

let it be reflected at B at the time  $t_B$ , and reach A again at the time  $t'_A$ . Taking into consideration the principle of the constancy of the velocity of light we find that

$$t_B - t_A = \frac{r_{AB}}{c - v} \text{ and } t'_A - t_B = \frac{r_{AB}}{c + v}$$

where  $r_{AB}$  denotes the length of the moving rod—measured in the stationary system. Observers moving with the moving rod would thus find that the two clocks were not synchronous, while observers in the stationary system would declare the clocks to be synchronous.

So we see that we cannot attach any *absolute* signification to the concept of simultaneity, but that two events which, viewed from a system of co-ordinates, are simultaneous, can no longer be looked upon as simultaneous events when envisaged from a system which is in motion relatively to that system.

### § 3. Theory of the Transformation of Co-ordinates and Times from a Stationary System to another System in Uniform Motion of Translation Relatively to the Former

Let us in “stationary” space take two systems of co-ordinates, i.e. two systems, each of three rigid material lines, perpendicular to one another, and issuing from a point. Let the axes of X of the two systems coincide, and their axes of Y and Z respectively be parallel. Let each system be provided with a rigid measuring-rod and a number of clocks, and let the two measuring-rods, and likewise all the clocks of the two systems, be in all respects alike.

Now to the origin of one of the two systems ( $k$ ) let a constant velocity  $v$  be imparted in the direction of the increasing  $x$  of the other stationary system (K), and let this velocity be communicated to the axes of the co-ordinates, the relevant measuring-rod, and the clocks. To any time of the stationary system K there then will correspond a definite position of the axes of the moving system, and from reasons of symmetry we are entitled to assume that the motion of  $k$  may be such that the axes of the moving system are at the time  $t$  (this “ $t$ ” always denotes a time of the stationary system) parallel to the axes of the stationary system.

We now imagine space to be measured from the stationary system K by means of the stationary measuring-rod, and also from the moving system  $k$  by means of the measuring-rod moving with it; and that we thus obtain the co-ordinates  $x, y, z$ , and  $\xi, \eta, \zeta$  respectively. Further, let the time  $t$  of the stationary system be determined for all points thereof at which there are clocks by means of light signals in the manner indicated in § 1; similarly let the time  $\tau$  of the moving system be determined for all points of the moving system at which there are clocks at rest relatively to that system by applying the method, given in § 1, of light signals between the points at which the latter clocks are located.

To any system of values  $x, y, z, t$ , which completely defines the place and time of an event in the stationary system, there belongs a system of values  $\xi,$