained both by departing from the one or from the other pure position. What is serious is that knowledge obtained from the one pure position cannot be transferred when we shift over to the other pure position. Knowledge formulated within the framework of a reductionistic paradigm appears irrelevant, meaningless or quite simply offensive within the framework of an opposing reductionist paradigm. A continual swinging between abstract individualism and abstract sociologism implies an unremitting invalidation of knowledge).

I do not know why this is so, but I do know that during the last 100-150 years it has been remarkably difficult to perceive and retain the dialectical opposition between the unit of the individual and society as the object or subject of social psychology. [translation mine]20

As noted earlier, this proposition by Asplund appears in his historical argument on social psychology, i.e., that social psychology emerged when, firstly, one (feels able to) differentiate between the individual and society and, secondly, the relationship between these phenomena is found to be problematic. Here we might add a third condition: when comprehension of the relation between the individual and society implies both unity and separation or, using Cooley’s terminology, when grasping both the collective and the distributive aspects of the relationship between the individual and society. Pursuing this line of interpretation, Asplund seems to suggest that the “social psychological truth” lies embedded in the dis/connection between the individual and society appearing when social psychologists superimpose and alternate the ocular and the binocular observations. Although it may not appear in the completed superimposition, it might in the superimposition per se; which is to say in the social psychological alternation between the disconnection and connection of individual and society. Thus, in the one observation it will appear as if we “apprehend the individuals for themselves and society for itself respectively” and in the other “the individuals and the society as a vital unity”.

However, this interpretation complicates matters when considered side-by-side with the propounded keystone of social psychology. Thus, looking more closely at Asplund’s distinction between ocular and binocular perceptions, we find that he in the first paragraph makes a distinction between two kinds of experience – sequential and simultaneous - while in the second paragraph the distinction is one of degree, implying a continuum between wide and narrow angles of vision.

If one proceeds upon the distinction between ocular and binocular experience as one of degree, as a range of perspectives resulting from the spatial distance between observer and object observed, one will find it a particular mode of social psychological observation. Those acquainted with

Asplund’s writing will remember the following passage taken from *Rivaler och Syndabockar*.

One of the most fundamental operations that exist consists of the observer approaching the observed to obtain details or, in the reverse, taking a step back to obtain the whole picture. I would like to see a theory as an intellectual instrument making it possible to see both the details and the whole picture. With the aid of theory we are able to approach or step back to see what, at a conventional distance, remains invisible. [translation mine]\(^{21}\)

Thus, by modulating the distance between the thing and ourselves we find an observation change as an effect thereof. Understood in this fashion, the ocular experience may be interpreted as the detailed or exclusive picture we develop when looking closely, and the binocular experience, in consequence, answers to the schematic or inclusive picture we get when observing the object from a distance. In this manner a theory, or a perspective, for each and every part of the compote thing is attained; each revealing to us a specific aspect or angle of the object, from the widest possible to the most narrow, and with an infinity of subdivisions between. Which one of these theories we choose will depend upon our particular inclination or purpose rather than a difference in validity. Consequently we obtain different results depending upon which perspective or theory we choose; which distance we choose with respect to the object. We obtain different but equally valid explanations of an occurrence.

On the other hand, if we use a concept distinguishing between kinds we shall have but two options with which we can observe the social psychological object.

Here the relationship between the individual and the environment is but a contingency. It appears only when the social occurrence is observed sequentially; with one eye after the other so to speak. With the one eye we shall see the individual and with the other the environment, and when we superimpose these pictures we conceive the relationship between them in order to reinstate both as they appeared immediately (together) in our experience. We shall like a squint-eyed person develop techniques to comprehend how the pictures relate to one another and in this manner reconstruct a coherent and definite object. This procedure is analogous to the social psychological theory where we can conceive a relationship between the individual and the environment. It will hereafter be referred to as “interactionist”.

In the binocular experience we use both eyes simultaneously rather than one after the other and display the pictures as integral to one another and so present the social occurrence as an expression of an indistinct multitude. It unfolds, pursuing the cinematographic theme, like a motion picture, constituted not by scanning one frame after another but rather in a sort of flowing

gaze in which no edges or specific frames are discerned. There will be an indistinct multitude that may be made distinct if one uses a sequential mode of observation. Hence, the pictures of the object must be considered different in kind from one another, depending upon whether one uses two synchronous eyes or whether one superimposes the pictures obtained sequentially by each eye in isolation.

Now, pondering the plausibility of both interpretations it would seem there is a piece missing in Asplund’s text that results in an ambiguity. Expressed differently, there is an ambiguity in the axis of distinction that generates two equally plausible interpretations, thus giving each component part in the distinction two different meanings.

The contour of this ambiguity becomes clearer when observing that a relationship between an individual and an environment appears in both interpretations but takes on different meanings depending upon in which pairing or distinction it is placed. The changing of emphasis exemplifies these two meanings: “Social psychology investigates the relationship between the individual and the environment” or “Social psychology investigates the relationship between the individual and the environment.” What does social psychology observe and what does it explain? Can one observe a relationship and if so, on what grounds? Or is it that the social psychological observer infers a relationship in order for the array of individuals and environments appearing in observation to make sense? What appears first in the social psychological experience, the relationship or the array of individual and environment? If, on the other hand, they appear simultaneously, then by what means?

This ambiguity may be probed further by examining the binocular perception in the sense of a visual machine. In one sense, the use of binoculars implies a distance between the individual and the object observed. We use the binoculars to get a closer or more distinct look at the object than we might otherwise obtain at distance. In another sense, the use of binoculars places the consciousness of the object between the individual organism and the object, indicating that the experience of the object is not merely a matter of a spatial relationship between two (physical) objects; that the

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22 Yet another possibility appears as we add an ontological dimension. Thus, are the individual and the environment really a unitary phenomenon, albeit experienced as interactive systems in an ocular view or, alternatively, are they really interactive systems but experienced as a unitary phenomenon in a binocular view?

23 To this articulation of the binocular experience one might, perhaps, also attach the idea of two lenses becoming one. Also, I wish to take this opportunity to specify a distinction between organism or individual organism on the one hand and self or individual self on the other. In the reading of Mead to follow, I shall speak both of individual organisms and individual selves. I believe this distinction to be important whereas the term individual will take on different meanings when conjoined with organism and self respectively. This difference relates to the fact stressed by Mead that an individual organism does not distinguish between characters belonging to “his” organism and “his” environment. This, on the other hand, is exactly what defines an individual self.
experience of the object *qua* object occurring is not located inside the individual. When I look at the object through the binoculars the question as to where “I” am in relationship to the object is raised. When I modulate the lens, “I” seem to move and it will require that “I” remind “myself” that “I” am (where) “my” body (is) in order to locate “my” self. However, as “I” do so, all “I” will find is a spatial location relative to the object observed - a relationship between two objects rather than a definite object.

I shall take seriously Asplund’s proposition that:

> If we are not prepared by ‘social psychology’ to mean more or less anything, we should say that every form of social psychology in some way or another has to examine the relation between the individual and society. [translation mine]

No, we are not prepared to call everything social psychology. Yes, social psychology investigates the relationship between the individual and society. The question remains, what are we prepared to call social psychology and in what way is the relationship between the individual and society investigated; or the way it *ought* to be investigated? As a clue as to how these questions might be answered, Asplund later makes the following suggestion.

> Consider the formula ‘individual/society’. What I am trying to say is that social psychology is – or ought to be – a science of the stroke between individual and society. As such it would constitute a science not of the wall, nor of the cracks, but of the cracks in the wall. [translation mine]

As indicated earlier, for there to be meaning in referring to a relationship between the individual and society in an explanation, it must be assumed that the two systems observed have something in common; that they are in some fashion connected. Yet the very way of posing a social psychological problem suggests that there should also be a differentiation between the individual and the environment. Why else should one speak of a relationship?

Posing the distinction between the ocular and binocular experience in the way suggested by the above metaphor, it appears as if the suggestion of “cracks in the wall” refers to such a dis/connection between the individual and society. The cracks in the wall denote individual phenomena in or of society. Both are there in the social psychological experience. The one implies the other. The crack appears to us only as a crack in the wall. Without a wall, there would be no possibility of cracks. Conversely, without cracks we would not experience the wall as a wall. Without differentiation it would not be reflected upon as being there at all. Rather the notion of a homogeneous

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24 Asplund., J. *Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv*. p. 54.
25 Ibid. p. 62
wall would imply that the individual observer *qua* crack exists apart from society or, alternatively, is not an individual.

In that case, what about the villagers in Montaillou, who in a certain binocular mode of observation seem to constitute a wall without cracks? There were, in the qualitative interpretation of the term, no selves. There were no individuals *qua* individuals, and hence no cracks in the social fabric. There were no cracks in the wall making for a differentiation between individual and society. It appears therefore that Montaillou cannot be considered a society. More precisely, it cannot be considered a society with the implication of individuals *qua* individuals.

In the quantitative interpretation of the binocular experience this does not follow. If binocular experience is supposed to refer to a distant experience, a view at distance, requiring the use of binoculars rather than the simultaneity and reciprocity of two views, Montaillou remains a society. For in this interpretation the binocular experience is an experience of something obtained from the outside (implied by the suggestion of a distance), and Montaillou can be considered a separate object with an extension. In this interpretation society appears with the implication of individuals *qua* individuals. Specifically, this society appears simultaneously with the appearance of the individual observer who, in respect of being an individual (brick), observes this extension (wall) at the distance supplied by the differentiation between the self of the individual observer and the object to which his observation refers. A distance, that is, granted by the individual being an individual *qua* individual (self or brick in the wall).

Still the ambiguity remains. What Asplund is proposing as social psychology is not written on the wall.

1.3 Six Directions and the Two Faces of Social Psychology

Sociologically, debate over the “true” meaning of Mead is really about whether sociology should model itself after the experimental sciences. The question of how Mead today would describe his own work can never be resolved. It serves an important function, however, in delineating sociologists’ approaches to the social sciences, and in showing us how scholars use “classic” works to convince other of the superiority of their own particular perspective.26

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In the late 1990s R. M. Farr, professor at the London School of Economics and Social Sciences addressed the editors of the latest edition of *Handbook of Social Psychology* in his’ *The Roots of Modern Social Psychology* with a lengthy and fervent argument for the restoration of a social psychology. A social psychology capable of confronting the hegemony of a discipline in which the prefix merely signifies a plenitude of distinctly individual units of observation. A social psychology that, using B. Roberts definition of Positivism, relies “on quantification, the use of the analytic method, the search for ‘objective causality’ and the adoption of an a-historical approach”.27

In his argument Farr makes a distinction between the past and the history of social psychology. The past is the trace of a social psychology vanishing during the years up to the Second World War and adapted to the conditions prevailing in the American and highly individualist culture. Returning to the past of social psychology rather than its history, written by contemporary social psychologists having won the war so to speak, Farr ventures to recapture a genuinely social psychology.

In his pursuit Farr highlights two scholars of particular interest: W. Wundt and G. H. Mead. In the case of Wundt, two assertions stand out in his argumentation. Firstly, Wundt maintained that investigations of phenomena such as language, religion, customs, cognition etc., are investigations of phenomena that cannot be reduced to the individual consciousness.28 These are reciprocal processes and are not explained by referring to the individuals involved. Secondly, these phenomena had to be investigated in terms of culture; in terms of overt behavior rather than the verbal reports used by Psychophysics and the Wurzburger school. Mead, on the other hand, attracts Farr’s interest in that he makes a serious effort to efface premises in Wundt’s work that had forced the latter to differentiate between different theories when dealing with man (e.g. individual-psychological and collective-socio-logical) and the methods by which to verify the theses formulated. Mead’s contribution is characterised by inserting self as a middle term and to rank language as primary to other collective phenomena. Language, Farr argues, can be thought of as the link between individual and collective perspectives and parallels the self as the link between the subjective and the objective perspective.

A project similar to Farr’s has been formulated by H. Joas in *G. H. Mead. A Contemporary Re-examination of His Thought*. Having acquainted himself with Mead,

(...) it became clear that the fecundity of Mead’s thought, as well as of the question of the meaning of language and of communication itself, could not be contained within the narrow bounds of the disciplines of linguistics and

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Taking advantage of the practical intersubjectivity elaborated by the latter, Joas suggests that Mead’s work provides material for a new understanding of social theory. Of particular relevance here is the acknowledgment of the experiential basis for the observation and explanation of “social” objects; what Mead in connection to relativity theory characterises as the “experiential background” and against which the object is reflected upon. For Joas this means, leaving Mead’s vocabulary, that observation and explanation rely on a tacit template of non-problematic suppositions and without which both the explanation and its legitimacy are impossible and left unaccounted for.

Now, with this term Joas alludes to the main theoretical theme in Mead’s work; the social act. This concept will also be at the center of the present argument. It will be elaborated in a different fashion. Paraphrasing Joas in addressing the venture of returning to Mead, I will ask for the meaning of language and communication in a social psychologically and scientifically executed act. This question will develop into the argument that a return to Mead in the hope of recovering a genuine concept of sociality is complicated by the fact that it tends to be used in a fashion confounding two elementary aspects of reciprocity.

This complication is particularly well expressed in Mead’s assessment of the theory of relativity.

Mead bases his discussion of relativity on the understanding of Einstein’s innovations held by physicists and philosophers, who, working with the concept of a four-dimensional space-time-world, conceived of time in various ways as a subjective phenomenon and not an inherent feature of the physical world itself. […] If this was the demonstrable corollary of the theory of relativity, then the very foundations of Mead’s thought were shaken. The extraordinarily stimulating effect of the theory of relativity on Mead was due to his belief that not only were these conclusions unjustified, but that the theory of relativity itself was the best proof of the opposite, if one but understood it correctly. But to achieve this correct understanding it was necessary to bring to bear just those concepts which were central to Mead’s social psychology: action and intersubjectivity.30

30 Ibid. p. 169. These concepts make up Joas’ suggestion of practical intersubjectivity as the theme of Mead’s work. “The concept of intersubjectivity designates a structure of communicative relations between subjects, a structure that is suited for transcending, on the theoretical plane, the opposition between the individualistic bias in the theory of action and a structural theory that does not recognize subjects or human agency. […] Mead’s theory is oriented to practical intersubjectivity; that means, to a structure that arises and takes form in the joint activity of human subjects to achieve ends set by their life needs, a structure into which the
Recognising the importance of relativity theory to Mead’s thought I find, unlike Joas, no reason to insert the term intersubjectivity (which, as noted by Joas, was not used by Mead himself\(^31\)). Such a maneuver diverts attention from meanings embedded in Mead’s use of “sociality” use and tends to mask a critical distinction regarding the relationship between the individual observer and the scientific object. Presumably Joas finds his suggestion of “intersubjectivity” more precise than Mead’s original concept, but it is important to understand that the complexity of this concept is worthwhile exploring; it provides a pathway beneath a cursory reading of Mead. Specifically, it enables an understanding of the relationship between “physical” and “social” objects. It also enables an understating of how their respective realities are realised by the individual in whose consciousness they appear. And more generally, probing the complex concept of sociality reveals the overarching theme in Mead’s late thought: the relationship between the individual observer and the scientific object (or the problem of the scientific object) addressed by Mead within the frame of an ongoing bifurcation of nature.\(^32\) This being so, to set aside the concept of sociality is to set aside the massive and unfinished undertaking of co-ordinating “physical” and “social” objects and, at that, lose sight of the relationship between these objects and the individual self by which they are reflected. Having demonstrated these points, the complexity of Mead’s concept of sociality and its repercussions in scientific behavior, we shall see that any attempt of the kind envisaged by Farr, and Joas, will have to make a series of qualifications not to conflict with Mead’s social philosophy.

It has in various camps long been accepted as a matter of course that Mead offered the foundation upon which a scientific social psychology might be placed. Within the framework of Symbolic Interactionism this is clearly the case, but also sociologists and social psychologists not considering themselves Symbolic interactionists accept that Mead has been instrumental for their research. Mead’s concepts of self, role-taking and the generalised other, to mention but a few, are directly or indirectly fed upon in large circles. And as noted by D. W. Warshay and L. H. Warshay, Mead's corporeality of these subjects and external nature readily enter.” Joas, H. G.H. Mead. A Contemporary Re-examination of His Thought. p. 13-4.


\(^{32}\) Mead defines this expression in connection to a lengthy assessment of Bergson’s philosophy to the following effect: “In a certain sense, Bergson’s position is one which was an outcome of the theory of evolution, as I have already said. The philosophy of the Renaissance had as its background a vie of nature which got its expression in Newtonian mechanics, that is, a physical world which was determined in all its movements by certain simple laws and which gave an account only of the positions of these physical particles. The result of this was the bifurcation of the world, the putting of other characters of the world of our experience into consciousness while it left the world of matter and motion to the statement of a mechanical philosophy.” Mead, G. H. Movements of Thought in the 19th Century. p. 294-5.
seems to have induced such a view. At least if one is to accept the following formulation appearing in *Mind, Self and Society*.

Social psychology is behaviouristic in the sense of starting off with an observable activity – the dynamic, ongoing social process, and the social acts which are its component elements – to be studied and analysed scientifically.\(^{33}\)

Now, assuming for the sake of argument that these are the words of Mead and that he in this passage refers to his own work, this position will be argued contrary to the concept of sociality in his late and large body of manuscripts. Particularly with respect to his assessment of scientific conduct and the social consciousness of the scientist.

The unreliability of *Mind, Self and Society* is well known. So much so in fact that even the authors mentioned above, and who rest their case on the basis of this volume, submit to this. In the present argument I shall restrict my reading of Mead to *Philosophy of the Present* and *Philosophy of the Act* and make an exception but for a few references to * Movements in the 19th Century Thought* and the two articles found by D. L. Miller after the publication of the former two volumes.\(^{34}\) It will be argued that in this vast material, no claims of advancing social psychology as a science were made by Mead. Accepting this will reduce the element of surprise when learning that Mead, as pointed out by B. M. Fisher and A. L. Strauss, lacked successors in sociology at his department. The one exception was H. Blumer and, according to Fischer and Strauss, this scholar made no references to Mead’s social psychology in matters pertaining to actual research.

This pattern is very clear in the work of a number of well-known Chicago sociologists who, although they have utilized a variety of concepts drawn from Mead’s work, neither have located these ideas in the theoretical context out of which Mead’s own argument was developed nor have raised some of the basic sociological questions that might have followed from an awareness of that context.\(^{35}\)

In answer to the suggestions made by Joas and Farr it will be argued that such an awareness will make it an exceedingly hazardous task to return to Mead’s social psychology with the prospect of reinforcing the scientific


\(^{34}\) I am referring here to *Metaphysics* and *Relative Space-Time and Simultaneity*, found and published by D. L. Miller in *The Review of Metaphysics* in 1964.

discipline of social psychology. On this point I find myself in agreement with B. M. Fisher and A. L. Strauss stating:

We are inclined to doubt whether Mead himself would have envisaged or even desired such a program. The problem, from his standpoint, was for social science researchers to get an adequate social psychology, and to pursue the study of relevant social conditions in the moral and intellectual context imposed by science and progressive citizenship. There is far less in Mead’s work to suggest a highly structured program of such activities (which, indeed, would have run counter to his argument about “problems” in general), than there is to suggest his concern that social science not turn in certain directions. In this respect, it is more Meadian in spirit to ask what problems Mead’s theory of social progress raises for sociologists than to outline a Meadian discipline.\(^{36}\)

That Mead might be regarded as beneficial to contemporary social psychology seems a fairly common view. Joas enumerates no less than six distinctive approaches among scholars returning to Mead for inspiration and support. On the other hand, the number of stances taken projects his contribution to a social psychology as a most ambiguous one. This can be illustrated by briefly reiterating Joas’ enumeration and so providing an occasion to delineate my own argument.

The first direction taken by scholars is that of Behaviourism, stirred, presumably, by the fact that Mead on occasion referred to his own position as Behaviourist. This field of interpretation has in large part been that of distinguishing between “true” Behaviourism, as exemplified by the non-reductionist or social psychology of Mead, and the so-called “Watsonism”. According to Joas this has resulted in little more than his thought being understood as an “inconsequent variation of rigorous behaviorism”.\(^{37}\) Proponents of this interpretation are C. Morris,\(^{38}\) G. C. Homans\(^{39}\) and, more recently, I. Scheffler\(^{40}\) and the neo-positivist Iowa-school. Against this direction the present argument will direct a rejection of the stimulus-response sequence that, even when incorporating feedback loops, is at odds with the Functional psychology permeating Mead’s social psychology of the act and, particularly, the Pragmatist epistemology underpinning it.

problem-solving activity of socially constituted selves, social organisation and human needs. However, as it neglects the biological and evolutionary strands in Mead’s thought and intellectualises the concept of meaning and reduces the concept of action to interaction, this reading presents to Joas severe deviations from Mead’s thought. In the present text, the Symbolic interactionist’s emphasis on the problem-solving character of human activity and the social constitution of selves as characteristic features of Mead’s work will find support. However, the intellectualisation of the individual and reducing of action to interaction will be criticised. In fact, this critique will be at the center of the present argument.

The third direction is the phenomenological one and which gained momentum from A. Schutz and M. Natanson who, particularly in the case of the latter, elaborate upon the aspects of subjectivity in the manuscripts comprised in the two volumes called Philosophy of the Present and Philosophy of the Act. Natanson’s interpretation builds, however, on two views that to Joas seem less advantageous. The first is a hollow notion stating a development from “problematical empiricism” to an “idealistic and subjectivistic” account of social reality. The second weakness is a methodological one, consisting of a far too narrow spectrum of points of reference between Mead and phenomenology (Schutz and Husserl). These Phenomenological interpretations of Mead shall play but a small role here, although matters of phenomenological relevance will be plenty. A point will be made of the Husserlian maxim of seeking for the thing in itself, used by B. Glassner in his Essential Interactionism when interpreting and using Mead in more recent social psychology. Though striking a chord in Mead’s thought, the quest for the thing in itself takes quite a different turn. In dealing with these matters service will be made of Mead’s assessment of Einstein’s theory of relativity.

The fourth and theological direction taken in the reception of Mead is one to which Joas evidently attaches little interest, chiefly due to its lack of theoretical distinction. This is particularly the case as regards the strong influences of natural science to be confronted when reading Mead. There are exceptions however, and among the ones Joas chooses to mention are P. E. Pfuetze’s bringing M. Buber’s intersubjectivity to Mead and K. Raiser on the constitution of the object and of time. The religious and ethical issues implied by Mead’s late work will not be commented on here. On the other hand, attention will be devoted to the so-called “intersubjectivity” charac-
teristic of Buber’s thought as well as the constitution of the object and time touched upon by Raizer. Here too Mead’s interest for the questions raised by Einstein will be of service.

Regarding the fifth direction, the metaphysical one, H. Lee, A. Reck and D. Miller stand out in that they have dealt with matters neglected in sociology due to their alleged obscurity. These scholars have devoted themselves particularly to the late and in large measure posthumously published work of Mead devoted to the concept of sociality. The main criticism Joas has is their ambition to synthesise the massive body of hypotheses, premises and accounts by means of this single concept. In the present text, geared to discuss the act of a social psychology, it will be argued that what we as social psychologists call ‘social’ cannot, by default, be separated from our act in or during which we observe the object considered social. Thus, to separate his act theory and his critique of philosophy and science from the concept of sociality will be regarded detrimental. Rather, it will be shown that to Mead sociality is not only a concept, but a cosmological axiom or principle. In this respect the present text will liaise with the metaphysical tradition of reading Mead. This holds true also of in the face of Joas’ second point of critique; namely that this tradition plays down developmental aspects of Mead’s thought and stresses the latter part of his scholarship. As the main objective here is to demonstrate the obstacles facing the scholar returning to Mead for a genuinely social psychology, little is to be gained by debating on what points Mead changed his mind and when. What might be relevant is why the changed his mind. And insofar these reasons are conceptual, rather than political, I am quite certain that these reasons can be accessed in a more properly in the context of the various issues to which they relate.

Anyway, Joas critique assumes an objective that has little in common to mine. Historical and the philosophical readings are of two different kinds and ought therefore to be handled differently. Here we are interested in Mead’s view on social psychology and science and in this respect the late texts constitute a more relevant and consistent source of information than his early articles (and the transcripts made by his students). I will assume, that is to say, that he had reasons for changing his mind.

Joas adds to these more or less traditional directions in the reception of Mead a sixth one, addressed as a new understanding of Mead. It seems to have been constituted by young scholars returning to Mead in the 1970s and opposing traditional interpretations and adaptations primarily with a reoriented phenomenological reading. A particularly strong impression on

Joas has been made by G. A. Cook. Others are P. Tibbetts and S. Rosenthal. I would like to add J. Huber to this group. Though primarily affiliated with Symbolic interactionism, this author nevertheless attempts a new understanding of Mead in a fashion relevant the present argument.

In a paper contemporary to the authors mentioned by Joas, Symbolic Interaction as a Pragmatic Perspective: The Bias of emergent Theory, Huber propounds that a closer reading of Mead suggests that a scientific use of the Blumerian adaptation of Mead’s social psychology meets with an epistemological difficulty. Not only, it is said, because Mead was more prone to discuss science in terms of natural sciences in general and that problems so conceived will be offered technological solutions rather than social ones.

To illustrate the scientific method, almost all of Mead’s examples refer to the natural or physical sciences where consensus on goals is high and the solutions are technological. In a rare discussion of a social problem, Mead says that various cult values – which are incommensurable – will present a solution; hence the scientist must learn to state, as far as possible, our social customs in terms of their functions. What the scientist is supposed to do when this much is accomplished Mead does not say.

According to Huber, social problems are not solved by means of measurements, but by means of “an emergent social consciousness of participants systematically confronted”. In other words, in the Pragmatic epistemology upon which Symbolic Interactionism rests, truth is conceived as the emergence of significant meaning. And whereas significance is established in the social act involving both the observer and the individuals observed, the theoretical component accompanying experience in the scientific procedure becomes ambiguous. Without having formulated assumptions upon which to place expectations regarding the object to be observed, the researcher will not be able to “lose the game”. This being so, it would appear

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53 Ibid. p. 56.
that little differentiate their reports from those of journalists. Therefore, as long as researchers within the Meadian tradition conduct studies on marginalised or deviant groups, such as is allegedly the typical case within Symbolic Interactionism, this ambiguity is less likely to surface. (These informants are not likely to confront the individual observer.)

Facing the Pragmatism of Mead’s social psychology is essential to any attempt at reinforcing social psychology by (re)turning to this scholar. Unlike Huber, who envisages a social psychological research afterwards, I doubt this is feasible. To demand from the scientist to explicate hidden assumptions liable to produce biases in observation does not bring about a reconciliation of issues raised by Mead. In saying this, I purport to take Huber’s argument a step further by suggesting that the bias cannot be separated from the definite object *per se*. The definitions of the object, that is to say, are impossible without there being assumptions unaccounted for and hence these immediate aspects go into the object reflected (upon). I will argue that taking what Mead calls the “whole situation” into account and in which the object appears, the explication of assumptions brings with it an infinite regression out of which no action or realisation can emerge. There is no object or phenomenon “at the beginning”, as in the Positivist conception, apart from our response to it. The characters of the object are simultaneous and reciprocal with our mediating approach. Thus, our approach *per se* is immediate and once immediate assumptions are reflected upon, a new set of immediate assumptions will be called into contention as “hidden” in this new reflection completed. There is then a temporal flaw in this suggestion, since the increasing array of reflections will not refer to the same object. A new object will appear with each new and self-revealing reflection.

In connection to this Symbolic interactionist attempt at a closer adherence to Mead, it would be proper to give additional form also to the other major direction, *Social behaviourism*. To accomplish this, I shall address some issues raised by J. D. Lewis, *A Social Behaviorist Interpretation of the Meadian “I”*. The main topic of this article is the standard criticism directed against Behaviourism, namely to avoid or simply ignore consciousness as part of human behavior.

The idea structuring Lewis’ account of Mead is that Symbolic interactionists have tended to misinterpret Mead’s “I” because their principal source has been confined to *Mind, Self and Society*. In that volume, Lewis counts no less than twelve different guises of this term. However, according to his argument these can be grouped into two classes: those in which “I” signifies an *individual response* and those in which “I” refers to an *individual attitude*. The difference implied here seems in Lewis’ view to be important in three respects. Firstly, while treating “I” as an attitude, one will

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be able (and here Lewis speaks of Symbolic interactionists) to eliminate it as a behavioral fact and so treat it as either a residue or as a remedy introduced in order to avoid a complete structural determination of the individual. Secondly, in the sense of an attitude, one will find oneself preoccupied by an unobservable or covert component of meaning in behavior and loose sight of what is positively there in the experience of the individual observer. Thirdly, treating “I” as an attitude, one will obscure the dynamic relationship between “I” and “me”, since in such an attitude-attitude relationship (“me” is considered an attitude by Lewis), nothing will supply the experiential material in relation to which the attitudes are attitudes. On the other hand, by interpreting “I” as a response, a pathway is secured for what Lewis calls a “far more rigorous, objective elaboration” of Mead’s concepts.55 And a far more rigorous, objective elaboration of Mead’s concepts is apparently what is called for.

Mead should be identified as an early pioneer in this field who established its basic theoretical and philosophical principles but lacked the sophisticated instrumentation required to pursue it in depth as a scientific research program. Nevertheless, his social behaviourism provides the vital theoretical linkages between physiological psychology and social psychology necessary to get such a research program started.56

What Lewis is calling for is an “I” usable for experimental inquiry.57 That is to say, a response to be checked against a stimulus.

As Lewis moves on to provide the basic features of this Meadian research programme, he advances four aspects of Mead’s “theory of action”.58 These are i) From Symbol to Attitude, ii) The First Feedback Phase, iii) From Attitude to Response and iv) The Final Feedback Phase. Now, rather than going into details here, I would like to make a general point relevant to the present argument. This point relates to the phases and their significance in Mead’s thought. As regards the first phase, Lewis notes that Mead “leaves much unexplained”. In connection to the second phase, Lewis remarks “Mead seems wrong in his assertion that consciousness or ‘inner conversation’ arises only in cases where one’s habitual mode of conduct has been blocked” and “Further refinements of Meadian social behaviourism could make valuable contributions […]”. With respect to the third phase, it is suggested, “[…] it could be argued convincingly that Mead overlooked cases in which the response involves a sustained effort of some kind”. Finally, the fourth phase, “While Mead’s own statements about the generalised other are not theoretically sophisticated enough to account for the complex inter-

56 Ibid. p. 61-2.
57 Ibid. p. 70.
58 Ibid. p. 72-9. The quotes to follow are to be found in this section of the article.
actions among the three sources of feedback input, we can add further theoretical assumptions which allow us to study these more subtle aspects of the final feedback phase of the act without moving outside the social behaviourist paradigm”. Now, it seems to me that what Lewis has in mind has more to do with science than Mead and Mead’s view on science. That is to say, Lewis seems preoccupied with adjusting Mead to scientific procedure rather than adjusting scientific procedure to Mead.

In the present text, Mead’s assessment of science will be used as it stands, particularly in connection to Einstein’s theory of relativity. Indeed, and as pointed out by Joas earlier, Einstein’s findings gave Mead a spectacular opportunity to develop his views on science. In contrast to Lewis, I will argue that Mead was far from formulating a scientific programme, or a social psychology upon which to build a new science. Rather he will be seen to account for the emergence of significant meaning in the scientific act. Mead’s objective, therefore, is not scientific but social psychological. Science is rather the object of his social psychology.

Before moving on to the general outline of the argument, I should mention here that the distinction or twin concept of “I” and “Me” will be used here despite the fact that these are insignificant, if at all visible, in the late lectures, essays and fragments found in connection with Mead’s death. However, since this distinction has become one of the most characteristic features of Mead’s thought in contemporary social psychology, it will be incorporated as a pedagogical device. Grasping Mead’s late thought is not an easy task.

1.4 Outline of the Argument

Most people not only think of individuals and society as more or less separate and antithetical, but they look upon the former as antecedent to the latter. That persons make society would be generally admitted as a matter of course; but that society makes persons would strike many as a startling notion, though I know of no good reason for looking upon the distributive aspect of life as more primary or causative than the collective aspect.59

As noted earlier, those who claim to have read Mead are largely those who have read the notes taken by his students and collected in Mind, Self and Society. Even when reading theoretical treatises on Mead, one finds this text to be a major source. It should come as no surprise therefore that Mead’s work has been thought of as a general and fruitful “perspective” or “approach”. Even though I at times have found myself willing to concur, I nevertheless suspect that one makes a difficult task easier by letting such

contentions suffice. Anyone having perused the texts included in Philosophy of the Present and Philosophy of the Act will see the complexities involved: not only in terms of the issues discussed but also in terms of the literary incompleteness in which they were left. But it would be incorrect to reduce these complexities to “metaphysics”, to an abstruse philosophy, of little or no practical relevance to contemporary concerns. In this I find myself in complete agreement with Farr. Reading these fragments and essays closely, one finds in them a juxtaposition of aspects revolving consistent philosophical, scientific and social psychological lines of thought. In the following I shall treat these texts as philosophical problems addressed in a scientific language and offering social psychological answers in terms of a social principle. This principle, as far as human endeavors are concerned, is embodied by the act.

As these texts stand, the lines structuring the arguments are often detectable but rarely if ever explicit. Overlapping of issues, incomplete use of emphasis and widely distributed premises and definitions tends to create complex conceptual tissues. Also, motivated by the prospect of a social psychological co-ordination of social and physical objects, Mead displays considerable effort and strain in dealing with the theory of relativity. Perhaps this strain can be viewed in the light of the fact that his time was circumscribed. Despite the editorial work made by A. E. Murphy, C. W. Morris and D. L. Miller, these texts nevertheless suffer from being incomplete.

As a buttress to aid my presentation and discussion of Mead’s social psychology I have entered the material into my computer and created an index with which to display patterns of thought relevant to my concerns. The material covered in this index are all nine lectures and supplementary essays in Philosophy of the Present and Philosophy of the Act; and primarily, although not exclusively, those manuscripts in Philosophy of the Act that deal with the act, mind and relativity. I have also indexed the two essays found and published by D. L. Mead.

60 According to Joas, this co-ordination was begun in The Mechanism of Social Consciousness but extends, as far as I can see, into the essays and fragments collected in Philosophy of the Present and Philosophy of the Act. Joas, H. G. H. Mead. A Contemporary Re-examination of His Thought. p. 106.

61 I am here alluding to the struggle that ensued with the appointment of R. Hutchins as President of University of Chicago and who envisaged a re-organisation of the department of philosophy. Mead was its Chairman and to be replaced by M. Adler and died only a few weeks after the department had broken with Hutchins. Collins, R. Toward a Neo-Meadian Sociology of Mind in George Herbert Mead. Critical Assessment. Vol. 4. (ed.) P. Hamilton. p. 268.

Miller known as *Relative Space-Time and Simultaneity* and *Metaphysics*. However, I shall lean heavily on *Philosophy of the Present* since it was intended as his first comprehensive publication, quite possibly to serve as a defense against the threat posed by the President at Chicago University.

Now, it is my intention to examine the foundations of a return to Mead with the prospect of reclaiming a scientific and genuine social psychology. My guiding question reads: is this possible? Are we justified in placing a scientific social psychology on the basis of Mead’s thought? I shall argue, based on Mead’s assessment of science and completed in close connection to Einstein’s theory of relativity, that it is not. In fact, I shall argue that there are strong reasons to question the very idea of a scientific and genuinely social psychology as far as Mead’s understanding of science and social psychology is concerned. These are two different acts whose objects, and hence objectives, are reflective of two different kinds of sociality.

In demonstrating this difference between two kinds of sociality, I shall make use of Bergson’s decomposition of time in relativity theory. This will take the form of an elaboration of the latter’s distinction between *half* and *complete reciprocity* into a distinction decisive to Mead’s late work. The components of this distinction will accordingly be termed *half* and *complete sociality*.

The reason why Bergson is called upon relates to the fact that Mead’s analysis of time in relativity theory and elsewhere is distinctly reminiscent of Bergson’s his work on this very issue in *Duration and Simultaneity*. The 1887 argument, called *Time and Free Will*, not only directed critique against the psychology produced by German Psychophysicists and British Associationists. This critique appears in retrospect as a first draft of the same critique launched against philosophers and physicists using the physical concept of time in philosophical and psychological analysis. The idea common to these two seemingly disparate progressions of thought, directed at both physical and social objects as it were, was the making distinct of an indistinct experience by abstracting time from experience. By rendering time through space the becoming or process of nature is replaced by a nature already there as an instantaneity and available to consciousness as a distinct multitude of objects. This would mean that we in order to conceive of the reality explained as a temporal or passing one should have to project our

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experience back into the indistinct multitude that made the distinction of our experience possible. The argument made by Bergson, and later repeated by Dewey in his classical article *The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology*, is therefore a meta-scientific or philosophical one, stressing the importance of not confusing two elementary and temporal aspects of experience.

It is reasonable to assume that Mead in Bergson’s philosophy recognised a kinship, particularly with respect to the biological framework of evolution that to both authors represented a conceptual alternative to the Mechanist figures of thought revolving in physics and mathematics at the time. The dialectical notion of emergence, which Mead advanced with great emphasis, reflects a desire to move beyond the statement of change that in a Mechanist frame was restricted to redistribution within a pre-existing multitude of distinct elements. However, to say that Mead advocates a temporal analysis having strong Bergsonian reminiscences built into it is not merely to suggest that Dynamism runs through both accounts. The Bergsonian influence is also to be found in the approach to the theory of relativity that presented Mead with the opportunity of demonstrating the flaws of psychology and the necessity of pondering experience as essentially social. He advocated a social psychology by stressing a distinction succinctly formulated by Bergson in connection to Einstein’s theory of relativity; that between complete and half reciprocity.

Significantly, Bergson’s temporal decomposition of Einstein’s theory of relativity offers a template by which the identification of the composite elements and the tracing of its implications in the scientific explanation might be completed. Approaching the concept of sociality without decomposition it, that is to say, it is likely to generate paradoxes in social psychological analysis similar in kind with those pointed out by Bergson as attaching to Becquerel’s interpretation of Einstein’s results. Thus, by adhering to Bergson’s caution we might avoid the conceptual point at which these paradoxes appear; namely whenever we confound two aspects of Mead’s concept of sociality and have two conceptions posing as one. This is particularly likely to happen when we try to make explicit the sociality of object and the relationship in which we as individual observers indicate this object as being social.

This is not to suggest that Mead and Bergson were on a complete par. In fact, Mead strongly rejected certain aspects of Bergson’s philosophy. Focusing on Mead’s social assessment of science it is important to bear in mind that the major issue in his rejection of Bergson consisted precisely in the latter’s view of science.63

In this critique of Bergson lies a complex concern and I shall address this in order to determine its relevance to the present argument. In Mead’s view

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63 This is readily to be seen in the review of Bergson included in the collection of Mead articles published by M. H. Moore in *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. 
Bergson’s critique of science was an Irrationalist one in which the creativity and novelty of the immediate experience are separated from and posited as the counterpart to (scientific) reflection. As such it exhibited in Mead’s view an insufficient consideration for the nature of scientific conduct. Against this Mead argued that science must be understood as an in itself creative aspect of nature and be given a non-Irrationalist account. This is done by Mead in his social psychological analysis of the act. Here reflection is returned to nature in terms of problem-solving; as such the very basis for all knowledge. To Mead Bergson’s suggestion of an intuitive knowledge of the real face of time, of becoming or “the creative advance of nature”, seemed more or less a reformulation of the introspective method that, in its extreme formulation, Mead refers to as Absolute Idealism. Thus, bringing the whole of reality inside individual experience is but the flip side to locating the whole of reality outside experience as in absolute Materialism. The one is just as unfortunate as the other.

Having said as much, a declaration as to their compatibility must follow. Firstly, both Mead and Bergson are pursuing a temporal critique of science whose objective is to reassess the truth-value of its products. The argument directed by Mead against Bergson relates rather to the path chosen by the latter in completing this objective. According to Mead, Bergson fails to give a satisfactory account for the rational and logical procedure in the scientific method. Merely to demonstrate the intuitive or immediate aspect of experience does not go to make up an experiential account for observation and explanation. In this Mead’s social psychological account exceeds the philosophy of Bergson. What Bergson accomplishes is to point out the limitations attaching to science, whereas Mead accounts for the role of scientific reflection in nature and human behavior. In fact, he shows how reflective and immediate experiences function in scientific behavior. Secondly, the precision with which Bergson furnishes a temporal dichotomy and the eloquence with which he has applied it to Einstein’s theory of relativity makes it an excellent instrument with which to enhance the features of Mead’s venture. In his own words, he wished to “to present mind as an evolution in nature, in which culminates that sociality which is the principle and the form of emergence”, where the “emergence in nature of sensuous qualities is due to the fact that an organism can respond to nature in differing systematic attitudes and yet occupy both attitudes. Thirdly, Bergson was not ignorant of the sociality with which Mead accounted for the relativity of perceptual objects. In fact he advances sociality as the very criterion with which to distinguish between real and virtual kinds of time. This is yet another reason for including Bergson here.

64 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 172.
65 Ibid. p. 161.
66 Ibid. p. 85.
Now, the motor common to the assessments made by Bergson and Mead regarding Einstein’s relativity is a conceptual transformation of time into space. Where Bergson focuses his attention on the reality of time in Einstein’s theory of relativity, the focus of the present assessment is the reality of passage in Mead’s theory of sociality. And where Bergson demonstrates the tacit mixing of real and virtual time, I shall in this Meadian context demonstrate a tacit mixing of emergent and bare passage.

If, in Bergson’s phrase, ‘real duration’ becomes time through the appearance of unique events which are distinguishable from each other through their qualitative nature, a something that is emergent in each event, then bare passage is a manner of arranging these events. But what is essential to this arrangement is that in each interval which is isolated it must be possible that something should become, that something unique should arise. We are subject to a psychological illusion if we assume that the rhythm of counting and the order which arises out of counting answer to a structure of passage itself, apart from the processes which fall into orders through the emergence of events. We never reach the interval itself between events, except in correlation’s between them and other situations within which we find congruence and replacement, something that can never take place in passage as such. We reach what may be called a functional equality of represented intervals within processes involving balance and rhythm, but on this basis to set up time as a quantity having an essential nature that allows of its being divided into equal portions of itself is an unwarranted use of abstraction. […]

A present then, as contrasted with the abstraction of mere passage, is not a piece cut out anywhere from the temporal dimension of uniformly passing reality. Its chief reference is to the emergent event, that is, to the occurrence of something which is more than the processes that have led up to it and which by its change, continuance, or disappearance, adds to later passages a content they would not otherwise have possessed.67

With reference to Mead’s social psychology this means that there might occur a tacit mixing regarding the passage involved in the social consciousness or role-taking of observation. In order to address this, it is imperative to understand that there are two aspects of passage and that these aspects may co-exist in our representations of the mind, of the social consciousness or role-taking. Thus, in order not to confound the theoretical relationships between the role-taking observed by the social psychologist and the role-taking by means of which he completes his observation, we need to decompose the passage of mind properly. This is necessary if we are to understand the emergent passage between individual perspectives (role-taking) and how it controls the fashion in which the scientific object appears in the social psychological act. Indeed, the manner in which the object of the social psychological observation and its explanation are understood will depend on

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67 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 22-3.
the manner in which we, as social psychologists grasp these two aspects of time in Mead’s work.

This approach to Mead falls back on the following assumptions: firstly, Mead sought to reformulate the principle of relativity as an incompletely social, or physical, approximation of the social principle and secondly, a social psychological analogy of the assessment of Einstein made by Bergson. The argument of this text assumes therefore that readers may deduce from Mead’s social psychology the existence of multiple real acts to the extent that they commit the same conceptual transformation of time into space that has compelled readers to conclude from Einstein’s theory of relativity the existence of a multitude of real times.

To place Bergson’s assessment of relativity upon Mead’s sociality is a hazardous venture. The task is made less so, however, by using Mead’s own assessment of relativity as firmament. In fact, when stating that “this principle [of sociality] has been evidenced most clearly in the doctrine of relativity as applied to physical theory”68 Mead lends himself to the approach suggested.

The principle in question reads:

[T]he principle of sociality that I am attempting to enunciate is that in the present within which emergent change takes place the emergent object belongs to different systems in its passage from the old to the new because of its systematic relationship with other structures, and possesses the characters it has because of this membership in these different systems.69

Thus, it would seem that the theory of relativity serves as a template upon which Mead elaborates the principle of sociality. As noted by Joas, Einstein’s principle of relativity provided Mead with a possibility of demonstrating nature as fundamentally social. Approaching Mead from this angle also enables an understanding of his many, and at times obscure, references to Whitehead’s relativist philosophy of nature. The most salient trace of this influence is the notion of cogredience between perspectives. In point of fact, it delivers Mead the opportunity of calling to attention the social consciousness necessary for the relativity of objects to appear.

68 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 65.
69 Ibid. p. 65. And later in the same paragraph as compared to the phenomena of life and consciousness: “In all three there is emergence, and the character of this emergence is due to the presence in different systems of the same object or group of objects. Thus we find that in one system with certain space, time and energy characters, an object moving with a high velocity has an increased mass because it is characterized by different space, time and energy coefficients, and the whole physical system is thereby affected. In like manner, it is because an animal is both alive and a part of a physico-chemical world that life is an emergent and extends it influence to the environment about it. It is because the conscious individual is both an animal and also able to look before and after that consciousness emerges with the meanings and values with which it informs the world.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 67.
Whitehead […] refers to a double consciousness of cогredience, in which the observer identifies himself both with the space-time of a train and with that of the landscape through which the train is moving. Evidently relativity as a doctrine would have been impossible but for this type of consciousness. Einstein’s doctrine has been called one of signals. It involves the realization of different meanings of the spatio-temporal order of events in different systems at the same time. Now I have presented consciousness as the response of an organism to its own responses, with the corresponding change which the environment undergoes in its meanings.70

Holding on to this notion, note also that a double consciousness does not suffice if we are to comprehend the persistent relation between any two systems of reference. In order to comprehend that both perspectives refers to the same train and the same environment, rather than two different ones in parallel realities, or an object becoming another when changing one’s point of view, we need to take recourse to a third point of reference in which the characters common and peculiar to the perspectives can be accounted for without contradicting one another. Only in this manner the relative object may be given a definite statement with which to explain the diverging experiences or observations of the object.

In terms of common conditions, by transformation formulae, we can pass from one value field to another, and thus come nearer finding out which is more valuable, or rather how to conserve each. The common perspective is comprehensibility, and comprehensibility is the statement in terms of common social conditions.

It is the relation of the individual perspective to the common perspective that is of importance.71

This statement relates not only to the individual involved in a particular relationship with the environment. It has bearing also upon the act of the social psychologist wishing to understand why what is happening does happen. Thus, in the case of social psychological observation there will be two relations: one between the individual and environment observed and one between the individual observer and the environmental object (the act) he is observing. For the social psychologist this means that not only must he assume, if proceeding upon Mead as his source of inspiration, that there is a common perspective involved in his environment, in the object or set of characters indicated in observation. He must also, as indicated by Joas, take into account the perspective he himself is using in order to comprehend the common perspective propelling the act making up his distant experience.

But how, and this is the question propelling the argument of this text, is he to verify that these two perspectives are compatible? How is he to assure

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70 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 78
71 Ibid. p. 167.
himself that the social occurrence “over there” has the characters they have “here”? It will be argued that basing a scientific observation upon Mead’s social psychology is possible only upon a cursory reading or, alternatively, a radical revision. Whatever the case, it violates Mead’s view of the relationship between social psychology and science. In consequence thereof a social psychology regarded as scientific within a Meadian frame of reference will suffer from the effects of an individual, and incompletely social, perspective as opposed to a completely social one. In social psychology we shall find the scientific observation to suffer from the chimera of a dis/connection between individual and environment appearing in the experience of the individual observing an object as if “there” (decoupled from “here”).

