A Theory of the Emotional Self
A Theory of the Emotional Self

From the Standpoint of a Neo-Meadian
To Mikael, whom I love
and know deserves to be loved.
Abstract


In this book, two fundamental questions are posed: (1) what is emotion, and (2) what part does it play in the social processes of self-formation and self-realization? How do we as behaving beings, who experience sensations, become interacting beings, who experience emotions? And, how are our emotional experiences related to who we are and our ability to acquire a positive relation to ourselves? By attempting to answer these questions I point out the social conditions that are necessary to enable emotional experiences, and in turn self-formation and self-realization. The focus is on the form, rather than on the content of the emotional self. From the developed neo-Meadian perspective on the emotional self, emotion is understood as a phenomenon linked to both mind and body, without being explained as a mind-body combination. It is argued that emotional experiences are (1) corporal evaluations of our interchanges with the outer world, especially, the other, and (2) crucial to who we are or want to be. An introduction to the neo-Meadian theory of the emotional self is presented in a general manner by including notions of the social self and emotion as social. In the first part of the book, I suggest that diverse phenomena in the social process of self-formation and self-realization are explained by a view that has its roots in the classic social psychology of Adam Smith, Charles Horton Cooley, and, especially, George Herbert Mead. The view consists of three salient ideas: (1) the self does not emerge without the other or society, (2) it is from the point of view of the other or society that the self develops, and (3) self-realization involves a need for recognition. In the second part of the book, I expand the view on emotion as social that is incorporated in the classic social psychology by investigating the recently established field of the sociology of emotions. Once the general structure of the notion of the social self and emotion as social is shown and provided with a preliminary defense, different modifications are considered. In the third part of the book, both the classic social psychology and the sociology of emotions are modified to become more accurate. I elaborate on Mead’s distinction between social behavior, in the form of (1) functional identification, and social interaction, in form of (2) attitude taking of the thing from which he means that self-feeling arises, and (3) attitude taking of the other from which he means that self-reflexion arises.

Keywords: self-formation, self-realization, emotion, social behavior, social interaction, attitude taking, social psychology, the sociology of emotions, A. Smith, C. H. Cooley, G. H. Mead.

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Introduction

In *Svenska Dagbladet* (Swedish Daily Tribune, 2003-06-16,) under the headline “Kemisk soppa bestämmer personligheten” (Chemical soup determines the personality,) Peter Gärdenfors discusses Steven Quartz and Terry Sejnowski’s book, *Liars, Lovers, and Heroes: What the New Brain Science Reveals about How We Become Who We Are* (2002). The heroes and heroines of the book are neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, noradrenaline, and acetylcholine. Serotonin affects not only our mood, but also our appetite, sleep, heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature. With help of drugs like Prozac, which raises or rather sustains the “optimal” level of serotonin in the brain, more than seventeen million Americans have tried an artificial way out of the blues. Take a pill, and be happy! And, why not try a drug that raises or sustains the “optimal” level of dopamine? After all, it is considered to be behind motivation and pleasant emotions. An emotional kingdom is in reach with a balanced mix of serotonin, dopamine, noradrenalin, and acetylcholine among others. It is all chemistry, you know.

Gärdenfors compares the above vision with the “Penfield mood organs” in Philip K. Dick’s novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*¹

> A merry little surge of electricity piped by automatic alarm from the mood organ beside his bed awakened Rick Deckard. Surprised – it always surprised him to find himself awake without prior notice – he rose from the bed, stood up in his multicolored pajamas, and stretched. Now, in her bed, his wife Iran opened her gray, unmerry eyes, blinked, then groaned and shut her eyes again.

> “You set your Penfield too weak,” he said to her. “I’ll reset it and you’ll be awake and – “

> “Keep your hand off my settings.” Her voice held bitter sharpness. I don’t *want* to be awake.”

He seated himself beside her, bent over her, and explained softly. “If you set the surge up high enough, you’ll be glad you’re awake; that’s the whole point.

> /.../

> “My schedule for today lists a six-hour self-accusatory depression,” Iran said.

> “What? Why would you schedule that?” It defeated the whole purpose of the mood organ. “I didn’t even know you could set it for that,” he said gloomily (Dick [1968] 1996: 3ff.).

Although, I am deeply fascinated by the research on neurotransmitters, on how they seem to be related to our emotions, as a sociologist, I have limited knowledge of this field of research. This book on the emotional self has nothing to do with neurotransmitters. It is not about what drugs may or may not affect them, nor is it about how drugs will enable us to design what to be or not to be.
Instead, it is on how our social relations are crucial to what we are or want to be. It shows how our relations to the outer world make us do things in certain manners. It, indeed, shows how those relationships are part of our personality – the emotional self. In this way, it points out the necessity of social interaction for the emergence, development, and realization of the emotional self. The purpose is not to contradict the views on our personalities that are presented within the field of neuroscience, but to present an alternative perspective.

In *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* ([2001] 2003) Martha C. Nussbaum challenges the view on our personalities, especially, the view on our emotions, as more or less biologically determined. Taking her point of departure from the ancient Greek Stoics, she claims that emotion is constituted by “a cognitive appraisal or evaluation; the idea of one’s own flourishing or one’s important goals and projects; and the idea of the salience of external objects as elements in one’s own scheme of goals” (Nussbaum [2001] 2003: 4, emphasis withdrawn). This view, Nussbaum claims, is expressed in Marcel Proust’s novel *Remembrance of Things Past*, which she begins her book by quoting:

> It is almost impossible to understand the extent to which this upheaval agitated, and by that very fact had temporarily enriched, the mind of M. de Charlus. Love in this way produces real geological upheavals of thought. In the mind of M. de Charlus, which only several days before resembled a plane so flat that even from a good vantage point one could not have discerned an idea sticking up above the ground, a mountain range had abruptly thrust itself into view, hard as a rock – but mountains sculpted as if an artist, instead of taking the marble away, had worked it on the spot, and where there twisted about one another, in giant and swollen groupings, Range, Jealousy, Curiosity, Envy, Hate, Suffering, Pride, Astonishment, and Love.

I do not think that Nussbaum’s interpretation of the view on emotion that is expressed by Proust in the above lines is adequate. In fact, I think it is better suited to illustrate the view on emotions that, in addition to Nussbaum’s view on emotion, develops in this book. Nonetheless, Nussbaum’s view on emotion points at what might be the most obvious alternative to the view on our personalities as biologically determined, namely, a view on our personalities as reflexively determined. It is, then, not the level of different neurotransmitters produced in our brains, but the way we think that designs who we are or want to be. My aim is not to oppose, but present an alternative perspective, also, to this second view on our personalities.

Indeed, researchers of a variety of disciplines in the contemporary western world tend to grasp the human being as a biological organism, a reflexive person, or some sort of combination of these two aspects. In the latter case, emotion is either seen as a biological given sense that becomes penetrated by meaning (see, for example, Shott 1979: 1318; Hochschild 1983: 219) or as
thought that becomes embodied because of its significance to us (see, for example, Rosaldo 1984: 143; Franks and Gecas 1992: 8).

The perspective on the emotional self that develops in this book incorporates neither of those views on emotion. Instead, it fills the void between pictures of the human being as a biological organism and as a reflexive person, without a (con)fused by them. In the end, an understanding of the emotional self as a phenomenon that connects body and mind, but which is not a combination of them transcends the Cartesian mind-body dualism.

My claim is that emotion is (1) a corporal attitude toward the outer world and ourselves. As such emotion relates to our biological organism, but is not reduced to it, since it is (2) initially performed by ways of our innate tendency to synchronize our bodily movements or postures with the bodily movements or postures of the persons around us. In turn, emotion relates to our reflexive person, but is not reduced to it, since emotion, when it becomes problematic for our interchanges with the outer world, especially, the other, or challenged by alternative emotions or corporal attitudes, is (3) what enables narratives about who we are or want to be. More precisely, it is claimed that emotional experience is a corporal evaluation of our interchanges with the outer world, especially, the other. Hence, emotion is not seen as specific levels of some of the neurotransmitters that are produced in our brains, but rather as part of what regulates those levels. Nor is emotion seen as a composition of cognitive appraisal or evaluation, the idea of one’s own flourishing or one’s important goals and projects, and the idea of the salience of external object as elements in one’s own scheme of goals, but as what makes it possible for us to formulate such an appraisal and such ideas. The view on our personalities that this claim incorporates is basically related to the idea of self-formation (i.e. self-emergence and self-development) and self-realization as social processes in which emotion is crucial.

My strategy is, first, to formulate this idea in a relative simple form, providing it with a preliminary defense (part I). Second, to flesh out the view on emotion as social that is indicated in it (part II). Once we have understood the general structure of the notion of the social self and the notion of emotion as social, we can, third, consider different modifications that they need to undergo to become more adequate (part III).

In the first part of the book, The Self: The Classic Social Psychology, I suggest that diverse phenomena in the social processes of self-formation and self-realization are explained by a view that has its roots in the classic social psychology of Adam Smith, Charles Horton Cooley, and, especially, George Herbert Mead. The view contains three salient ideas:
1. The self does not *emerge* without the other or society.

2. It is from the point of view of the other or society that the self *develops*.


Those claims are more or less well-established social psychological insights within contemporary sociology. In addition, much of contemporary sociological or social psychological theories acknowledge the significance of emotion for the self. Nonetheless, the focus is mainly on our reflexive capacities (see, for example, Anthony Giddens 1991; Beck 1992; Heelas, Lash, and Morris [Ed.] 1996). The few times that the main focus is on our emotional capacities, rather than our reflexive capacities, like in, for example, Arlie Hochschild’s *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983), the insights on emotions that the classic social psychology embodies tend to be ignored.

Adam Smith is commonly remembered for his idea of the “invisible hand,” rather than his ideas on sympathy or moral sentiments; Charles Horton Cooley for his idea of the looking-glass self, in the sense of self-reflexion, rather than self-feeling; and Mead for how we through attitude or role taking become selves with minds, rather than with emotions. This is unfortunate because those insights might prevent us from reinventing the wheel of the old Cartesian mind-body dualism, and instead transcending it with a theory of the social self that seriously takes into account emotion as something other than a mind-body combination.

My claim is not that the classic social psychology transcends the mind-body dualism, but that it provides us with theoretical tools to do it. However, to see this, the classic social psychology must be perceived from a perspective that, to some extent, contrary to their own and more recent sociology or social psychology, focus on emotion rather than on mind, body, or both of them.

The first chapter, *The Virtuous Self*, is a perception of Smith’s social psychology from a perspective that focuses on emotion. Smith’s idea that sympathy with the other is the key to self-formation, and in turn gives rise to the self’s need for recognition, of being amiable and meritorious in the eyes of the other, become the object of their love and gratitude, and ultimately having a loving relation to itself is explored.

The second chapter, *The Looking-glass Self*, is a discussion of Cooley’s social psychology. Also, his ideas on the social emergence, development, and realization of the self are perceived from a perspective that focuses on emotion. Cooley’s claim that the looking-glass self is a self-idea that “seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification” ([1902] 1992: 184) is explored.
dition, his notion of love is discussed in terms of the core of self-realization, which incorporates a need for recognition.

The third chapter, *The Attitude Taking Self*, is an elaboration of Mead’s social psychology. Just like in the case of Smith and Cooley’s thinking, Mead’s ideas on the social emergence, development, and realization of the self are perceived from a perspective that focuses on emotion. Especially, Mead’s idea of emotion as a felt inhibition of our interchanges with the outer world is examined.

This chapter is central to the book since it provides crucial theoretical tools for my thesis in chapter six. In the sixth chapter, the general core of Mead’s social psychology remains. However, it will be subtler and better suited to transcend the mind-body dualism. Therefore, the theory of the emotional self that develops may be called neo-Meadian. It has its own character, emphasizing, as it does, emotions significance for self-formation and self-realization.

The overarching aim of the third chapter is to systematize the logic of the evolving self that Mead’s focus on the act or our interchanges with the outer world shows. Three distinct forms of sociality, then, come to the forefront: (1) functional identification with the outer world, (2) attitude or role taking of the thing, from which self-feeling or emotional experience emerges, (3) attitude or role taking of the other, from which self-reflexion or reflexive experience emerges. It is these different forms of sociality that, in chapter six, are modified and used to explain our social transformation from biologically behaving organism into emotional, and in turn reflexive persons.

As we will see, Mead explicitly points out the inhibition of act or problematic social interchanges as the key to attitude taking of the thing from which he means that self-feeling arises, and attitude taking of the other from which he means that self-reflexion arises. In addition, he emphasizes that our functional identification with the outer world, especially, the other, is the foundation of such an inhibition of the act. Within this primordial, pre-personal sociality, or corporal intersubjectivity of the lived body, the human biological organism acquires a social structure of responses, in addition to its biological given structure of responses. The biologically behaving being is transformed to a socially behaving being. Indeed, it is argued, that the human biological organism’s acquirement of a social structure of responses is the initial incorporation of its past within the act, on the basis of which the self emerges, develops, and realizes itself.

In the second part of the book, *The Emotions: The Pioneering Sociology of Emotions*, the specific kind of notion of emotion that is necessary for the development of a social psychological theory of the emotional self is fleshed out. Chapter four, *Emotion as Culture*, and chapter five, *Emotion as Sociophysiology*, are critical investigations of the pioneering works within the recently established field of the sociology of emotions, which are based on the
aim to find the key to a notion of emotion that transcends the mind-body dualism.

Sociologists have always been generally interested in our emotions. But, a more specific interest in the emotions did not emerge within the sociological discipline until the end of the 1970s. It was, first and foremost, American sociologists who started to present papers and publish books on emotions. Among the pioneers we find Arlie R. Hochschild, Susan Shott, Thomas J. Scheff, Theodore D. Kemper, and Randall Collins. In the mid-1980s the interest in emotions from a social perspective flourished and became established as a field of its own – the sociology of emotions. Clearly, the research within this field is a reaction against the overly cognitive or rationalistic view on self and society that until recently has dominated the social sciences.

In brief, the sociology of emotions takes its point of departure from the assumption that the emotions not only influence individual behavior and action, but also, social development at large. Further, it studies how cultural systems of norms modify and penetrate expressions of emotions as well as emotional experiences. The research shows that emotions are both results and vital functions of social processes.

The question of what emotion really is and how exactly it is related to other dimensions of social life is debated within the field. Since the sociology of emotions is “accessible from virtually any sociological persuasion” as Theodore Kemper (1990: 20) points out, the answer to questions like these is not univocal. As I see it, the problem with the ideas on emotion that are presented within the sociology of emotions is that they either point out emotion as culture, and in turn tend to (con)fuse it with reflexion, or point out emotion as a specific physiological state that is triggered by certain social relations, and in turn tend to (con)fuse it with biology. The former is discussed in chapter four, whereas the latter is discussed in chapter five.

As will be shown, the pioneering sociology of emotions, however, embodies theoretical and empirical insights that help to modify the classic social psychology.

In the third part of the book, *The Emotional Self: A Contemporary Theory*, Mead’s distinction between functional identification, emotional experience, and reflexive experience, is elaborated. The classic social psychology, as presented in the first part of the book, is revisited, with the insights of the sociology of emotions, as presented in the second part of the book, in mind. Further, it is related to other theoretical and empirical research on the subject matter. In this way the classic social psychology becomes modified and strengthened.

In chapter six, *A Theory of the Emotional Self: From the Standpoint of a Neo-Meadian*, a theory of the emotional self is developed from a neo-Meadian perspective. The theory includes the claim that (1) our innate tendency to synchronize our corporal movements with those around us or functionally
identify ourselves with the other, is the foundation of our emotions; but (2) separates this process within the act, in which we fundamentally take over the emotional expressions of others, from our own emotional experiences, i.e., our corporal evaluations of our relation to the outer world or the other; and further (3) distinguishes our emotional experiences from the process of being conscious of them as part of ourselves.

The sort of inhibition of the act that our emotions embody is distinguished from the sort of inhibition of the act that makes us incorporate them into narratives of who we are or want to be. Mead’s idea of emotion as a felt inhibition of our attitude taking of the thing is, then, replaced by the idea of emotion as a corporal evaluative inhibition of the act, initially, experienced from the perspective of the other, on the basis of a functional identification with her or him. In addition, it is argued, that it is when our corporal evaluative inhibitions of the act become problematic for the completion of the act that self-reflexion arises. It is at this point that the answer to questions like who we are or want to be, initially, is formulated. Finally, the importance of functional identification for the sort of self-formation, i.e. emergence of self-feeling, and in turn self-reflexion that enables self-realization or satisfaction of the self’s need for recognition, is pointed out.

This last chapter of the book provides an answer to the question of how we as behaving beings, who experience sensations become interacting beings, who experience emotions, and in turn embody values or the need for recognition that enables self-realization. The answer is guided by the theoretical argument that emotion is not to be reduced to the human as a biological organism or to the human as a reflexive person. Nor is it a combination of the two, but what connects the one with the other within our interchanges with each other in the outer world. At the same time, the answer is guided by an attempt to illustrate this argument by a variety of empirical material.

The theory of the emotional self that develops throughout this book does not focus on specific emotions or individual selves, but on emotion and self in general. The aim is to develop a general framework for dealing with emotion and its significance for self-formation and self-realization. To be as specific as possible, the purpose is to show the form of the emotional self, not its content. Specific emotions are randomly chosen to illustrate the theoretical argument that emotional experiences in general are corporal evaluations of our relationships to the outer world, rather than investigated for their own sake. Though, my account of the emotional self is sensitive to the obvious differences between experiences of love and hate or shame and pride among others, the target is what is common to each. Their contents, of course, differ, but they do all inform us about our relationships with the outer world.

Though, self-formation and, especially, self-realization could be seen as artifacts of the typically modern – to use the words of Émile Durkheim ([1906]
1974: 58) – “cult of the individual,” my claim is that certain general social conditions are universally necessary to enable self-formation and self-realization, i.e., making oneself into an object to oneself, and ultimately having a positive relation to oneself. Clearly, this is the main theme of this book. This does not mean that I am unaware of the fact that the contents of each individual self are more or less unique and that the significance of self-formation and self-realization can differ between different cultures as well as within specific cultures.
Notes

1 The novel became the source of the motion picture *Blade Runner*.

2 The choice to treat Cooley and Mead’s thinking as classic social psychology is obvious. They are commonly seen as the founding fathers of social psychology within the sociological field. The choice to treat the thinking of Smith as classic social psychology is not that obvious. Smith is often embraced as the founding father of modern economics and sociology, not of social psychology. But, as we will see his thinking sets up the perfect scene on which the somewhat different social psychology of Cooley and social psychology of Mead can perform. In fact, it seems like the thinking of Smith influenced both Cooley and Mead. Smith’s work was available to both of them. “The *Wealth of Nations*, of course, a classic which any educated person in the English-speaking world would have read, was readily available. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is less well known, but it was published in the United States throughout the nineteenth century [...]. It would have been in most college libraries,” as Anthony J. Blasi (1998: 152) writes. Further, Chicago sociologists in Cooley and Mead’s time, like Albion Small, George E. Vincent, Robert E. Park, and Ernest W. Burgess, were familiar, not only with *The Wealth of Nations*, but, also, with Smith’s first book *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Indeed, the social psychological insights of Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* has so much in common with the thinking of Cooley as well as Mead that there is little doubt that they, at least, in an indirect way have been influenced by it (Blasi 1998: 153). However, the choice to begin this book on the emotional self with a chapter on Smith’s social psychology is not connected with any ambitions of making some sort of history of ideas. Rather, it is a result of a search for theoretical tools of a social psychological discussion on the emotional self that results in a transcendence of the mind-body dualism.

3 For discussions of the perception of Mead that focus on mind or thinkers that perceive Mead as a symbolic interactionist, see Peter Hamilton (Ed.) ([1992] 1998a). For discussions of the perception of Mead that focus on body or thinkers that perceive Mead as a social behaviorist, see Hamilton (Ed.) ([1992] 1998b). See, also, Elin Lundin (forthcoming), chapter four.

4 For a discussion of the classic sociologists’ interest in emotion, see, for example, Simon J. Williams 2001: 3 ff.

5 For explorations of the content rather than the form of the emotional self, see, for example, Deborah Lupton (1998), and Charlotte Bloch (2001).
PART I

The Self

The Classic Social Psychology
CHAPTER I

The Virtuous Self

What so great happiness as to be beloved, and to know that we deserve to be beloved? What so great misery as to be hated, and to know that we deserve to be hated?
(Smith [1759] 1984: 113)

Just as Adam Smith’s most well known book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) could be seen as the first sociological work,¹ his first book *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) could be seen as the first social psychological work.² With the latter he became the first thinker to formulate an idea of the self as social. In short, Smith understands the self as a product of the dialectic relationship between the individual and society. His pioneering thinking on the self could be seen as the theoretical basis of the ideas surrounding the social self that has been developed since the early 20th century.³ This is particularly so for American social psychology (compare Randall Collins 1988: 203). Smith’s idea of the virtuous self embodies striking similarities with Charles Horton Cooley’s (1902) idea of the “looking-glass self,” George Herbert Mead’s (1934) idea of the “attitude-taking self,” and Erving Goffman’s (1967) idea of the “dramaturgical self.”

When it comes to the social self, three intertwined social psychological insights come to the forefront. These are:

1. The self does not emergewithout the other or society.
2. It is from the point of view of the other or society that the selfdevelops.

In this first chapter, these social psychological insights will be expanded on in terms of Smith’s perspective.

Under, *The Mirror of the Self*, the idea that the self does not emerge without the other or society, is illustrated by a picture of society dwelling in the heart of the self, blowing life into it. More specifically, it is argued that sympathy with the other is the key to the self. Under, *The Judgments of the Other*, the idea that the self does not develop without the other or society is discussed in terms of the incorporation of “the man within the breast,” or “the impartial spectator,” in addition to the “partial spectator.” The claim implies that we must sympathize not only with concrete persons, but generalize the viewpoints of those persons, to be able to develop the self. Under, *The Love of Virtue*, the
idea that self-realization involves a “need for recognition” – a term borrowed from Charles Taylor (1994: 25 ff.) – is discussed in terms of the love of virtue or the self’s need for recognition of the passions that it arouses in the other, of being amiable and meritorious in the eyes of the other, become the object of their love and gratitude, and, ultimately, having a loving relation to itself. Finally, under, Creatures of Passions, and The Passions of Imagination, Smith’s idea of the importance of our passions or emotions for the social process of self-formation and self-realization that the insights above mentioned embody are put in focus. The overarching aim of the chapter is to offer a platform from which we can reach a deeper understanding of what is meant by the notion of the social self, and the part emotion play therein.

The Mirror of the Self

According to Smith, society dwells in the heart of the self. Like the body’s need for a functioning heart, the self is dependent on society. This is true, since the self is our blind spot. Our eyes do not focus on the self, but on society. Only as we view others, do we see ourselves. The focus is outward rather than inward. Hence, the persons that we come in contact with in the outer world – others – always mediate our contact with the inner world. In this way, we influence each other’s senses of self. To use the term Smith ([1759] 1984: 112) coined long before Cooley, the other is the “looking-glass” before which we can view the self.

Where it possible that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he could no more think of his own character, of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. All these are objects which he cannot easily see, which naturally he does not look at, and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror he wanted before (Smith [1759] 1984: 110).

It is in front of the social mirror that we become able to examine and make judgments about ourselves. However, this process, a bit paradoxically, depends on that aspect which fundamentally separates us from each other – our immediate access to our own, not another’s sensations. Certainly, it is our own sensations and sense perceptions of the outer world that basically enable us to assume the standpoint of the other or society. Smith gives us many examples that indicate this. For example, “[t]he mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the slack rope, naturally writhe and twist and balance their bodies, as they see him do, and as they feel that they themselves must do if in his situation” (Smith [1759] 1984: 10). Certainly, this form of bodily synchronization is fundamental for the intersubjective process that Smith calls sympathy, on the
basis of which our fellow feeling with others arises by changing places with them in our imagination.4

As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. [—] By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them. His agonies, when they are thus brought home to ourselves, when we have thus adopted and made them our own, begin at last to affect us [—]. That this is the source of our fellow-feeling for the misery of others, that it is by changing places in fancy with the sufferer, that we come either to conceive or be affected by what he feels, may be demonstrated by many obvious observations (Smith [1759] 1984: 9f.).

Also, others have the ability to be influenced by the way we feel under certain circumstances as they change places with us in their imagination. As Björn Eriksson (1988: 314) points out, it is not only person A who understands how person B feels under certain circumstances by changing place with person B. Person B also is able to understand person A’s reaction to the circumstances of person B by changing place with person A. Indeed, it is the ability of person A and person B to gain access to each other’s feelings that makes sympathy a source of intersubjectivity, of being both the other and the self. Put differently, sympathy results in self-distance and other-closeness. Clearly, place-changing makes us acquire a more socially objective view on our social embeddedness. The latter is emphasized in Smith’s conception of sympathy.

In order to produce this concord, as nature teaches the spectators to assume the circumstances of the person principally concerned, so she teaches this last in some measure to assume those of the spectators. As they are continually placing themselves in his situation, and thence conceiving emotions similar to what he feels; so he is constantly placing himself in theirs, and thence conceiving some degree of that coolness about his own fortune, with which he is sensible that they will view it. As they are constantly considering what they themselves would feel, if they actually were the sufferers, so he is constantly led to imagine in what manner he would be affected if he was only one of the spectators of his own situation (Smith [1759] 1984: 22).

To sum up, changing places with others allow us to remove ourselves from our subjective position in the world. As a result, we acquire the distance to ourselves, which Smith considers necessary for feeling, forming ideas, and judging ourselves.

We can never survey our own sentiments and motives, we can never form any judgment concerning them; unless we remove ourselves, as it were, from our own natural station, and endeavour to view them as at a certain distance from
us. But we can do this in no other way than by endeavouring to view them with the eyes of other people, or as other people are likely to view them. Whatever judgment we can form concerning them, accordingly, must always bear some secret reference, either to what are, or to what, upon a certain condition, would be, or to what, we imagine, ought to be the judgment of others (Smith [1759] 1984: 110).

The judgments of other persons are crucial in this context. It is their judgments that make it possible for us to scrutinize our own activities, in the same manner as we do with their activities.

Hence, Smith's idea of place-changing or sympathy is not to be confused with an attempt to solve Descartes' problem of how a monadic self gets out of itself and into another self, the Cartesian problem of other minds. Smith's view on the self is quite the opposite. He does not support ideas of the transparency of self-consciousness. “His view is, rather,” as Charles L. Griswold (1999: 105) writes, “that we always see ourselves through the eyes of others and are mirrors to each other. [...] We are not transparent to our own consciousness; indeed, without the mediation of the other, we have no determinate moral selves ‘there’ waiting to be made transparent.”

The Judgments of the Other

People constantly, directly or indirectly, comment us. They show us if they approve or disapprove of our actions. They make remarks about the propriety or impropriety of our passions, and the beauty or deformity of our minds, among others. It is quickly realized that we judge others and they judge us, based on societal values and norms. “Our first ideas of personal beauty and deformity,” Smith ([1759] 1984: 111) writes, “are drawn from the shape and appearance of others, not from our own. We soon become sensible, however, that others exercise the same criticism upon us. We are pleased when they approve of our figure, and are disobliged when they seem to be disgusted.” In this sense, others’ reactions to what we do affect us, and we come to anticipate how they view us. By changing places with them, we become aware of their expectations on us, which their judgements of us are based on. In addition, it is when we habitually imagine those judgments that self-judgement emerges and self-development is made possible. We then create what Smith ([1759] 1984: 128ff.) interchangeably calls “great tribunal,” “infeiour tribunal,” “superior tribunal,” “tribunal within our own breast,” “supreme arbiter,” “inmate of the breast,” “abstract man,” “substitute of the Deity,” probably best known as the “impartial spectator,” or “the man within the breast.”

Yet, not all of us are able to develop an impartial spectator or a man within the breast, according to Smith. “The week, the vain and the frivolous,” Smith ([1759] 1984: 130) writes, “indeed, may be mortified by the most groundless censure, or elated by the most absurd applause. Such persons are not
accustomed to consult the judge within concerning the opinion which they
ought to form of their own conduct. [—] When the world injures them,
therefore, they are incapable of doing themselves justice, and are, in consequence,
necessarily the slaves of the world.” To free ourselves, we are in need not only
of the partial judgements of the persons that we concretely live among and act
together with, but also of a generalization of those judgments. We are then
able to rid their subjectivity, in favor of (social) objectivity – the perspective of
the impartial spectator (Eriksson 1988: 318). To clarify this idea, let me once
again quote Smith:

When we first come into the world, from the natural desire to please, we accustom
ourselves to consider what behaviour is likely to be agreeable to every person
we converse with, to our parents, to our masters, to our companions. We address
ourselves to individuals, and for some time fondly pursue the impossible and
absurd project of gaining the good-will and approbation of every body. We are
soon taught by experience, however, that this universal approbation is altoget-
er unattainable. [—] In order to defend ourselves from such partial judgments,
we soon learn to set up in our minds a judge between ourselves and those we
live with. We conceive ourselves as acting in the presence of a person quite
candid and equitable, of one who has no particular relation either to ourselves,
or to those whose interests are affected by our conduct, who is neither father,
nor brother, nor friend either to them or to us, but is merely a man in general,
an impartial spectator... If, when we place ourselves in the situation of such a
person, our own actions appear to us under an agreeable aspect, if we feel that
such a spectator cannot avoid entering into all the motives which influenced us,
whatever may be the judgments of the world, we must still be pleased with our
own behaviour (Smith [1759] 1984: 129f.).

By an internalization of the attitudes of society as a whole we are able to in our
minds set up a judge between the self and the other. Society, then, lives within
us as the spectator of every breath we take, of every move we make. From that
perspective – from every imaginable perspectives of the other – we are able to
stand in relation to other persons, as well as to our own person. We are able to
react to what others do; what they feel and think about us, and to what we
ourselves do, what we feel and think about ourselves. It is first then we can talk
about a self with some sort of autonomy. Smith, indeed, understands spectator-
ship as a necessary condition for agency (Griswold 1999: 106). The form of
the self is seen as the relationship between – to use the terminology of Goffman
(1967) – “performance” and “audience.” The former cannot take place without
the latter. “The internalized or idealized judge,” Griswold (1999: 108; compare
Marshall 1986: 180) writes, “is still a spectator. The imagination preserves the
privileged position of this spectator – the stand-in for ‘the public.’ In this way,
the relation is internalized; we become our own public.” Smith himself describes
the form of the self as follows:
When I endeavour to examine my own conduct, when I endeavour to pass sentence upon it, and either to approve or condemn it, it is evident that, in all such cases, I divide myself, as it were, in two persons; and that I, the examiner and judge, represent a different character from that other I, the person whose conduct is examined into and judged of. The first is the spectator, whose sentiments with regard to my own conduct I endeavour to enter into, by placing myself in his situation... The second is the agent, the person whom I properly call myself, and whose conduct, under the character of the spectator, I was endeavouring to form some opinion (Smith [1759] 1984: 113).

This idea of the form of the self is probably most well known in terms of “I” (the agent) and “me” (the judged), which was introduced by William James ([1890] 1950), and espoused by Mead ([1934] 1967). On the one hand, the impartial spectator liberates us from the pain of being blamed by another when not being blameworthy. Although, being falsely accused always hurts, since the partial spectator never is totally cut off from the impartial spectator. On the other hand, the impartial spectator makes us feel guilty when we know that we are blameworthy, although not being blamed by another person (Smith [1759] 1984: 129). “The impartial spectator,” according to Griswold’s (1999: 132) interpretation, “seems to gaze down upon the guilty one, reminding him of his faults, filling him with dread that his misdeeds might be found out, and making him feel painful guilt at the recognition that he in fact is detestable.” As indicated before, this internal critic, though liberating us from the partial judgments of the persons that we pass on our path of life, bestows us with the hazard of something worse than receiving their disapproval – the self’s detest of itself. What would be more merciless? Remember that self-judgment is what anchors us in society, and that self-judgment is what we always bare by constantly facing the social mirror of everyday life.

