Revisiting Mead on Pragmatic "Fusion": From Emotion to Function

Andrew J. Weigert[1*]

[1] Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA

[*] Andrew J. Weigert, E-mail: Andrew.J.Weigert.1@nd.edu

Abstract

A recent biography and re-issue of George H. Mead's Mind, Self, and Society emphasize the emergent meanings of his work and of self's cognitive and affective dimensions in interaction. Erving Goffman likewise posits an interaction order based on individual and social identity. Mead's metaphor of fusion furthers recognition of an emotional merging of selves with each other and with emerging community. He initially characterizes this experience as "precious" and illustrates its presence in interactional domains such as teamwork, religion, and patriotism. Among other scholars, Charles Taylor uses fusion to interpret aspects of the contemporary secular age. Application to terrorist identities finds that emotional fusion motivates actions that threaten the moral imperative informing presentation of selves that grounds public order. From a pragmatic perspective, selves in pluralistic contexts must subordinate emotional fusion to functional fusion within an interaction order that fosters a larger self and more inclusive community to address common issues.

Keywords

pragmatism, G. H. Mead, fusion, terrorism

1. Introduction

John Dewey noted in his eulogy that George H. Mead's lifetime work showed a continuity of development around a central issue: "the problem of individual mind and consciousness in relation to the world and society" (1931, p. 311). This phrasing of Mead's central issue points to continuing reflection on the I and Me dialectics of self that empirically inform self identity and social identity. And a key process generating these dynamics is interaction, understood in broader pragmatic senses than those found in the sociological tradition labeled "symbolic interaction" by Herbert Blumer in 1937 and institutionalized with the formation of the "Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction" in 1977. This essay looks at interaction and self as dialectics: both a source and outcome of a dynamic Mead references as "The fusion of the 'I' and the 'Me' in social activities" (1934, p. 273).

In his recent biography, Becoming Mead, Daniel Huebner points out "that Mead is known in a discipline in which he did not teach for a book he did not write" (2014, p. 3). This characterization follows from, among others, the fact that Charles Morris' editorial compilation of student and

stenographer notes from Mead's courses was published as a book, Mind, Self, and Society (1934, and republished in a "definitive edition" including originating notes, 2015). Further support for Dewey's summary statement comes from citation patterns since "over four-fifths of all journal article citations to Mead since the mid-twentieth century (over 6,000 citations) have been references to Mind, Self and Society..." (Huebner, 2014, p. 86, p. 198). And references shift overwhelmingly from philosophy to social sciences, especially sociological social psychology in the journal Symbolic Interaction. Indeed, for Mead, mind emerges through non-reductive interaction, the conduct of consciousness in relation to the world (see Decker, 2008 for Mead's early understanding of the "psychical element" within a functional psychology).

Three themes inform this essay. The first all-encompassing theme extends "Mead becoming", since pragmatically, the meaning of actions is given in responses to them. As Huebner documents, Mead's meaning continues to emerge in citations within philosophical and especially now sociological sources. Secondly, I suggest that a construct such as affective self "fusion" is a promising sensitizing concept for social psychological analysis based on a section in Mind, Self and Society, and from a selective review of other uses of "fusion". Finally, following the pragmatist philosopher James Campbell, we emphasize that Mead's pragmatic mindedness warns us against the "precious" emotional power of fusion especially in times of conflict, and instead insists on cosmopolitan "international mindedness" to work our way through dangerous times (Campbell, 1995, 2013).

Mead's rational pragmatics is adumbrated in his use of "interaction" in the 1929 essay on national and international mindedness: "... society is the interaction of these selves and an interaction that is only possible if out of their diversity unity arises. We are indefinitely different from each other, but our differences make interaction possible. Society is unity in diversity" (Mead, 1929, 2011, pp. 316-317). Sociological analysts go further and develop interaction as a grounding concept for understanding how social and personal identities link to each other and to action.

Erving Goffman presented "interaction order" as the privileged domain of sociological inquiry in his 1982 Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association. He offered parameters for studying social universals found in situations "in which two or more individuals are physically in one another's response presence" including "reduced versions" enacted via distance communications (1983, p. 2). The justification for conceptualizing an interaction order as a separate substantive domain is that its elements fit together and allow further inter-organizational, cross-cultural, and historical analyses. This is a strong programmatic statement that formalizes and extends part of the pragmatist tradition in sociology (cf., "interaction", in McCall, 2003).

Although Goffman's program focuses on cognitive processes and structures, he notes that "Emotion, mood, cognition, bodily orientation, and muscular effort are intrinsically involved, introducing an inevitable psychobiological element. Ease and uneasiness, unselfconsciousness and wariness are central", naturalistic elements of interaction that reflect social dynamics of other species (1983, p. 3). He reflected on dynamics woven into all social organization that render self interactionally "sacred"

48

through deference rituals, or interactionally "embarrassed" at a loss of sacredness (1967, pp. 47-112; Blumer, 1969, p. 21, fn, insists that "self" is an inexhaustible and challenging aspect of interaction, echoing a Meadian theme).