Recognising the importance exerted upon Mead by Whitehead, this scholar is excluded from the subsequent account of Mead’s philosophy for the following reasons. Firstly, Bergson fulfils the task of mediating Mead’s view on science with more ease than does Whitehead. Secondly, Whitehead’s philosophy ran counter to Mead in a matter very much at the heart of the latter. Bergson, unlike Whitehead, directed a critique against science very much in the same vein as did Mead. Where the latter in Mead’s view effected a return to a Platonic bifurcation of nature into the realms of the momentary and subjective on the one hand and the eternal and objective on the other, the former shared Mead’s call for a profound re-evaluation of time and experience. In accordance with Bergson’s assessment of relativity, and the chimera of multiple real times having resulted from it, we shall have to insert into our analysis of the scientific explanation a second acting or actual observer; a genuinely social consciousness, speaking with Mead. If not, we might fail to distinguish between virtual real acts, just as readers of Einstein have failed to distinguish between virtual and real times.

Bringing this Bergsonian reading of Mead closer to the composition of the present argument, let me first reiterate the idea behind using Bergson’s assessment of relativity. If Bergson is correct in arguing that the multitude of real times drawn from relativity theory by readers of Einstein in fact results from a composite concept of time, and if it can be demonstrated that the social psychology drawn from Mead’s work feeds from a composite concept of sociality, then it would seem that Bergson’s argument has bearing also upon how social psychologists assess their observations of social phenomena. Particularly to the extent they rely on Mead in doing so. Acknowledging that Mead identifies sociality as the meaning of emergence and supposing this concept of sociality not to be decomposed, it will be argued to generate paradoxes in social psychology similar to those accepted by Becquerel as real features of nature. Thus, the emergent passage of the act will fixate in various hypothetical forms or objects depending upon the dimension of significance used in the premeditating arrest of action we call reflection. This suggests, in turn, that the social psychologist might lose sight of a difference between social transaction and social interaction.
To accomplish this Bergsonian reading of Mead, the following measures need to be taken: firstly, to demonstrate the presence of a composite concept of sociality, secondly, to identify the components of this composite concept and thirdly, to trace the implications of the composite in the scientific and social psychological observation.

In accordance with Bergson’s analytical method I shall decompose the concept of sociality alongside what Deleuze calls its two “natural articulations” or “lines”.72 These lines, space and time respectively, disclose the sociality of objects in two modes of differentiation: those of degrees and those of kind.

When we divide something up according to its natural articulations (as with proportions and figures that vary greatly from case to case), we have: on the one hand, the aspect of space, by which the thing can only ever differ in degree from other things and from itself (augmentation, diminution); and on the other hand, the aspect of duration, by which the thing differs in kind from all others and from itself (alteration).73

The articulation along these lines answers to the first step of the method. In the second step we shall find that the object is composite by necessity; that this is how the object we observe presents itself to us in observation. As a means of illustration, let me once again refer to Deleuze’s demonstration of Bergson’s method. However, as he in this quote cites Bergson on a particular matter, I shall have to exchange perception with transaction, recollection with interaction and psychology with social psychology. In this fashion I shall move in on the composite concept of sociality involved in scientific observation.

Once again, the question is not whether the two lines meet and mix together. This mixture is our experience itself, our representation. But all our false problems derive from the fact that we do not know how to go beyond experience toward the conditions of experience, toward the articulation of the real, and rediscover what differs in kind in the composites that are given to us and on which we live. These two acts, transaction and interaction, “always interpenetrate each other, are always exchanging something of their substance as by a process of endosmosis. The proper office of social psychologists would be to dissociate them, to give back to each its natural purity; in this way many difficulties raised by social psychology and perhaps also by metaphysics might be lessened. But they will have it that these mixed states, compounded, in unequal proportions, of pure transaction and pure interaction, are simple. And so we are condemned to an ignorance alike of pure interaction and of pure transaction, to knowing only a simple kind of phenomenon that will be called now interaction and now transaction, according to the predominance in it of one or other of the two aspects; and,

72 I am here referring to Deleuze’s investigation of Bergson’s method of intuition. Deleuze, G. Bergsonism
73 Deleuze, G. Bergsonism. p. 31.
consequently, to finding between transaction and interaction only a
difference in degree and not in kind.”74

This indicates the danger of not having investigated the concept of sociality,
but of acting upon it immediately.

The third step in my reading of Mead, although without a proper counter-
part in Deleuze’s characterisation of Bergson’s method, is to demonstrate the
implications of treating the concept of sociality as if it were simple or
monolithic. However, this demonstration will echo Bergson’s demonstration of
the less and the more with respect to time (t and the multitude of t’s
respectively) in the context of relativity theory. With these terms are
signified the reduction of the object observed and the multiplication that will
ensue when applying various dimensions, particularly that of light in the
context of relativity, with which to bring the object significant meaning. In
the present case, the lessening will involve a reduction of transaction into
interaction. The multiplication, in turn, refers to the chimeras of interaction
emerging in the individual observer’s reflective and incompletely social role-
taking (or social consciousness) of the object.

This argument will distribute among the chapters of this text in the
following fashion.

The second and following chapter will offer an interpretation of Mead’s
act theory as it is defined in Philosophy of the Act. This means that we shall
learn how the individual act with reference to physical objects. The idea here
is to furnish a conceptual frame with which to approach the observation of
social objects. Mead did not, as indicated by Fisher and Strauss, complete a
co-ordination of “physical” and “social” objects. This is certainly true if one
with social objects wishes to include phenomena such as social conflicts and
dilemmas. Mead’s own examples and his act theory are designed to deal
with problems: situations that demand and offer solutions whereby the
ambiguous object is offered characters such as to control and complete the
act. Thus Mead’s assessment of scientific procedure works nicely only as
long as we consider the objects “physical”. Mead was not a social psycho-
logical scientist, even when judged by the standards of his own time. His
concerns were meta-scientific ones and rarely separated physical or natural
from social sciences. In terms of procedure, that is to say in terms of
behavior, he spoke only of science.

It might seem odd or even self-contradictory that Mead spoke of science
in a general or inclusive manner while yet advancing a distinction between
physical and social objects. However, as pointed out by Farr, this pursuit was
not aiming at a distinction, but a synthesis capable of superseding the con-
ventional and scientific boundaries reflecting the separation. This is

74 Deleuze, G. Bergsonism. p. 26-7. The quote is taken from H. Bergson’s Matter and
Memory. p. 67.
managed by attending characters common to both and completes their co-
ordination on this elementary level of conception. There are three critical
concepts to this synthetic endeavor: simultaneity, reciprocity and the present
(time or passage). Together they make possible a social reformulation of all
objects, whether referred to as “physical” or “social” in conventional
language. Having said as much, it is important to point out also that when
Mead in fact did distinguish between natural and social sciences, he did so
from this philosophical and synthetic point of view. This is how we can
make sense of the fact that he, by means of Einstein’s relativity, attempted to
show that physical objects are fundamentally social. Indeed, in Mead’s view
the theory of relativity launched by Einstein cleared the way for the refor-
mulation of physical objects as social. Understanding his view on Einstein’s
theory of relativity is therefore imperative for a proper assessment of both
science and sociality in Mead’s work. For this reason the second chapter
shall present the theory of acts controlled by “physical” objects in
connection to issues raised by Einstein’s theory of relativity.

Proceeding in this manner by beginning with “physical” objects is in
accord with Mead’s own work. As noted above, he never really got a firm
grip on “social” objects and the co-ordination was left incomplete at his
death. These matters will be dealt with in the third chapter. Here the three
concepts mentioned will be employed and made to show, by distinguishing
between half and complete reciprocity and specious and functional presents
respectively, how and with what consequences the synthetic concept of
sociality becomes ambiguous if properly decomposed.

Clearly, suggesting that Mead intended a social reformulation of the
physical object is not so say that it is social in the same sense as objects we
are accustomed to call social. Mead advanced a distinction between two
different kinds of sociality, and it will be for the fourth chapter, paying heed
to Bergson’s assessment, to deal with the various ambiguities pouring from
this concept. This chapter then, articulates the effects of not having properly
decomposed the concept of sociality.

The fifth chapter will demonstrate how a return to or reliance upon Mead
in a scientific context will meet with the complexities introduced in the
fourth chapter. Here the suggestion made by Farr that Mead serves as a
social psychological rallying point when to challenge its de-individualisation
or re-socialisation will be rendered a distinctly ambiguous shibboleth. It is
precisely because of Mead’s concept of sociality that a scientific and
genuinely social psychology cannot be attained. This chapter shall therefore
be devoted to the situation of social psychological observation and, particu-
larly, how and with what implications Mead’s concept of sociality
characterises the consciousness of the individual observer and the object to
be explained.
2 The Act

2.1 Wundt, Mead and the Challenge of Relativity

No event exists at an instant, and therefore it is impossible to isolate any event as a cause, or any event as separable from those that precede and follow it. Continuity comes into the relations in nature with the recognition that even the spatial characters of things are passing. The consequent disappearance of “simple location” of events introduces contingency into nature, for it makes the future an active agency in the happenings in nature. The present as distinguishable from that which has occurred or that which will occur has gone.75

This section will provide the reasons for Mead’s fascination with Einstein’s theory of relativity. To do this properly, I shall once more follow Farr’s lead and turn to W. Wundt and the so-called Psychophysical School, which to a significant influenced both social psychology and the modern theory of relativity. It might seem odd that one should find it relevant to turn back to Wundt’s early psychophysical period rather than the period during which he developed his Völcherpsychologie. Yet a link running from Psychophysicism through relativity theory and into social psychology will be traced, the interconnecting term being that of sociality.

W. Wundt received his training by studying and working for L. von Helmholtz in Heidelberg and Berlin and like him, Wundt eventually became professor in philosophy. Yet physiology was their chief concern and, particularly, the methods of natural science with which a new study of man was made possible. When Wundt received his chair in Leipzig in 1875 he established the first psychological laboratory,76 and devised for the measurement of the causal relationship between the individual and his environment, a series of experiments on perception were accomplished. The response elicited from the scientific community was extraordinary. W. James, the so-called father of American psychology, traveled to Leipzig to visit Wundt the

76 The facts structuring this paragraph are to be found in K. B. Madsen’s The history of psychology in a metascientific perspective. p. 116-7.
very same year and during the decade to follow students from all over the world came to study for Wundt and many equipped similar rooms on their return. Even Japan, still in 1864 constituting a more or less feudal society with a divine emperor, sent young men to Leipzig and requested similar installations at their return. These were remarkable times indeed. God’s most articulate expression was to be explained. Studies on vision, hearing, and tactile perception amassed and to some, though not to Wundt himself, there seemed to be no limits to the ways in which man could be subjected to the methods developed by modern science.

Although Wundt was the first to establish a psychological laboratory for the study of psychophysical processes, G. T. Fechner, a fellow student in Heidelberg, had already in 1860 published the Psychophysical programme in *Elemente der Psychophysik.* Stating an observable subject matter available for mathematical formulation the prerequisites necessary to adopt the methods of physics were furnished. As such it promised the exact and objective determinations of the relationship between the mental and the physical and between man and his environment.

This text became renowned not only because of its definition of experimental psychology, but perhaps more so because of a law discovered by E. H. Weber (another fellow student from Heidelberg) years earlier. This law was elaborated upon by Fechner in the text mentioned and hence its name: Weber-Fechner’s Law.

This law was not only regarded as an awaited proof of a constant in the relation between stimulus and response, but perhaps more importantly, a confirmation of the possibility of bringing the methods of natural science into the study of man. Considered the manifestation of a causal relationship between the individual and environment this law promised a new epoch. It seemed that one had achieved a physico-mathematical formulation of a constant relation between a dependent psychological response, mediated by the verbal report of the experimental subject, and an independent, physical stimulus.

Incidentally, this Ernst Heinrich Weber had a younger brother called Wilhelm Eduard Weber. Eduard was a physicist, known to history chiefly by way of the so-called Weber-constant that eventually became decisive in the development of electromagnetic relativity. It was by elaborating upon this constant that H. A. Lorentz managed to construe the so-called beta-factor that was to serve as a cornerstone in Einstein’s theory of relativity. In electromagnetic physics the constant relation between systems was that of a finite and absolute velocity of light and provided the very conceptual basis for what he himself preferred to call the theory of invariance.

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78 Ibid. p. 10.
Now, Wundt was aware of limitations attaching to the Psychophysical undertaking and distinguished between physiological and social explanations of the higher mental functions characteristic of the human organism. In fact, according to Farr he found the qualitative ambiguity of psychological phenomena insurmountable. They appeared both physical and social.

The objects of study in Wundt’s Völkerpsychologie were language, religion, customs, myth, magic and cognate phenomena. These collective phenomena emerge from ‘the reciprocal interaction of the many’ (Wundt, 1916, p. 3) and, according to Wundt, they cannot be explained in terms of the consciousness of the individual which was the basis of his laboratory science. Wundt’s social psychology was, thus, a form of Geisteswissenschaft. Psychology was still the science of mind but in the Völkerpsychologie Wundt analysed mind in its external manifestations, i.e., in terms of culture.79

The generation having studied and been influenced by Wundt’s early experimental science were in large measure those not attaching weight to Wundt’s hesitation. Kulpe, founder of the Wurzburger School and Ebbinghaus stationed at Berlin, to mention but two, attacked the problem insisted upon by Wundt by regarding the social aspect as irrelevant and focused their energy upon the introspective method and exchanged the illusive or non-liminal mind with the psyche. Psychology was determined as a positive science with an object of inquiry delineated by the skin of the human organism. Wundt’s response to this avenue of research was not an enthusiastic one.

It is true that the attempt has frequently been made to investigate the complex functions of thought on the basis of mere introspection. These attempts, however, have always been unsuccessful. Individual consciousness is wholly incapable of giving us a history of human thought, for it is conditioned by an earlier history concerning which it cannot itself give us any knowledge.80

Mind, he argued, is temporal, historical and interwoven with the cultural context within which it develops through the “reciprocal interaction of the many”; predominantly by means of language. To this account offered by Farr, it should be added that H. Joas has found reason to argue that Wundt made an attempt at overcoming the dualist conception and that this attempt consisted in a “postulation of ‘two points of view’ or of ‘two types of experience’”81. It was for Mead to follow this attempt through. And so he did, particularly in the assessment of relativity and the general discussion regarding the nature and limits of science to which this assessment was geared.

Mead recognised the appearance of a problem with Einstein’s theory. Stated in the terms of Psychophysicism advanced in the above, this problem consisted of the disappearance of the object to which both the scientist and the test-person directs attention.

Relativity changed all this. In the geometry of a Minkowski space-time perceptual motion disappears. The ether has vanished, and events take the place of physical things. Time is assimilated to space, and the mind with its own spatial frame of reference adventures into this space-time whose curvature corresponds to the gravitational constant. The result is to carry the whole world of perception and perceptual imagination into perspectives that exhibit only a logical correlation between patterns affected with transformation formulae and events in a four dimensional time-space and intervals between them. By definition both events and intervals here lie outside of any experience. We reach them by way of the reference in the knowledge process to something beyond itself, and by a theory of probability. In our mathematical formulations of scientific experience we have come upon a cipher that seems to refer to inexperiencable entities and their mutual relations; and this hypostasized structure of logical entities satisfies our desire for an absolute reality to which our confessedly relative experience shall refer.

Seen from the vantage point of Mead, the import of Einstein’s electromagnetic theory of relativity theory is readily grasped as a challenge. Since Mead’s philosophy is based upon the act, and the act depends upon the object, it is imperative that the object is accessible to experience during the completion of the act. Without an object no act, and without an act Mead’s social psychology collapses under the weight of Einstein’s relativity. Still, it is reasonable to believe that Mead in the Special theory of relativity rather saw a “physical” verification of an idea he himself had long held; that a psychological theory of consciousness (of objects) was inherently naïve. In order to account properly for the appearance of objects in consciousness we must do so in terms of a social consciousness.

However, the problem posed by the relativity of objects was a genuine problem to Mead. He took its findings seriously and did not simply presuppose that it would support his social psychology of the act in its entirety. In fact, to some extent he might even have considered Einstein’s second theory of relativity, the General theory, a perfect nuisance. It revitalised the bifurcation of nature he had set out to fight and ultimately, to dismantle.

Probing the impact of relativity on a less abstract level, Einstein’s work implies in Mead’s view that the real characters of objects are not within the range of human perception. Our perceptions are but subjective and partial reflections of a true but unattainable reality, save for mathematical representation. In Newtonian relativity, what was relative was the speed of objects in a space having lost the structure granted by absolute rest. What was

measured as the speed of an object depended on the reference against which it was measured. In Einstein’s relativity, however, that which is relative is not only the speed of an object, but also the characters of the object *per se*. The object will vary with the velocity in the dimensions of time, form and mass. And since there is no absolute rest the object will have no absolute reality. Thus, perception has lost its object and, speaking in Psychophysical terms, the response has lost its stimulus. The real dimensions can no longer be obtained through observation since all observations take place in a universe whose objects are in motion. And since all objects are in reciprocal displacement, the object observed will vary with, or be relative to, the system occupied when referring to it.

The solution to this scientific predicament will be returned to repeatedly in this chapter, and it will suffice here to mention that in Mead’s view it consists in establishing a general relativity, wherein the perceptual object is transformed into a super conceptual or super scientific object. This transformation is conducted so as to present an object identical for all conceivable points of reference and independent of differences in motional status. What we are dealing with here is the equations formulated by Lorentz and with which Minkowski construed a space-time continuum; that is to say, the firmament of General Relativity.

This means that so-called objective reality has become a logical or mathematical matrix attainable, not through actual experience, but by ideation. The perceptual object is now a subjective reflection and to amend this, one has construed a conceptual object to be grasped and mediated only by means of transformation formulae. Transferring back to Psychophysics, the challenge of electro-magnetic relativity, although not perhaps finding its way to Wundt directly, signifies the problems as to what the test person is responding to and, perhaps more importantly, how the response is to be measured and accounted for. The stimulus, as it were, has vanished into a 4-dimensional and distinctly virtual reality.

Now, although some of the issues raised by Einstein in Mead’s view hampered Wundt’s project, he appears to have found ground common to both Wundt and Einstein. In the articles pointed out by Joas as markers of

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83 The *perceptual object* is defined by Mead as follows: “In so far as we act without question upon the stimulus of the distance stimulus, this reality accrues to them, and no abstraction is made of the present experience. They constitute the perceptual object. They are there; they are not known.” Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Act*, p. 217. The *scientific object*, on the other hand, is offered in the suggestion that “It is only when this question [the problem] has arisen that knowledge as such appears as an element in the experience. Otherwise the individual’s perspective is simply the reality that is there. Such a selection of characters which are identical for all experience, or nearly so, and are identical for all individuals, gives us the scientific object. They constitute an object for knowledge.” Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Act*, p. 12.
Mead’s development and standing within the scientific community, Mead formed a distinctive approach in opposition to, and beyond, an individualist psychology, the characteristic feature of which was the principle of sociality set as primary to any scientific theory relating to human behavior. Thus, turning Wundt’s idea of “two points of view” or “two kinds of experience” into a principle of sociality enabled Mead to offer a social psychological account of the relativity of objects. In a sense then, the electromagnetic theory of relativity served the project initiated in Mead’s early articles: to demonstrate the naivety of psychology in treating consciousness as an individual phenomenon. The social psychology of consciousness seemed to enable an account avoiding both objectivism and subjectivism. More precisely, Mead’s work on behavior, language and the mechanism of social conduct marks the advent of the analytical model using self as a middle term as it supplied a possible synthesis of the separation spelled out by Wundt in the paradigmatic distinctions between mind-body and individual-collective.

The novelty of Mead’s thought is characterised by Joas in the following manner.

According to Mead, the psychology of sensations grasps only one side of the process he has described, namely that of the conditions in which the reconstruction takes place, while the psychology of mental presentations grasps only the other side, that which is directed toward the reconstruction, the formation of hypotheses.

The articulation of these two aspects of consciousness, the immediate attitude of sensation and the reflective one of thought, are essential to Mead’s concept of sociality and with which he moved towards a reconciliation of Wundt’s differentiation. This was accomplished by accepting Whitehead’s idea of an objective relativism and elaborating upon the spatial and temporal persistence of the actual perspective in which self and object appear.

The objects that are there in independence of the organism imply the organism. That is, the organism is not independent of them. That the organism may be an object, they must be what they are. It must be possible to regard the organism from the standpoint of its field so that it may be there as an object. The process by which the organism has arisen is, however, one in which the organism has determined its field by its susceptibilities and responses. There is a mutual interdependence of the two. This is expressed in the term ‘perspective’.

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85 Ibid. p. 85.
The concept of sociality appeared in great many guises in early social psychology. In very early social psychology, in fact, for in *Social Psychology as the Counterpart to Physiological Psychology* Mead discusses the two authors who are generally accredited with baptising the discipline with which we are here concerned. The authors in question were E. A. Ross and W. McDougall, who in 1908 and independently of each other wrote textbooks for a discipline called “social psychology”. According to Farr, inserting but a parenthesis here, this term was not a novelty appearing with Ross and McDougall. Nor were they first in using the term in a systematic manner. Mead used it as the title of his 1900-1 course at Chicago University.87

Now, as these two views of social psychology were understood by G. H. Mead at that time88 the problem consisted in their views on consciousness and hence the psychology thereof. For Ross, who perhaps is most renowned for his theory of imitation, consciousness is the regularity of “psychic planes and currents that come into existence among men in consequence of their association”. In this view the sociality of consciousness, Mead argues, is merely a numerical effect of men’s association; an individual consciousness, that is, is independent of others and hence sociality is merely the sum of individuals interacting with one another. McDougall took another view, as related by Mead, in claiming that social psychology is the “study reveal[ing] sociality not as the result of interaction but as the medium within which intelligence and human emotion must arise.” The claim made by McDougall is that consciousness is determined by social instincts; by our natural tendencies to associate with others and that consciousness, and what else is peculiar to the human organism, takes place in terms of sociality and should, or could, not be understood otherwise. Here sociality is primary to consciousness and behavior and not a product thereof. Mead seems sympathetic to McDougall’s social emphasis: but only as an attempt at a reformulation of consciousness and so opposing the prevailing individualist concept. The idea of a social instinct also alluded to an action-based concept of consciousness and the importance of recognising the existence of social objects. Mead did not, however, find it appropriate to postulate a drive to account for self-awareness and argued that McDougall failed to recognise the social consciousness in full; “consciousness as the response of an organism to its own responses, with the corresponding change which the environment undergoes in its meanings.”89 How this social consciousness was to be co-ordinated with biological instincts or impulses, however, Mead was unable to show at

88 Mead, G. H. *Social Psychology as the Counterpart to Physiological Psychology* in *Selected Writings*. (ed.) A. J. Reck. p. 94-5. The quotes to follow are taken from this article.
89 Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 78.
that time. What we in contemporary social psychology speak of as his act theory was yet to be completed.

This opposition of views is symptomatic of the motive behind Mead’s article. It reviews the contemporary debate concerning the genealogy and nature of consciousness. Mead surveys the “social psychologists” mentioned, but also individual psychologists, structural psychologists, genetic psychologists and sociologists, with the intention of supplying a platform for the study of the socii of ego and alteri.90

The term “social psychology” had a more profound meaning to Mead than we today might readily appreciate. The project to which Mead was devoted, as indicated by Farr earlier, was to overcome the dualisms of mind-body and individual-collective having forced Wundt to distinguish between different strata of reality. To Mead a social psychology meant the study of the e- or unmergence91 of these strata and a platform from which to demonstrate how this e- or unmergence was misconstrued in such a fashion as to produce a bifurcation of nature; a separation between sensation and reflection, or more generally, between nature and mind.

As noted, this critique is developed predominantly in his work on the theory of General Relativity and the dualist ontology upon which it fed.

My suggestion was that we find in society and social experience, interpreted in terms of a behavioristic psychology, an instance of that organization of perspectives, which is for me at least the most obscure phase of Professor Whitehead’s philosophy. In his objective statement of relativity the existence of motion in the passage of events depends not upon what is taking place in an absolute space and time, but upon the relation of a consentient set to a percipient event. Such a relation stratifies nature. These stratifications are not only there in nature but they are the only forms of nature that are there. His dependence of nature upon the percipient event is not a reflection of nature into consciousness. Permanent spaces and times, which are successions of these strata, rest and motion, are there, but they are there only in their relationship to percipient events or organisms. We can then go further and say that the sensuous qualities of nature are there in nature, but there in their relationship to animal organisms. We can advance to the other values which have been regarded as dependent upon appetite, appreciation, and affection, and thus restore to nature all that a dualistic doctrine has relegated to consciousness, since the spatio-temporal structure of the world and the motion with which exact physical science is occupied is found to exist in nature only in its relationship to percipient events or organisms.92

90 The terms are Mead’s, used in the review referred to.
91 Mead uses the term emergence when outlining the creative aspect of nature. In conjunction to this term, I will use unmergence. Although synonymous in the sense that they refer to a singular process of distinction, they emphasise two equally important aspects of nature’s creativity.
92 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 171.
Nature in Mead’s view is not then independent of the individual observer. Suggesting that it is amounted in Meads view to the proposition of an absolute reality and the bifurcation of nature into the physical and the psychical, or more generally, into the subjective and the objective. (Such as would be the case if we were to treat this 4D reality as an actual reality rather than a mathematical representation). If this interpretation is made we will, in Mead’s view, argue that what we are able to experience is but the subjective appearance or chimera of an absolute time-space. This is what will follow upon stating the passage of events as independent of the percipient event and this is the point at which relativity becomes a proponent of a dualist conception of nature and towards which Mead directs his social psychology of the act.

Towards the end of Mead’s life, this critique of the social and psychological sciences had developed into what could be regarded a social cosmology. What is of immediate relevance here, however, is the social psychology of the act in which the emergence of objects occur in the actual consciousness of the scientist and upon which he applies the explanatory procedure.

In the present text, we are particularly interested in the objects of social science. But this does not suggest that we would do well to disregard the arguments made by Mead in connection to the biological or physical sciences. On the contrary, Mead’s social psychology was developed in a direct and ongoing assessment of scientific findings and the methods used. As is well known, Darwin and Einstein informed Mead’s elaborations considerably. These influences are readily seen in the stress placed on the intersection of perspectives expounded by Einstein in physics (and Whitehead in philosophy) and emergence advanced by Darwin in his evolutionary ecology. In the following I shall devote myself to the former, recognising the fundamental importance of the latter. As noted by A. J. Reck, “[a]s a functionalist, absorbing the impact of Darwinian evolution upon psychology, Mead undertook to find ‘such a place for mind in nature that nature could appear in experience’”. 93 Indeed, the notion of emergence is critical to Mead’s writing. But we ought to keep in mind that this notion was used to assess Einstein’s theory of electro-magnetic relativity. As such it served the purpose of a more general critique of the bifurcation of nature in contemporary science and emergence is of relevance to us precisely in this respect. It is in the notion of emergence that Mead’s concepts of sociality and science collide. For this reason, I shall stress Mead’s interest in Einstein and allow Darwin’s influence on Mead to operate in a more discrete fashion.

It has already been pointed out that Mead regarded Einstein’s theory as a most concise formulation of his own principle of sociality. Indeed, it appears as if Mead develops his social psychology while studying the concept of

relativity and the general, and at times quite vivid, realisation of the disintegration of time and space during the 19th century. It might well be pointed out that the experience of Einstein’s famous train passenger found himself learning how to co-ordinate experiences of “here” and “there” with an abstract time. A time measured not by the fatigue of horses, but by clocks.

The notion that the railroad annihilates space and time is not related to that expansion of space that results from the incorporation of new spaces into the transport network. What is experienced as being annihilated is the traditional space-time continuum which characterised the old transport technology. Organically embedded in nature as it was, that technology, in its mimetic relationship to the space traversed, permitted the traveler to perceive that space as a living entity. What Bergson called the durée (duration), the time spent getting from one place to another on a road is not an objective mathematical unit, but a subjective perception of space-time.

The convergence of time and space in experience, both in the forefront of physics and everyday life, is reflective of a point at which Mead’s idea of sociality and, particularly, the conception of a social consciousness is displayed most instructively. For at this point lies the experience of motion and, at the back of motion, change. And to Mead change is the very object of science. Without change, there is little to observe and even less to explain.

To Mead, the scientist embodies the highest form of sociality. The highest form enacting the social principle, speaking in the evolutionary terms used by Mead when explicitly pointing this out, is human thought, but what is characteristically social about this thought is the very keystone of the scientific procedure. What is immediately present in everyday life is a reflected, not to say perfected, procedure in the scientific act. The scientific inquiry relates to those objects that emerge in the passage between the individual aspects of self and object in the actual perspective and which the scientist takes for granted as being there in his experience. These are the phenomena to be explained. However, among the objects that emerge in the passage between individual perspectives are also the scientific objects. In fact, objects emerge as scientific objects only in so far as the observer is able to pass between the individual perspectives of the percipient event and that of the object perceived.

For this reason, the subsequent presentation of Mead’s thought will show that his social psychology breaks down into two intertwined premises.

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95 I am here proceeding upon the definition of thought offered by Mead in *Philosophy of the Present*. “A human organism does not become a rational being until he has achieved such an organized other in his field of social response. He then carries on that conversation with himself which we call thought, and thought, as distinct from perception and imagination, is occupied with indicating what is common in the passage from one attitude to another. Thus thought reaches what we call universals and these, with the symbols by which they are indicated, constitute ideas.” Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 87.
Firstly, the individual and common perspectives converge in the act and they must therefore be understood in terms of the act. Secondly, the act and the object are so related that the one cannot be understood without the other. On the one hand the object controls the act and, on the other, the object emerges in the natural perspective of which the act is indicative. Thus, the social psychological analysis is the analysis of how the acting individual alternates and translates between the perspectives of self and object by embracing a common perspective, both of which are emerging in this reflection of the process or actual perspective.

In social psychology we refer to common perspectives whenever speaking of characters indicated in a significant fashion; whenever referring to objects in a fashion admitting consensus. We do this correctly in so far as the characters in the actual perspective are significant, and so they are whenever responded to in a like fashion. Turning this rationale back to the individual observer, we find in the social psychological analysis that significance, the co-ordinated or unequivocal responses called out by the common character, enables the individual observer to pass between the two systems of reference included in the actual perspective; in the sensuous and passing relationship including both the individual organism and its environment. “Nature”, that is to say, “in its relationship to the organism, and including the organism is a perspective that is there”.96 And from this follows, as Mead stresses in his critique of science and the bifurcation of nature it has prompted, that to reflect, or to indicate nature in a reflective attitude, is another way of saying that nature is self-conscious or has reflected itself. Herein the previous reference to “creative advance of nature” resounds, and which Mead addresses as the emergence, or emergent passage, in which nature becomes an epistemological and scientific object.97

It is in the act then, in the relationship between the individual perspective and that of the environment, that nature emerges in our experience as definite forms or objects. And in so far those characters appearing in our experience persist in the completion of the act, these two individual perspectives express the significance of the object and the reciprocity of individual organism and object.

I have wished to present mind as an evolution in nature, in which culminates that sociality which is the principle and the form of emergence. The emergence in nature of sensuous qualities is due to the fact that an organism can respond to nature in differing systematic attitudes and yet occupy both attitudes.98

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96 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 172.
97 Ibid. p. 172.
98 Ibid. p. 85.
What Mead is speaking of is not a psychological explanation of a perceptual object but the social psychological and functional analysis of a perceptual object emerging in the act and in which its perception and reflection are but phases or events. The object qua object, the individual or definite object, emerges in so far as the individual observer is social; in so far he is able to indicate to himself that “here” and “there” are reciprocal, that the perceptual object and the sensuous organism are reflective of one another. It is because an object is what it is in one system of reference that it can be what it is in the other. “Sociality”, that is to say, “is the capacity of being several things at once.”99 This we imply whenever we find an object’s appearance to vary with our relationship towards it.

Now, it is safe to say that it was in this elementary reciprocity that made Mead consider Einstein’s principle of relativity as a most concise formulation of the principle of sociality he himself was working on. “Relativity”, as it were, “reveals a situation within which the object must be contemporaneously in different systems to be what it is in either.”100 This is how relativity relates to Mead’s social theory of the act. A social psychology is an analysis of the act. For it is in the act that the individual aspects of the actual perspectives converge and are adapted to one another and facilitate significance of meaning.101

In the following I shall undertake to present in detail how Mead defines the act as a perspective in passing nature and in which the individual self and object e- or unmerges as individual objects in experience. Doing this will mean qualifying the suggestions made above and taking a first step towards the meaning of Mead’s concept of sociality.

To accomplish this first step, however, it is instrumental to grasp the general principle of sociality in Mead’s assessment of relativity. This venture will be best served by confining ourselves to the act referring to the “physical” object and, having understood this act, move on to the somewhat more complex one involving a “social” object. Proceeding in this fashion will enable me to mediate and stress the distinction made by Mead between completely (“social”) and incompletely social (“physical”) objects. For without acknowledging this distinction, one shall find little or no ground upon which to attempt an understanding of a social psychological science. More precisely, depending on the manner in which we grasp the sociality of the act and its object, we shall take Mead to suggest that the scientific act

99 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 49.
100 Ibid. p. 63.
101 I am here proceeding upon the definition of meaning offered by Mead in the following passage: “We identify the universal contents in things by resenting ourselves as responding to them, and we call these responses aroused by the significant symbols of social gestures, or language, the meanings of things. It is because we can summon ourselves, as organizations of responses, into the field of experience by means of these symbols, that we are able to isolate these meanings and so further the reorganization of our responses in plan of action.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 371.
involves either the manipulation or the communication of an object. Con- 
foundering these two kinds of behavior will present the social psychologist 
following Farr’s lead with a most arresting problem.

2.2 Indicating the Physical Object

The functional explanation provides for the distinction between thinking as 
readiness to act in a special situation and the immediate factual datum, the 
starting point of the act. One seeks situations where one can find one’s self - 
situations that can be used as facts. This, however, is not consciousness; it is 
only where one cannot get at facts that one has consciousness. When we can 
put an identical set of events into two persons or when two sets of events can 
be put into one person, we have consciousness properly speaking. In a like 
sense, if we set up different opinions about an individual object, we remain 
inside separate perspectives. If, on the contrary, we unite different per- 
spectives and opinions, we have a content involving consciousness. From a 
conceptual situation, we can come back to a perceptual experience each 
would have.102

In the following the act will be defined on the basis of the introductory 
chapters of Philosophy of the Act. Being the most comprehensive and 
succinct formulation, it has found its way into most interpretations of 
Mead’s philosophy, particularly among social psychologists. It ought to be 
kept in mind, however, that this definition relates to an act in which the 
individual indicates a “physical” object. This is to say, a spatially delineated 
object; an object whose enclosing surfaces the individual may manipulate all 
at once in a tactile fashion.

In the figure below (see figure 1) the key features and phases of the act 
have been assembled to provide a general scheme. Ideally it will enable 
the reader to orient himself in the subsequent references to the act. The structure 
of the figure rests upon a series of qualifications and this will form the way 
in which the definition will be represented. Thus, in the following, I shall 
move “backwards” and break down the act into sets; each to be introduced 
by a quotation qualifying the set in question and a subsequent elaboration. In 
this fashion I will develop a series of qualifications and statements that, 
taken together, constitutes my interpretation of Mead’s act theory. As such, 
these qualifications and statements will serve as the framework underpinning 
the subsequent discussion of scientific activity as interaction: as an act indi- 
cating and realizing a “physical” object as a “physical” thing. Having come 
thus far, we shall be better equipped to approach the persistent and yet dim 
theme in Mead’s philosophy: the act indicating and realizing a completely 

Immediate sensuous stimulation

Attitude towards stimulation
Imagery of past experiences of object
Sensuous adjustment to object
Immediate attitude to object
Characters referred to object
The perceptual object
Manipulation of object

Instantaneous overt activity

Successful manipulation of object
Response to object
Sensuous readjustment to object
Reflective attitude to object
Characters referred to self

Unsuccessful manipulation of object
Successful manipulation of object
Characters referred to self remain
Manipulation of reconstructed object
The explained or scientific object

Characters referred to self vanish

Figure 1. The phases of the act indicating and realizing a physical object as a physical thing.

Below follows the passages in Mead’s presentation where various phases are defined and interrelated.

All perception involves an immediate sensuous stimulation and an attitude toward this stimulation, which is that of the reaction of the individual to the stimulation. This reaction, in so far as the perception does not go out into instantaneous overt activity, appears in consciousness only as an attitude, but as such it is the first stage in the complete response or group of responses which the stimulation in question call out. Furthermore, there accompanies this attitude of the response some imagery which is taken from past experiences in which the responses have been carried out, leading to the final experiences to which such a stimulation naturally leads.

Perception involves two immediate and alternative reactions: attitude towards the stimulation or instantaneous overt action. Thus the reaction consists either of an attitude towards the stimulation or an act carried out without being mediated by an attitude.

When using the term “reaction” we tend to imply an object to which the reaction refers. In Mead’s theory this is not the case, even though it might seem that way to the casual reader. The presence of an attitude towards

103 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 3.
stimulation implies consciousness of stimulation, but the presence of material in perception is synonymous with a “field of consciousness”, it is not to be confused with the “consciousness of” a stimulation. In this early phase of the act there is but a field of consciousness, an undifferentiated or indistinct multitude and where no object is made explicit as apart from the impulse or tendency to respond. Impulse and stimulation reflect one another, but they are not differentiated on the part of the individual, and so there is no particular object apart from the individual. For an object to appear, the individual must exhibit consciousness of something.

Perception, however, must not be regarded simply from the standpoint of presentation, the presence of material. It is, even taken by itself and ignoring its relation toward later movement, a process of sensing under the conditions noted above, i.e., the conscious attitude of response, and the imagery of the result of the response. The process of sensing is itself an activity. In the case of vision this is most evidently the case. Here the movement of the eyes, the focusing of the lens, and the adjustment of the lines of vision of the two eyes require a complicated activity which is further complicated by the movements of the eyes which will bring the rays of light coming from all parts of the object upon the center of clearest vision. […] The perception by the hand is also one that involves such movement in the exploratory processes of hand and fingers and the movements of the skin. Hearing involves at least the fixing of the head (and the whole body as the basis for the movement of the head) and the innervation of the minute muscles which stretch the eardrum. Smelling involves the drawing of the air over the olfactory surfaces by means of the processes of inspiration plus the placing of the head in such a position as to make the smelling most effective. Tasting, in so far as it is to be distinguished from tactual perception, involves the bringing of the fluids of the mouth in continually changed contact with the taste buds through the processes of mastication. […] The sensing of the object is so located that the organism takes a definite attitude toward it, involving possible movement.

This distinction is not made explicit in the passages elaborating the act in the Philosophy of the Act related here, but in the first pages of Philosophy of the Present, entitled The Present as the Locus of Reality. In this essay Mead formulates the difference between consciousness and consciousness of in terms of the problem and the setting of the problem. “I am distinguishing in particular that existence of the world for the individual and social organism which answers to the more general usage of the term consciousness from that situation which answers to the term ‘consciousness of’. It is the latter which, to my mind, connotes cognition. The distinction between the two falls in with that which I have suggested between the problem and its setting. The setting within which adjustment takes place is essential to the adjustment and falls within what belongs to the ‘field of consciousness’, as that term is generally used – especially when we recognize the implications of that which is more definitely in the field of consciousness. The term ‘field of awareness’ is at times used in the same sense, but it is more apt to carry with it the value of ‘awareness of’ than is the term ‘consciousness’. In other words, in knowledge there is always the presupposition of a world that is there and that provides the basis for the inferential and ideational process of cognition. This of course restricts cognition or ‘consciousness of’ to that which has within it an inferential strain.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 4-5.
toward or away from the object, [so that] stimulation may continue to the best
advantage.105

The organism adjusts its sensory apparatus in identifying the stimulation to
which the attitude refers and so involves the sensuous adjustment of
ascertaining characters necessary for a proper response. Sensory experience
therefore, is not merely a matter of thereness, of a field of consciousness. It
involves also the adjustments ascertaining characters necessary for the
completion of the act initiated.

Furthermore, by means of past experiences the individual anticipates the
response implied by the particular attitude in his sensuous adjustments. It is
not a copying or internalisation of the outside, but an ongoing alignment of
characters without distinction in the field of consciousness. Perception “is a
relation between a highly developed physiological organism and an object,
or an environment in which selection emphasises certain elements”106 i.e., it
involves also a persistence of passing characters selected by the sensory
apparatus. In a more general formulation, we are led here to the statement
that the field of consciousness controlling the individual’s immediate and
sensuous adjustment is an individual and indistinct aspect of the natural or
sensuous perspective we refer to as the act or the actual perspective.

The perceptual object is primarily the organization of the immediate environ-
ment with reference to the organism. Perception here has no other signifi-
cance than that of the sense apparatus in its adjustment to the environment, in
its function in selection of the stimulation needed for the reaction of the
organism through its relation to the central nervous system, and in its calling-
out of the appropriate response. The “what” of the object is, then, the ex-
pression of the whole of which both environment and organism are essential
parts.107

In so far as the sensory apparatus of the individual selects a consistent set of
characters and instant overt reaction does not occur, the individual organism
will approach the object proceeding upon an immediate attitude (towards the
object). The characters selected will not be identified or made conscious as
an object apart from another object. The object should rather be regarded as
the expression or form of the act.

Clearly, this is significantly not the case in the individual perspective of
the observer. In any investigation a relationship is presumed between what
we refer to as a definite individual and its equally definite environment. But
speaking from the point of view of the act going on, this characterisation will
not be fully adequate. We need to recognise that the immediate attitude of
the individual organism must be reflected upon; for this to be the case mere

106 Ibid. p. 8.
107 Ibid. p. 16.
consciousness must alter into consciousness of something and the multitude of characters selected be made distinct. Thus, what Mead is implying here is that the observation of an occurrence, and its explanation in terms of a particular dis/connection between individual and environment, expresses the emergent passage between immediate and reflective kinds of attitudes. What is more, these objects emerge *qua* objects with the reflection of the original and immediate experience.

Returning to the confines set by Mead in the introductory segment in *Philosophy of the Act*, we shall find that while the attitude of the individual is that of immediately approaching the perceptual object, the “what” or meaning of the object will be put to the test as soon as the experience turns manipulatory; i.e., when the object is about to perform its function in the act. Now, this critical junction can be characterised in many ways: when the object in the experience of the individual appears not merely from “one side at a time” but from “all sides simultaneously”, when the distance between the individual and the object is annihilated or when the object is indicated by both the distant experience having controlled the act and a manipulatory experience testing the distant hypothesis. The idea revolved by all these articulations borrowed from Mead is, however, a simple one. It reads: in so far as the perceptual adjustment at a distance has provided the individual with a set of characters that also holds for a manipulatory experience, the act may be completed within an immediate attitude. If the characters selected *at distance* (the characters stimulating the individual as a perceptual object and controlling his approach) are not compatible with the manipulatory experience, the act is obstructed and breaks down into individual *qua* individual and environment *qua* environment.

The situation out of which the difficult, the problem, springs is a lack of adjustment between the individual and his world. The response does not answer to the demands which gave the stimulus its power over the organism.108

The immediate perspective of the individual organism alters and becomes reflective as a result of the maladjustments in the individual’s initial and immediate approach. At this point, the object *qua* object will appear in the experience of the individual and so will the individual *qua* individual. The field of consciousness turns into the consciousness of objects side by side. Thus, in so far as the response is not completely adjusted to the object, the actual perspective will disclose itself to the individual as a *composite* of two individual perspectives. Better still, it is because an immediate attitude proves to have been founded upon inconsistent sets of characters that the actual perspective will become explicit or reflected as constituent of two parts.

As noted earlier, this e- or unmergence is particularly likely to happen when the individual’s experience of the object becomes a manipulatory one, since this is the passing of the object from one individual point of reference to another (or from “there” to “here”). The object that was a purely perceptual object now enters the manipulatory area and so becomes subjected to the conditions of actual manipulation. And as the adjustment proves insufficient to cope with the new conditions, the object controlling the act disintegrates and so the act falls apart, leaving the individual at a loss as to a definite stimulation and a definite response. Thus, the problem arises in the form of a series of conflicting tendencies to respond. It is symptomatic of a perception in which, while approaching the object, the organism senses not one definite object but a multitude of alternative objects, each answering to a certain tendency to respond.

The disintegration of the perceptual object is not merely the disintegration of a consistent set of distant characters. It is also the disintegration of the actual perspective in which the individual becomes conscious of himself as an object (or self).

Any object is thus always an expression of a peculiar relation between itself and the individual, but it is an objective relation. The character of the individual selects out of the object as it exists what answers to the nature of the individual in his present attitude – a selection which answers both to his immediate sensitivities and to his experience. The material which failed to call out the appropriate response and that which was found in the object as that which would have answered to the response which has been inhibited – these remain and, with the appearance of a self, are referred to that self. [...] The attitude which we take toward the contents of mind in their relation to the world is that of explanation. From the standpoint of future conduct explanation is such a reconstruction of the object, toward which conduct has failed to elicit the proper response, that this defeat may be avoided in the future.109

In the case where the sensuous adjustment fails and falls short of evoking a response capable of completing the act initiated, re-adjustment ensues. This re-adjustment takes the form of reconstructing the object by relocating some of the characters to the organism that in the initial attitude was immediately referred to the object. This relocation therefore implies awareness on the part of the individual regarding its sensuous organism as a definite part of the perceptual relation. Or in the functional formulation, such a consciousness of characters conferred upon one system from another is necessary if the act is to be completed. Without it the object cannot be stated in a fashion enabling a definite response to control the act. This experience of one’s physical self or organism affecting the appearance of the environment appears as a new hypothesis in accounting for the discrepancy between distant and mani-

pululatory experiences. The individual reflects itself in the object, takes the role of the object, and transcends its immediate and organismic responses.

Now, by reflecting upon the relationship between the “me” (self) and the “not-me” (object), the individual attempts a redistribution of the equivocal set of characters obstructing the passage and completion of the act.

That is, the characteristic of what is referred to the self, what is in the mind, is that it is not a thing, though it had the character of a thing. It has failed to call out the response which gives the stamp of reality to experiences. It could, and in the experience of the lower animals it presumably does, disappear, while readjustments take place in a trial-and-error fashion.

That it does not disappear in the conduct of the human animal is sufficient evidence that its retention in experience serves a purpose, or at least do some good. Its new function is indicated in the attitude assumed toward it as contrasted with that which is assumed toward things. The attitude which we, and all forms called intelligent, take toward things is that of overt or delayed response.110

This consciousness of something then seems to appear with the short-circuiting or arrest of the act and serves the function of re-adjusting the tendencies to respond conveyed by the unsuccessful manipulation. The manipulation of the object is now wholly ideational, premeditative, and the characters referred to the object in the initial and immediate role-taking remain on hold while the anticipation of various inhibited responses are tested by way of a reflective role-taking; by way of a hypothetical extension of the temporal environment carried out at the distance of virtual manipulation. This is likely to take the form of hypotheses like “If I do like this, what will happen then?”

That is, explanation is substituting another object, with which we will be en rapport, for that which confessed its unreality in the experimental test of conduct. The goal of this reconstruction is that of bringing out the other aspects of the object beside that which has led to defeat, and so co-ordinating them that the inhibition, which was the evidence of defeat, may cease and conduct may go on. The method is that of referring the invalidated aspects of the object to the individual in the form of the self. This can take place only when the individual has become an object to himself through the use of those gestures which can affect himself as they affect others, and only in so far as the individual acts toward himself as another, that is, takes the role of another toward himself. There is here the implication that, in the experience of the object by the individual, what is not object must be individual. It is the appearance of the self that makes it possible to carry out this, e.g., he indicates to himself his seeing an object at a certain distance with the object actually at another distance. In this fashion the false character of the object gets a local habitation and a name as the experience of the individual, and the true characters as tested by successful conduct are placed under this reflective

attitude as in the same category; while the task of re-organizing the object so that the individual with both tendencies (those to react unsuccessfully and successfully) may continue to act becomes that of so envisaging the object that conduct may go on. This attitude carries with it the implication that what was unreal may become real through reconstruction. As unreal, it is mere experience of the individual; as real, it becomes part of the object.111

In order that the act may be brought to completion the disintegrated object must be reconstructed. This is accomplished by ascertaining the fashion in which the immediate object was dependent upon the organism’s selection of characters; by way of the individual indicating “to himself his seeing an object at a certain distance with the object actually at another distance”. Thus, by indicating himself as having a manipulatory experience of the object, he may in this virtual manipulation respond to the object in the way he might have done in an actual manipulation. This virtual response or rehearsal, then, is the fashion in which the object is reconstructed and made amenable to further tests. And in these further tests, the individual may eliminate certain characters as part of the object and reconstruct them as distortions, false assumptions or wishes. These characters will in other words be referred to the self and as such be regarded as “unreal”.