*The Love of Virtue*

To handle the above-mentioned aspects of our social embeddedness – the judgments of “partial spectators” as well as the judgments of the impartial spectator – we develop, what Smith ([1759] 1984: 117) calls “real love of virtue.” This kind of love is – as Harry G. Frankfurt (1971: 7) would have put it – “second order desire.” By way of our capacity for evaluative self-reflexion, we want to have or not to have certain sentiments and motives or passions. We desire a virtuous self, in the sense of an amiable and meritorious self, a self that deserves love and reward. Complications arise with the love of virtue when “[v]irtue is not said to be amiable, or to be meritorious, because it is the object of its own love, or of its own gratitude; but because it excites those sentiments in other men” (Smith [1759] 1984: 113). It is only from the viewpoint of society that we can be seen as virtuous. Hence, the unmediated access to our own sensations stands in the shadow of what is known about others’ experiences.
of us (Blasi 1998: 154). We then enter into what Smith ([1759] 1984: 145) calls “the great school of self-command” or what today is called “emotion-management” and “affect-control.” We acquire “second order nature,” in addition to “first order nature,” the social (virtuous) self, in addition to the biological organism.

A very young child has no self-command; but, whatever are its emotions, whether fear, or grief, or anger, in endeavours always, by the violence of its outcries, to alarm, as much as it can, the attention of its nurse, or of its parents. While it remains under custody of such partial protectors, its anger is the first and perhaps, the only passion which it is taught to moderate. [—] When it is old enough to go to school, or to mix with its equals, it soon finds that they have no such indulgent partiality. It naturally wishes to gain their favour, and to avoid their hatred or contempt. Regard even to its own safety teaches it to do so; and it soon finds that it can do so in no other way than by moderating, not only its anger, but all its other passions, to the degree which its play-fellows and companions are likely to be pleased with (Smith [1759] 1984: 145).

In this way self-formation and self-realization is strongly related to the development of sympathy. However, love of virtue, indeed, the need for recognition that is involved in self-realization signifies a specific form of sympathy. In a wide sense, it is possible to sympathize with “any passion whatever” (Smith [1759] 1984: 10). “Because one can sympathize with almost any passion,” as Griswold (1999: 85) writes, “it must be possible to ‘sympathize’ with someone and not approve of them, not even be ‘sympathetic’ in the narrow sense of the term.” We should therefore not confuse the love of virtue or the need for recognition that is involved in self-realization with sympathy in general. It only signifies sympathy in the narrowest sense of the term. Love of virtue is the self’s need for recognition of the passions that it arouses in the other, of being amiable and meritorious, become the object of the other’s love and gratitude. Ultimately, it is about the possibility of the self to become an object of its own love. To be as specific as possible, Smith understands the love of virtue as a (second order) desire for recognition that is motivated by the good of being beloved and the right of knowing that one deserves to be beloved and the bad of being hated and the wrong of knowing that one deserves to be hated.

Certainly, Smith’s theory of moral sentiment points at the centrality of sympathy, in the specific form of love.

[Although Smith delineates a somewhat unusual, technical sense of “sympathy” (“fellow-feeling” for any emotion), his use of the term sometimes slips into the more ordinary sense of “compassion” or affectionate fellow feeling. This no doubt intentional equivocation helps to suffuse the book with these themes, so that without much exaggeration, one could say that The Theory of Moral Sentiments is generally about love: our need for love and sympathy, love as friendship, self-love, the love of praise and blameworthiness, the love of beauty (Griswold 1999: 148, compare Stewart-Robertson and Norton 1984: 313).]
The love of virtue is a kind of moral self-consciousness requiring that “I divide myself, as it were, in two persons” (Smith [1759] 1984: 113). Again, we are faced with Smith’s idea of the form of the self. Through a modification of our passions the other can sympathize with them and like a looking glass reflect that image of the self. As a result, the virtuous self is something we become. As aforementioned, Smith stresses that this process of transformation from “creatures less than fully human” into “human creatures” or moral agents is necessary not only for others’ sympathy with us, but for the possibility of having a positive relation to ourselves.

The love of virtue is not the love of the approval of some other person, called the “impartial spectator,” but of an aspect of ourselves with which we “sympathize.” At this level it is a question of the self’s relation to itself. As we become habituated to observing ourselves from the impartial point of view, our emotions are themselves shaped so as to diminish the motivation to act from self-love alone, and our loves are consistent with our love of virtue; for we are impartial spectators of ourselves. The love of virtue is an outgrowth of sympathy (Griswold 1999: 133).

Hence, the love of virtue embodies a need for being recognized for who we are or desire to be from the impartial spectator’s perspective, in addition to the partial spectator’s perspective.

**Creatures of Passions**

The great significance for human life that Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ascribes to passions, make us appear to be a little more than creatures of passions (Griswold 1999: 113). To some extent, Smith sees passions as coming humanity or the virtuous self. However, he does not perceive passions as mere feelings in the sense of sensations. Through place-changing or sympathy passions become modified and communicate information and evaluations between different actors (Smith [1759] 1984: 399; compare Griswold 1999: 137). According to Smith, it is first when properly expressed that passions become truly communicative, and in turn part of the virtuous self or what make us human.

The propriety of every passion exited by objects peculiarly related to ourselves, the pitch which the spectator can go along with, must lie, it is evident, in a certain mediocrity. If the passion is too high, or if it is too low, he cannot enter into it. Grief and resentment for private misfortunes and injuries may easily, for example, be too high, and in the greater part of mankind they are so. They may likewise, thought this more rarely happens, be too low. We denominate the excess, weakness and fury: and we call the defect stupidity, insensibility, and want of spirit. We can enter into neither of them, but are astonished and confused to see them (Smith [1759] 1984: 27).

In other words, passions need to be expressed in accordance with societal values or norms. This is the only way to transform from first order nature into second
order nature, i.e., sympathy, in which the self and the other are always put on par.

According to Smith, our ability to form ideas about passions and sympathize with them is dependent on our imagination. In addition, he claims that it is the relationship between our imagination and our passions that makes it possible for us to form and direct ourselves. The self would simply be of no interest to us without the second order desire – love of virtue – that emerges through a sympathetic turn toward our passions, toward ourselves, which is made possible by imagination. In this way, imagination penetrates all sorts of passions – “the passions that take their origin from the body,” as well as “the passions that take their origin from a particular turn or habit of the imagination” (Smith [1759] 1984: 27ff.). These two general categories of emotion that Smith distinguishes between are what Griswold (1999: 114) calls the “bodily passions” and the “passions of the imagination.” “Phenomenologically,” Griswold (1999: 114) writes, “the key to the distinction between the two kinds of passions seems to be, in Smith’s account, that bodily passions are taken to be expressions or consequences of bodily affections or physical states (such as an empty stomach or an open wound), whereas this is not the case, at least at the level of ordinary experience, with states of mind – such as fear and hope – that depend on the work of the imagination.”

Although, Smith means that we work on both the bodily passions and the passions of the imagination with the help of imagination, he argues that the passions of the imagination are more easily sympathized with than the bodily passions. He does not distinguish between the two categories in terms of natural or artificial, good or evil, and rational or irrational, which he claims are situation-based in terms of expressed communication, but understands the passions of the imagination as more significant for social life or society than the bodily passions. Indeed, it seems like Smith understands the basis of the bodily passions as first order desire, whereas he understands the basis of the passions of the imagination as second order desire.

The argumentation can be linked to Smith’s idea of our physical separateness and psychical togetherness. As already mentioned, Smith argues that we have immediate access to our own sensations, but not to others’ sensations. In addition, imagination consistently draws the two – the self and the other – together. In this way, the passions of the imagination always include the other. This makes them more easily to work on and sympathize with than the bodily passions. The passions of the imagination are simply more malleable than the bodily passions, because imagination as a whole is possible to educate, whereas the body, though possible to educate, inevitably introduces an element of passivity into the self.

When satisfied, Smith ([1759] 1984: 2f.) argues, the bodily passions seem to vanish. Usually, it is better to simply satisfy them as quickly and quietly as
possible, than to make them into a second order nature – the social self – by the help of sympathetic imagination or by working on them through self-command. With the passions of the imagination, it is quite different.

Nothing is so soon forgot as pain. The moment it is gone the whole agony of it is over, and the thought of it can no longer give us any sort of disturbance. We ourselves cannot then enter into the anxiety and anguish which we had before conceived. An unguarded word from a friend will occasion a more durable uneasiness. The agony which this creates is by no means over with the word. What at first disturbs us is not the object of the senses, but the idea of the imagination. As it is an idea, therefore, which occasions our uneasiness, till time and other accidents have in some measure effaced it from our memory, the imagination continues to fret and rankle within, from the thought of it (Smith [1759] 1984: 29).

This may be why Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* focuses on the passions of the imagination, rather than on the bodily passions. The bodily passions do not necessarily have to include other persons and seldom affect them, whereas the passions of the imagination do necessarily include other persons and often affect them.

*The Passions of the Imagination*

Smith ([1759] 1984: 38ff.) divides the passions of the imagination into subcategories – the social-, the unsocial-, and the selfish passions. This categorization might seem inconsistent, since the passions of the imagination are to be understood as social passions, because they in one sense or another include the other. The inconsistency perceived depends on that Smith uses the term social in, at least, two different ways. When he talks about the passions of the imagination as social he focuses primarily on their genesis in social life, whereas he focuses on their consequences for society when he divides them into different subcategories. While the social passions promise societal growth, the unsocial passions threaten to tear society apart. The consequences of the selfish passions is found somewhere in between those opposite poles.

*The social passions* – generosity, kindness, compassion, gratitude, friendship and esteem – not only have the other as their object, but also affect the other since they are necessary for societal growth.

All members of human society stand in need of each others assistance, and are likewise exposed to mutual injuries. Where the necessary assistance is reciprocally afforded from love, from gratitude, from friendship, and esteem, the society flourishes and is happy. All the different members of it are bound together by the agreeable bands of love and affection, and are, as it were, drawn to one common centre of mutual good offices (Smith [1759] 1984: 85).
Smith continues by positing that the social passions are easiest to adapt to. When properly expressed, these passions enable “redoubled sympathy” (Smith [1759] 1984: 38). Not only do we sympathize with the persons who feel them, but also with the object of them. We are not in conflict, but can go along with both of them. With pleasure we witness the child who reaches for the parent’s hand, the friends who greet each other with a hug, and the teenager who helps an elderly person cross the street. Nonetheless, they can be improperly expressed. Extravagant love, for example, might seem so ridiculous in the eyes of the other that it becomes impossible to be recognized through it. “The imaginations of mankind, not having acquired that particular turn, cannot enter into them; and such passions, though they may be allowed to be almost unavoidable in some part of life, are always, in some measure, ridiculous,” Smith ([1759] 1984: 31) claims.

Within the classical plays of William Shakespeare, we find an abundance of examples that help us imagine how ridiculous extravagant love may appear in the eyes of the other. In the play *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream* (Shakespeare [1594] 1957: 172f.), we find fair Helena’s excessive love for Demetrius, who turns his back on her for the love of Hermia, who loves Lysander:

*Her.* God speed fair Helena! Whither away?
*Hel.* Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars! And your tongue’s
Sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd’s ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O! were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue’s sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I’d give to be to you translated.
O! teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius’ heart.
*Her.* I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.
*Hel.* O! that you frowns would teach my smiles such skill.
*Her.* I give him curses, yet he gives me love.
*Hel.* O! that my prayers could such affection move.
*Her.* The more I hate, the more he follows me.
*Hel.* The more I love, the more he hateth me.
*Her.* His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.
The passion that Helena expresses in this scene – her love for Demetrius – is ridiculed, rather than sympathized with. It is not only Demetrius who does not sympathize with Helena’s love for him. Hermia, indeed, finds it in some sense ridiculous. For her, it is impossible to view Demetrius as an object of love. In her eyes, he is an object of disgust. As she admits herself; “I frown upon him.” In her mind, no one but Lysander is the proper object of love, which her father finds ridiculous. The kind of improper love that Helena expresses seems to be difficult to enter into, not only because it is ridiculous in its stupidity, but because of the object of it.

Still, Helena’s appearance in *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream* evokes our sympathy. We sympathize with her hopes of all the good mutual love between her and Demetrius could bring. We enter into the subtle affliction of her loss of the idea “and so they lived happily ever after ...” We follow as she gives into her broken heart, in the ruins of which she loses the idea of even occasional happiness. Nonetheless, her love for Demetrius needs to be moderately expressed. Love, just like any other passion, is dependent of sympathetic imagination to become part of the virtuous selves.

In the case of the *unsocial passions* – anger, hatred, and resentment – the necessity of sympathetic imagination to enable recognition as virtuous may be more evident. After all, it threatens to tear society apart.

Society, however, cannot subsist among those who are at all times ready to hurt and injure one another. The moment that injury begins, the moment that mutual resentment and animosity take place, all the bands of it are broken asunder, and the different members of which it consisted are, as it were, dissipated and scattered abroad by the violence and opposition of their discordant affections (Smith [1759] 1984: 86).

Like the social passions, these passions take their origin in a specific turn or habit of imagination. Yet, Smith ([1759] 1984: 34) argues, they are different. In a much higher degree than any other set of passions, our sympathy with them is divided. Certainly, these passions are not a case of redoubled sympathy. On the one hand, we have the person who feels them, and on the other hand, the person who is the object of them. Who is to receive our sympathy in August Strindberg’s play *Miss Julie* when the thin line between love and hate is broken? Who do we sympathize with when Julie expresses her hatred towards Jean?

You think I cannot stand the sight of blood. You think I am as weak as that – oh, I should like to see your blood, your brains, on that block there. I should like to see your whole sex swimming in blood like that thing there. I think I could drink out of your skull, and bathe my feet in your open breast, and eat your heart from the spit! –You think I am weak; you think I love you because the fruit of my womb was yearning for your seed; you think I want to carry your offspring under my heart and nourish it with my blood – bear your children and take your name! Tell me, you, what are you called anyhow? I have never heard your family name – and maybe you haven’t any. I should become
Mrs. “Hovel,” or Mrs. “Backyard” – you dog there, that’s wearing my collar; you lackey with my coat of arms on your buttons – and I should share with my cook, and be the rival of my own servant. Oh! Oh! Oh! – You think I am a coward and want to run away! No, now I’ll stay – and let the lightning strike! My father will come home – will find his chiffonier opened – the money gone! Then he’ll ring – twice for the valet – and then he’ll send for the sheriff – and then I shall tell everything! Everything! Oh, but it will be good to get an end to it – if it only be the end! And then his heart will break, and he dies (Strindberg [1913] 1992: 30).

As we start to sympathize with one more than the other, we are in conflict since we cannot sympathize, in the narrowest sense of the term, with opposing “passions.” If we did not witness previous the scene leading to Julie’s outburst, (where Jean chops of the head of Julie’s favorite pet,) we are likely to sympathize with Jean, the object of Julie’s hate. “As they are both men,” Smith ([1759] 1984: 34) writes, “we are concerned for both, and our fear for what the one may suffer, damps our resentment for what the other has suffered.” If we are to sympathize with the hate or resentment of other people, it “must always be brought down to a pitch much lower than that to which undisciplined nature would raise them” (ibid.). To be amiable, the hate or resentment must be humble. Although we want her to be civil, we desire Julie to react to Jean’s behavior. Certainly, the unsocial passions are at times needed for acquiring sympathy and recognition. Yet, it is more difficult to become recognized for our unsocial passions that our social passions. Unsocial passions like anger, hatred, and resentment are not only disagreeable to the spectator, but also, to the actor. Hatred and anger are the greatest poison to the happiness of a good mind. There is, in the very feeling of those passions, something harsh, jarring, and convulsive, something that tears and distract the breast, and is altogether destructive of that composure and tranquillity of mind which is so necessary to happiness, and which is best promoted by the contrary passions of gratitude and love (Smith [1759] 1984: 37).

The selfish passions are found somewhere in between love and hate. Never are they so graceful as the former or so offensive as the latter. Among them, we find the two opposite extremes of the joy of becoming rich and famous over night and the grief of suddenly losing everything. The former seems to promise the flourishing of the self, whereas the latter seems to threaten to tear it apart. However, it is not from its own perspective that the self views itself, nor is it with reference to self-joy and self-grief, but rather it is with reference to the joy and grief that the self brings to the other. From this process does the self becomes loved or hated and knows that it deserves to be loved or hatred. According to Smith ([1759] 1984: 40f.), this explains why the lottery-millionaire, the married into high-class society, and the all to sudden vice-president of a successful company seldom get as happy as expected. Congratulations from their friends are not as sincere as they had hoped. It is to their advantage to minimize
themselves, including their luxuries, Smith argues. To enable the other’s happiness for the success of the self, it must appear to be gained gradually. One has to make sure that every spectator is able to foresee the next step long before it takes place.

Upon that account, when it comes, it can excite no extravagant joy, and with regard to whom it cannot reasonably create either any jealousy in those he overtakes, or any envy in those he leaves behind (Smith [1759] 1984: 41).

By gradually steps, we are able to see if the joy expressed is properly. Modestly expressed, the selfish joy takes the form of the common pleasures that fill up everyday-life. It is then easy to follow. Indeed, the one taking joy in the small things in life – the habitual light-hearted person – is graceful in the eyes of the other, Smith ([1759] 1984: 41f.) argues.

Concluding Remarks

It is obvious that Smith’s thinking on the self as social – the virtuous self – needs to be modified to become more adequate. It seems we should assure sympathy by commanding ourselves into the character of the habitual cheerful heroine or hero in a great tragedy. In that way, society would be able to go along with all of our passions – our person would altogether be sympathetic or our self would be virtuous. Put differently, our own passions would be recognized by the other, and in turn enable us to develop a positive relation to ourselves.

Nonetheless, Smith’s thinking clearly formulates the idea that self-formation and self-realization are dependent on sympathetic encounters with others that make us work upon and modify our passions. It, also, points at the very fact that those processes are preceded by a mutual corporal synchronization, i.e., that we assume the corporal attitudes of each other. Further, it shows the importance of the development of an impartial spectator, in addition to partial spectators, for becoming a moral agent and acquiring a positive relation to oneself. Smith argues that the other – the spectator – should ideally be understood as an imagined person “within,” rather than an actual person “without.” He claims that the self and the other ultimately meet within the social sphere of imagination. It is only in this sphere our person is scrutinized. In this context, Smith introduces the idea of an impartial spectator “within,” whom nothing can be hidden from, as would be the case of any actual spectator “without.”

We suppose ourselves the spectators of our own behaviour, and endeavour to imagine what effect it would, in this light, produce upon us. This is the only looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct (Smith [1759] 1984:112).
Notes

1 With *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) Smith first and foremost became acknowledged as the founder of modern economics, but with it he is also “credited with anticipating comparative historical sociology and a macro sociology of institutions” (Barbalet 1998: 11). For a discussion of the eighteenth century Scottish origin of sociology, see Björn Eriksson 1988. For references to other discussions of this kind, see Barbalet 1998: 11.

2 For a discussion of Adam Smith’s status as the first social psychologist, see Agneta Hugemark 1989.

3 Within the sociological discipline it is most common to look at Cooley and Mead as the founders of social psychology (see, for example, Collins 1988, Ritzer 1996). Sometimes, but more seldom, William James is pointed out as the founding father of social psychology. “The origins of the sociological conception of the self” Hans Joas (2000: 149), for example, writes, “are to be found in the intellectual life of the United States during the last decade of the nineteenth century. [...] The starting-point of this sudden flurry of ideas was William James’s psychology, which was published in 1890.”

4 Smith’s notion of sympathy will be closer examined at the end of this chapter.

5 In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* Smith interchangeably discusses passions and emotions, i.e., our desires or aversions, our joy or sorrow (Smith [1759] 1984: 27ff.). From now on I will, however, only use the term passions when I discuss Smith’s thinking. I do so because I later, in part II and III, talk about emotions in a more narrow sense than Smith does.

6 For a discussion of Mead’s distinction between “I” and “me,” see chapter three.

7 Smith did coin the term impartial spectator. However, he did not coin the term partial spectators, though some researchers apparently think so (see, for example, Hugemark 1989: 59). It rather seems to be Eriksson (1988) who coined the term when he discussed the necessity of the judgments of the impartial spectator for self-realization. “Brought into society”, he writes when describing Smith’s idea of the self as social, “we adjusted ourselves to the behavior that was expected from the whole bunch of significant others that surrounded us... It was, however, always a question of expectation from concrete significant others, others that we always could put a name on and which had particular, often egoistic, demands on our behavior. One could call them partial spectators” (Eriksson 1988: 319, my translation).

8 For a discussion of contemporary theories of emotion-management or affect-control, see chapter four.

9 For a discussion of the difference between the feeling of emotion (passion) and the feeling of sensation or simply between emotion (passion) and sensation, see chapter four.
CHAPTER II

The Looking-glass Self

Self and society are twin-born, we know one as immediately as we know the other, and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion. (Cooley [1909] 1962: 5)

In Cooley’s social theory we find a story of self and society as “twin-born.” There is no self without society. There is no society without individual selves. They are two sides of the same coin – social reality. “The real thing,” Cooley ([1902] 1922: 36 f.) writes, “is Human Life, which may be considered either in an individual aspect or in a social, that is to say a general, aspect; but is always, as a matter of fact, both individual and general.” Hence, self and society are intertwined. Indeed, they are understood as superfluous nothings without each other.

The individual is not separable from the human whole, but a living member of it, deriving his life from the whole through social and hereditary transmission as truly as if men were literally one body. He cannot cut himself off; the strands of heredity and education are woven into all his being. And, on the other hand, the social whole is in some degree dependent upon each individual, because each contributes something to the common life that no one else can contribute (Cooley [1902] 1992: 35).

It is on the basis of ideas like these that Cooley, (together with Mead,) has become known as the first social psychologist. Randall Collins (1988: 230) writes:

Among the first efforts of American sociology to crave out a territory for itself was the theory of the social self. It marks the inroads of sociology into psychology, dealing with a topic that appears at the first glance to be preeminently individual. What could be more intimate than one’s own self, and hence amenable at best to psychological, rather than sociological, analysis? The classic American theorists Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead, writing in the early twentieth century, showed otherwise. In their theories, the self would not exist without society.

As discussed in the previous chapter, as early as the 18th century, Smith showed that the self had no existence without society. Still, it is within the age of thinkers like Cooley and Mead that the idea of the social self becomes part of a continuous discussion. It is, also, at this period of time that pragmatism became established as an intellectual tradition. Within this school of thought, Descartes’ method
to determine the foundations of knowledge is criticized. By distinguishing, as Descartes does, between human thought (res cogitans) and the objects of the outer world (res extensa) as two autonomous realms, mind becomes “a kind of self-contained world of thoughts and experiences, essentially independent of the ‘external’ world of people and things ‘outside’ or ‘beyond’ it” (Bakhurst and Sypnowich 1995: 3). This sort of mind makes the self a prisoner, trapped forever in a subjective world. The core argument of pragmatism, “[all] stages of cognition, from sensory perception through to the logical drawing of conclusions and on to self-reflection” are processes that arise from problems encountered in the outer world or through communication with the other, however, set the self free.

Generally, pragmatism aims at the transcendence of the Cartesian mind-body dualism. Though, Smith’s idea of the social self clears the path for such a transcendence, it is Cooley who first explicitly demands a pragmatism at the level of social psychology. “A social, or perhaps, I should say, a sociological pragmatism remains to be worked out,” he writes (Cooley, as quoted in Jandy 1942: 110). As indicated above, Cooley requires a theory of the self as a process that emerges from and develops through problems encountered in the outer world or communication with the other.

Self and society go together, as phases of a common whole. I am aware of the social groups in which I live as immediately and authentically as I am aware of myself; and Descartes might have said “We think,” cogitamus, on as good grounds as he said cogito (Cooley [1909] 1962: 8f.).

When it comes to the development of a social pragmatism, Cooley and, especially, Mead, go far beyond the theorizing of Smith. Nevertheless, some parts of both Cooley and Mead’s thinking on the social self becomes more distinct against the background of Smith’s thinking, as we will see.

In this chapter, the three intertwined social psychological insights will be discussed in terms of Cooley’s thinking. As Hans-Joachim Schubert (1998: 22) writes “Cooley reconstructed three progressive phases of the evolving self: (1) the ‘sense of appropriation,’ which is the expression of a biologically manifested spontaneity and activity; (2) the ‘social self,’ which is developed by taking in the attitudes of others; and (3) the famous ‘looking-glass self,’ which describes neither an ‘over-socialized self’ characterized by passive internalization of given habits and values nor an ’unencumbered self’ cut loose from all social constraints.”

Under, Self and Society as Siamese Twins, the social psychological insight that the self does not emerge without the other or society is elaborated on in terms of the first and second of the progressive phases that Schubert ascribes to Cooley’s theory of the evolving self. Under, The Other that Doth Pass, the social psychological insight that it is from the point of view of the other or society that the self develops is elaborated on in the terms of the third of the
progressive phases that Schubert ascribes to Cooley’s theory of the evolving self – the looking-glass self. This is a self-idea that “seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 184). Finally, under, The Need for Recognition, the social psychological insight that the process of self-realization involves a need for recognition is elaborated on in terms of Cooley’s conception of love. The overarching aim of the chapter is to give a deeper understanding of the notion of the social self, and, especially, the role of emotion.

Self and Society as Siamese Twins

Cooley argues that the relation between self and society is “organic” ([1902] 1992: 35). Self and society are not simply twin-born, but rather like Siamese twins, they share the same “heart.” Whether in sickness or health, their shared “heart” pumps the stream of social reality around in mind – the sphere in which self and society always are put on par and simultaneously emerge and develop. “MIND,” Cooley ([1909] 1962: 3) writes, “is an organic whole made up of coöperating individualities, in somewhat the same way that the music of an orchestra is made up of divergent but related sounds.” In the same way as the orchestra makes up something more than the sum of the musicians playing related tones on different instruments – a symphony – people coming together and doing related things in different ways makes up something more than the sum of their behavior turning into action – social reality. The sum is greater than its parts. Yet the synergistic parts are of equal importance.

In order to have society it is evidently necessary that persons should get together somewhere; and they get together only as personal ideas in the mind. Where else? What other possible locus can be assigned for the real contact of persons, or in what other form can they come in contact except as impressions or ideas formed in this common locus? Society exists in my mind as the contact and reciprocal influence of certain ideas named “I,” Thomas, Henry, Susan, Bridget, and so on. It exists in your mind as a similar group, and so in every mind. Each person is immediately aware of a particular aspect of society: and so far as he is aware of great social wholes, like a nation or an epoch, it is by embracing in this particular aspect ideas or sentiments which he attributes to his countrymen or contemporaries in their collective aspect (Cooley [1902] 1992: 119).

What the above quoted lines indicate and which is typical for Cooley is that society is seen as mental, from the perspective of the individual self. However, Cooley’s idea, which seemingly contradict his intention of developing an understanding of self and society as two sides of social reality, must be understood in relation to his claim that “society is mental,” because “the human mind is social” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 81).
As aforementioned, Cooley requires a social pragmatism, which indicates that he ultimately understands mind as an outcome of our communication with each other. “[T]he mind lives in perpetual conversation,” Cooley ([1902] 1992: 90) writes. “Without communication,” he maintains, “the mind does not develop a true human nature, but remains in an abnormal and nondescript state neither human nor properly brutal” (Cooley [1909] 1962: 62). More precisely, Cooley ([1909] 1963: 61) thinks that communication is “the mechanism through which human relations exist and develop – all the symbols of the mind, together with the means of conveying them through space and preserving them in time. It includes the expression of the face, attitude and gesture, the tones of the voice, words, writing, printing, railways, telegraphs, telephones, and whatever else may be the latest achievement in the conquest of space and time. All these taken together, in the intricacy of their actual combination, make up an organic whole corresponding to the organic whole of human thought; and everything in the way of mental growth has an external existence therein.” Further, he (ibid.) claims that “[t]here is no sharp line between the means of communication and the rest of the external world. In a sense all objects and actions are symbols of the mind, and nearly anything may be used as a sign [...].”

Hence, Cooley does not understand mind as being isolated from the outer world (Schubert 1998: 21). Instead, Cooley talks about “[t]he growth of personal ideas through intercourse,” which “implies a growing power of sympathy, of entering into and sharing the minds of other persons. To converse with another, through words, looks, or other symbols, means to have more or less understanding or communion with him, to get on common ground and partake of his ideas and sentiments” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 136). Cooley refers to people’s mutual influences on each other when he insists “the imaginations which people have of one another are the solid facts of society” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 121). In other words, both self and society are understood as artifacts of intersubjective processes. This indicates that the influence that we have on society is what makes us present in it, and that the influence that society has on us is what makes it present in us. Further, it indicates that this presence is dependent on the group.

Although “group,” in ordinary usage, often denotes a mere assemblage of persons or things[,] it is commonly understood in sociology to mean a social group, that is[,] a number of persons among whom is some degree of communication and interaction. Moreover this must be reciprocal and not in one direction only. ... Evidently the conception is a very general one, and groups may vary indefinitely in size and character. Any two persons conversing make up a group, and, on the other hand[,] the word might be applied in some connections to the whole population of the earth, since there can be few persons, if any, who do not directly or indirectly receive and give influence (Cooley 1895, index card, as cited in Schubert 1998: 24).
The self and the other have no existence as mutually exclusive social facts (Cooley [1902] 1992: 126). To acquire a self, we have to imagine or notice others, at the same time as we become imagined or noticed by others. In short, the self is neither a “physical thing” nor a “thinking thing.” Rather, it is the transcendence of body and mind through intersubjective relations between people. It is social reality or human life.

When Cooley discusses the self, he has the pronouns of the first person singular as used in daily speech in mind. As such, “I,” “me,” “mine,” and “myself,” “always have more or less distinct reference to other people as well as the speaker” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 168). Hence, a view on the self as primary to social consciousness, for example, Descartes’ theory of knowledge, is understood as deceptive. According to Cooley ([1909] 1962: 6), the observation of Descartes that “whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, I think, hence I am, was so certain and of such evidence that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of philosophy,” misleads us in at least two central aspects. “In the first place,” Cooley (ibid.) writes, “it seems to imply that ‘I’-consciousness is part of all consciousness, when, in fact, it belongs only to a rather advanced stage of development. In the second it is one-sided or ‘individualistic’ in asserting the personal or ‘I’ aspect to the exclusion of the social or ‘we’ aspect, which is equally original with it.” Instead of using Descartes’ limited conception of introspection, Cooley suggests that we should think in terms of sympathetic introspection (Cooley [1909] 1972: 7). It, then, becomes clear that self-consciousness is an advanced stage of development and that such a development does not take place outside the social sphere or without an imagined other.

The mental experience of the newborn is just sensations following upon each other or an uninterrupted stream of impressions. Such a process is not to be confused with the self. We may talk about the former as some kind of general consciousness, but not as self-consciousness. In fact, the infant becomes self-conscious first in the process of co-operation with the outer world or communication with the other. Then, “the mind begins to discriminate personal impressions and to become both naively self-conscious and naively conscious of society; that is, the child is aware, in an unreflective way, of a group and of his own special relation to it” (Cooley [1909] 1972: 8). The child, now, experiences the connection between its actions and changes in the movements of the persons and things that surrounds it. In this manner the child becomes aware, in an unreflective way, of its influence over the outer world. Actually, Cooley claims that the self, originally, materializes in the movements that the human biological organism brings forth in the outer world, and that its sense of self or self-feeling arises when this sort of influence is
threatened. As David D. Franks and Victor Gecas (1992b: 55f.) states, “Cooley clearly thought the earliest sense of self was a function of the act of possessing something. The behaviors giving rise to these feelings were aggressive, assertive acts stemming, for example, from disputes with other children over the ownership (and thereby control) of objects. It was in this militant context that the child voiced the first phrases indicating what Cooley took as sense of self – ‘my,’ ‘mine,’ ‘give it to me,’ ‘I want it,’ etc.” Hence, when Cooley ([1902] 1992: 172) writes that “[t]here can be no final test of the self except the way we feel,” he does not refer to the self as a physical thing, or as the flesh and blood of the biological organism. Instead, he refers to the feeling that the child in relation to others attaches to and let form that flesh and blood. In this sense, we could say that Cooley argues that the self is made of – to refer to Smith – the passions that take their origin in a specific turn or habit of imagination, rather than the passions that take their origin in the body.