Goffman posits two constitutive definitions of self as identified that structure interaction: categoric, or identity by placement in a social category; and individual, or identity by particular appearances. These two types of identity inform all elements of the interaction order. They constitute a universal relationship structure generating an ongoing dialectic of personal and social identity that is negotiated in the interaction order of the pragmatic business at hand and the social psychological identity at stake. Concomitant with the dual identity structure are dual emotional dynamics, such as embarrassment and esteem, deference and demeanor. How the two dimensions of identity function cognitively and emotionally is key for understanding issues central to interaction analysis such as motivation and agency. Through all his formulations, Goffman likely assumed a perduring self as both a grounding source and a product of interaction (Sahni, 2012).

2. Fusion: Metaphor, Sensitizing Concept, and Cause

The present essay explores Mead's "fusion" metaphor as a fruitful sensitizing concept for interpreting emotional dynamics of identities informing a single self in the interaction order. Pragmatically, concepts function as instruments for seeing, symbolizing, interpreting, and discoursing about the social world. Pragmatic knowers reformulate concepts when faced with emergent phenomena, such as an event that is newly situated and calls for a newly nuanced concept. Both the event and the situation enter into the reformulated concept that generates new scientific interpretations.

Herbert Blumer labeled such pragmatic concepts "sensitizing concepts" contrasted with "definitive concepts" that give univocal indicators and apriori meanings to phenomena by applying "fixed bench marks" for conceptualizing them. By contrast, sensitizing concepts "suggest directions along which to look ... on a general sense of what is relevant" (1969, p. 148). Analysts need to interpret appearances of a phenomenon in its context to specify what it has in common with other phenomena within the same concept. The paradox of analyzing both sameness and difference for comparing phenomena arises from the irreducible specificity of events in the "natural empirical world" of experience for scientific study (Blumer, 1969, p. 149). Although I present Mead's fusion as a sensitizing concept in this sense, I am not reporting a naturalistic study, but rather applying the concept to scholars' attempts to either theorize or observe dynamics of self identities and social identities as precious experiences and powerful motivators.

Mead discusses fusion in Mind, Self, and Society (1934/2015, p. 273) to refer to the powerful emotional experience from merging personal identities with each other and with social identity. Mead's theoretical perspective is typically interpreted as behavioral and cognitive. Yet more recently available writings such as his unpublished book manuscript also deal with emotional dynamics (Deegan, 2001, pp. xii-xiii). In later lectures, Mead developed the metaphor of fusion and suggested how it contributes

49

to understanding emotion within the interaction order, especially in extreme actions at both individual and social levels. In that same period preceding World War I, Mead recognized the power of fusion in reflections on war and internationalism. In a 1914-1915 essay, "psychological bases of internationalism", that is both reflective and applied, he observes that the war in Europe led to "the *fusing* of people and peoples into self-conscious nations" (in Petras, 1968, p. 151, italics added). Referring to empirical sources such as letters and everyday incidents, Mead thinks of this fusion as a kind of spiritual experience—but one that generates contradictory moral outcomes, and thus calls for pragmatic reconstruction. A spectator may think that such a fused self is a saint or martyr "sacrificing himself for others" and thus losing self, whereas the fused actor believes that he or she is not losing self but "is realizing the meaning of his identity with his whole group"—losing one's physical body but gaining a larger self (Mead, 1914-1915, in Petras, 1968, p. 151). Such altruistic self sacrifice *for* the group, however, may combine with hatred *against* the enemy as the spiritual emotion enlarging self also motivates violence against others. Mead suggests the two-edged sword of fusion as explored below.

As a metaphor, fusion provides a provocative interpretive tool for understanding the power of affect in Mead's reflections on self and society. His interpretive use of the nominal and verbal cognates of "fuse" provides a paradigm of analogies for addressing his lifelong issue, analogies applied to religion, neighborliness, teamwork, physical tasks, aesthetics, and warfare. For example, Mead (1934, p. 275, italics added) states that in neighborly kindness, there is "*fusion* of the 'I' and the 'me'" so that one is motivated to replicate the generosity practiced by others, and so we find that "exaltation in the case of patriotism presents an analogous instance of this *fusion*". Fusion fuels actions of kindness *and* of warfare! The force arises from a fusion of the I and the Me dialectics of self so that only Me moves self to action.

With a striking adjective, assuming student notes got it literally, Mead adds that from an "emotional standpoint such situations are peculiarly *preciou*s" and they involve "the successful completion of the social process" (Ibid., italics added; see Huebner's recording of student notes from 1928 used to construct this text, 2015, pp. 470-473). Mead describes an "engineer" who takes the attitude of everyone and everything else in teamwork, thus extending fusion from interaction with selves to interaction with physical objects (Ibid., p. 277). He characterizes the processes as analogous in the sense that both social and physical actions are responses to objects that function as "me's" which then fuse with "I" and motivate coordinated lines of action (Ibid., p. 279). Finally, he extends the analogy to aesthetic experience such as the "exaltation of music" resulting from "the fusion of the 'I' and the 'me'" (Ibid., p. 280, likely stimulated by a student's question about music: Heubner, 2015, p. 472).