It is important, in so far as we are to understand the social consciousness of the individual, that it is not a question of a projection emanating from the individual to the object. The individual and the object appear simultaneously and reciprocally. The one appears because the other appears, and the characters of the one determine the characters of the other.

It is the endowing of the thing with an inside. Simultaneity is the possible presence of the organism at any locality while the organism is in relation with the distant stimuli. It is the indication to the organism of its response from the standpoint of the location, distance and other characters of the stimulus, in so far as the organism has taken the attitude of the distant stimulus. This taking the attitude of the distant stimulus must then be prior to the experience of mutual indications. The organism as a physical object appears in the same process within which appears the distant object. We are not aware of projecting ourselves into the distant object because as selves we do not project ourselves into it. The taking of the attitude of the distant object and of the self in response has already taken place in the social mechanism of the organism.112

Reflection is the retroactive tracing of characters having been selected immediately, and the comparison of these with new hypothetical indications with the unsuccessful ones. In other words, the individual observer associates some of the responses to the object (the “not-me”) with his self (the

“me”), and by responding to these tendencies to respond he becomes capable of indicating the way in which he approached the object. He identifies the sensuous characters of the organism by identifying the characters of the immediate object that failed to answer to the initial manipulation.

Presumably the paranoid schizophrenic illustrates this operation negatively, for what this person does not manage is to distinguish reflectively between impulse and stimulation. He hears voices speaking to him from television sets giving him instructions or threats, failing to distinguish between his immediate responses to the TV and the TV as a definite object apart from his self. In this fashion, his immediate responses, his immediate perspective, expands indefinitely and annihilates that of the object.

Thus, in so far the individual manages to make a match between invalidated characters of the object and his immediate responses, they are retracted from the object and deemed belonging to the individual organism. If not, the characters are given the locale of the object and become the significant meaning of the definite object (or the object *qua* object).

I have wished to present mind as an evolution in nature, in which culminates that sociality which is the principle and the form of emergence. The emergence in nature of sensuous qualities is due to the fact that an organism can respond to nature in differing systematic attitudes and yet occupy both attitudes.\(^{113}\)

In order for the reflection and explanation to be completed then, the individual must be able to pass between the two systems having emerged in the act. This is, from the point of view of the act, what we are implying when speaking of arrest of action or inhibition.

In inhibition owing to competing responses, the terminal attitudes call for tentative reactions of the objects which will lead to readjustment of the complex response which overcomes the obstacle in the situation. One imaginatively tries out various combinations, demanding therefore a content of the object in contact terms which is in some sense under the control of the organism. Mere passive imagery does not meet this requirement. It must be the resistance which the organism itself innervates if it is to meet this requirement. Such a process is evidently one that is presupposed by the self and the objects that appear in experience, as they are in some sense constituted by the process. It is not the self that takes the role of the physical object, but certain of the initiated responses of the organism, such as go to make up the self, do go to make up the object, and these responses are excited by the terminal attitudes of the organism.\(^{114}\)

In this reflective kind of role-taking the self and the object are present in consciousness *qua* self and object. Here, as opposed to the immediate role-

\(^{113}\) Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 85.

taking, it is the relationship rather than the objects of individual and environment that are at issue. The individual has now reached the conclusion that the characters depend upon their relationship. To ascertain the characters of the object now means to eliminate the self from the object; to grasp and manipulate the significance involved in this relationship. This also means that the explanation required to furnish a definite object depends on the ability to maintain and co-ordinate the two individual perspectives of self and object. This is the quintessence of the social consciousness of the individual observer.

What is done […] is to take those characters which hold both for the immediate perception and for later conduct, for this visual apparatus and that of others, and identify the object. If in such an identification the conditions for the different characters ascribed to the same object can be harmoniously stated, the whole situation is taken into account. […] It is only when this question [the problem] has arisen that knowledge as such appears as an element in the experience. Otherwise the individual’s perspective is simply the reality that is there. Such a selection of characters which are identical for all experience, or nearly so, and are identical for all individuals, gives us the scientific object. They constitute an object for knowledge. The immediate perception is simply there and not an object of awareness or knowledge except as some question as to conduct or agreement with the perceptions of others arises to lead us to reflect upon it.115

When the problem has appeared in the form of a disintegration of the object controlling the immediate response, the consciousness-of aspect of mind enters the collapsed act as a reflective attitude towards the indistinct multitude of characters sensed. This reflective attitude is most distinctly that of the scientist. Indeed, Mead refers to the object now being re-constructed as the scientific or conceptual object.116

115 Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Act*. p. 11-2. The expression “the whole situation” will play an important role in the discussion to follow and I should point out that this rather vague terminology can be made intelligible by suggesting that Mead here is implying temporality. The support for such an interpretation will grow as we move along, but find its definite source in the following suggestion made by Mead. “A definition of life in terms of physical science, since this states the world in timeless spaces that answer to durations that are reduced to ideal instants, is bound to be mechanical, since it allows of no spread of existence within which a process can exist. It also has no place for a living process, since its statements are all in causal series, in terms of a past actual or presented, not in terms of a future with an indeterminate time dimension. I take it that the indeterminateness of the time dimension of extension introduces the possibility of contingency in nature. There can be a selection of a time system, i.e., of the events that are to succeed the immediate events, but there can be no selection without a reason, and this reason must be found in an existent succession that is a reality as a whole, that is, in a process.” Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Act*. p. 341.

116 Regarding the matter of the scientific or conceptual object, Mead suggests that they are “are objects of hypothetical character; and, as such, they have imaginable contents which are essential to the hypothesis to which they belong.” Mead, G. H. *Movements in the 19th Century Thought*. p. 323. In *Philosophy of the Present* he elaborates further on the subject: “I assume that the reason for this is that the scientist is seeking for what is permanent, that he
[The] reflective attitude, that of reflective analysis [...] resolve the whole field, including the organism, into physical elements which could conceivably be the objects in a hypothetical perception; that is, their characters of location, effective occupation of space, inertia, and motion are those characters which appear in actual contact experience as the ultimate reality of objects in perception. This analysis substitutes for the color, sound, odor, taste, temperature, and even the feel of the object, structures and motions which cannot be any of the characters which they undertake to account for. The actual contact experience, however, cannot be the characters of these physical elements, for their structure and motions are the preconditions for the experience itself. [...] In the first place, these particles of matter with their characters must have been there in advance of our experiencing them, [...] in the second place, the actual experience of these characters is in any particular case in some sense different from that which we could have in any other case. [And thus it follows that] distance experience of any sort is of a different sort from that of ultimate contact and that the ultimate reality of the distance experience is to be found in that of contact experience.117

The reflective attitude abstracts from experience those characters that involve what in philosophy are called “secondary” (color, sound, odor, taste, temperature etc.) and retain the “primary” characters that will hold in actual manipulation. In a sense one might say that the reflection substitutes those characters deemed dependent upon the organism for those that are assumed independent thereof. Correctly carried out, this maneuver of explanation enables the individual observer to state the general conditions under which the secondary characters appear in any individual observation. In other words, the explanation works by the abstraction of characters involving the individual observer so that only its so-called primary or independent characters remain. However, in explaining the object, in stating the object in terms of general conditions, one separates the object from any actual individual observer. One has transformed the perceptual object into a conceptual object by abstracting from it the characters of the actual perspective in which it emerged. The reality of the scientific object is therefore of another kind than the perceptual object. That is to say, the reality of the scientific object is virtual and will never appear in the actual experience of manipulation during which the “physical” object is realised as a “physical” thing.

finds this in the uniformities of the processes, that it is in terms of these uniformities that he defines his objects, and that this therefore is what he means when he speaks of conceptual objects. The scientist seems thus to have transcended the perceptual field. He seems to be dealing no longer either with distance – or with contact-experience, but rather with an organized system of change which may in perceptual experience reflect themselves in either of these categories, but which is really entirely independent of such experience.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 151.

It is not the consummation of the act, however, which is the perceptual thing that the distance stimulus sets going. One eats things. In other words, there is an experience of contact with the object which constitutes its perceptual reality and which comes in between the beginning of the act and its consummation. To this experience is referred both the visual experience and the consummatory. They both become characters or adjectives of the thing.

This contact experience is not the bare contact with the surface of the organism. This, as in the case of feeling for a thing or in contacts of currents of air, may be a distance experience which leads to the thing itself. The physical thing arises in manipulation. […]

We approach the distant stimulus with the manipulatory processes already excited. We are ready to grasp the hammer before we reach it, and the attitude of manipulatory response directs the approach. What we are going to do determines the line of approach and in some sense its manner. It is the later process already aroused in the central nervous system, controlling the earlier, which constitutes the teleological character of the act. Into this situation there enter the alternative manipulations that the distant stimulus arouses. For the time being they inhibit one another and so the act. Different stimuli compete for setting free the act. If a nail has to be driven in the absence of a hammer, the eye wanders from a stone to the heel of a boot or to an iron bar. Finally, one or the other assumes control of the act which is thus directed by this distant stimulus rather than the other. The human animal thus sees physical things, i.e., the initiated manipulatory response in the distant stimulus that sets free the activity of the organism.118

This passage recapitulates the key features of the act noted in the above. But it also adds some elements hitherto not properly addressed. Though conceptually interwoven, these will be discussed separately for reasons of clarity.

Firstly, the manipulatory experience that intervenes between the initial and terminal phases of the reflectively mediated act is a contact experience that realises the object (the hypothesis) as a physical thing.119 There is then to be noted a temporal distinction between objects and things and that both emerge in the passing act. Nature is nature only in reference to an act and cannot be stated in abstraction of the act without separating ontologically between a “subjective” referring and an “objective” reference – without bringing the whole of reality either into or out of consciousness. That would in Mead’s view lead to a bifurcation of nature, either as an Idealism or as a Materialism.

Secondly, the act is not to be understood with less than the acknowledgment that it is constituted as natural (f)act, as a sensuous, persistent rela-

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119 The realisation of the object as a physical thing falls back on the adequacy of approach offered by its characters. “An act is an ongoing event that consists of stimulation and response and the results of the response. Back of these lie the attitudes and impulses of the individual which are responsible for his sensitiveness to the particular stimulus and for the adequacy of the response. It is the adequacy of the response which in immediate experience determines the reality of the stimulation.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 364.
tion between the emerging aspects we call self and object or, more generally, individual and environment. Acknowledging this, however, is not to submit that an act “takes time” or that the emergence of self and object “takes time”. Rather the act constitutes time by supplying the individual with experiences of a “before” and an “after”. Then, and only then, is it proper to reflect the act as “taking time” and as a past.

It was, and to some extent still is, customary in psychology to treat the perception of an object as the effect of a stimulus serving as, or hereby identified as, the cause of perception. This was notably the premise upon which Psychophysicists acted and upon which psychology gained the status of an legitimate science. What Mead does in contrast is to stress the active character of perception. He does so by means of elaborating the actual perspective temporally. He places perception as a phase in action and makes perception not a mere and passive reflection of nature, but an aspect of nature becoming.

The act, as we have seen, is completed only after having identified and realised the object as a physical thing in successful manipulation. Accepting this, however, is also to submit that the object is realised as a thing on condition that it is also (successfully) responded to. The “cause”, that is to say, is simultaneous to the “effect” whereas the response and the object responded to both occur within the temporality of the act. The stimulus, changing to the Behaviorist terminology, cannot be considered causal, since it has no reality independent of the act. It appears together with what in reflection will be rendered as its response. One might also put the matter to the effect that the act cannot be reduced into stimulus and response because these are characters attributed to the act observed from the distance of another present reflecting or “re-presenting” it. The individual acting in the immediate attitude has no such idea since this would presuppose the reflection of an immediate response having not yet occurred.120

However, in the reflectively executed act, or the act reflected by an individual observer, the issue of causality must be treated somewhat differently. For in the reflective attitude the individual distinguishes between cause and effect or, as the case may be, stimulus and response, whereas he is about to reconstruct an object. (He would not be reflecting if he did not). In such an attitude the differentiation between self and object has already emerged as hypotheses to be worked out and to make for completion. This individual

120 I use Mead’s concept of the idea as it is defined in the following passage. “Where a vocal gesture uttered by one individual leads to a certain response in another, we may call it a symbol of that act; where it arouses in the man who makes it the tendency to the same response, we may call it a significant symbol. These organized attitudes which we arouse in ourselves when we talk to others are, then, the ideas which we say are in our minds, and in so far as they arouse the same attitudes in others, they are in their minds, in so far as they are self-conscious in the sense in which I have used that term. But it is not necessary that we should talk to another to have these ideas. We can talk to ourselves, and this we do in the inner forum of what we call thought.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 189.
observer feels able to locate the response after stimulation since he, at this point, is already provided with the separate habitat of self and object and is about to test various hypothetical responses with which to complete the act. Moreover, since the reflective attitude works by calculating or envisaging events in terms of if-then hypotheses and these hypotheses in the reflective role-taking are operated sequentially (by posing stimuli as “if’s” and responses as “then’s”), responses will appear dependent upon and lagging behind the stimulation. The simultaneity of stimulation and response has thus broken down in two parts and pasts. From this reflective or inhibitory point of view, stimulus and response will appear as “beginning” and “end” in the detemporalised perspective of the individual observer.

But this is how the scientific procedure will make sense to the individual observer. He has experienced something but does not yet know what it is and so he asks the object. He manipulates the object reflectively, he tests or experiments, by mediating the object and self. In the terminology favored by Mead; he indicates to himself by way of ideation alternative routes of manipulatory approach. He conducts reflective or “retroactive” role-taking as he mentally traverses back and forth in a non-emergent or bare passage of nature seized. And nothing will prevent him from doing so. All these objects are manipulated as pasts; as already having happened.

By narrowing down the world in this way, the individual observer eliminates the temporality of the act. The explanation or statement upon which the reconstructed object lies ignores the immediate (f)act whereby this is achieved. It ignores the emergent passage of the reflectively executed act with which the object is scientifically construed. The result is a statement made in terms of the conditions under which it appears and without regard for individual experience: as a set of general characters independent of any particular and actual perspective.

Returning to the point of view of Mead’s functional analysis, the object has become abstracted from the passage in which it emerged. In his functional analysis the object is rendered a virtual thing; an object never to be realised, a composite of characters from both distance and manipulatory experiences. Because the explanation abstracts the individual observer from the sensuous relationship or actual perspective which constitutes the perceptual object’s “what”, its immediate meaning, by transforming it into a general set of characters obtaining in all possible systems of observation, none of these will, if actually occupied, generate the perceptual object explained. The explanation has abstracted the object from the passage of the actual perspective in which it emerges as a real physical thing. The significance of this conclusion is that if this scientific reconstruction is not treated carefully, it may invite a bifurcation of nature.

121 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 16.
Though the object may be said to have been (trans)formed in terms of the conditions under which it appeared in actual experience into a conceptual or scientific object, this is a rather different view than that held by the scientist. Viewed from this individual observer’s perspective, for the perceptual object to be offered an explanation it is quite necessary to state the conditions under which it appears in any one’s experience. The scientist’s abstraction of emergent passage is instrumental in achieving the significant meaning upon which the scientific object relies. The social psychologist and the scientist speaks therefore of different objects.

In Mead’s view science had long profited from a Materialist philosophy. Building its explanations by replacing secondary characters with primary ones its procedure amounts to an abstraction from the object those characters that are associated with the percipient event. By reconstructing the perceptual object obtained in the distant experience by means of the manipulatory characters of resistance the scientist has eluded the chimeras of so-called subjectivity and accomplished an objective statement. Understood as making these propositions, Mead’s social psychology ought to be considered a statement in the philosophy of knowledge. The teleological strand in his conception of the act and the alternative temporality he advances regarding causality are subordinated to this attempt at showing that the scientific procedure cannot be understood unless taking into account the emergent passage of nature in which its object is accomplished or realised.

The characteristic move made by Mead is to bring the explanation inside the actual perspective. Science is social behavior; it is the indication of characters conditional to the appearance of the object in any individual experience. As such it is an undertaking purporting to supply hypotheses that redistribute the characters immediately conferred upon the object between the self and to the object in a significant fashion. That is to say, to complete a statement of the object that holds no contradiction between any two individual observations or perspectives. Mead’s analysis therefore directs attention to the whole situation in which the object emerges as an epistemological object rather than fixing attention on an absolute and hence invariant set of characters.

Not only, then, does Mead emphasise what we in contemporary terminology refer to as synergetic effects. What he does is to frame the entire scientific observation as a synergetic effect of the act. The perceptual as well as the scientific object and the individual qua observer emerge in the act. These objects, then, are not incidents to be explained by psychology. They are co-incidental in the act and are to be understood properly only in social psychological terms.

The theory of relativity not only demonstrated, per analogy, the naivety of contemporary psychology, it offered the general features of a psychology with which to replace it. In the essay *The Social Nature of the Present*, Mead makes the following statement.
In Newtonian relativity, in the case of unaccelerated motion of two systems with reference to each other, the conditioning past was summed up in the dictum of the same relative position of the bodies of the two systems and the same mechanical situation whichever system was regarded in motion. In this situation there is no emergence. If into this Newtonian relativity we now introduce the Special Principle of Relativity we have the emergence of new characters of the moving body in the system within which it moves, because of its motion. And if we describe the body under the old conditions we must reduce it to rest, which only can occur without loss of the reality which the emergent motion brings with it if we set in motion the other system with the emergent changes appearing in that system. In the case of General Relativity, Einstein undertook the task of formulating the universal conditions under which the changes in the spatio-temporal structure of the universe seem to take place – those changes which are due to motion, accelerated as well as unaccelerated.122

Cutting the matter of relevance short, the characters of the object are such that they are members of both the moving system (the distant experience) and that of the arrested reference system (the manipulatory experience) and subsequently they cannot be reduced to either one. Thus Einsteinian relativity reveals a situation in which the characters of an object cannot be confined to any one locale, but emerge in the passage between perspectives (between the individual aspects of the actual perspective).

As I shall show in the following, Mead found that Einstein and his collaborators had demonstrated the correlativeity of self and object in the experience of the individual observer. The characters of the system occupied by the individual observer and that of the object are mutually dependent and mutually exclusive in a space-time void of absolute points of reference. The measurable characters of an object, its significant meaning, will emerge therefore only as the individual observer passes between the reference systems involved. The object signifies a relation, not an entity. This must be taken into account when to understand the motive behind Mead’s quite excessive probing of Einstein’s theory of relativity. This is why he claimed that the “principle of sociality that I am attempting to enunciate […] has been evidenced most clearly in the doctrine of relativity as applied to physical theory.123

The suggestion that the challenge put forth by the theory of relativity can be met by reformulating consciousness as social, rather than psychological, was important to Mead. It had a principal significance. To be able to account for the relative experience of objects in terms of a social consciousness pointed towards a resolution of the separation between the physical and the social that had forced Wundt to develop different methodologies and concepts. In so far as the physicist was able to harmonise a multitude of equally

122 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 64.
123 Ibid. p. 65.
valid points of view and this could be accounted for in terms of a social consciousness, this reformulation of the principle of relativity offered a path beyond the dualist conception illustrated by Wundt.

Before examining the concept of sociality and its relevance to the scientific observation and explanation, the steps involved and how they relate to the objective of the argument ought to be explicated. These steps are: firstly, to outline the principal elements of Mead’s assessment of physical relativity theory, secondly, to show how Mead pictures relativity as an instance of a more inclusive principle of sociality and thirdly, to bring forth three concepts with which the act theory formulated by Mead might be used for an understanding of the observation of social objects. The three concepts in question are *simultaneity*, *reciprocity* (or mutual adjustment) and *the present*.

The reason for taking these steps lies in their capacity to bring Mead’s concept of sociality into focus and, more precisely, how this concept relates to scientific action. This is a matter that should be addressed if a call for a return to Mead is argued to make possible a genuinely social psychology. As a matter of fact, it is an important discussion even disregarding the search for a genuinely social psychology as relevant. Regardless of what we might imply by a “genuine social psychology”, it is worthwhile considering what will follow if we take Mead’s proposition seriously and regard the social psychological observation an actual perspective. In doing so, we shall better understand that the fashion in which we find this act to be social will have implications for how we conceive of science and, particularly, a scientific social psychology.

The reason I stress this is that when reading Mead’s late texts, one will find that there are two aspects in which he uses this term. The nature of these has been hinted at in the introduction as I related Asplund’s distinction between ocular and binocular experiences and that of Dewey’s distributive and collective meanings of the relationship between the individual and the societal. In the context of Mead’s work, these two senses are rarely explained. This being so, betokens the incompleteness in which he was forced to leave his project. Yet the demonstration to follow aims to show that his work on the principle of relativity occasioned his most succinct formulation of sociality.

I should point out that in this demonstration, I make no claim to represent Einstein’s work correctly. My aim is only to represent Mead’s understanding of Einstein’s work and, moreover, to demonstrate how it relates to his principle of sociality. Thus, propositions made concerning particular features

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I distinguish between *observation* and *explanation* in the following manner. Observation signifies the consciousness of an object in the respect of posing the individual with a problem. Explanation, on the other hand, signifies the re-construction of this perceptual object into a scientific object.
of the doctrine either relate to or illustrate the way in which Mead understood the principle of relativity.

2.3 Relativity and the Bifurcation of Nature

The question then arises, what is the nature of this attitude by which perception shifts indifferently from one center O to another? 125

As an example of error in perception, Mead advances the situation in which a wooden branch is partially immersed in water. Trying to pick it up in an immediate manipulation, we might fail as the branch is intercepted and aligned in accordance with the medium of the surrounding water. Or at least, so we might conclude having failed and found ourselves at a loss. For the completion of the act controlled by the object of the branch it has become necessary for the individual to understand the relationship between the self and the branch that has emerged in the breakdown of the immediate perspective. Without the co-ordination of the manipulatory and distance experiences of the object, the act will not be brought to closure and so he is required to reflect upon the situation, to reflectively take the role of the object, in order to “repair” what has broken and left further approach without an immediate objective.

Now, in the sense that the individual assumes the branch to have a certain set of characters and compares these virtual or distant characters against those actually perceived in the unsuccessful manipulation, this reflective role-taking can, from the point of view of the individual, be described as a shift in spatial perspective. Those characters that persist in the comparison are attributed to the object and the individual then tests this new construct by grasping at a certain other point than was done in the immediate approach. However, from the point of view of the act this characteristically spatial determination of the relationship between the individual and the branch does not suffice. It suggests a relationship placed in nature abstracted from its passage. To Mead, such a spatial statement of the relationship implies the paradox of objects at variance with themselves.

Adopting for the moment the conception of instantaneousness and considering simply spatial perspectives, the line between the individual and a distant point is itself a point. The line may be conceived of as the locus of an infinite number of events stretching from the individual to the point in question. The perspective reduces them to a single event-particle. If the perspective is shifted, and one stands to one side, the point becomes a line of

125 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 120-1.
varying extent as one comes to take a position that is closer and closer to that of perpendicularity to the line.

If one moves about in a circle from the original position of the individual to the point which was the object of vision, the line in question would not only increase in length up to a maximum at the point of perpendicularity, and then would decrease again in length, reaching a point again when the individual occupied what had been the point of vision and envisaged the point which he had occupied at first, but also the line would be at an angle which would vary through all the 180 degrees.126

The object in such a statement is passive and will take on an infinite series of determinations; one for each degree in which we choose to approach the spatial perspective. This paradox will vanish at the moment we conceive of nature as passing, once we allow for the individual to pass from the perspective of the organism to that of the object. In other words, by taking into account the passage of nature we shall allow for the social consciousness of role-taking.127 Neglecting to make allowance for the temporality implied by observation, the object cannot be explained or be given distinction. Without temporality the control of the object upon the act is lost. Thus, remaining within the confinement of spatial perspectives, each of the innumerable determinations of the object will be as valid as the next.

What is of importance, in considering the situation, is the fact that, in bringing in this actual or possible comparison, we are deserting our instantaneous space, for it is only in the actual, or imagined, or conceived accomplishment of the act that the comparison can take place.128

Though the individual may conceive of the relationship between itself and the object as a spatial relationship in order for the error in perception be corrected, he nevertheless must imply a passing nature to which the orga-

127 I am here leaning on a passage in Philosophy of the Present interconnecting key concepts such as passage, role-taking and sociality of consciousness. “But let us instead accept passage as the character of reality, and recognize that in passage there is change in the structure of things, and that because of passage objects can occupy different systems. If we then recognize that there is a form of sociality within which we can go from the one to the other by means of a system of transformations, and so occupy both systems, identifying the same objects in each, it becomes possible for passage to take place between alternative systems that are simultaneously mutually exclusive. The set of transformations and the mathematical structure built upon it are as much parts of nature as anything else. They are attitudes answering to meanings of things brought under our control by symbols. Passage from a system in motion to the same system at rest, while the rest of world passes from rest to motion, means passage from the one to the other in what we call a mind. These two aspects exist in nature, and the mind is also in nature. The mind passes from one to the other in its so-called consciousness, and the world is a different world from the standpoint of one attitude from what it is from another. We say the world cannot occupy both meanings, if they are mutually exclusive; but passage in a mind enables it to do so by means of transformations.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 79-80.
nism and the object belong. The spatially conceived relationship serves merely as a hypothetical measure to retrieve an object having disintegrated in the initial and immediate manipulation. It is but a hypothesis making explanation possible. Once the individual (observer) has completed the re-configuration of the object, nature will again be immediately acted upon as a passing one by the individual (organism). To explain this chain of thoughts, let me make use of a few quotations.

First, in the immediate attitude of the individual

Any object is thus always an expression of a peculiar relation between itself and the individual, but it is an objective relation. The character of the individual selects out of the object as it exists what answers to the nature of the individual in his present attitude – a selection which answers both to his immediate sensitivities and to his experience.129

Second, if these immediate sensitivities and past experiences bring the individual to an unsuccessful manipulation, to a problem, the task becomes that of “re-organizing the object so that the individual with both tendencies”, those to react unsuccessfully and successfully, “may continue to act becomes that of so envisaging the object that conduct may go on.” Thus:

For this purpose we abstract from characters which inhere in particular objects and their situations and fasten our attention upon what is uniform in all objects and in all processes of perception. This enables us to identify the object of perception in its relation to the whole field and to account for the illusions of sense perception, such as reflected and refracted objects.131

Third, for the purpose of proper control and action resumed the individual abstracts passage from the object in reflecting upon the immediate perspective of the act arrested.

In a passing world objects do not pass. In so far as the object is spatially defined, it does not pass if it keeps the same spatial content, as determined by its reference to some percipient event, or individual, in a consentient set, or if it retains the same form with a different spatial content, as in the case of a wave. If a like spatial form is continually occupied by characters that do not pass, such as hardness or colour, we conceive of it as occupied by a something, a matter.132

Thus, even though the individual observer grants nature passage in his reflection of the immediate relationship of the act, this does not include the object contrived in this reflection. If it were included, it would not be able to

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130 Ibid. p. 8.
131 Ibid. p.10.
132 Ibid. p. 166.
control the act whose completion it is about to serve. If the object’s characters changed in the point of view of the individual, he would not be able to act upon a definite response and so be brought back to the problem or the conflict of opposing tendencies to respond from which his reflection emanated. The responses of the individual and the characters of the object stimulating the individual are correlative or reciprocal. The complex or ambiguous meaning of an object, that is to say, answers to that complex of conflicting tendencies to respond. In Mead’s formulation; “My thesis is that the inhibited contact responses in the distance experience constitute the meaning of the resistance of the physical object”.133 The meaning of the object qua object, the reflected set of characters distinguishing the object among others (notably that of the self) and which enables the individual to carry out this response and complete the act, are the responses not carried out. In other words, self and object are reciprocal and so the inhibition of response answers to the fixation of the “not-me” into a local rest in an otherwise passing nature. Having accomplished this fixation, the individual may go on to secure a definite set of characters by sorting out the characters obtaining in both distance and manipulatory experiences.

Now, having stated the necessity of comparing distance (predominantly visual) experience with manipulatory (predominantly tactile) experience, Mead has furnished an account of the errors of perception. Those characters that hold for both “here” and “there” offer the conditions for the object as they refer to conditions for their appearance in experience regardless of position. They are, in a more familiar phrasing, significant. They are independent of the “subjective”, or what Mead might have called the insignificant, individual effects of position. The object has been given a general statement by eliminating the self and the arbitrariness by which it is positioned in relation to the spatially characterised object.

However, this is a procedure not available when considering the (electro-magnetic) relativity of physical objects. The situation is similar, but not entirely the same. Here there seems to be no definite manipulatory area available to support the test of an object’s reality as a physical thing.

Since there is no absolute space to which these differing standpoints can be referred, as the perspectives of vision can be referred to a common manipulatory area, there can be no manipulatory area to which these perspectives or frames of reference may be referred. The measuring-rod and the clock that gives the local time belong to the manipulatory area, and the quantities they measure will vary from one set to another. There is no common measuring rod, and no common clock, that all can accept.134

133 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 127.
134 Ibid. p. 145.
Though the individual taking the role of a physical object manages to solve distortions limited to spatial perspectives and to co-ordinate its various individual aspects, it does not solve the problems raised by temporal perspectives. Since the actual perspective in which the characters of the object appear has a status of its own (the finitude of light), experiences of events will lag behind their occurrence in the system from which the emission originated. We find a restricted analogy to this phenomenon in acoustics whenever a sound traverses great distances and we compare arrival with utterance. The analogy is not perfect, but its imperfection conveys the point to be made. For while we in the case of sound may compare these characters with a microphone placed beside its origin and thus reconstruct the object in the distant experience based on a manipulatory experience, this is not the case with electromagnetic phenomena.

While we, in the standard and spatially conceived case, proceed by ascertaining the conditions under which characters appear in our distant experience by indicating those that persist in a manipulatory test, we cannot do so accepting electromagnetic relativity. Because the object in our experience appears differently when experienced in motion, the object will appear in the pre-Einsteinian science to require one explanation when at rest and another when in motion; or even worse, to require one statement for each conceivable degree of motion. There is no one definite or independent set of conditions under which the object appears in our experience. Due to the referential passage involved when moving from one system to another the explanation of an object cannot be conducted by subjecting the object to a manipulatory test. Such a test would imply a passage from a system at rest to one in motion and that the latter system, by way of this very referential passage, will be considered as if at rest and the former, conversely, in motion. Manipulatory experience of the object, therefore, will not confirm the distant experience, since will involve a comparison between characters obtained in two mutually exclusive space-time systems.

The import of relativity theory is then that while the pre-relative explanation may proceed by abstraction and comparison of characters obtained by means of individual perception, this will not suffice in the post-relative explanation. The theory of relativity has shown that the different characters of the object in distant and manipulatory experiences are “objective”. They cannot be corrected by way of reducing secondary characters into primary ones since the primary characters too have been found to vary with the individual observer’s perspective. In fact, the theory of relativity has argued that the “errors” in perception cannot be corrected by ascertaining the relationship between the individual observer and the object on account of their emergence in this very relationship. There is simply no definite object and no definite self apart from the actual perspective in which they emerge.
What is of importance, in considering the situation, is the fact that, in bringing in this actual or possible comparison, we are deserting our instantaneousness space, for it is only in the actual, or imagined, or conceived accomplishment of the act that the comparison can take place. When we do this, we prolong the instantaneous space beyond the hypothetical instant. In the instantaneous space there is and can be no error, for even the presence of the imagery of the distant object at the instant in the experience implies the completion of the act, and this involves time.\textsuperscript{135}

Relativity reveals therefore, in a certain sense, a situation in which the object in our experience is \textit{not} the expression of a \textit{problematic relationship}. The characters making up the perceptual object are not borne spatially but, ultimately, offered under temporal conditions and so the characters appearing in our experience cannot be brought to a manipulatory test by approaching the object since our very approach will give us another set of characters as we pass between “here” and “there”. Thus, stated the other way around, the characters of the object will be what they are \textit{because} they will be different when “there” becomes ”here”; our effort to bring the object into our manipulatory experience will alter the sensuous characters of the object. Returning to the case with the immersed wooden branch, Mead continues:

That is, we would see things with dimensions which would have a meaning for our manipulatory spheres which would not be borne out by the experience of getting them into those spheres. And we could not translate these errors into laws of reflection and refraction which implied a static space within which the mirror and the water image exist. We can get these images and the objects in their proper places into the same space; we could not do this with the objects observed moving at these high velocities. With the proper Lorentz transformations, we could translate from the one situation to the other, but they would remain objects in different time-space systems. We would never be able to get them into the same perceptual world as we understand this in the case of the so-called errors of perception.\textsuperscript{136}

We shall search in vain for a definite manipulatory object and a single and hence definitive response, since our very occupation of the system in which it appears will alter its sensuous characters. The object is the expression of a passing relationship between the self and the object, and since this perspective is a passing one, since the meaning of the object is an expression of an ongoing act, the object cannot be stated as invariant with itself. Thus, the object \textit{qua} object is not relative merely as a surface in a spatial relation but also as to its inside, which is to say its meaning. The object cannot be stated in abstraction of the act(ual perspective) in which it appears.

This point is best understood against the background of rest and motion. Rest and motion are, on the one hand, relational concepts in the sense that

\textsuperscript{135} Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Act}. p. 171-2.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid. p. 172-3.
the meaning of rest implies motion and vice versa. On the other hand they are conditions under which the object and self appear. In the first case, rest and motion constitute what Asplund referred to as a puzzle picture in connection to Tepoztlán; two pictures that, seen within the frame of the larger picture, both depend on and exclude one another.

Passage from a system in motion to the same system at rest, while the rest of world passes from rest to motion, means passage from the one to the other in what we call a mind. These two aspects exist in nature, and the mind is also in nature. The mind passes from one to the other in its so-called consciousness, and the world is a different world from the standpoint of one attitude from what it is from another. We say the world cannot occupy both meanings, if they are mutually exclusive; but passage in a mind enables it to do so by means of transformations. All that we need to recognize is that the world had the one aspect from one point of view and that it now has the other aspect from another point of view, and that there has been the same passage in nature from the one to the other as has taken place in the mind […]. [Italics mine]137

In the latter case, we say with Mead that an experiential condition for motion and rest is a set of characters that abide irrespective of an otherwise passing nature.

If perspectives can be reduced to diverse appearances of things that have remained the same during all changes, relativity will not bite into the nature of the things; but if the nature of things is found in process, in a system of changes, the different values which this process takes on form the various standpoints of different but related observers must affect the natures of the things themselves. Yet we cannot really reduce things to processes, for it is not possible that processes should go on that are not processes of things, and measurements can only be made in a situation within which something abides irrelevant to time.

While the event is taking place we watch it or listen to it or feel it; but if we can complete the behavior it initiates, we isolate the thing to which the event is happening. But from the standpoint of relativity no physical object can be isolated from what is happening to it. If it is at rest in one consentient set under the measurement of a scientist, it is moving in another set; and not only are its measurements in time and space shifting with the relative velocities of the sets, but its inner content of mass varies also.138

Thus, the relational meaning of rest and motion appears as soon as the object has appeared in the individual experience, together with the experience of the self, and either of these two objects will be considered referential, which is to say as if at rest, whenever the individual takes the role of one indicating the other. In other words, the rest of one implies the motion of the other.

137 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 80.
138 Ibid. p. 144.
since, in a universe void of absolute rest, the rest of one is another way of saying that it has been arrested during the inhibition with which reflection is afforded the individual. To Mead then, there is a close association between the rest of a system and the arrest of action – the one bears with it the implication of referring to a moving object, the other that of reflective indication of an object in an otherwise passing nature. It is the conception of rest in arrest of action that offers Mead a platform upon which to situate the social consciousness of the reflective experience.

The progression of thought we are dealing with here then suggests that the object will take on different meanings, different characters, to which I indicate myself as responding, depending upon whether I take the role of the distant or manipulatory object. Taking the role of the moving train, for instance, is another way of saying that I use the train as the system of reference rather than the passing embankment. This means, conversely and under the relativist assumption of a reciprocal displacement, that this system is indicated as if at rest. This is in Mead’s view another way of saying that the individual reflects himself as having a manipulatory experience of the train rather than the passing embankment. The individual takes the role of the self in the arrested or inhibited act.

As we have seen, in this reflective attitude nature consists in a reciprocal displacement of objects, or systems of characters, each of which is as valid as any other. This disinterested attitude illustrates the ideal attitude of the scientist.

This generalised attitude of the scientists, then, presents a “reality” which implies a passage from one’s own field to the field of another. This is accomplished by addressing the other and taking his attitude in reply to one’s own gesture. This is the psychological process that answers to the relativist’s recognition that what for him is moving may be at rest from the standpoint of another consentient set, while his consentient set is regarded as executing the motion. The relativist’s transformation formula appears when the psychological process fails. Psychologically, one places one’s self in the coordinates of the sun or that of the fixed stars. This becomes impossible when differences in simultaneity are postulated, i.e., we can place ourselves in the spatial perspective of another but not in a temporal perspective of another. The former leads up to the world at an instant and to the presentation of a stuff with a content of inertia as an expression of the quantity of matter. The latter comes back to the definition of things in terms of transformation formulas, and these cannot be brought into the perceptual field. 139

For the scientist there is no, nor should there be any, vantage point more valid than any other. If there were, it would signify nothing but an improper execution of standard procedures. The Einsteinian scientist differs from the classical or Newtonian scientist however, in that he accepts no manipulatory

test of the object’s reality that would offer the general conditions for its appearance in experience. The implication of the relativist definition of the situation breaks down to the impossibility of realizing the distant object as a physical thing and this necessitates the confinement of our explanation or reconstruction of the object to a transformation value. Thus, we are required to state the characters of the object in a fashion accounting for the time it takes for the object to reach our sensuous apparatus and appear in our experience. The characters that in the case of error in perception were conferred either upon the object or the self are here used to set up a transformation formula and with which each individual observer can take the role of any other.

Thus, contrary to the pre-Einsteinian scientist, who abstracts the observer’s self from the immediate object, the post-Einsteinian scientist shows that abstracting the object from its observation cannot yield a valid explanation. Since there is no independent perceptual object, the individual observer is required to generalise, not eliminate, the self to which the relative object answers. That is to say, since self and object are reciprocal, the generalisation of the conditions under which the object appears implies the generalisation also of the conditions under which the self appears. And, in consequence thereof, in order to explain the relative object we must state the conditions under which the individual self appears in the individual experience. Thus we reach a situation in which we need to turn epistemology around and treat actual experience as a cipher.

Now relativity, with the electro-magnetic theory out of which it has so largely arisen, has not only vastly complicated the spatio-temporal theory of measurement, but it has also reversed what I may call the reality-reference. Instead of saying that the reality of the perspectives of our distance experience is to be found in that contact experience which is firmly bedded in the geometry of a Euclidean space and the even flow of a uniform time, we must say that it is only as we can read over this seemingly Euclidean space of our contact world into perspectives dependent upon the motion of distance objects and discover transformation formulae between these that we can reach the reality of what we perceive.140

As relativity has shown that “the ’what’ of the object is the expression of the whole of which both environment and organism are essential parts”141 and in this respect to be considered a spatio-temporal one, the object has been reformulated into a transformation value reflecting the immediate perception of the object. Only with this re-constructed object the individual observer may calculate the characters that his self (or the system of which it is a member) immediately confers upon the object in perception. In other words, using these transformation formulae the individual observer may conduct the reflective role-taking necessary to eliminate from the object those immediate

140 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 60-1.
141 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 16.
characters that will produce failure if acted upon in a manipulatory experience.

Now, by reflecting (upon) the immediate role-taking the physicist acknowledges that the distant object observed is not a given or pre-existent thing, but emerging in the observation. Another way of putting this revelation is that there is no manipulatory experience that would ever realise the re-constructed object. There is in the theory of relativity no physical thing that answers to the definite object accomplished. It indicates but a virtual reality, not to be confused with the actual reality in which perceptual objects and physical things emerge. The transformation of universe, the generalisation of the conditions under which objects appear, results therefore in a hypothetical world; an infinite and instantaneous perspective signifying the most general of relationships, which is to say that between any individual observer and any object.

Approximating Mead’s point of view, we may call this transformation formula, this third point of reference, the perspective of the generalised other – not forgetting that Mead in the texts related here preferred the common or social perspective. The function of this point of reference is to detect and indicate in a coherent manner the characters common to the individual aspects of the actual perspective having emerged with the problem. By using this third point of reference the two disconnected individual perspectives now sums up and represents the actual perspective of an emergent passage observed. That is to say, this emergent passage will now appear to the individual observer as already completed, as having already become “what it is”. This is how post-Einsteinian observations retain the scientific procedure described by Mead in his functional elaboration of the act.

What we designate as “mental” is this attitude of isolation of common features that call out identical responses provided that we have symbols by which we refer to them. To set up a world of essences or universals or eternal objects within which these entities subsist or exist is parallel to the procedure of setting up a Minkowski space-time or a four-dimensional aggregate of events. Presumably objects in motion with reference to us have different values spatially, temporally and in terms of mass from those at rest; and if we are to measure them as we measure objects at rest about us we must isolate the common feature – viz., the relational character of space and time common to the two situations of rest and motion. The expression of this common feature in the equations that Larmor and Lorentz worked out in order to give invariance to the Maxwell equations carries with it most interesting implications, especially with reference to the constant velocity of light; but it does not change the fact that what is going on is measurement in one situation of something whose measurable characters are partly dependent upon the fact that it is in another situation as well. It does not carry with it the necessity of setting up a space-time realm.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{142} Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Present}. p. 154-5.
Let me expand on the way in which the scientific procedure governs the post-Einsteinian explanation of objects. It will enable us to understand more clearly the way in which Mead understands science.

What we have here is a common perspective called “the theory of relativity”, reflecting the actual perspective insofar it explains the (electro-magnetic) laws of nature and the role they play in the actual experiences of motion and rest. In this common perspective, light has replaced the ambiguous conditions of motion and rest, posing them as individual effects of position, and provides in this respect a significant dimension with which to render the sensuous characters obtained in either system consistent with the other.

We are here returning to the abstraction required to attain explanations, to state the conditions for a certain experience and the implication of a bifurcated nature. The experiential conditions of motion and rest have been reduced into a general statement, into a singular system called the space-time continuum or Minkowski space-time, by equalising distant and manipulatory kinds of experiences. Nature, that is to say, has been separated from the individual observer in whose experience this universal object actually appears or emerges. Although objective, this object is now also conceptual.

The non-experiential characters of light making up Minkowski’s 4D reality in other words are the generalisation of what would be the case if one assumed an object to have any speed between virtual rest and the (equally) virtual speed of light. They signify the general conditions under which an object appears in the experience of the physicist qua physicist. To Mead, then, this means that for the accomplishment of a common perspective enabling the physicist to translate the characters from the one system to the other, it is necessary that the characters differing between these systems be abstracted. With respect to motion and rest, used here as an indicator of change, this means the abstraction of the motional status from the systems observed and, in consequence, the conceiving of a universe as a void of emergent passage. It is no longer adequate to speak of actual experiences of “before” and “after”, since there is no alteration. All there is, is the variation or reciprocal displacement of instantaneous objects.

The postulation of such a realm rests upon the assumption that because the same object may be dealt with either as at rest or in motion, it must therefore be affected with the co-ordinate of time in the same fashion in each situation. This assumption consequently wipes out motion and substitutes for it geometrical determination in a four dimensional realm outside of any possible experience.

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143 It is virtual as far as rest is concerned, for there is no absolute rest in the universe defined by Einstein and, with regard to light, because its velocity cannot be actually experienced by an individual observer.
It all comes back to this: the separation of space and time is essential to the perceptual fact of motion. There must be a timeless space within which motion takes place. But timeless spaces differ according as the individual or “percipient event” is in motion or at rest. If, as in the example of the railway train, we transfer ourselves from the space of the compartment within the train to that of the landscape, then the space of the compartment within the train is in motion, and that space, if measured, will be measured in units differing from those of the space of the landscape. The same is true of the times. Given the relational character of space and time, their structural characters differ according to what may be called the temporal perspective of the individual. And, as Whitehead insists, these differences belong to nature [which is to say, the finite velocity of light governing our vision]. They are not subjective.\(^\text{144}\)

To find in Minkowski space-time (the) true nature (of things) is possible only on condition that we in the arrested or inhibited perspective of the individual observer would find real or actual time. That is to say, on condition that we confound the characters indicated by the common perspective with those in the actual perspective (involving the individual observer and within which he refers to the common perspective).

There must be at least something that happens to and in the thing which affects the nature of the thing in order that one moment may be distinguishable from another, in order that there may be time. […] From the standpoint which I have suggested it would involve a becoming.\(^\text{145}\)

According to Mead, then, the pasts and futures or, rather, the experiences of “before” and “after” reached in the transformational procedure should be considered virtual. In the 4D times-space there is no becoming, no actual change. These pasts and futures are as virtual as the homogeneous medium of 4D space-time in which these reflective or symbolic role-takings or transformations occur. In this universe, envisaged by the individual observer, there is really no relativity. In fact, relativity is a perceptual or subjective anomaly to be explained. From the point of view of the individual observer, which is to say the relativist, there is but invariance of objects, posing as relative in the individual perspectives of those conceived to inhabit this universe.

In Mead’s view, therefore, this invariant 4D realm construed by Minkowski in order to harmonise the individual and “subjective” perspectives has been furnished by way of making irrelevant the differences in kind between distance and manipulatory experiences and between bare and emergent passage.

\(^\text{145}\) Ibid. p. 19-20.
A change might always conceivably be other than it is. A geometrical structure and what follows from that structure can never conceivably be other than it is. In a space-time whose structure is once given nothing could conceivably be other than it is. As long, then, as nature appears in experience with the brute constants we discover, which change under our further investigation, the reference of formulae such as those of generalized relativity will always be to a situation that may conceivably be other than it is. They can never disappear, in our thinking of the world, into the geometry of a space-time. For example, it will always be conceivable that the constant of gravitation will prove to be such as not to resolve itself into curvatures of space-time. I recur to the statement I made earlier, that the reference of general relativity as well as that of special relativity is to the field of experience within which scientific problems, observations and experiments lie.\textsuperscript{146}

Bare passage is the reflection of emergent passage. The events appearing here are not events of becoming. Here no insides emerge, merely the surfaces corresponding to the symbols with which they are indicated. Here transformation values restrict indication to the significance allowed by the common and conceptual reference-system of light. The perceptual and relative object has been shown to be a subjective chimera of reality. By reconstructing it into a transformation value and generalised significance to include all conceivable points of view or any individual perspective, Minkowski has accomplished absolute pasts and futures of any conceivable event.\textsuperscript{147} No temporal perspectives, no actual and hence relative experiences of “before” and ”after” remain. Nature has been explained. Nature has been re-constructed into a distinct, conceptual object.

To Mead, however, this is little short of a bifurcation of nature and thus we reach the critical aspect of Mead’s account for the doctrine of relativity. This also brings us to the main point of the present argument; Mead’s account for the social consciousness as evidenced by the relativist in particular and the scientific observer in general.

We are now, I think, in a position to answer the question raised earlier: how do we come to give to the thing at a distance the physical values of the mani-

\textsuperscript{146} Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Present}. p. 159-60.