To elaborate this line of argumentation Cooley refers to the first hundred “I” and “me” in Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*. Most often those hundred “I” and “me” are used in connection with emotion, thought, intention etc., he ([1902] 1922: 176f.) argues. When the pronoun, nevertheless, is used in connection with the body, which is altogether nineteen times out of hundred, it is always in a rather vague sense like “I came to Denmark” or “No more like my father than I to Hercules.” Drawing upon the way Shakespeare’s characters use pronouns, Cooley concludes that they seldom think of themselves as equivalent to their biological organisms. More importantly, he claims that Shakespeare’s characters in this respect are representative of humankind in general.

Still, it is in some sense confusing to think of the self as something other than our physical appearance, Cooley thinks. In Stig Larsson’s novel *Nyår* ([New Year] 1984), Kenneth, the main character of the novel, expresses such confusion:

“The body fell apart piece by piece,” he says as he is trying to recall a serious ski-accident he had suffered some years earlier. “I ripped away big rags from it,” he continues. “What *I*,” he asks (Larsson [1984] 1987: 133, my translation, emphasis added).

In this context, “I” is capable of ripping rags from its own body, which indicates that “I” in some sense must be separated from the body. The two cannot be one. What is the self, if it is not the body, or located in it? The problem becomes evident in the confusion of the child who is asked to locate the self. What does the child refer to when it uses pronouns like “I,” “me,” and “mine?”

Cooley remembers one of his own children struggling to point out the self. “In my own children,” he ([1902] 1992: 195) writes, “I only once observed anything of this sort, and that was in the case of R., when he was struggling to
achieve the correct use of his pronouns; and a futile, and as I now think
mistaken, attempt was made to help him by pointing out the association of the
word with his body.”

As aforementioned, in everyday life the child’s usage of pronouns like “I,”
“me,” and “mine” “refer to claims upon playthings, to assertions of one’s
peculiar will or purpose, as ‘I don’t want to do it that way,’ ‘I am going to draw
a kitty,’ and so on, rarely to any part of the body” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 195).
Let me explore this line of argumentation with the help of two stories of my
early childhood.

The first story pictures the self as the relation between the self and the outer
world in form of another person:

I was talking to my mother, who was talking to someone else on the phone.
I did what I could to get her attention. I sang her a song. I played with her hair.
I stroked my hand over her chin. I guess I talked in terms of “me, “myself,”
and “I.” After a while she had enough of my behavior. She shut the door
between us, between the bathroom and the hallway. I was locked up in the
bathroom and she was talking on the phone in the hallway. An ugly dark-brown
door – I always remember that particular door as ugly – was separating me
from my mother. In the middle was my foot. The heel was in the bathroom
with some of me. The big toe was in the hallway with the rest of me – my
mother. I do not remember the bodily pain I must have felt. I do remember the
mortification of the lost power over my mother – the reification of myself.

The second story pictures the self as the relation between the self and the
outer world in the form of a thing:

The whole family was going to meet at my grandparents’ house. I decided to
stay at home if I could not bring my favorite chair. It was small. It would not be
much of a problem to bring it along... Somehow, maybe because it was Christ-
mas, my parents were easily persuaded. They went along with my wish. The
chair was allowed to accompany us... It, my chair, was placed in the middle of
the action. Together we enjoyed the company of the others. I was making jokes,
laughing a lot, which seemed to draw everybody’s attention towards me. My
cousin’s attention was drawn to my chair. She wanted to sit on it. She did not
ask me for permission. No one asked me if I would let her. Someone just carried
me away from the chair. But, it was my chair, supposed to be part of me, not
part of her. At that time I did not know of such thing as reification. I felt the
mortification of my lost power over the chair. I could not stand the feeling. I
could not let a part of me be part of her. I ran towards what was mine and
crushed it with my bare hands. They were, I was told many years later, bleeding.
I do not remember any blood. I do remember the chair broken into pieces.

Looking back at these short episodes of my life, it seems clear to me that I
sensed or felt me through “my mother” and “my chair,” that is, through the
other. The stories illustrate the self as something that tries to conquer the world
or the other by seeing itself in it. It puts names on itself like “my mother” and “my chair,” when threatened to lose influence over its relationships with the outer world or the other. It fights for being able to personally act upon the mind and conscience of the other by shouting “me,” “myself,” and “I.” Indeed, both of these stories show how a primitive sense of self or self-feeling arises through problems encountered when interacting with the outer world or the other.

Though the sort of self that is pictured in the two stories must be seen as premature, (since it does not include the looking-glass self,) it includes what Cooley ([1902] 1992: 198) calls “the germ of personal ambition of every sort.” This kind of ambition is important for the development or maturity of the self, because it makes us work on our capacity of sympathy, and our ability to enter into and share other persons’ minds, especially, their judgments about us.

*The Other that Doth Pass*

From the day that the child’s personal ambition becomes established it makes greater and greater efforts to understand what kind of impressions it makes on the minds of others. At this time, the “reflected or looking-glass self” (through which the more primitive sense of self or self-feeling develops) evolves. “A self-idea of this sort,” Cooley writes, “seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 184).

Cooley’s idea of the looking-glass self could have been developed in conscious analogy with Smith’s idea about society as the mirror or looking-glass of the self.4 Like Smith, he points at the crucial part that the judgements of the other play in the process of self-formation. It is, first and foremost, those judgements that Cooley ([1902] 1992: 184) has in mind when he tries to capture the depth of the looking-glass self by quoting the following lines of Emerson:

> Each to each a looking-glass
> Reflects the other that doth pass.

Without the imagination of other people’s judgments of our appearance that move us to some sort of self-feeling, like pride or shame there would be no motive for the enterprise of self-development.

The comparison with a looking-glass hardly suggests the second element, the imagined judgment, which is quite essential. The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another’s mind. [—] We always imagine, and in imagining share, the judgments of the other mind (Cooley [1902] 1992: 184f.).
When the looking-glass self evolves, self-feeling is no longer solely a question of “the joy of being a cause, of exerting social power” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 196). The sense of self turns into a question of the ability to view its received influence, and given influence, or relations to specific parts of the surrounding world, like the relations I as a child had to my mother and my chair, from the point of view of society. As indicated before, we then imagine the other’s judgment of our appearance, which according to Cooley, is followed by the emotional process of self-feeling, i.e., pride or mortification.

In his book *Känslornas filosofi* (The Philosophy of Emotions 1992: 113), Sten Anderson, inspired by Jean-Paul Sartre, tells us a story about a problem, in which he experiences the self by imagining another person’s judgment of his appearance, and not being able to doubt it because of the shame he is feeling. Andersson is visiting some friends, a married couple, over the weekend. He spends a pleasant evening in their company, and it becomes time to say goodnight. Said and done. He goes to the guestroom, and his friends go to their bedroom. After resting in the bed for a while, Andersson needs to use the bathroom. Instead of going straight ahead, he stops in front the couple's bedroom, which he has to pass to get to the bathroom. He looks around to make sure that he is alone in the hallway. He then bends and peeks in through the keyhole of the door. As he turns his head to see better, someone clears the throat behind him. Andersson turns around, and his eyes meet with the eyes of one half of the couple – the husband. In his gaze, Andersson feels mortified. He wants to disappear. He wants to drop dead. The shame that he is feeling, however, tells him that the opposite is the case. Most certainly, he is alive. There is no doubt that he exists.

Against the background of this story, Andersson is paraphrasing Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum*:

I am ashamed, hence I exists (Andersson 1992: 114, my translation).

But, since the story, also, indicates that we do not feel ashamed without imagining others’ judgment of our appearance, he (1992:114) adds:

I am ashamed, hence, you exist (Andersson 1992: 114, my translation).

Emotions like shame are relational. We do not feel shame without a relation to the other. Shame is always felt over something in relation to someone. We even feel differently over the same things in relation to different persons, Cooley ([1902] 1992: 184f.) claims:

[T]he character and weight of that other, in whose mind we see ourselves, makes all the difference with our feeling. We are ashamed to seem evasive in the presence of a straightforward man, cowardly in the presence of a brave one, gross in the eyes of a refined one, and so on. We always imagine, and in imagining share, the judgment of the other mind. A man will boast to one person of an action – say some sharp transaction in trade – which he would be ashamed to own to another.
The other is significant not only for the way that we imagine ourselves, but also, for the way that we judge ourselves. The other does not only make us feel the self when our relations to the outer world are threatened, which is evident in the cases when my cousin made a claim upon my chair, and when someone on the phone demanded my mother. (It was my chair and my mother.) The other, also, seems to influence what kind of emotions we feel about the way we relate to the outer world or the other. When Andersson peeks in through the keyhole of his married friends’ bedroom, he is excited. In the gaze of the husband, his excitement turns to shame, however. Andersson suddenly becomes aware of the other’s judgment of his appearance. (Andersson is not looking at his own wife. He is looking at his friend’s wife.)

We become conscious of the self-relevancy of things and persons in the surrounding world first when our intersubjective relations to them become threatened, or problematic. At the same time, we become conscious of the fact that we are not the only ones who has a relationship to those things and persons or see them as self-relevant. Still, they are crucial for the self. As Cooley ([1902] 1992: 194) writes, “even in adult life, ‘I,’ ‘me,’ and ‘mine’ are applied with a strong sense of their meaning only to things distinguished as peculiar to us by some sort of opposition or contrast. They always imply social life and relation to other persons. That which is most distinctively mine is very private, it is true, but it is that part of the private which I am cherishing in antithesis to the rest of the world, not the separate but the special.”

Hence, to become a unique part of social reality, we need to focus upon a special part or aspect of the world that we are brought into in antithesis to the rest of that world. In that way, we endow the world with self-relevancy, which is essential for our ability of self-feeling. Actually, the need for recognition involved in self-realization is essentially related to our relations to the persons and things that we cherish in antithesis to the rest of the world. Indeed, they are part of what makes us unique or individual persons.

**The Need for Recognition**

When Cooley uses love as a metaphor to picture self-formation and self realization, he points at one of the most central aspect of recognition, namely, to be cherished, though not worthy to “swallow up all other selves” (Cooley [1902] 1992: 217). This means to be recognized in one’s difference from the other, rather than sameness with the other. In this sense, Cooley’s conception of love questions the way that love and self are set over against each other in the literature of the emotion, for example, Tennyson (as cited in Cooley [1902] 1992:162):

> Love took up the harp of life and smote on all the chords with might;
> Smote the chord of self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.
It is true that there exists love of the self-deserting kind, Cooley argues. At least, it is what the Buddhist sages seek in Nirvana.

Love of this sort obliterates that idea of separate personality whose life is always unsure and often painful. One who feels it leaves the precarious self; his boat glides out upon a wider stream; he forgets his own deformity, weakness, shame, or failure, or if he thinks of them it is to feel free of them, released from their coil (Cooley [1902] 1992: 163).

Nevertheless, love that intends or strives for something in the world of the beloved always includes the self. Even a parent’s love for a child is a type of self-love. This is evident in the difference between “my children” and “your kids.” Love for my children almost always appears to be stronger than love for your kids. How often do we not hear people say; “it is different when it is your own child”? The love for one’s own child is associated with “me,” “myself,” and “I.” It is the love for my child. Cooley ([1902] 1992: 162) describes this kind of love as “active, purposeful, and appropriative, rejoicing in its object with a sense of being one with it as against the rest of the world.” Like the love I, as a child, felt for my mother and my chair, such a love is a matter of self-enlargement, rather than of self-desertion. It is love that, as Cooley ([1902] 1992: 163) writes, “lingers upon something, forms intention, and begins to act.” As aforementioned, he claims that everything cherished is part of the self. It has, thus, nothing to do with the kind of selflessness that we find in the New Testament’s idea of God’s love – agape, that is, disinterested and unbounded love that does not cherish and strive for its object.

A wholly selfless love is mere contemplation, an escape from conscious specialty, and a dwelling in undifferentiated life. It sees all things as one and makes no effort (Cooley [1902] 1992: 164).

Few love like that – selflessly. Have you ever met a person who loves without taking delight in the object of love? What kind of lover does not strive for being able to claim the object of the love as her or his in antithesis to the rest of the world? Who in love does not have hopes and fears regarding the loved one? Finally, who wants a love through which one cannot be recognized as such?

The man first loves the woman as something transcendent, divine, or universal, which he dares not think of appropriating; but presently he begins to claim her as his in antithesis to the rest of the world, and to have hopes, fears, and resentments regarding her; the painter loves beauty contemplatively, and then tries to paint it; the poet delights in his visions, and then tries to tell them, and so on (Cooley [1902] 1992: 164f.).

This kind of love has ambitions, and is no more selfless than any other kind of ambitions. Hence, falling in love may seem like self-desertion, but is more like self-transcendence, which in some sense aims at self-enlargement. The love I had for my chair, and the love I had for my mother, was made part of me as an
extension of myself, in the same way as the parent’s love for a child is made part of them as lovers transformed into a family. In this context, we are, first and foremost, dealing with our openness toward the outer world, which must be seen as one of the most fundamental traits of the human being. Such openness should be confused neither with mere contemplation nor with some sort of passively received love from others. It is a conscious or unconscious struggle of assertion. It is a question of the self’s incorporation of the other within interaction.

*Being in love*, which is necessary for the development of a mature self, we open up for society’s attitude towards our particular love through which the self has expanded. It is about enabling an understanding of the surrounding world’s view on the special relationship we have to the very same world. To be truly recognized as human, we need to open up those relations, and let them be part of a more general stream of imagination.

The sort of self-love that is harmful is one that has hardened about a particular object and ceased to expand. On the other hand, it seems that the power to enter into universal life depends upon a healthy development of the special self. [—] We cannot, then, exalt one of these over the other; what would seem desirable is that the self, without losing its special purpose and vigor, should keep expanding, so that it should tend to include more and more of what is largest and highest in the general life (Cooley [1902] 1992: 165).

To close one’s heart forever is to cease developing the self. It is to unable the growth of the power of sympathy, which is necessary for the growth of personal ideas, as well as making us human. According to Cooley, a growing power of sympathy is the magic that turns the biological human organism into a human being. It enables what Smith calls a virtuous self.

By human nature, I suppose, we may understand those sentiments and impulses that are human in being superior to those of lower animals, and also in the sense that they belong to mankind at large; and not to any particular race or time. It means, particularly, sympathy and the innumerable sentiments into which sympathy enters, such as love, resentment, ambition, vanity, hero-worship, and the feeling of social right or wrong (Cooley [1909] 1972: 28).

The child, who rather with bare hands crushes its belongings than lend them to someone else, like I did with my chair as a child, has yet no feeling of social right or wrong. To put it in the terms of Smith, the child has not developed an impartial spectator or a man within the breast. The child is not able to genuinely view itself in the looking-glass of its society. The fully developed looking-glass self is able to create an image of how its relations to specific parts of the world that it inhabits appear to the rest of that world. It is able to judge itself from the point of view of society. The looking-glass self is motivated to do what is socially right, instead of socially wrong, because of the pride or mortification that is the outcome of this sort of judgment. Nonetheless, to ensure that its human
qualities develop further, it needs to understand that it is and will remain a self-seeker. It, also, needs to understand that the only way to find itself is by ways of the other. Indeed, self-realization involves a continuous need for recognition.

_Every cherished idea is a self:_ and, though it appear to the individual, or to a class, or to a whole nation, worthy to swallow up all other selves, it is subject to the same need of discipline under rules of justice and decency as any other. It is healthy for every one to understand that he is, and will remain, a self-seeker, and that if he gets out of one self he is sure to form another which may stand in equal need of control. [—] Selfishness as a mental trait is always some sort of narrowness, littleness, or defect; an inadequacy of imagination. The perfectly balanced and vigorous mind can hardly be selfish, because it cannot be oblivious to any important social situation, either in immediate intercourse or in more permanent relations; it must always tend to be sympathetic, fair, and just, because it possesses that breadth and unity of view of which these qualities are the natural expression. To lack them is to be not altogether social and human (Cooley [1902] 1992: 217).

**Concluding Remarks**

To sum up, Cooley’s theory of the looking-glass self lacks a thorough idea of how the social self communicates with itself, in the sense of, for example, Smith’s idea of the impartial spectator. It is, also, true that social pragmatism, which Cooley was the first to proclaim, is in need of such kind of thinking. Cooley’s theory of the looking-glass self, however, contributes to a deeper understanding of the emotional processes that are essential for the development of the social self’s relation to itself, or the impartial spectator, than does Smith’s theory of the virtuous self. First, Cooley shows that the initial formation of a self-idea arises when the feeling of mutually received and given influence between the self and the other are threatened or problematic. Indeed, he explains that self-reflexion or I-consciousness, which he understands as sympathetic introspection, arises out of problems encountered in the course of action in the outer world, and that it is an advanced phase of consciousness. Second, he points out the importance of self-feelings, such as pride and mortification, for the development of the second order desire that Smith calls the love of virtue. This is important since the development of this kind of love is what motivates us to work on our capacity of sympathy, without which there would be no such thing as an impartial spectator. Third, Cooley’s ([1902] 1992: 162) conception of love as “active, purposeful, and appropriative, rejoicing in its object with a sense of being one with it as against the rest of the world” implies that self-realization includes not only a need for recognition in the sense of equality, i.e., self-determination or autonomy, but, also, in the sense of difference, i.e., being special and irreplaceable. With those insights, Cooley succeeds Smith’s theorizing on the social process of self-formation, especially, the role of emotion. When it comes to the evolving social self, Cooley’s most important contribution has
been to initiate social pragmatism. It is through Cooley that we have come to think of the self as developing through emotional processes that are a result of problems or inhibitions of our interchanges with the outer world.
Notes

1 Though Cooley and Mead are the thinkers who have come to be known and talked about as the first social psychologists, at least, within the sociological discipline, it is William James’s *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) that ought to be seen as the starting-point of the continuous discourse of the social self. James (1890: 279ff.) introduces the idea of the “total self” that is made up by a “material self,” a “social self”, and a “spiritual self.” For an account of the implications of this idea, and the objections it has meet with, especially, from Mead, see Joas (1998).

2 Smith rather develops a sort of pragmatism in the form of the logical drawing of conclusions. In his essay *The History of Astronomy*, which was published posthumously in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (1980), we find his most worked-through attempt of such a kind of theorizing. As Barbalet (1998: 189) points out, Smith in this essay “demonstrates that scientific discovery and the theoretical reorganizations which take the form of what are now called ‘scientific revolutions’ are at root to be explained in terms of emotional process.” Further, I would like to add, Smith understands this sort of emotional process in terms of social interaction in the form of problems encountered in the course of action in the outer world. The emotions that Smith has in mind are wonder, surprise, and admiration. About surprise he, for example, writes that “[w]e are surprised at those things which we have seen often, but which we least of all expected to meet with in the place where we find them; we are surprised at the sudden appearance of a friend, whom we have seen a thousand times, but whom we did not imagine we were to see then” (Smith [1795] 1980: 33).

3 See the exemplification of this process in the form of two stories of my early childhood told later in this chapter.

4 That Cooley’s adoption of the looking glass symbol is possible to understand in continuation with Smith’s theory of moral sentiments is not an uncontradicted statement. Paul Creelan (1987: 40) argues that Smith was Cooley’s “foremost antagonist.” “Cooley understood Smith’s conception as shrunken and perverted fragment”, he (1987: 40) writes. But, as far as I know, Cooley nowhere expresses such an understanding of Smith’s thinking. If he, nevertheless, implicitly meant so, he must have misunderstood Smith, in the same sense as Creelan does when he (1987:31) reduces Smith’s idea of sympathy to “a complex of relentless self-interest coupled with a rationality that decrees that some degree of voluntary adjustment is necessary in order to avoid the Hobbesian war of each against all.” As I have shown in the previous chapter, Smith – to quote Francis Fukuyama, reviewing Griswold’s *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment*, – “does not believe that human beings are born into the world as bundles of selfish preference, nor does he argue, like contemporary game theorists, that their sociability arises out of a rational contractarian process.” For a closer investigation of Smith’s work that shows that he believed that the capacity of moral action was natural to human beings and that the primary moral sentiment was sympathy see Eriksson (1988) or Griswold (1999).
CHAPTER III

The Attitude Taking Self

We must be others if we are to be ourselves.

Mead ([1902] 1992: xxix) argues that Cooley’s most important contribution to social psychology is his ideas that “[t]he mind is not first individual and then social,” and that “[t]he mind itself in the individual arises through communication.” In short, ideas like these distinguish “social psychology” from “ordinary psychology.”

Just as the conscious processes of the mind of ‘ordinary psychology’ correspond to the living processes of the physiological individual, so the social processes of the mind answer to the living processes of society. However, there is an essential difference between the two. Our physical and biological observation presents us with the objects that make up society and its mechanisms, which can be stated and defined without recourse to a living social process. It is in fact necessary to endue these physiological and physical objects with the meanings which, for Cooley, reside in the mind before life can be breathed into the social organism (Mead [1902] 1992: xxviiiif.).

In the above quotation, Mead embraces Cooley’s idea that we need to be endowed with meaning before we can be viewed as social selves. However, Mead is not satisfied with “Cooley’s assumption that the form which the self takes in the experience of the individual is that of imaginative ideas which he finds in his mind that others have of him. And that others are the imaginative ideas which he entertains of them” (Mead [1902] 1992: xxxiv). Mead ([1902] 1992: xxxi) argues that “[a] self that can reach other selves only through interpretation of states of consciousness that are primarily states of itself, can never be primarily a social self, no matter how social the group may be within which as a living organism it has its being.” To explain the self as social, we cannot view social reality as mental. Instead, we need to show that social reality is “an objective phase of experience which we set off against a physical phase” (Mead [1902] 1992: xxxv). We need to show more systematically than Cooley does that physical behavior or contact between people takes place in the course of action in the outer world, not in the mind.1 The latter is central to the social psychology of Mead, and important for the development of social pragmatism. Therefore, let me quote Mead when he elaborates the idea that “[t]he locus of society is not in the mind” (Mead [1902]1992: xxxvi):
The evidence for this [that the self and the other belongs to an objective phase of experience] is found in the fact that the human organism, in advance of psychical experiences to which Cooley refers, assumes the attitude of another which it addresses by vocal gesture, and in this attitude addresses itself, thus giving rise to its own self and to the other [...] In the process of communication there appears a social world of selves standing on the same level of immediate reality as that of the physical world that surrounds us. It is out of this social world that the inner experiences arise which we term psychical, and they serve largely in interpretation of this social world as psychical sensations and percepts serve to interpret the physical objects of our environment. If this is true, social groups are not psychical but immediately given, though inner experiences are essential for their interpretation (Mead [1902] 1992: xxxvf.).

Mead’s claim is that mind or inner experience is preceded by human beings’ communication with each other in the outer world. Hence, self and society is not found by ways of sympathetic introspection, but in what Mead ([1938] 1972: 65; 1982: 27) calls “the act.” The mind, which Cooley supposes that self and others dwell in, is itself, “as psychical, a phase of experience that is an outgrowth of primitive human communication,” Mead writes. To show that this is the case social psychology must approach mind by “an analysis which is behavioristic” (Mead [1902] 1992: xxxvi). Hence, the social psychologist must take behaviorism as her or his methodological position. “Social psychology,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 7) writes, “is behavioristic in the sense of starting off with an observable activity – the dynamic, on-going social process, and the social acts which are its component elements – to be studied and analyzed scientifically.” Accordingly, the social psychologist must work “from the outside to the inside” (Mead [1934] 1967: 8). She or he must be concerned with “[t]he act, then, and not the tract” (Mead [1934] 1967: 8).

In this way, Mead expands the social pragmatism that Cooley was the first to explicitly demand. A parallel between Mead’s behaviorism and social pragmatism may seem unexpected. Nonetheless, the behaviorism of Mead develops into social pragmatism. “When Mead wrote and lectured on social psychological topics,” Gary A. Cook (1993: 161) writes, “he often characterized his mature approach to human conduct as a version of psychological ‘behaviorism.’ When he sought to develop the broader implications of this same approach, however, he thought of himself as a representative of philosophical ‘pragmatism.’”

It, however, was not Cooley who compelled Mead to develop a philosophical or social pragmatism. Mead’s source of inspiration was rather the work of his friend and companion John Dewey. Mead “emphasizes the importance of Dewey’s early Hegelianism as one of the foundations for his later pragmatism. Dewey’s early training in the dialectic of absolute idealism, Mead contends, supplied him with several key convictions that he carried over into his mature philosophical work. Among these were: (1) the conception of reality as a
developing process; (2) the view that both human thought and its objects arise within this process and are integrally related aspects of it; (3) the notion that human society is a culminating dimension of this process and that the human individual can achieve self-realization only through participation with other selves as an organic part of a larger social whole” (Cook 1993:163 f.). Those key convictions are all found in Mead’s idea of the attitude or role taking self, which we find throughout his work (see, for example Mead [1934] 1967).

The overarching aim of this third chapter is to systematize the logic of the evolving self in Mead’s writings. Three distinct forms of our interchanges with the outer world come to the forefront: (1) functional identification with the outer world, (2) attitude taking of the thing (towards oneself), (3) attitude taking of the other (towards oneself). These distinctions, implicit in Mead’s thinking on the attitude taking self, provide us with theoretical tools to explain our social transformation from biologically behaving organisms into emotional and reflexive persons. As we will see, Mead explicitly points out the inhibition of act or problematic social interchanges as the key to attitude taking of the thing from which he means that self-feeling arises, and attitude taking of the other from which he means that self-reflexion arises. At the same time, he emphasizes that our functional identity or functional identification with the outer world, especially, the other, is the foundation of the inhibited act. Within this primordial, pre-personal sociality, or corporal intersubjectivity of the lived body, the human biological organism acquires a social structure of responses, in addition to its biological given structure of responses. It, thus, transforms from a biologically behaving being to a socially behaving being. Indeed, the human biological organism’s acquirement of a social structure of responses is the initial incorporation of its past within the act, on the basis of which the self emerges, develops, and realizes.

Under, In the Beginning Was the Act, the social psychological insight that the self does not emerge without the other or society is elaborated on in terms of social behavior or functional identification with the outer world. In this section, the focus is on humans as biologically behaving organisms and evolved socially behaving beings.

Under, The Inhibited Act, the social psychological insight that the self develops from the point of view of the other or society is further elaborated in terms of (1) attitude taking of the thing and (2) attitude taking of the other. The answer to the question about how we as behaving beings who experience sensations turn into interacting beings who experience emotions is initially formulated and provided with a preliminary defense. In addition, the idea that it is our emotional experiences that enable self-reflexion is discussed.

Under, Self-realization, the social psychological insight that self-realization involves a need for recognition is further expanded in terms of Mead’s idea that self-realization implies recognition on a concrete level, i.e., evaluative
recognition of the unique person, as well as recognition on an abstract level, i.e., normative recognition of the individual person with universal rights. As I see it, this idea could be related to a conception of self-realization as a process that takes place not only on a reflexive, but also on an emotional level of the act. Indeed, both self-feeling and self-reflexion are necessary for the continuous need for recognition that is incorporated in self-realization. Yet, Mead’s idea that self-realization involves a need for recognition is probably best captured in terms of recognition in the form of equality and difference, (on the basis of both self-feeling and self-reflexion that have emerged from mutual functional identification between the other and the self). It is primarily the idea of self-realization as a process that includes a need for recognition as equal with at the same time as different from the other, which is discussed in this chapter, whereas we in chapter six return to the idea that such forms of recognition only are made possible on the basis of self-feeling, and in turn self-reflexion that have emerged from mutual functional identification between the other and the self.

In the Beginning Was the Act

One of the most characteristic features of society is the specific form of communication that makes its high level of complexity possible, namely, communication with “significant gestures” or “significant symbols.” Basically, this means communication with meaning that we share with others (see, for example, Mead [1934] 1967: 70ff.). However, not all of our gestures are significant. “Gestures become significant symbols,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 47) writes, “when they implicitly arouse in an individual making them the same responses which they explicitly arouse, or are supposed to arouse, in other individuals, the individuals to whom they are addressed [...].” Significant gestures or symbols mean the same things to others as they do to us, in the sense of initiating the same sort of activity in others as in us. Hence, communication with significant gestures or symbols implies that our own gestures influence us in the same way as they influence others.

As we will see, Mead means that significant gestures or symbols are the ultimate outcomes of the act or the process in which we co-exist with the outer world or the other. Within the act, it becomes possible for us to travel back and forth in space, in ways that enable us to travel back and forth in time. By changing place with the other, we are able to imagine our past as well as our future, as will be explained later in this chapter. Only then is minded selves or conversations with meaning possible.

Then again, in the beginning there is no mind, self, and society. In the beginning, there is the act – co-existing human organisms that are dependent on each other to enable an individual membership of a society of minded selves. When Mead talks about the act as the “primitive unit” (Mead 1982: 27) or “the unit of existence” (Mead [1938] 1972: 65) he has human interdependence
in mind. “[T]he individual reaches his self,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 233) writes, “only through communication with others, only through the elaboration of social processes by means of significant communication, then the self could not antedate the social organism. The latter would have to be there first.”

What is typical of the human social organism, (or the human biological organism within the act,) is that it has the ability to communicate in ways that involve participation in the other, the appearance of the other in the self, or functional identification with the other (Mead [1934] 1967: 253). Indeed, our very ability to influence ourselves as we influence others or to converse with significant gestures is built upon, to quote Hans Joas (1996: 183), “communication via gestures that does not presume the prior existence of boundaries: namely, symbiotic unity or identification.” Through this communication, we acquire a social or common structure of responsive gestures to certain stimuli, in addition to our biologically given responses to outer and inner stimuli.

However, symbiotic unity or identification, in accordance with Mead’s social psychology, is not to be confused with being existentially identical with the outer world or the other. Instead, such a symbiotic unity or identification indicates our inborn ability to functionally identify ourselves with others within the act. We, then, develop common structures of social behavior by ways of synchronizing our bodily movements with those of others. This sort of identity with others, which in its most basic form implies that we perform the same sort of corporal postures as others, is not the same as existential identity. Though our body takes the same shape as another they are not one and the same body. We are “absolutely and existentially different from all other particulars,” i.e., “absolutely existential identical” only with ourselves. Nonetheless, we have the ability through communication with each other within the act to become “functionally identical,” as suggested by David L. Miller (1973: 14f.).

Miller (1973: 17) claims that our symbiotic unity with others, in terms of our functional identification, is the “[h]abit formation or learning at the precognitive level, Mead holds, is a precondition of awareness and reflective thinking.” In this context, our sameness has not so much to do with the fact that we are “physiologically differentiated relatively slightly” (Mead [1934] 1967: 238). Instead, it has to do with the fact that our physiological makeup works in ways that enables the incorporation of common or social structures of habitual responses to certain stimuli.

To describe what is meant by habitual responses, Mead ([1934] 1967: 15) writes, “[t]he offering of a chair by a person of good manners is something which is almost instinctive.” Our habitual reactions look “almost instinctive” since they, like our innate responses, are “non-intentional” (Bales [1966] 1998: 122). As long as the act of offering a chair to a person is completed without any complications, there is no awareness of it as good manner. It is simply done in relation to both human (the one that is offered the chair) and non-
human objects (the chair that one is offering) of the outer world, without the inhibition necessary for being self-conscious, in this case, conscious of the self as well mannered. However, it is our habitual reactions that when they are inhibited within the act enables intentional action, the ability to consider and plan future activities. They provide us with corporal images of our past within the act, of certain expectations on self and society.

With the idea of the human biological organisms’ functional identification with each other within the act, or their acquirement of a social structure of habitual responses, Mead, indeed, tries to capture the link – to borrow the words of Tim Ingold (2000: 3) – “between the biological life of the organism in its environment and the cultural life of the mind in society.”