Similarly, in a discussion of conflicts from his theoretical understanding of universal impulses toward cooperation and/or antagonism, Mead states that an economic market system fuses the cooperative with the antagonistic, somewhat similar to the fusion in a group of individuals who fashion a baseball team by subordinating their rivalries in cooperating to win the game. So too, facing an external danger to the

50

group, individual members fuse both with each other and with their group identity against the threat. The fusion motivates them to act out both their cooperative impulses toward each other and their antagonistic impulses against the enemy. The power of patriotic appeals in warfare arises from the fused unity both of each self's I and Me, and of all members' selves against a common enemy (Mead, 1934, pp. 305-306). This double fusion provides profoundly powerful motivation that may be fanned by political leaders to engineer wars and prosecute dissenters as traitors. Indeed, "When ... individual existence is sacrificed for the sake of the community ... social fusion is complete and absolute" (Silva, 2008, p. 178).

In summary, Mead's fusion analogies include the following:

Epistemological fusion of image with percept and states of consciousness (cf., Mead, 1999, pp. 90-91; Reck, 1964, p. 29); Actional fusion of means with ends and of social and/or physical objects realized in actions, e.g., an engineer dealing with persons and things (Mead, 1934, p. 277, p. 279, p. 281); Interactional fusion of biological individual with self (Mead, 1934, pp. 373-374). Fusion of selves' I's and Me's into solidary group (Mead, 1934, p. 273ff); Social fusion of self with groups as in "precious" moments of patriotism, religion, and teamwork (Mead, 1934, p. 273ff).

Within the interaction order, then, fusion transforms behavior by a biological individual into cognitively grasped and emotionally felt social action. Fusion generates motivation for both individual actions and the fitting together of lines of interaction into large-scale organizational and collective actions by overriding individual concerns. In violent conflict, for example, the community's good becomes the "supreme good of the individual"—an affective, motivational, and moral fusion (Mead, quoted in Campbell, 1995, p. 64; cf., Campbell, 2013). Though not known as a conflict theorist, Mead highlights "this cohesive power, which the hostile impulse in human nature exercises with such absolute authority" and that lies behind the "spiritual exaltation of wartime patriotism" (in Reck, 1964, p. 356).

3. Fusion beyond Mead

Other social thinkers used fusion as a partial grounding for an interactional social psychology. Although I do not find explicit theoretical developments, there are suggestive uses of fusion early within the interactionist tradition. For example, Charles H. Cooley grounded the potential of fusion as a theoretical metaphor in his seminal statement on "primary group":

"By primary groups I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. They are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain *fusion* of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. ... It is a "we"; it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which "we" is the natural expression. One lives in the feeling of the whole and finds the chief aims of his will in that feeling" (Cooley, 1909/1967, p. 23, emphasis added).

Intimate interaction, in Cooley's view, generates identities informed by "we" feelings that fill a self with a purpose greater than that of an individual life so that self's own will emerges from the internalized "feeling of the whole". This quote pinpoints the power of fusion informing social relationships and providing emotional glue that bonds members with each other and with the group. Fusion is an affective force informing primary groups and emotionally relating the structural identities posited in Goffman's interaction order.

Similarly, in 1902-1903 lectures on "Moral Education", Emile Durkheim wrote that "society ... is outside us and envelops us, but it is also in us and is everywhere an aspect of our nature. We are *fused* with it" (1925/1973, p. 71, italics added). Durkheim grounds education as a learning community formed by fusion in words that echo Cooley's primary group: "there is pleasure in saying 'we', rather than 'I', because anyone in a position to say 'we' feels behind him a ... *force* that is much more intense than that upon which isolated individuals can rely". This force follows from a "*fusion*, this joining of minds in a common consciousness" (1925/1973, p. 240, italics added). In effective education, students become an emerging community akin to a primary group in which individuals experience a group reality providing an inclusive worldview and transcendent morality for which individuals may sacrifice their personal ways of thinking.

More recently, Charles Taylor informs contemporary philosophical reflection with classical sociological themes. For instance, in wide-ranging interpretations of today's "secular age", he uses the metaphor of fusion to interpret socio-cultural shifts. Concerning sport and festival, he writes, "there is heightened excitement at these moments of *fusion*, reminiscent of Carnival". Excitement from fusion reproduces an experience analogous to Durkheimian primitive rituals that generate a "collective effervescence as founding moments of society and the sacred" (Taylor, 2007, p. 482, italics added). Fusion liberates exultation and transcendence from the everyday lifeworld. Besides liberating self from routine humdrum, fusion may instill a sense of awe, fascination, and tremendous power akin to a moment of sacred transcendence.

