

1967

Full Issue

University of New Mexico Press

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq>

Recommended Citation

University of New Mexico Press. "Full Issue." *New Mexico Quarterly* 37, 4 (1967). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol37/iss4/1>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the University of New Mexico Press at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Mexico Quarterly by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.



NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY

WINTER
1968

VIOLENCE



NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY

WIDEN WIDEN

in Contemporary Society

Edited by JOSEPH FRANK

MANAGING EDITOR, Mary Adams. COVER DESIGN, Frank Mahood.

Opinions expressed or implied by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or of the University of New Mexico. All manuscripts solicited by the editors.

© 1968 THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PRESS

SUBSCRIPTIONS: one year, \$5; two years, \$9; three years, \$12. Single copy, \$1.50; back issues prior to Volume XXX, \$2; back issues from Volume XXX through Volume XXXVII, \$1.75. Foreign same as domestic.

ADDRESS: New Mexico Quarterly, The University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106, U.S.A.

Published quarterly. Composed, printed and bound in the United States of America at the University of New Mexico Printing Plant. Entered as second-class postage paid at Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY, VOLUME XXXVII, No. 4, WINTER 1968

CONTENTS

Articles

INTRODUCTION: OVERTURE FOR VIOLENCE. Joseph Frank.	293
THE KNOWLEDGE OF VIOLENCE. R. J. Kaufmann.	302
VIOLENCE IN THE GHETTOS: A CONSENSUS OF ATTITUDES. Joseph Boskin.	317
PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF URBAN VIOLENCE. Judd Marmor.	335
REFLECTIONS ON THE ALIANZA. Peter Nabokov.	343
OBSCENITY, PROTEST AND WAR. William Hamilton.	363
THE MESSAGE. William Eastlake.	368
VIOLENCE AND THE CREATIVE ACT. Donald L. Weismann.	372
ART AMONG THE LETTER WRITERS. Clinton Adams.	377
VIOLENCE IN THE MODERN THEATER: NOTES ON THE NEW SENECAISM. Morris Freedman.	386

Fiction

DEAD DOG. Tom Mayer.	357
----------------------	-----

Poetry

"FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD . . ." Robert Creeley.	395
---	-----

CONTRIBUTORS.	397
INDEX to VOLUME XXXVII.	399

Joseph Frank

Introduction: Overture for Violence

LOOKING OUT OF MY OFFICE WINDOW on this late afternoon I can see the mountains turn from brown to pink. Gently, compellingly they invite a long look. But not too long a look. Below one peak a row of stakes, hard and angular in the setting sun, repel the eye. They mark the pit in which part of our nuclear arsenal is said to be stored. Beneath these mountains, the home of Sandia and Folsom Man, ticks the modern mechanism.

One can do much with the phallic or aesthetic symbolism of this scene; I prefer to look at its cultural meaning for the world of 1968. Beneath the rosy glitter of our ostensibly affluent society ticks the bomb. The mountain can erupt at any moment. Rivulets of lava already scar the landscape, and the ground is steaming.

For the past two decades the bomb, and the violence of which it is a dramatic symbol, has saturated all channels of communication, both serious and frivolous. Recently such magazines as *Esquire* and *Look* have analyzed—with lurid photographs—violence in contemporary society. This issue of *New Mexico Quarterly* contains no pictures, nor does it come up with a solution to the problem of modern violence. But it does try, through a variety of approaches, to probe beneath the surface, to record the seismic rumblings. It is the purpose of this Introduction to suggest that these rumblings are both a warning and a challenge. The analytic and creative articles which follow at once amplify and specify this warning, this challenge.

Violence is not a new phenomenon. Imagine an issue of the *Quarterly* on the subject of violence published on clay tablets at a nearby pueblo 2,000 years ago. Or push back the invention of television to the time when man climbed out of the trees and tried to walk upright. A psychological thriller of that remote time would show the horror of leaving the security of the trees for a ground where sabre-toothed tigers prowled and mastadons ranged, the dislocation of exchanging the un-

examined security of a leafy world for a cosmos alive with frightening animistic forces. Millennia later, on location in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, a documentary would portray the recurrent struggles and Freudian sacrifices of shifting from an agrarian culture to the ritualized and competitive frenzy of embryonic urbanization: the ur-Ur.