In its most primordial form functional identification is communication in which co-existing bodies that caught up in each other’s motion share a certain rhythm and focus of attention. Mead uses “mob-consciousness” to illustrate the impact that our co-existing bodies have on each other:

We get illustrations of that in what we term mob-consciousness, the attitude which an audience will take when under the influence of a great speaker. One is influenced by the attitudes of those about him, which are reflected back into the different members of the audience so that they come to respond as a whole. One feels the general attitude of the whole audience. There is then communication in a real sense, that is, one form communicates to the other an attitude which the other assumes toward certain part of the environment that is of importance to them both (Mead [1934] 1967: 253).

However, it does not take extraordinary experiences like mob-consciousness to be caught up in each other’s motions. Within the act, we are continuously engaged in joint travel back and forth in space. Someone laughs and we begin to laugh. People around us are happy and we become happy. Emotional communication is almost infectious. Mead argues:

In your relations to other persons, it is your own hostile attitude to the other person that is your evidence of his hostile attitude toward you. Change that takes place in yourself is an indication of the attitude in the other. [—] The child finds itself in a situation in which those about it are unhappy and it is itself unhappy. The child’s social weapon is its cry. It is advantageous for the child to cry when it is in a situation where others are unhappy. This situation in the surrounding company is one which is dangerous to the child, and we have the response, the natural explanation from the evolutionary point of view. The suckling process is the natural response to the cheerful attitude. You have a series of attitudes which call out responses. These so-called expressions represent the beginnings of social acts, not merely the physiological accompaniments or merely a mechanical physiological reaction (Mead 1982: 38 f.).
The newborn, who is placed on its mother’s chest, who finds the breast, who embraces a nipple, and who starts to suckle, has not incorporated any common structure of habitual reactions. Nonetheless, it is already part of the act or the social structure that precedes it. The experiences of the newborn belong to the pre-emotional and pre-reflexive phase of the act, in which common structures of habitual reactions are acquired. “The child,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 368) describes this process, “is for a long time dependent upon moods and emotional attitudes. How quickly he adjusts himself to this is a continual surprise. He responds to facial expressions earlier than to most stimuli and answers with appropriate expressions of his own, before he makes responses that we consider significant.” It does not take long before the child embodies the social structure or behavior against the background of which one becomes emotional, reflexive, and self-conscious.

Sandra B. Rosenthal and Patrick L. Bourgeois (1991: 87) calls our functional identification with the outer world or the other, in which our co-existence as biological organisms turn us into social organisms or our behavior into social behavior, “primordial, pre-personal sociality or corporal intersubjectivity of the lived body [...].” In accordance with Joas and Miller, they claim that “[t]his pre-personal coexistence is the social foundation for role taking. It is the ‘being with’ which underlies the taking of roles. Such intercorporeality underlies the very ability to take roles, for taking the role of the other presupposes ‘being with’ the other” (Rosenthal and Bourgeois 1991: 88).

Hence, what we originally become conscious of as ourselves when we take the attitudes of the other towards ourselves is that which we have become through the inescapable adaptation to our social environment within the act. Put differently, we become conscious of ourselves as social organisms, in the sense of our socially given habitual responses, rather than as biological organisms, in the sense of our biologically given sensations.

Our bodies are parts of our environment; and it is possible for the individual to experience and be conscious of his body, and of bodily sensations, without being conscious or aware of himself – without, in other words, taking the attitude of the other toward himself. According to the social theory of consciousness, what we mean by consciousness is that peculiar character and aspect of the environment of individual human experience which is due to human society, a society of other individual selves who take the attitude of the other toward themselves. The physiological conception or theory of consciousness is by itself inadequate; it requires supplementation from the socio-psychological point of view. The taking or feeling of the attitude of the other toward yourself is what constitutes self-consciousness, and not mere organic sensations of which the individual is aware and which he experiences. Until the rise of his self-consciousness in the process of social experience, the individual experiences his body – its feelings and sensations – merely as an immediate part of his environment, not as his own, not in terms of self-consciousness (Mead [1934] 1967: 171f.).
In this context, it is important that we do not confuse the idea of functional identification as the social foundation of attitude taking with an attempt to reduce mind, self, and society to behavior (see Mead [1924-25] 1981; [1934] 1967; [1936] 1972a; [1938] 1972b). Mead finds the radical behaviorism of, for example, his student John B. Watson absurd. According to Mead ([1934] 1967: 2f.), “John B. Watson’s attitude was that of the Queen in Alice in Wonderland – ‘Off with their heads!’ – there were no such things. There was no imagery, and no consciousness.” Of course, there is imagery and consciousness, Mead claims:

The mental image is a memory image. Such images which, as symbols, play so large a part in thinking, belong to the environment. [—] The image is there in its relation to the individual who not only has sense organs but who also has certain past experiences. It is the organism that has had such experiences that has such imagery. (Mead [1934] 1967: 332)

According to Mead ([1934] 1967: 332 f.), it is a waste to, as he means that Watson does, deny imagery, and then have to admit imagery, and then try to minimize imagery. Each of us who has a past within the act, incorporated as a structure of habitual reactions, has imagery.

Our past stays with us in terms of those changes which have resulted from our experience and which are in some sense registered there. The peculiar intelligence of the human form lies in this elaborate control gained through the past. The human animal’s past is constantly present in the facility with which he acts (Mead [1934] 1967: 116).

Mead stresses that our imagery of the other and the self does not emerge unless the act is inhibited (see, for example, Mead [1934] 1967: 11). Consciousness of the other and the self, thus, arises when our past within the act (i.e. when incorporated in the form of common structures of habitual reactions that give rise to certain unreflexive expectations on our co-existence with the outer world or the other) is not sufficient for the completion of the act. The inhibited act transforms our social behavior into social interaction where we discover our insides, and endow ourselves with meanings. It enables us to be emotional and reflexive, in a particular way of being objects to ourselves. Basically, Mead understands the self as the peculiar capacity of being an object to oneself.

The individual enters as such into his own experience only as an object, not as a subject; and he can enter as an object only on the basis of social relations and interactions, only by means of his experiential transactions with other individuals in an organized social environment. [—] Apart from his social interactions with other individuals, he would not relate the private or “subjective” contents of his experience to himself, and he could not become aware of himself as such, that is, as an individual, a person, merely by means or in terms of these contents of his experience; for in order to become aware of himself as such he must, to repeat, become an object to himself, or enter his own experience as an object,
and only by social means – only by taking the attitudes of others toward himself – is he able to become an object to himself (Mead [1934] 1967: 225f.).

When we become an object to ourselves by taking the attitude of the thing and the other towards ourselves, our joint travel back and forth in space enables us to travel forth and back in time – to plan our future, guided by our past, in our presence within the act.

The Inhibited Act

In Mead’s view, social interaction (attitude taking), in contrast to social behavior (functional identity or functional identification), implies a break or barrier to our immediate tendencies to act. Without an inhibition of the act or of our symbiotic unity with the other, we would be forever doomed to live in a world of exteriors – a world without insides and meanings. Only through social interaction, which implies inhibitions of our interchanges with the outer world, especially, the other is it possible for us to add those qualities to the world that is already there. What Mead ([1934] 1967: 135) calls “a bare thereness of the world,” the world as sensuous experience of that which immediately takes place within the act, then, transforms into a world of possibilities and impossibilities. It becomes a question of qualities we have or not have, a question of to be or not to be.

Without an inhibition of the act there would simply be an experience of “a bare thereness of the world.” According to Mead, this experience belongs to the act in the sense of our habitual reactions to the outer world or others. Generally, we could talk about those habitual reactions as the manner in which we exist unemotionally and unreflexively within the act. When Mead (1982: 30) writes that “[i]t is characteristic of the child that it does not inhibit but follows the first current that opens,” he refers to the newborn’s lack of a developed social structure of habitual responses against the background of which the act can be inhibited. As aforementioned, Mead means that it is only on the basis of a social structure of habitual responses that the act becomes inhibited in ways that enable the discovery of insides. The latter implies an emotional experience, rather than just an experience of sensations following upon each other in some sort of affective stream. In this way functional identification and emotional experience are distinguished from each other. Emotional experience includes a bodily awareness of the other and the self as different but interrelated, whereas functional identification is a process of corporal sociality between the other and the self that lacks such sort of self-consciousness.

To understand this line of argumentation, we must recognize the distinction that Mead makes between gesture, expression, or symbol of emotion, on the one hand, and experience or feeling of emotion, on the other hand. Following Wilhelm Wundt, he argues that pleasure “can be a symbol only for the observer,
not for the person experiencing the pleasure. This is an aesthetic explanation rather than a psychological one, representing the attitude of the individual who stands outside looking on. It does not explain the gesture as it arises in the experience of the individual” (Mead 1982: 34). But, contrary to Wundt who understands our experiences of emotion as simple results of a series of feelings, Mead, in accordance with Dewey, understands experiences of emotion as felt inhibitions of the act. As felt inhibitions of the act, emotions are the magic that transforms social behavior into social interaction.

One of the differences between physical and social conduct is the emotional content, which is much more vivid in social conduct. As a rule, the so-called physical stimulations are not expressions of the emotions and do not call out responses that we call expressions of the emotions. Emotions arise under tensions. In social conduct there is constant adjustment and readjustment, hence emotion. (Mead 1982: 43).

The experience or feeling of emotion arises only if our expression of it does not lead to the completion of the act – if the act collapses (Mead 1982: 40). “If a man could strike at once when he clinches his fist there would be no emotion, for there would be no checking, no inhibition,” Mead (1982: 34) argues.

According to Mead our emotional experiences are not the things that we habitually do. They presuppose inhibition of such activities. They are corporal evaluations of the self from the standpoint of the other. Mead never fully elaborates on this point. In my interpretation, Mead thinks that it is with help of such evaluations that we feel ourselves as we travel back and forth in space – between the concrete position of the other and the concrete position of ourselves. Accordingly, our emotional experiences are what primarily transforms exterior to interior. As we will see, Mead suggests that our emotional experiences, in the form of felt inhibitions of the act, make us discover “insides” (Mead [1932] 1959: 119ff.; [1938] 1972b: 143ff., 186ff., 212ff.). Such an enterprise is not one of an isolated self, but includes the outer world. It takes two, like in the tango. Indeed, the tango could be seen as an elaborate illustration of what Mead has in mind when he discusses the discovery of our insides or centers of activity.

What does it mean to say that it takes two to tango in this context? To begin with, co-existing human organisms or bodies are not enough to tango. The tango demands the active presence of those organisms or bodies. It is co-operation. Certainly, the tango is not a question of one body carrying another body around the dance-floor. In the tango not only the leading part is active. Seemingly passive, the part that follows is active. Only through the mutual pressure of the bodies that linger upon each other in the tango – a resistance felt in the emotional experiences of each of the bodies – is it possible for the following part to be lead, and vice versa. Those familiar with the tango know that this is the case. To tango is about enabling emotional experiences or
awareness of the core of the own body through the body of the other. It is a question of making the body as a single whole into an object of its own perception – of simultaneously being subject and object.

However, Mead does not discuss the discovery of our insides in terms of our cooperation with the other, which is the case in the tango. Instead, he discusses such a discovery in terms of our relation to the thing.

According to Mead, it is only through the formation of physical objects in our environment that we can experience ourselves as a physical object and develop corporal awareness of our body as a single whole. “It will be some time before he can successfully unite the different parts of his own body, such as his hands and feet, which he sees and feels, into a single object,” Mead ([1912] 1964: 138) writes about the child. “Such a step,” he (ibid.) continues, “must be later than the formation of the physical objects of his environment. The form of the object is given in the experience of things, which are not his physical self. When he has synthesized his various bodily parts with the organic sensations and affective experiences, it will be on a model of objects about him. The mere presence of experiences of pleasure and pain, together with organic sensations, will not form an object unless this material can fall into the scheme of an object – that of sensuous stimulation plus the imagery of the response.”

It is when emphasizing the importance of the formation of physical objects in the environment for the emotional experience or corporal awareness of the own body as a single whole that Mead discusses the discovery of our inside or center of activity in terms of taking the attitude of the thing toward ourselves:

[T]he organism in grasping and pushing things is identifying its own effort with the contact experience of the thing. It increases that experience by its own efforts. To take hold of a hard object is to stimulate oneself to exert that inner effort. One arouses in himself an action which comes also from the inside of the thing. It comes from the inside of the thing because the experience is increased by the action of bodies upon organisms and upon other things within the perceptual world. The organism’s object arouses in the organism the action of the object upon the organism, and so becomes endowed with that inner nature of pressure which constitute the inside of the physical thing. It is only in so far as the organism thus takes the attitude of the thing that the thing acquires such an inside.

[—] In the development of the infant this experience must come earlier than that of its own physical organism as a whole. The infant must be placing this effort of his inside of things before he is in a position to identify the effort as his own. His surroundings stretch away on all sides, and colored shapes come to be located and familiar in a world within which his body comes finally to occupy a defined place. Meantime the pressure of his body and the grasping of his hands have to localize things from an inside attitude, and he finally reaches himself as a thing through the action of other things upon him (Mead [1932] 1959: 121f.).
To better understand the sort of cooperation with the thing, in which we take its attitude, we can think about the child who does not succeed in grasping the glass of milk standing on the table in front of it. In a way the glass attacks. It explodes in bits and pieces, and the milk that runs down the edge of the table makes the child wet and cold. To be able to cooperate with things, like the glass of milk, the child must adjust and readjust its own boundaries, efficacy, and force, to the boundaries, efficacy, and force of the thing (Mead [1938] 1972b: 109f.).

According to Mead ([1938] 1972b: 110), the ability to cooperate with things is developed on the basis of contact between different parts of our bodies. For example, when we press our hands against each other we experience resistance – an inhibition of the act. In turn, we become conscious of the pressure exerted by ourselves upon ourselves. We become conscious of our hands as separate physical objects, with different centers of activity or insides. This results in the ability to in contact with physical objects other than the different parts of our own bodies assume within them the same kind of active center or inside as within different parts of our bodies. Nonetheless, it is only by taking a social attitude toward the things in our environment that we are able to experience the different parts of the own body as a whole, make it into an object to ourselves, and in turn, make it a part of the self. “Identification of the individual with an object,” E. Doyle McCarthy (1984: 115) writes, “is the condition for self-reflexiveness. Identification is the means by which the individual moves from a knowledge of the ‘insides’ of things to the ‘inside’ of one’s bodily self – a movement from object to subject, from other to me.”

Mead argues that it is true that we in this process sometimes endow things in our environment with personalities, like when “[w]e talk to nature; we address the clouds, the sea, the tree, and objects about us” (Mead [1934] 1967: 184). He thinks, however, that the most crucial thing for self-formation is that we make those things into permanent objects (see Joas [1980] 1997: 153ff.). Mead writes:

What is essential to this social relation to the environment is not that the physical thing is endowed with a personality, although in the experience of little children and primitive man there is an approach to this. The essential thing is that the individual, in preparing to grasp the distant object, himself takes the attitude of resisting his own effort in grasping, and that the attained preparation for the manipulation is the result of this co-operation or conversation with attitudes (Mead [1938] 1972b: 110).

The latter is important to notice, since Mead thinks that our conscious attitudes or self-consciousness establishes within anticipatory attitude taking. This form of attitude taking implies that we are able to adjust and readjust our actions in relation to things and others before actual contact-experience of them occurs. Hence, it is abstract rather than concrete attitude taking. The primary process
of concrete attitude taking is discovering insides or centers of activity, whereas
the primary process of abstract attitude taking is meaning-endowment.
According to Mead, during the phase of anticipatory attitude taking we
incorporate the meanings or significant symbols that enables us to consider
and plan our forthcoming actions. In turn, we become able to travel back and
forth in both time and space. “My thesis,” Mead writes, “is that the inhibited
contact response in the distance experience constitute the meaning of the
resistance of the physical object” (as cited in Joas [1980] 1997: 157). In addition,
Mead claims that the development of our ability of abstract attitude taking is
dependent on our emotional experience of the thing, and on our relation to an
interacting social group of individual organisms.

When Mead deals with the emergence of meaning, in terms of the development
doing this, he refers to the relations of an interacting
social group of individual organisms to the outer world or the other, rather
than to the relation to the environment of individual organisms themselves.
His focus changes from social interaction in the form attitude taking of the
thing toward the self to social interaction in the form of attitude taking of the
other toward the self. This implies that Mead thinks that the social process of
taking the attitude of the other precedes our capacity of assuming social attitudes

Mead illustrates the attitude taking with the child’s playful activities. He
also discusses it in terms of our acquisition of language in the form of vocal
gestures. Since Mead’s elaboration on attitude taking of the other is central, let
us take a look at Mead’s idea of the acquisition of language. Thereafter let us
see how it relates to the child’s playful activities, i.e., “play” and “game.” There
is no doubt that Mead thinks that vocal gestures are central for the development
of the minded self or a self that is able to communicate with significant gestu-
res or symbols.

The vocal gesture, then, has an importance which no other gesture has. We
cannot see ourselves when our face assumes a certain expression. If we hear
ourselves speak we are more apt to pay attention. One hears himself when he is
irritated using a tone that is of an irritable quality, and so catches himself. But in
the facial expression of irritation the stimulus is not one that calls out an
expression in the individual which it calls out in the other. One is more apt to
catch himself up and control himself in the vocal gesture than in the expression
Vocal gestures are significant, since they evoke functionally identical responses in all of the individual members of an interacting social group who uses them and understands them (Miller 1973: 73). By using and understanding vocal gestures, we can become objects to ourselves through talking to ourselves. Mead ([1912] 1981: 140) doubts that “a consciousness of a self as an object would ever have arisen in man if he had not had the mechanism of talking to himself [...].” Although he thinks that “the mechanism of thought, insofar as thought uses symbols which are used in social intercourse, is but an inner conversation” (Mead [1913] 1981: 146), or “that all of our thinking is vocalization” (Mead [1934] 1967: 69), he stresses that we need to “take into account all that is involved here, namely, that these stimuli are the essential elements in elaborate social processes and carry with them the value of those social processes” (ibid.). Learning a language is an internalization of the process of taking the attitude of the other in the outer world. Using and understanding that language is about being part of the culture and society it belongs to.

A person learns a new language and, as we say, gets a new soul. He puts himself into the attitude of those that make use of that language. He cannot read its literature, cannot converse with those that belong to that community, without taking on its peculiar attitudes. He becomes in that sense a different individual (Mead [1934] 1967: 283).

Social conditions, under which we develop into self-conscious individuals with definite personalities, i.e., emotional and reflexive persons that embody certain values and norms, guide our actions. Parallel Mead’s distinction between the play-phase and the game-phase of the child’s playful activities. A common understanding is that Mead’s discussion of the child’s transition from the play-phase to the game-phase of the act is an illustration of how the child’s ability of concrete self-reflexion gradually takes the form of abstract self-reflexion (see, for example, Andersson 1972: 23ff.). However, it could also be seen as an illustration of how the child’s self-feeling gradually takes the form of self-reflexion. As aforementioned, the ability of self-consciousness is founded within a pre-personal or a pre-emotional and pre-reflexive phase of the act. As we will see, that is why not only the emergence and development of self-reflexion, but also self-feeling is included in Mead’s conception of the attitude taking of the other.

The long period of the child’s dependence on its caretakers enables it to play at being those persons. “The very universal habit of playing with dolls,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 364) writes, “indicates how ready for expression, in the child, is the parental attitude, or perhaps one should say, certain of the parental attitudes.”

It is interesting to notice how fundamental the child’s tendency to make social contacts with others seems to be. Clear examples can be illustrated from our present surroundings. When our daughter was about six months old, my
husband noticed her early search for eye contact – how she seemed so fascinated by eye contact. Further, he observed that this social interaction was prior to the manipulation of the thing. “My daughter,” he later writes in an essay, “was the first couple of months of her life more or less uninterested in things. She was given, for example, a lot of various kinds of toys, which she to the disappointments of our relatives and friends ignored. On the other hand, she amused herself by looking deep into their eyes and smiled as soon as her gaze was reflected back upon her. It is only lately that she has begun taking interest in things” (Carlehedenh 2003: 10, my translation).

In addition, it is interesting to notice that she now prefers to play with the things that my husband and I use in our everyday life rather than with her toys. And, when playing with those things it seems like she above all is trying to manipulate them in the same manner as we do. Indeed, she within the play seems to use things in the environment, primarily, to play at being her significant others. Though my daughter has yet to show any specific interest in dolls, I think there is a resemblance between her play with things and the way that Mead understands what he calls the universal habit of playing with dolls, namely, that children in general do not play with dolls, but rather use dolls as a tool when they play at being their significant others. When playing with a doll, the child takes the same attitudes toward the doll as the parents take toward the child. In the play with the doll, an externalization of the child’s responses in tone of voice and in attitude as the parents’ responses to it takes place. In this process the child becomes an object to itself, Mead ([1924-25] 1981: 285) argues. The play is the passage in which the child’s ability of concrete self-consciousness emerges.

Thus the child can think about his conduct as good or bad only as he reacts to his own acts in the remembered words of his parents. Until this process has been developed into the abstract process of thought, self-consciousness remains dramatic, and the self which is a fusion of the remembered actor and this accompanying chorus is somewhat loosely organized and very clearly social (Mead [1913] 1981: 146).

Within the play-phase of the act, the self of the child is constituted by an organization of the attitudes of its significant others in particular social acts (Mead [1934] 1967: 158). The child is able to assume only one attitude of the significant other at a time. “He plays that he is, for instance, offering himself something, and he buys it; he gives a letter to himself and takes it away; he addresses himself as a parent, as a teacher; he arrests himself as a policeman,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 150f.) writes. Playing at being a wider circle of particular persons about it, the child gets a feel for the variety of attitudes of the social group that it belongs to. The growing child, certainly, comes to incorporate individual gestures, symbols or expressions of emotion within this passage. However, the child is not able to organize the different attitudes of those others
into a single whole or unity of self. The child’s inner world or capacity to make itself into an object to itself, into what Mead calls, “me,” is fragmented in a way that makes the child unaccountable. Put differently, the child’s inhibition of its immediate tendencies to act is not organized.

It is first within the game-phase of the act that the child is introduced to a set of rules that will make it possible for it to organize the attitudes of its significant others towards itself into a single whole. When playing a game, in contrast to playing at being one significant other after another, the child simultaneously assumes the various attitudes belonging to that game towards itself. The child takes the attitude of what Mead calls the “generalized other” towards itself. “The game, in other words,” Mead writes, “requires a whole self, whereas play requires only pieces of the self. The game has an organized set of others whose roles you can assume [...]. Each speaks in the vox populi [...].” Speaking on the basis of the rules of the game, the maturing child is able to consider and plan its forthcoming actions in relation to the forthcoming actions of the variety of others participating in the same sort of games as it does. In this way, the child is able to inhibit itself, and in turn enable both self-feeling and self-reflexion. The child can be held responsible for the attitudes or roles that are assumed toward others or the outcome of the game.

This is a central passage in Mead’s theory of the attitude taking self, since it prefigures the child’s abstract relation to its community and society – the incorporation of its norms and laws. It is first within this phase of self-development that it makes sense to discuss the self of the child in terms of its normative idea of itself as an individual with a definite personality, in addition to its evaluative feel of itself. Let me elaborate the above line of argumentation with help of an example – chess.

According to the rules of chess, we organize moves based on what is allowed for the king, queen, runners, horses, towers, and peasants, as well as the goal of the game. Chess is about organizing moves and anticipating the opponent’s moves. We can do this, since the concrete others and things are given meanings, abstracted into significant gestures or symbols within the game. It is, primarily, as bearers of those meanings that they are of interest within the game. The particularity or values of the opponent and the inside or center of activity of the pieces are secondary or of little consequence within the game of chess. The concrete (significant) others, whose attitudes the child acts out towards itself within the play-phase of the act becomes non-individual and depersonalized within the game-phase of the act. “In abstract thought the individual takes the attitude of the generalized other [...] toward himself,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 155f.) writes, “without reference to its expressions in any particular other individuals [...].” Hence, the individual incorporates the normative expectations of an abstract or generalized other on her or him, as well as on others. “That process,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 160) claims, “is one which is a striking stage in
the development of the child’s morale. It constitutes him a self-conscious member of the community to which he belongs.” For example, the child can control its own properties by respecting other’s properties (Mead [1934] 1967: 161). “It makes no difference, over against a person who is stealing your property, whether it is Tom, Dick, or Harry. There is an identical response on the part of the whole community under these conditions,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 167) writes.

**Self-realization**

In the above context, it is important to understand that Mead’s concept of moral refers to the end – self-realization – that motivates the individual person’s actions, rather than those actions in themselves. An individual person might find it necessary to stand up against the whole world about her or him to reach that end, Mead ([1934] 1967: 168) claims:

> A person may reach a point of going against the whole world about him; he may stand out by himself over against it. But to do that he has to speak with the voice of reason to himself. He has to comprehend the voices of the past and of the future. That is the only way in which the self can get a voice which is more than the voice of the community. [—] That is the way, of course, in which society gets ahead, by just such interactions as those in which some person thinks a thing out. We are continually changing our social system in some respects, and we are able to do that intelligently because we can think.

Mead opposes the idea that there is only one way of acting morally, which he suggests is found in Kant’s categorical imperative. “You want to be able to steal things and yet keep them as your own property; but if everyone stole, there would not be any such thing as property. Just generalize the principle of your act and see what would follow with reference to the very thing you are trying to do,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 380) describes Kant’s moral test. Such tests are valuable, Mead thinks, because they apply to a lot of acts that we recognize as moral. He, however, means that they are only possible to use within acts in which the standards are set and there is no need for restatement, readjustment, under circumstances in which no novelty appears. In new situations, in which there is need for action, there is a need for reconstruction. Any constructive act implies alternative ways of acting, Mead ([1934] 1967: 381) contends. We then need a principle to tell us what is a moral act, rather than what is an immoral act.

> What Kant’s principle does is to tell you that an act is immoral under certain conditions, but it does not tell you what is the moral act. Kant’s categorical imperative assumes that there is just one way of acting. If that is the case, then there is only one course that can be universalized; then the respect for law would be the motive for acting in that fashion. But if you assume that there are alternative ways of acting, then you cannot utilize Kant’s motive as a means of determining what is right (Mead [1934] 1976: 381).
The discussion is of great significance for Mead’s argument that the autonomy, gained by the internalization of social rules or norms and laws of society, is necessary for self-realization. It points at the innumerable ways of being a member of a community or society by an incorporation of its norms and laws. Illustrated with help of the game, this means that only when fully incorporating the significant symbols revealing the meaning of the game – when embodying its rules as a structure of habitual responses – will the innumerable ways of playing the game enable the individual to express its personality, within the frame of its (socially) objective rules. This phase of self-development prefigures the individual person’s ability to transcend the order of the community or society that results in an expansion of the rights of each individual member of that community or society and thereby an enlargement of the possibilities of self-realization. As indicated, such a process implies inhibition, a conflict between the individual members of the community or the society, which in turn involves a need for recognition.

A human being is a member of a community and is thereby an expression of its customs and the carrier of its values. These customs appear in the individual as habits, and the values appear as his goods, and these habits and goods come into conflict with each other. Out of the conflict arise in human social experience the meanings of things and the rational solution of the conflicts. The rational solution of the conflicts, however, calls for the reconstruction of both habits and values, and this involves the transcending the order of the community. A hypothetically different order suggests itself and becomes the end in conduct. It is a social end and must appeal to others in the community. In logical terms there is established a universe of discourse which transcends the specific order within which the members of the community may, in a specific conflict, place themselves outside of the community order as it exists, and agree upon changed habits of action and a restatement of values. [—] Its claim is that all the conditions of conduct and all the values which are involved in the conflict must be taken into account in abstraction from the fixed forms of habits and goods which have clashed with each other (Mead [1930] 1981: 404 f.).

Mead’s idea of self-realization or the complete attitude taking self, thus, includes a need for recognition on an abstract level (i.e. normative and legal recognition or recognition as an individual person with universal rights) on the one hand, and on a concrete level (i.e. evaluative recognition or recognition as a unique person) on the other hand. Hence, we desire recognition in normative or legal relations to others, since we are all alike, and exchangeable, under such circumstances. Yet, we desire recognition in evaluative relations to others, since that would show that we are different from others, and indispensable in those situations. The former implies the need for equality, whereas the latter implies the need for difference. “We do belong to the community,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 204f.) claims, “and our self-respect depends on our recognition of ourselves as such self-respecting individuals. But that is not enough for us, since we want to
recognize ourselves in our differences from other persons.” Axel Honneth emphasizes this point in his book *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*.

The esteem that the child directly experiences, to begin with, in the affectionate attention of concrete others must dissolve into a form of recognition that offers intersubjective confirmation of one’s individually chosen way of life. In order to arrive at a ‘me’ that can provide this sort of ethical support, every individual must learn to generalize the value-convictions of all of his or her interaction partners sufficiently to get an abstract idea of the collective goals of the community. For it is only within the horizon of these commonly shared values that one can conceive oneself as a person who is distinguished from all others in virtue of a contribution to society’s life-process that is recognized as unique (Honneth [1992] 1995: 87).

“I” demands its difference, whereas “me,” when autonomy is achieved, provides the opportunity for it. “The possibilities of the ‘I,’” Mead ([1934] 1967: 204) writes, “belong to that which is actually going on, taking place, and it is in some sense the most fascinating part of our experience. It is there that novelty arises and it is there that our most important values are located. It is the realization in some sense of this self that we are continually seeking.”5 As Habermas ([1988] 1992: 190 f.) claims in his reading of Mead:

> [T]he communicative actor is encouraged by the bare structure of linguistic intersubjectivity to remain *himself*, even in behavior conforming to norms. In action guided by norms, the initiative to realize oneself cannot in principle be taken away from any one – and no one can give up this initiative[...]. It belongs to the logic of the use of the personal pronouns, and especially to the perspective of a speaker who orients himself to a second person, that this speaker cannot *in actu* rid himself of his irreplaceability, cannot take refuge in the anonymity of a third person, but must lay claim to recognition as an individuated being.

**Concluding Remarks**

According to Mead, the attitude taking self is an interplay between the individual human being’s emotional and reflexive experiences of its relationships to the outer world or the other. Both of these sorts of experiences are based on functional identification between the self and the outer world or the other. Further, the attitude taking self continuously needs recognition as equal yet different from the other, for the acquirement of a positive relation to itself. This idea points out the centrality of the other for the self. At the same time it points out the significance of being the self and not the other. Indeed, Mead argues that moral action, which in his definition aims at self-realization, demands that we remain ourselves. We cannot act morally if we are trying to get rid of ourselves. But, what does he mean? The answer may be evident in Mead’s idea of our history of emotional experiences, materialized as our values. With the term value I simply refer to – the definition by Habermas ([1996] 1999: 55) –
“the preferability of goods that are striven for by particular groups.” Clearly, our emotional experiences and values are the initial core of who we are or desire to be. A direct elaboration of such an argumentation is not clearly found in the thinking of Mead. Mead’s account of our emotions as socially given is neither developed nor radical enough to be accurately incorporated in the discussion of Smith’s virtuous self, Cooley’s looking-glass self, or his own morally acting self, whose aim is self-realization. Moreover, Mead does not explicitly discuss our emotions as results of the attitude taking of the other, based on the self’s functional identity with the other. Such a discussion is necessary if we are going to understand the social formation and realization of the attitude taking self. We must show the significance of the emotional experiences and values of the self by pointing out their part in the story the self in the present tells about its past, which makes up the premises of what it will be in the future. To do this is to explore one of the most significant aspects of the attitude taking self that always is dependent on acting out the attitude of the other towards itself to become itself.
Notes

1 In my interpretation, there are tendencies in Cooley’s thinking to explain mind or self-consciousness as an outgrowth of problems encountered in our interchanges with each other in the outer world. I am thinking of Cooley’s argument that the child senses itself first when the other in some sense threatens the child’s influence over the outer world, which we discussed in chapter two. It is in relationship to this sort of argumentation that Cooley claims that mind or self-consciousness is an advanced stage of consciousness.

2 Nonetheless, Mead’s social pragmatism is problematic, from the point of view of developing a theory of the emotional self. Since it explores the emergence of self-feeling or emotional experience in terms of the attitude or role taking of the thing, rather than in terms of the attitude or role taking of the other, it does not explain the emotions as genuinely social. Further, it makes the interrelation between functional identification, emotional experiences, and reflexive experiences in the process of self-formation unclear. This line of argumentation will be elaborated in chapter six, whereas this chapter set the stage for it.

