

**G. H. Mead's introspective "self" as a process of interaction of object and subject relations and its some implications in evaluating of moral-psychological climate of organized community units.**

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G. H. Mead (1863-1931) was a social theoretical thinker of the notion "Self" construction. Being as part of the political activists, he tried to establish "the real path leading to the truth of "socialism"" in the States and recognition of self.

How was his vision of this model? What were the major elements of this interaction and how are they implied in interpersonal relations of the community units? The purpose of this article is to try making some in-depth analyses referring to this interrelation and generalizing the ideas of some philosophers around this issue.

Quite devoted to the idea of progressive politics in America, he envisioned this path through "changing the conduct or behavior of individuals and social groups"<sup>1</sup>. Whatever the followed objective and interpretive explanations by scholars were, Mead always retained his exceptional and passionate optimism in interpretation of self through the metamorphoses of social groups and systems. Thus, he stated that individuals might retain their objective nature only through endless interactions with social groups and each of their members. But how? Let us review some opinions referring to this reflexiveness.

If we put the path of recognizing the social facts of "Self" by G. H. Mead into the so called "generalized other"<sup>2</sup> offered by outstanding American philosopher John Ryder, then "Me", changes through the following interactions with stimuli to emerge the new "chain of interrelationships of object with subject". Evidently, then the major assumptions drawn are:

a) 'self' is not equal to 'I'; b) 'self' is always an object; c) object always involves subject; d) so, 'me' is inconceivable without an 'I'; e) and, at last, 'I' is presupposition, but never a present conscious experience because it is passed into the objective case.

Interestingly, such kind of "mechanical quantitative" changes, without doubt, also cause to arising of some new qualitative alterations in organized community interrelationship. For example, it is quite helpful while defining the criteria of assessing "moral psychological climate of the community groups", where the general evaluations of the community group climate cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell Aboulafia: George Herbert Mead, 1863-1931. American Philosophy, Edited by Armen.T. M and John Ryder: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p.174

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 178

equalized to the summative pile up of individual features and personal traits. Apparently, it is more than that, that is why, in most cases the sociologists agree that satisfaction of each individual (“I”) in community units is measured by the general satisfactory status of the interpersonal units (“Self”) affecting on each personality. Thus, philosophers judge this status by the “result-driven essentials” of the moral-psychological climate.

By our opinion, “satisfaction” is vague notion, and is more subjective rather than objective from the viewpoint of its inception; it needs further concretization. For instance, there is wide a range of unsatisfactory elements existing in community interaction suggested by G.A. Mochenov. This is, first, the width of the dissatisfaction spectrum of each community individual; second, these are the components of spectrum of dissatisfaction which include as the total community dissatisfaction, as well as the dissatisfaction of its each individual with the “complex” nature of human interrelations; third, it involves the scale of dissatisfaction of each individual with separate components of human interrelation; and the last is the depth of dissatisfaction with separate elements of community which is an indication of dissatisfaction level.<sup>3</sup>

It is quite clear that, the ‘wholeness’ of the moral-psychological climate (self) manifests itself as discontinuity in its continuous nature of development and occurrence (I), acting as pre-dominance of some values “inhabiting” in the community conscious and psychology, in the practical interpersonal and intercommunity relations.

Similarly, once logically analyzed, Mead’s social “self analysis” interpreted by Andy Brunden, from Brock University,<sup>4</sup> assumes such kind of “rediintegrated” character, where initially “self” is not lying perforce to be immediately equal to “I”, at least because the first is subject, and the latter is object. Moreover, they appear sequentially, but not simultaneously where self cannot emerge in consciousness as an “I”.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, “self” is enough disturbed to change the objective character of “I, i.e. ‘self’ is always an object whereas ‘I’ presents itself as subject. By Fichte, because the “I” - thing-in-itself, had just been discredited, at once prepared a system without any thing-in-itself. Consequently, he rejected the assumption of anything that was not through and through merely our representation, and therefore let the knowing subject be all in all or at any rate produce everything from its own resources. For this purpose, he at once did away with the essential and most meritorious part of the Kantian doctrine, the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* and thus that between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself. For he declared everything to be *a priori*, naturally without any evidence for such a monstrous assertion; instead of these, he gave sophisms and even crazy sham demonstrations whose absurdity was concealed under the mask of profundity and of the

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<sup>3</sup> Mochenov G.A. Problem of research of some socio-psychological aspects for managing the the scientific research community groups” , Ph.D. reference work-Moscow, 1973, p.28

<sup>4</sup> The social Self, Journal of Philosophy (Transcribed by Andy Blunden)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

incomprehensibility ostensibly arising the reform. Moreover, he appealed boldly and openly to intellectual intuition, that is, really to inspiration.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, self is phenomenological and “complicated” “I” with a system of continuum complexity of interaction. But there is an outstanding question: “Does it have a capacity to subjugate “I”? This would probably put an end to the thesis about the real essence of the personality which is determined through endless experiences and interactions of “I” with the outer world. The likely continuum of transference is conditioned by two – sided relations where mediation is usually made invisibly.