\textsuperscript{147} I would like to point out, together with Bergson, that Einstein was fully aware of the distinction to be made between the perceptual and the physico-mathematical reality of Minkowski time-space. “Similarly, the world of physical phenomena which was briefly called ‘world’ by Minkowski is naturally four-dimensional in the space-time sense. For it is composed of individual events, each of which is described by four numbers, namely, three space co-ordinates \(x, y, z\) and a time co-ordinate, the time-value \(t\). The “world” is in this sense also a continuum; for to every event there re as many ‘neighbouring’ events (realized or at least thinkable) as we care to choose, the co-ordinates \(x_1, y_1, z_1, t_1\) of which differ by an indefinitely small amount from those of the event \(x, y, z, t\) originally considered. That we have not been accustomed to regard the world in this sense as a four-dimensional continuum is due to the fact that in physics, before the advent of the theory of relativity, time played a different and more independent role, as compared with the space co-ordinates.” Einstein, A. \textit{Relativity. The Spatial and the General Theory}. p. 55-6.
Having stated the object as an invariant figure of light, the temporality of perspectives no longer presents the observer with a problem. Though the perceptual object does not lend itself to immediate role-taking, this failure of the mental processes has been repaired by the introduction of transformation formulae that enable the individual observer to indicate characters persisting in the passage between both systems. By means of this common perspective objects can be translated from one experiential condition to another; from the condition of rest to motion and from motion to rest. Light, as it were, had been found in the Michelson & Morley experiments to possess a velocity independent of the perceptual conditions signified as rest and motion and provided a character common to both systems. The velocity of light thus enabled a reflective role-taking with which to reinstate a definite object unattainable in the immediate role-taking of temporal perspectives.

It is in this respect that Minkowski time-space is not to be considered a sensuous reality, but a reflective reality. We adopt it once co-ordinating time with space, once treating time as the fourth dimension of space. And adhering to it, we shall complete the relativist explanation within an actual perspective but leave its emergent passage outside or implicit. If the individual observer were to make the emergent passage of his explanation explicit, he would offer a social psychological analysis of the explanation. He would stress the emergence of the (scientific) self and object in which the relative experience of the object will be found against the experiential background of an immediately social consciousness. This much said, let us now move on to Mead’s critique.

What in Mead’s view needs to be recognised is that “the experiential background” involved in the relativist transformations consists in a social

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148 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 123.
149 I am here referring to Mead’s suggestion that the reconstruction of a perceptual object always proceeds upon other perceptual objects. This suggestion might well be elaborated with a reference to E. Gendlin, suggesting implicit meaning as the conditional to explicit meaning. “[I]f we insist that logical structures and situatedness are always simply mixed, we lose both. But, if we enter even a short way into what implicitly happens in logical inference, we find that in logic and most scientific thinking one takes a distinction or conceptual pattern alone (that is to say as if it were alone), which requires the implicit effort to set aside all of the inseparable more (all one has there, knows, feels, experiences, is…), including the genesis and social context that is assumed in the conceptual pattern and its applications. This setting aside is real in that it actually occurs; one actually does it, but of course this does not in any way avoid the unexamined assumptions and consequences inherent in all that, to which one is not attending.” Gendlin, E. How Philosophy Cannot Appeal to Experience, and How It Can in Language beyond post-modernism: saying and thinking in Gendlin’s philosophy. (ed.) Levin, D. p. 10. This notion of the implicit, and the more implied by it than what is explicit in the logical operation, will prove to be an important theme in the probing of Mead’s social psychological assessment of science. This will be ventured in the final chapters of the present argument.
consciousness that enables the relativist to compare the two divergent observations of which he is immediately conscious.

The question at issue here is, what is there in nature that answers to the transformation in the mathematician’s mind? […] To state the matter less cumbersomely, the relativist is able to hold on to two or more mutually exclusive systems within which the same object appears, by passing from one to the other. I have already referred to the experiential form of this passage in which the man in a train passes from the system of the movement of his train to that of the movement of a neighbouring train. His train cannot be both moving and at rest, but the mind of the passenger can occupy in passage both systems, and hold the two attitudes in a comprehensible relationship to each other as representing the same occurrence from two different standpoints, having a mind or being a mind, he can occupy. If he accepts the two mutually exclusive situations as both legitimate, it is because as a minded organism he can be in both.150

In other words, the transformation yields a significant meaning regarding the two objects after having correlated two sets of characters already indicated in an immediate social consciousness. The characters by which the object is indicated are immediately there in the experience of the individual before he conducts the transformation.

If the velocity of light were infinite there would be no foreshortening, for then the light wave that left one end of an object would reach us at the same moment as the light wave from the other end, no matter how rapid the motion. It is then only when velocities approach that of light that such a perspective enters into experience, and then only indirectly as in the calculation of the change in mass of the particle shot out of the atom. But if we could see what is found in Eddington’s suppositional airplane we should get the visual temporal perspective directly, for of course time slows down in proportion as spatial dimensions are foreshortened. The natural assumption would be that these temporal perspectives are to be regarded in the same light as are spatial perspectives. The real dimensions and the real temporal passage are what the passengers in the airplane find them to be, just as their distorted view of us is to be corrected by what we find to be about us and what we find to be going on about us. [italics mine]151

Relativity qua invariance is realised by the individual observer as he finds, by means of responding to his immediate response, that the object has a definite meaning independent of any one individual perspective. It is upon the “natural assumption”, building in turn upon an immediately social consciousness in which “[w]e are not aware of projecting ourselves into the distant object because as selves we do not project ourselves into it”,152 that

150 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 80-1.
151 Ibid. p. 55.
the diverging appearances are co-ordinated by means of Lorentz’ transformation formulae. Thus, the explanatory reconstruction arrived at in the reflective social consciousness presupposes an immediately social consciousness. Without provisory and immediate objects the reflective construction of a conceptual object cannot be completed. To mention but one example, without the immediate acceptance of the measuring rod, it cannot support a reflection of the object be measured. As noted earlier, the verification of the conceptual object takes place in an otherwise passing nature; it occurs by means of an actual perspective.

Moreover, the procedure provided by Lorentz “is only possible if that sociality of thought in which we occupy the attitude of the other by taking our own divergent attitude is also a characteristic of nature.” The relativist “proceeds by transformations, but they are transformations which are possible only as the observer grasps that in his own situation which involves his placing himself in the situation of that which he observes.” Thus, the relativist procedure understood as a reflective passage or role-taking between individual perspectives, illustrates the sociality of the physical object in the post-Einsteinian universe and of the individual consciousness in which it emerges.

More generally speaking, the implication of Mead’s assessment is that relativity theory is not really a discovery achieved by physical science but rather an increasingly general or symbolic reflection of the sociality of the life process, of nature. Moreover, the relativist doctrine formulates a principle stating that consciousness of one object implies the consciousness also of another. These are the reciprocal experiences making up the social consciousness of the individual observer.

Now, accepting Mead’s reformulation of the relative principle as a social one, we find that there is a perceptual object common to the various individual perspectives. There is not a real multitude of one and the same object, one for each conceivable velocity. When we observe objects and find them to vary with themselves, this is true only in the sense that we treat the distant and the manipulatory experiences as if of one and the same kind. In such an experience the perceptual and reflective meanings will co-exist immediately and produce paradoxes similar to those pointed out by Bergson.

154 Ibid. p. 62. The point which Mead efforts to do in the context from which these quotations are taken are another. Namely that the relativists have changed the grounds for validation from (manipulatory) experience (which also include the very basis for this transformation theory as indicated above) to a reality between distance and manipulatory experience. Mead insists, however, that whatever the physicist will claim, he will still have to conduct his final validation in actual experience, in a perceptual world, and not by referring to a time-space beyond experience (meaning indirect experience through an mathematical or optical apparatus). Still, it is has bearing upon our present concern in that the sociality of consciousness is an actual expression of nature. More precisely, the social consciousness of the individual observer expresses, or embodies, the emergent passage of nature.
with respect to time in the reception of Einstein’s work. In this latter context the immediate confounding of temporal time with spatial time made for a conception of time superimposing the immediate reality of the former and the reflective multiplicity of the latter. This is also how Mead accounts for the bifurcation of nature; it occurs by way of confounding two different kinds of social consciousness: the immediate and the reflective role-taking. And this is not to surprise, since one has abandoned the emergent passage with which these two phases of the explanatory action are distinguished.

What Mead is proposing when speaking of the social or “double consciousness” of an observer indicating the relativity of a physical object, is then the sociality of the physical object. Although the individual observer immediately and as facts “accepts the two mutually exclusive situations as both legitimate […] because as a minded organism he can be in both,” it does not follow that the object answering to the social self is the multiplicity of a physical thing. It is a social object, answering to this social self in the actual perspective and reflected in the common perspective. Moreover, the realisation of the object as a thing is now restricted to manipulation conducted by means of transformation formulae.

Light, that is to say, has been deemed the general and common condition under which an object appears in individual experience, and reveals a situation in which there is no longer a physical object to realise as a physical thing. The object explained has been expelled from actual experience and is now but a figure of light, a “curvature of time-space”. Reality is now wholly virtual or “objective” and what perceptual objects there are signify nothing but subjective appearances of a 4D time-space continuum. In Mead’s view therefore, electromagnetic relativity has turned the entire reality reference upside down or, perhaps, inside out. As noted earlier:

Instead of saying that the reality of the perspectives of our distance experience is to be found in that contact experience which is firmly bedded in the geometry of a Euclidean space and the even flow of a uniform time, we must say that it is only as we can read over this seemingly Euclidean space of our contact world into perspectives dependent upon the motion of distance objects and discover transformation formulae between these that we can reach the reality of what we perceive.

Thus, as individual observers we cannot account explain the relativity of the object without stating the object as a transformation value; i.e., as a relationship. And it is for this very reason that we shall keep in mind that stating nature in terms of transformation formulae is the indication of an object-

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155 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 81.
156 Ibid. p. 112.
157 Ibid. p. 60-1.
158 Ibid. p. 60-1.
world, not a thing-world. Failing to do so, we at once fall prey to a bifurcation of nature.

It remained for relativity to set up motion itself as an entity which arises under certain conditions – those of frames of reference – out of logically antecedent conditions of events at intervals from each other within space-time. But these conditions no longer lie within the range of possible experience.\textsuperscript{159}

Recognising the difference between emergent passage between two perceptual systems and bare passage, confined to the carrying on of relations within a singular system, is imperative when to avoid a bifurcation of nature. The significance of this distinction between emergent and bare passage stems from the fact that passage, or time, has a profound bearing upon the concept of change. As stressed by Deleuze in his analysis of Bergson’s philosophy, grasping change as \textit{variation} (change of position) should be distinguished from the sense in which change signifies \textit{alteration}. Spatialising time, as when reducing time to the fourth dimension of space in relativity theory, we shall have a concept of change spelling change of position. This concept would seem to be also the conventional one and one necessary for scientific explanations. This can be demonstrated quite easily with reference to the premise that an individual observer can only indicate change as a difference between two observations of an object conducted at different times. Working on a concept of time as a series of instances, and where each instance corresponds to spatial co-ordinates, change will be reflected as a series of locations in one, two or three dimensions alongside that of \( t \). Conceiving time temporally rather than spatially, thus refuting time as the fourth dimension of space, denies us the possibility of plotting change as a change of position. Still accepting the premise that change can only be indicated as a difference between any two observations of the same object at two different occasions, leaves us with a change referring to the characters of the object rather than its position (in space); which is to say alteration. Here time is considered unattached to, or different in kind from, space and can therefore only be determined with reference to the indication, and reflection, of the object’s alteration. In other words, articulating time temporally means that we shall have to determine time in terms of the individual observers actual experiences of “before” and “after”.

If one fails in recognising this distinction and conceives of change as a simple or non-composite concept with which to pose the question from which the explanation will ensue, the object is conceived irrespective of the individual in whose experience or temporal perspective it emerges. The perceptual reality shall be exchanged for its reflection and the thing will take on the everlasting reality characteristic to the object: an invariant, geometric

\textsuperscript{159} Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Present}. p. 50.
form in the four-dimensional co-ordinate system devised by Minkowski. From that moment on, we shall realise the object only by means of the symbolic manipulation of reflection and ignore the temporality to which its emergence attests.¹⁶⁰ Let me illustrate this point by using Mead’s distinction between I and me.

When I recall a past experience, I structure the memory from another co-ordinate in the homogeneous space or medium erected by my reflection. I am able to do so since there has been a passage transcending the present I now call “past”. In fact, I would be in no position to conceptualise (an experience as) a past (experience) without an emergent passage. It is here the difference between temporal and spatial time lies: between the irrevocability of a real or temporal past and the revocability of Minkowski’s virtual or atemporal past. While the former experience occurs from within a temporal perspective (an actual perspective involved in emergent passage), the latter occurs from within a spatial perspective (an actual perspective having emerged and acted upon as the bare passage of an eternal past).

That which has happened is gone beyond recall and, whatever it was, its slipping into the past seems to take it beyond the influence of emergent events in our own conduct or in nature. It is the “what it was” that changes, and this seemingly empty title of irrevocability attaches to it whatever it may come to be.¹⁶¹

A more comprehensive way of putting the difference between the two kinds of passage is gained by developing the two temporal aspects of the self in scientific observation in the above paragraph. Above I noted that: “I structure the memory from another co-ordinate in the homogeneous space or medium erected by my reflection. I am able to do so since there has been a passage transcending the present I now call ‘past’.” This formulation can be rephrased as follows: “I structure the memory from me in the homogeneous space or medium erected by my reflection. I am able to do so since there has occurred an emergence transcending the present from what the I calls ‘past’ as me.” That is, I cannot present the responding while simultaneously responding without the object (and hence the act) having altered. In the present present me is reflective of the response having occurred in the past as an immediate response or I. In this fashion the past fuses with the present stimulation and this fusing answers to a natural or immediate confounding of the two aspects of time. It serves the purpose of an eternal or independent object with which to control the act having been arrested and so enables the individual to plan action. In this case, it enables the individual to indicate (the object of) himself in two different presents or temporal perspectives.

¹⁶⁰ I am here referring to the previously mentioned suggestion made by Mead that sociality is the principle and form of emergence. See Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 85.
¹⁶¹ Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 3.
Converting back to the theory of relativity, and to which Mead’s reasoning relates, we can see how the Minkowski experience is different in kind from an actual experience. It comprises change only in the respect of changes of position in an invariant space-time medium. Emergent passage has been vanquished in reducing the conflicting conditions of rest and motion into the singular dimension of significance available; namely light. With this time events can virtually be repeated time and time again, very much like the events projected in Proctor’s Pleasure Palace. In fact, this is the very purpose, for it is only as such that it will provide an explanation for the appearance of the relative object in the individual experience. And because of this conception of passage, there will be no possibility of emergence entering the statement of the object. And, indeed, why should it? If it did, the scientific procedure would certainly be considered inadequately executed. They very purpose of explanation is to rid actual experience of indefinite tendencies to respond to the object. Failing to do so, the individual is in no position to pursue the act obstructed by the ambiguous object.

Thus, what Mead stresses in his social assessment of relativity is that there is a difference in kind between the reality in which the relativity of objects emerges and the reality in which the relative objects have already emerged qua invariant objects. The former refers to an emergent passage, the latter to a bare passage. In the former the object emerges, in the latter it appears as if having already emerged. Thus, the characteristic move of the relativist is the elimination of real or actually experienced change, as illustrated by the absence of real motion in Minkowski’s time-space continuum. Once harmonizing time with space, motion will be rendered as change of position or, speaking in terms of differentiation, differences by degree or quantity. In this view what is perceived is a finite or subjective fragment of what “really” is. Change is merely a subjective and relative expression or surface of an invariant, electromagnetic reality. To Mead, this is nothing short of an “Absolute Idealism”\(^{162}\) a view treating universe as pre-made, stated in a fashion eliminating emergent passage or, speaking from the point of view of the individual observer, the actual perspectives of “before” and “after”.

This needs to be appreciated and understood when returning to Mead’s philosophy in the hope of recovering a genuinely social psychology. If these two kinds of time are confounded, such as when saying that motion and rest are subjective chimeras of real nature, bifurcation of nature is not far away. We shall soon be distinguishing between the perceptual object and the object of reflection in such a fashion as to imply that the latter is “equally”, if not

\(^{162}\) I am here leaning on a theme in Mead’s work, revolving following proposition: “The outcome of this doctrine has been the statement of change in nature in geometrical form, but it is a geometry that includes time as one of its dimension.” Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Act*. p. 321.

“more”, real than the former. Such a conclusion will, with the aid provided by Bergson, here be recognised as a confounding of the object with the thing and resulting from the elimination of the emergent passage necessary for the appreciation of differences in kind.

As I am now to increase the distance from which I have hitherto represented the principal argument made by Mead to one offering less detail, I would like to repeat the basic argument made here. What Mead endeavored was the suggestion that the relativity of the physical object appeared at the moment the scientist realised that the emergence of the object in his individual perspective was simultaneous and reciprocal with the emergence of his self. The individual reflecting (upon) the physical object as relative realises the sociality of this object as well as the sociality of the consciousness in which it emerges.

Relativity reveals a situation within which the object must be contemporaneously in different systems to be what it is in either.164

The social characters of the universe we find in the situation in which the novel event is in both the old order and the new which its advent heralds. Sociality is the capacity of being several things at once.165

How then are we to understand this concept of sociality? And how are we to distinguish the one sense of sociality from the other: the altering emergence from the carrying on of varying relations? For, surely, there is a difference to be made between the sociality of “physical” objects and the sociality we imply when indicating the objects (the acts) observed in social psychology. The problem is, however, that Mead never got to finish the co-ordination of these two kinds of objects and show how they might have differed in the scientific procedure with which they are reflected. In fact, and as noted by B. M. Fisher and A. L. Strauss above,166 Mead had but little to say about the observation and explanation of “social “ objects in the first place.

164 Mead, G. H. in Philosophy of the Present, p. 63.
165 Ibid. p. 49.
3 Beyond the “Physical” and the “Social”: The Whole Situation

3.1. Simultaneity and Reciprocity

The systems to which I have referred are in all cases interrelations between the organism and the world that reveals itself as environment, determined by its relationship to the organism. Any essential change in the organism brings with it a corresponding change in the environment.167

Reading Mead’s concept of sociality without acknowledging the difference in kind between an incomplete sociality including physical objects and a complete sociality excluding physical objects, one shall treat it as a “simple” concept. One shall read Mead as if the relationship between individual and environment signifies a social interaction (or simply interaction). It does not. And in order to appreciate this difference in kind we need to articulate the actual perspective including the individual observer and the individuals observed temporally. Failing to do so, we may confound the sociality of nature and imply a bifurcation of nature.

But Whitehead uses [analytical abstraction] as a method of metaphysical abstraction and finds in the mere happening the event, the substance of that which becomes. He transfers the content of what becomes to a world of ‘eternal objects’ having ingress into events under the control of a principle lying outside of their occurrence. While, then, the existence of what occurs is found in the present, the “what it is” that occurs does not arise out of happening, it happens to the event through the metaphysical process of ingress. This seems to me to be an improper use of abstraction, since it leads to a metaphysical separation of what is abstracted from the concrete reality from which the abstraction is made, instead of leaving it as a tool in the intellectual control of that reality. Bergson refers, I think, to the same improper use of abstraction, in another context, as the spatialization of time, contrasting the exclusive nature of such temporal moments with the interpretation of the contents of ‘real’ duration.168

167 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 84-5.
168 Ibid. p. 20-1.
Allowing for temporal and spatial conceptions to mix in (or up) the social psychological observation will make any attempt at reinforcing social psychology with the philosophy of Mead a difficult one. Not only is this confounding the very point of his critique of the bifurcation of nature in modern science, it also renders the social psychologist incapable of verifying the reality of the object he is set to explain. Before mapping this out, however, I will bring this problem to bare by means of Mead’s philosophical position. In a first step, this will mean a temporal articulation of the concept of sociality, facilitating an understanding of what Mead calls “the whole situation” and in which the social psychologist is located insofar as he is to be regarded a scientist. In a second step, I shall demonstrate why the spatialisation of time is necessary to science and, having accomplished as much, I shall show how this spatialisation of time renders the social psychologist incapable of verifying the reality of the object he sets out to explain.

Now, in this first step I shall make use of Bergson’s critique of the concept of time acted as displayed by Becquerel’s twin-paradox; chiefly because this critique will serve as a template when facing the task of decomposing concepts. In this respect it will offer help in understanding the implications of not distinguishing between Mead’s two kinds of passage necessary to understand the spatialisation of time. What I am to do here is therefore to follow through Mead’s temporal articulation of the act and so make possible a distinction in kind between what Bergson calls complete and half reciprocity. This in turn will inform an understanding of Mead’s distinction between what is “fully” or completely social and that which is not; what is completely social and what is incompletely social.

There is also another reason for using Bergson’s critique of Becquerel’s understanding of time, although strongly related to the one mentioned. It has to do with the Temporalist philosophy169 to which both Mead and Bergson contributed.

Although excellently presented by Dewey in his 1898 article The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology, and having made a strong impression on Mead,170 the kernel of this mode of thought was not a novel one. As early as 1887, when publishing Time and Free Will, Bergson devoted himself to what he considered a most serious limitation to (the philosophy of) science: the spatialisation of time. By spatialising time on the grounds of procedure and not circumscribing the legitimacy of this procedure, one confounds two kinds of time and makes obscure any attempt at understanding change. By reading what has already become into what is becoming, that is to say, change will turn into a logical scheme of elements placed side by side seized by the individual observer in an instantaneity. This omniscient observer will be able to see cause and effect simultaneously. And yet the whole exercise of

169 Murphy, A. E. Philosophy of the Present. p. xi.
explaining the change in question proceeds upon the recognition that they have occurred in a mutually exclusive succession. (The change of the object is defined as a constitutional shift occurring between a certain “before” and a certain “after”.) Thus, in order that the individual observer may complete his explanation of the object’s change, he has to travel back in time and determine certain characters that extend into and define the present object. He must read into the becoming what has already become, for this is all he can know with perceptual certainty. Only then can he travel back into the future of the present and claim: here it is, here is the cause of this object, this effect. Change, then, due to this confounding of two kinds of time, has been reduced to the carrying on of certain relations (those defining the object in space and time). The change of the object explained is the variation of a certain object over time, rather than the alteration of one object to another. This is necessary since change, in this latter sense, cannot be subjected to the time travel required for explanation.

Having made these introductory remarks, I proceed now to the time travel paradox offered by Becquerel and resolved by Bergson.

Becquerel asks us to conceive of two twins on earth, one of which enters a shuttle sending him out in space at a certain or accelerating speed. According to the theory of relativity, Becquerel continues, this twin will, due to the speed of the shuttle, have aged at slower rate than his twin on earth. According to Bergson, however, this is true insofar as we conduct our calculation as would the twin on earth and regard earth as our system of reference. And it will be true insofar as there is no twin, no second observer, living the life of an even moderately conscious physicist left. If there was, both systems would constitute reference systems simultaneously and thus both would be as if at rest. However, as two systems cannot be conceived at rest simultaneously in a universe stipulated as an aggregate of reciprocal displacement, the time recorded for the astronaut-twin is a time recorded as if by him. This time is attributed by the earth-twin to the system as he necessarily sees it as if in motion in order that the universe be retained within the laws of perspective from his “enlightened” point of view. The time immediately projected to the moving system is thus the effect of his individual perspective. It is not a real time, for this requires a consciousness able to read a clock in a proper fashion (t as reflecting time). The immediate occurrences of “before’s” and “after’s” obtained by the earth-twin reading his clock are real but those obtained by the astronaut-twin are not. Only

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172 Two “systems” can be at rest simultaneously only insofar they are both members of a system we observe from another (reference-)system. Not making this interpretation, we are violating the axiom reciprocal displacement (space offers no absolute rest).
reckoning with a philosophically complete reciprocity, they could count as real. As noted earlier:

There must be at least something that happens to and in the thing which affects the nature of the thing in order that one moment may be distinguishable from another, in order that there may be time. […] From the standpoint which I have suggested it would involve a becoming.

What makes it possible for the twins to calculate the time involved in the relative observation is the emergent passage in which they are pointing off simultaneities of self and object co-existing as there in the immediately social consciousness. The reason why we might conclude that the astronaut-twin has aged less than his earth-twin is that he was erased at the moment the shuttle started to move (unmerged or was indicated as distinctly different from the reference system) and reinstated as a conscious being at his return (re-merging with the reference system). For it ought to be remembered that the only reason why the shuttle moves and the laboratory is at rest is that our single observer has chosen earth as his reference system. Had he located his laboratory in the shuttle, the reversed rate of aging would have been the case, mathematically speaking. Speaking philosophically, however, both life processes occur in a singular and emergent passage of nature. There are not, then, multiple real times. There is one actual or real time and multiple virtual ones, where the latter constitute individual reflections of the former, which is to say the immediate passage of the actual perspective.

The paradox of time slowing down in systems approximating the velocity of light rests therefore, Bergson argues, upon a chain of arguments starting with real time, allowing virtual or mathematical time to slip in and finally returning to a real time. These junctures are i) the instant the twin leaves earth in the shuttle, hereby establishing two systems of which but one is made referential by the individual qua observer and ii) the instant at which the shuttle re-merges with earth and allows the twin in the shuttle once again to benefit from executing an actual consciousness. If we had taken into account both earth and shuttle as systems of reference, thus manifesting complete reciprocity rather than two half reciprocities superimposed, both systems would have been as if at rest and in motion simultaneously. In this view the twins age at the same rate in the real time common to all reference systems, to all systems inhabited by individuals qua observers.

Bergson’s distinction between half and complete reciprocity serves to signify two conceptions of the relationship between systems or sets of characters. Whereas the half reciprocity assumes one observer alternating

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173 This is Bergson’s terminology, used to differentiate the mathematically complete reciprocity, offered by one individual observer adding to halves, from that offered by communication between two individual observers.
between two systems, the complete allows for two contemporaneous observers, one in each system. The relationship between two systems will therefore be conceptualised in different ways depending upon whether we assume, on the one hand, that there is one observer comparing one manipulatory experience (in the system at rest) with a distant experience (reflectively taking the role of the moving system) obtained by means of transformation formulae or, on the other, that there are two observer’s comparing manipulatory experiences contemporaneously.\footnote{This signifies a difference between manipulation and communication and we shall do well keeping this in mind.} In the former case a multitude of times will appear and differ by degrees; simultaneities at the reference system will extend into successions in the moving system, in the latter case, the temporal relationship will differ by kinds; the immediate time experienced by the individual observer in the reference system and the symbolic or virtual time he attributes to the moving system as he reflectively takes its role towards the original reference system.

The distinction between half and complete reciprocity amounts therefore to a note of warning: not decomposing the composite concept of time implies the paradox of multiple real times and, in a second step, that of time traveling.

Yet a single real time is instrumental to the relativist theory of multiple, diverging times appearing when obtained alternately at rest and in motion. Real time (or la durée speaking with Bergson), that is to say, is instrumental to its reflection. It is the time used by the physicist when reading the clocks as measuring $t_1$, $t_2$, $t_n$. Without such a spatialisation of time, the individual observer will be at loss also when to determine relationships between “cause” and “effect”. These objects may emerge only in a consciousness in which the object observed is offered a temporal environment and with reference to which they are fixed. Thus, what I intend to do here is to advance similar warning to reader’s of Mead. Reciprocity is implied by the principle of sociality as defined by Mead in terms of emergent passage (real time).

\footnote{Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 85.}

I have wished to present mind as an evolution in nature, in which culminates that sociality which is the principle and the form of emergence. The emergence in nature of sensuous qualities is due to the fact that an organism can respond to nature in differing systematic attitudes and yet occupy both attitudes.\footnote{This signifies a difference between manipulation and communication and we shall do well keeping this in mind.}

In the remainder of this argument I shall argue that if or when we alternate between two different senses of reciprocity in an immediate fashion, this alternation will be reflected equally immediately in the meaning or characters of the object. Thus, if this alternation or emergent passage between
individual perspectives in itself is unaccounted for or left outside the scientific situation, the social psychological observer is liable to meet with paradoxes similar to those discussed by Bergson. As a first step in this direction, I shall now “Meditate” the two concepts of time located at the back of both relativity and sociality; *simultaneity* and *reciprocity*. For with these concepts we are given tools with which to grasp Mead’s theory of the act more firmly and to target the concept of sociality contained by it.

For the success of the explanation of an object, the assumption of a certain relationship between individual and environment is imperative. This is evidenced in that science seeks to efface the individual self from the object by stating the object in such a fashion that the object is what it is, independently of how and from what location it is observed. The way the explanation treats this relationship however, indicates to Mead that it considers but an aspect, or phase, of the act. What we need to do is to take “the whole situation” into account. And taking “the whole situation” into account means significantly to take time into account, or more concretely, to consider the object and the self as emerging as the individual aspects of an actual perspective in passing nature; as the individual aspects of a temporal perspective.

The objects that are there in independence of the organism imply the organism. That is, the organism is not independent of them. That the organism may be an object, they must be what they are. It must be possible to regard the organism from the standpoint of its field so that it may be there as an object. The process by which the organism has arisen is, however, one in which the organism has determined its field by its susceptibilities and responses. There is a mutual interdependence of the two. This is expressed in the term “perspective”.

By *perspective*, Mead understands a “mutual interdependence” between self and object and with this characterisation he has activated a series of statements relying on concepts and distinctions critical to the present argument: perspective-act, bare-emergent passage, simultaneity-reciprocity and mind-nature. Now, given the rather complex nature of these tissues it will be for the remainder of this chapter to unveil the concept of sociality lying beneath. We shall begin by looking at a somewhat more substantial example of the complexity of the concept of perspective, emphasizing its affinity with a key concept in relativity: *simultaneity*.

[M]ind as it appears in the mechanism of social conduct is the organization of perspectives in nature and at least a phase of the creative advance of nature. Nature in its relationship to the organism, and including the organism, is a perspective that is there. A state of mind of the organism is the establishment of simultaneity between the organism and a group of events, through the

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arrest of action under inhibition as above described. This arrest of action means the tendencies within the organism to act in conflicting ways in the completion of the whole act. […] It is the identification of these responses with the distant stimuli that establishes simultaneity, that gives insides to these distant stimuli, and a self to the organism. Without such an establishment of simultaneity, these stimuli are spatio-temporally distant from the organism, and their reality lies in the future of passage. The establishment of simultaneity wrenches this future reality into a possible present, for all our presents beyond the manipulatory area are only possibilities, as respects their perceptual reality.178

The simultaneity is the emergence of two definite objects in the consciousness of the individual. It is the instantaneity of objects side by side in the arrest of action we know as inhibition. As such it answers to the reflection of our competing immediate responses that give the objects inside or meaning in order that a successful manipulation may complete the act. As such, moreover, the simultaneity manifests the breakdown of the immediate actual perspective in which the problem arose, thus presenting the individual with the remaining “parts” of the actual perspective: the set of characters responded to (the object) and the set of responses responded to (the self). Most importantly though is the fact that the simultaneity points to a consciousness involving both self and object: a reflective social consciousness, in itself passing between the two non-passing objects side by side.

In a passing nature simultaneity is established between the organism and other events through the arrest of the on-going act, and the organism’s taking the attitude of the thing there over against the organism here. The identification with the thing is the result of the arousal in the organism of the thing’s response when the organism acts so as to call out that response in the thing. This response for physical things is that of resistance. It is the endowing of the thing with an inside. Simultaneity is the possible presence of the organism at any locality while the organism is in relation with the distant stimuli. It is the indication to the organism of its response from the standpoint of the location, distance and other characters of the stimulus, in so far as the organism has taken the attitude of the distant stimulus. This taking the attitude of the distant stimulus must then be prior to the experience of mutual indications. The organism as a physical object appears in the same process within which appears the distant object. We are not aware of projecting ourselves into the distant object because as selves we do not project ourselves into it. The taking of the attitude of the distant object and of the self in response has already taken place in the social mechanism of the organism.179

Thus, during reflective role-taking, during the indication of competing tendencies to respond, a simultaneity of self and object will obtain as the

178 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 172.
immediate condition\textsuperscript{180} upon which the reconstructive explanation relies. It manifests itself to the reflective social consciousness in that unquestioned reality that is \textit{there}; the object and the self persisting as individual objects side by side as the result of an immediate role-taking having always already occurred and failed. As such it supplies the individual with the material upon whose perceptual reality he conducts the explanatory reflection.

Taking this back to Mead’s assessment of the relative object, the referential capacity of a system is to be understood as its immediate rest and, given Einstein’s suggestion that rest is treated as reciprocal with immediate motion, what we find in Mead’s assessment is this: when Einstein proposed that rest of any rigid body cannot be assumed, he did so in order to eliminate subjectivity or individuality from the statement of the conditions under which an system or object appears in experience. All objects are in reciprocal displacement, as it were. The experiential conditions of rest and motion respectively were reformulated therefore into characters appearing in individual perception and, as such, to be regarded as “subjective”. The relativity of the distant object was hereby explained as the effect of an immediate role-taking and as such to be eliminated by the reflective social consciousness of universe as a singular spatio-temporal system.

Now, as rest or simultaneity is the aspect nature takes on in reflection, it is but a small leap to associate the physico-mathematical concept of \textit{rest} with the social psychological \textit{arrest} of action, with inhibition of responses or reflection.

Simultaneity refers to the maintenance of the same relative position of objects to one another during any duration however how short.\textsuperscript{181}

Thus, by posing rest as the environmental reflection of the individual’s arrest of action Mead supplies the individual with the non-passing nature required for the problem to be solved. Here, or rather then, the individual may ponder different paths of approach by envisaging how to organise the two individual aspects of the actual perspective. The individual perspective is therefore to be considered a simultaneity of self and object placed side by side in an otherwise passing nature. This otherwise passing nature is significantly that of his consciousness passing between the two individual perspectives of self and object and that of his instruments spatialising and measuring the passage whereby this role-taking is completed.

Now, in the above I have proceeded alongside the distinction between the immediate and reflective aspects of the act. I have argued that the simultaneity appears as the individual reflects the immediate role-taking, rendering

\textsuperscript{180} The re-construction of the perceptual object into a scientific object proceeds, Mead stresses, on the immediate acceptance of other perceptual objects. This will be elaborated upon shortly. Mead, G. H. \textit{ Philosophy of the Act}. p. 9-10.

\textsuperscript{181} Mead, G. H. \textit{ Philosophy of the Act}. p. 562.
its indistinct elements the form or characters of the particular dimension of significance added. Having done so, I have presented Mead’s argument that the simultaneity or side-by-sidedness of self and object emerges as the hypotheses with which the individual attempts to complete the arrested act. I have also indicated that the social consciousness expresses the passage of nature. Both in the sense of providing the immediate material being there and the reflective role-taking whereby self and object emerge as individual objects.

Accepting this characterisation of the simultaneity it is but a short step to the concept of reciprocity. For reciprocity, taken in an elementary sense and to be differentiated shortly, signifies a simultaneity of two objects (or local rests) in an otherwise passing nature; a composite body or system in motion. Or more precisely, when speaking of reciprocity we refer not to two moving objects but rather the motion of a complex object or the changing appearance of a relationship. Reciprocity understood in this fashion refers therefore to a simultaneity plus the passing nature being there. It is the realisation on the part of the observer that his reflection of the actual perspective is part of the passage in which these objects appear.

The motion of a system is always reflected in a system at rest, and when the individual observer grasps that this rest is motion in another individual perspective, this realisation in itself reflects the reciprocity expressed by the actual perspective. The individual observer thus brings back to nature what is necessary for this realisation regarding the relative nature of rest and motion; he reads back into nature the passage he abstracted in making the two systems distinct and with which he accomplished the explanation for the experiential relativity of objects. In fact, he returns what he took away when splitting nature alongside the two kinds of social consciousness; the immediate and the reflective aspects of the passing consciousness.

Although the texts covered by my index (see 1.6. The Return to Mead and the Challenge of Relativity) do not include reciprocity, except for a single instance to be addressed shortly, this does not mean that the notion of reciprocity is redundant to Mead’s argument. In the passage quoted earlier in this section, to mention but one example, perspective takes its place. In his non-Einsteinian elaborations, the terms serving the purposes of reciprocity are predominantly those of (mutual) adaptation, interaction and adjustment.

Adaptation refers to that relationship between individual and environment in which there is no differentiation between the two on behalf of the individual. It signifies a situation involving two objects without the experience of, or implication of, insides or meaning.182

182 I am here proceeding upon the definition of meaning earlier (see 2.1. Wundt, Mead and the Challenge of Relativity). See also Mead, G. H. in Philosophy of the Act. p. 371.
The expression of this relationship is found in the term “adaptation”. It is this relationship which I have referred to as that between exteriors – exteriors without the implication of interiors.\(^\text{183}\)

There is in adaptation no consciousness of individual aspects of the actual perspective in the sense of suggesting objects. Thus, though there may be consciousness there is no consciousness of anything.\(^\text{184}\) There is then no object \textit{qua} object in adaptation and this situation occurs whenever an organism responds to its environment without reflecting itself in an object, either because of its insufficient cerebral capacities or the absence of a problem. As adaptations one might consider the casual stroll down an avenue or the blinking of one’s eyes when changing one’s focus of attention.

\textit{Interaction}, on the other hand, refers to a relationship between individual and environment in which there is a distinction between two physical objects on behalf of the individual.

I am distinguishing here between the adaptation of the organism to the thing […] and the realization of the interaction between an object and the organism, in which both are things.\(^\text{185}\)

The interactive relationship is characterised by the recognition on the part of the individual organism that there is both action and reaction; i.e., that response meets with resistance. There is consciousness of an object apart from the individual organism in the sense of a meaning, in the sense of \textit{something}. And simultaneous to this recognition is the recognition of the individual as \textit{something}; as individual \textit{qua} individual. With interaction, then, reflection is introduced.

But nothing can be an object in experience unless action is directed toward it, and nothing is an object without the self or organism being also an object, so that the presence of an object involves not only action with reference to this object but also action directed toward the self or organism. Action of the organism with reference to itself is, then, a precondition of the appearance of an object in its experience. The striking characteristic of perceptual objects is their simultaneity, the substitution of objects which are spatially but not temporally distant from the individual for those which are spatio-temporally distant. The basis for this simultaneity is the common possession of a content which carries the character of “now”.\(^\text{186}\)

Interaction, then, refers to the simultaneous emergence of individual \textit{qua} organism and object \textit{qua} physical object in the experience of an individual

\(^\text{183}\) Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Act}. p. 312.
\(^\text{184}\) I refer here to the distinction related earlier (see 2.2. Referring to the Physical Object). See also Mead, G. H. in \textit{Philosophy of the Present}. p. 4.
\(^\text{185}\) Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Act}. p. 311.
\(^\text{186}\) Ibid. p. 160.
observer occupying each of these two systems sequentially, the reason being the breakdown of the immediate actual perspective into two individual and indefinite objects and an attempt at understanding their relationship.

Adjustment, finally, signifies both adaptation and interaction. It is used as a general term and seems to be Mead’s choice when his focus is not fastened to the biological or functional differences but to the relationship per se between objects. Another reason for treating adjustment as a general term for the discussion of reciprocal or “relative” objects is provided by the fact that on the singular occasion reciprocity appears in my index, it does so as a synonym to mutual adjustment and a temporally extended simultaneity.\(^{187}\)

Now, since our primary concern here is the emergence and reflection of objects, we shall leave the concept of adjustment here and direct attention to the distinction between adaptation and interaction. This distinction is significantly a temporal one and will in this respect be of great value when in subsequent attempting to decompose the concept of sociality.

The differentiation made by Mead regarding the general occurrence of adjustment between adaptation and interaction relates to the presence of insides and involves the meaning entering the act of complex organisms. This was touched upon when presenting the physical act in the foregoing chapter and now is the time to probe this suggestion further. For not to grasp the emergence of the “inside” or meaning of physical objects is tantamount to failing to recognise the way in which the individual manages to include itself in the actual perspective; to respond, that is to say, in such a fashion as to complete the act and hence exclude the possibility of accounting for the sociality of consciousness. Thus, when Mead asked how “we come to give to the thing at a distance the physical values of the manipulatory area?” and “what is the experiential background of the homogeneity of space?”\(^{188}\) he

\(^{187}\) This passage reads: “The past is there conditioning the present and its passage into the future, but in the organization of tendencies embodied in one individual there may be an emergent which gives to these tendencies a structure which belongs only to the situation of that individual. The tendencies coming from past passage, and from the conditioning that is inherent in passage, become different influences when they have taken on this organized structure of tendencies. This would be as true of the balance of processes of disruption and of agglomeration in a star as in the adjustment to each other of a living form and its environment. The structural relationship in their reciprocal balance or adjustment arranges those passing processes which reflect backward and lead us to an account of the history of the star. As Dewey has maintained, events appear as histories which have a dénouement, and when an historical process is taking place the organization of the conditioning phases of the process is the novel element which is not predictable from the separate phases themselves, and which at once sets the scene for a past that leads to this outcome. The organization of any individual thing carries with it the relation of this thing to processes that occurred before this organization set in. In this sense the past of this thing is ‘given’ in the passing present of the thing, and our histories of things are elaborations of what is implicit in this situation. This ‘given’ in passage is there and is the starting point for a cognitive structure of the past.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 17-8.

\(^{188}\) Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 123.
wanted to know how the reciprocity of self and object is constituted as the interaction between the self and the object in the individual experience.

The peculiar importance of this origin of the content of the physical object lies in the occasion that it offers for the appearance of the self as an object. In the content of resistance which goes into the chair seen at a distance the organism is inviting itself to sit down in the chair. It is the inside of the object that reveals the action of the organism in the content of the object, and it is this which is not given in the distance or passive tactual experience. It can have no other source except the resistance as given in the initiation of the response of the organism itself and which, in so far as it is inside the object, dates it with the organism in the now. If the stimulus to this reaction lies in the object it would have the future date of that stimulus. Only if the stimulus lies in the organism itself can it be in the now, and so be simultaneous with the organism. It is a reflection of the organism into the environment. This can only take place in an organism in which the whole determines the parts, where an identity of the content of the whole and the part is given.\textsuperscript{189}

Reciprocity at the level of interaction between individual and environment means that the object is given physical characters only in so far as the individual is given physical characters and vice versa. Effective occupation of space, for instance, is a character that emerges in the “now” in which the individual tries to put its foot inside the stone. “Ouch!”, as it were, is the vocal confirmation of the reciprocity between the object and self as physical. Thus, resistance means that two objects cannot occupy the same space simultaneously. And when this is realised, the two objects are realised as two physical things (side by side); they emerge as the individual and simultaneous aspects of an actual perspective that disintegrated with the obstruction of the act.

There are two matters to be emphasised here. First, reciprocity is critical to Mead’s proposition of the social consciousness and the actual perspective it either reflects or immediately embodies. This is evident considering how these concepts of adaptation and interaction fit into the larger picture of his act theory and its relation to Einstein’s theory of relativity. Second, from a Bergsonian point of view interaction is revealed as a half reciprocity as far as the act is considered as completed within the reflective attitude of a single individual observer.

In the following these two matters will be elaborated upon in relation to, or in terms of, the present – the \textit{locus of reality} - and particularly its two temporal aspects; the specious and the functional, corresponding to the bare and emergent aspects of passage in Mead’s analysis of time in relativity theory. In order to complete the presentation of Mead’s concepts of simultaneity and reciprocity and aid the introduction of the complex concept of the present we now return to Hollandia.

\textsuperscript{189} Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Act}. p. 163.
3.2 Revisiting Hollandia

When we are seated on the bank of a river, the flowing of the water, the gliding of a boat or the flight of a bird, the ceaseless murmur in our life’s deeps are for us three separate things or only one, as we choose. We can interiorize the whole, dealing with a single perception that carries along the three flows, mingled, in its course; or we can leave the first two outside and then divide our attention between the inner and the outer; or better yet, we can do both at one and the same time, our attention uniting and yet differentiating the three flows, thanks to its singular privilege of being one and several. Such is our primary idea of simultaneity. We therefore call two external flows that occupy the same duration “simultaneous” because they both depend upon the duration of a like third, our own: this duration is ours only when our consciousness is concerned with us alone, but it becomes equally theirs when our attention embraces the three flows in a single indivisible act.190

Sitting by the window and looking at people passing Hollandia, I may be considered as observing the motion of objects. My attention wanders from the one to the other, momentarily locking attention on details and noting recurring features or their absence. And when describing the observation as I have done now, I place myself in this stream and in respect to which I find myself at rest, sitting by the round table beside the perambulator. It is only after having placed or retrojected “myself” into passage that there will be some-thing having been inside Hollandia looking out. I have placed my self in the environment indicated as “Hollandia”. By the same token there was not really a stream of objects moving up and down the esplanade. These objects appear as a reciprocal displacement, as “the visual manifestation of an absolute internal change occurring somewhere in space” as Bergson put it,191 of some-things simultaneously with the self appearing in “my” experience. These objects appear simultaneously with the appearance of me or my self. And yet it is equally true that there are no objects at all, not even that of me, since these are but the reflections emerging when to restore and complete the passage of the actual perspective from which these reflections have been born out. A similar fixation picture is offered also by Bergson in the above note on the relationship between “subjective” and “objective” perspectives.

The window appearing and separating me from the objects outside Hollandia illustrates the transition from the one attitude to the other, from the immediate to the reflective. Where there was passage there is now motion (of objects) and the screen displaying this reciprocal displacement of bodies. A shift in reference has occurred; a transcendence to a point of reference

190 Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 36.
191 Ibid. p. 22.
encompassing pedestrians and me in an instantaneous mental gaze. What has happened is the adding of a dimension providing a medium in which passage is displayed as a co-ordinate system or homogeneous space, rendering events as forms. With the aid provided by this dimension added, this “objective” perspective, and to which I refer when looking upon myself as beside the moving objects, I may even measure the distances in time and space now having appeared in my consciousness. I sit, as it were, “close” to the perambulator, and “behind” the perambulator the window stretches from one wall to the other. And “outside” this window the moving objects can be seen to move about “fifty meters” “before” disappearing off-screen. I know that they are there some-where. And if adding a temporal dimension I would be able to find them and my self some-when.

By subdividing passage between the esplanade and myself by inserting the window “in between”, and by subdividing each of these two simultaneous flows into parts I have rendered time through space. I have, putting it differently, broken down passage into instants or simultaneities of objects, each of which can be offered both spatial and temporal characters. Thus, what form or set of characters it will have follows from the manipulation of the dimension added. In either case, however, I have spatialised time so that the comparisons and measurements integral to explanations or reconstructions in general may be completed.

Suppose that I bring to attention a watch and measure the time required for a particular moving object to pass from one lamppost to another. What am I doing? I count instants in which the relevant lampposts, the particular object and me are positioned in a certain spatial configuration. For each instant counted a particular configuration of embodied points will appear in space. And by placing these instants beside one another, I shall obtain a measurement of the time during which the body moves from one lamppost (or enlightened point) to the other in the reference system provided by Södra Förstadsgatan. This placing of instants beside one another is the instantaneous gaze made possible by the spatialisation of time displayed and of which the clock is indicative.

How could we split it up into fractions whilst affirming its unity, if we did not regard it implicitly as an extended object, one in intuition but multiple in space? You will never get out of an idea which you have formed anything which you have not put into it; and if the unity by means of which you make up your number is the unity of an act and not of an object, no effort of analysis will bring out of it anything but unity pure and simple. No doubt, when you equate the number 3 to the sum of 1+1+1, nothing prevents you from regarding the units which compose it as indivisible: but the reason is that you do not choose to make use of the multiplicity which is enclosed

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192 I refer here to the suggestion made by Bergson that “what is given as motion in a space of any number of dimensions can be represented as form in a space of one more dimension.” Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 106.
within each of these units. [...] But we soon perceive that, while all multiplication implies the possibility of treating any number whatever as a provisional unit which can be added to itself, inversely the units in their turn are true numbers which are as big as we like, but are regarded as provisionally indivisible for the purpose of compounding them with one another. Now, the vary admission that is possible to divide the unit into as may parts as we like, shows that we regard it as extended.193

How can I feel capable of doing so? How is it that I find passage in the sequence numbering $t_1$, $t_2$, $t_n$? Because I read what I know by immediate experience into the reflection; because I bring back the indistinct multitude of emergent passage (becoming) to what has been made the distinct multitude of bare passage (what has already become).