3 For an elaboration of the claim that emotional experiences are corporal evaluations of ourselves from the standpoint of the other, see chapter six.

4 I have lost the reference to this quote of Mead, and I have not been able to relocate it.

5 “Now the thing we actually do, the words we speak, our expressions, our emotions, those are the ‘T’; but they are fused with the ‘me’ [—]. The act itself which I have spoken of as the ‘T’ in the social situation is a source of the unity of the whole, while the ‘me’ is the social situation in which this act can express itself,” Mead ([1934] 1967: 279) writes.

6 Hence, a clear distinction is made between values and norms. “Whereas norms are observed in the sense of a fulfillment of generalized behavioral expectations, values or goods can be realized or acquired only by purposive action,” Habermas ([1996] 1999: 55) writes. “Furthermore,” he (ibid.) continuous, “norms rise a binary validity claim in virtue of which they are said to be either valid or invalid: to ought statements, as to assertoric statements, we can respond only with “yes” or “no” – or refrain from judgement. Values, by contrast, fix relations of preference which signify that certain goods are more attractive than others: hence, we can assent to evaluative statements to greater or lesser degree. The obligatory force of norms has the absolute meaning of an unconditional and universal duty: what one ought to do is what is equally good for all (that is, for all addressees). The attractiveness of values reflects an evaluation and a transitive ordering of goods that has become established in particular cultures or has been adopted by particular groups: important evaluative decisions or higher-order preferences express what is good for us (or for me), all things considered. Finally, different norms must not contradict each other when they claim validity for the same domain of addressees; they must stand in coherent relations to one another – in other words, they must constitute a system. Different values, by contrast, compete for priority; insofar as they meet with intersubjective recognition within culture or group, they constitute shifting configurations fraught with tension.”
PART II

The Emotions
The Pioneering Sociology of Emotions
Emotion as Culture

It is clear that Smith, Cooley, and Mead posit that emotions play an important role in the social processes of self-formation and self-realization. Yet, what does it mean to understand emotions as social processes? In turn, is it possible to understand emotions as part of the self, rather than as part of the biological organism? In fact, there is a whole field within the sociological discipline that tries to answer questions like these – the sociology of emotions.

Several strategies have been used to answer these questions. One strategy is to approach emotion as culture. The assumption is that emotion as culture is a controversial task. It is controversial if it implies the idea – paraphrasing Émile Durkheim ([1895] 1982) – that one can be sure that an explanation or understanding of a cultural phenomenon is false if it is based on something other than cultural facts, for instance, on biological or psychological processes. The neglect of emotion within the sociological discipline before the 1970s was mainly a result of the general view on emotion as a biological or psychological phenomenon.

In search for an understanding of emotion as a phenomena that connects body and mind, without (con)fusing them, this fourth chapter examines the ideas of emotion as culture within the sociology of emotions. Under, What is a Cultural Phenomenon?, the conception of culture within contemporary sociology is discussed. In this section, emotion, as well as knowledge is understood as culture. Indeed, the idea of emotion and knowledge as culture tend to be intertwined within the sociology of emotion. Nonetheless, the development of the idea of knowledge as culture involves a different problem than the development of the idea of emotion as culture. A theory of knowledge as culture opposes a “traditional” view on knowledge as representation of outer nature, whereas a theory of emotion as culture opposes a “traditional” view on emotion as inner nature caused by outer nature. Once we have understood this general structure, a critical investigation of the different ideas of emotion as culture within the contemporary sociology of emotions can be undertaken.

In the present chapter, several ideas will be used to support the claim that emotion is culture. Some researchers argue that emotion is inner nature, a biologically given sense, but that it becomes penetrated and modified by culture (see, for example, Shott 1979; Hochschild 1983), whereas other researchers argue that emotion, as a whole, is culture (see, for example, Coulter 1986; McCarthy 1989). Under, The Sociocultural (Re)Construction of Emotion, the idea of emotion as “plastic,” as something “penetrated” by society or culture is discussed. Arguing, however, that emotion is a biologically given sense, this
idea does not give a socio-cultural answer to what is plastic and penetrated by society or culture.

Under the headline, *The Sociolinguistic of Emotion*, an account of emotion that takes its point of departure from emotional culture, rather than ending up with it, is discussed. This account focuses on the language of emotions. It claims that emotion cannot be understood in abstraction from its linguistic context. This implies, for example, that the feeling of an emotion and a sensation is not to be confused with each other, since the one cannot be understood within the – to borrow the concept of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953) – “language-game” of the other. The concept of feeling simply refers to different phenomena within each “language-game.” Basically, it is argued that emotions are lived and acted out as expressive gestures, social actions, given meaning only within its own “language-game.” However, the account does not specify what sort of expressive gesture or social action emotion is, and how it is socioculturally acquired.

Under, *Emotion as Embodied Thought*, the idea that emotion is a specific form of social action, the thoughts of an individual person, which because of its significance to her or him becomes embodied, is discussed. This idea, however, tends to reduce emotion to mind, which also will be addressed. This idea

**What is a Cultural Phenomenon?**

To view emotion as culture may seem odd in an age where culture more explicitly than ever is grasped as knowledge. “In line with constructivist development in recent sociology,” Gerard Delanty (1999: 10) writes, “I am arguing that we can see culture as a communicatively structured form of social knowledge from which social actors draw and which is inseparable from their social practices.” Or, the other way around – knowledge is culture, as McCarthy (1996: 1) advocates:

> [K]nowledge is best conceived and studied as culture, and the various types of social knowledges communicate and signal social meanings – such as meanings about power and pleasure, beauty and death, goodness and danger. As powerful cultural forms, knowledges also constitute meanings and create entirely new objects and social practices.

Considering the theories of emotion within sociology it is not odd to understand emotion as culture. What is happening in contemporary sociology (of culture) is that the notions of knowledge and emotion are moving toward each other. Today both knowledge and emotion are understood as phenomena that are constructed within the sphere of culture, i.e., “the signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (Williams 1981: 13). Further, it is argued that culture could be thought of as a battlefield where social actors as bearers of social structures struggle with and against each other, constructing social reality. It is the semiotic or symbolic function mediating between agency and
structure (compare McCarthy 1996; Alexander 1998: 216ff.; Delanty 1999: 10, 42). Hence, culture is not a result of social institutions and material reproduction. It is not a “secondary formation” (Shalins 1976). Instead, it is grasped as a semiotic process, outside of which nothing exists for us – “neither material life, forces of production, and certainly not enterprises of science and social science, themselves and their objects, cultural forms and forces” (McCarthy 1994: 270, emphasis withdrawn).

According to Alberto Melucci (1996: 59), culture is the capacity through which objects and relations are embodied with meaning. Culture represents shared meanings. As C. Wright Mills would have put it – culture is communication. “The first rule for understanding the human condition is that men live in a second-hand world,” he (1963: 375) argues. With the statement Mills (ibid.) implies that “[t]he consciousness of men does not determine their existence, nor does their existence determine their consciousness. Between the human consciousness and material existence stand communications and designs, patterns and values, which influence decisively such consciousness as they have.” Clifford Geertz’s (1973: 89) definition of culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life” is a good summary of the concept of culture within contemporary social sciences.

Culture as the sphere in which capacities like different types of knowledge and emotions are constructed refers to these kinds of capacities as processes that make up signifying systems. They operate within culture by telling or informing us about society (McCarthy 1984: 270). The idea of knowledge and emotion as culture implies that both are ways of understanding others and ourselves. Nonetheless, knowledge as culture is not the same as emotion as culture. Before the notion of emotion as culture is discussed, the notion of knowledge as culture is looked at.

On the one hand, the relation between culture and knowledge may seem self-evident. Within sociology of knowledge the idea of knowledge as culture has been supported over time. Early on, Durkheim ([1914] 1983: 85) advocates the idea that “thoughts create reality.” For him, culture, in the sense of collective representations, is society. Knowledge is grasped as representations of reality that are given force, truth, and objectivity through being collectively shared. Durkheim understands social life or culture “as the mother and eternal nurse of moral thought and logical thinking, of science as well as faith” (Lévi-Strauss 1945: 530). Also, Karl Mannheim ([1929] 1936) grasps knowledge as culture, in the sense of a collective act of thinking. According to him, all forms of knowledge are fragile, because they are dependent on specific perspectives. As such knowledge is inseparable from culture, the sphere in which different groups of people compete for the validity of their specific perspective of reality.
Similarly, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) understand social reality and knowledge as dialectically connected to each other within culture. From their perspective, reality and knowledge encounter and become transformed within culture. This means that reality and knowledge are interdependent within the cultural domain. Moreover, the notion of knowledge as culture is both indicated and elaborated within the kind of action-oriented theories of mind developed by social pragmatists like Charles S. Pierce, Dewey, and Mead.

On the other hand, there exists a long tradition of western thought, running from Descartes and the scientific revolution as a red thread throughout the philosophy of Enlightenment and modern theory of science, which argues that knowledge is a stranger to culture. Within this tradition, knowledge is viewed as something existing in, what Mead calls “the world that is already there,” or what Maurice Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1962), and Nelson Goodman (1978) call, “a ready-made world.” Knowledge is in these cases seen as reflected in the nature of things themselves. No such thing as meaning – particular and local – stands between the knowing subject and the known object. It only distorts knowledge and turns it into false belief. At least those are the arguments that the “empiricist’s” or the “naturalist’s” account of knowledge is criticized for defending within cultural accounts of knowledge (see, for example, Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1962; Richard Rorty 1979; Richard A. Shweder 1984b). Within the former, knowledge seems to be a question of consciousness and outer nature immediately connecting with each other. Knowledge aims at “truth,” in form of a mirror image of reality. Knowledge and reality, as something once and for all given in outer nature, are supposed to be distinguished from opinions and appearances. Opinions and appearances are simply possessions of confused people (compare Shweder 1984b). They are cultural blurs, rather than social constructions that constitute new meanings and create new objects, hence, reality, which the advocates of knowledge as culture argue. We are thus faced with a worldview that dualistically distinguishes the world of reason (knowing subjects) from the empirical world (known objects). The subject’s knowledge is a question of passive sense perception (compare Shweder 1984b: 30ff.). “Things,” as Foucault once have described this way of thinking, “mumble already a meaning which our language just need to grasp” (as cited in Carlehed 1999: 12). Accordingly, we are supposed to step out of whatever culture we live in, transcend ourselves, and let the universal essence of the objects of the world imprint or force itself upon us (compare Shweder 1984b: 30; Rorty 1991: 22).

In opposition to this idea, a conceptualization of knowledge as culture indicates that an understanding of knowledge and reality presupposes an account of intentional actions of individuals. It is argued that individual actors do not only take part in making themselves, but also in making the meanings and objects of the world they inhabit. Indeed, the discurs of different types of
knowledge, i.e., everyday knowledge and scientific knowledge, is a turn away from the idea of knowledge as a mirror of nature, and a turn towards an idea of knowledge as culture.

However, the notion of emotion as culture confronts us with a problem somewhat different from the notion of knowledge as culture. A theory of knowledge as culture opposes a traditional view on knowledge as representation of outer nature, whereas a theory of emotion as culture opposes a traditional view on emotion as inner nature caused by outer nature.

### The Sociocultural (Re)Construction of Emotion

Within sociology of emotions, the majority of researchers treat emotions as culture or social constructs.

A majority of sociologists and many other social scientists working in emotion studies identify their work with an approach called ‘social constructionism.’ Constructionism’s most prominent feature is an emphasis (one that varies considerably from study to study) on cognitive and cultural features of emotion. In most cases, proponents of this approach argue that emotions cannot be divorced from the sociocultural meanings in which they are experienced and expressed (McCarthy 1994: 267f.).

In general, they argue that emotional experience and expression is culture. It, however, does not necessarily imply that the advocates of a cultural theory of emotion argue that emotion, as a whole, should be understood as cultural. Often they simply acknowledge culture’s capacity to modify or shape emotion. Emotion is seen as “plastic” (see, for example, Shott 1979: 1318). This is a view on emotion that we find in theories of “emotion management” (see, for example, Hochschild 1983; Thomas J. Scheff 1990; Liz Meerabeau and Susie Page 1998) and “affect control” (see, for example, David R. Heise 1977; Smith-Lovin and Heise (Eds.) 1988; Neil J. MacKinnon 1994). Within these theories, it is investigated how norms, beliefs, identities, linguistic practices, and semantics affect our emotional life and behavior. They show how the individual person works on her or his emotional experiences and expressions to be able to live up to or in accordance with her or his socioculturally determined identity or sociocultural expectations, i.e., conventions and moral obligations. Nonetheless, they take their point of departure from the idea that there exists a biologically given core of emotion that becomes socio-culturally (re)constructed.

“Emotion,” Hochschild (1983: 219) writes, “I suggest, is a biologically given sense, and our most important one.” Or, as Shott writes, “[b]efore I begin this exposition [...] a definitional note is in order, given the variegated welter of definitions of emotion. In this paper, I shall use Schachter’s (1971, pp. 23–24) conception of emotion as a state of physiological arousal defined by the actor as emotionally induced” (Shott 1979: 1318).
Some of the sociologists dealing with emotion are critical of this way of handling the notion of emotion as culture. As they see it, sociological theories of emotion should not be built upon other disciplines’ definition of emotion (McCarthy 1989: 53; Gordon 1990: 150). Durkheim stresses that “[w]henever a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon, we may be sure that the explanation is false” (as cited in McCarthy 1989: 51).

To make sociology of emotion a field of its own, rather than an assistant or subfield of the physiological-psychological domain, it should be distinctive. In doing so the sociologists can develop a full account of emotion from their specific perspective.

With this point of departure, Gordon (1990: 153, see, also, Gordon 1981) claims that emotion should be treated “as an ‘open system’, in which the entire combination of elements is socially constructed [...].” The elements or aspects of emotion that Gordon points out are: bodily sensations, expressive gestures and actions, a social situation or relationship, and emotional culture (1990: 151f.). The importance lies in Gordon’s sociological understanding of the different elements of emotion.

Concerning the bodily sensations, i.e., physiological feelings or arousal, Gordon argues that the sociologist has very little to say. The sociologist has more to say about expressive gestures and actions, i.e., the way in which emotions appear in outer activities, since they are cultural-specific in form and internalized within the social act. According to Gordon, the sociologist ought to investigate emotion in a social situation or relationship. He refers to such a situation or relationship as the cause of emotion. “An emotion,” Gordon (1990: 152) writes, “is a reaction to a situation, usually of social origin, such as change in relationship.” Viewed as a reaction to a social situation, Gordon stresses that emotional experiences are dependent on the interpretation that the individual person does of the social situation in which they occur. Accordingly, this element of emotion is both social and cognitive in character, and in turn confronts the sociologist with emotional culture. Gordon (1981; 1990) argues that emotional culture is more than merely a certain set of rules or norms of emotional experiences and expressions, i.e., socioculturally determined prescriptions of range, intensity, duration, objects, and circumstances of individual feeling and display of emotion. “Feeling rules” (Hochschild 1979; 1983, see also chapter six) or “display rules” (Paul Ekman 1982) and techniques developed to be able to live by them, i.e., “surface acting” and “deep acting” (Hochschild 1983, see also chapter six) are significant elements of emotion culture. Nonetheless, they exist alongside emotion vocabulary, i.e., names for emotions and the way we combine them with other words in speech. They exist alongside beliefs, ideologies, or myths about emotions. Emotional culture “records a society’s history of experiences and interpretations regarding an emotion,” Gordon (1989: 322) writes. According to him, emotional culture is
intertwined with every actual episode of emotion. As I see it, Gordon’s notion of emotional culture does not oppose any of the elements of emotions that theories of emotion management or affect control focus on. It captures them.

In contrast, however, to the researchers dealing with emotion management or affect control, Gordon posits that the sociologists should take their starting point from within the sociological domain. The sociologists should not build upon any other disciplines, but their own, particularly if the former inhibit the researcher from grasping all the potentials of sociology to explain or understand emotion. At the same time, Gordon warns the sociologist against becoming a victim of an oversocialized conception of emotion (Gordon 1981; 1990: 153).

He suggests that the sociologist should “integrate social influences on emotion with physiological substrate” (Gordon 1990: 153). In fact, he demands a “two-factor” theory of emotion that takes into account both sociocultural and physiological factors. He does not try to develop such a theory from within the sociological discipline, but rather he refers to the results of Stanley Schachter and Jerome E. Singer’s psychological experiment on emotions, from 1962.

In the publication of the controversial results of their experiment on emotion, Schachter and Singer claim that sociocultural factors play a significant part in the constitution of emotional experiences. Many scientists came to abandon the common view on emotions as specific physiological states, in favor of Schachter and Singer understanding of emotion:

> Granted a general pattern of sympathetic excitation as characteristic of emotional states, granted that there might be some differences in pattern from state to state, it is suggested that one labels, interprets, and identifies this stirred-up state in terms of the characteristic of the precipitating situation. This suggests, then, that an emotional state may be considered a function of a state of physiological arousal [...] and of a cognition appropriate to this state of arousal. [...] It is the cognition that determines whether the state of physiological arousal will be labeled as “anger,” “joy,” “fear,” or whatever (Schachter and Singer 1962: 380).

Gordon claims that Schachter and Singer’s account of emotion (which is examined in chapter five) embodies both the sociocultural and the physiological factors that make up our emotions. Nonetheless, he emphasizes that the sociologist should not accept Schachter and Singer’s two-factor theory of emotion, or any other psychological theory of emotion, as it stands. She or he ought to revisit such theory only “to see what can be saved for sociological use” (Gordon 1990: 154).

Gordon tries to develop a notion of emotion as sociocultural. Yet, he does not develop a sociological account of the initial core of emotion and nor does he provide a sociological or sociocultural answer to the question – univocally put by Ian Hacking (1999) – “the social construction of what?”
If we define or understand culture as labeling, interpretation, communication, or meaning-making, there must be something which is labeled, interpreted, valued, communicated about or given meaning. Simple labels, interpretations, values, communications or meanings are not useful. To make the idea of emotion as an entirely sociocultural phenomenon intelligible, we must find what is being labeled or communicated. If it is not a biologically based sensation, manifested in outer behavior, what is it?

As stated earlier, social researchers dealing with emotion assume it is initially a biologically based sensation. As aforementioned, Hochschild views emotion in this way. However, she emphasizes that “[i]t is not simply true that the malleable aspect of emotion is ‘social’ (the focus of the interactional theorists) and that the unmalleable aspect of emotion is its biological link to action (the focus of the organismic theorists). The unmalleable aspect of emotion (which is what we try to manage) is also social” (Hochschild 1983: 220). Hochschild’s empirical material shows that the emotional life of the individual person becomes constructed by her or his aim to live in accordance with cultural norms of emotional experiences and expressions. Hochschild does not view emotion entirely as a sociocultural phenomenon. She looks at emotions as biologically given that become penetrated by sociocultural factors, first and foremost, meanings, which in turn become an immanent part of them. In her view it is a biologically based sensation that is socioculturally constructed in the case of emotion.

As far as I see, Gordon’s sociology of emotions, in spite of all his efforts to take seriously the notion of emotion as an entirely sociocultural phenomenon, is limited. Like theories of emotion management or affect control, his account of emotion could be criticized for taking us only “half the way” in understanding or explaining emotion from a sociological perspective.

Nonetheless, there are some social researchers, beginning their treatment of emotion without relaying on any other discipline’s findings to start with. Those researchers provide us with an alternative to Gordon’s treatment of emotion. Such alternative does not end up with emotional culture, but takes it as a point of departure. The central idea of this alternative approach is that a cultural phenomenon by necessity needs to be explained by other cultural phenomena. Therefore, the researchers must start their investigations of emotion as culture from within the sphere of culture. At their disposal they have communications, meanings, ideas, values, and norms. How do we look at phenomena like these? Perhaps, the answer lies in language. When the social antrophologist Roy G. D’Andrade discusses culture theory he says that “[w]hen I was a graduate student, one imagined people in a culture; ten years later culture was all in their heads. The thing went from something out there and very large to something that got placed inside. […] We went from ‘let’s try to look at behavior and describe it’ to ‘let’s try to look at ideas.’ Now how you were to look at ideas
was a bit of a problem – and some people said, ‘Well, look at language’” (as cited in Shweder 1984a: 7). Within the sociology of emotion this is exactly what some researchers do. They examine languages. More precisely, they develop linguistically sensitive accounts of emotion.

The Sociolinguistic of Emotion

Sociology has had little to say about the nature of “affective” or emotional conduct, perhaps primarily because, following Max Weber’s lead, it has generally been hived off theoretically from the bulk of “rational” action in human affairs, downgraded to a sort of appendage to social relations and consigned to a permanently residual status. Mistakenly thought of as beyond the scope of social convention and constraint, affective states have been allowed to fall exclusively within the province of psychology. In its turn, psychology has generated a variety of ways of handling the phenomena of affect, but few of them have remained consistent with, or controlled by, the conceptual structure of emotion-concepts, and this has entailed a serious neglect of the socio-cultural dimensions integral to the very constitution of the phenomena under study. It will be argued here that such dimensions are primary in the consideration of affective states and conduct. Affect and rationality are much more closely interrelated than has been noted in the behavioral sciences, and both are throughout subject to socio-cultural and sociolinguistic analysis (Coulter 1979: 125).

Coulter is probably the most univocal advocate of a linguistic approach to emotion within the sociological discipline. Taking his lead from the later Wittgensteinian tradition of linguistic philosophy, he assumes that we only can understand the world we live in and ourselves by means of the concepts and structures of everyday language. According to Coulter, we must, thus, begin our investigation of emotion by examine the language of it.

Before we take a closer look at Coulter’s argumentation, it is important that we do not confuse his concept of language with representational and semantic concepts of it. Coulter understands linguistic meaning pragmatically, derived from language practice in concrete contexts, and the rules that regulate a such practice. This is what Wittgenstein calls “language-games.” In other words, to speak is not just a matter of describing things. We do things with words, as J. L. Austin (1971) puts it. We beg, lie, order, question, insult, help, exclaim, and explain, among other things. To talk is a form of social action – it is a speech act. Hence, speech is a legitimate object of social research. Further, each speech act belongs to a specific language-game, outside of which it cannot be understood. In short, when Coulter deals with emotion, he investigates the language-game in which it exists, since he means that it cannot be understood in abstraction from such a context.

According to Coulter, the way that we talk about our emotions in everyday language is a source of confusion, not only among laypeople, but also throughout the history of both philosophical and psychological thinking. The problem
is that the word feeling is used both in emotion vocabulary and in sensation vocabulary. We say “I feel sad,” “I felt happy all day long” or “I feel so embarrassed when you look at me like that.” At the same time we say, “I felt hungry for hours, but now I feel stuffed,” “I feel pain in my stomach.” In both cases, Coulter argues, we are dealing with exclamations – substitutes of original forms of emotion-behavior or sensation-behavior. As an exclamation or expression, “I feel happy” is a substitute of, for example, smiling, jumping or dancing, whereas “I feel pain in my throat” is a substitute of, for example, crying. Neither expressions of emotion nor expressions of sensation are to be reduced to subjective descriptions of states that exist independently of them. Instead, they must be comprehended as elements of specific patterns of action or behavior that make up or constitute emotions or sensations. Emotion and sensation is put on par. However, the resemblance of emotion and sensation also ends here (Crossley 1998: 18).

It is important that we, in spite of the different ways that we use the word feeling, do not confuse emotion with sensation. The concept of emotion belongs to another “language-game,” than the concept of sensation. Therefore, it is not possible for us to understand the one within the “language-game” of the other. We do different things with the feeling-concept within the “language-game” of emotion and the “language-game” of sensation. Hence, it embodies different meanings within each of the “language-games.” To be able to identify emotion we must, therefore examine the “grammar” of the language-game of emotions, the rules we play by within it, Coulter argues. If we do so, we will be able to point out several features of emotion that clearly distinguish it from sensation – all of them revealing the sociocultural character emotion. To put it simply, we will see that the original core of emotion, in contrast to the original core of sensation, is not an internal state, but rather a certain set of outer circumstances that have become internalized. Hence, emotion is understood as context-bound action, rather than a biologically given sensation. With reference to Wittgenstein’s idea “[o]ne no more feels sorrow in one’s body than one feels seeing in ones eyes,” Coulter (1979: 127) defends this claim.

In addition, Coulter looks at the idea that we know our own emotions best. There is some truth to it, he thinks. However, this idea is not to be confused with the idea that we know our own feeling-states or sensations best. Rather, it is a question of “routinely knowing” the outer circumstances of the own emotional experiences, he argues. “If someone informs us that he feels angry,” Coulter (1979: 126f.) writes, “this may be treated as corroborative rather than indispensable testimony, but the warranted ascription of anger does not depend necessarily upon a corresponding avowal, nor upon the presence of a particular feeling-state accompanying the anger displayed.” This becomes evident if we consider the problem of the location of emotion. As Wittgenstein points out, we are not able to localize emotions in the way that we are with sensations. This, however, is not to say that sensations are excluded from emotion-behavior.
Let me give you an example that might shed some light over the argumentation of Wittgenstein. When a dentist asks a patient, who claims a toothache, “exactly where do you feel it,” it makes sense to us. If, however, someone claims being happy, trying to locate it makes no sense. Indeed, it is possible for us to “have a pain,” but not to “have a happy.” We can only be happy. When we say that we have been happy all day long, we do not express that we have had a specific sensation constantly throughout the day. Yet, this is the case if we say that we have been hungry all day.

Instead of looking at self-reports like “I feel shame” or “I feel grief” as descriptions of something happening or existing inside the subject, Coulter suggests that we should see self-reports of emotion as expressions that are “circumstantially justified or unjustified.” When we express an emotion, we do not refer, first and foremost, to a certain feeling-state or sensation, but rather to a set of justified or unjustified circumstances. Consider the way in which it is possible to be reasoned into or out of anger, pride, happiness, and embarrassment. This is not the case of headaches or thirst. We cannot argue that it is unreasonable or inappropriate to feel pain. Nonetheless, we can argue that it is unreasonable to feel angry when, for example, given a present.

Another example is if your partner breaks the foot when you are dancing together and says, “I feel envy,” would you really understand what exactly your partner is trying to tell you? Crying out in anger or pain would make more sense, would it not? To be in pain, however, is not a case of emotion-behavior, but sensation-behavior. As Coulter (1979: 128) puts it, “[not] only do emotions characteristically have meaningful objects or situations as their occasions, but such objects or situations make emotions intelligibly present.”

If we hear someone crying next door, for example, it is difficult to know if the person who cries is sad or in pain. We simply do not know the circumstances of the behavior. In our efforts to recognize emotions, we link them not merely to specific patterns of behavior, but also to specific types of situations. “The link,” Coulter (1979: 133) stresses, “is neither deterministic nor biological, but socio-cultural.”

The above claim implies (1) that emotional behavior follows cultural conventions. We feel sad at funerals, happy at weddings, exited at rock-concerts, for example. It implies (2) that cultural expectations on our emotional behavior is differentiated according to our situated identities, for example, if we are children, women, men, dancers, professors, unemployed, sick, healthy, poor, rich. It implies (3) that emotions change over time.

Actually, Coulter looks at emotion in a manner similar to the way that “the new sociology of knowledge” view knowledge – as constantly contested and changing within culture. In this way, emotion ought to be seen as an intersubjective rather than a subjective phenomenon. Emotional behavior, expressions, or exclamations are in turn understood as social action, in the
sense of – to borrow from the terminology of Habermas – “communicative action.” It can be contested in terms of, at least, the two latter of the three following validity claims; propositional truth, normative rightness, and subjective truthfulness (see Habermas [1981] 1997: 71, 329). Hence, emotional behavior cannot be “hived off theoretically from the bulk of ‘rational’ action in human affairs” (Coulter 1979: 125). As Crossley (1998: 20) puts it “[e]motions, in this conception, form part of a mutually meaningful, intersubjective interworld and they are accountable.” Nonetheless, he argues that sociocultural or sociolinguistic accounts of emotion are insufficient. “Linguistic analysis, by its nature, only considers the concept of emotion and the manner in which emotions are accounted for in situations. It fails to consider the way in which they are lived and acted out. Consequently it does not provide us with an understanding of emotion, but rather with an understanding of our understanding of emotion,” Crossley (1998: 20) writes.

In my opinion, Crossley’s critique of the sociolinguistic account of emotion is inadequate. Sociolinguistic accounts of emotion like Coulter’s and Wittgenstein’s, discuss the way in which emotion is lived and acted out. As aforementioned, they do argue that emotions are lived and acted out as expressive gestures or social actions, rendered meaningfully only within the language-game of emotions. However, the sociolinguistic accounts of emotion fail or ignore to provide a social or cultural understanding or explanation of how the emotions come to manifest themselves as expressive gestures or acts. What those accounts refer to when they claim that emotions are exclamations or substitutes of more initial forms of emotion-behavior is never explained.

To consider emotion as an entirely sociocultural phenomenon implies more than the consideration of how emotion as a specific form of social action is known, defined, and judged. We must consider the possibility that the specific form of social action that constitutes emotion (which for that matter needs to be explored in more detail) is socioculturally given. This means that we need to consider our emotions as somehow internalized within the sociocultural sphere. As Crossley writes (1998: 21), “linguistic philosophy is problematic because it fails to consider that emotion may play a positive role in the constitution of the social world qua intersubjectively meaningful interworld, in addition to being constituted within that world.” This central critique implies that we need to know more about the kind of social action that is supposed to be socioculturally constructed or given meaning within a specific “language game” or culture. Once again, we are faced with the question of the social construction of what. It is not sufficient to say it is social action. A detailed account of the specific kind of social action that is labeled and communicated within culture is necessary.

Many social scientists understand thoughts, ideas, and interpretations as forms of social action. Does this mean that we should understand the initial
core of emotion as a specific kind of thought, idea, or interpretation? Certainly, this seems to be the case when emotion is conceptualized as “embodied thought” (see Franks and Gecas 1992a). Is it possible to think about something as initially thought, idea, or interpretation? Does this presuppose a pre-reflexive dimension of meaningfulness, in the sense of intentionality, as phenomenologists like, for example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1962) argue? Do we not need an object, something to think about to enable thinking? To find out, let us consider the notion of emotion as embodied thought.

**Emotion as Embodied Thought**

Among social constructionists within the sociology of emotion or within culture theory it is rather common to talk about emotion as embodied thought. With reference to several works on emotions as sociocultural phenomena (i.e. Hochschild 1983; Franks 1989; Franks and McCarthy 1989; Calhoun 1989; Averill 1990), Franks and Gecas (1992a: 8) identify emotion as “thought that becomes embodied because of the intensity with which it is laced with personal self-relevancy.”

The social anthropologist Michelle Z. Rosaldo (1984) talks about emotions in a manner similar to Franks and Gecas. Rosaldo posits that we must acknowledge the significance of how human beings understand themselves, since their actions, especially, their emotions, are creations of those understandings.

[We] must appreciate the ways in which such understandings grow, not from an ‘inner’ essence relatively independent of the social world, but from experience in a world of meanings, images and social bonds, in which all persons are inevitably involved (Rosaldo 1984: 139).

Like Coulter, she emphasizes that emotions are not hidden in some kind of inner chamber of mind or body. What we think of as our insides or hearts – the subjectivity or uniqueness of the individual – arise in the sphere of culture. Emotion is, no more than thought, a biological given. For a long time, we have separated emotion and thought. At present, such dichotomies are dissolving. “Once upon a time,” Rosaldo (1984: 137) writes, “the world was simple.” We took for granted that thought was not the same as emotion. However, the “interpretative” conceptualization of culture helps us to see that this is not the case, Rosaldo claims. Her conception of culture identifies the emotions as “cognitions – or more aptly, perhaps, interpretations – always culturally informed, in which the actor finds that body, self, and identity are immediately involved” (Rosaldo 1884: 141; see also Catherine Lutz 1988: 5).