Taylor goes on to state that this collective experience is "not so much an action, as an emotion, a powerful common feeling. What is happening is that we are ... sensing ourselves as *fused* in our contact with something greater ... whose power to move us has been immensely magnified by the *fusion*" (2007, p. 482, italics added). "This brings us back into the category of the 'festive' ... moments of *fusion* in a common action/feeling, which both wrench us out of the everyday, and seem to put us in touch with something exceptional, beyond our-selves" (Ibid., pp. 482-483, italics added). He thinks that these collective experiences suggest "new forms of religion in our world" (Ibid., p. 483). From fused experiences emerge new religious possibilities. From a Durkheimian perspective, such a religious experience is more than ritual or belief, it is fusion force wielding divine, aka social, power.

Taylor characterizes a typical contemporary self as culturally "buffered", that is, relatively closed to religious forces and living in a disenchanted cosmos. By contrast, an enchanted porous self at times realizes a state of divine possession by and "partial fusion with, a spirit or God" which is a fact of

52

"*experience*, not a matter of 'theory' or 'belief'" (2007, p. 39, his italics). This type of self reflects developments such as the French Revolution which sought "a virtue which consists in the *fusion* of self-love and love of country" realized in the people's "general will" in that selves are "maximally present ... to each other when our wills *fuse* into one" (Ibid, p. 204, italics added). These self dynamics continued into some forms of Communism as a "politics of virtue, as the *fusion* of individual and general, and ... even quasi-religious in tone" (Ibid, p. 207, italics added). I extend his analysis and suggest below that this type of fusion may motivate contemporary terrorists as a mode of religiously informed virtuous action.

Like Taylor, Mead earlier saw that fusion may be a force for both constructive and destructive interaction. It over-rides the I and Me dialectic of self, and generates an affect-laden submersion of Self Identity into Group Identity. This submersion is not merely cognitive acceptance of a larger social reality but affective engulfment, so that self becomes motivated to act with the power of the group. Affective fusion leads to loss of individual-self-as-motive and to emergence of group-self-as-motive. Pragmatically, this dynamic is to be evaluated in terms of interactional outcomes. Mead reasons that emotional fusion in war needs to be transformed into pragmatic functional fusion (cf., Silva, 2008, pp. 177-178).

4. Fusion Unchained

Mead suggests that fusion of individual and social identities typically diminishes critical reflexivity and self authenticity. Indeed, within social identity, even self's biography may merge with a group's history. Eviatar Zerubavel writes that the "existential *fusion* of one's own biography with the history of the groups or communities to which one belongs is an indispensable part of one's unmistakably social identity" and functions as a "sociobiographical memory" that generates pride, pain, or shame even for events that occurred long before we were alive or joined the group (1997, p. 91, italics added). Fused identities extend self-as-identified before and beyond one's physical lifetime.

Self's biography acquires an extended past by merging with a group's history and may acquire a projected future through religion's promise. This merger forms a temporally extended self through belief in a grounding narrative. Kenneth Gergen interprets Armenian terrorists' actions as "carrying out the implications of a culturally shared narrative" and trying "to live out one's life course nested within the broader history of one's people". These narratives may include virtue stories of "courage, martyrdom, and the pursuit of justice" (1994, p. 204; I take "nested" as cognate to fused).

Such fused identities, then, assume a group identity, group definition, group goals, group authority, group pasts and promised futures, and group ideology as the "master" identity of self. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann theorized about identity merging in their treatment of reification, or "thing-making", in the social construction of reality: "identity itself (the total self, if one prefers) may be reified ... a total identification of the individual and his socially assigned typifications. He is apprehended as *nothing but* that type" (1966, p. 84, their italics). The group's mindset becomes the self's mindset

53

originating from and guided by the leader who re-presents the group (Hudson, 1999, p. 98). The locus of control is in the leader's word informing the follower's thought. Almost literally, fusion transforms the interpreting mind of the group into the experienced mind of the self. Fusion transmogrifies George H. Mead's pragmatic "social mind" and inclusive generalized other into an exclusive emotional group self or "ersatz mind" that merges the two identities that Goffman locates at the heart of the interaction order.

In his Chapter on "community without fusion", the pragmatist philosopher James Campbell (1995) interprets fusion as a disturbing construct in pragmatist thought, including Mead's. Campbell further recognizes that Mead's framework offers a way out of dysfunctional fused identity dynamics via the reflexive capability of self. The possibility of balancing social fusion and personal moral life arises from a dialectical understanding of self. Mead is not advocating fusion of I and Me, and "complete identification of individuals" as the desired moral condition of pragmatic action, but he does note its existence and power, even "precious" power, temporarily to liberate self from humdrum everyday meanings and to experience transformative "exaltation" (Mead, 1934, p. 274). Likewise, Campbell affirms that, in tense hostile situations, a "powerful sense of oneness" is an "immensely pleasurable" experience. He cautions that we recognize there is a "great danger here" (1995, p. 57).