There are also some very interesting parallels drawn between Hegelian and Meadian philosophies.

The definition of subject which Andy proposes is the “subject is a *self-conscious system of activity*”. An individual fits this definition, insofar as the individual, self-evidently a system of activity, is a self-conscious, sovereign and rational person; a social subject fits this definition as well, insofar as the system of activity acts as a moral agent in the world, has corporate knowledge, and has a continuing (corporate) identity.<sup>7</sup>

The self-consciousness discussed above also qualifies as a subject. We have a specific kind of collaborative activity amongst individual human beings. But the relation between the individual and the individual’s ‘human habitat’ is different. Self-consciousness in this sense can only be conceived of in isolation from Objective Spirit by throwing one’s mind back to the Stone Age.<sup>8</sup>

In summary, the individual does not distinguish between themselves and the community. We see this type of consciousness expressed in Aristotle’s definition of the Subject which means that the subject is an individual *of* the community, alike but independent. Thus, no reason to suppose that what goes inside someone else’s head is any different from what goes on in her own, even if people are outwardly different (gender and age differences and the natural division of labor aside).<sup>9</sup>

The objective nature of the experienced subject alternates between the needs of the master subject and their satisfaction. That is, the objectification (Object) of the new, class-ridden subjectivity is the practical activity of the subordinated subject. On the other hand, the needs of the enslaved subject its the entire culture (Subjective Spirit) are replaced by that of the master-subject into which they have been drawn in a subordinate position; it is the consciousness of the master-subject which controls their labor mediating between their consciousness and their material activity. The subject becomes a unity of theory and practice in which the dominated subject is absorbed in practice while the dominant subject is absorbed in theory, i.e, the direction and organization of labor. Each mediates the other.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann\\_Gottlieb\\_Fichte](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Gottlieb_Fichte)

<sup>7</sup> The Subject. Philosophical Foundations. Andy Blunden 2005/6Hegel: The Subject as Self-consciousness/  
<http://home.mira.net/~andy/works/hegel-habitus.htm/>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

The relationship is consonant with the I-me dialectic first discovered by Fichte, and taken up by the George Herbert Mead and others (Aron R, Earl Raab, Ganter G, Yeakel M, S. Herman, C. Richard and others) in which each subject in the relationship sees an image of himself in the material activity of the other subject. What we have then in Hegel's outline of Self-Consciousness in the Subjective Spirit is a form of subjectivity which is fundamentally *intuitive*; it "rises to" intelligence, but even in the most developed society, the subjectivity of the citizens apprehends the culture of the broader society in a physical, sensual, intuitive, practical and taken-for-granted interpersonal way.

This is not to say though that the notion of "self-consciousness" is an inherently *individual* concept. As we remarked above, this process of the development of Subjective Spirit is Hegel's description of the emergence of the sovereign individual, the presupposition of Kantian philosophy. Mead's "Mind, Self, and Society" which was published in 1934 clearly identify the real path of 'self modification' to compose the holistic interaction with the total social system. It is somehow the interaction of immaterial mind and the material body – immaterial mind and the material body are two completely different types of substances of two completely different types of substances. The Subjective Spirit constitutes a *principle* which is apprehended intuitively through participation in a shared form of life.

Overall, G. H. Mead's introspective "self" as a process of interaction of object and subject has a direct relation and interpretative power in evaluating moral-psychological climate of the organized community units. Because in moral - psychological climate of the organized units the personality itself (I), more concretely "the interactively-changing personality", acts in kind of Subject; but in relation to moral-psychological climate of the organized human group, as a social factor, the personality plays the least role as an Object. The practice of intercommunity and intergroup relations here acts as a "means" providing the development of personality in such organized groups. Actually this "means" is also realized through such kind of "qualities" of a personality-in-action as his/her more increasing demands and abilities, capacities and consciousness. By comprehending itself, the "I" also establishes the other "self", 'the generalized other'