Rosaldo (1984: 143) thinks that emotions are best grasped as “thoughts somehow ‘felt’ in flushes, pulses, ‘movements’ of our livers, minds, hearts, stomachs, skin. They are *embodied* thoughts [...].” Hence, she suggests that thought is the original core of emotion. Emotion is a specific kind of thought,
namely, thought that becomes embodied, she claims. How the embodiment of thought takes place is already indicated within the statement of Franks and Gecas quoted above. The idea is that it is about the ways in which we are involved in social life. It is about our engagement in the outer world, which color our experiences with self-relevancy and gives them personal contents. “[A] mere hearing of a child’s cry and a hearing felt – as when one realizes that danger is involved or that the child is one’s own” makes all the difference, Rosaldo (1984: 143) claims. To further show what an account of emotions as embodied thoughts indicates, Rosaldo describes the emotional life of the Ilongots, which she has studied for several years.

The Ilongots do not distinguish emotion and thought in the same way as we generally do within contemporary western culture. In everyday language of the Ilongots, one speaks of “hearts that think and feel without distinguishing thought and affect,” Rosaldo writes (1984: 142). Central to this idea is that thought and emotion are two sides of the same coin. As Francis F. Seeburger (1992: 51; see also Franks 1989) influenced by Zen Buddhism puts it, thought and emotion are “not two.” The claim is that we cannot distinguish thought and emotion in the same way as we do with cats and dogs. Thought and emotion are not independent entities. Nor are they one and the same entity. It is a misunderstanding to comprehend “not two” as “one and the same thing,” Seeburger (1992: 52) stresses. Indeed, it is only on a theoretical level that we can distinguish thought from emotion. In praxis, thought and emotion are always intertwined, in the same way as the blue and the width of the sea seems bound with each other, when viewed by the beach. Nonetheless, there exists of a gap between emotion and thought. Also, the Ilongot people acknowledge the existence of a gap between emotion and thought. “Thought and feeling are not distinguished, but Ilongot discourse comprehends a gap between passive reflection and thought fueled with affect, or acts of desiring,” Rosaldo (1984: 143) writes.

Hence, neither the thinking of Rosaldo, nor the thinking of Seeburger suggests that we should abandon the distinction between emotion and thought, altogether, but consider its limits. “‘Hot’ mindless passion and its opposite, ‘cold’ de-contexted thought, may have their use as ideal-types,” Rosaldo (1984: 141) writes. She suggests that we sometimes imagine cognition entirely free from affect. If we, however, look at cognition as “passive reflection,” it must be understood as an abstraction of the concrete cognition at issue. Emotion and thought are not separated within real life or concrete cognition, she concludes. Seeburger writes:

Cognition is obviously not the same thing as emotion. Judging or believing is not identical to feeling or being moved […]. Nevertheless, cognition and emotion are not two substantially separable things either. Instead wherever judgement is, there is feeling also; and whoever is moved, believes” (Seeburger 1992: 52).
Rosaldo, as well as Seeburger, posits that a phenomenological account of emotion, i.e., a description of the individual experience of emotion, shows that cognition and affect or thought and emotion are impossible to isolate within real life experiences. If emotion and thought are isolated within such experiences we are dealing with a kind of “social pathology,” Seeburger (1992: 56) claims.

Elaborating on the claim, Seeburger (1992: 58) pictures the little girl who has been raped by her stepfather. If we ask the girl about her experience of the sexual abuse that she has been put through, we will soon understand that the only way that she is able to cope with the sexual abuse is by a withdrawal of her emotionality, i.e., the personal self-relevancy with which the experience is laced. When the little girl remembers the sexual abuse, she imagines herself looking upon the scenario as from above. She renders it as if from a distance. It is not she that is being sexually abused. It is not her stepfather raping her. It is about other people, as if she is watching TV. According to Seeburger, the girl’s experiences of abuse have not become embodied – she was simply not personally involved. The girl’s account of her rape only incorporates knowledge of the experience in a weakened sense, as Seeburger sees it.

It is only in a weakened sense of “know” that the child who has to project herself in imagination into the corner to observe herself being raped, and who can only recall the event (if at all) as though it involved someone else, not her, can be said to know what happened to her. In the full, genuine sense of knowledge, she does not know. She cannot dare to let herself know (Seeburger 1992: 58).

Seeburger understands emotion as a central aspect of knowledge. He argues that thought and emotion are linked to each other within knowledge or experience of reality. Like Rosaldo, he sees emotion as an element of everyday knowledge that is so strongly related to the individual person that her body becomes its locus. His main thesis is that if the body is somehow excluded from the way that we exist within the act, we are unable to live our life fully – to realize ourselves.

What is problematic with Seeburger’s account of emotion is not that emotion and thought are intertwined within full experience of reality, but rather the idea that emotion is embodied thought. The aim of the conceptualization is to bring the body into the sphere of culture – to transcend the mind-body dualism – by pointing out the close relationship between ideas, meanings, or interpretations and the body. This, however, is done by an emphasis on the former rather than on the latter. The idea that is presented is that emotion is – to borrow the terminology of Simon J. Williams and Gillian Bedelow (1998: 154) – “mindful body.” We, then, encounter the same idea that we find within notions like Mary Douglas’s “symbolic body,” Michel Foucault’s “discursive body,” and Norbert Elias’s “civilised body.” In all these, what we have to begin with in our search for the original core of emotion is culture, whether it is ritualistic beliefs, disciplinary techniques of power/knowledge, or codes of
etiquette. When adapting to, whether on a pre-reflexive or a reflexive level, they become part of the body of the individual. Embodied in this way, they are seen as what constitute our emotions. As a result (though it does not necessarily have to be the case) the researchers that view emotion as embodied thought look at emotion as social corporality in the form of a bodily extension of mind. “There is, here,” as Margot L. Lyon (1998: 49) writes, “an acknowledgement of the bodily dimension; but in the overall context of the study of emotion, its cultural implicitness is troublesome. The bodily component remains ‘hedged’, harnessed closely to culturally mediated thought. It is so partly because it is caught up in the ideational bias of the concepts of culture and symbol.” In turn, this makes it a “mission impossible” to give an answer to Hacking’s question “the social construction of what?” Indeed, it is the wrong question. In the case of emotion as embodied thought, it would be more accurate to ask how exactly do social or cultural constructions become embodied.

We know that we can think about our emotions. I can think about the happiness I felt the day when I got married or the sorrow I felt when a friend died. It, however, would be absurd to suggest that these thoughts are primordial in the making of emotion. It must be something else that one has in mind within accounts of emotion as embodied thought – a thought that precedes the thinking about emotion. It simply seems as if we cannot get rid of the question about the social construction of what or the question about what it is that we intend in the case of emotion. Still, we have to point out what is the initial process of thought that becomes embodied. To do so, we simply cannot begin with thought. There must be something – the original core of emotion - that we, at some point, feel a need to articulate, give shared meaning, or understand on a reflexive level. This something must as far as I see, precede meaning, interpretation, or thought, especially if these concepts are understood as reflexive processes. Hence, the initial core of emotion has to be sought after on a pre-reflexive rather than reflexive level of our existence within the act. When emotion is understood as originally a reflexive aspect of social life, this search is made meaningless or paradoxical.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have searched for an understanding of emotion that transcends the mind-body dualism by investigating the idea of emotion as culture. The aim has been to explain or understand emotion as a phenomenon that primarily emerges and develops within our interchanges with each other.

To claim that “bodily sensations” are basic (socio-cultural) elements of our emotions and not present an understanding or explanation of those sensations as culture or from a sociological standpoint, as we have discussed that Gordon does, is not useful. Gordon, however, would have been more useful if he had considered the relations between the “bodily sensations” and the “expressive
gestures and actions,” which he claims are also basic (socio-cultural) elements of our emotions.

In some way, the latter is what Coulter does in his sociocultural or sociolinguistic account of emotions, which also has been discussed in this chapter. We tend to confuse emotion and sensation, since we talk about both in terms of feelings, he argues. We say that we feel love and hate, as well as we feel pleasure and pain. However, this line of argumentation is not enough for us to be able to totally understand the relationship between emotion and sensation. In fact, it almost seems like Coulter tries to tell us that it is useless to think about the relation between the feeling of emotion and the feeling of sensation, since they belong to different “language-games.” Though, we cannot use the feeling-concept to unveil the relation between our emotions and our sensations, I suggest, sensations belong to the “language-game” of emotion. Certainly, it is possible to discuss the sensation of emotion. It is my belief that we feel our (socially based) emotions by help of our (biologically based) sensations. Indeed, those sensations make us (re)construct our emotions by help of thoughts, as I will show in chapter six. To explain or understand the relationship between the emotions and our sensations of them, as well as our thoughts about them, we must continue our search for a view on emotion that transcends the mind-body dualism. More precisely, we are looking for the key to a specific understanding or explanation of emotion as sociocultural, namely, an account of emotion that makes it possible for us to talk about the emotional aspects of the self that at a theoretical level is possible to distinguish from the biological and the reflexive aspects of the self. Hence, we are searching for the felt self, in addition to the behaving and the thought self. What we, then, need to do is to bring the body back into the sociology of emotions without reducing it to thought, on the one hand, or reduce it to biology, on the other hand. The closest we have got to such an account in this chapter is Coulter’s idea of emotion as a particular kind of social action, namely, exclamations of more initial forms of emotional behavior. What we still need to find out is how these more initial forms of emotional behavior are acquired. Let us, therefore, critically investigate the branch of sociology of emotions that advocates a widening of the narrowed image of the human being as – to quote Collins (1975: 44) – “a thinker, never a creature with a physical body and emotional responses.”
Notes

¹ In Habermas' theory of communicative action emotion is understood as a phenomenon that is possible to contest solely in terms of subjective truthfulness. Habermas does not develop an idea of our emotional capacities, but rather an idea of our reflexive capacities as sociocultural givens.
CHAPTER V

Emotion as Sociophysiology

Though the majority within sociology of emotions to some extent view emotion as culture, there are some who oppose it. Their interest is the “sociophysiology of emotions” (see, for example, Kemper 1978: 146). Accordingly, they emphasize that emotions have two different loci – the relational and the physiological (see, for example, Kemper 1978; 1990). Emotions are basically seen as specific physical changes, which are triggered by specific types of social relations (Kemper 1978: 146ff.). The sociologist’s task is to explore what makes emotions occur, not what emotion is. This is the “only advance that a sociologist can hope to make,” Kemper (1990: 207) claims. This does not mean that emotions as such are to be neglected within sociological investigations, but rather that emotions are keys to solidarity – what holds society together and makes it flourish. To see this we must rediscover the human being as an animal, rather than as a creature of culture, Collins (1975; 1990: 27f.) argues. We must broaden the “narrow” image of the human being as “a thinker, never a creature with a physical body and emotional responses” (Collins 1975: 44). Further, we must explore the fundamental dimensions of our social relationships, which stimulate responses (Kemper 1978: 26ff.; Kemper and Collins 1990).

In this chapter, we take a closer look at the arguments found in Kemper’s sociology of emotions, and Collins’s sociology of emotions. Under, *The Human is an Animal*, Collins’ idea of the importance of our physical bodies and emotional responses for the emergence of solidarity and the flourishing of society is presented. As we will see, the idea implies a notion of “interaction rituals” as processes that emerge from biologically based forms of emotionality at the same time as they result in different levels of “emotional energy.” In addition, it is argued that we are able to predict the emotional outcomes of the interaction rituals that we participate in by an exploration of what is understood to be the fundamental dimensions underlying all social relations, power and status. Under, *To Predict Emotion*, Kemper’s power and status model of interaction, on the basis of which he claims that we can predict emotion, is presented and discussed in relation to some of the critique it has meet from other sociologists within the field of the sociology of emotions. Under, *The Schachter and Singer Experiment*, Kemper’s demand of a reinterpretation of Schachter and Singer’s experiment, on the basis of his power and status model of interaction, is discussed. Under, *Kemper’s Reinterpretation of Schachter and Singer’s Experiment*, Kemper’s defense of emotions as specific physiological states is looked at more closely. Under, *The Illogic of Kemper’s Reinterpretation*
of Schachter and Singer’s Experiment, a critique against the grounds upon which Kemper advocates a view on emotions as biological givens is developed. Finally, under, Concluding Remarks, comments (which are more extensive that in the previous chapters) relating Collins and Kemper’s thinking on emotion to the social psychology of Mead close the chapter.

The Human is an Animal

Generally, we are interdependent in both our “technical activities,” actions directed toward a task, and “relational activities,” actions toward each other (Kemper 1978: 26 ff.; Kemper and Collins 1990). “This is of necessity true,” Kemper (1978: 27) writes, “because if humans were not fundamentally interdependent there would be no need for them to come together.” Our interdependency, however, does not alone sustain society. In line with Durkheim ([1893] 1947), it is argued that social order presupposes solidarity. Indeed, it is argued that we must explore the mechanism of solidarity rather than of interdependency in order to be able to explain our survival and the magnitude of society. Hence, when Collins (1975: 91ff.) demands a rediscovery of the human being as an animal, the overarching aim is the exploration of the mechanism of solidarity.

He suggests that we re-read the works of Darwin, since they will help us to embrace “the relevance of our biological presence as a source for explanatory principles.” (Collins 1975: 91) They will remind us that we are not the only species that live together with others of our own kind. “[S]ociety is subhuman” (Collins 1975: 92).

Today, we often think about ourselves as talking beings. The fact that we have acquired a language is supposed to make all the differences. But, the only difference between our communicative skills and the skills of other animals is that we “elaborate more on the arbitrary part of the dance built up around innate gestures,” Collins (1975: 97) writes. Like the sounds of other animals, our language origins in a desire to communicate our biologically determined moods to others. Certainly, it is not our use of language that fundamentally holds society together. On the contrary, it is built “on the top of” a natural capacity for social bindings or social evolution. Drawing on insights of Durkheim, Freud, Nietzsche and Weber, Collins assumes that solidarity is grounded in a biologically given form of emotionality that we share with other animals.

What holds a society together – the “glue” of solidarity – and what mobilizes conflict – the energy of mobilized groups – are emotions; so is what operates to uphold stratification – hierarchical feelings, whether dominant, subservient, or resentful. (Collins 1990: 27f., see also Collins 1975)

Advocating that our emotions, in the form of biological givens, are the foundation of solidarity, Collins elaborates the concept of “interaction rituals” (IRs), which was coined by Goffman (1967), but dates back to Durkheim ([1915]
While Durkheim mainly deals with IRs of religious nature, Goffman argues that our everyday life interactions are rituals. The only difference between them is that we within the former focus our attention on religious objects, whereas we within the latter focus our attention on our own self and the selves of other participants. In short, Goffman understands IRs as common patterns of interaction in everyday life. If we read his most well known book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), it seems like we do almost everything in a more or less ritualized manner. By scrutinizing our everyday activities ethnomethodologists, A. Lincoln Ryave and James N. Schenkein (1974) have found that we even walk in a ritualized manner. The way we walk is not a matter of merely walking. Walking is a joint or collective activity of navigating ourselves in accordance with universalized rules. We do not walk straight ahead into a group of people walking toward us. If we are walking alone or in a group including fewer people than the approaching group, it is expected that we walk around it, for example. Like Durkheim ([1915] 1954) talks about “doing religion,” Ryave and Schenkein (1974: 265) talk about “doing walking.”

Drawing on the thinking of Durkheim and Goffman, Collins’ specific claim is that IRs not only originate from biologically given forms of emotionality or innate emotions, but also produce “emotional energy” (EE). IRs have emotions as outcomes. Collins does not ignore that our most common patterns of interactions include language in the specific sense of conversation with significant vocal gestures. He is, however, critical about the way we seem to forget that our linguistic ways of carrying out IRs evolve from innate emotional and behavioral tendencies, and result in EE. “Verbal rituals are carried off because of emotional contagion,” Collins (1975: 97) claims. Further, it is the underlying emotional or non-verbal signs, which verbal communication is embedded in that make chains of IRs possible, as Collins (1975: 97, 114ff.) sees it. In his book *Interaction Ritual Chains* (forthcoming), he writes, “the center of an interaction ritual is the process in which participants develop a mutual focus of attention and become entrained in each other’s bodily micro-rhythms and emotions.” The key to successful engagement in any sort of conversation or group activities is the sharing of a focus of attention and mood. By physically coming together and focusing on the same object in a ritualistic way, with the help of, for example, stereotyped patterns of gestures or sounds, it is possible for us to achieve such a sharing or intersubjective experience. This becomes obvious when we come together to watch a game of football or listening to a concert, for example.

According to Collins (1975; 1981; 1990; 1993), we desire to engage ourselves in IRs, since they are rewarding. To share a focus and mood with others produces positive feelings like enthusiasm and confidence, or simply EE. This is what makes us eager to come together over and over again, and in turn ensures a frequent level of solidarity within society. But this would not be the
case, if we did not have automatically aroused emotional responses like “the mutual arousal of alarm signals, recognition and affection signals, sexual arousal signals, antagonism signals, play signals, and of the asymmetric arousal of threat and deference signals,” which we share with other animals, Collins (1975: 153) continues to argue. However, he never elaborates why it is so. Instead, he argues that we have a unique capability to evoke those emotional states with the help of symbols. With help of symbolization or naming, we are able to recall the past, combine different experiences, and imagine the future. On the basis of our biologically given emotions that we share with other animals, this reflexivity enables us to develop also emotions that are specific to our species. Collins (1975: 92) writes:

The infant learns to laugh and to blush, for example – emotions that other species generally lack – at specific points in his cognitive development (Ambrose, 1960). From a sociological point of view, this meeting ground of mind and body is very important, for it is through emotional behavior that men exercise power, create religions and works of art, as well as enact bonds of solidarity among family and friends. Another way of seeing this is to recognize that ideals or values are emotionally charged ideas. Durkheim’s great contribution is to provide a method for explaining the variations in behavior and thought through the kinds of situations that influence emotions.

Collins elaborates on the prediction of the emotional outcomes of IRs, rather than on how emotions that are specific to our species emerge and develop within the act. According to Collins, the former is important because the emotional outcome of IRs determines our “emotional capital,” which together with our “cultural capital,” determines our individual success or social stratification. The argumentation implies that IRs not always succeed in providing the participants with EE. If the prescribed IR is violated by any of the participants there is loss, rather than gain of EE. Another possibility is that some of the participants of an IR gain EE, whereas others do not. To explain processes like these, and in turn be able to predict gain or loss of EE, Collins considers “power” and “status,” which he understands as the fundamental dimensions underlying all social relationships (Kemper and Collins 1990). It, however, is not Collins, but Kemper (1978) who develops a more detailed theory of our emotional experiences as outcomes of power and status relations. Kemper claims that we can predict our emotional experiences on the basis of an exploration of our power and status relations.

To Predict Emotion
Kemper’s claim (that we can predict our emotional experiences on the basis of an exploration of our power and status relations) is based on the assumptions that (1) all social interactions inevitably affect the participants’ power and status positions, and that (2) all social interaction have emotional outcomes. The first
assumption is seen as direct consequence of our interdependency. More specifically, Kemper (1978: 30ff.) defines power as a social relation, in which we actually force or potentially have the ability to force others to do something against their own will. Status or status accord, he defines as a social relation where others voluntarily recognize our value. Further, he argues that every time we engage ourselves in social interaction, our power or status is affected in the sense that it increases, decreases, or is maintained. Kemper (1978, see also Kemper and Collins 1990) contends that our specific emotional experiences are determined by the way our power and status positions become affected within social interaction.

To accurately predict our specific emotional experiences, on the basis of how our power and status positions are affected within the act, we must consider the understanding of who it is that is responsible for the increase, decrease, or maintenance of our power and status. This complicates Kemper’s (1978) account of the determination of our specific emotional experiences within the act. Nonetheless, we can distinguish four different ways that our relational standings can change within an actual single interaction episode, according to Kemper. We can (1) gain power, (2) loose power, (3) gain status, or (4) loose status. If we disregard the understanding of who is responsible for such a gain or loss, the prediction of the emotional outcomes of IRs that Kemper suggests can be summarized in the following way:

If we (1) gain power within the act, we will feel security. Drawing on Max Weber, Kemper (1978: 50) describes security as “positive feeling of comfort and ease, because one feels assured of winning in any showdown or confrontation with the other.” If we (2) lose power within the act, we will feel fear or anxiety. It is because others then gain in their ability to exercise power over us. If we (3) gain status within the act, we will feel “good” like in satisfaction, happiness, approval, esteem, love, and contentment. If we (4) lose status, we will feel shame or become depressed. Further, Kemper (1978: 43, 80ff.) claims, if no changes at all occur during an episode of social interaction, the outcome can be intense emotional experience. This sort of emotional experience Kemper calls “consequent emotion,” whereas he calls the emotional experiences that occur as a result of changes in status or power “structural emotion.” He also talks about what he calls “anticipatory emotion,” which he understands as our appreciation of a social relationship, based on interactions in the past. Social relations always have a future, and almost always a past, he argues. If our interaction with others is defined by continuing voluntary recognition of the value of each, and no changes in any of the participants’ power and status positions take place, the outcome of the social interaction episode can nonetheless be great happiness or satisfaction, he concludes.

This sort of account of emotion is heavily criticized within the field of the sociology of emotions. In a comment on Kemper’s power and status model of interaction, Hochschild (1982: 434) writes:
We need a focus on the translations between what Kemper assumes power and status relations to be, objectively, and what any given actor actually, variably, and complexly takes them to be. Close up, Kemper’s knowns – status and power – turn into unknowns.

Hochschild implies that Kemper’s attempt to predict emotions (on the basis of his power and status model of interaction) is ignorant. Further, his view on emotion as basically specific biological states is put in question. Kemper’s “alternative ‘positivist’ approach that ‘maintains an important link with biology’ (p. 337) seems of dubious (and often unexplicated) sociological utility,” Hunsaker (1982: 435) writes. However, Hunsaker (1982: 436) stresses that he himself does not exclude physiological correlates to emotion, but understands them as a consequence of prior appraisal or interpretation of some disturbing environmental event, which he means is what constitutes emotion. In a reply to Hunsaker, Kemper (1982: 442) says that the intention of his theory of emotions is to specify more precisely what it is in social events that persons interpret when emotion is aroused. Hence, he does not think that it is accurate to accuse him for excluding the meaning analysis of the situations that make emotions occur. But, as far as I see, Hunsaker does not blame Kemper for omitting that cognitive factors are involved in the arousal of emotions, but rather for his denial of cognitive factors as constituting them. Certainly, Kemper does deny that cognitive factors constitute our emotions. It is such a position that he advocates in his critique and reinterpretation of the well known Schachter and Singer experiment on emotions that was published 1962.

The Schachter and Singer Experiment

Many scientists abandoned their thoughts of emotion as specific physiological states, in favor of the view on emotions that Schachter and Singer presented as a result of their experiment. Schachter and Singer write:

Granted a general pattern of sympathetic excitation as characteristic of emotional states, granted that there may be some differences in pattern from state to state, it is suggested that one labels, interprets, and identifies this stirred-up state in terms of the characteristic of the precipitating situation [...] [A]n emotional state may be considered a function of a state of physiological arousal and of a cognition appropriate to this state of arousal [...]. It is the cognition that determines whether the state of physiological arousal will be labeled as “anger,” “joy,” “fear,” or whatever (Schachter and Singer 1962: 380).

While some sociologists use Schachter and Singer’s experiment on emotions as a path of entry into the sociology of emotions (see, for example, Shott 1979), other sociologists, including Kemper, claim that it is not useful. The reason behind the lack of support could be due to lack of adequate understanding of how social relations evoke emotions, and thus, a crucial error in the interpretation of the experiment. Kemper (1978: 166) writes the following about the error of Schachter and Singer’s interpretation of their experiment on emotion:
Their error makes it appear that a similar state of physiological arousal produced by injected E [epinephrine] underlies emotions as different as anger and euphoria. Actually, a more plausible interpretation is that individuals feel the emotions that are appropriate to the social relational conditions in which they find themselves.

Kemper advocates a reinterpretation of Schachter and Singer’s experiment, on the basis of his theory of power and status relations. Such a reinterpretation, he thinks, will show that emotions are constituted exclusively by specific physiological states. To be able to further discuss Kemper’s perspective, a brief review of the Schachter and Singer’s experiment is presented.

The main purpose of Schachter and Singer’s rather comprehensive and complex experiment is to study if sociocultural elements constitute our emotions. Marañon (1924) had already provided evidence of the insufficiency of the idea that physiological arousal alone constitute emotion. After giving injections of epinephrine, which increased the blood pressure in his 210 patients, Marañon asked them what they felt. Seventy-one percent of the subjects simply reported the physical changes they felt in connection to their rising blood pressure without relating to any emotions. Twenty-nine percent of the subjects told Marañon that they felt as if they were afraid, or as if they were awaiting great happiness, among others. Hence, these subjects did not really feel any emotions, they only felt as if... Marañon also reported that a very low number of his subjects actually did have experiences of genuine emotions. In these few cases, the subjects mentioned feeling these emotions before the injection of adrenaline (epinephrine). They were likely already provided with an appropriate cognition of the felt emotions (Marañon 1924: 301ff., see also Schachter and Singer 1962: 308f.).

Schachter and Singer assumed that the reason why so few of the subjects reported any emotional experience in Marañon’s study was related to their knowledge of the drug injected. What would the emotion-reports have been like if the subjects did not have such information? In order to find out, Schachter and Singer made a new experiment. They gave subjects, all male college students, epinephrine (Epi) injections. The subjects were, however, told that they were injected with the vitamin compound “Suproxin,” and that the aim of the experiment was to study the effects of this specific vitamin compound on visual skills (Schachter and Singer 1962: 382). The subjects were divided into three groups. Each group was given different information on the effects of the injection; (1) Epinephrine Informed (Epi Inf), (2) Epinephrine Ignorant (Epi Ign), and (3) Epinephrine Misinformed (Epi Mis). Group 1 received correct information of the injection effects. “What will probably happen is that your hand will start to shake, your heart will start to pound, and your face may get warm and flushed” (Schachter and Singer 1962: 383). Group 2 was told that the injection was mild and harmless and had no side effects (ibid.). Group 3 received incorrect information of the injection effects. “What will probably
happen is that your feet will feel numb, you will have an itching sensation over parts of your body, and you may get a slight headache” (ibid.). A control group was included in the experiment. The subjects in this group were told exactly the same things as the third group, but instead of Epi they got a neutral saline solution injected.

Drawing on Leon Festinger’s article “A Theory of Social Comparison Processes” (1954), Schachter and Singer’s initial assumption was that if individuals experience a physiological change or feeling without knowing what caused it, they attempt to compare themselves with others in the same immediate situation. Therefore, Schachter and Singer decided to place the individual subjects of their experiment together with, either a confederate trained to act euphorically, or a confederate trained to act angrily, directly after they got their injections. The unknowing subjects were, however, given the impression that the confederate was another subject given the same treatment, and that they had to wait for 20 minutes before the injection would start to work. The truth was that the injection started to work already after 3–5 minutes. In this experiment Schachter and Singer aimed at an exploration of the interpretations of the unknowing subjects. Would they interpret the bodily feeling caused by the injected Epi in accordance with the emotional experience the confederate displayed? Two methods were used to measure this; (1) observations through a one-way mirror, and (2) self-reports. In short, the result showed that it is possible to label a feeling caused by an injection of Epi as both euphoria and anger. On this basis, Schachter and Singer claim that a bodily state does not alone constitute emotion or emotional experience.

Kemper’s Reinterpretation of Schachter and Singer’s Experiment

Drawing on the framework of his theory of power and status relations, Kemper (1978: 174) claims that Schachter and Singer failed “to conceive of the experimental subjects as having a social relationship with the experimenters and their confederates.” Let us, therefore, take another look at the group of subjects that was ignorant of the side effects of the Epi and placed together with a confederate instructed to display anger. As aforementioned, Schachter and Singer explain those subjects’ anger with help of a theory of social comparison. However, according to Kemper, there is another explanation. He posits that neither the Epi injection nor the behavior of the confederate influenced the subjects’ emotional experiences, but rather that the subjects’ relationship with the experimenters evoked them. The relationship is decreasing both the power and the status of the subjects, which explains the instigation of the specific physical state that we label anger, it is argued. To elaborate the line of argumentation, Kemper (1978: 177) describes the relationship through the eyes of the subjects:
First, the surprising symptoms, as they are referred back to the experimenters, suggest that we are in their power. They have done something to us that is making us feel strange. Second, they have withdrawn a considerable amount of status from us by not regarding our safety and welfare adequately, treating us as guinea pigs, fooling us into participating in an experiment and lying to us about the effects of the injections they gave us. This all signifies that the experimenters accord us very little status. In the face of this provocation, we quite naturally respond by becoming angry. This is real anger. It is fundamentally initiated by the failed trust between us and the experimenters, and it is aggravated by the rather insulting questionnaire we must complete.

If the confederate had any effect, it was to provide cues for expressing the real anger felt, not to suggest the label of the subject’s emotional state. The high level of anger reported by the Epi Ign subjects was due to their relationship with the experimenters, not to the anger displayed by the confederate, Kemper (1978: 177) contends.

How does Kemper explain the high level of euphoria reported by the group of Epi Ign subjects, placed together with a confederate who was instructed to display euphoria? The subjects in this group also feel anger, he insists. It is obvious, Kemper thinks, because they had the same precursor relational conditions as the ignorant subjects who reported a high level of anger. Referring to Freud (1905), and Bergler (1956), he stresses that many forms of humor, that actually are a display of hostility are confused with a display of euphoria. Even if the latter is true, it does not explain why the subjects reported feeling euphoria, not anger. By taking part “in the so-called euphoric activities,” Kemper writes to explain the reported level of euphoria, the subject is able to express his anger, which automatically leads to “good feelings.” The argumentation is concluded as follows:

[W]hen the subject was asked about ‘how good or happy he feels’ immediately after the encounter with the stooge, he would indeed ‘feel good.’ He has, after all, retrieved some of his self-esteem by discharging hostility against the experimenters and somewhat vicariously against the confederate. There is much experimental evidence to suggest that the release of aggression is satisfying and reinforcing (Berkowitz, 1962; Hokanson and Burgess, 1962a, 1962b). Thus it is highly understandable that the E-ign [Epi Ign] subject should indicate that he feels good. (Kemper 1978: 179)

**The Illogic of Kemper’s Reinterpretation of Schachter and Singer’s Experiment**

We have no evidence for the accuracy of Kemper’s reinterpretation of the Schachter and Singer experiment. There exists other reasonable and perhaps more logical explanations of the high level of anger as well as euphoria reported by the two different groups of Epi Ign subjects. One option is to understand it in terms of “empathic role-taking” emotions, that Shott (1979) develops. By
referring to Cannon (1927), Mead (1938), Schachter and Singer (1962), Blumer (1969), and Manis and Meltzer (1978), Shott (1979: 1321f.) claims that emotion is constituted by interpretation of the situation in which it is felt. Like Schachter and Singer, Shott emphasizes that social factors constitute emotion. However, she focuses on the process of attitude or role taking, rather than on the process of social comparison. More precisely, she distinguishes between two types of “role-taking sentiments,” which to some extent are made up by social control, as well as being the medium through which social control is exercised, the “reflexive,” and the “empathic.” The reflexive role-taking emotions are feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, pride, and vanity. Those emotions are directed towards the self. Indeed, they are “self-conceptions” since they are evoked as well as constituted by the judgement of the self through the eyes of the other. In short, the empathic role-taking emotion is the other’s emotion felt by the self through place-changing.

If Schachter and Singer had Shott’s theory of emphatic role-taking as their initial hypothesis, they probably would have reported that it was through empathic role-taking, not social comparison, that the Epi IgN subjects of their experiment felt anger or euphoria. The aim is not to argue for any specific way of interpreting the Schachter and Singer experiment. Rather, the aim is to make clear that the results of experiments like those of Schachter and Singer are dependent on the theoretical framework within which they are interpreted. More importantly, it is to show that Kemper’s reinterpretation of Schachter and Singer’s experiment on emotions does not provide any evidence for the “specificity” of our emotions, i.e., that they are constituted by specific physiological states. Instead, we return to Marañon’s experiment.