The program possibilities from recorded history are continuous and endless: serials on the adventures of Moses or David; a spectacular named Marathon; weekly Roman westerns or Crusader easterns; medieval domestic comedy punctuated with violated chastity belts, flagellation, bloody tournaments, dances of death; and the plague, either as medical series or as moral-uplift sermons. In fact, it is not necessary to postulate an ancient CBS or NBC. The art objects of the past which survive, from Sumerian shards to Renaissance tapestries, show that every age has been both torn and fascinated by the human propensity for violence.

Having studied the subliterate of the mid-seventeenth century, I know that when journalism was in its infancy the English weeklies were full of violence: war, dirty diplomacy, natural disasters, political imprecation, crime. Though the ingredients of violence were the same as now, the reporting of them was less full and sensational. Even the carefully staged beheading of Charles I in 1649, one of the most dramatic stories in English history, was reported in most papers in a matter-of-fact style. In the case of a less national crime, a London journalist managed to tell in a few casual words how a jealous wife in Kent cut out her rival's vulva and served it to her unfaithful husband. But violence, even if toned down by the intermittently heavy hand of the censor, saturates the early press.

It is probable that from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, as the world's population increased and industrialization mushroomed, the amount of violence—inner and outer, private and public—increased proportionately. I suspect, however, that if the world's total of violence could be measured and then divided by the number of people alive at that moment, the individual share of violence would remain fairly constant. Certainly, though this is no proof, the fairy tales and nursery rhymes that have always amused and bemused the human race have remained constant in their gore: the persecuted patient sufferer of ancient India and Mesopotamia persists in the Job-like figure of Charlie Brown; Li'l Abner is the Samson of Judges; Cinderella, sometimes made masculine as in Beowulf and Tannhauser, is today's star of countless comic books, movies, TV dramas, and slick-

paper stories—and the happy ending is almost always the sudden and incongruous climax to prolonged vicissitudes.

And yet—granted that violence has always been with us and even that the quantity of violence has remained constant both in the amount per individual and in its appeal—violence in contemporary society is different. To examine why this is true is a major purpose of this winter issue. But a necessary preliminary is to ask what we mean by “violence.” In the articles that follow, the definitions vary both implicitly and explicitly. In general, however, the word designates those external acts, individual and collective, which are obviously and directly destructive; and those inner states which are obviously and directly internecine.

The most evident distinction between immediate now and remote then is our creation of weapons that can quickly wipe out the human race: weapons that a few violent men, regardless of their benign expressions, allegedly rational purposes, and well-tailored respectability, can unleash—with or without the aid of totally nonviolent computers. Even the Thirty Years’ War, during which the population of the Germanic countries was reduced by two-thirds, becomes pallid and peaceful compared to what World War III would produce. This change, moreover, has been a quick one. Shaw’s *Heartbreak House*, a scathing portrayal of the cultured European establishment on the eve of World War I, ends with the most amiable male character turning on the lights of the country house so that German bombers will see it. He is supported by his wife’s “I hope they’ll come again tomorrow night,” and, in the play’s last line, by the heroine’s “Oh, I hope so.” Today such a curtain speech would sound suicidal and psychotic; forty years ago it seemed abrasive and challenging. In the past, Armageddon has always signified both an epilogue and a prologue. Now it means “The End.”

This is the major distinction between now and then, but there are others. Probably second in importance is the revolution in communication, in particular the rapid spread in the Western world of television. Even so, thirty-five hundred years ago probably at least as high a percentage of Minoans thrilled to the stylized bull dances as people today goggle at “Bonanza” and “Star Trek.” But I am not concerned here with what can loosely be called violence in art or in the reaction to art. At its best, art is both less and more than realistic. A movie like *Bonnie and Clyde* is enough of a work of art to make the sudden close-up of the shattered face of the policeman and the linger-

ing sequence of the perforated bodies of the protagonists both less and more than real. Yet we are not viewing a documentary. Instead we are aware of actors acting and directors directing; we are aware that we are sitting in a movie house; we are, in short, aware that we are looking at an artifact. The real impact of the television explosion, in terms of violence, does not lie in its shows but in its news. Many in the TV audience confuse the two—and even suspend their disbelief in watching both—but most viewers do make a distinction, no matter how hazy or unconscious.

And it is the news, often brilliantly photographed, then instantly flashed into our living rooms, that makes us increasingly immune to violence: not just to the violence of artifact but also to the violence of reality. A Viet Cong corpse loses its shock value when it is duplicated evening after evening. If we are to be kept glued to our TV sets maybe we need an ever headier diet: the close-up of gangrene, the mutilated prisoner, the child in flames. TV shows can become as heady as Hooper and Nielsen dictate. Not the news, unless we make it so—in both senses of the word “make.”