But this correspondence has meaning only because we mentally traverse the curve and occupy points on it successively. If we have been able to replace this succession by a juxtaposition, real time by a spatialized time, becoming by the become, it is because we retain becoming, real duration, within us; when the child actually reads a word all at once, he is spelling it virtually letter by letter. Let us not therefore imagine that our three-dimensional curve gives us, as if crystallized together, the motion by which the curve is outlined on the plane and this plane curve itself. It has merely extracted from becoming what is of interest to science, and science can use this extract only because our mind will re-establish the eliminated becoming or will feel able to do so.194

Having completed this spatialisation of time I have reflected the indistinct multitude of emergent passage as a distribution of instants with which to give form or significance to a certain occurrence. What was passage has become a distribution, a trajectory, in the homogenous space offered by the medium or extension erected with the addition of a significant dimension $t$ in reflection.

A similar rationale applies to space and the objects moving “inside” this homogeneous medium. Suppose that I, rather than measuring time, find reason to measure the distance of the moving object outside the window. I will have no trouble in substituting $t$ with $x$, since these are dimensions on par (they are already made similar in kind) designating any two dimensions of an occurrence brought to attention. I may stipulate another convention or dimension and insofar as you grant your assent we will both proceed by virtue of the shared significance of its symbols and exchange $t$ for $x$.

Thus, rather than instants, I shall now be operating points. And since my observation will proceed by taking reference in the significance of the dimension $x$ added to passage, the objects of which I am conscious will be in motion in relation to this particular system. The body of me and it’s location


194 Bergson, H. *Duration and Simultaneity*. p. 106.
will have no bearing insofar as what is to be measured is the number of a particular unit, let’s say meters, traversed in $x$ by the body we have deemed to be in motion. My self may be located at Selma’s Café on Södra Förstads-gatan and will still be able to calculate all the possible $x$ values that the moving body may produce outside Hollandia. I may even offer another observer the job and have him measure the body moving between the two points. Whatever the case the reciprocal displacement will look exactly the same as long as we apply to it the same dimension and the apparatus designed to register the characters selected by this particular dimension added. What we do in applying a particular set of dimensions and instruments designed for their observation is exactly this: to give passage a definite form, making it appear identical to all observers proceeding likewise. According to Bergson, however, it will not have the same form in the point of view of the individual actually moving down the esplanade.

In this individual consciousness, movement and effort (or resistance to movement) coincide. From this point of view there will be a real (f)act of motion. Of course, this running individual is free to occupy whatever system of reference he deems relevant, should there be reason to. This is particularly likely to happen should he run into one of the lampposts and thus fall prey to an arresting problem.

There is only one motion, we said, which is perceived from within, and of which we are aware as an event in itself: the motion that our effort brings to our attention. Elsewhere, when we see a motion occur, all we are assured of is that some change is taking place in the universe. The nature and even the exact location of this change escape us; we can only note certain changes of position that are its visual and surface aspect, and these changes are necessarily reciprocal. All motion – even ours as perceived from without and made visual – is therefore relative.\(^{195}\)

When I say that the body exhibiting characters from which we infer a behavior called running, I take the perspective of an individual observer. And when I have put it in this way, I have posed the observer beside the moving object. I have also said, with Bergson, that the runner moves in an elementary sense. It is an immediate experience and it is only when reflected (upon) that it might be considered involved in a reciprocal displacement. In this latter articulation I take the point of view of the individual runner.

But does not this latter suggestion run contrary to the relativist maxim that both systems offer equal validity to observations made when granted the rest of hypothetical occupation? How, that is to say, can it be that one experience is elementary or immediate and that another is not. What makes the runner’s experience of motion elementary or immediate and the observer’s complex or reflective?

\(^{195}\) Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 26
The one is elementary and the other complex insofar we consider the situation on the premise of a singular observer; whenever we analyse the situation using a half concept of reciprocity. The experience taking its reference in Hollandia will be complex because this individual shall have to take the role of the runner in order to gain manipulatory experience of the motion. His immediate experience is that of rest, sitting inside Hollandia. A reflective social consciousness is, in other words, integral to the complex experience of motion. For the runner, on the other hand, the experience of motion is an immediate one. It is only upon reflection or the taking of the role of another observer that a distinction between the experience of effort to motion and motion will complicate the situation and so enable him to grasp the motion as a reciprocal displacement. Turned around, not reflecting upon the motion *qua* motion is another way of putting his experience as an immediate or elementary passage of nature.

However, in this analysis, proceeding upon a half concept of reciprocity, the moving object is the distant experience of any individual observer and hence there will be nothing but complex experiences of motion (regardless of whether he takes the point of view of the so-called runner or another individual inside Hollandia196). At the moment we speak of a runner on the esplanade, we are implying an individual observer and as long as we have but this one observer, this individual observer will inhabit *either* Hollandia *or* the moving body. And accepting this, we shall also have to submit, going along with the findings of Einstein, that what this sole individual observer can observe is the reciprocal displacement of this object in relation to at least one other object; namely his *me*. His observations of motion are, in other words, necessarily that of reciprocal displacement. But the experiential background against which this reflection occurs is the immediate experience of his arrested or inhibited self.

This reflection requires that I, the individual observer, abstract myself from passage and take as my point of view the significant dimension added and from this common perspective behold the objects having appeared or emerged in my individual or incompletely social consciousness. I am, by virtue of a passing mind, present both in the reference system of *me* and that of the object. I am both “here” and “there”, so to speak. But it is an implicit passage. The reflection expressed by the observation is in itself an immediate passage that I as a scientist or individual observer leave outside the statement of my observation. I retain only the distribution of objects in space necessary to the reflective role-taking of the one individual object towards the other. This distribution or instantaneity of objects side by side is

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196 He may of course be located anywhere, but here Hollandia serves the purpose of signifying any system as if at rest with respect to the object deemed moving. The individual observer might be located on a bench or on a roof but this will make no difference, since these are considered points in the particular (reference-)system deemed as if at rest once the runner is deemed in motion.
all that remains when, in order that an explanation may be obtained, having eliminated the emergent passage from the observation. I hold on to what is interdepending and leave out, but yet imply, the passage in which my social consciousness transcended from immediate selection to reflective indication.

Maintaining this in effect half concept of reciprocity we may turn the situation around and conceive the “runner” as an individual observer. In doing so, however, we picture the individual observer in question to take the role of an individual inside Hollandia passing our “runner” by in his reflective (ar)rest. Considering the runner as being the observer in our half concept of reciprocity, that is to say, we shall, as he himself, consider him as if at rest as he is now in a reflective attitude of inhibition. Just as an individual observer occupying Hollandia he shall find that the motion is the motion of a certain body and that this moving body is a distant experience. Conceiving this situation on the basis of a half concept of reciprocity therefore, we shall conceive of it as consisting in two completely interchangeable parts. For the individual observer to grasp the meaning of each (indicate the characters of each), he is required to take the role of each in a reflective sequence and superimpose the two pictures having emerged in order to reinstate the passage of nature he was forced to hypothesise in order to complete his reflection. This is significantly not the case when considering the situation using a complete concept of reciprocity.

In this framing of the situation there are two individual perspectives embodied contemporaneously rather than sequentially; both systems will be regarded reference systems, the one reflecting the motion of the other. This means that although the experience of self will be a complex one, whether we use a half or complete concept of reciprocity, there will now be two selves reflected (upon) against two different experiential backgrounds: immediate rest and immediate motion. Using a complete concept of reciprocity, therefore, we are at once capable of distinguishing differences in kind. Armed with a half concept of reciprocity, the two individual perspectives are completely interchangeable. And so they are in order that the relativist shall be able to account for the fact that a single individual observer may grasp the relationship between any two objects in a space reflected as void of an absolute rest (reference). And this, in turn, is required by the scientific procedure itself. It requires that the characters of the scientific objects are significant; that they are responded to as common by any conceivable individual observer, regardless of position. In an analysis based upon a complete concept of reciprocity this scientific view, this super individual view, will appear as incapable of distinguishing between an incompletely and a completely social consciousness. Why? Because there are no two contemporaneous individual observers communicating their experiences, merely one taking the role of another and wholly virtual individual observer.
3.3 The Present: Taking the Whole Situation into Account

The achievement of the human animal, or rather of human social conduct, is the arrest of passage, and the establishment of a “now”. It takes place, as indicated above, by inhibition first of all, but inhibition is not competent to erect the now, i.e., a world within which passage can take place, and hence a world which is irrelevant to passage as regards its structure; and, in the second place, a world in which the temporal character of the manipulatory present is extended indefinitely, i.e., in which what is spatiotemporally distant is given the character of that which is both seen and grasped, is one in which both promise and fulfillment are given. […] If the organism can play the part of the object in resisting the organism, if the organism can play both parts (that of resisting the object as organism and of resisting the organism as object), the now of the immediate activity of the organism can be put into the world of distant stimuli. To accomplish this, the organism must stimulate itself to act as the object by its response to the stimulus of the distant object.¹⁹⁷

It is only in a mathematical conception that two halves go to make a whole. Philosophically speaking, however, two half reciprocities does not add up to a complete reciprocity. There is a difference in kind between half and complete reciprocities. And this difference in kind can only to be discerned in a temporal articulation. It is, as noted earlier, only in terms of a real time that alteration and hence differences in kind appear and can be made distinct in terms of the temporal perspectives of “before” and “after”. Such a temporal assessment is gained by taking into account the passage to which the observation belongs and in which it emerges. And it is to this emergent passage that Mead refers when calling for the “whole situation” to be taken into account.

When I observe an individual body running down the esplanade outside Hollandia I should think him quite disinterested in the fact that I was sitting there watching him. Or rather, he might become interested if he had been made aware of my act interest in him. If so, I believe it safe to say that his pace would have changed, as indicated by Triplett’s experiments, or that he would simply have stopped running. I believe it safe to say also that either of these contingencies would have entangled me in the act observed (and whose object I am indicating in taking the role of the moving body) and so “completed” the interactive reciprocity. In such a case I will no longer face a moving body, but another individual observer occupying that body. And as was demonstrated by Bergson, when I consult a second observer, the system he is occupying is no longer moving. It becomes a reference system too. And just as the system stops moving, so does the individual runner when I bang

on the window to attract his attention. That this would alter the observation I set out to complete is significant.

When I observed the girl adjusting her hair and she saw my eyes instead of her own through the medium of the glass, I was responded to. In that moment there was alternation. In that emergent passage her eyes appeared simultaneously with the appearance of my eyes. This is significantly not the case in the interaction described by the observation of a physical object. In so far as there is a second observer, there will be a response to the observation reflecting the observation per se. The observation is no longer immediate, but in itself the object of which I am conscious. In the case of the runner I was not responded to and hence no alteration could occur with respect to that object.

What I am pointing at here is that the meaning to which this “peeping tom” experience refers altered the observation contemporaneously with the emergence of me and her. I smiled and the girl screamed when the meaning of “peeping tom” was realised. The significance of this meaning happened, as it were, contemporaneously with the emergence of our selves. This significance, however, cannot be considered as belonging to my me and her me since that would imply that these objects qua selves were present before significance occurred. We should rather say that these objects, these selves, e- or unmerged in the passage in which significance completed the responses now reflected upon. In a less analytical formulation, me and her and me and him were the individual reflections emerging in the immediate and emergent passage we only now are able to reflect upon and indicate as separate or individual selves. It is only having re-presented the situation that these forms appear as distinct objects of consciousness. It is only having mediated the occurrence, using Bergson’s terminology, that we are able to read back what has become or formed into the becoming or forming.

In the case of the runner, on the other hand, me does not bring with it the implication of the runner realizing a me. In the half reciprocity of observation, that is to say, the me of the individual observer does not require another me for its realisation as a definite object. Any “physical” object would do. In a complete reciprocity this does not hold and so a concept of complete reciprocity is required for the distinction in kind between a “physical” and a “social” self or me.

Now, what has been argued here is that a complete reciprocity is required for the individual observer to realise the difference between “physical” and “social” objects. It has been argued also that differences in kind can be discerned only in a temporal articulation; it requires from the individual the social consciousness of an object “before” and “after”. Thus, to grasp the difference in kind between half and complete reciprocity, we need to articulate reciprocity temporally and not simply accept it as signifying the interaction of two objects.
We find the temporality required for a "before" and "after" to appear in the individual perspective or consciousness in Mead’s references to the present. The present is the term used by Mead when bringing his discussion of time into the issue of individual perspectives. Passage, having been used above, refers rather to a general concept of time and is used by Mead predominantly in connection to philosophical discussions on nature and, particularly, the actual perspectives in which nature is stratified. Here we shall be concerned with time from the point of view of individual perspectives.

The present can be defined temporally either in terms of its limits or in terms of the interval between these limits. Thus, Mead calls the present specious when referring to it in terms of its (psychological) limits and functional when referring to what happens, or is becoming, in the interval between the individual and temporal perspectives of “before” and “after”.

What then is a present? […] From the standpoint which I have suggested it would involve a becoming. There must be at least something that happens to and in the thing which affects the nature of the thing in order that one moment may be distinguishable from another, in order that there may be time. But there is in such a statement a conflict of principles of definition. From one standpoint we are seeking for what is essential to a present; from the other we are seeking for the lower limit in a process of division. I will refer to the latter first, for it involves the question of the relation of time to passage – to that within which time seems to lie and in terms of whose extension we place time and compare times. The thousandth part of a second has a real significance, and we can conceive of the universe as foundering in a sea of entropy within which all becoming has ceased. We are dealing here with an abstraction of the extension of mere passage from the time within which events happen because they become.198

To illustrate the importance of this distinction, it may be pointed out that reciprocity in terms of a succession of simultanities relates only to the specious presents in which the individual observer identifies an impulse with a stimulus (in the form of an object). As long as we keep within the specious presents in framing the act, therefore, we shall never reach the completion of the act. Treating time as a succession of instants, that is to say, the number of

198 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 19-20. Another definition of the present, attaching to the act and indicating the element of becoming or emergence, is offered in the following passage: “The present is the combination of the future and the past in the process that is going on. The future is the control of the process, and the past is that which is there as an irrevocable condition of the ongoing of the process. These two temporal phases, the future and the past, are divided between the individual and his environment, or the percipient event and the consentient cogredient set. The future comes in the terms of the act, the past in terms of the field of the act. Where they merge in the process, we have the present. In that minimal extension there is no distinction between the individual and environment, but the control appears as selection in the environment with the inevitable isolation of what has been there that is appropriate for the demand of the act. In terms of the attitude of anticipation involved in control we have called the one consciousness. In terms of the conditions of the act we have called the other the world.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 347-8.
instants can be multiplied indefinitely as we change our unit of subdivision.\textsuperscript{199} There is no definite point at which we shall be able to indicate the act as having reached its target or objective. Just as Zeno found the motion of his arrow to be infinite, we will find the act to disintegrate into an infinite series of instants. We must be careful then, not to confuse our concept of time. We must, as pointed out by Zeno, refrain from spatialising time in order not to fall prey to paradoxes of motion and, ultimately, of change.

The psychological present or specious present is specious because, while it is an actual duration and not a knife-edge present, its duration is not that of the completion of the act within which the object is there, but that of reflection, i.e., the act of indicating, by gesture or significant symbol, the present characters of things at a distance in the individual. \textit{They are related to the individual, not to the object}, and this indication takes place within a world that is there, a world of objects of which we are not reflectively aware.\textsuperscript{200}

What has been left out in the above is what Mead calls the \textit{functional present}; what Mead refers to here as the duration in which the act is completed. Without the functional present there can be no account for the real time of the act. The specious presents are but instants in reflection, albeit of varying spans. They are the temporal units used by the relativist when determining two events simultaneous in the reference system or manipulatory area and successive in distant area. If we accept Mead’s proposition that the specious present is the temporal environment of the individual’s indication of an object and, moreover, that the relativists have shown that the explanation of an object necessitates two such specious presents (since “[r]elativity reveals a situation within which the object must be contemporaneously in different systems to be what it is in either”)\textsuperscript{201}, then it seems to follow that we must introduce a temporal environment in which the individual observer may account for the relationship between any two such specious presents. This inclusive present is the functional present, which alone can account for the “whole situation” in which the relativity of the “physical” object is explained by the individual observer. It alone can account for the emergence necessary for the social consciousness of the individual observer to indicate to himself an object as present in two systems simultaneously and to be what it is in the one system because it is what it is in the other.

If we were to disregard the relevance of a functional present we would remain within a half reciprocity and suffer from chimeras of the individual perspective. For while contending with specious presents, we shall contend

\textsuperscript{199} Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Act}. p. 567-573.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid. p. 220.
\textsuperscript{201} Mead, G. H. \textit{Philosophy of the Present}. p. 63.
with time enough but for one indication and all we would have with which to understand passage would be one instant after another; bare passage, as it were. Thus, reducing the passage of nature to one instant after another is to conceive it from the point of view of a single individual observer having reflectively eliminated its self and hence the immediately social consciousness from the emergent passage of nature. What is important here to note here is that while for the relativist this means the elimination of subjectivity, for Mead it means the elimination of mind as a natural feature; i.e., a bifurcation of nature.

The situation in nature which relativity presents is that of a present which can occupy different pasts and futures, and that in mind these futures and pasts can be built out, and can be held as alternatives though mutually exclusive. Relativity has carried the indeterminateness in the selection to the nth degree, thereby emphasizing the thesis that reality lies in the present, and that science under the presuppositions relativity has in no sense weakened the strength of the laws of nature. But when relativistic doctrine undertakes to set up a fixed reality made out of the determining conditions in passage, within which there is no present with its alternative futures and pasts, it has set up a metaphysics of reality that lies outside of any possible experience and has taken mind out of nature.202

Mind is the reflection of nature emerging within nature. Therefore, abstracting mind from nature is significantly to abstract from nature the emergent passage and, from the point of view of the individual perspective, the replacement of “before” and “after” with \( t_1 \) and \( t_2 \). It is to eliminate the functional present in which the relativist completes his explanation.

[J] Mind in its highest sense involves the passage from one attitude to another with the consequent occupation of both. This also takes place in nature. It is the phase of change in which both states are found in the process.203

Or, more generally;

What I am suggesting is that this process, in which a perspective ceases to be objective, becomes if you like subjective, and in which new common minds and new common perspectives arise, is an instance of the organization of perspectives in nature, of the creative advance of nature. This amounts to the affirmation that mind as it appears in the mechanism of social conduct is the organization of perspectives in nature and at least a phase of the creative advance of nature. Nature in its relationship to the organism, and including the organism, is a perspective that is there.204

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203 Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 86.
204 Ibid. p. 172.
Without involving mind in the statement of nature we shall abstain from the possibility of distinguishing emergence and, as I have stressed, alteration or difference in kind. Abstracting mind from nature we shall be unable to account for the “whole situation” in which the scientific observation takes place, and this include the actual experiences of “before” and “after” with which emergence is identified. And, even more importantly, without acknowledging the import of the functional present to Mead’s social psychology, we shall be unable to discern the two senses of its sociality.

The emergence in nature of sensuous qualities is due to the fact that an organism can respond to nature in differing systematic attitudes and yet occupy both attitudes.205

Or more generally,

The social nature of the present arises out of its emergence. I am referring to the process of readjustment that emergence involves. Nature takes on new characters, for example with the appearance of life, or the stellar system takes on new characters with the loss of mass by the collapse of atoms through the processes that goes on within a star. There is an adjustment to this new situation. The new objects enter into relationship with the old. The determining conditions of passage set the conditions under which they survive, and the old objects enter into new relations with what has arisen. I am here using the term “social” with reference not to the new system, but to the process of readjustment.206

The import of emergence upon the individual and actual perspectives pertains to the relationship between the immediate and the reflective attitudes of the social consciousness. Confining the object (of nature) to the statement reached in the reflective attitude precludes the possibility of accounting for real change. Real change or alteration can only be accounted for by accepting the functional present of the individual perspective. It requires taking into account the emergent passage between immediate and reflective attitudes in which the individual perspective of the observer e- or unmerges in the actual perspective.

Descending from these somewhat abstract observations, what does this amount to with respect to a situation of a more “social psychological” character? What about the present and passage in which the scientific observation of a responding object occurs? What about reciprocity, that is to say, in the observation of completely social objects?

The girl was there, she detailed her hair, started and ran off screen. Such was my initial observation at Hollandia. Having once formulated the occurrence in this fashion, I may question it and ask further why the

205 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 85.
206 Ibid. p. 47.
occurrence happened the way it did. Indeed, why did the object move or respond the way it did? In my previous reflections on this matter I have been assuming that she did so because she suddenly or unexpectedly saw me looking at her. This I cannot propose without having assumed her role and added some dimension or other. (I added the relationship called “peeping tom”). But having done so, I have differentiated between two definite objects and offered a statement of the girl by conferring certain characters to it and certain others to that of my self. Having done so, that is to say, I have proceeded immediately upon the idea of two definite objects. Subsequently, as I have spoken of two objects, I have also eliminated the emergent passage of these objects and so either of these objects can be present in both systems only in the point of view of an individual observer (me) projecting its (my) self back into the passage in which they e- or unmerged as definite objects, as objects qua objects. Speaking with Bergson, I have rendered the actual time in which they became through the virtual time in which they have become what the added dimension of significance permitted. Thus, speaking now with Mead, what has been eliminated is the emergent passage in which the dimension added is added; I have eliminated the emergence of meaning and retained but what became the meaning of the occurrence. And thus it has become impossible for me to distinguish between two kinds of meaning: those that are significant and those that are shared.

The former refers to characters common to any two systems between which an individual passes in reflective role-taking, while the latter refers to characters common to at least two individuals taking the roles of each other contemporaneously. In the case of the former we are implying a situation consisting in the manipulating interaction comprising an individual observer and a “physical” object (or an object treated as such), in the latter the communication between two individual observer’s indicating a third and “social” object. The former situation can be accounted for using a half concept of reciprocity, the latter requires a complete concept of reciprocity.

What I did earlier was to use a mathematical concept of complete reciprocity. Specifically, I added two individual perspectives, having taken the roles of the girl and my self, and found the characters of peeping tom to be consistent with both. Such an alternation between systems, whereby the two systems were inhabited sequentially, differs from the philosophical kind of complete reciprocity in that significance emerges between two contemporaneous points of view. The shared significance made possible by conceiving of two individual observers whose acts are controlled by the same object, that is. And the only way to confirm that a common object controls our individual acts is to communicate. Communication, that is to say, is the procedure by which the reality of “social” objects is verified.\textsuperscript{207} In such cases

\textsuperscript{207} I will use \textit{communication} as defined by Mead in \textit{Philosophy of the Present} and stress the notion of complete reciprocity with which the definition of the object is furnished. I am
interactive manipulation does not suffice. *Thus, communication and manipulation are both procedures by which the reality of objects is tested, but the objects dealt with are of two different kinds.* The one kind emerges in the complete reciprocity between two individuals, the other in the half reciprocity obtaining between a conscious self and a “physical” object or any object treated as such.

It is then only with some effort the Hollandia situation can be reflected as a complete reciprocity. It would seem as if the situation involving the girl, the Hollandia window and my self merely approximates a complete reciprocity. I did not run out to catch the girl asking why she started and left in such a hurry, and neither did she enter Hollandia to ask me what I had been doing. Had we talked about it, as I now put it when projecting my self back to the functional present reflected (upon), then there would have been a possibility of agreeing upon a social object such as that of peeping tom. Even if “we” where sharing the significance of this meaning, however, it would hardly have controlled “her” act walking towards the window and “me” sitting there looking out. These acts, that is to say, emerged in the interaction between our individual perspectives, but there was no object controlling both, such as when I walk to the counter buying coffee from the waitress. What will be found as our individual perspectives e- or unmerge because I want Hollandia coffee and she sells Hollandia coffee.

Now, when to deal with and realise the social object of trade it does not suffice to look, smell, listen or touch. It does insofar as we deal with “physical” objects of course, but when confronted with a *completely social object*, an object requiring a complete reciprocity or shared significance, we communicate rather than manipulate the object. This is what will happen when the waitress tells me that the coffee costs twenty-two crowns.

I should point out that regardless of whether we haggle and compromise or one of us accepts the significance of the other’s object, the mutual adjustment of a completely social act has been completed nevertheless. Communication does not mean either the surrender to brute force or a majority, nor does it imply compromise. It involves but alteration; the conversion of conversation. With what consequence this alteration occurs or what meaning it has will depend upon a subsequent reflection or re-presentation. Its particular meaning will emerge in a present having this present as its past. Taken referring here to the meaning of the co-operative or social act. “In the process of communication the individual is an other before he is a self. It is in addressing himself in the role of an other that his self arises in experience. The growth of the organized game out of simple play in the experience of the child, and of organized group activities in human society, placed the individual then in a variety of roles, in so far as these were parts of the social act, and the very organization of these in the whole act gave them a common character in indicating what he had to do. He is able then to become a generalized other in addressing himself in the attitude of the group or the community. In this situation he have come a definite self over against the social whole to which he belongs. This is the common perspective.” Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present.* p. 168.
as such, it signifies but a real change that may or may not be reflected as such.

When fixing on the concept of interaction some paragraphs back the point was made that reciprocity is critical to the significance of the object *qua* object. Although it may seem slightly obscure a statement, it is critical if one is to argue, as did Mead, that the distinctive feature of societies is found in the co-operation of individuals. While termites and ants, using Mead’s example, are able to organise their acts as social ones by way of physiological differentiation, the human form enacts society by “in some fashion present in his organism the tendencies to respond as the other participants in the act will respond”.208 Now, to manage this role-taking it is necessary to occupy a common perspective and so imply a common or social object.

It is because of the gravity of this proposition that Mead devoted such an intense interest to Einstein’s theory. The latter had worked out the idea of systematic significance that enabled an individual observer to translate, or transform as it were, characters from one system to another without sacrificing the differences between these systems. The doctrine supplied the idea of transformation formulae, based on the significance of light, which organised and made comprehensive the relation between various individual perspectives at odds with one another (and, as such, presenting the acting individual with competing responses and an arresting problem).

Now, for this implicit analogy to hold, we must understand that, to Mead, there is a rationale common to both “physical” and “social” objects.

In terms of common conditions, by transformation formulae, we can pass from one value field to another, and thus come nearer finding out which is more valuable, or rather how to conserve each. The common perspective is comprehensibility, and comprehensibility is the statement in terms of common social conditions.

It is the relation of the individual perspective to the common perspective that is of importance. To the biologist there is a common environment of an ant-hill or of a beehive, which is rendered possible by the intricate social relationships of the ants and the bees. It is entirely improbable that this perspective exists in the perspectives of individual ants or bees, for there is no evidence of communication. Communication is a social process whose natural history shows that it arises out of cooperative activities, such as those involved in sex, parenthood, fighting, herding, and the like, in which some phase of the act of one form, which may be called a gesture, acts as a stimulus to others to carry on their parts of the social act. It does not become communication in the full sense, i.e., the stimulus does not become a significant symbol, until the gesture tends to arouse the same response in the individual who makes it that it arouses in the others.209

208 Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 182.
209 Ibid. p. 167.
It is in the sense of a transformation formula that the common or shared perspective makes possible the passing between individual perspectives. It relies upon the characters common to the systems and to which we attach symbols that, in so far as the characters indicated are present contemporaneously in a multitude of systems, become ones of shared significance.

It seems to me that reciprocity, as used in physico-mathematical terminology to state the mutual dependence between any two or more systems, fulfils an analogous statement in Mead’s social psychology. In the social psychology of completely social objects, however, the significance of the “light-signal” is infinitely complicated and we tend to debate the symbols to be used. Turned around, we tend to communicate so as to achieve the shared significance required for the co-operative act to be completed. It is only insofar as we become able to anticipate and actually respond to each other’s acts that the social act can be completed. Now, this anticipation of responses (tendencies to respond) is another way of expressing reciprocity. More precisely, it is the significance of the symbols used in indicating or communicating responses that makes possible a co-ordination of meanings upon which the comparison between the individual perspectives is conducted. The common characters indicated as the “true” object, over and against its multiple or insignificant appearances in each individual perspective, are the characters having emerged in the arrest of social action following from a conflict between what is to be regarded as different individual tendencies to respond.

A social act may be defined as one in which the occasion or stimulus which sets free an impulse is found in the character or conduct of a living form that belongs to the proper environment of the living form whose impulse it is. I wish, however, to restrict the social act to the class of acts which involve the cooperation of more than one individual, and whose objects as defined by the act, in the sense of Bergson, is a social act. I mean by a social object one that answers to all the parts of the complex act, though these parts are found in the conduct of different individuals. The objective of the act is then found in the life-process of the group, not in those of the separate individuals alone. The full social object would not exist in the environments of the separate individuals of the societies of the Hymenoptera and termites, nor in the restricted societies of the vertebrates whose basis is found alone in physiological adjustment. [italics mine]210

While the object in the fully or completely social act controls a multitude of individual perspectives, the object referred to by the “physical” or incompletely social act attended earlier is not. The social object is characterised by the reciprocity of a multitude of individual tendencies to respond. Or more fully, the completely social object is an object referred to by several acts coordinated by a common perspective that, while shared by the individuals,

ensures a coherent and definite object to control the correlativity necessary for the social act to be completed. It should also be pointed out, in order not to imply an Individualist position here, that the meaning of each individual act is what it is because it has a certain other meaning in another individual aspect of the social act. Thus, the social object is completely social to the extent that it is present or indicated contemporaneously in these individual reference systems. The complete sociality of the object, therefore, lies not in a capacity to “sum up” the characters indicated by individual perspectives, but rather in the possibility of an object appearing in a series of individual perspectives and controlling the act in which these individual perspectives may or may not emerge.

Individuals do realize themselves definitely in their oppositions to one another [...] such as the conflicts of the feudal groups in which people were called upon to express their servitude to the overlord. They attained the new selfhood that finds itself in opposition to the feudal lord. It is characteristic of that development that a new individual realizes himself, first of all, in opposition to the lord opposed and depends upon that for the maintenance of his own self-consciousness.211

Or, speaking with Asplund;

It would seem as irrefutable to claim that the vassal were not a pure subject as to claim that his lord were not a pure ruler. And the vassal had his rights being possessed of power or counter power. This does not make the vassal or the lord individuals. The lord and vassal were what they were in respect to each other. They could renounce their internal loyalties but without their internal dependence they would neither be lord nor vassal. Beyond their internal relation they were nothing. This is the contrary of an individualistic order. In an individualistic order one is who one is in respect to oneself, one is independent.

It is another thing altogether that man can never, regardless of social rank, be independent of everything and everyone. What I wish to say here is simply that feudalism was based on duality, not individuality. [translation mine]212

Using Bergson’s distinction between half and complete reciprocity, we may translate this distinction into the following statement: completely social objects are characterised in the complete reciprocity of two (or more) contemporaneous individual observers, whereas incompletely social objects are characterised in the half reciprocity of one individual observer sequentially taking the roles of any other and any number of hypothetical individual observers. The difference between these situations, then, is that in the former another individual observer is immediately there, whereas in the latter the second individual observers is part of the reflection of the object.

212 Asplund, J. Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv. p. 66.
Placing this distinction in terms of social consciousness, we find that whereas in the former there is a completely social consciousness of two role-takings referring to one another, there is in the latter an incompletely social consciousness of one role-taking after another. Pursuing the terminology used by Mead in reference to the act relating to a “physical” object, we find here two selves, two completely social selves, that in respect of objects serve to lodge the responses towards the object having disintegrated in the unsuccessful realisation of the “social” object. However, it would be improper, pursuing this analogy, to say that the completely social object is realised by means of manipulation, since this would suggest the completely social act to equal interaction. As argued in the above, we have here a situation where two “social” selves emerge, not the emergence of a (“physical”) self and a “physical” object. To this end, we shall in the following be careful to distinguish between the verification of “physical” objects and the verification of “social” objects by using the concepts of manipulation and communication respectively.

In so far as there are social acts, there are social objects, and I take it that social control is bringing the act of the individual into relation with this social object. With the control of the object over the act, we are abundantly familiar. Just because the object is the form of the act, in this character it controls the expression of the act. […] Barring a breakdown in the structure or function, the very existence of the object insures its control of the act. In the social act, however, the act is distributed among a number of individuals.213

3.4 The Two Projects

Science undertakes to isolate the conditions under which […] new things arise, or have arisen. It abstracts from the peculiarities of particular experience and seeks that which is common among as many experiences as possible. It thus reaches things which upon the supposition of analysis have a common reality apart from the particular experience within which the analyzed object existed. We thus reach things that belong to any possible experience up to the limits of our powers of generalization.214

The context of Mead’s argument was, if the matter may be put a bit crudely, that of a psychology ranging from, on the one hand, a postulation of a group mind to measurement and classification of the responses and their intensities displayed by persons subjected to various stimuli on the other. Thus, a rather taxing confusion prevailed as to what was the subject matter of psychology and how this subject matter should be conceptualised. In Social Psychology

213 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 191.
214 Ibid. p. 117-8.
as the Counterpart to Physiological Psychology, Mead suggests the human consciousness and its particularly social character as the object of social psychology. Along this line he proceeded to offer a statement of sociality and upon it founds a principle with which to qualify not only the characters of the human consciousness but, more generally, nature as the form of an actual mind.

The issue now to be addressed is how this concept of sociality is to be understood and, particularly, the implications of not appreciating the complexity of the term in contemporary social psychological theory. Before doing so, I will complete this chapter by reiterating the main features of Mead’s social psychological assessment of science.

According to Mead, the “how” of the object offers from the “what” of the object. The meaning of the object emerges with the attempt of grasping and using the object. This is not only the premise of an alternative epistemology set up to hold at bay the bifurcation of nature introduced by a representative theory of perception, it involves also a social psychology that affords Mead with a meta-scientific assessment of the scientific act; which is to say a functional statement as to the nature of the scientific act. Thus, stressing a social psychology Mead shows that the object emerges reciprocally with the self within the functional present and, consequently, that the scientific object cannot be assessed properly while set apart from the temporal perspective of the act.

What is involved in the explanation is the bringing into relation of objects which are all there. Even when that to be explained is a process, the objects which are related in the process are there for the observation that explains them. That is, perceptual objects are assumed as given for the explanation of perception. It is evident, then, that the explanation that is given is not of the perceptual objects which are used in the explanation of perception. Rather, given a world of perceptual objects, we are determining what are the particular conditions under which a certain perception takes place. It is true that any of the perceptual objects which are parts of this perceptual world might be subject to a like explanation, or, rather, we might state the conditions under which any perceptual object may appear, but in making such a statement we must presuppose a perceptual world within which this experience takes place. What this amounts to is that the so-called explanation, or statement of conditions of the perception, is not the perception itself, nor can the statement of the conditions of perception take the place of the perceptual

215 I am here referring to the characterisation made by Mead regarding the reality of the scientific object and to which I have already referred. In a passage on the modern scientist, Mead writes: “He seems to be dealing no longer either with distance – or with contact-experience, but rather with an organized system of change which may in perceptual experience reflect themselves in either of these categories, but which is really entirely independent of such experience. The door thus is thrown open to the representative theory of perception. The perceptual content of the object comes to be defined in terms of sense-data, which are correlated with scientific objects, but have their proper locus in a consciousness, or else lie somewhere between the mind and nature.” Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 151-2.
objects. The analysis with its statement abstracts from the particular perception and leaves us, therefore, without this particular object of perception. It is, however, in terms of other perceptual objects.

Sorting out the key points made here, I find the following set pertinent as to the meaning of the "whole situation" in which observation and explanation occurs.

Firstly, the perceptual object to be explained is immediately there in the experience of the observer. The reason why the object is there may vary, but what is significant is the arrest of action that the problematic or indefinite object has brought about and the reflective role-taking of this object. Thus, the object to be explained is simply there as the experiential background of the reconstructive reflection. What is reflected (upon) in this role-taking is the way it appears and why it appears this way. As illustrated by Einstein, the object to which the reflection refers is simply assumed as that of a spaceship, planet, measuring rod or, as is usually the case, any rigid body. The object per se is simply there.

Secondly, for the explanation to be completed, a set of additional perceptual objects will also be there in the experience of the observer. The clock used by the relativist may serve as an example, inasmuch it expresses the passage of nature upon which the individual in observation and explanation relies. The individual observer responds immediately to this object in order that he may reflect upon and manipulate the problematical object.

Thirdly, the explanation of the perceptual object is offered in the form of a statement regarding the general conditions under which the perception of the object appears in the observer’s experience. This we have seen illustrated in the case of the relativist when deeming all vantage points of equal validity and stating the object in the terms of the one general condition in an otherwise relative nature; light. The implication of this feature is that the perceptual object is reconstructed into those characters that are independent of the individual observer’s position.

What we designate as “mental” is this attitude of isolation of common features that call out identical responses provided that we have symbols by which we refer to them.

I shall also derive a fourth suggestion made by Mead regarding the scientific explanation: the scientific object is the perceptual object stated in such a fashion as to have been decoupled from the relation in which it immediately appeared in the consciousness of the individual observer. I am here alluding to Mead’s definition of the perceptual object quoted earlier, stating “The

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‘what’ of the object is the expression of the whole of which both environment and organism are essential parts”. 218 In other words, the scientific object allows for no emergence qua scientific object. The scientific object is the perceptual object minus emergent passage. It is a form or construct without the implication of formation or construction.

The individual observer states, as indicated in the epigraph to this section, the conditions of a particular observation by abstracting from the object those characters that vary from one instance to another; from the passage between one specious present to another or from one system made referential to another. He re-constructs the perceptual object into a general or conceptual object on the basis of those characters that emerge in the passage between different individual perspectives and hereby are indicated as common to all. In doing so he renders irrelevant all actual observations by replacing them with all the possible or virtual observations. That is to say, he forms the scientific object by eliminating from it the passage in which it emerged.

If, per impossible, we were to reach that past event as it took place we should have to be in that event, and then compare it with what we know present as its history. This is not only a contradiction in terms, but it also belies the function of the past in experience. This function is a continual reconstruction as a chronicle to serve the purposes of present interpretation. We seem to approach this complete recall, if I may use this expression, in identifying the fundamental laws of nature, such as those of motion, which we say must have been and must always be what they are now; and it is here that relativity is most illuminating. It frankly reduces the sort of reality that could be identical content of past, present and future to an ordered arrangement of events in a space-time that, by definition, could be as little in any past of scientific imagination as it could be found in our perceptual world. The geometry of space-time denies emergence unless it is brought in by way of Whitehead’s metaphysics; and if I am not mistaken such a view must surrender the ordered geometry of space-time that Whitehead retains. Without emergence there are no distinguishable events thanks to which time emerges. The events and intervals to which the relativist refers are the constants that shake out of the elaborate mathematics which the realization of the social character of the universe has shown to be necessary. 219

I would like to emphasise that any object, whether “physical” or “social”, becomes a scientific object only on condition that the tendencies to respond to it are not carried out. The various meanings of the object are the characters not responded to; they are the characters reflected during (ar)rest of action. Presumably this plays some part in the confounding of the reality of the scientific object. The scientific object is an object, not a thing. Only by confounding emergent and bare passage, by reading becoming into that

218 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 16.
which has become, the object can be regarded as having the characters of a
thing. And since the meaning of the object emerges in inhibition of response,
this paradox is quite difficult to disentangle. This is why it is necessary to
bring real time or emergent passage into play; i.e., “the whole situation” of
scientific action.

I find that this functional and temporal conception of the actual per-
spective involves two particularly important and interrelated suggestions.
Firstly, that self and object constitute an immediate unity and secondly, that
the act transcends each of these individual objects. These unmerge as the
individual and reciprocal aspects of the actual perspective during the syn-
thesising re-organisation or reflection of the parts remaining once passage
has been arrested.

Unity resides in the reciprocity of stimulation and response, suggesting
that the one cannot appear in experience without the other. Self and object
are what they are or have the meanings they have insofar they are reflected
as simultaneously passing systems. Without the passing mind or social con-
sciousness indicating both “here” and “there”, neither of these individual
objects would have a definite meaning to the interacting individual in whose
experience they are reflected as individual objects.

The notion of transcendence falls back on the immediate simultaneity or
indistinct multitude of self and object in the individual perspective but adds
to it the emergent passage by which means these individual aspects are re-
constructed so as to restore the functionally defined unity of the act. Thus,
without the alteration of referential system’s a and not-a, or me and not-me,
into a common perspective including both, significance of meaning cannot
be achieved. This logical relationship is realised in the dialectical passage of
a social consciousness.

I submit that the only instance we have of prehension in experience is this
holding together of future and past as possibilities – for all pasts are as
essentially subject to revision as the futures, and are, therefore, only possi-
ibilities – and the common content which endures is that which is common to
the organism and environment in the perspective. This in the organism is
identified with the spatio-temporally distant stimuli as a possibly real present,
past, and future. The unity lies in the act or process, the prehension is the
exercise of this unity, when the process has been checked through conflicting
tendencies, and the conditions and results of these tendencies are held as
possibilities in a specious present.220

Having reiterated the key features of Mead’s assessment of the scientific act,
I shall now move on to the argument to be made in the following and final
chapters.

In the above, the social consciousness indicating the “physical” object has been given two aspects. The one is the social consciousness of immediate role-taking necessary for the object to control the initial manipulation of the object, the other the social consciousness of reflective role-taking following upon the immediate response insofar as the manipulation was unsuccessful. This latter kind of social consciousness is characteristic of the scientist. But that being so should not be understood as a permission to leave the immediate aspect of the social consciousness out. The individual observer relies on both, though they indicate different kinds of objects. Some are there, giving form to others whose reality is yet to be ascertained. Now, what has been argued above, and to be discussed with direct reference taken in the observation of social objects proper, is that these two kinds of social presents cannot be confounded with less than a misunderstanding of the social psychology forwarded by Mead.

A return to Mead, and what Farr refers to as a genuinely social psychology, is not an altogether straightforward proposition. Taking seriously the social argument made by Mead in the numerous fragments from which he departed prematurely, one finds that Mead was not an advocate of a social psychology, let alone a scientific one. It was a functional and social re-statement of psychology with which, in a larger philosophical context, a pragmatic theory of emergence was attempted.

The argument to which this demonstration is geared is that the psychological fallacy of which Dewey speaks is not a fallacy restricted to psychologists, but has bearing also among those calling themselves social psychologists. Contemporary social psychologists might conceive of sociality in terms of a dis/connection between two or more individuals or, alternatively, in terms of a singular individual dis/connecting between himself and environment. But in so far this is done in the name of Mead this will constitute an incorrect claim of support. This is but one aspect of Mead’s concept of sociality. The conception of the social referred to here proceeds upon a half reciprocity, in which the characters of the object are those conferred upon it by the individual observer as he reflects (upon) it by way of a sequential, as opposed to a simultaneous, role-taking.

I am not implying that Mead presents a composite concept any more than Bergson implied that Einstein confounded the concept of time. What I wish

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221 This fallacy has been alluded to throughout this text, and relates to the failure of maintaining temporal integrity in explanations with respect to the emergence of meaning. I shall return in detail to this fallacy but introduce Dewey’s definition here in order to cue the reader’s attention. “The fallacy that arises when this is done is virtually the psychological or historical fallacy. A set of considerations which hold good only because of a completed process, is read into the content of the process which conditions this completed result. A state of things characterizing an outcome is regarded as a true description of the events which led up to this outcome; when, as a matter of fact, if this outcome had already been in existence, there would have been no necessity for the process.” Dewey, J The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology in Psychological Review 3 (1896). p. 367.
to stress is rather that when reading Mead, one may not always appreciate the complexity and read him as though he promoted a social psychology of interaction. He did not. As shown, and shortly to be shown with greater clarity, we shall find that he did so only when articulating sociality spatially; when failing to articulate the concept of sociality temporally and hence spell emergence with the characters of bare passage.

This demonstration will be conducted by decomposing the concept of the act; I shall distinguish between transaction and interaction. Having completed this decomposition of the act, I shall return to the distinction between complete and incomplete kinds of sociality and reconstruct Mead’s concept of the social act in the context of a scientific social psychology.

The suggestion to be pursued here is then that rather than basing a statement of the sociality of the object with reference taken in the interaction completed of the social psychological observer qua scientist, we should look at this act as a transaction. Thus, the act to which the observation belongs is a transaction, and so is the act observed. The temporal articulation of the social therefore implies both the emergence of the act to which the observer refers as a social object and the emergence of the social object controlling the social act observed.
4 The Composite of the Social Symbol

4.1. The Two Dimensions of Sociality

The difference between these two dimensions of sociality is temporal. A system can conceivably be taken at an instant, and the social character of the individual member would in that instant be what it is because of the mutual relationships of all members [of the community or consentient set]. On the other hand, an object can be a member of two divergent systems only in passage, in which its nature in one system leads to the transformation which it’s passing into another system carries with it. In the passage itself it can be in both.222

A return to Mead in the attempt of recovering a genuinely social psychology requires that we familiarise ourselves with his axiom: the principle of sociality. In doing so we shall find that it will take a certain reading for this attempt or venture to meet with its purpose. Specifically, it will necessitate that we read Mead’s concept of sociality as if based on a half concept of reciprocity, for it is only as such the individual observer may be thought to accomplish a scientific statement regarding the reality of the social object.

In order to demonstrate this, I shall analogise the rationale upon which Bergson proceeded when he assessed the reception of Einstein’s principle of relativity. Thus, while Bergson violated the relativist axiom of reciprocal displacement suggesting, speaking with Mead, the incomplete sociality of physical objects, so shall I attempt here to violate the social scientific axiom of interaction by undertaking a temporal account for the act in which completely social objects emerge as objects of observation and explanation. This means that I shall paraphrase the question in answer to which he offered the immediately social consciousness: i.e., “how do we come to give to the thing at a distance the physical values of the manipulatory area?”223

We are not aware of projecting ourselves into the distant object because as selves we do not project ourselves into it. The taking of the attitude of the distant object and of the self in response has already taken place in the social

222 Mead, G. H.  Philosophy of the Present. p. 77.
223 Ibid. p. 123.
mechanism of the organism. [...] The organism as a physical object appears in the same process within which appears the distant object.  

What I aim to do in this chapter is to grasp the answer as if referring to a completely social object. In attempting this I shall direct attention to the Meadian fact that beyond the “physical” and the “social”, social consciousness is not an individual phenomenon. It is an emergent passage of nature making individual phenomenon possible. Speaking in the more familiar terms of I and me, this suggestion states that it is not the self that takes the role of the object. Role-taking is an immediately social consciousness we refer to as a I and in which me and other individual objects emerge. This means that in order to assess the sociality of an object, we need to assess the sociality of the act(ual perspective) in which this social object emerges.

When Dewey some twenty years after Mead’s death suggested transaction to characterise Mead’s contribution to psychology, he emphasised the elements of action in perception and hence the creative aspect of action. The characters of the object are not mirrored or represented in the individual consciousness as stipulated by classical psychology. The object does not precede the perception, nor does it cause the perception. The object and the self emerge reciprocally in the act, and together they go into the completion of the act. The metaphor proper, according to Dewey’s 1896 article The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology, is the circuit, not the arc advanced by psychologists. The act refers not to an individual agency separate or independent from its environment, but to an event that may or may not be reflected as consisting of two individual objects exchanging acts. Thus, to understand the act(ual perspective) and the characters belonging to it, it is necessary not to limit analysis to the interdependence of individual objects being there, but to account for the “whole situation” in which these objects emerge: i.e., transcendence.

Expanding upon the argument made by Dewey in his critique of psychology, and to which Mead adhered and returned repeatedly, it states that the act is a functional whole and is not to be reduced to a stimulus and response. These are but abstractions made in the retrospect of reflection and to be used as the material of scientific and psychological explanation. Psychology should seek its answers not in juxtapositioning stimulus and response but rather in terms of their emergence in the observation. This is the quintessence of articulating the act temporally; action as transcending the positive or intrinsic differentiation between individual and environment. These individual objects e- or unmerge in the passage of the actual perspective.