The little Kemper says about Marañon’s experiment is not positive (see Kemper 1978: 177). Paradoxically, we on the basis of Kemper’s reinterpretation of Schachter and Singer’s experiment can draw exactly the same conclusions as Marañon, that injections of E does not produce, nor constitute emotion. Throughout his reinterpretation of the Schachter and Singer experiment on emotions, Kemper argues about “real” emotions felt, which he understands as emotions produced by increase, decrease, or maintenance of power or status, not by the distinct physiological states that Epi injections actually produce. In this manner, Kemper seems to deny that the distinct physiological state from injections of Epi constitute any emotion. If the only thing constituting a specific emotion is a specific physiological state, which Kemper claims, why would injections of Epi not make us feel any emotion? One could argue that there is no emotion that is constituted by the type of blood pressure rise from Epi injections, and therefore injection of Epi does not produce or instigate any emotions. This, however, is not Kemper’s point. His central argument is that it is not injections of biological substrates, but rather it is social relations that are crucial for the production of emotion. As a whole, the social is instigating or
producing, as well as being part of our emotions. The social constitutes emotion. Nonetheless, Kemper is unable to see that he is implicitly suggesting that it is more reasonable to view emotions as basically constituted by social relations or interactions than to view them as basically constituted by specific physiological states.

Concluding Remarks

The sociology of emotion that argues that our emotions are sociophysiological has emerged from a critique of the overly cognitive view on the human being within the social sciences. It is argued that theorists like Mead are the source of this view, as it is advocated within ethnomethodology and phenomenology (see, for example, Collins 1975: 44). Mead, however, was well aware of the human as a physical body and emotional responses, which was shown in chapter three. Indeed, he thought that the existence of our minds and selves is dependent on our physical body and emotional experiences. He even developed a theory of emotion (1895), in collaboration with Dewey (1894; 1894). Yet, Mead studied the human being’s physical body and emotional experiences primarily to explain mind, self and society as creations of the act. For him, the most significant feature of the human being is that she or he within the act develops a system of communication with significant symbols, which enables thinking. It is likely the latter idea that troubles sociologist like Kemper and Collins. However, such an idea does not by necessity neglect the human being’s emotions, especially, not if the emotions are grasped as sociocultural, rather than biological. In this context, the problem with Kemper and Collins’ view on emotion is that they see emotion as biologically given rather than as socioculturally given. In addition, Kemper and Collins’ view on the human as sociocultural is no less cognitive than, for example, Mead’s view on the human as sociocultural. Nonetheless, their criticism of the overall tendency within contemporary sociology to view our cognitive capacities as what alone hold society together and make it flourish has a good point. Certainly, our emotional capacities are equally important with our cognitive capacities in this respect. The overly cognitive view on the human being within the social sciences, however, is a result of the lack of a logically consistent explanation or understanding of the emotions as sociocultural. Hence, the sort of sociology of emotion that claims that the human is not a sociocultural being to such a great extent as thinkers inspired by Mead claim, does not help us to explain or understand emotion as a phenomena that transcends the mind-body dualism. The slogan, man is an animal, seems to encouraging a type of Watsonian behaviorism, which Mead, even if he was in debt to Watson, struggled to overcome. Whereas Watson explained the human as a product and part of stimuli-response pattern, Mead stressed the human as actively reasoning on the stimuli-response pattern.
Collins and Kemper do not deny that we are reasoning. But, they do see our activities as fundamentally organized by an *innate* desire to gain EE (see, for example, Collins 1993). What obviously is missing in their theories of emotion is a distinction between, to refer to Smith, “the passions of the body” and “the passions of the imagination,” or what within contemporary psychology often is called “reflexes,” “instincts,” “drives,” on the one side, and “emotions,” on the other side. Within the psychological discipline, the different concepts refer to particular processes that motivate, and are a part of behavior. According to Carroll E. Izard (1991: 11ff.), *reflexes* are uncomplicated forms of behavior, for example, blinking. *Instincts* are more complex forms of behavior that we usually observe in animals, for example, flight or fight. Unlike the reflexes, they can be interrupted and modified by appraisal or judgement to limited extent. Instincts always remain with a fixed behavioral pattern that originates from hormonal changes, it is argued. *Drives*, however, are felt needs for survival, for example, hunger, thirst, sex. Izard (1991: 13) stresses that “a system of silent automatic processes that regulate blood flow, breathing, and body temperature as well as maintain homeostasis - the chemical balance necessary for health and well-being” is underlying our drives. At the same time, there exist an almost endless number of techniques that we can use to sublimate or modify our drives. Our mechanisms of motivation go far beyond our mere survival needs. To explain this further, Izard introduces a concept of emotion that refers to experiences of shame, sadness, happiness, pride, grief, anger, envy, guilt, and embarrassment, among others. “An emotion,” he (1991: 14) writes, “is experienced as a feeling that motivates, organizes, and guides perception, thought, and action.” While reflexes and instincts are central in the lives of animals, emotions are what essentially motivate human activity (Izard 1991: 24). Although, he contends, this description of emotions is incomplete it is central to the understanding of the nature of emotion.

It is not Izard’s specific definition of reflexes, instincts, drives, and emotions that is central, but rather that it points out the broad spectra of processes that we in everyday language refer to when we talk about emotion. Like many sociobiologists, sociologists like Collins and Kemper do not see why such a distinction is useful for an understanding of our emotions. Since sociobiologists focus on biological basis of social behavior in primates, Collins and Kemper have looked to their theories to further link biological base and human behavior. Hence, they do not examine the possibility that emotion could have a social base.

The sociobiologist James D. Weinrich (1980: 132) explicitly argues that attempts to make a distinction between drives and emotions, like Izard (1977: 164ff.) and Plutchik (1962: 168f.), are unimportant. “[T]he differences listed,” Weinrich (1980: 132) writes, “strike me as post hoc – They do not follow convincingly from a theoretical discussion that shows why they are important.
I have tried to come up with a sociobiological argument that would reveal the importance of the distinction, and failed.” Weinrich (ibid.) especially criticizes Izard for developing a “two-tier system,” which not only is inadequate, but also is “anti-sociobiological.” From the point of view of developing a sociocultural view on our emotions, the latter is what makes Izard’s distinction between drives and emotions interesting. It opens up for a view on emotion as a sociocultural phenomenon. The problem is that Izard’s account of emotions is too closely linked to drives. “The origins of emotion lie in evolution. Some emotions may have emerged from physiological drives such as hunger, and from basic approach-avoidance mechanisms,” Izard (1991: 24) claims. As a whole, his view on emotion is neither sociocultural nor “anti-sociobiological,” and in turn fails to provide an explanation or understanding of emotion as an entirely sociocultural phenomenon. If we instead argue that emotions emerge within the act, rather than from physiological drives, a theoretical argument would be supportive of Weinrich demands for being able to consider the distinction between drives and emotions as important.

It is not my intention to deny that we have drives. Instead, my intention is to stress that we have many unanswered questions about the self, particularly, in relation to the sociocultural perspective on emotion. As earlier indicated Mead’s view on the human being as sociocultural is cognitively biased. One, however, should not spontaneously avoid such a bias by reducing the human to a biological construct. Perhaps, by reconstructing Mead’s view, particularly, on the emotional dimensions of the human as sociocultural, emotion will be understood unbiased. This is likely to help develop a concept of emotion not limited by mind-body dualism. The sixth and final chapter will continue along these lines by illustrating further the importance of a non-dualistic approach to emotion.
Notes

1It is reasonable to understand Collins’ concept “emotional capital” as a person’s consequent emotion together with her anticipatory emotion (see Collins 1975).
PART III

The Emotional Self

A Contemporary Theory
CHAPTER VI

A Theory of the Emotional Self
From the Standpoint of a Neo-Meadian

Having raised several doubts regarding contemporary views on emotion developed within the sociology of emotions, I suggest that we revisit the classic social psychology. What I suggest is that we go back in the history of the sociological branch of social psychology to find the key to understanding emotion as social in order to see emotional experience as a significant aspect of the self. More specifically, I suggest a modification of Mead’s explanation of our emotions as felt inhibitions of the act or corporal evaluations of our relation to the outer world or the other. In this manner, emotion is neither reduced to sensation nor to thought. A radicalization of the classic social psychological accounts of emotion as well as the contemporary sociology of emotions is proposed. The overarching aim of the chapter is to develop the discussion of Mead’s social psychology, in chapter three, into a neo-Meadian theory of the emotional self.

In chapter three, the distinction Mead makes between social behavior and social interaction is discussed along concepts of functional identity, self-feeling, and self-reflexion. The inhibition of the act was pointed out as the central difference between social behavior and social interaction. Hence, self-feeling and self-reflexion, in contrast to functional identification, imply an inhibition of the act or our interplay with the outer world.

In this chapter, the distinction between functional identity, emotionality, and reflexivity is the primary focus. The theoretical tools that Mead has provided for the explanation of the emergence, development, and realization of the self are used. His main focus on the significance of mind for self-formation and self-realization is replaced by a main focus on the significance of emotion. More specifically, the aim is to transcend the Cartesian mind-body dualism by developing a social theory of the emotional self. The claim is that the emotions and thoughts of the self are social in character, as well as different from each other. Since it aims at transcending the mind-body dualism, the social theory of the emotional self parallels Mead’s theory of the social self.

By reconstructing Mead’s social psychology, it becomes evident that not only the reflexive person, who can tell who she or he is or desires to be, but also the emotional person, who feels happy or sad is a creation of social interchanges. The elaboration of the latter claim results in what may be called a theory of the emotional self from the standpoint of a neo-Median. The general core of Mead’s social psychology remains. But, it has an independent character, empha-
sizing as it does, in accordance with segments of the sociology of emotions, that emotion is part (of the socially objective perspective) of the individual self.

The neo-Meadian theory of the emotional self that is developed in this chapter points out (1) our functional identification with others as the foundation of our emotions; but (2) separates this process within the act, in which we fundamentally take the emotional expressions of others, from our own emotional experiences; and further (3) distinguishes our emotional experiences from the process of being conscious of them as part of our selves at a reflexive level of the act. We could then talk about an internalization of the history of our performed emotional attitudes in the form of values, i.e. the preferability of goods that are striven for by particular groups or individual persons, on the one hand, and an externalization of those values in the form of narratives about who we are or want to be, on the other hand. As will be explained later the two processes include different sorts of inhibitions of the act. At the same time they are intertwined in the continuous process of need for recognition that is a significant part of self-realization.

Under, *The Emergence of the Emotional Self*, the idea that our functional identification with the other makes the foundation of our emotional experiences or emotional selves is investigated. Certainly, Mead thinks that the symbiotic primordial unit from which the other and the self arise is a process of mutual functional identification. In the theorizing of Cooley, however, the symbiotic primordial unit from which the other and the self arise is understood as a phase of sympathetic introspection. He thus tends to bring the conception of the symbiotic primordial unit closer to an idea of existential rather than functional identity. In fact, this tendency can be understood as the core of Mead’s criticism of Cooley’s social psychology. Nonetheless, Cooley challenges the idea of functional identity as the foundation of emotional experience in a way that makes it necessary to provide an explanation of what makes up the foundation of our functional identity. In this section, an explanation is provided, not only by a critical discussion of the classic social psychology of Smith, Cooley, and Mead, but also by relating this tradition to more recent research related to the subject matter, such as the research of Maurice Merleau-Ponty ([1964] 1968), Cornelius Castoriadis ([1995] 1987), and Daniel Stern ([1977] 2002; 2000).

Cooeley’s concept of “sympathetic introspection” is put on par with Castoriadis’ idea of “radical imagination,” whereas Mead’s concept of functional identity is strengthened by Merleau-Ponty’s idea of the “primacy of perception,” and Stern’s research on the infant’s communicative skills. By elaborating on the classic social psychological idea of a symbiotic primordial unit where the self and the other arise, it is argued that our functional identification with the other is an important key to the understanding of how we as behaving beings, who experience sensations, become interacting beings, who experience emotions. This line of argumentation incorporates the claim that the identifi-
cation with the other’s expressions of emotions is not to be confused with the actual emotional experiences of the self. A distinction is made between sensations or sense perceptions and emotions. Indeed, it is shown that sensations or sense perceptions are the foundation of our functional identification with the other’s emotional expressions, which in turn enables the emotional experiences of the self. As we will see, such a distinction indicates the necessity of an existential difference between the other and the self for their functional identification with each other.

Under, *The Development of the Emotional Self*, the distinction between our sense perceptions and our emotional experiences is discussed whereby emotional experiences are viewed as part of the (socially) objective perspective of the self, rather than as purely subjectively. The idea of the objective perspective of the self is one of the most critical for Mead. To be able to incorporate, not only thought, but also emotion into the socially objective perspective of the self, a modification or reconstruction of Mead’s social psychology is necessary. To continue in this section, Mead’s concept of functional identity is modified to be able to distinguish the sort of inhibition of the act that our emotions embody from the sort of inhibition of the act that makes us incorporate our emotions into narratives about who we are or want to be. Mead’s idea of emotion as a felt inhibition of the attitude taking of the thing is replaced by the idea of emotion as an evaluative inhibition of the act, which is initially experienced from the perspective of the other, on the basis of a functional identification with the outer world.

Defined in this way, it becomes obvious that emotion does not alone cover all that we are in between biological organisms and reflexive persons. To further elaborate the neo-Meadian perspective, emotion is contrasted to another significant part of us, which we find in the sphere between mind and body, namely, motor skills. It is argued that emotion is the specific manner in which we perform certain acts, rather than the motor-capacities that enable us to perform those acts. Emotion is *the style of the flesh*. Accordingly, it is claimed that it is the style of the flesh that gets (re)constructed within culture, in the case of emotion. It, however, is emphasized that such a (re)construction takes place only when we become reflexively aware of our style of the flesh or corporal attitudes toward the outer world, and in turn toward ourselves. This happens when our style of the flesh is problematic within the act, and challenged by alternative styles of the flesh. As will be explained, when our style of the flesh is challenged, the act is inhibited in a double sense. Research from the genus sensitive perspective, like the research of Iris Marion Young ([1980] 1990) and Ingemar Gens (2002), is used to illustrate and to some extent confirm this argumentation.

Under, *Self-realization*, the centrality of the other, is focused on in terms of the need for recognition. By using references to the theory of the emotional self that Hochschild presents in *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of*
*Human Feeling* (1983), the general structure of this sort of need is explored. Hochschild shows how the need for recognition is expressed within the act, primarily, when our emotional expressions or experiences do not work as means of the completion of the act. The idea, however, that the need for recognition is a second order desire, and that it is necessary for self-realization is advocated in contrast to Hochschild’s thinking. The aim is to point out the significance of mutual functional identification or an intersubjective relation between the other and the self as the foundation of the process of need for recognition that is incorporated in self-realization. In this way the idea of the existential difference between the other and the self in the process of their functional identification with each other that is indicated in Mead’s social psychology is expanded. The central claim is that the mutual recognition of such a difference between the other and the self is a precondition for self-realization.

*The Emergence of the Emotional Self*

It is one thing to be loved. It is another thing to feel and know that we deserve it. When we are loved, the self emerges, and when we feel and know that we deserve it, the self develops. This means that the emotional attitudes of others toward us are what originally constitute our selves. They are the mirrors of society reflecting back upon us the image of the self, whereas our emotional and reflexive experiences are what make us work upon, and in turn develop that self.

This argumentation is crucial to Smith’s idea that we are fundamentally dependent on others, especially, on their emotional expressions, to acquire a self. According to him, our first idea of the beauty or deformity of ourselves is shaped by the way we look upon others as beautiful or deformed. This sense of self brings with it the certainty that others judge our person as we judge their person. In this manner, the shapes of others, their attitudes toward us, not only show who we are, but, also, shape who we desire to be.

This argumentation, is also central to Cooley’s idea of the looking-glass self, which consists of three principal elements; (1) the imagination of our appearance to the other person; (2) the imagination of his or her judgment of that appearance; and (3) some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or shame. In addition, Cooley’s social psychology shows that a mutual influence between the human biological organism and its environment precedes such a self. It is first when this mutual influence is broken, like in children’s disputes over ownership, that the sense of self becomes articulated in a manner that enables the looking-glass self. This sort of articulation is evident when children strongly claim their caretakers and playthings. Further, it is stressed that to understand the self as genuinely social it is important that we recognize that the use of the pronouns of the first person singular originally arises when our relationship to persons and things around us are threatened, rather than when our physical bodies are injured.
The latter is implied when Mead ([1924–25] 1981: 292) claims that “[w]e must be others if we are to be ourselves.” The claim might seem simple, but it is far from it. Its complexity unfolds if we relate it to the suggestions that Cooley makes when he writes; “[s]ociety and self are twin-born, we know one as immediately as we know the other, and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion” ([1909] 1972: 5).

It is clear that both Cooley and Mead think that the other and the self emerge from a symbiotic primordial unit. They, however, differ slightly on how the other and the self arise. Mead seems to explain the symbiotic primordial unit in terms of our functional identification with outer world, whereas Cooley rather seems to explain it in terms of existential identification with the outer world. To explore the differences between the two perceptions, I will contrast Castoriadis’s idea of “radical imagination” ([1975] 1987: 283), which I think parallels Cooley’s thinking, to Merleau-Ponty’s idea of the “primacy of perception” ([1947] 1964: 12), which I think is similar to Mead’s thinking. In addition, Smith’s thinking on this subject matter will be briefly discussed.

In the social psychology of Cooley, like that of Smith, the idea of the symbiotic primordial unit out of which the other and the self emerge is incorporated in the conception of sympathy. In contrast to Cooley, Smith’s conception of sympathy points at what Merleau-Ponty ([1947] 1964: 12) calls the “primacy of perception.” Bear in mind, Smith’s description of how we on the basis of our bodily perceptions tune into the emotional expressions of others by performing the same bodily postures as them, and thus are able to change places in imagination with them. Indeed, this understanding of sympathy is in accordance with Mead’s idea of the symbiotic primordial unit as a process of functional identification. According to Mead, it is when we perform the bodily postures of others that we experience the outer world in a way that make it reflect back to us the image of ourselves.

Cooley’s conception of sympathy instead tends to point at the primacy of sympathetic introspection or what Castoriadis ([1975] 1987: 283) calls “radical imagination.” Certainly, this is the core of Mead’s criticisms of Cooley’s social psychology. From Mead’s perspective, the idea of sympathetic introspection embodies a (con)fUSion of functional identification and existential identification with the other, i.e., that we gain whatever sameness we have with the other from assuming the same attitude as the other and that there is no real or concrete difference between the self and the other. It suggests an understanding of our symbiotic primordial unit with the other in the sense that Donald W. Winnicott (1971: 12), for example, expresses when he writes that; “the infant takes from a breast that is part of the infant, and the mother gives milk to an infant that is part of herself.” Hence, we are faced with what Castoriadis ([1975] 1987: 294) calls the monadic core of the primal subject.” According to Castoriadis ([1975] 1987: 295), the primal subject “is the scene” of the child drinking...
from the breast of the mother and the mother feeding the child – not a phase of first being here and then being there. We do, then, not find the self and the other, but “the psyche,” which according to Castoriadis ([1975] 1978: 282), “is the capacity to produce an ‘initial’ representation, the capacity of putting into image or making an image.” Without this capacity, there would be no medium through which the real – the concrete other and the concrete self – could announce itself as an impression to the subject, it is argued.

The psyche is, to be sure, ‘the receptivity of impressions’, the capacity of being-affected-by ...; but it is also, and more importantly (for without this the receptivity of impressions would produce nothing) the emergence of representation as an irreducible and unique mode of being and as the organization of something in and through its figuration, its ‘being put into images’. The psyche is a forming, which exists in and through what it forms and how it forms; it is Bildung and Einbildung – formation and imagination – it is the radical imagination that makes a ‘first’ representation arise out of a nothingness of representation, that is to say, out of nothing (Castoriadis [1975] 1978: 283).

Here Castoriadis presents a view on the emergence of the other and the self, which, I think, is in accordance with Cooley’s view on society as mental because the human mind is social. Like Cooley, Castoriadis argues that the self and the other would be superfluous nothings if they did not meet as impressions formed within imagination. The impressions formed within imagination are what Castoriadis calls “the psyche,” and what Cooley calls “the mind.” Nonetheless, they claim, the “radical imagination” that makes possible the “first” representation includes both the other and the self. They are immanent parts of “the scene” that is yet not represented as anything, but is what and how the psyche and the mind will be forming. By this line of argumentation Castoriadis constructs a formula of how “the ‘impression’ (Eindruck, to use the Kantian term), that by means of which the ‘real’ announces itself in the psyche, becomes an element in the representation only in relation to a psychical elaboration that can produce, depending on the subject and the moment, the most divergent and most unexpected results” (Castoriadis [1975] 1978: 283).

What is missing from a neo-Meadian perspective is an account of the real or concrete difference between being fed and feeding, which is essential for the understanding of how a genuinely social self emerges through the more objective process of assuming the attitudes of the other within the act. The meaning of such a difference and its centrality for the emergence of the self is probably most exhaustively captured by Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the reversibility of bodily perceptions like touching and being touched or seeing and being seen. According to Merleau-Ponty, there is the same sort of reversibility in being seen and seeing as it is in being touched and touching, which is the case when our left hand touches our right hand and suddenly reverses in that the left hand is touched by the right hand. “The visible can fill
me and occupy me only because I who see it do not see it from the depths of nothingness, but from the midst of itself; I the seer am also visible,” Merleau-Ponty ([1964] 1968: 113) argues. Further, he claims, “there is no coinciding of the seer with the visible. But each borrows from the other, takes form or encroaches upon the other, intersects with the other, is in chiasm with the other” (Merleau-Ponty [1964] 1968: 261).

What is endorsed by Merleau-Ponty in the above quoted lines is that perception is contact where differentiation is made possible by reversibility. Contrary to the thinking of Castoriadis, Merleau–Ponty implies that without a difference between our own body as a sensitive subject and the body of the other as a sensitive subject no impressions of the outer world or the other, hence, the self would emerge. “When the difference is removed,” as Galen A. Jonson (1990: xx) describes Merleau-Ponty’s idea of alterity as a reversibility, “as when my eye grows too close to the object, there is a blurring, then blindness. With my eyes too close, there is loss of the visual field, loss of a horizon to ground a figure. Vision is contact that includes differentiation; loss of vision is contact without differentiation.” This idea is what I think Mead attempts when making a distinction between existential identity and functional identity. In this way, he shows that we are existentially identical only with ourselves, at the same time as it is possible for us to be functionally identical only with others. It is, especially, in this respect that Mead’s social psychology precedes the social psychology of Cooley.

By taking the contemporary psychodynamic view by Daniel Stern, the problem of the centrality of the visual field enabling us to ground a figure – the other – for the emergent self will be further discussed. One of the problems that Stern struggles with in his book *The First Relationship* ([1977] 2002) is to give an accurate account of what infants are able to do in relationship to the outer world or the other. Based on his split-second detailed natural parent-child observations, he suggests that inborn behaviors could help us to understand our first relationship. Advocating the idea that we are brought into the world “bringing formidable capabilities to establish human relatedness,” he aims to study those capabilities, i.e., the perceptual and motor abilities that at birth permit us to engage in social interchanges. Among them he focuses on “gazing,” “head movements,” and “facial expressions.”

If we observe alert newborns, we see that they within minutes of birth, without any learning, are able to visually follow an object that passes their visual field, about eight inches away from them, Stern ([1977] 2002: 50) asserts. What is interesting to notice is that it is exactly eight inches between newborns’ eyes and the eyes of their caregivers when they are facing toward each other in a normal infant feeding position (Stern [1977] 2002: 52). Considering the amount of time awake that newborns spend in this position, we can assume that what they most likely perceive the first weeks after birth is the face, and
especially the eyes of their caregivers, and vice versa. It has been observed that caregivers spend 70% of their infant feeding time facing and looking at their infants (Stern [1977] 2002: 52). Since the eyes of newborns are about eight inches away from the face, especially, the eyes of their caregivers in a normal infant feeding position, there, indeed, exists a horizon to ground a figure, as Merleau-Ponty would have formulated it. Certainly, it seems like we perceive the figure of the other before we perceive the figure of the self, like Mead claims.

When infants are about six weeks, a subtle change in their gazing occurs, Stern ([1977] 2002: 54) continues. “The infant,” he (ibid.) writes, “simply becomes capable of visually fixating his mother’s eyes and holding the fixation with eye widening and eye brightening.” In normal cases, this sort of change in the infant is accompanied with a change, also, in the attitude of the caregiver toward the infant – the facial as well as vocal gestures of the caregiver becomes more vivid. About three months after birth another perhaps more radical change in gazing occurs – the eight-inch “bubble” bursts. The visual field of the infant becomes almost as wide as the visual field of its adult caregiver. With the help of eye and head movements, which matures in phase with each other, the infant starts to pursue and hold visual targets. The infant is then able to perceive the bodily appearance of persons as they approach, move around, or leave it. Further, the infant is able to make the perception of the bodily appearance of others go away simply by closing the eyes or turning the head away. Varying the head position (motor act) relative to the persons around, the infant comes to have different sensory (visual) experience of them, and, thus, of its relation to them, and vice versa. “From the mother’s side,” Stern ([1977] 2002: 58f.) writes, “the nature and degree of the infant’s gaze direction and head turning are of great importance as a signal. First there is the vital issue of whether or not the baby is looking into the mother’s eyes. If the baby is and also is directly facing her, that is one thing. If, however, he is looking at her but has turned his head slightly away, say 10–15 degrees, that is another matter. Gazing ‘sideways’ has the character of an equivocal or ambivalent signal. It contains the contradictory components of contact with the eyes and aversions or flight with the head. With infants under six months (compared to adults), it is an unstable position that rapidly gets resolved one way or the other, into full facing with eye contact or further head aversion with loss of eye contact.”

The maturity of infants’ motor control of gazing is extraordinary, especially, if it is compared to the immaturity of their other communicative capacities, as Stern ([1977] 2002: 56) points out. Besides infant (motor control of) gaze, it is only infant (motor control of) facial expressions that (compared to adults) could be seen as mature communicative capacities. The observers of the newborn’s facial expressions are often surprised with the large number of facial expressions preformed, which seem identical with adult facial expressions.
Among those expressions Stern ([1977] 2002: 61) mentions “intense visual interest; cunning and wisdom; wry humor; complicated contortions of disgust or rejection; quizzical frowns and serene smiles.” He stresses, however, there is no research suggesting, “that with such expressions the newborn experiences anything at all, let alone internal feelings comparable to those generally associated with the expressions in adults” (Stern [1977] 2002: 61).

Drawing on the insights of the classic social psychology of, primarily, Mead, but also of the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, as previously described, I suggest that the newborn live in a world of sensations. Within the act this sensational world of the newborn takes the form of sense perceptions of, and functional identification with, especially, the facial expressions of their significant others or caregivers. This suggestion is supported, I think, by the findings within the field of developmental psychology, such as (1) one of the infants’ most fundamental sense perceptions of the outer world are visual perceptions of facial expressions of their caregivers; and (2) newborns have motor control for performing a large array of facial expressions, which appear to be identical with adult facial expressions. Those capabilities provide the infant with social tools necessary for functionally identifying with others.

Moreover, a set of recent experiments supports previous findings in developmental psychology. Referring to McCauley (1994); Port, Cummins and McCauley (1995); and Torras (1985), Stern (2000: xx) claims that “[r]esearchers have found adaptive oscillators that permit us to synch our movements to those of others who are moving [...]”. Perhaps, we are brought into society with a tendency to synchronize our corporal attitudes with the persons around us. If this is the case, we have an inborn tendency to functionally identify ourselves with others, which would give even more support for a neo-Meadian view on emotions initially fleshing out the understanding of our synchronization with the movements of the persons around us or our functional identification with the other as the foundation of our emotional and reflexive experiences, termed as self-consciousness. With this respect, the next step will be to point out the difference between those phases within the act, as well as their interdependence in the process of self-formation.

To grasp the difference between our functional identification with the other and our emotional experiences, Mead’s distinction between emotional expressions and emotional experiences is helpful. As aforementioned, Mead emphasizes that expressions of emotions are symbols only for the observer. In this sense, they represent the aesthetic comprehension of those emotions from the point of view of the other, not the self’s experience of those emotions. Only in this aesthetic way is emotion part of the sensuous world of the newborn. This means that the only way that this world could be described as emotional is based on a newborn’s ability to identify itself by looking at and taking the experiences of emotional expressions from their caregivers. It does not mean
that they emotionally experience their sense perceptions of the outer or the other. Nor does it mean that their facial expressions, which appear to be identical with the facial expressions of adults, refer to any experiences of emotion. Rather, they are responses to internal and external sensations. As such they “are not properly called emotions (Sroufe 1979, p. 472), but rather expressions of sensations (Couch 1989, p. 37),” as Cathryn Johnson (1992: 188) points out. In a manner similar to Coulter, whose ideas were discussed in chapter four, Johnson argues that the difference between our sensations and our emotions are that sensations are occurrences limited in time and space, whereas emotions are able to transcend time and space. They travel with us forth and back in time and space. More specifically, they are incorporations of our past in the form of habits or structures of corporal attitudes. It is those socially incorporated structures that make the inhibition of the act felt in the form of emotional experiences possible.

Nonetheless, newborns’ experiences of pain or discomfort, expressed by cries, and their experiences of pleasure or comfort, expressed by smiles are gestures used to communicate with their caregivers. Those expressions are beginnings of acts, yet not part of the self. Hence, we are brought into society with sensations such as those of comfort and discomfort, but also with a capability of forming sense perceptions of, especially, emotional expressions as they are displayed in the face of significant others. Such a capability is necessary for the emergence of our emotional experiences, but should not be confused with them. This capability is the key to our functional identification with the outer world or the other, rather than the foundation of our emotional experiences.

The understanding of emotion that develops is not to be confused with – to use the terminology of Smith – “the passions that take their origin from the body.” Emotions are not sensations like pain or pleasure or sense perceptions of the outer world. This implies a critique against the sociology of emotions that argue that we ought to rediscover the human as an animal, i.e., that we are brought into the act as beings with a biologically given emotionality that enables the development of our reflexive capacities (see chapter five). The socio-physiological view on emotion does not make any clear distinction between sensation and emotion. Hence, it becomes impossible for this view to answer questions like how infants as behaving beings, who experience sensations, becomes interacting beings, who experience emotions (compare Johnson 1992: 184). In fact, such a question is seen as irrelevant. As a result, a socially objective perspective of the self excludes emotion. In turn, it does not provide the foundation for a social psychology that seriously takes emotion into account.
One of the most critical things of Mead’s social psychology is to present a conception of the perspective of the self as objective, rather than subjective. Mead solves the problem by arguing that insofar as a perspective represents a set of shared responses it is not “private” or “subjective,” but rather it belongs to a social, hence, objective reality. The perspective of the self could, thus, not be seen merely as our sense perceptions of internal and external stimuli. As mentioned, Mead claims that the perspective of the self is dependent on the attitude taking of the thing, and especially on the attitude taking of the other. Further, he claims that such a perspective is established within anticipatory or abstract attitude taking, rather than within immediate or concrete attitude taking.

What is problematic with Mead’s discussion of concrete and abstract attitude taking, from the point of view of our attempt to develop an account of emotions as parts of the social self, is that it focuses mainly (1) on emotional experiences in the case of the attitude taking of the thing, and (2) on reflexive experiences in the case of the attitude taking of the other. In this way it does (3) not explain the (socially) evaluative contents of our emotions, and in turn (4) tends to exclude our emotional capacities on behalf of our reflexive capacities in the case of anticipatory or abstract attitude taking. As a whole, this makes it easy to draw the conclusion that Mead believes that our emotional experiences are feelings only of concrete inhibitions of the act, in the form of taking the attitude of things toward ourselves, in which he argues that we discover our core of activity. Accordingly, emotions arise in our interactions with things, rather than with the others, and are in turn not parts of a genuinely social self. Indeed, an understanding of our emotions as sense perceptions of the outer world that automatically trigger innate structures of behavior seems to be the logical conclusion.