Campbell finds that the danger arises from the emotional source of fusion, since "we *feel* ourselves superior" to others and act accordingly (1995, p. 66, his italics). Then, in a post-feeling state, "we search for rationalizations for our hostile response" through the powerful mechanism of oppositional dualities: being a believer makes other an infidel; a patriot makes an enemy; our good acts and motives make theirs bad, even if the acts are similar, such as exploding a bomb killing citizens in a city (see LeShane, 2002, for a summary of oppositional reductionism in wartime myth and rhetoric). In a later reflection, Campbell notes that fusion generates mistakes in the contemporary international situation. Fused nationalistic selves confront fused religious selves and the "emotional core of the one feeds the emotional core of the other" (Campbell, 2013, p. xvi).

5. Fused Identities Inform Sacred Violence

Religion may provides oppositional narratives that fuse identities at once cosmic, mythic, and sacred (Juergensmeyer, 2008). Paradoxically, as we saw, a religious fusion can transform the loss of a physical this-worldly self into a fulfilled other-worldly self. Following a pragmatist critique of emotional fusion as a loss of minded self, consider how body-destroying but self-fulfilling terrorist acts lead to a reconsideration of Goffman's claim that today's urban democratic society renders self one of the last dramaturgical experiences of the sacred for moderns whose transcendent gods are dead. Fusion resurrects self and group versions of those gods as motivation for violence.

One analyst of terrorist psychology finds that "Once recruited, there is a clear *fusing* of individual identity and group identity, particularly among the more radical elements of each organization" (Post, 2005, p. 64, italics added). Social psychological consequences of such fusion include making the

struggle "more personal" and legitimating violent action even as it given "absolution, or loss of responsibility, to the individual" (Ibid., p. 66). In an interactionist dialectic of altercasting through which my goodness warrants your badness, "*fusion* with the group seems to provide the necessary justification for their actions" and at the same time, "individual and group *fusion* (perceives) 'the enemy' ... (as) anyone who is opposed to their worldview" (Post, 2005, p. 66, italics added).

For terrorists defined as suicide bombers or hero martyrs, identity fusion adds "ultimacy" and "certitude" to other features of identity such as salience, commitment, and locus of control. A national review of terrorists' worldviews comments that "religious" groups or millennial cults are among the most motivated, dangerous, unlikely to negotiate or compromise, and likely to use weapons of mass destruction (Hudson, 1999, pp. 6-7). Strongly affective religious identities activate group values and render them salient in selves' motivations. In a comparative historical study, Moral Purity and Persecution in History, Barrington Moore (2000) finds that sacred violence is characteristic of movements and institutions realizing dichotomous cultural modes of "pollution" that separate those who are "pure" from others who are "unclean". He concludes that the three global monotheistic religions gave rise to strong forms of moral purity that separate "us" from "them". He notes that historical case studies show continuity with contemporary violence against the impure even in cultural domains where it was not previously strong (Moore, 2000, p. 128).

Literal monotheism is a primary analogue incorporating the logic of exclusionary oppositional dualities in the formation of personal and social identities. If there is but One True God Whom only we know by Name, anyone who worships another God or a variant of that One True God is by that fact godless, idolatrous, erroneous, and morally impure. A combination of oppositional dualities with a claim to absolute truth that requires strict obedience in a holy war sometimes places fused religious identities in the service of immoral actions (Kimball, 2002). The sacredness of the motive redefines the morality of the act so that massacring non-combatants, even children, is not immoral—it is God's will.

Hypothetically, fusion generates great power for identities fashioned in monotheistic religions with narratives of eliminative exclusion: our god is real, yours is an idol. In her interviews of selected warrior terrorists, Jessica Stern (2003, pp. 280-281) notes that "It is part of the human condition to lack certainty about our identities; the desire to see ourselves in opposition to some Other is appealing". ... As a result of my interviews, I have come to see that apocalyptic violence intended to "cleanse' the world of "impurities" can create a transcendent state. All the terrorist groups examined in this book believe—or at least started out believing—that they are creating a more perfect world. ... When I began this project, I could not understand why the killers I met seemed spiritually intoxicated ... all of them describe themselves as responding to a spiritual calling, and many report a kind of spiritual high ... related to its fulfillment. In short, Stern concludes that religious terrorists seek to fashion a better society, to transform themselves, and to achieve a worthier life after feeling culturally humiliated and personally debased. Selves are resurrected as so powerful in fused cosmic religious narratives that an urban democratic self-as-god is replaced by a fulfilled cosmic martyr confronting a satanized enemy.