As indicated, this conception of matters was a novel one in the early 20th century and replaces, significantly, spatially conceptualised objects with

temporal ones. As shown in the preceding chapters, the “object” Mead speaks of is a hypothetical slab of nature isolated from emergent passage in order to aid the reflection of the immediate reciprocity between stimuli and response in a functional present. As such it is not to be confused with the commonsensical “object”, denoting a thing, a physical extension and masse in space. In Mead’s view, the object is rather the form that our experience takes in responding to environment. It is an immediate or reflective hypothesis regarding characters to be tested in the future based on representations of past experiences. I believe it instructive therefore to read this term as if spelled “object(ive)” in the remainder of the present argument. In this way we submit to the recognition that the object cannot be considered apart from the act in which it emerges together with the individual me or self.

They are […] strictly correlative and contemporaneous. The stimulus is something to be discovered; to be made out; the activity affords its own adequate stimulation, there is no stimulus save in the objective sense already referred to. As soon as it is adequately determined, then and then only is the response also complete. To attain either, means that the coordination has completed itself. It is the coordination which unifies that which the reflex arc concept gives us only in disjointed fragments. It is the circuit within which fall distinctions of stimulus and response as functional phases of its own mediation or completion.226

This distinction made by Dewey between that which has become and that which is becoming Mead later elaborated into a distinction between two kinds of sociality. With Mead we shall refer to them as the two dimensions of sociality and we shall recognise them as the spatial or temporal articulations of reciprocity. Let us begin with the spatial articulation of sociality.

A system can conceivably be taken at an instant, and the social character of the individual member would in that instant be what it is because of the mutual relationships of all members [of this system].227

Another way of putting this spatial articulation of sociality would be: the individual member may have only the characters that the membership in this system allows him. And the characters the system allows him, in turn, are those characters it is given by the individual observer adding to it a certain significant dimension whereby he re-constructs the object so that it may control the act he attempts to complete. In a still stronger formulation, these members appear and have the meaning they have only in the individual reflection in which this object or system of characters appear as a problem. And moreover, the system encompassing the individual member is a system

227 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 77.
only in the perspective of the individual observer. It is the particular slab of nature indicated and abstracted from passage and with which the individual attempts to isolate significant characters. And insofar as he succeeds, these characters will hold also for the individual members since they are the characters with which they emerge. They cannot be identified differently. They emerge, and exist, in this perspective only.

What we refer to as the characters of the system are therefore the characters emerging in the sensuous relationship or actual perspective established between the individual observer and his object once the problem has obstructed and called forth this reflection of emergent passage. The characters are the distance experience of the individual and are indicated by him alone. Thus, the social character of the individual member is a character emerging in his individual or incompletely social reflection.

As pointed out earlier, it is due to the reciprocity between the characters of self and object that it becomes necessary for the individual observer to state the object in a general fashion. Without abstracting himself, or rather his self, from the emergent passage of the actual perspective, the individual observer will be unable to state the object independently of the self and in the terms of characters common to all conceivable individual perspectives. Thus, the object is not to be explained with less than its removal from the temporality of the actual perspective in which it emerged. Having reduced the functional present to a specious one and expanded it into a universal or infinite instant, the individual observer has secured the characters with which to signify the object but sacrificed the possibility of its individual members to alter. The act observed is now a system, simultaneous with his self.

Change is here allowed only in the sense that the individual observer reflectively redistributes or varies his position in relation to the distant object indicated. And as he changes his perspective from the one position to the other within the reference system chosen, the distribution of the characters making up the system or object referred to will be rendered different accordingly. The object as such, however, does not. In fact, it cannot. It appears in the individual observer’s consciousness as an instant, attesting to the bare passage of reflection. (It was abstracted from passage by the individual observer as he abstracted himself from the actual perspective in which the object emerged.) The definite and virtual object is his hypothesis, to be tested in a procedure in which a series of different individual perspectives are applied: i.e., the procedure of reflective role-taking. Furthermore, if the object did not appear to the individual observer as an instant, he could not compare characters obtained in the various individual perspectives applied in this symbolic manipulation. And, in consequence thereof, he could not state its general characters.

The point to be stressed here is that we need to acknowledge the temporality involved in observation; the functional present in which the scientist’s mind passes between the various systems in order to obtain what characters

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are common to all. For this is the sense in which sociality is the “principle and the form of emergence” and which articulates the object temporally as unmerging during the short-circuiting of the act into a dis/connection between the self and object.

I have defined emergence as the presence of things in two or more different systems, in such a fashion that its presence in a later system changes its character in the earlier system or systems to which it belongs. Returning to the example advanced by Mead earlier, we may say that in order that the affairs of the feudal lord and his subject will be successfully completed, their individual acts must have a common object. Although the feudal lord presumably called this object exercised right and the vassal may have preferred the term forced duty, they managed to settle their affairs by referring to or indicating a higher order called God’s will. This reference system, this common perspective, offered significance to both lord and vassal. The significant words of God controlled their individual acts and contributed to the realisation of the social object of feudalism.

Still, even this is an ambiguous formulation of the sociality of the act. On the one hand it might be articulated as an act consisting of a sum of individual acts referring to a common object and which they realised insofar as the co-operative act was carried out successfully. In another articulation, as suggested by Asplund, the vassal and the subject emerged qua vassal and subject in the feudal act controlled by the common object of God’s will. In this articulation one should, rather than calling God’s will a common object, understand this reference system as the definite form in which the emergence of the individual took place. What I mean to say is: God became a common, or rather shared, object only after the vassal and the subject have emerged as definite or distinctly individual objects. It is only after having projected a realisation into emergence, a become into the becoming, that something might have been shared.

The same point can be made by asking: who deems the social act of feudalism a certain common or shared object? The individual observer, clearly. If I (sic!) did not attribute a virtual object to control the act observed, I would be unable to construe a definite act-object with which to complete the act to which my observation belongs. Yet, while remaining at the distance implied by inhibition and reflection, I may offer a series of virtual objects and forever fall short of a conclusive realisation of the object (the act observed). Formulated closer to the terms of temporal articulation: I will not be able to distinguish between the “before” and “after” of the object since no object has been subjected to an actual communication. The object is still a

228 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 85.
229 Ibid. p. 69. A more general formulation to the same effect is to be found on the following page: “I have also called emergence an expression of sociality”.
distance experience in my reflective and incompletely social consciousness. And since I cannot distinguish between a “before” and “after” of the object, I will find no reason to object to the virtual time travel, the conceptual passage in time, required in stating the explanation (or prediction) of the act observed. Again, to properly account for the sociality of the object, we need to account for the act(ual perspective) in which it emerge.

This conception of sociality differs, clearly, from the spatial articulation. Here we account for the emergent passage upon which the explanation implicitly proceeds, albeit explicitly denies, is the manifestation of a transcendental kind of sociality.

On the other hand, an object can be a member of two divergent systems only in passage, in which its nature in one system leads to the transformation which it’s passing into another system carries with it. In the passage itself it can be in both.230

While in the spatial articulation the social signified a common membership to a definite and singular system, the temporal articulation of the social stresses the passage between systems and the emergence of characters in this passage.

The social nature of the present arises out of its emergence. I am referring to the process of readjustment that emergence involves. […] The new objects enter into relationship with the old. The determining conditions of passage set the conditions under which they survive, and the old objects enter into new relations with what has arisen. I am here using the term “social” with reference not to the new system, but to the process of readjustment.231

Thus, sociality signifies not only the relational characters of the members of a particular system, but also the very emergence of these characters in the reflective passage of observation. The concept of sociality refers not only to the (f)acts of men and women, white and colored, white and blue collar, young and old. Also the process in which they appear to the individual observer indicating the members of a class or group is a social (f)act. That is to say, in the reflective and sequential role-taking or passage between the systems of self and object.

Now, the method of articulating concepts temporally might seem overly abstract. Nevertheless it serves the purpose for which it is designed: it resolves paradoxes. However, having once learned the method and accepted the premises upon which it proceeds, we may fire it from the hip, so to speak. Thus, we may say that the difference between the incomplete and complete aspects of sociality is conveyed by the answer to the following question: can the individual observer and the object he is referring to re-

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230 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 77.
231 Ibid. p. 47.
spond to one another. If they can, we are dealing with a complete sociality. If not, we have a case of incomplete sociality. This is the impact of Bergson’s emphasis on allowing for a second observer or actual twin.

We are not dealing here with the experience of physical objects, or objects treated as if physical, preoccupying classical psychology. Rather than objects characterised by their extension and resistance, we are interested in objects whose meaning is realised not by means of manipulation but by means of communication. Indeed, social psychologists are but rarely interested in the masse or extension of a group. In order to determine what does interest the social psychologist therefore, we shall first have to figure out what the significance of sociality actually composes in the social psychological observation.

The reflection required from the reader of Mead must, as argued by Bergson, be conducted with the recognition of a second individual observer. It is only upon such a rationale that we shall free our reflection from the notion of a distance experience of the social object and its manipulation. Following the lead of Bergson, what we have in its place is communication, allowing for a completely social object to be realised. In this articulation, conducted upon a complete concept of reciprocity, there will be no one individual observer occupying individual perspectives sequentially, but the contemporaneous emergence of at least two individual observers and hence a completely social consciousness.

In the following I will show that the significance of the completely social object will not be discernable as long as the difference in kind between half and complete reciprocity remains clouded. I will show that as long as we consider the situation as allowing for but one individual observer, as long as we allow for the realisation of the completely social object to be handled as though it were a matter of manipulation rather than communication, we shall only a gaze wandering from the one picture to the other without comprehension as to their actual significance. What we shall have is composite or, speaking with Asplund, a puzzling picture. Thus, I will argue that the social characters of the object observed will take on the social characters of the consciousness in which the object emerges; more precisely, the incomplete sociality of the observation will mask the complete sociality of the act observed and give rise to a wide spectrum of social chimeras.

The argument to be made here is that to abstract the act from the object or the object from the act is to remove either from the emergent passage in which scientific observations are completed. The observation is social and this sociality cannot be accounted for without qualifying the sociality of the object observed. And the sociality of the object observed, on the other hand, cannot be comprehended without the sociality of the observation, i.e., the social consciousness of the individual observer. The sociality of time, of passage, may seem obscure but we need only keep in mind that emergence is another way of spelling e- or unmergence or, more contemporary, di-
stinction. Subsequently, in applying Bergson’s argument on time to Mead’s social reformulation of the principle of relativity, I hope to be able to address the confounding of two kinds of time (passage) liable to induce also a confounding of the two aspects of sociality.

This will be attempted by analogising Bergson’s decomposition of time in Einstein’s theory of relativity. This attempt could be viewed as an attempt at a social psychology of social psychological observation.

The premises of this analogy are these: firstly, what in Mead’s social psychology answers to the relative object in Einstein’s theory of relativity is the social object, which is to say the social act observed and secondly, the sociality of this object will depend upon whether we understand the act to which the observation belongs as a transaction or an interaction. Now, the particular purpose of this analogy is that of determining, as did Bergson with respect to relativity, the effects of the more and the less in the social psychological observation that ensue from the spatialisation of time. I shall argue that these effects consist in the objects of interaction: atemporal or spatialised transactions made possible by the dis/connection between individual and environment in scientific social psychology.

The questions to which this decomposition is geared are these: What kind of social self and social object emerge in an act whose reflective phase indicates a distant and yet completely social object? How is its reality to be verified? How, that is to say, does the individual observer realise the completely social object? And how is he to state the general conditions under which the completely social object appears in an(y) individual consciousness?

4.2. Making Less in Scientific Observation

From a “happening” in three-dimensional space, physics becomes, as it were, an “existence” in the four-dimensional “world”.232

As a means to introduce the less of the individual perspective in observation, let me relate another incident at Hollandia as a colleague of mine was conducting research for his study on improvisation in verbal conversation. The situation was such that my colleague sat at a table beside two men discussing what appeared to be a company promotion application written by the younger one. While the other was reviewing the application, the conversation touched on a waitress at a restaurant they both frequented. The younger man was quite intrigued and became even more so when the older man, having up to this point acted rather reservedly, conveyed that he had

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had an affair with the woman in question. The younger man pushed the matter and eventually he got the story. Or at least the first part, for somehow the older man sensed that my colleague was listening in. In any case he looked directly at my colleague and then returned to the previous topic.

As in the case of the girl in the Hollandia window, this situation exhibits a complication as to the relationship between the individual observer and the object. The two events are indeed similar. The transaction emerged the way it did due to his, albeit reluctant, partaking. Was he to abstract himself from the object of the act observed, the explanation ensuing would contain a hiatus or gap in time between the moments before and after the mutual adjustments signified by the looking into one another’s eyes. Up to this point there is no scientific objection suggesting that my colleague, however much he had wished to do so, could abstract from the transaction the characters conferred upon it by his presence. But in and after that moment during which he was entangled in the transaction he had been observing this is not feasible. The functional present of the conversation was “contaminated” by the responding of the object to the individual observer. (The “contamination” being another way of putting the alteration occurring as the individual’s inhibition of response was terminated.) The object responded to my colleague being there and he subsequently responded to his tendencies to respond.

In that moment the characters of the act became inseparable from the actual presence of the particular observer. Had my colleague in that moment been looking in another direction, to mention but one possibility, the act could presumably be argued to have had a different passage. But this was not the case, nor could the characters cannot be conferred upon the object itself. The individual observer is implied and, in order to account for the social psychological object observed, this actual perspective must be taken into account as well.

Conversation involves a situation which is changed with every remark made. If the conversation is in point, provided there is some matter under discussion that is being illuminated by the remarks, it means that the approach of one speaker is changed by the attitude of his opponent. His approach has to be a definite approach. If we are discussing a matter and one brings forward an aspect he has not recognized, then the situation is in so far a definite association. The difference in attitude of one individual involves an adjustment for the other. The change may be very slight, and yet such changes go on, many taking place without recognizing them.233

In this case, my colleague did recognise a change, obviously, but this is beside the point being made. The point being made is that, in the standard scientific observation, the presence of my colleague does not present a

problem. The explanation is completed as if the observer is not present, whether responded to or not. It is stated in a fashion as if the object perceived had no individual observer as its environment. If the object had such an environment, the explanation would lack the general conditions required by the procedure.

Let me return to the case of the girl reflecting herself in the Hollandia window. When I observed the girl, I also - or simultaneously, functionally speaking - observed my self in order that the characters conferred immediately upon the girl in the explanation could consistently be eliminated from the object. In this fashion the girl is isolated from me and mediated as a separate, objective or significant object. As I did so, I replaced my actual self with a multitude of virtual selves that represent (all) possible individual perspectives upon the object. I disconnected the object of the girl and me from each other and from the temporality of the actual perspective in which they emerged. While enumerating or indicating these possible vantage points I pass between a virtual and distinct multitude of systems or objects made referential as I take their roles. In this passing the immediate present or circuit becomes reflected as a succession or arc - an interaction.234

Having approximated the less in a preparatory manner, I shall now give proper definition using an observation made by Bergson in connection to the 4D space-time continuum of Minkowski.

The fourth dimension of space-time is \( t \) and is considered on equal pairing with the spatial dimensions \( x, y \) and \( z \) to which it is added and attached. It signifies time co-ordinated with the (other) spatial dimensions in order that events may be plotted down as taking both place and time in the distinct multitude (of moving objects) call the universe. These are relativist facts according to Bergson and the question he goes on to target the implications of having this fourth dimension added to the reality described by the dimensions of space. In his attempt to answer this question he begins by asking us to imagine a 2D reality to which \( t \) is added as a third dimension.

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\text{[E]ach of the successive states of this universe will be an instantaneous image, taking up the whole plane and comprising the totality of objects, all flat, of which this universe is made. The plane of this universe will therefore be like a screen upon which the cinematography of the universe will be run off, with the difference however that here there is no cinematography external to the screen, no photography projected from without; the images takes form on the screen spontaneously.235}
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Now, what happens when adding an extra dimension to this object is the establishment of a medium, encompassing the screen-reality of the 2D

234 I may now distribute, as do the psychologists in the respective arguments of Mead and Dewey, the stimuli and responses between the objects now placed side by side in the instantaneous gaze provided by the abstraction of the emergent passage of nature.

235 Bergson, H. *Duration and Simultaneity*. p. 108.
universe and facilitating the motion of these images. What was experienced
by sentient beings in the 2D world is now to be regarded projections of an
already given form. But although we may recognise this universe,

[...] this correspondence has meaning only because we mentally traverse the
[film] and occupy [images] successively. If we have been able to replace this
succession by a juxtaposition, real time by a spatialized time, becoming by
the become, it is because we retain becoming, real duration, within us; when
the child actually reads a word all at once, he is spelling it virtually letter by
letter. Let us not therefore imagine that our [film] gives us, as if crystallized
together, the motion by which the [film] is outlined on the plane and this
plane [film] itself. It has merely extracted from becoming what is of interest
to science, and science can use this extract only because our mind will re-
establish the eliminated becoming or will feel able to do so.236

Bringing the distinction closer to Mead, we shall say either that i) there is a
reflected multitude of simultaneities or specious presents, and that whenever
we point off each point in space we also point off a concomitant instant of
bare passage or that ii) there is an immediate multitude of simultaneities or
specious presents in which the positions of the moving object merges with
another. In this latter, temporal articulation of motion we shall be unable to
find the change by looking between the simultaneities (of self and object).
Trying this will yield but yet smaller intervals of the distribution. As pointed
out by Mead, “this inner nature of the physical thing we never reach by
subdividing its visual boundaries”.237 All we shall be able to reach are
merely new surfaces. This virtual kind of time is a representation of what is
indicated as if having already happened, not the happening experienced
immediately.

If I follow my finger across a sheet of paper without looking at it, the motion
I perform is, perceived from within, a continuity of consciousness, something
of my own flow, in a word duration. If I now open my eyes, I see that my
finger is tracing on the sheet of paper a line that is preserved, where all is
juxtaposition and no longer succession; this is the unfolded, which is the
record of the result of motion, and which will be its symbol as well. Now,
this line is divisible, measurable. In dividing and measuring it, I can then say,
if it suits me, that I am dividing and measuring the duration of the motion that
is tracing it out.238

Real time therefore, Bergson and Mead suggests, is becoming, change in
itself, while the symbolic or mathematical time (t) is time rendered through

236 Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 106. In this passage I have replaced the
geometrical terms used in Bergson’s example with the cinematographical terms set by an
example related earlier. In the place of “curve” I have used “film” and instead of “points” the
reader will read “images”.
237 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 121.
238 Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 34.
or distributed in space and given form, presenting the object as if already happened or already having become. It retains of time only what is of value to science: the limit, not the interval, and affords the scientist with the measures or surface of the object.239

Were we to analyse motion by translating it into space, separating between the point-instance of the space traced out by the projectile, we would have to differentiate our perceptions allegedly corresponding to the position in space into which the motion is reduced in order, or with the effect, that the capacity of effective occupation of space also characterises our consciousness of the object.240 It must be remembered, Bergson insists, that it is only our slicing the indistinct multitude into distinct segments and abstracting from motion its immediate reality, leaving, like the tail of light accompanying the falling star, reflection with its re-presentation, that makes for it’s distinction. That we still recognise motion here is due to our reading back into this 3D time-space an intuitive (immediate) knowledge of duration (emergent passage).

When we see a movie, we say with Mead that we experience the picture as moving because our visual perception and the projection of pictures are adjusted to one another.241 To say that the movie is a multitude of distinct pictures ordered successively, however, is correct only upon condition that we sacrifice the actual experience of motion. We sacrifice the indistinct multitude of expectations, perceptions and memories in order that they may e- or unmerge distinctly in reflection. Thus, when we explain the movie as a

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239 This is not to say that t or symbolic time contains merely past time, as opposed to present and future time. For the mediation of time compels us, once started, to continue the line or curve into possible directions of reality. It is not the concept of time that changes with the present, but the direction of this conceptualised time in the medium. All time will be pictured as if already having passed and hence as non-passing. I am here alluding to a passage in Philosophy of the Present where Mead suggests that the individual, once having arrested passage by means of inhibition and reflection, the bare passage by which he envisage the future immediately will replace all passage and so leave emergent passage outside the statement to be made. This means that once the object has been abstracted from emergent passage, this abstraction, this bare passage, will extend and engulf the reality of which the individual is consciously aware. “The achievement of the human animal, or rather of human social conduct, is the arrest of passage, and the establishment of a “now”. It takes place, as indicated above, by inhibition first of all, but inhibition is not competent to erect the now, i.e., a world within which passage can take place, and hence a world which is irrelevant to passage as regards its structure; and, in the second place, a world in which the temporal character of the manipulatory present is extended indefinitely, i.e., in which what is spatiotemporally distant is given the character of that which is both seen and grasped, is one in which both promise and fulfillment are given. Actually only the promise is given in the distance experience and any imagery of contact would still be spatiotemporally distant - the contact if this is given in tactual imagery would be a past content put into a future experience.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 161-2.

240 I am here proceeding upon the notion of endosmosis in Bergson’s Time and Free Will, suggesting that consciousness takes on the distinction with which environment seem to present itself.

241 To create the impression of motion, some fifty images per second are required. Bordwell, D. Narration in Fiction Film. p. 32.
distinct multitude of pictures we have neglected to take into account that we already have made the indistinct multitude distinct by mediating it. We do not, as noted by Bergson, begin by seeing the juxtaposition of pictures. What we experience intuitively - or immediately, speaking with Mead - is rather the motion picture, for we have not yet erected the medium necessary for distinction. The juxtaposition appears only at the moment we, in a mental effort, subdivide the motion into portions (and whose extremes or limits we may count if we so please). To take the example even further, at the moment we see the movie as pictures, we have stepped outside the cinematic experience and view it from a distance; we stand “beside” the projector and look at the screen (the screen qua screen). We have erected a medium dis/connecting our selves qua selves from the movie qua movie by adding the dimension t that will measure its principle of unfolding. In fact, by modulating the speed of the systems, we may see what is to pass and what has passed at will. The emergent passage between “before” and “after” has lost its actuality and is now only barely recognisable.

If every motion in the universe were suddenly to accelerate in proportion, including the one that serves as the measure of time, something would change for a consciousness not bound up with intra-cerebral molecular motions; it would not receive the same enrichment between sunup and sundown; it would therefore detect a change; in fact, the hypothesis of a simultaneous acceleration of every motion in the universe makes sense only if we imagine a spectator-consciousness whose completely qualitative duration admits of a more and a less without being thereby accessible to measurement. But the change would exist only for that consciousness able to compare the flow of things with that of the inner life. In the view of science nothing would have changed.242

Again, the juxtaposition or distinct multitude of snapshots falls short of motion per se. Having already made the transformation, on the other hand, we may talk of motion pictures as motion only in the sense that we read motion back into the projection of motion (the trajectory).

This is the less of reality: the happening recovered as if already happened.

Returning to the language of geometry used earlier, we may say that the two-dimensional universe consists in curved lines and that when added with an extra dimension any particular 2D object will turn into a spiral. The distance between the beginning of the spiral and its ending point will, if counted in this third dimension, be its temporal extension. How many dimensions we count in our analysis makes no difference (in kind). There are as many virtual or symbolic realities as we care to mediate.

In this procedure of mediation, in this procedure of making less by means of adding a certain extra dimension with which to render phenomena distinct

242 Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 40.
form, we have construed a co-ordinate system in which we can trace the
two-dimensional characters of any object; with the reference system pro-
vided by this third dimension we shall be able to view the “history” of the
“story”. And, moreover, if we are able to calculate the algorithm of this
curve plotted down, we can extend its two-dimensional extension in the third
added so that we may predict its position or point in any future two-
dimensional co-ordinate.

This procedure is the procedure by which means Minkowski construed
the space-time continuum. The principal difference being that instead of
beginning with two spatial dimensions he started with three, adding a fourth
called time and within which we are now able to encompass, as if in an
instantaneous and omniscient gaze, the successive positions of 3D objects
juxtaposed in a symbolic and universal simultaneity.

Now, Bergson’s assessment of time is instructive on two closely related
accounts.

Firstly, time is a key concept in Mead’s philosophy of sociality. Passage,
as it were, informs Mead’s elaborations both in the sense of supplying the
Persistence of the actual perspective and the difference or change of social
consciousness (which is to say the altering alternation or passage between
individual perspectives being there). Passage, therefore, yields not only the
temporality of nature but also that of mind. And, depending upon our
conception or use of the concept of time we shall be able or unable to
distinguish between the immediate and the reflective aspects of the social
consciousness. With a simple concept of passage, we shall have a simple
concept as to the role-taking completed by the individual observer in his
indication of the object and, perforce, have but a simple concept as to the
sociality of the object indicated. Thus, as Bergson distinguishes between two
kinds of time, so has Mead, speaking from the points of view of the act and
the individual respectively, distinguished between bare and emergent
passage and between specious and functional presents.

Secondly, the manner in which Bergson grasps the relativist’s lessening
of the reality of time aids our understanding of how the reflection (media-
tion) of the social object works in a scientific observation. The abstraction of
the immediate passage of the individual observer’s reflection from the object
brings with it the abstraction of the object from emergent passage. This is
how it becomes subject to a distinct (definite) re-construction (form); the
indistinct (or indefinite) multitude characterising the object is now rendered
a distinct multitude (of characters) in the medium (significance) offered by
the dimension (object(ive)) added. This translates into the present analysis of
Mead as follows: the social object observed by the social psychologist is an
act, and in order to give this social psychological object a definite form, it is
imperative that we give the act observed an object(ive) answering to, or
which is consistent with, the behavior of the individuals involved. Turned
around, insofar as we accomplish significance the behavior of the group (the
multitude of definite individuals) will appear as a certain solution to a certain problem.

Closling in on the social psychological observation proper and the explanation made concerning the social act observed, the following characters should be emphasised. Firstly, it has as its object of observation a problematical transaction, and secondly, the social psychological observer explains the transaction in terms of a relationship between two parts; individual and environment. The explanation is successful insofar as it identifies or indicates the general conditions under which the social transaction appears in the experience of any individual observer.

Thus, during social psychological observation the individual acts upon the assumption that there are two elements disconnected as to account for the members of a relationship, and that there is also a connection constituting and accounting for, the particular adjustments made by each member of the system observed. This immediate and professional response of the social psychologist I have called the social psychological dis/connection.

What we deal with here is then an individual observer, a system of characters observed composed by the individual and its environment and a relationship or perspective composed by the individual observer and this social object.

![Figure 2. The situation of individual observation. Preliminary sketch.](image)

The diagonal interface between the connections individual-environment and self-individual observer represents the disconnections constituent to the relationships qua relationships. These disconnections are the reflective demarcations between the individual observer and individual-environment (the object observed) on the one hand and, on the other, between the individual and the environment serving as the parts of this object in the social consciousness of the individual observer.

These disconnections signify, more generally speaking, reflections of two actual perspectives. With reference to Bergson, these reflections might be understood as the mediations of the intuitive simultaneity in which the individual observer comprises the individual aspects as members of a system in a single or instantaneous gaze (as he attempts a determination of the ways in which or with what intensity the one individual object acts upon the other).

Thus, there are a multitude of characters whose relationships are to be ascertained. And in their reflection, completed by way of a superimposition
or co-ordination of the two observations, the individual observer pictures how each individual member of the social act interacts with the other alongside the dimension or relationship added. That is to say, as he is not partaking in the act he is forced to hypothesise.

This picture, this distinct disconnection, is obtained by the individual observer insofar as he manages to imagine a “mirror” between individual and environment by means of which to take the role of the environment by “deflecting” the stimulus to himself. That is to say, by indicating his response to the stimulus of the individual, the individual observer may characterise the way in which it affects the individual object of the so-called environment. Having completed this part of the observation he then switches the capacity of reference to the individual and reflects the environment as stimulus. He takes the role of the individual by “turning” the mirror, deflecting the characters conferred upon his self or me. In this manner he becomes able to ascertain the way in which the environment affects the individual.

This reflection, this observation conducted by means of sequential role-taking, is made possible then by the individual observer having added a significant dimension, a common perspective or “mirror”, to the act observed serving, although hypothetically, as the object(ive) controlling the act observed. Also, it should be recognised here that due to the half reciprocity used in obtaining the experiential material to be symbolised in the explanation, not only will the transaction observed turn into interaction in this reflective attitude but, more importantly, into an incompletely social object. The experience in which the object appears is the experience of the individual observer taking the roles of each participant appearing beside his hypothetical self. He attributes or projects his self sequentially to the individual roles emerging in this reflection (or deflection). And, as he has abstracted emergent passage form the actual perspective, he is confined to superimposing the two pictures of incomplete or attributed significance he obtains in order to reach complete significance. But this significance, this meaning, will be complete or common only in a mathematical sense; according to this composite picture the one individual response is a response to the stimulation offered by another individual member. Thus, it fails to account for the functional fact that stimulus and response refer to two dis/connected tendencies to respond called out in the individual observer by the significant dimension or object(ive) added to the completely social transaction observed.

Substituting the “physical” term of reciprocity with the “social psychological” of significant meaning that is to say, we find that the interaction appears as a chimera in the individual perspective of the observer. For replacing the particular dimension of significance with another, there will also be a replacement of the object; i.e., a new object of interaction. This impli-
cation will be discussed further in the following section. (See 4.3 The More in Scientific Observation).

Now, what has been argued so far amounts to the proposition that the object of the social psychological observation is a transaction characterised by either complete or incomplete sociality. The object may be constituted either by a single individual referring to a “physical” or incompletely social object of at least two individuals referring to an incompletely or completely social object in a co-operative act. It has also been proposed that both kinds of objects will appear an interaction once mediated. The two cannot be differentiated from one another because reflection will render both transactions the same form or expression. This form, this interaction, has been referred to here as the social psychological dis/connection and signifies the immediately composite conception of individual and environment appearing as mediation, or reflection speaking with Mead, makes less of the transaction observed. And the less of transaction is equal to interaction in the sense that whenever emergent passage is replaced by bare passage, that which is emerging is reflected when having already emerged. And as far as social psychology is concerned, what emerge are individual objects.

Now the question asserting itself is how to distinguish between these two aspects of sociality. To do this we need to examine the transaction of the individual observer. The difference will emerge, that is to say, when we consider the individual observer as abstracting the characters he immediately conferred upon the object.

While in the case of the incompletely social object, such as the runner outside Hollandia, the statement of the conditions under which it appears in the experience of the individual observer inside Hollandia may yield an unproblematic formulation, this is not the case with completely social objects. When the individual observer abstracts his self in order that the conditions can be regarded general, he does so at the expense of a complete sociality. At the moment the object is considered apart from, or not capable of responding to, the presence of the individual observer the object becomes stated an incompletely social object, an as if physical object. Yet, in cases of complete sociality, illustrated by the girl reflecting herself in the Hollandia window, what happened was that the object observed could not be stated in the abstraction of the individual observer, qua observer, qua self or me. Of course, as a physical or incompletely social object it could, but such a statement would leave out what happened in the situation and retain, specifically, only what did not happen; i.e., the meaning obtained in inhibiting and reflecting tendencies to respond. It would retain what was there irrespective of the passage in which these objects emerged. In case the object is to be considered a completely social transaction therefore, the explanation must be considered at least problematic.

Limiting this argument to the Hollandia example; were I to leave out my self I would be unable to account for the self of the girl and it was precisely
the simultaneous appearance or emergence of our selves that made up the completely social transaction. It was the emergence of our selves that made us capable of projecting our selves back into the emergent passage and in the instantaneous gaze of reflection finding what we recognise as a “peeping tom”-relationship. A relationship in which one individual discloses “her” characters to another because, or on condition that, the other does not disclose “his”. The girl screamed because she projected her self back into what now appeared to her an embarrassing situation and, as she did so, I passed from incomplete sociality to the complete sociality granted by the significance of the set of characters we call “peeping tom”. Or so it seems to me when I reflect (upon) the situation. The object observed now involved me. The object observed altered from her to me and her. In other words, the (initial) observation became a problem, necessitating that I brought my self back into the object, not so that I may state the general conditions for its appearance in my experience, but to explain why she exhibited the characters she did (responding to me qua observer) by way of reinserting my self as a hypothesis. Having done so, I find in my reflection, in elaborating my “peeping tom”-hypothesis, an object offering significance in both individual perspectives; an object controlling both our individual acts.

Thus, in this case, as well as in the case of the runner, there is actually but one observer or a single referring consciousness establishing significance. There is but one individual observer taking the roles of both selves, indicating himself as responding in their places or in accordance with their individual perspectives. In cases such as these the transactions have been formed into interactions and given the form of incomplete sociality. In cases such as these there will appear in the individual observer’s experience a distribution of members in a single and silent system referred to as the object of observation. And in cases such as these the I of the individual observer has been replaced by a me from the temporal perspective of the I presently reflecting the past (present). This is the temporal nature of the individual observer’s act.

I have defined emergence as the presence of things in two or more different systems, in such a fashion that its presence in a later system changes its character in the earlier system or systems to which it belongs.243

Pursuing this temporal articulation of the social consciousness of the individual observer, the present transaction observed, whether of complete or incomplete sociality, will necessarily be explained by the individual observer stating it as a past. Thus the sociality observed and explained will be stated as if outside time and hence outside the social present in which it emerges in the passage between past and future. It will appear as an everlasting instant.

243 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 69.
Indeed, what Mead seems to be suggesting is that a social psychological observation amounts to a composite of the two aspects of sociality; a statement of the past made in the present but without the implication of the future upon which the observation relies for its control and completion.

In fact, we find these two articulations of sociality not only to fuse in the social consciousness of social psychological observation but also to make it possible. Speaking with Bergson, the temporal and spatial lines converge in the social psychological observation and constitute the parts of the composite sociality used in the social psychological explanation. This is why the confounding occurs. (Shortly we shall see also how it occurs).

The difference between the two kinds of social consciousness is difficult to maintain, however, since Mead’s elaboration of the act is closely interwoven with the notion of individual and environment. Unreflectively or immediately accepting this manner of formulating the transaction observed, we tend to slip into the framework of an interactionist sociality. More precisely, this will happen as we let go of complete reciprocity and fall back to the more familiar idea of half reciprocity implied by the notion of reflective role-taking. Here we need but the two halves of which we are conscious in reflection. We shall be aware of a slip having taken place, however, whenever we think of the social act observed as completed by individual selves. Whenever this is our conception of sociality we have abstracted temporality from the transaction observed and turned it into interaction; we have mediated the indistinct multitude into a distinct multitude of members that in reflective role-taking are arrayed side-by-side by a singularly reflecting individual.

Again, this transition from transactional to interactionist sociality is integral to social psychological observation. In the respect of an individual observer, the social psychologist occupies a similar position, temporally speaking, to the act observed as does the self having emerged from it. The individual qua observer responds reflectively or virtually to the transaction from the distance implied by occupying another reference system or temporal perspective. The present observed, that is to say, appears as if a past (present) within the temporal perspective of the present (present). The individual observer perceives the alteration or becoming as the individuals will become able to perceive it: as having become. He reflects transcendence by rendering it the form of interdependence.

This suggestion falls back on Mead’s argument on the irrevocability of the past. He argues, particularly in The Present as the Locus of Reality, that the individual having emerged qua self can revoke the past only from the new perspective of that present having emerged betwixt the past present and the new or present present. The individual cannot revoke the past experience such as it happened, since the individual perspective that was emerging immediately in the past (transaction) presently constitutes a reflective perspective. What was indefinite becomes definite only upon condition of the
re-distribution of characters having emerged with this alteration or emergent passage. The past and the change from past to present will therefore always be possible to represent, but the representation per se will not. Not as long as it is passing. The past is seen through the present and controlled by the future. And as the perspective of the present alters, so will the past alter or emerge.

Now, from this temporal articulation of sociality of the actual perspective follows that the individual observer standing “beside” that which emerges, as does the self reflected (upon) with respect to what has emerged, will reflect the emerging as if having emerged. In other words, the transaction emerges in the reflective attitude of the individual observer in the form of an interaction. This is an important point. For, not only does it imply a disqualification of a difference in kind between half and complete reciprocity, it implies also a disqualification of the difference between communication and the symbolic manipulation of thought.244

Consider the situation of recalling. The characters of this ideation, this virtual extension of environment, are similar to those of regular observation. When I recollect or re-present what has happened I am able to envisage the reciprocity of simultaneities just as in reflective role-taking, and I am just as unable to let the individuals involved in that past transaction respond to (the object of) me now as the individual observing the completely social transaction while happening or passing. The circuit is broken into an arc in both cases due to the half reciprocity replacing the actual void of shared significance.

In this case as well as in that of physics, the individual observer will occupy one system at (or in ar)rest and reflect the passage of the other from a distance. The fact that he tosses the capacity of reference around alters nothing in this respect. It is merely a change (variation) of position in the reference system or significant dimension added and attests to nothing but the significance of the symbols used by the individual observer to manage this reflective role-taking. The individual observer switching point of view within the reference system remains at the social level of interaction defined by the half reciprocity of not sharing significance, of not communicating. The only significant difference we (do not) have here is the difference between interactionist and transactionist conceptions of the sociality of acts and their objects: the transaction we observe, we indicate reflectively as interaction. We do so because we, as individual observers, relate to it as bare (individual) selves rather then emerging (social) selves. And this means that we shall be confined to conceive rather than perceive a dis/connection between the individual and the environment. Rhetorically put, to observe the

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244 I am here proceeding upon the definition of thought cited earlier (See 2.1. Wundt, Mead and the Challenge of Relativity). See also Mead, G. H. in Philosophy of the Present. p. 87.
individual and the environment in interaction is the reflection of the distant individual observer in the object.

Thus, we shall find that trying to explain the social act observed in terms of two or more individual acts, we shall make less of the social object observed. This is standard scientific procedure; it is standard psychological procedure that may be utilised as an incompletely social psychology. As a measure of making this concrete and, perhaps more importantly, showing that it is not only a possibility, I shall target an instance of this lessening and the confounding of the social act observed.

In *Att förstå vardagen* J. Trost and I. Levin apply a Symbolic interactionist perspective in order to render their readers an instrument with which to understand everyday life. In the following passage the authors present their view on the difference between interaction and communication.

We are often asked in what the distinction between social communication and interaction lies. As far as we understand, the distinction lies in social interaction at a given opportunity only being able to occur when a person, being completely alone and still engaging in social interaction, talks to himself or quite simply is thinking. An important principle of communication is that we cannot avoid communicating unless we are completely alone. As an example we could say that Robinson Crusoe did not communicate when he was alone on the deserted island but we could say that he interacted with himself and we could say that he pretended to communicate with things which did not exist. This is to engage in social interaction with oneself and not to engage in social communication. When he discovered Friday and began teaching him English, then the two started to really communicate.

Communication is therefore a later stage than interaction and it is important to underline that just as little as we only interact with the aid of the language, nor is all communication linguistic in the general sense. When the reader reads what we have written we can speak of communication, but as I write, it is a question of social interaction and nothing more than an intention that it will become communication between myself and many interested readers. Yet another distinction can be discerned in that one can speak of a unit of social interaction as in the discussion of the triadic system below. Social communication, on the other hand, cannot reasonably be divided up in the same way. Social communication requires a sequence of social interaction units. [translation mine]²⁴⁵

The difference between what the authors call social communication and social interaction is that the former requires but one individual while the former needs at least two interacting individuals. Both communication and interaction, however, are determined as social and the question arises as to what the term *social* actually signifies.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Also, it might be contested whether this distinction is at all legitimate. Communication refers to the conduct by which individuals verify the reality of a social object and, in this respect, it is to be distinguished from manipulation. Manipulation, as shown, denotes the
I have argued in the above that while unqualified, it refers to two different kinds of objects. In the one there is but one individual or several and separate individuals added to each other to make up a certain sum divisible with the distinct multitude of individuals already and implicitly added to each other, in the other there are at least two e- or unmerging individual selves. How are Trost & Levin and their readers to distinguish the one kind of sociality from the other if there is but a difference in degree (quantity); if communication is equal to a certain multitude of individual interactions? The difference between one and two individuals may of course be approached in a valid fashion as a difference in degree. But then we shall have to submit also that there is no chance of distinguishing a difference in kind between interactions and transactions respectively and, subsequently, that we shall have no way of distinguishing between those acts that Mead qualifies as completely social from those disqualified as such. This impotence is illustrated by the way in which these authors depict the completely social act in terms referred to as “Mead’s triadic system of interaction”.

We believe that one could also interpret Mead’s idea of the triads in yet another way, which would better than previously live up to contemporary symbolic interactionism. The person’s definition of situation represents a base, as it always does in every context – we cannot act or think without doing so in a situation which we ourselves define or perceive. On this base or within this framework represented by the definition of the situation, the triads occur. One element is in the action A performs, his action directed towards B. A perceives B’s response (the second element) and A interprets what A perceives (the interpretation represents the third element). [..]

As further support for this interpretation of the triadic idea we can see how Mead underlines human co-operation, social interaction, based partly on individuals seeing the intent or intentions of others’ activities, and partly providing their own response based on this perception of intention. This means that for people to be able to co-operate there is some kind of mechanism through which each person partly can understand the others’ ways of acting and partly can control their own behaviour to adjust to the understanding of the others’ ways of acting. Altogether, this in turn implies that all this action and these perceptions occur within the given individual himself and not between the individual and the others.

Human behaviour is not to react or respond directly to the behaviour of others. Human behaviour is to respond to others’ perceived or interpreted intentions. In this sense all our communication, all our interaction, is oriented to the future, towards the intended future behaviour of others as it is perceived in advance or interpreted by the individual. [translation mine]247

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247 Trost, J. & Levin, I. *Att förstå vardagen*. p. 102
Trost & Levin’s conclusion that human behavior is to respond to the intentions of others or that a social act occurs within each particular individual will not be discussed here. Nor is the fact that they make no distinction between immediate and reflective aspects of social consciousness. It will suffice but to point out that the authors’ choice and use of the term interaction indicates, given Mead’s terminology (see 3. Beyond the “Physical” and the “Social”: The Whole Situation), that they in writing this book, either manipulated a future collection of papers or one another. These are the only physical objects implied in the situation described. Using a less rhetorical formulation, what I wish to stress here is that this interpretation of Mead’s “triadic system of interaction” spells out how we may read him as though he explains completely social transactions in terms of incompletely social interactions and, as to be demonstrated shortly, how we make less and, without noticing the effects immediately introduced by the individual perspective, make more when to understand the actual reference of the explanation.

This interpretation of Mead illustrates not only how sociality is made less by the social psychologist, how social psychology becomes an individual psychology. This lessening is the point made by J. Asplund in Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv quoted earlier. It will be repeated here for the purpose of emphasis.

While psychology investigates the separate individual (in isolation from society) and sociology investigates society (in isolation from the individual), social psychology examines the relationship between the individual and society, separately and in general.

Elementary. It is just that the relationship between the individual and society in a conventional textbook of social psychology would very rapidly after the introductory declaration, slip out of the picture. One is tempted to say that the relationship between the individual and society is just what conventional social psychology is not about. Most frequently it is about the individual in isolation from society or society in isolation from the individual.

Bastards are problematic. [translation mine]

In the following I shall demonstrate why and how this lessening of Mead’s concept of sociality occurs. I shall show that the lessening of the social object (the social act observed) occurs due to a confounding of Mead’s concept of role-taking; which is to say, as a confounding of the immediate and reflective aspects of social consciousness. I shall show also that the scientific form of this social psychological lessening of action is to be found in the incompletely social interaction. The argument will be made that by confounding the temporal aspects of immediate and reflective role-taking, all role-taking takes the form of reflective role-taking. In this way all action will

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be rendered the scientific form of interaction. Let be begin by recapitulating the relevant premises reached thus far.

I have argued that the transactional sociality (the completely social object of transaction) enacted and realised by the individual observer fuses with the transactional sociality of the object he is reflecting as an interaction. I have also argued alongside the assessment made by Bergson that it is because the individual observer is able to read real time or emergent passage back into the interaction that he will find it to represent transaction. However, as the object controlling the individual observer’s act is the distance experience of another transaction, his responses to those stimuli will not go to make a circuit and so the reciprocity of the act will be half. As pointed out by Dewey, the circuit will appear to him as an arc. The elements of the system observed will appear to him as distributed in that distant system rather than emerging in the immediate passage of observation which, as such and insofar as it is not obstructed, is in itself immediate. Why? Because he is to state the general conditions for the appearance or emergence of this object in his experience, he will have to abstract from it the act and, together with it, the emergent passage of the actual perspective to which his particular observation belongs. And when this is done, when the object is abjured from alteration, it will fix into an instantaneous object. Thus, what is transaction “here” will become interaction “there”; the complete reciprocity of the act observed will present itself as half in the experience of the distant individual observer. As I have shown, attempting to explain the act so as to re-construe a definite object capable of controlling his own act, the individual observer will have to take the role of each member of that “moving” system sequentially and hence the disappearance of the difference in kind between half and complete reciprocity. The complete sociality of an object will be stated in the terms of an incomplete sociality. It is crucial therefore, not to fail in taking into account the “whole situation” or, speaking with Bergson, articulate temporally the act in which the scientific object emerges. Failing, one will be unable to distinguish between reflective and immediate attitudes of social consciousness and in subsequent fail to make out the difference in kind between the complete sociality from the incomplete. Thenceforth one may, or perhaps even will, read Mead as though he advanced a scientific social psychology.

The mistake of confounding interaction and transaction and, in consequence thereof, confounding the incomplete with the complete sociality of the act observed is one easily made. Indeed, Mead seems to make smooth the passage from the one conception to the other. The mistake becomes almost a fluent one as he states that what makes reflective, and hence scientific, action possible is the capacity of role-taking. He invites the reader to conceptualise the social act as consisting of two parts, as if constituted by two half reciprocities: one conscious or reflective(ly role-taking) individual
switching his position plus a general other. Adding them we receive but a mathematically complete significance.

Considering sociality a simple concept and immediately move on to the social consciousness of role-taking as tacitly reflective and hence sequential, one will find the transaction observed an interaction and in that respect be predisposed to a generalisation of the object’s sociality.\(^{249}\) I suppose that this to some extent is due to the already noted circumstance that Mead did not complete the co-ordination, and hereby delineation, of incompletely and completely social acts. The confounding of the two kinds of sociality is invited by Mead’s rather placid manner of expressing himself in connection to role-taking and, perhaps also, his many references to individual and environment. In counteracting this confounding it is important also to recognise that the posthumous editing of his many texts and fragments sometimes prompts it and the tendency among scholars to identify Mead’s theory of the act with the account provided in the early chapters of Philosophy of the Present. It offers a convenient source for the reader of Mead, yes, but it directs attention away from the numerous but scattered suggestions and qualifications published elsewhere. For the scholar sifting through the material, this particular account offers a shorthand version not of the act, but of the act referring to or controlled by a “physical” object. It is hazardous, therefore, to use this account as a template when understanding the act controlled by “social” objects. It is to open the door wide to the confounding of two different kinds of sociality.

Let me return to the notes made (see 2. The Act) with respect to the act controlled by a “physical” object and connect it to the less of reality it will imply while not qualified as such.

Mead states that the individual will act in terms of the functionality inherent to his sensitivity to environment. More precisely, how the action will unfold will depend upon whether the individual’s response to the stimulus is singular or multiple. If the response is singular, the act will be completed by means of immediate role-taking or an immediately social consciousness. If the act initiated is faceted by a multitude of responses towards the stimulus, the action will be reflected as the individual will be unable immediately to identify the stimulation. This will hold whenever he finds himself at loss to find a principle with which to co-ordinate the characters answering to his different tendencies to respond. To resolve the situation the individual will have to arrest passage and re-present the object; to reflect (upon) itself in (relation to) the environmental characters selected by his sensuous apparatus. Thus, in order to adjust his response, he will have to

\(^{249}\) This is, I believe, an indirect consequence of the many essays in which role-taking is designed by Mead as reflective in order to enable an account of the procedure by which the individual physicist, using the terminology of Einstein, is able to observe \(S\) from \(S’\). In the present context this statement translates into the observation of the object in the manipulatory area with reference taken in the distant object.
confer upon environment an order, a significant form or definitive meaning. This is when the individual asks the stimulus what it demands from him in order that he may complete the initiated and obstructed act. This is what I have referred to as reflective role-taking.