Chappell and Harold L. Orbach (1986: 78) write the following when they try to capture Mead’s understanding of emotion:

Essentially, emotion, as the affective side of mind or psychic activity ([Mead] 1903) that arises from the inhibition or blocking of ongoing activity, serves to arouse the organism to solve the problem that is blocking the completion of the ongoing act. It thus serves as a motor basis for the individual’s mobilization of resources to solve the problem, because the solution of the problem is what releases the tension created by the emotional state.

Further, they argue that “Mead, like Dewey, sees specific emotional attitudes as representing biological processes that have emerged and persisted because of their evolutionary survival value. Socialization provide customary and valued forms for the use and control of emotion (habits and manners, for example), but these can break down in extreme situations such as crowd or mob or other form of collective behavior, when original animal responses take over” (Chappell
and Orbach 1986: 78). In some sense this sort of perception of Mead’s thinking on emotion is understandable. It appears to be in accordance with, for example, his claim that “[t]here is of course, a great deal in one’s conversation with others that does not arouse in one’s self the same response it arouses in others. That is particularly true in the case of emotional attitudes” (Mead [1934] 1967: 147).

However, this claim is not in accordance with Mead’s overarching aim to show that emotional experiences are corporal evaluations of ourselves from the standpoint of the outer world. Recall his claim that “[i]n your relation to other persons, it is your own hostile attitude to the person that is your evidence of his hostile attitude toward you” (Mead 1982: 38). Nor is the idea of emotion as a biological given, which Chappell and Orbach suggest that Mead advocates, compatible with his belief that the inhibition of the act felt in our emotional experiences is made possible only against the background of a socially given structure of responses or habits, in addition to our biologically given structure of responses. Such a belief simply points at an understanding of our emotional experiences as corporal awareness of our habitual expressions of emotion, which arises when those expressions become inhibited within the act.

To elaborate this argumentation, we need to turn away from Mead’s idea of emotion as something that primarily emerges from the attitude taking of things. Instead, we must give primacy to the attitude taking of others. To avoid confusion, let us consider two examples to illustrate the idea that the core of emotion fundamentally is a result of our interchanges with the other. More specifically, the examples illustrate the claim that the core of emotion or the emotional self is an evaluative inhibition of the act, experienced from the perspective of the other, on the basis of a functional identification with the other.

The first example illustrates the inhibitions of the act, in the form of negative evaluations:

A little boy is sitting on a white bathroom-floor. At a distance, it looks like he paints it brown. Getting closer it is obvious that he is playing with his excrement. One moment the boy is alone in the play with his excrement. The next moment he has company. A tense person is running towards him. A wry face is closing in on him. A voice yells “phew” in falsetto. The boy is unable to continue his play with the excrement, (indeed, his attitude taking of it when he handles and learns to master it,) in the same uninhibited manner as the moment before. After repeated interruptions of this kind, the boy habitually avoids his excrement. His body becomes tense – it closes itself – in relation to the excrement. He feels something not yet named by him. But, the other has a name for it – disgust. The scene of the little boy playing with his excrement is repulsive. Playing with his excrement, the boy, looking at himself from the
standpoint of the other, experiences not only the emotion of disgust, but evaluates himself as disgusting in such a situation.

The second example illustrates the inhibitions of the act, in the form of positive evaluations:

My thirteen-month-old daughter is watching BET (black entertainment television), in the living room. I enter into the room, notice that she moves her body (she dances, I think), and hear that she makes vocal sounds (she sings, I think). I cannot help myself. I run toward her, with a big smile on my face, enthusiastically clapping my hands. When my eyes meet her eyes, she stops dancing and singing. There is silence, and then she begins to clap her hands. We are smiling at each other, and I start to shake my head and move to the music. She stands still for a couple of seconds. Then she starts to dance together with me. We have fun. I like dancing. I love dancing. We clap our hands again. We even scream as loud as we can as I turn up the volume. I then feel that it is just a matter of time until she will love to dance as much as I do.

The two examples relate to Mead’s (1982: 40) idea that “[i]nhibitions are not well worked-out in the case of the baby. He cannot stop himself.” In addition, it shows that the child, who takes the emotional attitude of the other toward the situation that it finds itself in, gradually becomes more apt to stop itself. When repeatedly taking the emotional attitude of the other towards itself in certain situations, the child develops a structure of social behavior in the form of emotional attitudes. This structure makes the child approach the outer world from an anticipated corporal perspective. When the child’s habitually expressed corporal attitudes become problematic or challenged within the act, emotional experience, in the form of a corporal evaluation of its relationship to the outer world arises. The child becomes aware of itself as standing in a particular relationship to the outer world. In other words, self-feeling arises.

Emotional experience is self-feeling, in the specific sense of a corporal evaluation of the own existence within the act. As such the core of emotion or that which we become aware of as ourselves when we have emotional experiences is neither a biological or reflexive given, but rather it is what our bodies have become on the basis of our functional identification with others.

Let me elaborate on this claim by using Young’s research on bodily comportment. In her essay, “Throwing Like a Girl” ([1980] 1990), Young implicitly makes a distinction between our motor acts and our emotional experiences. Motor acts refer to abilities like walking and talking, whereas emotional experiences refer to the manner in which we walk and talk, among others. As I will suggest, our emotional experiences are strongly related to the style in which we with help of our motor capacities approach the outer world, the other, and ourselves. We could talk about our emotions as the style of our flesh, which tells who we are.
According to Young, the style of the flesh is about to be or not to be. Throwing like a girl is not to be, whereas throwing like a boy is to be. Indeed, it seems like girls in general embody an attitude of not being when they throw. This suggests that they make as little use of their bodies as possible. Young posits that this is visible in Erwin W. Strauss (1969) study of photographs of young boys and girls. “The basic difference that Strauss observes between the way boys and girls throw,” Young ([1980] 1990: 145) writes, “is that girls do not bring their whole bodies into the motion as much as the boys do. They do not reach back, twist, move backward, step, and lean forward. Rather, the girls tend to remain relatively immobile except for their arms, and even the arms are not extended as far as they could be.” The motion restriction of girls is not limited to throwing. It is shown in their existence within the act, altogether, Young claims.

Not only is there a typical style of throwing like a girl, but there is a more or less typical style of running like a girl, climbing like a girl, swinging like a girl, hitting like a girl. They have in common first that the whole body is not put into fluid and directed motion, but rather, in swinging and hitting, for example, the motion is concentrated in one body part; and second that the woman’s motion tends not to reach, extend, lean, stretch, and follow through in the direction of her intention (Young [1980] 1990: 146).

The flesh of boys tends to be open toward the outer world, whereas the flesh of girls tends to be closed from the outer world.

Even in the most simple body orientations of men and women as they sit, stand, and walk, one can observe a typical difference in body style and extension. Women generally are not as open with their bodies as are men in their gait and stride. Typically the masculine stride is longer proportional to a man’s body than is the feminine stride to a woman’s. The man typically swings his arms in a more open an loose fashion than does a woman and typically has more up and down rhythm in his step. Though we now wear pants more than we used to and consequently do not have to restrict our sitting postures because of dress, women still tend to sit with their legs relatively close and their arms across their bodies. When simply standing or leaning, men tend to keep their feet farther apart then do women, and we also tend more to keep our hands and arms touching or shielding our bodies (Young [1980] 1990: 145).

In my interpretation of Young, the style of the flesh is acquired from functional identification with outer world or the other. In turn, it is the basis of emotional experiences – our corporal evaluations of our relations to the outer world or the other. Accordingly, self-feeling is constituted by corporal attitudes.

If we are going to take seriously the difference in corporal attitudes shown between the two sexes, our conception of functional identification must take into account that others approach us differently depending on their socio-cultural categorization of us in terms of girl or boy, woman or man, and presumably, also, in terms of colored or white, and sick or healthy among
others. This is important to emphasize because we do not choose our sex, our skin color, or our health status. More importantly, it implies that those are not qualities that decide who we are or want to be. Rather, they are part of the basis on which others approach us. Clearly, it shows that it is basically others’ attitudes towards us that bestow the outer world with powers to which we become subjects (compare McCarthy 1984: 118).

We, however, are able to change our corporal attitudes toward the outer world or other in spite of sociocultural categorizations. This is not easy. We are often emotionally aware of the style of our flesh within the act, i.e. corporally evaluate our relation to the outer world or the other, but we are seldom conscious of the style of our flesh at a reflexive level of the act, i.e., incorporate it in our answer to questions about who we are or want to be. The reason for this is that our emotional expressions are usually performed in a habitual manner. As aforementioned, it is only when our emotional expressions and experiences within the act are inhibited to an extent that make them problematic for the completion of the act, that we become conscious of them at a reflexive level. It is at this point, communication about emotion with help of significant symbols, and in turn emotion-management starts.

An example of the above argumentation is what happened when the staff at two different Kindergartens outside of Gävle in Sweden videotaped themselves helping the children get ready to go out in the mornings. The videotaping was part of a project that aimed at gender role equality among children, which was initiated by the equality-expert Ingemar Gens at the county administrative board of Gästleborg in 1996. Before observing the videotapes the staff was convinced that they treated all of the children in the same manner. During the observations, the staff made a count of the words directed towards girls and directed towards boys. The final analysis showed that 80 % of the words were directed towards girls, and mere 20 % of the words were directed to boys. Difference seemed also to be displayed in how the personnel used words. The staff seemed to communicate with the girls when helping them to get dressed, whereas the boys were commanded to get dressed. Nonetheless, the communication with the girls was immediately interrupted as soon as a boy shouted out. In addition, the videotapes showed an episode of when a little boy who asked nicely for help repeatedly goes without being noticed. The boy eventually throws himself on the floor and screams. After the staff viewed the videotapes, they realized that their attitudes toward the children reinforced the typical gender roles among them. This was consistent with earlier stuff on the children’s communication around the dinner table. For example, a girl was asked with words if “someone could pass the milk, please” and a boy said “öhgh.” Another girl at the table seemed to know that he wanted milk. After discussing the problem at hand, the staff decided to divide the girls and boys into different groups based on sex. Without any boys seeking attention, the girls could be
encouraged to focus on themselves and their own needs. Without any girls being experts on communication and understanding, the staff had to communicate with the boys to be able to understand what they wanted. The staff then realized that it, for example, takes as long time to make a boy into a cowboy as it takes to make a girl into a princess, and that boys are in no more hurry to play cowboy than to be dressed up as a cowboy. The boys, certainly, did not mind as the staff communicated with them (Gens 2002).

It did not take long before the changed attitudes of the staff toward the children resulted in changed attitudes in the children themselves:

A pre-school teacher came home from an excursion in the forest, and was very upset. One of the children had devoted itself to trample to death all the snails that they have found a lot of in a glade. [...]– It is not the whole world, is it? Boys do so, was the reply to her frustration. But it was not a boy. It was a girl (Gens 2002: 60, my translation).

The observations support Young’s ([1980] 1990: 147) claim that “[t]here is no inherent, mysterious connection between these sorts of typical comportments and being a female person.” To some extent, they support Young’s idea that the typically timid, uncertain, and hesitant attitude of women engaging physically with things results “from lack of practice in using the body and performing tasks” (Young [1980] 1990: 147). More importantly, they show the significance of the approach of the other towards the self when it performs motor acts. It is, first and foremost, the other’s corporal attitudes that determine our emotional selves, if we are going to feel ourselves as timid, uncertain, hesitant, or the opposite, as well as feminine or masculine.

The examples above are used to illustrate that it is emotional attitude taking that makes us into interacting human beings, who experience emotions, in addition to behaving human organisms, who experience sensations or have sense perceptions.

In turn, this implies a distinction between our experiences of emotions, in the form of corporal evaluations of our relationship to the outer world or the other, and being conscious of those emotional experiences as a part of our selves. The latter only takes place if our expressions of emotion (or emotional experiences) do not work as means of the completion of our cooperative acts with others. In the next section, I elaborate on the idea that the need for recognition that is involved in self-realization externalizes primarily when our expressions of emotion (or emotional experiences) do not work to complete the act.
**Self-realization**

The type of situation in which our emotional expressions or emotional experiences do not work as means of the completion of the act and in which we become conscious of them as ours is probably most easily pictured with help of situations in which we explicitly are expected to express or experience certain emotions, indeed, manage or control our emotions. In the book *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983), Hochschild provides us with many good examples of such situations. Among the examples, we find the flight attendants at Delta Airlines, who explicitly are expected to smile:

Trainees must learn literally hundreds of regulations, memorize the location of safety equipment on four different airplanes, and receive instruction of passenger handling. [...] In all their courses, they were constantly reminded that their own job security and the company's profit rode on a smiling face. A seat in a plane, they were told, “is our most perishable product – we have to keep winning our passengers back.” How you do it is as important as what you do. There were many direct appeals to smile: “Really work on your smiles.” “Your smile is your biggest asset – use it.” In demonstrating how to deal with insistent smokers, with persons boarding the wrong plane, and with passengers who are sick or flirtatious or otherwise troublesome, a trainer held up a card that said “Relax and smile.” By standing aside and laughing at the “relax and smile” training, trainers parried student resistance to it. They said, in effect, “It’s incredible how much we have to smile, but there it is. We know that, but we’re still doing it, and you should too” (Hochschild 1983: 104f.).

Clearly the smile is understood as the key to successful interactions between the flight attendants and the passengers. For the successful completion of such an act, it is important that the passengers do not feel, for example, frightened. In praxis this means that the flight attendants under some circumstances withdraw the truth from the passengers, by what Goffman would have called a *cynical* style of flesh. An example of this style of the flesh is described in the following confession by a Delta Airline attendant to Hochschild:

> Even though I’m a very honest person, I have learned not to allow my face to mirror my alarm or my fright. I feel very protective of my passengers. Above all, I don’t want them to be frightened. If we were going down, if we were going to make a ditching in water, the chances of our surviving are slim, even though we (the flight attendants) know exactly what to do.

> *But, I think I would probably* – and I think I can say this for most of my fellow flight attendants – *be able to keep them from being too worried about it.* I mean my voice might quiver a little during the announcements, but somehow I feel we could get them to believe... the best (Hochschild 1983: 107).

Inspired by the Russian director Constantin Stanislavski, Hochschild calls the cynical style of the flesh described in the quotation above as “surface acting,” which is to be understood in contrast to what she calls “deep acting” (Hochschild 1983: 35ff.). In a Goffmanian manner, she argues that although the world is
not entirely a stage, all of us do our part. Sometimes we act at the surface of ourselves, “we try to change how we outwardly appear” (Hochschild 1983: 35). This sort of acting is limited to our body-language, Hochschild argues. Other times we act at the depths of ourselves. We then express, Hochschild posits, “spontaneously, as the Russian director Constantin Stanislavski urged, a real feeling that has been self-induced” (ibid.).

Indeed, “surface acting” and “deep acting” could be seen as two different techniques that actors use to perform their characters onstage. Using the former technique, the actor “puts on” facial expressions and bodily postures specific for the character that she or he is to perform. In the case of surface acting, the character belongs to the person as an actor frontstage, but is clearly separated from the person as her or himself backstage. Hence, a clear distinction is made between the person as an actor, “frontstage,” and the person as her or himself, “backstage.” We could say that the actor, when using the technique of “surface acting” finds the character she or he embodies “frontstage” in the outer world of props, (although the props mainly are made up by the body of the person as an actor, which actually is the very same body as of the person as her or himself). In the case of “deep acting,” the actor turns toward the self, however. The actor is expected to dig deep into the self by walking down memory lane of daily life in search for the emotions of the character that is to be preformed “frontstage.” By giving life to the character preformed “frontstage” by re-experiencing part of her or his emotional life, the actor turns into a person. The character performed “frontstage” transforms into her or him “backstage.” In this way, the actor is “true” during the performance “frontstage.” The difference between the two techniques of acting is captured in Stanislavski’s description of the limits of “surface acting.”

This type of art (of the Coquelin school) is less profound than beautiful. It is more immediately effective than truly powerful; [its] form is more interesting than its content. It acts more on your sense of sound and sight than on your soul. Consequently it is more likely to delight than to move you. You can receive great impressions through this art. But they will neither warm your soul nor penetrate deeply into it. Their effect is sharp but not lasting. Your astonishment rather than your faith is aroused. Only what can be accomplished through surprising theatrical beauty or picturesque pathos lies within the bounds of this art. But delicate and deep human feelings are not subject to such technique. They call for natural emotions at the very moment in which they appear before you in the flesh. They call for the direct cooperation of nature itself (as cited in Hochschild 1983: 38).

“Deep acting” does not only imply making use of the memories of our emotional experiences with the help of the trained imagination, but also believing that those emotions are experienced here and now (Hochschild 1983: 42).

It is not only actresses or actors that perform acts of passion with “deep acting.” “In our daily lives, offstage as it were, we also develop feeling for the
parts we play; and along with the workday props of the kitchen table or office restroom mirror we also use deep acting, emotion memory, an the sense of ‘as if this were true’ in the course of trying to feel what we sense we ought to feel or want to feel,” Hochschild (1983: 42f.) writes. The following episode illustrates this:

You think of how the new person resembles someone you know. You see your sister’s eyes in someone sitting at that seat. That makes you want to put out for them. I like to think of the cabin as the living room of my own home. When someone drops in [at home], you may not know them, but you get something for them. You put that on a grand scale – thirty-six passengers per flight attendant – but it’s the same feeling (Hochschild 1983: 105).

Since we usually do not reflect on our emotional experiences as part of who we are or want to be, we are most of the time not conscious of the work we do to be able to experience the emotions desirable. “Only when our feeling does not fit the situation, and when we sense this as a problem, do we turn our attention to the inward, imagined mirror, and ask whether we are or should be acting,” Hochschild (1983: 43) writes. But, what does it mean to sense that our emotional experiences do not fit the situation? Certainly, it is not a question of merely feeling-rules that are dictated by culture. Perhaps, and more importantly, it is a question of the concrete responses of others to our emotional expressions. This becomes obvious if we consider the following story of another flight attendant at Delta Airlines:

There was one time when I finally decided that somebody had it coming. It was a woman who complained about absolutely everything. I told her in my prettiest voice, “We’re doing our best for you. I’m sorry that you aren’t happy with the flight time. I’m sorry that you aren’t happy with our service.” She went on and on about how terrible the food was, how bad the flight attendants were, how bad her seat was. Then she began yelling at me and my co-worker friend, who happened to be black. “You nigger bitch!” she said. Well, that did it. I told my friend not to waste her pain. This lady asked for one more Bloody Marry. I fixed the drink, put it on a tray, an when I got to her seat, my toe somehow found a piece of carpet and I tripped – and that Bloody Mary hit that white pants suit! (Hochschild 1983: 114).

It is not, primarily, the flight attendant’s emotions that “misfit” in the above episode, but rather it is the emotions expressed by one of the passengers – the lady in the white pants suit. The flight attendant does everything that she can to live up to the feeling-rules of Delta Airlines. After several efforts to communicate or establish an intersubjective relationship with the lady the flight attendant reaches her limit, which is likely due to the lady’s display of disrespect. She treats the flight attendant as an object, not a subject, an individual person, who deserves respect. The flight attendant’s reaction to the lady is a result of the need for recognition that is involved in self-realization, which in relation to the lady becomes impossible to satisfy within the boundary of the feeling-rules
of Delta Airlines. As I see it, the episode is not to be understood as a conscious violation of those rules. It is rather to be understood as an expression of the need for recognition that is involved in the realization of the self that is always dependent on acting out the attitude of the other towards itself to become itself. Indeed, it was the emotions expressed by the lady that was mirrored in the flight attendant’s attitudes.

From a neo-Meadian perspective, this process is understood in relation to the idea that our emotions are acquired on the basis of our functional identification with each other. This implies that it is difficult to distinguish between “surface acting” and “deep acting” in our daily lives. Although we are able to evoke emotional experiences by the imagination, our emotional selves continuously expand on the basis of our functional identification with others at a pre-emotional and pre-reflexive level of the act. Whether the cause of our corporal attitudes is found at a corporal, emotional, or reflexive level of the act, and whether they are understood as “cynical” or “sincere,” they are what basically make up our emotions, and parts of our selves. There may be interpretations of our emotional experiences as cynically or sincerely expressed. But, is it possible to distinguish between a “true” and a “false” self, like Hochschild (1983: 194f.) does in the following lines?

The actual content of feelings – or whishes, or fantasies, or actions – is not what distinguishes the false self from the true self; the difference lies in whether we claim them as “our own.” This claiming applies to our outward behavior, our surface acting: “I wasn’t acting like myself.” It also applies to our inner experience, our deep acting: “I made myself go to that party and have a good time even though I was feeling depressed.”

From a neo-Meadian perspective, our outward behavior, the corporal attitudes that we perform within the act, is the “I.” As such, they are part of the self. Remember that Mead [1934] 1967: 279) claims that the things we actually do, the words we speak, our expressions, our emotions are the “I.” In this way, the “I” is what primarily makes us have something to emotionally experience as ourselves, and in turn reflect upon as ourselves. This implies not merely that the emotional self is acquired from functional identification with the other at a pre-emotional and pre-reflexive level of the act, but also that we do not discard it solely by interpreting it as cynical or false at a reflexive level of the act.

To view the style of our flesh as cynical or false distances ourselves from our corporal attitudes within the act, what our emotional experiences are built on. We then run the risk that a concrete separation between our emotions and thoughts could occur. Accordingly, the self does not become divided in a “false” and a “true” self, but fragmented or even mutilated in a manner that makes self-realization impossible. To continue, I refer back to the case of the sexually abused child in chapter four.
The child is only able to deal with the abuse by withdrawing the emotional self and recalling the abuse reflexively. Sexual abuse has taken place, but I was not sexually abused, the child tells itself. Nonetheless, the child was sexually abused. During the sexual abuse the child lacked the self-autonomy enabling the claim of the need for recognition that is implied in self-realization. Fundamentally, this lack results from the child not being recognized as an individual person with a right to determine its own sexual activities. The child did not like or love the perpetrator in a sexually desirable manner. But, since the perpetrator did not make any emotional attitude taking, he was not able to place himself in the child’s position – to feel as if he was the child. If the child under those circumstances does not possess an – to use the terminology of Smith ([1759] 1984: 128ff.) – “impartial spectator,” the child will not be able to morally distinguish between the perpetrator’s responses to its gestures and its own responses to them. The child is, then, not able to tell the cynical from the sincere or the good from the bad. The child becomes the slave of the other as itself, as Smith might have put it. Clearly, the emotional self does not mumble to the child values already there. Instead, it seems like the child can be filled up with anything that the other expresses. This becomes evident if we consider the following quotation from Kerstin Rathsman’s book *Incest: Att bo i en stulen kropp*, (Incest: To live in a stolen body, 2001: 116f., my translation) which is an empirical study on the subject matter from a social psychological perspective:

Did your father have real sexual intercourse with you?

*Olivia:* Yes.

At what age did it begin?

*Olivia:* Well, from early on.

You don’t remember the first time, how old you were?

*Olivia:* No, it went so fast you know, if I’m so to say. It didn’t work in the beginning, what shall I say, five, six maybe. Then, I had an uncle who participated now and then.

Were both of them on you together then?

*Olivia:* Yes.

Were both sadists?

*Olivia:* No the brother you know, he was also very afraid of my daddy and controlled. Yes, he did it but not as often and not as violent. It was daddy who stood for all that you know. He was the lighter variation, so to say.

Is there any time that was totally different from the other times? Earlier you said that there was a pattern so to say, and that you knew what was about to happen. Was there any occasion, which wasn’t like the others? Was there always a blindfold, for example?
Olivia: Yes, not when I was younger. It was more when I became older. Later he could dress up a bit in like one of those little army caps and then he had those black belts on him and black boots and walked around and swaggered. I can see it like this in front of me, and then fear would surface. He should like terrify me, and then you know it was the same things. OK, if it should go fast at the time, then one didn’t have to bother about bondage and stuff, instead it then became – but it was always choking, always choking, that I can say, always it was that.

[—]

Have you had any relationships with more that this particular older man?

Olivia: Yes, a few, but no god relationships. In the beginning I may have had two fair relationships, but then you know, actually between 21 and 26, now I am 35, but after 26 I have only been drawn to the wrong kind of men, the more exciting and a bit dangerous men.

Perhaps the way that we can be filled up with almost anything that the other expresses becomes even more evident if we consider that children who have been sexually abused often not only lose the ability to stay in contact with their own corporal attitudes, but also with the corporal attitudes of others. They become numb, their emotionality, altogether, is excluded from their experience of the self, as well as the other. It is not unusual that they, in desperate attempts to get in touch with their lost emotional selves, torture the own body as well as others’ bodies.

Indeed, the examples above illustrate emotional experiences expressed by the style of the flesh in the sense of corporal evaluations of the relation to the outer world or the other. The problem with those expressions of emotional experiences is not that they are “cynical” or “false,” but that they have not emerged from *intersubjective* relations within the act. They are not results of mutual openness between the self and the other. They have nothing to do with, for example, the sort of love that Cooley embraces as the source of self-enlargement, as discussed in chapter two. Rather, they are results of the closing of the self by being approached by another, closed within her or himself. No contact between the other and the self is established. There are no insides discovered, and no meanings created – only exteriors without value. Therefore, we cannot talk generally about emotional experiences as genuine manifestations of values (compare Joas 2000). Certainly, the style of the flesh forced upon the self as itself under circumstances like the above described is not internalized as the sort of values that is incorporated in self-realization.

We must take into account that functional identification as well as emotional attitude taking are only manifested in an emotional self that is able to claim the need for recognition incorporated in self-realization, if they take place within *intersubjective* relationships with the other. Indeed, processes of emotional attitude taking, on the basis of functional identification with the other, become pathological if others *force* themselves upon us. There must exist an openness
of the other, as well as of the self, that embodies a search for the continuously changing insides of the other and the self to be (re)discovered, (re)endowed with meaning, (re)evaluated, and (re)normatively embraced within the act. In an ideal social interaction, all participants continuously take the attitude of the other, not merely reflexively, but also emotionally. To be as specific as possible, we only exist as selves or individual persons by emotionally and reflexively taking the attitudes of those who are existentially different from us, but who approach us as functionally identical.

Let me end this discussion by giving you an example of what it, from the neo-Median position, means to exist as selves or individual persons within the act, in a way that enables the process of the need for recognition that is involved in self-realization. I will do this by quoting Lars-Erik Berg’s interpretation of Mead’s view on the intersubjective act in which the mother and the child exist.

The mother smiles in happiness over her child, the child returns the smile without knowing that it thereby starts a conversation. The mother’s happiness becomes stronger by the response the child gives, and her smile is intensified, which the child in its turn reacts to etc. The focus of attention is continuously on the Other, and reactions approach each other through this fundamental similarity-function. [—] It is easy to make something one-way directed out of this process, that it is the child who is born psycho-socially by ways of its own astonishing perception. However, it would be misleading to interpret Mead like that. For him the opposite process has the same degree of significance. The child gives birth to its mother through recognizing her as such. Here we again meet with a paradox: Must not that which is to be recognized exist before it is recognized? The answer is that recognition changes the object that is recognized. The subject that emerges from being recognized has been changed through precisely recognition. First if somebody answers my actions of motherhood is it possible for me to experience myself as a mother. Of the same degree of significance is also that the mother calls forth the same tendency in herself as in her child through her gestures. Encountering each other their smiles reinforce the mutual feeling of happiness. The well-known phrase of Mead is again: The organism calls forth the same gesture in itself as it does in the other organism (Berg 2001: 74f., my translation).

The mother and the child are mutually giving birth to each other. They are not born as one, but as special and cherished. In this way, the mother and the child are interdependent in their difference from each other. Indeed, the process of continuous need for recognition that is incorporated in self-realization has its source in difference, approached by emotional and reflexive attitude taking, on the basis of functional identification with the other, from the standpoint of the self. It is only from the own standpoint that it is possible to identify with the other, and only in the mirror of the difference of the other that it is possible to catch the reflexion of the self as a particular person, making a difference in the world of human interrelations, on an emotional as well as reflexive level of the act. Without existential difference and functional identity there would be
no inhibition of the act, thus, emotional, and in turn reflexive experiences. In other words, there would be no self.

**Concluding Remarks**

The present theory of the emotional self consists of an elaboration of three aspects of the self that are explicitly in Mead’s social psychology, namely, functional identification, emotionality, and reflexivity. The aim of the book is to show that emotional experience or the emotional self is a phenomena that is linked to both mind and body, without (con)fusing it with them.

By distinguishing emotion from our functional identification with the outer world, especially, the other, (i.e., our innate tendency to, on the basis of our senseperceptions, assume the corporal attitude of the other) emotion escapes the danger of being reduced to the body. At the same time, it is not cut off from the body, since it is shown that emotional experience is dependent on a social structure of habitual responses to outer and inner stimuli. Emotional experiences, it is claimed, are corporal evaluations of our relationships to the outer world from the perspective of the other. As such, our emotional experiences are internalized as values, (i.e., preferability of goods that are striven for by particular groups or individual persons). We, however, become conscious of such corporal evaluations as part of the self only if they are problematic in our interchanges with the outer world or challenged by alternative corporal attitudes. In this way, emotionality is distinguished from reflexivity. What we are or want to be is distinguished from the formulation of the answers to those questions. Emotion, thus, escapes the danger of being reduced to the mind. At the same time, it is not cut off from the mind, since it is shown that emotional experiences give an opportunity for the mind to develop. Indeed, our emotional experiences of our intersubjective relationships to each other, internalized as our values, are the core of the continuous need for recognition that is involved in self-realization.

In this book the theory develops from a neo-Meadian perspective. By taking such an approach, it has been noted that emotional experiences are necessary to enable self-formation and self-realization. It, however, contributes with little or nothing about the contents of the emotional experiences that are involved in self-formation and self-realization. To be able to understand the contents of emotional experiences or the emotional self, it is necessary to explore the ways in which the emotions, as our corporal evaluations of our relations to the outer world, are linked to the mind and the body. Indeed, the idea that our emotions are endowed with their particular contents, i.e., how they feel and what we think about them, only via their links to the mind and the body is implicit in a theory of the emotional self from the standpoint of a neo-Meadian. Yet, to explore the contents of the emotional self is a task somewhat different from the one I had in mind when I was writing this book. It, indeed, demands another,
perhaps more empirical way, of conducting research. An example of this kind of research is Lupton’s book *The Emotional Self: A Sociocultural Exploration* (1998). “A major theme of this book,” Lupton (1989: 6) writes, in the introduction of the book, “is that our concepts of our emotions are often integral to our wider conceptions of ourselves, used to give meaning and provide explanation for our lives, for why we respond to life events, other people, material artifacts and places in certain ways, why we tend to follow patterns of behaviour throughout our lives.” Clearly, this is not a major theme of this book. The different ways, however, of exploring the emotional self are not contradictory, but rather they complement each other. In the conclusions of her book, Lupton (1998: 176, see, also, Williams 2001: 132) writes:

> At the beginning of this book I commented on the slipperiness of the concept of emotions. Having examined the everyday, popular discourses on the emotions emerging in people's own explanations and experiences and in mass media, and the expert discourses articulated in professional forums such as the ‘psy’ disciplines, as well as identifying some of the historical underpinnings of these discourses, emotions still remain somewhat elusive. This is inevitable, given the complex interrelationships of discourse, embodiment, memory, personal biography, socio-cultural processes and thought that constitute and give meaning to emotional states. Due to the shifting state of these interrelationships, definitions of emotion are always liable to change – emotion is, therefore, a moving target.

As a final conclusion, the neo-Meadian perspective on the emotional self, in contrast to other explorations of the emotional self like Lupton’s, contributes with making emotion and its significance for self-formation and self-realization a less moving or slippery target. This is possible since it investigates the *form* rather than the *contents* of the emotional self.
Notes

¹ Of course there are other emotions than love, which the other expresses toward us, and which in turn affect us. Love, however, is crucial for the emergence, development, and realization of the self.

² Compare Chappell and Orbach’s conception of Mead’s view on emotion with John D. Baldwin (1985); Lloyd Gordon Ward and Robert Throop (1992); Moira von Wright (2000: 97ff.).
References