Studying the interface between the interaction order and public order furthers understanding of emotion-as-motivation and illuminates fusion in other situations. In his comparative cultural study of contemporary religious violence, Mark Juergensmeyer distills the following features of the "cosmic struggle" which believers are fighting in this world: "1) *The struggle is perceived as a defense of basic identity and dignity...* 2) *Losing the struggle would be unthinkable...* 3) *The struggle is blocked and cannot be won in real time or in real terms*" (2000, pp. 161-162, his italics). Such cosmic violence becomes legitimate in the minds of believers, "… when religion becomes *fused* with violent expressions of social aspirations, personal pride, and movements for political change" (Juergensmeyer, 2000, p. 10, italics added). In this religious transformation of social conflict into sacred struggle, the conflict becomes cosmic; enemies are "satanized"; and believers are martyrs (Ibid., p. 13). These observations fit the paradigm of "five beliefs" at individual and group levels that inform the identities of persons and groups oriented toward violence to protect their purity and destiny (Eidelson & Judy, 2003; Deegan, 1999).

Such fused identities of self and other are not merely opposed, they are religiously and morally incompatible, mutually eliminative, and sacredly cosmic (an embodiment of Peter Berger's definition of religion as "sacred cosmization", 1967; and see Tayler, 2007, p. 792, italics added, quoting Robert Bellah about the power of tribal and archaic religious narratives that "are 'cosmological', in that supernature, nature and society were all *fused* in a single cosmos", his italics). As a believer in a fused cosmos, a religious self is the primary analog of a cosmic actor who aligns self not only with the meanings of the cosmos in a scientific understanding, but with the meanings that issue from Divinity Itself in the eternal presence of Whom there is no worldly alternative—a final analog of a fused self.

6. Morality in Interaction Order and Public Terrorism

Terrorism demonstrates how fusion of identities, particularly totalized religious-based fusion, overcomes the dialectical relationship between the two identities that grounds Goffman's thesis that the "moral character" informing self's appearances in the interaction order makes public order possible. This moral character makes ethical demands on interaction: 1) self has a duty that obligates self to be who self appears to be; 2) self has a right to expect others to treat self as who self appears to be; and 3) self "implicitly forgoes all claims to be things he does not appear to be" (1959, p. 13)—precisely the moral imperative that identity-fused terrorists violate. In general, any appearance that violates the moral assumption underwriting the interaction order threatens public order as well.

The moral force of the interaction order underwrites the reproduction of public order. Pragmatically, everyone must make the moral assumption that appearances reflect who one is and how one will act as self enters public space shared with apparent but unknown others. As Goffman reports, trust in the moral presentation of apparent identities makes identity validation and business at hand possible. In short, "to accept the conventions ... as given ... is, *in effect*, to put trust in those about one. Not doing so, one could hardly ... have any business at hand" (1983, p. 6, his italics). Almost fifty years ago, Goffman

noted increasing "vulnerability of public life" in part because moderns are increasingly aware of the "intricacies of mutual trust presupposed in public order" (1971, p. 331). It is precisely the "mutual trust" that is put at risk and even violated in explosive actions motivated by terrorists' emotional fusion with hidden group identities. As noted, Jessica Stern (2003) characterized some of the terrorists she interviewed as "intoxicated with religion". I take this description as a version of fused identities' power to override Goffman's mutually supportive interactional and public orders that warrant peaceful identity exchanges and cooperative lines of action among strangers.

Given a pluralistic society or even a two-category society (Catholic-Protestant, Shia-Sunni, Muslim-Jew, Christian-Hindu, etc.), emotional fusion may motivate destroying rather than re-producing public order. Public order is based on trust that those in each other's presence will abide by the moral assumptions underlying the interaction order and allow others safely to share that public space.

Analyses of the interface between interaction order and other social orders are a critical interpretive task. An increasing interactional paradox informs public order: as contemporaries become more aware of risks in shared space, so too does the need grow for functional trust that goes beyond empirical indicators. In short, this social paradox arises from "the inevitable nature of appearing as if nothing is up that one is appearing exactly as one would were one trying to conceal a source of threat" (Goffman, 1971, p. 327). And social contagion bleeds threats within the interaction order into the public order. Public safety lies in normalized and functional inferences about those who circulate in that shared space (see Weigert, 2003, partly summarized above).

7. Functional Fusion

Mead reasons that emotional fusion motivating collective violence must give way to "functional fusion" as competitive societies learn to work together to reconstruct approaches to shared issues in rational and cooperative interaction (see Campbell, 1992, p. 23ff). Pluralistic societies in an increasingly globalized world must generate rational cooperation by intelligent methods to replace inter-societal violence motivated by fusing individual citizens with a social identity dialectically opposed to other social identities. In modern societies, functional fusion must replace emotional fusion that drives patriotic citizenry toward war (Campbell, 1995). The analogy moves from affective motivation to rational pragmatic reconstruction of common concerns about living together. Functional fusion informs cosmopolitan selves in a pluralistic world.

In a study of prison chaplains, for example, Allison Hicks used "role fusion" to interpret how religiously identified chaplains were able to align self and institutional identities. Tactical role fusion allowed them to function both as chaplains for inmates and as team mates with prison staffers. Dynamics of role and identity fusion lessened role strain between their self understanding as chaplains and their interaction with prisoners governed by prison rules. As Hicks notes, "fusing rehabilitation and custody" roles aligned the self identities of the chaplains with their prison identities, so that chaplains

57

and prison staff were now "on the same team" (2008, p. 413). The chaplains functionally "maintained their religious idealism by fusing it with the correctional dimension of their role" thus affirming "their salient identities while decreasing role strain" (2008, p. 417)—a process enacted on a louder frequency by so-labeled "terrorists" who subjectively enact a "hero-martyr" identity by fusing religious and warrior identities.