I have proposed that this is also what the scientific social psychologist does. In explaining the social psychological object (the completely social transaction observed) he deflects the individual responses to his self in order to indicate his responses and so make the observed responses of other individuals intelligible. And if need be, he adds, hypothetically, a series of object(ives) or dimensions of significance until he finds one calling out in him a response similar to, or identical with, the ones he has observed. However, in doing so, the reciprocity of the transaction observed takes on characters immediately conferred upon it by the individual observer’s reflection. It must be recognised that in order to explain or re-construct the object of the act, the individual observer has to take the role of each individual with reference taken in the object(ive) added to the act observed. He cannot complete this reflection on any other basis than this sequence of role-takings. And this means, in turn, that the complete reciprocity of the social consciousness involved in the act observed will take on the sequentiality of the reflective social consciousness of the individual observer and be lessened into a sum of half reciprocities. This is how the act observed takes on the characters of a “physical” object. This is how Dewey’s circuit turns into an arc.

The key to this line of argument lies in the temporal difference between the immediate and reflective aspects of the social consciousness of observation.

The object can thus appear in experience through the reaction of the organism to it, given the mechanism of the upper nervous system. It is there in the values it will have, reflected in the responses of the organism; but it is there in advance of the responses. And it is because the objects are there that the organism can become an object to itself in its experience.250

The immediate role-taking is that phase of the act evoking a certain response and which is carried out without there being a consciousness of a definite object or an object _qua_ object (and hence no individual self or individual _qua_ individual).

This kind of role-taking is to be distinguished from that in which the individual observer redistributes characters, indicated by means of the particular dimension of significance added, between the individual objects having merged in the actual perspective.

If not properly articulated, the difference between these two temporal aspects or phases of the act may translate also into a difference between a

250 Mead, G. H. _Philosophy of the Present_. p. 133.
psychological and a social psychological conceptualisation of Mead’s position. For if these are confounded we may come to the conclusion that an act, whether completely or incompletely social, can be explained in terms of role-taking. This is an ambiguous and hence dangerous statement. To reduce social consciousness, which is to say the capacity for role-taking, to imply only individual reflection we shall fail to appreciate that role-taking occur as a passage between e- or unmerging perspectives which we only “after” emergence has occurred may indicate reflectively as individual. What we shall find is merely an individual reflectively redistributing characters between a distinct multitude of individual objects; notably between those of the self and the object to be explained.

Thus, while unqualified the concept of role-taking is as applicable to interaction as it is to transaction, hence masking the difference between acts controlled by completely and incompletely social objects. It may therefore serve to confound the kind of social consciousness whereby these acts are completed. Acts requiring communication for their completion will appear no different from those requiring manipulation.

We shall do well to recognise that the difference between these two kinds of role-takings lies in whether or not the significant meaning conferred upon environment is regarded as having emerged, or may have emerged, in a completely reciprocal fashion. Whether the environment of the individual observer is, or may have been, another actual individual, as such capable of responding to characters in a fashion similar to the individual observer in whose experience this other self appears. This is, obviously radically different from an environment conceptualised as if a physical object. This difference, then, is one between actually shared and virtually attributed significance. The former signifies a completely social consciousness, the latter an incompletely social consciousness. Yet the confounding of these two aspects of social consciousness does happen, particularly in scientific explanations.

Before moving on to the more of reality, let me sum up why and how the less appears in the social psychological observation.

When the individual observer makes the statement of the conditions for the particular object to appear (the act observed), he isolates the common features by passing between this system and that of his self by exercising this social consciousness. He passes between the systems made sequentially referential and looks back at them in the instantaneous gaze of mind in order to find their common or significant characters. In Mead’s view, the most spectacular demonstration of this power of generalisation of the passing mind is Minkowski time-space. The generality of this reality is of such extraordinary magnitude that he finds it appropriate to call it geometry; a reality so general it eludes perception. However, this reality is not entirely beyond perception. When the physicist looks at the clock, he accepts immediately what he perceives. The relative observation depends upon the acceptance of
this perceptual *thereness* (the immediacy of the object) of the clock-hand. Similarly, the social psychologist may accept as *there* the act in terms of individual and environment. And by the same rationale, these may be stated as a geometry of social reality; a “society” appearing as the individual observer assembling from the observations made those characters that are independent of any particular system used as reference. In this fashion a societal continuum, an individual-environment reality of social psychology, appears as the individual observer enumerates the characters common to all conceivable systems of reference.

Using this scientific concept of sociality makes the social psychologist incapable of discriminating between “physical” and “social” objects, which is to say, between incomplete and complete sociality of objects. The role-taking conducted by any one individual separated from his environment necessitates the sequential procedure of the individual reflectively taking the roles of object and self, whether having a “physical” or a “social” destination, and we shall have but half reciprocity added to itself. In Mead’s view, this is illustrated by the relativist observer as he makes one system referential in order to observe the other and adds the two specious presents to one another in order to represent the motion or reciprocal displacement of objects. In both these cases, in physical as well as social psychological observation, the individual acts by finding common characters by generalising, by turning over the reference of his sensuous consciousness to a transformation formula symbolizing, the original experience.

This is all proper scientific conduct. However, as long as one operates one’s observations upon a half concept of reciprocity, the relationship will necessarily have one actual and one virtual system, where the characters of the latter are reflected in the arrest of the former. Thus, there will in each specious present (or instant of bare passage) be but one system referential. We shall lack complete reciprocity and compensating for it by means of sequential and superimposed role-takings will not suffice. What was to be gained has already been lost.

Moreover, as was shown by Bergson to be the case in physics, social psychologists may come to read the actual or real transaction back into the symbolic manipulation of the social act conducted in reflective role-taking. This is likely to happen since both objects, the interaction and the transaction, are referred to using the same expression. The fact Mead keeps using terms such as *individual and environment* or *self and object* makes it exceedingly easy to infer that individual and environment or self and object refer to two separate entities. Once we make this interpretation we shall have two ideas of sociality appearing as one and make us the prey of paradoxes similar to those indicated by Bergson in relation to electromagnetic relativity theory. We shall immediately accept the *thereness* of individuals side by side and we shall move back and forth in time when explaining and predicting why they did or will do what they are thought or reflected to do.
Failing to appreciate that Mead distinguishes between a social psychology acting upon a recognition of complete reciprocity and a science acting upon half reciprocity, this is quite likely what is going to happen. With less than a decomposition of the concept of sociality, we shall find that a return to Mead may confuse what is actually real (the act) with what is virtually real (the object). Were we to return to and apply Mead as though advocating social psychology as a scientific mode of observation and explanation, the sociality of the act observed will be inseparable from the act in which it appears and by which it is controlled. Thus, insofar the difference in kind is not reflected (upon), the reality of the act observed will immediately be responded to by the individual observer as being of the same kind as that of his own, though abstracted, transaction. In this manner the dis/connection between the individual and the environment may become not the reflection but the immediate or “professional” reflection of the individual observer in the object.

Grasping the realisation of the object(ive) of the scientific act as a series of conceptual maneuvers, the confounding occurs as a loss of touch. The sequence being: i) the immediate acceptance of a completely social trans-action, ii) the transformation or reconstruction of this object into the incomplete sociality of interaction and iii) the return to the complete sociality required for the comprehension of what went on or, speaking with Mead, the “what is was” that was observed and explained. The loss, or less, of sociality will occur in this third step; when we read our own memories of past transactions back into the interaction construed in order to reanimate or re-compose it, in order to realise, though virtually or hypothetically, the meaning of act using, as we are accustomed to do, a singular term with which to signify both kinds of objects. In another formulation, we lose the distinction between the virtual and the actual objects involved: i) the sociality expressed in the reflective experience and which propels the act of the individual observer and ii) the sociality of the act observed.

It should be pointed out that this mixing or convergence reflects not a failure in the scientific procedure. The act observed constitutes the object controlling the individual observer’s act. Even closer to Mead’s terminology: the act observed manifests the distant experience of the individual observer and, as is the case in any perception, the anticipations attached to the object fuses with the memories with which the hypothetical form of the object is furnished. Thus, the sociality upon which the observation and explanation proceeds is necessarily composite of both immediate and reflective experience.

This lessening and the confounding following upon it is of importance for the following reason: in so far we confound the difference in kind between incomplete and complete sociality as we move through experience to explanation, a multitude of objects can be construed and so pose the individual observer with the problem of how to distinguish between true and false
objects. One ought therefore to examine the assumptions making these objects possible and of what kind they are. Again, let me stress that I do not consider the scientific procedure faulty or lacking value per se. What I am saying is that one is liable to a severe misuse of Mead if returning to him in an attempt at supporting a scientific social psychology. Insofar we do not appreciate the different objectives of science and social psychology as stated by Mead, we are liable to read immediate social experience back into the social object we have construed reflectively in order to explain the experience. In fact, this procedure is so frequent that some would probably argue that this is the very goal of social psychology. It is said that we have explained this or that phenomenon and imply hereby that the explanation is true in the sense that a certain phenomenon exists and exists as described by, or is corresponding to, the explanation. Of course, in a sense it does – as soon as we use social psychological language of observation and explanation it exists in the fashion it is mediated by this language. But so does any number of composite or virtual realities and this is the lesson to be learned from Bergson’s assessment. Indeed, how do we distinguish the reality of one object from another and, more importantly, how do we distinguish the object from the act it mediates?

4.3 The More in Scientific Observation

But as we have substituted the completely made for what we perceive being made, we have, on the one hand, eliminated the becoming inherent in time and, on the other hand, introduced the possibility of an infinity of other processes through which the thing could just as well have been constructed. Along the line in which we found the progressive genesis of this thing, there was a clearly defined mode of generation; but, in the new space, increased by one dimension, in which the thing is spread out at one stroke by the joining of time to the original space, we are free to imagine an infinity of equally possible modes of generation; and the one that we have actually found, though it alone is real, no longer appears as privileged: we shall line it up – wrongly – alongside the others.251

Hitherto I have been stressing the role-taking or social consciousness of the social psychological observer and played down somewhat the suggestion made by Bergson that the object observed should be treated as conscious or actual as the individual observer himself; that the object’s “definition of the situation” emerges together with that of the other in complete reciprocity and should be considered just as legitimate. I am not hinting at the possibility that the ones observed might be aware of being observed, as in Triplett’s

251 Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 107.
experiment in the late 1890’s, but at the fact that the individual observer proceeds as if not actually conscious.

What we should be saying, according to Bergson, is that if we are to grasp the philosophical meaning of relativity - and sociality, if we are to accept Mead’s argument - we must treat both systems as referential contemporaneously. If not, the individual observer will be tempted to deem the reality of the object equal with the reality of the act and so annihilate the difference between verifying and realising incompletely and completely social objects. To illustrate this I would like to take Bergson’s cinematic analogy a step further and elaborate the sense in which the added dimension of time erects a medium.

In “shooting” an occurrence we not only eliminate its becoming so as to make it amenable to projection and re-viewing in a pleasure palace. What is more, we transpose it into light. If we did not transform the occurrence into light, we would not be able to re-view in the first place, of course, but what is of particular interest here is the cinematic transformation itself and its implications for the perceptual reality mediated.

If I were to say that the reality in F. Lang’s Metropolis is as real as that in K. Loach’s Naked I may be regarded as making at least two different statements. On the one hand I am incorrect, since the reality depicted in Naked is livable or actual as opposed to the one offered in Metropolis. The lives led are those led by Englishmen whereas there are no Metropolisian lives to lead. The only Metropolis there is, is an allegory over modern life. On the other hand, I am in the right insofar as both realities are light-patterns on a screen. Now, what Bergson suggests is that these two senses can be established only if we make a distinction between what might be termed reality of representation and represented reality. As long as we speak only in terms of cinema, regarding only the reality of representation, we have no possibility to rank the reality of Naked more real than that mediated in Metropolis. More strongly put, we shall never be able to find “real” reality among these “unreal” realities. The reality construed means of light masks the differences in kind between livable and non-livable worlds, as it were. Once accepting the privilege of a singularly conscious and omniscient individual director and projector of characters, we have no way of telling the difference. To be able to do so, we would have to communicate with, or allowing a response from the actors (rather than the characters); we would have to introduce a second actual observer. For as long as we reckon with but the mediating projector or the reflective role-taking of the individual observing reality through this dimension, we will see only figures of light. We may accelerate or decelerate the speed of the projected system moving on the screen and for the characters nothing will change. They will act independently and will suffer or benefit from no changes in duration of its
various adventures. No alteration will occur to change the object, although there will be a re-distribution or change in position of the object in the fourth dimension of time. If we respond to the characters as actors, on the other hand, we shall have no trouble in concluding that the change in velocity allows us to discriminate a difference between lives livable and those that are not. We shall also be able to conclude that the reality of the motions on screen is but the effects of the speed attributed to the pictures or members of this system.

In terms of electromagnetic relativity, by adding an extra dimension called time we attach \( t \) to the dimensions of space \( (x, y, z) \) and in doing so we form our idea of time in accordance with the idea of the spatial perspective. This is what we do in mediating objects with the aid of Minkowski space-time. And what we do in this procedure is also making less and more of the occurrence in question. We not only retract becoming from reality, we also make possible a series of alternative realities leading up to the co-ordinate in space-time at which the particular object has appeared, as having become.

In terms of basic geometry, we may picture a curve elevated into a spiral perpendicular to any of the three spatial axes by adding an extra dimension. This spiral will be a spiral irrespective of the particular mode of generation. The same form may appear twice or as many times we like within the co-ordinate system or medium created with the added dimension of \( z \). Nothing will distinguish the one from the other except for its arbitrary position in the co-ordinate system. As such, as geometric or homogeneous forms, they are identical. This is an important point, also for social psychology, once realised that an act observed from a distance of rest will give rise to a form or object that may have a host of possible “motives”, “causes”, “attitudes”, “roles” or “structural impetuses” at their back once mediated.

If we return to the example of cinema we may detect a similar, though reversed, mode of reality generation. A particular narrative element can be accounted for in many ways. Let us consider love, being one of the most well known social occurrences depicted in cinema.

The ways in which characters fall in love with each other are innumerable. Even a relationship such as that between a young woman and a gigantic gorilla called King Kong may be recognised (or tended to be responded to) as love when viewed on screen. Why do we interpret their relationship as love?

I believe it safe to say that directors have elaborate methods of generating the cinematic phenomenon of love. There is a host of cues that shape the event into the templates of expectation we have of love. Once obtained this form, this idea of love, can be generated in as many dimensions as we care to conceive. We may add the dimensions of social class, ethnicity, gender, race

\[252 \text{ See M. Bakhtin’s } \textit{The Dialogic Imagination} \text{ for an instructive elaboration of this atemporal or spatial time in the history of literature.} \]
and, evidently, even species. The form will be the same in all these cases, although its surface will change according to the point of view or individual perspective (dimension) we have manipulated (added). In other words, directors may generate the object of love in many ways and no one is less or more real than any other. Real love, as it were, is impossible to distinguish in this multitude as long as we remain within the language of cinema. Yet we are able to recognise all these appearances as love. How is that? Extending the analogy of Bergson’s argument: because we as reflective individuals read our intuitive experiences of love into its cinematic symbol just as the physicist reads real time into the symbol of time (t).

The convergence of interaction and transaction stirring a composite concept of sociality in the social consciousness of the social psychological observer may seem a bit esoteric and without practical consequence. It is not, and what I am arguing here is that in so far the social psychologist is to rely upon Mead, be it but in the form of employing the concept of significance or a reference to the concept of role-taking, this is a matter to be taken seriously. It is a matter of keeping track of the relationship between Mead’s views of science and social psychology respectively and avoiding the bifurcation of nature his social psychology was designed to abolish. A passive and cursory approach to Mead’s thought leads to the abstraction of bits and pieces and to the loss of their significance within the context of their use.

By bringing this closer to social psychology, the more of reality indicated by hypotheses or objects of interaction can be illustrated by paying attention to the argument made by B. Glassner in *Essential Interactionism*.

> I may go to the store because I define that action as necessary to obtain food to keep me alive. Or I may go to the store because I feel like taking a walk. My outward behaviors may be exactly the same in each case. I may put on the same shoes, walk at the same pace, buy the same number of items, and think the same thoughts. Although there is a kernel of truth to the proposal that I do what I do because of the way I define the situation, explanations of this variety in some circumstances do not give deep explanations or exclude possibilities.253

As a means of demonstrating the relevance of the above quote to the present argument, let me remind the reader of Mead’s position with respect to scientific observation. According to Mead the scientific explanation acts upon, or is controlled by, the object to be explained. The scientific procedure accepts the object being there and reflectively moves on to demonstrate the general conditions for this object to be there by way of abstracting from the object those characters that are imposed upon it by the percipient event (e.g. the individual organism).

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A physical thing lies in a space-time, and it has characters. Both the space-time and the characters are conditioned by the organism within whose field of experience the physical thing lies. This statement, however, carries with it complication, owing to the fact that the organism is itself a physical thing, and commonly exists in the field of the very organism with reference to which the other physical things are regarded as conditioned. Under that naïve assumption that the organism is independent of the determining influence which the organism exercises upon its field, the organism is that of an observer who is regarding the organism. He is, then, bringing the organism within his own field. When he regards his own organism as determining his field, he is then taking the attitude of this other. In so far as it is the generalized attitude of the scientists, he assumes this as that which is the control in his own estimate of the influence which his organism exercises over his own field.254

This position is recognised also by Glassner in his proclamation of his new approach in social psychology, called Essential Interactionism.

Causal (correlational) analysis locates particular local states, taking phenomena for granted. For instance, correlational analysts have examined the conjunctions of frustration, race, socio-economic position, educational attainment, marginality, etc. with prejudice. In so doing, they take these phenomena for granted and do not study them in-themselves, but rather construct operational definitions of the terms being correlated, in order to concentrate on the direction, type and magnitude of the conjunctions.255

And, furthermore, in looking for what Glassner in reference to Husserl calls the essence of observed phenomena, a path is entered eluding the unqualified or commonsensical relativism to which Mead refers as naïve science.

An appreciation of the need for essential interactionism sheds some light on why so much theorizing based primarily upon correlational analysis is so easily replaceable. Thus, the history of social science theories concerning prejudice reveals that a new theory of prejudice develops every time prejudice manifests itself in a slightly different manner from its previous exhibition. Through an essentialist understanding of prejudice we can hope to avoid this syndrome of dealing solely with manifestations of a phenomenon rather than with the phenomenon itself.256

The observer should “go to the things themselves”, as it were, and find what is necessary for these things to be the things they are in experience. “Essences are the immutable and necessary complex of characteristics without which the phenomenon cannot be conceived”.257 Thus, the essence of a phenomenon or perceptual object is not to be equalised with the pheno-

256 Ibid. p. 23.
257 Ibid. p. 34.
menon itself, but must incorporate also what enables it to appear in the experience of the individual observer. In a phrasing closer to that of Mead’s, I find therefore that the notion of essences bypasses the relative appearances by eliminating those characters that is conferred upon it by the particular and indeed arbitrary position of the individual observer.

Both correlational analysis and symbolic interactionism assume implicitly that we already know about the phenomena which the former finds constantly conjoined and which the latter finds within events. But it is impossible to learn about a phenomenon itself by seeing only how it interacts with other phenomena. We also require understanding of phenomena themselves – of their composition and possibilities. To do this we must look for the essential make-up of phenomena, and hence I call the enterprise essential interactionism. This endeavour is a systematic attempt to accomplish the old ontological dictum that ‘the knowledge of possibilities must precede that of actualities’.

Reflecting upon Glassner’s example, I find that the possible explanations indicated are necessarily present for the individual observer. Rather than resorting to essences, the problem can be approached with more ease by assuming that they are there as the effects of the individual perspective upon which the observation relies. They constitute the *more* of reality that follows upon initially having made less. This lessening, however, Glassner seems to have neglected to take into full account. In fact, he makes the lessening his solution in that he advocates essences; i.e., those characters remaining *after* having abstracted the individual observer from the actual perspective in which the object emerged. This is the reason why Glassner is able to suggest that the behavior observed outside the store above fits or offers significance to two or more different acts.

I would like to propose, in contrast to Glassner, that to take a walk and go shopping are acts controlled by two different object(ive)s and that they will have the same form only when having disconnected the individual observer or self from the object(ive) of the act observed.

The temporality of the act is most instructive for the understanding of how and why this multitude of possible explanations or objects of interaction appear (equally valid). Articulating this situation of scientific observation temporally means not only that we shall attend the act as a passing perspective, involving both past and future, but also the passage in which the transaction observed emerges to control the transaction of the individual observer. To do this, we need first to acknowledge that the social act observed signifies a real change, which is to say a real time or alteration, and that the scientific observation of a social act in itself constitutes an alteration. Thus, the individual observer’s consciousness of the social act is an actual

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consciousness; a consciousness belonging to an act whose control lies with the object, the social act, to be explained.

Now, bringing these two temporal suggestions back to Mead’s conception of science related earlier, we seem to face a situation where an individual observer seeks to state the general conditions for another alteration appearing in and controlling the alteration of the individual observer’s experience. I shall try to disentangle this peculiar situation and so further our understanding of Mead’s temporal conception of science, by asking: in what respect do I emerge in observing a social act?

Do I emerge in the transaction I am observing? I would seem not to. To emerge in the transaction observed, it is necessary that I partake in it. It is necessary that I respond to the object. Observation on the other hand, as defined by Mead, is quintessentially the opposite of responding. It is the reflection occurring due to a conflict between competing tendencies to respond. It is the arrest of action and indication of tendencies to respond. Hence I cannot simultaneously observe and partake in the social act. Thus the question shall be answered in the negative. However, in another sense the observation of a social act does imply emergence. Given that I, qua individual observer, manage to resolve the conflict and complete a definite object to which an unequivocal response may be directed, emergence has taken place. My consciousness has altered, and together with it also the object, the act observed. It is now a definite or explained object.

There is yet another sense in which I may be regarded, qua individual observer, to emerge in the social act. I may partake and, due to some problem occurring in its completion, I may have to reflect upon the execution of the act. In other words, I become self-conscious in order to become object-conscious. In this case however, there is another temporality at work. To be able to observe the act in which I have partaken (and in relation to which my self-consciousness has appeared) means that I shall have to take the role of what is now a past present and, by means of a retrospective mediation, make significant the transaction from the temporal distance or perspective of the present present. Thus, to be able to conduct this observation there must be emergence, which is to say, an actual experience of a “before” and an “after” offering the temporal perspective or distance required.

In the first case, in the case of standard scientific (non-participating) observation, there is emergence as well, but not that of an emergent passage between participating and not participating. Rather the passage is one between not participating and the indication or pretension of oneself as participating. What is implied here, in this second case, is in contrast the emergent passage in which individuals go from immediate to reflective responding to one another. Thus the two individual observers have different object(ive)s. The former has a problem “before” the completely social transaction occurs and mediates the completely social transaction accordingly.
The latter’s problem, on the other hand, emerges in the course of a completely social transaction and he becomes aware of this problem only “after” the passage of the social act has been arrested. That is to say, the scientist has the completely social transaction as his object(ive), while the layman has an object(ive) that the completely social transaction is mediating.

It should be remembered that this is characteristic of me qua social psychologist. I am observing because I have experienced a problem. This is, Mead argues, the very point of the scientific procedure, social psychological or otherwise. Thus, since “the what” I am observing is problematic, since it does not allow completion of a response, I will reflect it in that I take the role of the object. But I will not, and cannot yet, respond. A response would imply, as suggested by Mead’s conception of the act, that the object has been explained and that the conflict between my tendencies to respond have been resolved. It would imply, ultimately, that I engage in the completely social transaction I was reflecting.

Moreover, and this is an important point to be made in connection to Glassner’s argument, as I am not emerging in the transaction I am observing, I am not able to discern whether the emergent characters of significance occurring are the ones I am indicating in reflectively taking the roles of the individuals involved. What I am capable of doing is to assume what is significant (and what is not) and so project an object to control the act observed. Since no one is, nor is capable of, responding to my inhibited tendencies to respond, how could I ascertain that the object or significant dimension I am adding is the one actually controlling the transaction?

What makes Glassner’s argument interesting is that it attempts to form a scientific social psychology at the basis of Mead. Now, accepting the present argument that Mead’s philosophy of the act is not an attempt at laying the foundation of a social scientific procedure but a critical assessment, Glassner’s enthusiasm appears odd. While abstaining from rebuking the argument in toto, I would nevertheless like to stress that his ambition illustrates the appearance of an interactionist conception stemming from reading Mead as though he discusses sociality from a scientific point of view. This is precisely what he is not doing. Glassner’s ambition implies that the transaction, the act being there in the individual observer’s experience, is turned into interaction when manipulating this indefinite object in the attempt of reconstructing it as a definite or scientific object. It is turned into a separate and invariant object; what we are accustomed to call an “essence”. Mead does not present a scientific social psychology but a social psychology of science. The Husserlian thing in itself, speaking from Mead’s point of view, is but a reformulation of the conceptual object. And as such it is emerging and submerging in the flux of passage. To clench the phenomenon from the individual observer and the actual perspective or whole situation

upon which its *thereness* relies is completely at odds with Mead’s philosophy of the act. It would constitute but a relapse into a Minkowskian time-space: an instantaneous reality, a geometry of bare passage signifying the return to a bifurcated nature.

What we designate as “mental” is this attitude of isolation of common features that call out identical responses provided that we have symbols by which we refer to them. To set up a world of essences or universals or eternal objects within which these entities subsist or exist is parallel to the procedure of setting up a Minkowski space-time or a fourdimensional aggregate of events.260

Still, Glassner’s reading of Mead serves the purpose of illustrating how one may read Mead as Becquerel read Einstein. That is to say, how one exercises a composite concept of reciprocity in such a manner as to treat the symbol of time as real time and thus conjure a multiplicity of real times – that which Glassner himself, somewhat paradoxically, so acutely pointed out as a social scientific menace.

In light of the above I find myself intrigued by a footnote added by Glassner, disclosing that he is working on a paper called *Mead as an Essential Interactionist*.261 Though I am in no position to pursue this elaboration, I wish to point out that this does not retract significance from what has been argued here. On the contrary, what Glassner formulates is precisely this: essential interactionism.

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5 Conclusions

5.1 S(t)imulations

How do we pass from this inner time to the time of things? We perceive the physical world and this perception appears, rightly or wrongly, to be inside and outside us at one and the same time; in one way, it is a state of consciousness; in another, a surface film of matter in which perceiver and perceived coincide. To each moment of our inner life there thus corresponds a moment of our body and of all environing matter that is simultaneous with it; this matter then seems to participate in our conscious duration.\(^{262}\)

The organism as a physical object appears in the same process within which appears the distant object. We are not aware of projecting ourselves into the distant object because as selves we do not project ourselves into it. The taking of the attitude of the distant object and of the self in response has already taken place in the social mechanism of the organism.\(^{263}\)

You sit by the river and you have made the river and your self distinct. There is a river and there is your self. Together these objects manifest the distinct multitude of your experience. You take a glass from your bag and put it down in the water to abstract a sample. Bringing the sample home you conduct a series of measurements and, having done so, you conclude that the characters obtained hold also for the river from which you abstracted the sample. You have thus characterised the water of the river.

This is a reasonable procedure and I shall raise no objection. Still, as I follow you back to the river and watch you pour the contents of the glass back into the river, I ask if you can tell me the difference between the sample and the river. I suggest to you that you cannot. And most probably you shall raise no objection. Your objective was to secure the characters of the river. You might also argue that you cannot possibly point in all those directions

\(^{262}\) Bergson, H. *Duration and Simultaneity*. p. 45.
taken by each drop as they mingle. Only upon reflection you would realise the difference in kind implied by the question.264

Now, to be sure, this realisation does not require a trained mind. And yet a simple exercise, the difference in kind will be invisible without it and so the difference in kind will be confounded with the difference in degree. What I mean to say is that although the scientific object is a re-construction of an immediate object having disintegrated, the individual observer or scientist feels able to see passage where, once explained, there is but a certain distribution. This feeling is due to the fact that the scientist, owing to his immediately social consciousness, reads his conception achieved by means of reflection back into the initial or immediate experience. “We are not aware”, as pointed out by Mead, “of projecting ourselves into the distant object because as selves we do not project ourselves into it”.265 Also, in the respect of individual observers we project our selves into the object immediately, which is to say before we are able to reflect (upon) this very projection. The immediately social consciousness cuts both ways.

The scientist presumes that he or she can move characters back and forth between the immediate and the reflective experience of the object in a procedure as if all things being equal. Of course it can be done, but reflection leads only in the direction of the less. And once we move back, once we read passage back into distribution when to animate or interpret it, we will implicitly receive more than explicitly asked for. We shall receive an infinite series of objects immediately implied by the lessening explanation. And all of them shall have assimilated the immediacy with which we re-animate and comprehend the object explained in reflectively taking its role; by way of transferring the passage of the functional present back into the instant of the specious present. Thus we recover more than we expect to find and we shall be unable to distinguish the one kind from the other. The drop is now

264 I am here referring to a passage concerned with the act and the explanation related earlier and in which Mead states that “What this amounts to is that the so-called explanation, or statement of conditions of the perception, is not the perception itself, nor can the statement of the conditions of perception take the place of the perceptual objects. The analysis with its statement abstracts from the particular perception and leaves us, therefore, without this particular object of perception. It is, however, in terms of other perceptual objects.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 9-10. I am also referring to the passage in which Bergson notes: “If we have been able to replace this succession by a juxtaposition, real time by a spatialized time, becoming by the become, it is because we retain becoming, real duration, within us; when the child actually reads a word all at once, he is spelling it virtually letter by letter. Let us not therefore imagine that our three-dimensional curve gives us, as if crystallized together, the motion by which the curve is outlined on the plane and this plane curve itself. It has merely extracted from becoming what is of interest to science, and science can use this extract only because our mind will re-establish the eliminated becoming or will feel able to do so.” Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 106.

indistinguishable from the characters we have ascertained, and so is the river from which the drop was singled out.

We form the object because it serves a purpose. It enables the completion of the act initiated and in the case of a social object, be it a social reform or a cultural convention, this power of the object comes at the price of lessening. From the social event it eliminates what is completely and immediately social, and once this elimination is completed, we shall have no means of knowing whether it refers to a completely social act or not. What we will have is a series of effective objects serving various and, ideally, equally valid purposes.

What we as social psychological observers are capable of observing are - or rather, will become - interactions. We can neither observe nor mediate the transaction in the form of an explanation without transforming it into an interaction. The transaction, whether referring to a completely or incompletely social object, is momentary and unique. It is an immediate and functional present and for others to partake of it mediation is imperative. This is the only sense in which transactions are repeatable. We replace the stimulation with simulation and arm ourselves with an idea of correspondence so that we may accept the simulation to re-present the stimulation truthfully “as it really is” or “the thing in itself”. As argued by Bergson and Mead, having made less of emergent passage in transforming stimulation into simulation, the symbol t remaining will, on the one hand, make repetition possible and so, in subsequence, explanation and prediction. But once this is done we can no longer distinguish the transaction from all those conceivable interactions slipping into the temporal void created whenever we try to make experience of conception, sensation of reflection; i.e., when we simulate the stimulation. Accepting that the observation and explanation transforms social reality, Mead is then not only saying that the mediated or reflected reality is something different than immediate reality. He implies also a disbelief in the correspondence between the two needed for the legitimacy of the scientific report.

I should think we are all acquainted with the difference between the perceptual and the scientific object. It is not a novel proposition to be sure. But whereas one may employ a theory of correspondence in order to forge the one to the other so that one may move between them, one moves in each step in a direction contrary to that which Mead advanced. He advocates no theory of correspondence. He advocates a theory of function. And although these are at odds with one another it does happen that students and scholars claiming conceptual support from Mead fails to recognise this discrepancy. To the extent I am correct in saying this, to the same extent will a return to Mead for a genuinely social psychology become complicated. Nursing a theory of correspondence one will tend to side with the scientist.

In order to grasp the discrepancy, we have done well in paying heed to Mead’s assessment of Einstein’s theory of relativity. For with the acceptance
of a theory of correspondence relativity is invited, whether electromagnetic or otherwise. In the following I shall assess two views, both amenable to produce a social psychological relativity, and argue how they are to be rejected if a return to Mead is to be attempted. Such a rejection must be made in order not to allow for the bifurcation of nature against which Mead’s work was directed. Such a rejection is necessary in order not to confound the sociality of our reflection of the object with the sociality of the object reflected. To equalise these two kinds of sociality will make us prey to the effects of perspective in a bifurcated nature.

When a social psychologist concludes the result of his observation he does so by indicating a certain relationship between the individual and the environment. The significance of this relationship consists of the successful addition of certain dimension to the transaction observed. Now, if he and/or his reader, says “this is but one aspect”, “one perspective” of the object observed, either of the following two ideas has crossed this mind.

i) It is implied that there are a host of other perspectives, just as legitimate as the one suggested in the particular report and therefore that the more of the individual perspective brought forth, the more of social reality (the particular transaction) shall be made explicit. If this notion supports our qualification, we are also suggesting, speaking with Asplund, that a wider angle or a distinct multitude of restricted angles will generate a more valid statement of the transaction. This suggestion, however, falls back upon the disconnection between the individual observer and the object and brings with it the implication of interaction. A relationship, that is to say, between two nodes or members seized by means of an implicit reference system capable of holding and arraying both in an instantaneous gaze. Here the social characters of the object will be identified as the characters relating the one member of this distant system to any other.

To add one aspect or individual perspective to another until we have covered all conceivable angles to the object gives us not the object, but the reflection of our relationship to the object. It constitutes what the Cubists called enumeration of the object, and goes to make what Mead calls an explanation. It does not take the whole situation (or functional present) into account but adds to the object all sorts of virtual or possible vantage points. And each individual perspective added by the observer, each dimension or object(ive) added, will create yet another chimera of interaction hiding the actual transaction by means of their sheer multitude.

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266 I am speaking here of spatial perspectives and to this category the Einsteinian version belongs as well. In Mead’s view, this is the only kind of perspective known to science, pre- as well as post-Einsteinian, the reason being that the spatial perspective is necessary for the completion of the measurements with which explanations are construed. To this end, also time is considered spatially.

267 Apollinaire, G. The Cubist Painters in Aesthetic Meditations. 1913.
There is no number of aspects that together will return the transaction. The enumeration of aspects is not an accumulative operation; they do not support one another. As they are recovered as pasts from all possible and no actual present, they are for all practical reasons innumerable and hence just as void of actual meaning. What is relevant, in Mead’s point of view, is to reach a statement of what is happening during the enumeration and what purpose the enumeration serves, and this is a functional rather than a scientific statement. To understand Mead’s social psychology therefore, we need to move beyond science. And this move is a social psychological one.

ii) It is implied that there are a host of other perspectives just as legitimate as the one suggested in our particular report. It is suggested, furthermore, that these are the makings of our particular ways of observation, i.e., that we construe the object when observing it and that the object is not a given or absolute entity. Each dimension of significance added, transforms the object observed.

The question that must be answered here, it seems to me, is: what is it that is changing? Surely it cannot be a transaction. A transaction manifests itself in a functional present and hence its longevity is terminated as the individual observer reflects upon the reflection (the observation) as such. This would seem to imply yet another emergence and a new locus of reality, a new functional present. To Mead, that is to say, the transaction is always happening, it is change per se or alteration. To expect to build a scientific statement upon such an observation would qualify only as a disqualification of the scientific observation. Considering interaction, on the other hand, we shall find it to answer to the scientific procedure outlined by Mead. The object of interaction changes appearance whenever we take another (individual) look at it; whenever we look upon it from another angle or occasion, whenever we add to it another dimension of significance. And since our dimensions added are of an uncertain, quite possibly infinite number given that it will vary with each new emergent passage as observed by Glassner, our consciousness of it will be an ever-changing one. We shall be able to enumerate a series of observations of the object and never be able to find two identical ones unless we are assuming that the object observed remains unchanged. Unless, that is to say, the object abides regardless of passage at our manipulatory disposal and gives rise to all these effects of interaction; an essence, as it were. We have already assumed, immediately that is, an object against which we are able to identify passage. This second view or tendency to respond is then little more than a mirror image of the former.

In the first tendency to respond (i) we imply that our perspective changes, in the second (ii) we say that our subject matter changes as a social (f)act. Both views suffer from the same confusion in that they pose two concepts of sociality as one. In the first view we assume that we are able to explain the transaction by way of interacting with it, in the second case we assume that
we are able to explain the transaction by way of emerging in another trans-
action. This difficulty in maintaining the differences in kind reflects an
inadequate use of Mead’s social psychology in science.

When we are saying that all that we are capable of doing as (social
psychological) scientists is to offer interactions as explanations to trans-
actions, we shall also have to submit, accepting Mead’s assessment of
relativity, that these explanations are as legitimate or meaningful as the
spatio-temporal set of characters observed by the physicist. For each new
time obtained for each new speed attributed to the system in motion, so shall
the social scientist obtain a new interaction for each new dimension added to
it, be it social class, gender, ethnicity, age, attitudes or personality traits.
These effects or chimeras of the individual perspective are the more of
reality we shall have by initially having made less of reality; when having
dis/connected the individual and the environment in order to complete the
reflective role-taking necessary for the explanation. And once having
appeared or emerged in our incompletely social consciousness, these virtual
realities will mix alongside with the actual since both kinds of sociality are
stated in terms of an interaction.

Let me repeat the point made in the above. Once we have disconnected
the individual from its environment by sequentially taking the roles of the
individuals involved and thus made less of the transaction, we may put them
together by adding any particular dimension we see fit and so render the
definite interaction whatever significance we see fit. Thus, once having
made less by way of disconnection we will make more when, in adding a
particular dimension, connecting them in order to simulate their unity. And
when we have made this connection we shall have no means by which to
distinguish these virtual interactions from the actual transaction. The act is
now indicated by a simple and yet composite expression: “a relationship
between the individual and the environment”.

Having come this far, let us test this reasoning by applying it to the
ambiguity from which this text started out. In doing so, not only will this
reading of Mead be confronted with a problem and show its worth, it will
also bring closure to the conceptual act having emerged in this text. Indeed,
let us find out whether the indefinite object of a binocular experience can be
made distinct enough to enable a significant statement within the framework
of Asplund’s social psychology. Having done as much, we shall move on to
Farr’s idea of a genuinely social psychology based on Mead.
5.2 Approximating the Social Consciousness of Social Psychology

In this case social psychology would neither be about society with the exception of the individual, nor about the individual with the exception of society, but the relationship between society and the individual. I have sometimes spoken of the dash between society and the individual. Another pair of concepts we might introduce here, although unfortunately poorly understood and frequently misused, is Mead's me/I. If we take this pair and impose it across the society/individual pair we create a cross and it is at the intersection of this cross that I would like to place social psychology. Ideally, I would like to see it as a circular movement, allowing us to move from society to the individual, from me to I and back again in our observations and speculations - in an ever deepening spiral. In these dialectical relations it is neither certain nor even likely that we might find anything of interest between me and I at the initial circle level, since this would only become apparent after many circles within the structure.

Incidentally, I overlooked something when stating my argument, namely, that there is at least one further condition for social psychology and that is that it has to be about something tangible. [translation mine] 268

While introducing the argument of this text, I advanced an ambiguity attaching to Asplund’s distinction between ocular and binocular perception. And as I am now about to conclude this investigation, it would seem appropriate to return to Asplund’s distinction and frame the conclusions to be made regarding Mead’s social psychology, his view on science and the matter of their compatibility.

Let me begin by pointing out how Mead’s concept of sociality and its two dimensions relate to Asplund’s distinction between ocular and binocular modes of experience?

Mead: “A system can conceivably be taken at an instant, and the social character of the individual member would in that instant be what it is because of the mutual relationships of all members.” 269

Asplund: “In this way one perceives the individual in isolation and society in isolation, and perhaps one will come to observe society as the ‘form’ and the individual as the ‘content’.” [translation mine] 270

To be distinguished from:

269 Mead, G. H. *Philosophy of the Present*. p. 77.
270 Asplund, J *Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv*. p. 93.
Mead: “On the other hand, an object can be a member of two divergent systems only in passage, in which its nature in one system leads to the transformation with its passing into another system carries with it. In the passage itself it can be in both.”

Asplund: “One could also attempt to establish a binocular perspective. If we look with both eyes simultaneously we should be able to perceive individuals and society as a vital unit, as an organism, if you will. If one’s perspective is sufficiently wide we would no longer see a number of component parts, which are more or less temporarily put together; rather, we would see the whole – life, the system, the organism. The events and actions we observe are not events of component parts or actions performed by the component parts. They are events within the whole and actions performed by the whole.”

If we conceive the social psychological object in terms of a system (of stimuli and responses) and if we furthermore assume that the individual observer is located at a certain distance from this complex object or system, we shall find it to take on the features of a thing seen in a spatial perspective. We shall have a situation in which the object observed would change its appearance as this relationship changes. The individual observer about to characterise the object will find it invariant or identical with itself. We shall accredit this experiential phenomenon to the fact that the object observed is approached from the “outside” made possible by his reflective role-taking of the object. As the object changes during observation, that is to say, this is not to be attributed to a change occurring in the object qua object, but as reflecting a change in the relative positions of self and object. This social act observed, as illustrated by Asplund in his reference to the observations of Tepoztlán will be stated in terms of its “surface” characters. In this sense the object is a chimera; a hypothetical arrest of emergent passage making for the control of the act to which the observation belongs. Eliminating the act eliminates the emergent passage of the object and renders

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272 Asplund, J. *Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv*. p. 93.
273 There are three principal ways in which this relationship can be conceived as changing. i) The observer moves and the object is at rest, making for change in the sense that we see the object in a succession of angles. ii) The object moves, as we observe it from a system at rest, rendering the object in a succession of angles. iii) The third possibility for a change in the relationship is created as both systems are moving. As noted earlier, to offer a representation of both systems as if in completely reciprocal motion we shall, as we are dealing with one observer alone, have to switch between systems occupied sequentially and superimpose the observations obtained as a measure to animate the reflection or create the illusion of a motion picture. iv) The fourth alternative of both systems being at rest is ruled out since here we are discussing only change in relationships. If both were at rest the individual would have no possibility of ever observing any change of appearance. In such a case, we would have an “eternal” or instantaneous reality. Needless to say, without change there would be no need for explanations.
the object the characters of a past. As such it is available to experience only by way of symbolic manipulation.

Even if the individual observer were to distinguish between different characters conferred upon the object, as in subdividing or disconnecting it during reflective role-taking, he shall nevertheless find that the changes of appearance are due to variation or changing positions rather than alteration. The disconnection between the individual observer and the object resulting from turning emergent passage bare erases the possibility of discerning these two kinds of change. If the individual observer feels able to do so, it is because he has already determined the object as so and so constituted; i.e., because he knows the object immediately and before the act in which the present observation occurs. He has already and immediately assumed and applied a dimension of significance and abstains from the capacity of distinguishing the two kinds of change from one another in order to explain the object being there. The observation now taking place is one of degrees, proceeding upon the composite social consciousness of social interaction.

This observation, this distant experience of the object, is reminiscent of the way in which Asplund conceives of theories. In setting the objective of this text, I noted Asplund’s suggestion that theories resemble the (varying) distances from which we perceive a thing. We were told that depending upon the distance between self and object, particulars and wholes would appear accordingly. We find that by distancing ourselves from the object, we shall sooner or later find it a whole. “If one’s perspective is sufficiently wide […] we would see the whole – life, the system, the organism”.[274] If we increase our distance distance, if we take "a step back", we shall "obtain the whole picture".[275] We shall observe the object binocularly. Conversely, by diminishing distance to the object we shall be able to see its particulars, “a number of component parts, which are more or less temporarily put together”.[276] We shall observe the object ocularly.

This line of reasoning follows from the spatial articulation of Asplund’s distinction. Employing the temporal articulation indicated by Asplund in the same paragraph, we shall conclude differently. We shall find that distance per se between the individual observer and the object makes the observation ocular. Conversely, it is only if the observer is allowed to merge with the object, acting upon complete reciprocity and negating distance, that there will be a binocular experience of the object. Here it is only in e- or unmerging from the object, by reflecting (upon) it, that we shall discover a distance, a disconnection of individual and environment.

If, with the aid of Bergson, we were to translate this interpretation back into the distinction between incomplete and complete sociality of con-

When we are seated on the bank of a river, the flowing of the water, the gliding of a boat or the flight of a bird, the ceaseless murmur in our life’s deeps are for us three separate things or only one, as we choose. We can interiorize the whole, dealing with a single perception that carries along the three flows, mingled, in its course; or we can leave the first two outside and then divide our attention between the inner and the outer; or better yet, we can do both at one and the same time, our attention uniting and yet differentiating the three flows, thanks to its singular privilege of being one and several. Such is our primary idea of simultaneity. We therefore call two external flows that occupy the same duration “simultaneous” because they both depend upon the duration of a like third, our own: this duration is ours only when our consciousness is concerned with us alone, but it becomes equally theirs when our attention embraces the three flows in a single indivisible act.  

I believe that the ambiguity is resolved once we treat the distinction as one between different kinds of experience, hereby recognizing that they are of different orders. More precisely, they refer to two different kinds of temporal perspectives: before and after the e- or unmergence of the individual self and the individual object. Having asserted as much, let me now question for the characteristics of an observation conducted with one pair of eyes and the significance of one involving two. Let me begin by making the following suggestions: firstly, when Asplund characterises the ocular mode of perception, he suggests that in this mode one sees either individuals or society. Let me put forth the suggestion that in this mode I see only an object, whether made complex by subdividing it into a disconnection or not. What characters are there, are there in the name of this object and this object alone. Secondly, when Asplund characterises the binocular mode of perception, he suggests that in this mode, one sees neither individuals nor society but both simultaneously. Let me put forth the suggestion that in this mode I see both an object and a me. What characters are there, are there in the name of the actual perspective in which they emerge. Thus, in order to determine the characters of the one object, it is necessary to determine also the characters of the other.

I am alluding here to the characters used by Mead in distinguishing between acts in the respective attitudes of immediate and reflective consciousness, implying that Asplund reformulates Mead’s distinction between immediate and reflective attitudes in the act. The act itself has been eliminated from Asplund’s account though. The ocular experience is significantly the conferring of characters to the object (whether this selected

277 Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 36.
environment be deemed to refer to a physical thing, another individual or the consentient set or a system called society) and, conversely, the binocular experience is significantly the conferring of characters present in experience to both the object and subject of the act; the observer and the observed. In other words: the conception of binocular experience is rendered intelligible as the explanatory phase of the act in which the individual mind holds both the attitude of self and object while betwixt the e- or unmerging systems. Thus, the binocular experience signifies the immediately social consciousness of role-taking.

But still, how can it be that Asplund characterises binocular experience as the non-differentiating kind of consciousness? How is it that he, accepting this interpretation, attaches it to the reflective phase of the act?

If we with Mead suppose that completion of acts relies on the successful manipulation/communication of an incompletely/completely social object, we suppose that the completion expresses a mutual adjustment between individual and environment. If the object is unknown to us, we sense this as a lack of definite response, as confusion as to how to act, and we reflect ourselves in the object in order to achieve a definite response. We explain the object, as it were, by distributing the characters in the actual perspective between object and self. Now, the temporal characterisation of the binocular experience was argued to suggest an absence of differentiation between the individual observer and the observed; an indistinct multitude from which past and future, self and object, e- or unmerges. It was characterised as the absence of a sequential consciousness moving from one object to another, leaving but a consciousness in which no-objects are simply all there. Asplund might therefore be considered to be advancing two different characters of the binocular experience: i) a consciousness here referred to as a reflective attitude, attending the self and object qua self and object emerging in the act and ii) a consciousness not differentiating between self and object.

Needless to say, these statements seem to contradict one another. How are we to understand a reflective attitude as not differentiating between objects? Is this differentiation not the very functioning of the reflective social

278 I am here referring to Mead’s characterisation of the immediately social consciousness: “In an experience in which there are no physical objects and there is no motion, there will be not only this passage of nature which covers all events, but also events with such varying temporal dimensions that the spatial structure of the events that succeed them will be continually different, with corresponding differences in the sensuous characters that occupy the events. These differences will be registered in this experience not as differences, i.e., there will be no comparisons, but as the events which make up what we call the bodily life of the animal and the feels which occupy them. In such an experience there will be no consentient set, for this implies an identity of spatial structure over against passage and a comparison with the changing order consequent upon the varying temporal dimensions of certain events. Nor will there by any crystallization of characters into objects.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Act. p. 333
consciousness, of the dialectical alternation of attention? Quite so. And not distinguishing between these two statements as of different kinds, we are likely to repeat the psychological fallacy in social psychology.

The fallacy that arises when this is done is virtually the psychological or historical fallacy. A set of considerations which hold good only because of a completed process, is read into the content of the process which conditions this completed result. A state of things characterizing an outcome is regarded as a true description of the events which led up to this outcome; when, as a matter of fact, if this outcome had already been in existence, there would have been no necessity for the process.279

There is not merely a differentiation to be made between individual and environment on condition of a reflective social consciousness. There is also a differentiation between the social reality of the object and the social verification of the reality of the object to be taken into the account. Not doing so, we shall have a statement suggesting that what is found - what has been completed or having become in the act - was there also in the process of its becoming or emergence. Reformulating this warning into Mead’s terminology, we say that what has been found as being there will be read back into its immediate becoming or emergence. And as far we are dealing with social objects, we shall find that whenever there is one self there is also another. This reciprocity characterises what is there in the reflective attitude of either self. But this does not hold for the e- or unmergence of these individual objects. We are able to distinguish the reality of these selves because we have emerged with, or unmerged from, each other. This differentiation betokens the completion of the reflection whereby we have emerged as selves. It betokens the real change or alteration from a real before to a real after within the functional present. Thus, the sociality of the object observed cannot be equated or treated as on par with the sociality of the consciousness to which the individual observation belongs.

This sounds trivial enough, but the thing is that these two temporal perspectives are both present in the experience of the individual observer and insofar they are confounded, they bring about an equalisation of the social transaction immediately reflected with the interaction of which we are reflectively conscious as immediately there in consciousness.280 If confounded, we tend to feel able to do so justly. But this is so only because we have

279 Dewey, J. The Reflex Arc Concept is Psychology in Psychological Review 3 (1896). p. 367. The Bergsonian proposition I am making here with respect to Mead and the notion of a scientific social psychology is reminiscent of this argument. Or rather, Dewey’s argument echoes the argument directed against Psychophysics by Bergson in Time and Free Will some ten years earlier (and re-directed against Becquerel in Duration and Simultaneity).

280 I am here referring to the distinction made by Mead between the two aspects of consciousness in terms of consciousness and consciousness of noted earlier (see 2.2 Indicating the Physical Object). See also Mead, G. H. in Philosophy of the Present. p. 4-5.
What I am saying is that the social process of explanation is immediate until or unless it fails to accomplish the completion of the act to which it belongs. This is the “subjective” aspect of (scientific) explanation in which objects and observers become “objective”; which is to say distinctly and significantly individual. It is the aspect of the act that has been called the I.281 Without this aspect nothing would prevent the individual re-presentation or reflection of an object from simultaneously reflecting this reflection. These are two different responses inasmuch they refer to two different objects. And, as noted repeatedly in the chapter on Mead (see 2. The Act), reflection occurs on condition that there is a failure in the manipulation (and communication per analogy). What has not been subjected to a test cannot fail. It remains a hypothesis in the inhibited act and as such it is immediate until the explanation fails. Only then, in the temporal perspective of “after”, can the manipulation itself be the object of reflection. This is, quintessentially, how a confounding of the concept of time confounds also the concept of sociality.

Confounding the immediate and reflective aspects of the social consciousness of the social object, therefore, we shall be unable to resolve the paradox formulated by Asplund. To manage this, we need to understand the temporal relationship between the distinctions of I-me and individual-society. Incidentally, according to Asplund’s suggestion in the above epigraph, this is also to think in significantly social psychological terms.

In the temporal articulation of Asplund’s binocular experience, no contradictory terms and hence no paradox will emerge. It takes rather a form enhancing the immediate aspect of the social consciousness of reflection. Thus understood, the binocular experience refers to the emerging explanation per se, unless it fails to attain significance and control of the act. Speaking with Joas, Asplund might be interpreted as isolating, wittingly or not, the scientific subjectivity constructing the objective explanation in real time.282 Temporally articulated then, the binocular experience signifies the experience in which the scientist occupies both the system of the object and that of “himself” in the emergent passage of an actual perspective (in a functional present). The binocular experience supplies the background against which the explanation determines the characters of the object being immediately there.

There is a line of reasoning in Asplund’s Det sociala livets elementära former that might help to illustrate this point. We have already seen that

Asplund dates social psychology to the moment when the individual i) emerged as a separate and ii) problematical phenomenon. It is assumed, that is to say, that the individual object appeared when adding a multitude of dimensions to behavior and isolating the characters common to these individual perspectives.

In the first criteria, the systems used in anchoring the individual perspectives or significant dimensions are those of “home” and “work” and the characters common to both go to make the individual object. Thus the individual emerges as a set of social characters in the intersection of these systems. In the latter criteria, Asplund is hinting at the abstract nature of this individual. The individual, that is to say, is conceptualised as a set of definite characters remaining having eliminated significant dimensions of society indicated as “home” and “work”. As such, this procedure enabled the social psychologist to answer the question: “what is the individual like, stripped from a particular society?”.

Abstract sociality - and thereby the idea of man as an abstract social being - is meanwhile a historically new phenomenon. In pre-industrial society there appears to have been no concept of a ‘pure’ sociality, in other words, that which remains when the specific political, legal, economic and religious aspects have in some way been subtracted. Beneath this conceptual gap there is an actual or empirical gap: the pre-industrial person, ‘the peasantry’, were quite simply not abstract social beings. Social psychology studies such behaviour ‘which occurs in the presence of others’. This is a minimal definition which can be found for instance in Allport (1968) and Zajonc (1965), and here it is abstract sociality which is referred to. Observe how abstract this sociality is. It does not matter – or it may not matter – where the test people come from (city, village or farmstead), their names (or what family line they belong to), what gods they worship or do not worship, whether they are Jewish or Christians, Greeks or Barbarians... They are presumed to be completely alike, like cloned samples of the abstract social being. [translation mine]

The point is that the emergence of these characters cannot occur with less than a consciousness in which the object of the individual is already and immediately there. And conversely, the individual being stripped of these characters cannot be stripped unless the characters are immediately there to be stripped. Thus, there are both immediate and reflective aspects to the social consciousness reflecting an object. But while the reflection is conditioned by a problem, the immediate thereness of the object is not. It is there as the experiential background against which reflection and explanation occur.

Probing the argument made by Mead, using Dewey’s and Bergson’s temporal sensitivity, I think one will find that what remains consists rather of

what actually emerges (in the reflective experience or consciousness of the social psychologist). That is to say, what the social psychological observer will find to be the characters of the individual, having reflectively subtracted dimensions associated with the idea of society, are those that emerge in the explanation to which end this ideation or symbolic manipulation is directed. In yet another formulation, the characters of the object will be the characters remaining having subtracted those depending upon the dimensions immediately added by the individual observer. (And the greater the number of dimensions added, the more abstract the object of the individual will seem once having completed the explanation.)

Having now resolved the paradox of the binocular experience, I shall move on to the reality to the social object of Montaillou and Tepoztlán.

5.3 The Villages Revisited

Consciousness is both the difference which arises in the environment because of its relation to the organism in its organic process of adjustment, and also the difference in the organism because of the change which has taken place in the environment. We refer to the first as meaning, and to the second as ideation.284

In connection to Asplund’s discussion of Lewis’ and Redfield’s observations of Tepoztlán, I fixed attention upon the acquisition of “truth” upon which Asplund touched in terms of a dialectical alternation. Now returning to this example, it is my intention to bring form to the point made in the above regarding the scientific implications of accepting an e- or unmerging social consciousness on behalf of the individual observer. What I will do, specifically, is to bring the two villages somewhat closer to one another and argue that what was typical for the consciousness of the Montaillou member is not necessarily less so for that of Tepoztlán.

Addressing the studies of Tepoztlán, Asplund proposed that this object had not changed in the interval between Lewis’ and Redfield’s observations. Rather the change suggested by the diversity of their results was considered to pertain to the individual perspectives enacted by the scientists in question. The truth, the significant meaning of the object, of Tepoztlán is to be obtained not in choosing the one observation over and against the other, but in comprehending their relationship.

The truth about Tepoztlán, if such a thing exists, can be attained by superimposing Lewis’ picture onto Redfield’s picture, whereupon we can see a Gemeinschaft within a Gesellschaft and vice versa. Such an image need not

284 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p 4.
be especially well made – but is probably unusually well composed in this case. Redfield and Lewis were studying the same society and reached diametrically opposed results. The truth that emerges when the images are superimposed does not lie in the combination of the images, but lies equally as much in the interchange between them. [translation mine]²⁸⁵

As in the case of the distinction, or rather twin-concept, of ocular and binocular experiences, I find Asplund to open up for two different modes of interpretation of this dialectical alternation. The question from which they stem is how the reality of the object is to be realised and verified. The one mode is that of thought; which is here to say symbolic manipulation, the other that of dialogue or actual communication.²⁸⁶ Thus, either we alternate between the two ocular or individual perspectives of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft in a reflective and incompletely social consciousness and find what is common to both or, in the latter alternative, between two ocular or individual perspectives of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft in a reflective and completely social consciousness and find what is common to both.

In both procedures, thought and dialogue, the significance achieved signifies the reality of the object. However, as long as we confine our concept of sociality to one requiring but a half reciprocity, as stipulated by the individuality of a sequential role-taking or incompletely social consciousness of thought, we shall have no means of distinguishing the actual act of Tepoztlán among the multitude of virtual (f)acts of Tepoztlán. The object(ive) added to the village in order to contrive significance will mask the actual village in the incompletely social or individual consciousness of the observer. Admittedly, the dimensions of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft have the advantage vis-à-vis other, non-dichotomous dimensions; there are but two object(ive)s with which to unravel the reality of the act observed. The dimensions of the dichotomy differ from other sets of dimensions or object(ive)s in that the reality of the act observed is indicated by their alternation. But this matters little, considering that this particular dialectical alternation has no end. It is a symbolic loop producing an infinite series of conceptual object(ive)s. It is, according to Mead, only when communicating

²⁸⁵ Asplund, J. Gemeinschaft och Gesellschaft. p. 46.
²⁸⁶ The significant dimensions of Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft are two individual and reciprocal perspectives. They exclude one another, yet they imply one another. Thus, had Asplund attempted to illustrate how Redfield was to co-ordinate them, beyond bringing in contention a dialectical alternation, I take it he would illustrate it in terms of an emergent and in itself immediate passage (between these experiences), suggesting the immediate character of the binocular experience necessary to the comprehension of the correlatively of these ocular and individual reflections of the object. Thus, while Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are individual and reciprocal perspectives, ocular and binocular experiences are not. Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are two ocular or individual perspectives and as such they cannot be operated simultaneously unless in dialectical alternation or, speaking with Mead, in a functional present. They are, proceeding in this Meadian interpretation of Asplund, of a specious or non-functional order. The reciprocity of these ocular perspectives can be understood only in terms offered by a binocular experience articulated as an immediately social consciousness.
the object that it will become actual and allow its reality to be(come) realised. It is only when communicating the actual object that its “truth” becomes distinguishable from the hypotheses obtained at the experiential distance of symbolic manipulation or thought.

Thus, in order for the object to be properly understood it is necessary to take into account the whole situation in which it appears or emerges. Not doing so, all we shall find is the virtual or symbolic reality of objects not yet put to the test of communication. What we shall have is the manipulatory calculus of various object(ive)s obtained by a singularly real observer redistributing his self.

Confined to construe significance on his own accord, having left the act outside the statement of the object, brings with it the abstraction of emergent passage into the geometry of bare passage; an instantaneous and eternal space in which no “before” and “after” will grant the individual observer the means by which to distinguish between the incompletely and completely social characters of the object. It is only after having communicated the object that the individual observer may distinguish between the virtual fact of Tepoztlán and the actual act of Tepoztlán. The truth of Tepoztlán lies in the combination and in the dialectical alternation between them, but this truth is yet unqualified. Are there in Lewis’ and Redfield’s observations one or at least two individual observers? Is there an incompletely or completely social consciousness realizing the object(ive) of Tepoztlán?

From a Meadian point of view, then, the reason for this ambiguity regarding the truth of the social object of Tepoztlán lies in what appears a reluctance to bring the act into the statement of the object. Thus, what attracts Asplund’s interest is not the complete reciprocity between the individual observer of Tepoztlán and Tepoztlán, but rather the particular ways in which the individual observer is reflected in Tepoztlán. In fact, he might be said to illustrate the more of reality appearing in the experience of the individual observers while unable to indicate the reflection of the incompletely social perspective in which the object appears.287

Doing so, Asplund leaves out what from a Meadian point of view is crucial: the verification of the object’s reality. And the reality of a completely social object is verified only by means of communication. Symbolic manipulation will not do. In the case of Tepoztlán, the test and realisation of the social reality of the object coincide in transactional communication of the completely social object. How would Lewis and Redfield verify the reality of their hypotheses if not communicating with Tepoztlán? Observation under the assumption of a half concept of reciprocity will make these individual

287 I am not saying that this inability is a shortcoming of an ideal. What I am saying is that this composite (of interaction and transaction) is a necessary feature of all observation and this remains a shortcoming only insofar we, unwittingly, hold on to a half reciprocity or, speaking less with Bergson and more with Mead, if we act immediately on an incompletely social object(ive).
observers “feel able to” do without communication, but that they do not becomes apparent in the puzzling picture following upon superimposing their results.

Thus, if Tepoztlán had been allowed to respond to either picture or both, a dialogical mediation and social verification had been possible and admitting for the fact that act and object are inseparable and, as Dewey put it, correlative. To assume that the one emerges, or is completed, before or independently of the other is to proceed upon a half concept of reciprocity and bring the psychological fallacy into social psychology.

Consciousness is social, using Mead’s minimal definition, in that it has “the capacity of being several things at once”. In my argument I have taken this statement a step further and stressed its immediate and reflective aspects. For without this distinction we cannot grasp the full meaning of this minimal distinction. In this attempt, I have articulated the capacity of the social consciousness, qua mind, to pass between the reference systems of the individual and its environment or, speaking from the point of view of the individual qua individual, between self and object. Stated with the aid provided by the above epigraph, immediate social consciousness is the change signifying the emergence of the object (or meaning) while reflective social consciousness, on the other hand, is the change signifying the significance of this immediate object. It is, as noted, the consciousness of consciousness in which appears the difference between self and object. Once this differentiation is made, we understand how it is possible that an individual can be viewed as both self and object or, speaking from the point of view of the act, that the environment of an individual is not something apart from the individual. Rather the individual and the environment are the two aspects of an actual perspective.

Returning to the picture of social psychology offered earlier (see 5.2 Approximating the Social Consciousness of Social Psychology), Asplund stipulates that I-me and individual-society as the differences with which social psychology is concerned. This basic analytical form is similar to that used by Mead. There is only one significant difference. Rather than emphasising the differentiation between individual and society, Mead stresses the more elementary difference between individual and environment. An environment may compose of both social and physical objects, as it were.

Now, as has been shown here, these are the differences with which Mead develops his functional social psychology. It is by grasping the relationship between these differences that we become capable of grasping consciousness as an e- or unmergence of nature or, even more rhetorically, as the most elementary of social changes. Distinguishing the one kind from the other, we set our arguments in such a fashion that will disclose their

288 Bergson, H. Duration and Simultaneity. p. 106.
289 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 49.
distinction, their e- or unmergence. And this setting is “the whole situation”; the temporal and actual perspective in which the observer and the environment appear as individual objects.

Asplund alludes to this temporality of the act(ual perspective) to which the scientific observation belongs when referring to “dialectical alternation” in connection to Tepoztlán, although implying but the incompletely social consciousness of Lewis and Redfield respectively. Nevertheless, applying this notion of dialectical alternation upon his “social psychological cross” will help us to grasp the e- or unmergence of Mead’s social consciousness. In fact, it makes us see with greater clarity the importance of recognizing the two dimensions of sociality and the temporal articulation of the social consciousness with which these dimensions are discerned.

Let me begin by making the following suggestion: the difference between immediate (I) and reflective (me) attitudes and that between individual and environment emerge as the elementary aspects of a problem arresting the passage of the actual perspective. I shall refer to the first difference as the dimension of individual consciousness and the latter as the dimension of action. Together they describe “the whole situation” or the actual perspective of individual observation.

![Figure 3. The “whole situation” of observation. The problem and the dimensions of social consciousness and action.](image)

When does a problem appear to the individual? When the immediate object has disintegrated, presenting to the individual a multitude of responses obstructing the act and calling forth reflection with which to furnish an object to control its completion. And whereas the object is reciprocal with the self, we cannot indicate the object constituting the experiential environment of the individual without indicating also the individual self. As noted earlier (see 2.2 Indicating the Physical Object), the self emerges simultaneously with the object qua object as the habitat of the characters abstracted from the immediate object in the course of reflection. The rationale upon which the individual proceeds here, as indicated in the section mentioned, takes the form of a deduction: whatever are not the characters of the object must be characters conferred upon the object by the self.

Now, these two objects enter the dimension of individual and environment underscoring the other dimension of difference, which is to say the passage from an immediate to a reflective attitude in which these two
individual objects emerge as the (definite) characters of *individual* and *environment*.

The function of this reflection of the individual self in the environmental object and the environmental object in the individual self is to establish a common perspective or a “generalised other”. Once the individual manages to set up a perspective encompassing both individual perspectives a set of experiential characters common to both is indicated. In this fashion the individual co-ordinates the characters obtained in each individual perspective in order that the one does not contradict the other. Indicating the object from the perspective of this generalised other, the individual observer may reach a general statement of the object acceptable to, or in which the object is responded to in a similar fashion, by any other individual observer.

![Figure 4. The “whole situation” of observation. Temporal aspects.](image1)

Moreover, we shall have to distinguish between two temporal aspects of the act: i) the phase during which the individual observer completes the immediate test of the object’s reality and ii) the phase during which to assess the test of the hypothesis achieved after the initial failure. Thus there are two temporal perspectives to be added to the social consciousness of the individual observer: the object before and after having attempted to verify its reality.

![Figure 5. The “whole situation” of observation. Self and object.](image2)

It is only after the problem has occurred that reflection may occur, for without a problem there is no multitude of responses to arrest the passage of the actual perspective. Without an arrest of passage, that is to say, the individual observer will have no means by which to conduct a prospective manipulation.
of the object that, in turn, will yield definite characters to be tested. And sub-
sequent to this anticipatory manipulation, a retrospective or assessing manip-
ulation of the object will have to be undertaken in order to determine the
characters withstanding the test. Having completed these two manipulations,
the individual observer has ascertained characters consistent with both
distant and manipulatory experiences. And with these characters he may
afford the explanation or significance of the object.

It should be pointed out that from the temporal perspective of the retro-
spective manipulation the initial and prospective manipulation is immediate.
Because if this manipulation fails or becomes problematical per se, it will be
reflected (upon) as proceeding upon characters assumed tacitly (and wrong-
ly). From the temporal perspective of a “before”, on the other hand, there
will, insofar as the test is successful, be no immediately assumed characters,
no immediate projection of self into the object since such characters can only
be indicated once the test has failed.

This suggests that there will necessarily be two roles taken in order that
the individual observer may explain or make significant this environmental
object(ive) apart from the initial and immediate role-taking that lead up to
the problem in the first place: one immediate and prospective and one re-
flexive and retrospective. In a case where the test is successful, the retro-
spective manipulation confirms the characters assumed in the prospective
manipulation and these will then serve the explanation of the object. In case
the test fails, the individual observer reflects (upon) the prospective mani-
pulation in order to set up new characters to be tested in yet another manipu-
lation. He questions or makes problematic the prospective object; i.e., he re-
defines the problem in order to reconstruct the object. We may also say that
he conducts experiments in attempting to ascertain correlating characters.

We find then that there are two temporal aspects or phases of self and
object respectively. The self and the object will both have a “before” and an
“after” since both are involved in an emergent passage, as such attesting to
“the whole situation” of scientific behavior.

Figure 6. The “whole situation” of observation. Immediate and reflective aspects of
self and object.
We find, due to the temporality of the actual perspective, that the individual observer will be differently characterised depending upon which temporal perspective is adopted. Significantly, the individual observer will appear as both I and me, depending upon whether we look at him as reciprocal with the immediate or the reflective aspect of the object to be explained. As a consequence thereof, we should acknowledge also that the problem is now another, answering to the object having been reflected upon and (to be) tested as such. We draw now therefore a diagonal line crossing the initial problem, signifying this new e- or unmergence of difference.

There appears then a new intersection, a new “cross”, within the original one. This time in terms of differences between two aspects of the individual observer; the immediate I and the reflective me, and of the object, implying the immediate and the reflective scientific object respectively. In doing so, we recognise that the social object to take on different characters depending upon whether we regard the experience in which it appears as immediate or reflective. Thus, regardless of the dimension emphasised in grasping “the whole situation”, the social object is characterised elementarily as either an immediate or reflective experience. In the dimension of action, there will be either an indistinct or distinct difference between individual and environment, whereas in the dimension of the individual consciousness there will be an indistinct or distinct difference between self and object. Consequently, if we were to identify the object in question as a social act observed, we shall find two different kinds of social objects: interactions and transactions respectively.

Let us consider the sociality of (the object of) Tepoztlán and the differences or meanings of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft distinguished by Asplund. In the view of Redfield’s observation the object was characterised as a Gesellschaft: it had the aspect of a distinct multitude of individual selves, each defined as one whose act is controlled by an equally individual object(ive). What co-operation there was, was one of interests intersecting and of incidental consequence. This was a community of individuals whose social acts were co-incidental and that brought with it no implication of control or significance beyond contingency. This was a community whose social characters were the sum of its individual members. There was no object(ive) in reference to which the selves emerged as correlative. This was an individual order - an incompletely social order.

The original observation conducted by Lewis, on the other hand, Asplund characterises as the representation of a Gemeinschaft: it had the aspect of an indistinct multitude of completely social selves, all emerging in co-operative acts anything but co-incidental to Tepoztlán. Rather one is given the impression that there were no individuals apart from the inclusive social act of the community as such. This was a community whose social characters were not the sum of individual members. There was an object(ive) in
reference to which the selves emerged as correlative. This was a social order - a completely social order.

Now, the former picture, that of Gesellschaft, is inconceivable without the reflective and sequential role-taking of an individual observer. And so is the latter picture. What makes for their distinction is not the reflection of the social transaction per se, but the concept of reciprocity with which the sociality of the characters (of the individual members of the object) is indicated by the individual observer. Both pictures emerge in a symbolic manipulation of the social object of Tepoztlán. These pictures, these ocular perspectives, emerge in an incompletely social act completed by the individual observer. That the individual observer depicting the picture of a Gemeinschaft recognises the significance of complete sociality does not carry with it the implication that the act to which this statement belongs is an act completed irrespective of the members of Tepoztlán. Lewis’ and Redfield’s individual acts are both controlled by an object(ive) different from that of Tepoztlán. When Lewis and Redfield tested the reality of their objects, they both did so by interacting symbolically with the object of Tepoztlán. They did not transact with, and hence did not emerge with, the act of Tepoztlán. They manipulated rather than communicated (with the members of) Tepoztlán, as evidenced by the fact that their respective acts were controlled by an object(ive) with which emerged the distinctly individual self of a social psychological scientist. And as such, they run the risk of confounding the reflective object with the act reflected and so bring more reality about than was the observer’s object(ive), as evidenced by the fact that their respective acts were controlled by an object(ive) different from that of Tepoztlán.

Tepoztlán may appear as undifferentiated as Montaillou - as may indeed the experience of the individual observer in which these differences emerge. The absence of difference is not primarily a matter of history, but of time.

5.4 What About a Scientific Social Psychology of the Act?

What has happened in all of these instances, from the most universal to the most particular, is that the rejected perspective fails to agree with that common perspective which the individual finds himself occupying as a member of the community of minds, which is constitutive of his self. This is not a case of the surrender to a vote of the majority, but the development of another self through its intercourse with others and hence with himself. What I am suggesting is that this process, […] in which new common minds and new common perspectives arise, is an instance of the organization of perspectives in nature, of the creative advance of nature.290

We become conscious of motion and rest as well as common and individual perspectives as we pass between the reference systems having emerged with the obstruction or resistance to action. As we differentiate between systems in motion and at rest and manage to switch between them in a premeditated manner, so we may switch between the common and the individual, between the objective and the subjective. These possibilities emerge with the exercise of social consciousness in the complicated act. And as we manage to procure intelligibility as to the correlativity of the individual aspects of the actual perspective we realise sociality in its highest form. We manage to occupy any conceivable role, any conceivable position in the universe. And with every new significant dimension added to it, nature will if not alter so at least vary with itself. This is what modern physics in Mead’s view has dramatised so vividly. By abstracting from the perceptual object more and more of the characters conferred upon it by the individual observer it now seems that there are no individuals left in, even less necessary to, the object of nature. The mind with which the meaning of nature has been made significant appears to have been taken out of nature.

In the final Meadian analysis, the individual observer and his environment emerge in the immediate and social passage of the functional present. To be able to conceptualise individual and environment as distinct or individual objects, to be able to differentiate between these systems and so conceive their simultaneity, the individual organism has to mediate itself as if a part of any environment. But this is secondary to the point being made. The point is that Mead’s social psychological analysis is not a scientific one. It is a functionalist one, a meta-scientific one. In fact, from Mead’s point of view a social psychological science is the result of a slip of thought - a misuse of categories induced by a composite concept of sociality. In order that there will be a scientific explanation the individual observer must be assumed as if situated both everywhere and now(-)here. In terms of a passing mind, by way of his social consciousness, he can be so situated betwixt individual perspectives, and in order for him to comprehend what this passing mind is able to fixate in observation, he reads his immediate sociality into the interaction reflecting the transaction.

The scientist need not bother with this bifurcation of nature. It is a purely social psychological concern. The scientist is interested in getting results, i.e., general, or non-individual, statements of the conditions under which the particular object appears. The social psychologist returning to Mead, on the other hand, does bother with it. For to this individual observer it is of particular interest to understand the emergence of the individual aspects of the completely social transaction observed. These are necessary to determine in order that an assessment of the reflective role-taking can be conducted. This is to say, then, that the Meadian scientist begins by fastening his attention on what has emerged, while the Meadian social psychologist starts by ascertaining how the particular object having emerged in actual fact did
emerge. This difference is roughly speaking one between “what?” and “how?”, where the social psychologist assumes that the “how” actually precedes and finds its way into the definition of the “what?” of concern to the scientist.

Again, the difference is a temporal one. The social psychological scientist takes for granted “the what” a Meadian social psychologist analyst significantly does not: the interactionist takes for granted the existence of individual and environment qua objects being there. The Meadian social psychologist, on the other hand, reflects (upon) the e- or unmergence of individual and environment; he does not accept the thereness of the individual and the thereness of its environment appearing in the individual perspective. Nor does he accept the scientific procedure as there and, as such, to be acted upon. There is a chasm here, stretching between the different kinds of reciprocity reckoned with.

By attributing various relationships, by adding various dimensions of significance in order to explain mutual adjustments in the completely social transaction observed, we shall find a distinct multitude of individuals. The scientific act is reflected in the object in terms of the self with which the object is completely reciprocal. The object, therefore, will be as definite as that of the individual observer’s self. But while the scientific explanation takes this separation between individual aspects for granted and immediately acts upon it in reflective role-taking, the social psychologist proceeds from their emergence. He is required to take the “whole situation” into account, and this includes recognition of both aspects of the social consciousness. This includes the particular conditions under which the object emerges, not it’s general conditions.

This I take to be Asplund’s guiding notion, not only in his distinction between ocular and binocular perception in the early 1980s, but also when in the late 1990s referring to the social psychological “cross” appearing when superimposing the distinctions of I-me and individual-society. Thus understood Asplund identifies social psychology as the “dialectical alternation” between the two distinctions of I-me and individual-society or, speaking with Mead, the emergent passage between the distinctions of reflective and immediate attitudes on the one hand and individual and common perspectives on the other.

Stepping back from Asplund and adopting a more general – although still Meadian - perspective, there are yet a couple points worth stressing regarding the relationship between social psychology and science.

By means of the symbols of language we may take the roles of objects. By mediating the object, that is to say, we may generalise its characters and indicate these characters in a significant fashion. In doing so, not only will the object be mediated, but it will also be an object whose meaning we may mediate to our piers. In the objectivity of the object lies not only it’s unmergence from the individual observer, but also it’s significance as a
common object. Having once been explained by an individual observer, he
may let other individuals indicate or respond to it as well.

But what if the object to be explained, the object whose reality is to be
realised in a test, is, or manifests itself as, significance? How is the indivi-
dual observer to test the reality of an object who has no measures, no
existence apart from the individuals who are realizing or actualising it? I
have argued that manipulation will be obsolete, and that communication
takes its place. But yet this kind of test, in which the individual observer
adopts the perspective common to the individuals observed(?), has been
made possible by prospective and retrospective manipulations that, if taken
seriously as parts of the whole scientific act, go into the communication and
provide it with the characters of an interaction.

Not to involve completely in a social transaction observed is tantamount
to not putting the hypothesis made to the test: not communicating, not taking
seriously one’s presence in the observation, not to mediate dialogically, is
significantly not to allow a realisation of the completely social object. The
individual observer avoids, as pointed out by J. Huber, loosing the game and
the object will remain a virtual reality, an effect of the individual per-
spective; a social interaction conducted in the form of an individual observer
manipulating a distant object symbolically. I take this as having been
demonstrated by Asplund, intentionally or by accident, in connection to
Tepoztlán and the incomplete sociality of the ocular perspectives of Gemein-
schaft and Gesellschaft. The verification of the completely social object is
simultaneous to its realisation, i.e., it occurs when the individual observer is
actually responded to by another individual observer and realise shared or
collective rather than attributed or distributive significance.

I believe however that contemporary social psychologists regard as valid,
perhaps even recommend, refraining from letting the individual observer’s
presence become reflected in the scientific object. And insofar a return to
Mead brings such a notion with it, the journey will be a journey made in
vain. It has no destination, for such an abstraction effaces in Mead’s view the
act from the object and so the object controlling the act will have no act by
which to be verified and realised. In terms not including the paradox created,
this scientific norm does not consider the “whole situation” but offers its
account in terms of an implicitly individual point of view. The crux of the
matter however, stressed throughout this chapter, is that according to Mead’s
functional social psychology, this omniscience of the individual observer
will be immediately reflected in the object in the form of an incomplete
sociality. The object, that is to say, will immediately take the social form of
the reflectively social consciousness by which means the act is completed and in which this object emerges (as a conceptual or scientific object). 291

This concept of half reciprocity is not only detectable in the separation of the act from the object but, perforce, also in the separation of the individual observer from the individuals observed. For what, if not a separation, is the virtual (f)act of observing the object while discharging the immediate reflection of one’s self in the object? Although we may add two half reciprocities and receive a mathematically complete reciprocity, it makes up a social psychologically complete sociality as little as a philosophically complete reciprocity is gained by adding two halves. If it did, it would be tantamount to admitting that the scientific social psychological observation acts upon a rationale inviting, and indeed promoting, incompletely social objects. And once there, we shall have but small means, if any, with which to distinguish the object(ive) attributed from the act observed.

Now, this might be viewed as an acceptable, or at least an unavoidable, complication attaching to scientific conduct. Perhaps. But what is important to keep in mind for any scholar referring to Mead is that this is the moment at which nature becomes bifurcated. This, as it were, is why G. A. Fine and S. Kleinman are able to report that:

All schools of Meadian thought use Mead to support their methodological stances, but we have little data to suggest that Mead intended to provide a methodological treatise for sociological research. 292

In the above I have argued alongside and emphasised Mead’s distinction between the social psychological and functional analysis on the one hand and the positively scientific explanation on the other. In this, I have proceeded on the idea that Mead develops not a social psychological science, but a critique of social and psychological sciences. To this demonstration I have added an elaboration of the implications for social psychology if understood as a science, particularly as regards the loss, or less, of the “whole situation”. To this end I have conducted a temporal articulation of a scientific act whose control, whose problematical object, has the characters of a completely social act.

The scientific act is an act that in social psychological terms is to be considered as all acts. And so are its objects. Social psychology serves the purpose of understanding the scientific explanation of social acts. It provides an account for the meanings taken for granted, for characters immediately

291 I am here alluding to the suggestion made by Mead that “[j]ust because the object is the form of the act, in this character it controls the expression of the act.” Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 191.
responded to, in the scientific explanation. The social psychological observation is not therefore a scientific observation but a meta-scientific analysis. The scientific object emerges in the act to which the scientific explanation belongs and to fathom this event of scientific realisation is a social psychological realisation. Thus I have argued that the symbol of sociality the social psychological scientist uses is a composite, signifying a multitude of objects to which he tends to respond in a likewise fashion.

As the relativist evokes the symbol of time with which to co-ordinate the diverging observations in different reference systems, so the social psychological scientist evokes the symbol of sociality to co-ordinate the diverging observations obtained when occupying the various or individual systems. However, and as pointed out by Glassner, as the symbol indicates less than the social act observed the symbol will fit a multitude of acts when turned back towards the object. Put the other way around, it will be difficult to distinguish the signifier from what is signified since all social psychological objects made scientific are indicated in accordance with the scientific procedure of reflective role-taking. What is immediate or indistinct will be rendered as if reflective or distinct since the individual observer conducts his observation by way of reflecting his self in a multitude of individuals always already being there qua individual selves.

Alongside this argument I have proposed that the explanation of the completely social transaction consists in indicating a significant relationship or dimension between individual and environment being there simultaneously in the reflective experience of the individual observer. But the disconnection between the individual and the environment immediately acted upon here is in itself emerging in the less than completely social transaction of the individual observer’s reflection. The scientific explanation represents therefore, as argued by Bergson, the happening as something already having happened. The scientific explanation represents the transaction as interaction and so the individual observer will find the becoming mingling with what has become. And so shall the social psychological scientist find, per analogy, the emergence of completely social selves to mingle with the thereness of incompletely social selves.

Not acknowledging the mingling of these two temporal aspects of sociality we are likely to repeat the psychological fallacy in social psychology and render it, as does Trost & Levin, an incompletely social psychology. The completely social transaction will take the immediate form of characters that belong to an object apart from those belonging or conferred upon it by the individual observer’s incompletely social consciousness. Thus, until the attitude towards the scientific object is reflected (upon), the social psychologist will be unable to abstract from the object those characters conferred upon it in observation on account of his being unable to tell the difference between completely and incompletely social objects. Since he projects this significant meaning upon the object immediately ideation will fuse
immediately with perception and so, in turn, he unwittingly projects what has become into what is becoming. As stressed by Mead, “[w]e are not aware of projecting ourselves into the distant object because as selves we do not project ourselves into it.”

In this fashion two different temporal perspectives blend to manifest a composite simultaneity of social and individual tendencies to respond; an inadequate or incomplete recognition of the whole situation from which they emerge - a puzzling picture.

More precisely, what is to be learned from this assessment of Mead’s concept of the social? What are prospects of forging his social psychology with his view on science? That i) social psychology is impossible, ii) inherently problematical, iii) in need of self-reflection or simply that iv) the concept of science has changed since the early 1930s?

iv’) Let me begin by acknowledging that there are a multitude of concepts of science. Mead’s concept is but one, designed to fit a certain functional analysis. It is also a concept referring to what we would call a Positive science. This matters little, however. Firstly, to reject Mead’s critique of science one has first to furnish a definition of science, and this in a fashion eluding or neutralising his principal argument on the bifurcation of nature. I have used the term *science* in the sense Mead used it; as referring to the statement accounting for the general conditions under which an object appears in the experience of an individual observer. On the basis of this definition and the functional social psychology with which it is framed, I have argued that this scientific procedure abstracts emergent passage from the object as the individual observer abstracts his self from the actual perspective and thus renders the completely social transaction observed the definite form of an incompletely social interaction; a social occurrence characterised by two “insides”, always already side by side rather than e- or unmerging. Secondly, the assessment of contemporary social psychology made by Farr indicates that social psychology in a significant sense remains a Positivist and Individualist science. To this critique I have added examples of how social psychologists may read the scholar to which Farr refers when concluding his search for a completely social psychology. I have shown also how and with what consequences one approaches Mead’s concept of sociality as a Positively scientific concept. As a concept based upon a notion of half reciprocity that favors an individualist social psychology, suggestive of an incompletely social psychology acting immediately upon a dis/connection of individual and environment and that, symptomatically thereof, lessens the completely social transaction observed. Its products will in each case consist of a distinct multitude of individuals always already there, armed with but stripped of their definitions of the situation.

I cannot see that this definition of science offered by Mead has lost its substance or become overly narrow. What I can see, and what does matter, is its incompatibility with the functional analysis propelled by Mead’s social psychology.

Now, before probing this issue further in relation to the questions whether a scientific social psychology is inherently problematic or even impossible, it would seem proper first to attend to the weaker alternative stating that the import of the argument made suggests a call for self-reflection.

iii’) I am not arguing for self-reflection on the behalf of social psychology. Self-reflection requires a problem and to the best of my knowledge there is at present no evidence of a problem obstructing the social psychological act. Quite on the contrary, never have social psychologists produced more than they do at present. But this is, strictly speaking, beside the question raised.

If we alongside the Meadian argument act upon the assumption that the characteristic feature of science is to accomplish general statements as to the conditions under which a perception appears by eliminating the characters conferred upon it by the percipient event, then it would seem a good idea to learn what those characters conferred upon the object are. Thus, the more the social psychologist learns about himself qua scientific observer the greater his chances of eliminating those characters his self imposes upon the object. It would seem, however, that this amounts but to an improvement of what science in Mead’s view already has perfected. It suggests nothing in the direction of taking into account “the whole situation”; i.e., the temporality of the act in which the object emerges and for whose control it is made distinct.

Self-reflection in the scientific procedure is not at issue. The explanatory phase is precisely that phase in the act in which the self emerges. Mead would certainly argue that never does one learn so much about oneself as in the scientific profession. Scientific procedure requires the scientist to constantly be aware of himself in order to optimise the elimination of oneself from the observation and hence those characters that do not belong to the object qua object. For this reason self-reflection ought not to be argued as a redeemer from the social psychological assessment made by Mead. Insofar there is a problem at all, the very idea of the self would seem to present itself as a first-rank candidate. As I have stressed, what Mead is suggesting with his social psychological analysis is the consideration of the act in terms of which the self is e- or unmerging: the sense in which the self is both present and absent in the emergent passage of the present; i.e., the sense in which the social consciousness of reflection is immediate.

ii’) Whether or not a social psychological science is rendered inherently problematical from a Meadian point of view is a question that would seem to answer itself. Something becomes inherently problematical at the moment one requires from it to be something else. And the view of Mead’s social psychology as being scientific illustrates exactly this. It is an inherently pro-
blematical notion – and an indistinctly social notion. The Meadian social psychology encompasses the act in which scientific conduct is but a contingent phase. These are objects, or acts if you like, of different orders; they do not belong to the same actual perspective. Why? Because they have, or are controlled by, different object(ive)s. Let me illustrate this negatively.

If an individual observer were to state social psychologically the conditions under which an object appears in the experience of any conceivable individual observer, he would proceed from the actual presence of himself and the characters conferred by his self upon the object and do so in the light of the act going on (or which has been obstructed). That is to say, the individual observer would have to represent the representation while it occurs. He would have to reflect the reflection while the reflection completes the object to which the reflection refers. Converted into the decomposed social terminology of Mead: these reflections belong to different kinds of acts since these procedures are controlled by different object(ive)s. This is illustrated by the fact that their concepts of sociality are of two different kinds.

Before moving further, I should point out here that my intention is not to argue against the scientific procedure per se. The reflections in the individual perspective are not simply virtual or in lack of consequence. Without them, without these virtual futures and pasts with which to reconstruct the ambiguous object, there would be no problem-solving and hence no science. These reflections refer to an actual occurrence whose mediation and realisation constitutes scientific behavior.

Furthermore the study of passage involves the discovery of events. These cannot be simply parts of passage. These events have always characters of uniqueness. Time can only arise through the ordering of passage by the unique events. The scientist finds such events in his observations and experiments. The relation of any event to the conditions under which it occurs is what we term causation. The relation of the event to its preceding conditions at once sets up a history, and the uniqueness of the events makes that history relative to that event. The conditioning passage and the appearance of the unique event then give rise to past and future as they appear in a present. All of the past is in the present as the conditioning nature of passage, and all the future arises out the present as the unique events that transpire. To unravel this existent past in the present and on the basis of it to previse the future is the task of science. The method is that of ideation. 294

These individual reflections are the alternatives envisaged and indicated. They are the hypotheses competing for the responses with which to realise an object capable of controlling the act obstructed. Insofar they are unsuccessful, a new object will be construed, if successful this object has been realised as a physical thing or, as the case may be, a social venture.

294 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 33.
However, while the reference of the individual reflection is a definite and generalised object, a hypothesis, the very act of referring is not. The referring completed with reflection is in itself an immediate occurrence. At least until this reflection itself has been reflected, such as would be the case if another individual observer responds to the individual observer. This will happen in cases where scientific conduct becomes a completely social act; when both the act of the individual observer and the social act he observes are controlled by the same object(ive). When, in other words, there is dialogue rather than two monologues of thought superimposed by the omniscient consciousness of an individual observer.

Were one to suggest that this communicative verification of the object occurs in the academic seminars, one sidesteps the point being made here. As I have argued, e- or unmerging in another transaction does not complete the verification of the social object’s reality. Were this to be endeavored, the result would merely consist of the adding of yet more dimensions by individual observers, by distant and hence redundant or abstract(ed) selves. And a redundant self may render redundant also the result in case that which is verified is obscured or confounded by the individual observer’s redundancy.

Let me repeat that the verification of a social psychological hypothesis (the social psychological object) consists in communication rather than manipulation; in a completely reciprocal indication of alternatives and envisaged realisations of the object. That it can be verified in scientific and social psychological terms by a computation of variables or symbolic manipulation is a deficient notion resulting from treating as real the individual effects of perspective. Its underlying rationale is analogous to that concluding from the theory of relativity that there is a multitude of real times. In this sense a scientific social psychology appears inherently problematical: it ignores the contradictory assertions of complete and incomplete sociality.

i') I have not been arguing that a scientific social psychology is impossible. Relying on Mead’s late work, I have tried to indicate the characters of such an act. What has been argued is rather that if one is to support a scientific theory or method in the name of Mead, one will find it incompatible with the philosophy giving rise to his social psychology.

In Mead’s social psychology, a relationship between individual and environment is something to be found when observing an act. In social psychology as science, a relationship between individual and environment is something that has been assumed in order to explain the act. Moreover, in Mead’s social psychology the relationship “found” cannot be hypothesised or reflected upon independently of the individual observer since the characters of the relationship will vary with the act and, ultimately, with the object(ive) controlling the act. In social psychology as science on the other hand, the object is stated in abstraction of the individual observer’s contingent transaction and hence in the abstraction of emergent passage of
nature. Thus, the relationship is considered independent of the individual observer and hence the act in which this object is correlative. Again, viewing social psychology as a scientific behavior, which is to say from the standpoint of Mead, provides it the appearance of a contradiction originating in a composite concept of sociality. Insofar we are to use the concept of sociality and deem an object social, we cannot as social psychologists restrict the meaning of this concept to the occurrence we observe with the one hand and call upon Mead as a measure of adding weight to our particular argument or report with the other. For, according to Mead, *when deeming the object observed social, the sense in which it is social will be correlative with the social consciousness in which this object appears*. Thus a scientific social psychology based on Mead will create a contradiction that, though instructive and thought provoking in the hands of Asplund, may generate vicious paradoxes.

Another variant of the contradictory nature of a scientific social psychology based on Mead’s theory of the act might be developed by paying attention to his conception of science as the problem-solving phase of the act. If we are to found a social psychology on Mead’s theory of the act, having made irrelevant the four objections raised, we shall find it limited to the observation and explanation of social problems and their resolutions. That is to say, it would be unable to deal with social dilemmas. While problems by definition are solvable, dilemmas by their very nature are not. Also, granting that social objects are verified by means of communication, social dilemmas attended will surely be joined by those of researchers confounding their object(ive) with those observed.

5.5 Final Remarks

What urges you on and arouses your ardour, you wisest of men, do you call it “will to truth”? Immanuel Kant

Will to the conceivability of all being: that is what I call your will! Your first want to make all being conceivable: for, with a healthy mistrust, you doubt whether it is in fact conceivable.

But it must bend and accommodate itself to you! Thus will our will have it. It must become smooth and subject to the minds as the mind’s mirror and reflection.

That is your entire will, you wisest men; it is a will to power.295

When, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche spoke of life and reflection in connection to the self, he did so in a manner similar to that of Mead. When suggesting the secret of life as ever-ongoing transcendence or self-over-

coming, he spoke of the notorious “will to power”: the power to change one’s ways and thoughts and defy what is given or generally unquestioned. There is nothing just being there, merely what is presented as such by those possessing the power to define, to deem what is true and what is false. God’s words, as it were, may be a significant and objective perspective, but only as long we act upon it immediately. Though I find Nietzsche’s vocabulary somewhat aggressive at times, I believe one shall find in his call for Superman a man in continual emergence.

It is this development that a society whose life process is mediated by communication has made possible. It is here that mental life arises – with this continual passing from one system to another, with the occupation of both in passage and with the systematic structures that both involve. It is the realm of continual emergence.296

However, Mead viewed (modern) life from a perspective quite different from that of Nietzsche. To Mead the man in continual emergence or transcendence is not succumbing the other; he is his co-creator. In fact, it would be more proper using Nietzsche’s Superman to characterise Mead’s scientist. While in communication there is a complete reciprocity between the selves emerging, the continual verification of social acts by an individual observer feeds from the manipulation of others. It necessitates the manipulation of those whose acts one is about to explain. There is, as I have argued, really no place in the scientific procedure for the emergence of another individual observer. For the explanation to be completed, the other needs to be (made) an invariant object. The will to truth may indeed, as noted by Nietzsche, be the reflection of a will to power. The will of the scientist, so to speak, is to fix the object in order that he may transcend his self and so achieve an explanation. The invariance of object is the vehicle, or prize, for his alteration. What is more, this change or alteration he completes not by sharing his time with others, but by isolating himself in time. He alone has the power to dwell upon the truths of objects. This is, if I may paraphrase the advertisement outside Proctor’s Pleasure Palace, life as always already having happened and mediated as if in motion. In this sense, this will to power is an incompletely social one: it is a will to individual power. For this alone will yield the scientific truths for which he ardoured.

Because of this crucial distinction between two modes of verification, whether they referred to as manipulation and communication, thought and dialogue or mediation and dialogical mediation, I have found reason to question Farr’s attempt at a scientific social psychology based on Mead. For at the back of this lie two very different notions of reciprocity and where-upon our ideas of sociality largely rely. To this end I have used Asplund’s distinction between ocular and binocular modes of (ap)perception and

296 Mead, G. H. Philosophy of the Present. p. 85.
Bergson’s “second observer”: I have discussed Mead’s concept of sociality and the social consciousness of the individual observer and shown how a decomposition might work. I have also identified the implications that follow from a composite concept of sociality in social psychology and, based on these findings, concluded that Farr’s suggestion needs to be qualified in four, possibly five, respects.

The alternative is of course simply to disregard the philosophy of Mead and keep moving in whatever directions we are moving. However, as I have found myself uncertain as to the characters of these directions, I have undertaken an inquiry into the very idea of a scientific social psychology. Still, regardless of whether we choose to turn our attention to Mead or not, I believe social psychology understood in this Meadian sense approximates a statement of a social psychology acknowledging the complete reciprocity with which a genuinely social psychology is enacted. I also believe that it will be considered unscientific.
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