Interpreting the power of emotional forces via the metaphor of fusion illuminates a major dynamic linking interaction order and public order. Goffman's naturalistic approach for studying the interaction order makes scientific sense and furthers our understanding of public order. Contrary to his "bleat", however, in which he asserts that no normative perspective is permissible within a sociological perspective, a Meadian pragmatic stance includes interpretations informing interaction aimed at ameliorating shared issues and reconstructing larger self identities and more inclusive societies. A moral impetus informs Meadian pragmatic analyses of interaction order that underwrites public order, an imperative requirement in a world of strangers sharing the global commons that is our interactional space.

Recall that a self-defined radical "terrorist" whose individual identity fuses with a group identity feels the struggle as profoundly personal. And in a typical interactional dialectic, the more personally fused the struggle, the more extreme the characterization of the enemy-as-satanized (Juergensmeyer, 2000; Post, 2005). The affective fusion of a terrorist motivates actions similar to those of a citizen motivated to fight in conventional warfare, though in a different institutionalized context and on a far higher key intoning that fused identity even to suicidal action.

8. Conclusion: Self Managing Fusion

Mead states that fused individuals "enjoy a new spiritual experience" that may motivate violent conflict in defense of collective symbols and common life. Here lies the "pathos" of fused selves. He goes on to insist that "there is only one solution ... and that is in finding the intelligible common objects" of industry, commerce, literature, art, science and politics that at first divide societies and elicit defensive reactions but which are amenable to cooperative interaction. Pragmatically, "the rational attitude is to find what common values lie back of the divisions..." so that "(d)ifference of function takes the place of hostility of interest" (in Reck, 1964, p. 365). Campbell re-emphasizes this call in quotes from Mead calling for "being a nation by means of rational self-consciousness" (2013, p. vii).

Mead repeatedly seeks a "functional fusion" of reasonable cooperation in shared issues to replace the emotional fusion of irrational adherence to an oppositional identity merged with my group's identity in a deadly conflict with your identity and your group. Emotionally fused selves fire the weapons of war for competing zero-sum goods; functionally fused selves shoulder the workings for common goods somehow shared by all. Thus he explicitly speaks of "international mindedness" as employing "mind" theorized in the interactionist tradition, that is, rooted in emerging lines of interaction to resolve shared issues in the unending process of forming more inclusive societies, and larger cooperating selves to

58

people them (see Aboulafia, 2001, for a "cosmopolitan" take on Mead's international mindedness). International mindedness emphasizes Mead's notion of "minded action" as that which moves toward functional rationality—the methods of pragmatic cooperation and social melioration. Speaking of an "international mindedness" that could transform interpretations of dynamics leading to World War I, Mead writes, "We must *think* ourselves in terms of the great community to which we belong", and not follow fused feelings (in Reck, 1964, p. 363, his italics). He succinctly adds, "Instead of depending upon a national soul we must achieve national-mindedness". National mindedness is inherently international mindedness, give contemporary conditions.

A self, then, "who has achieved an economic, a legal, or any type of social triumph does not feel the impulse to physically annihilate his opponent. ... The moral of this is ... that advance takes place in bringing to consciousness the larger social whole within which hostile attitudes pass over into self-assertions that are functional instead of destructive" (in Reck, 1964, pp. 216-217).   This reflection echoes Stern's call to make a new purification project for terrorists by focusing on aspects and necessities of the humanity we all share rather than emphasizing differences that provide "a seemingly clear (but false) identity" (2003, p. 280). Mead (in Reck, 1964, p. 365, p. 366) repeatedly urges a rational pragmatic shift in which "Difference of function takes the place of hostility of interest". He asserts that the "moral equivalent of war is found in the intelligence and the will both to discover these common interests between contending nations and make them the basis for ... the common life which they will make possible".

Let functional fusion dynamics bloom within this pragmatic matrix and not be eliminated, though they must be subordinated to interaction in the service of more encompassing common goods. Imperialistic societies and fundamentalist ideologies that block such changes will block necessary cooperation. So the search continues for universally inclusive goods that motivate inclusive pragmatic impulses enabling pluralistic cooperation to address emergent issues. First, subordinate deceptive fusion within the interaction order to safeguard the moral foundation that self will act as who self appears to be, so that public order allows strangers to interact in public space. Then, as Mead proposes, selves move from the early stages of precious but emotional fusion into rational and functional fusion that allows strangers to address inclusive common goals through cooperative lines of action—a classic pragmatist theme.

Revisiting Mead's pragmatic roots enriches our understanding of mindful interaction as a gateway to perennial issues of self in relation to other selves and to society. And this discussion adds to Huebner's (2014) thesis that Mead's interpretive force continues to evolve through academic reconstruction of his writings. Campbell recapitulates this theme with summary references to the danger of self-nation fusion (2013, pp. xi-xx, and 2013a, pp. 21-35) and for Mead's famous references to how many different Caesars have crossed the Rubicon in his brief introduction and contribution to a conference on Mead held in Poland, 2011. Analogous with Mead's historization of different Caesars crossing the Rubicon, we get to recognize different Meads continually informing scholarly discourse (cf., Joas, 2015).

References

Aboulafia, M. (2001). *The Cosmopolitan Self*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Appendix: The Sources of Mind, Self and Society. (2015). In *George H. Mead, Mind, Self and Society: The Definitive Edition* (pp. 391-487). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Berger, P. L. (1967). *The Sacred Canopy*. New York: Doubleday.

Berger, P. L., & Thomas, L. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Doubleday.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbol Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Campbell, J. (1992). *The Community Reconstructs*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Community without fusion: Dewey, Mead, Tufts. (1995). In R. Hollinger, & D. Depew (Eds.), *Pragmatism From Progressivism to Postmodernism* (pp. 56-71). Westport: Praeger.

Cooley, C. H. (1909/1967). *Social Organization*. New York: Schocken Books.

Decker, K. S. (2008). The evolution of the psychical element in George Herbert Mead at the University of Chicago Lecture notes by H. Heath Bawden 1899-1900. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, *44*(5), 469-479.

Deegan, M. Jo. (2001). Introduction: George Herbert Mead's First Book. In M. Jo Deegan (Ed.), *Essays in Social Psychology by George Herbert Mead* (pp. xi-xliv). New Brunswick: Transaction Pubs.

Deegan, M. Jo. (Ed.). (1999). *Play, School, and Society*. New York: Peter Lang.

Dewey, J. (1931). George Herbert Mead. *Journal of Philosophy*, *28*(12), 309-314.

Durkheim, E. (1925/1973). *Moral Education*. New York: The Free Press.

Eidelson, R. J., & Judy, I. E. (2003). Dangerous ideas: Five beliefs that propel groups toward conflict. *American Psychologist*, *58*(3), 182-192.

Gergen, K. J. (1994). *Realities and Relationships*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Global Rebellion. (2008). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books.

Hicks, A. M. (2008). Role fusion: The occupational socialization of prison chaplains. *Symbolic Interaction*, *31*(4), 400-421.

Hudson, R. A. et al. (1999). *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why: The 1999 Government Report on Profiling Terrorists*. Guilford: Lyons Press.

Huebner, D. R. (2014). *Becoming Mead: The Social Process of Academic Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Interaction Ritual. (1967). Garden City: Anchor Books.

Introduction: George Herbert Mead and the Chicago School of Pragmatism. (2013). In F. T. Burke, & P. S. Krzysztof (Eds.), *George Herbert Mead in the Twenty-first Century* (pp. xi-xx). Lanham: Lexington Books.

Joas, H. (2015). Foreword. In *George H. Mead, Mind, Self, and Society: The Definitive Edition* (pp. ix-xii). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Juergensmeyer, M. (2000). *Terror in the Mind of God*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kimball, C. (2002). *When Religion Becomes Evil*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.

LeShan, L. (2003). Why we love war. *Utne*, *Jan.-Feb.*, 53-58.

McCall, G. J. (2003). Interaction. In L. T. Reynolds, & N. J. Herman-Kinney (Eds.), *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism* (pp. 327-348). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mead's understanding of movements of thought. (2013a). In F. T. Burke, & P. S. Krzysztof (Eds.), *George Herbert Mead in the Twenty-first Century* (pp. 21-35). Lanham: Lexington Books.

Mind, Self, and Society: The Definitive Edition. (2015). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Moore, Jr. B. (2000). *Moral Purity and Persecution in History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Petras, J. W. (1968). *George Herbert Mead: Essays on His Social Philosophy*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Post, J. M. (2005). The socio-cultural underpinnings of terrorist psychology. In T. Bjorgo (Ed.), *Root Causes of Terrorism* (pp. 54-69). New York: Routledge.

Reck, A. J. (Ed.). (1964). *Selected Writings: George Herbert Mead*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co.

Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order. (1971). New York: Basic Books.

Sahni, I.-P. (2012). More than a façade: Somatic and structural determinants in Erving Goffman's theory of the perduring self. *Symbolic Interaction*, *35*(2), 162-185.

Silva, F. C. da. (2008). *Mead and Modernity*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Stern, J. (2003). *Terror in the Name of God*. New York: HarperCollins.

Taylor, C. (2007). *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

The interaction order. (1983). *American Sociological Review*, *48*(Feb.), 1-17.

Weigert, A. J. (2003). Terrorism, identity, and public order: A perspective from Goffman. *Identity*, *3*(2), 93-113.

Zerubavel, E. (1997). *Social Mindscapes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.