One function of the urban riots in the United States seems to have been to “make” news for its own sake. We have become bored, not indignant, with Vietnam. Even the devastating explosion of a Sicilian volcano leaves us indifferent, so that we react with a minor groan or resigned shrug. The reality of our world has not only been brought into our living rooms, but once there it has become as predictable, as taken for granted, as the TV set itself. Violence, even as it escalates, remains normal. To Jeremiah in living color we are now inclined to say, “So what?”

Third, and also a product of the technological revolution, is the wide dissemination of anaesthesia. It is possible for a prosperous American or European to go through life, from eased birth to tranquilized death, without consciously experiencing intense physical pain. Some dentists now administer a preliminary anaesthetic so the patient won't feel the needle which injects the deeper shot. One can die of cancer and still have the final pain suppressed.

Perhaps, insofar as we escape the experience of personal physical pain, we need a vicarious substitute. If so, the violence of art may have increased to meet this need, while the mounting violence of reality—if we are not physically involved—can serve the same function. Anthony West suggests in one of his novels that the history of the Western world would have been different if sturdy, cheap, comfort-

able shoes had been invented a long time ago. One wonders what different paths history might have taken, just as one wonders what would have happened to Carlyle's philosophy if he had had therapeutic digestive tablets. I am not advocating a periodic sock on the jaw or the wearing of a hairshirt or of shoes that hurt. But it is possible that the absence of physical pain in our own lives has subconsciously nourished our need to see pain in the lives of others.

A fourth major distinction between immediate now and remote *then* is the depersonalization and at the same time the growing violence of language. Examples of the former are endless: people are personnel, bombs and bullets are hardware, men no longer die but pass on—or become units in a body count. In the academic world the social sciences have become progressively more quantified—witness the development of econometrics, sociometrics, and soon historiometrics—with the result that the individual disappears into the anonymity of statistics. Even in the field of language itself, the scholar who was once a linguist has become a linguistcian, and current rumor suggests that he may evolve into a linguistcianist.

As for violence in language: there are very few four-letter words in the following pages. If there were, no reader acquainted with current literature would be shocked. Like the English "bloody," the four-letter words are rapidly declining into meaningless noises, and their use usually indicates an impoverished vocabulary.

If, then, the shocker no longer shocks, how do we describe violence to make it seem genuinely violent? Perhaps we can't. Perhaps both our means of and our response to verbal communication have become so meager that we need the real thing: the nonverbal TV screen bringing us its horrifying documentary message or, if we're lucky, the convenient automobile accident or mugging at which we can gawk in person.

Fifth and last in this speculative catalog is the disappearance of heaven and hell. This difference from the past, however, is more cumulative than abrupt. Heaven has always been hard to envision, and Dante's *Inferno* is a more vivid realm than his *Paradiso*. The Happy Hunting Ground of the American Indian and the Valhalla of the Vikings were merely masculine-oriented extensions of earthly life. And as painting and literature have long demonstrated, it is hard to imagine an eternity of happiness, of appropriate reward. Try it: an investment that always goes up, an infinity of martinis, an everlasting orgasm. Even in the Middle Ages and Renaissance one of the highest

rewards granted the blessed was the relish of watching the intricate and eternal sufferings of the damned.

But at least since the sixteenth century the idea of hell has also become steadily paler, despite all the hellfire-and-brimstone rhetoric with which moralists and evangelists have tried to keep it bright. At the apogee of Puritanism in Cromwellian England the devil was rapidly losing his claws, the inferno steadily becoming a metaphor rather than a reality. Paradoxical as it may sound, the hell of *Paradise Lost* is far more allegorical than that of the *Divine Comedy*.

Whether or not God has died and heaven vanished, once hell has lost its horrors we seem to need something to replace it: the policeman's club of Hobbes, the sublimated conscience of Freud, the sense of human freedom and responsibility of Camus' existential man—or possibly the building of an earthly City of Satan. To what extent the affluence of our society has engendered a collective guilty conscience and a collective need to balance the pleasures of prosperity with pains I do not know. The protagonist of Sartre's *The Condemned of Altona* commits suicide when he finds out that Germany is not devastated but prosperous. Are we, subconsciously, wishing for and creating—in a manner that Calvin would approve—some retribution for our goodies? A literal belief in hell can of course make life a nightmare, but the absence of such a belief can produce, in an immature society, similar nightmares. In either case, each of us writes the script for his own dreams.

If we consider these five factors that make today's violence different, can we arrive at any synthesis? The bomb, TV news, anaesthesia, changes in language, and the decline of hell, at first glance suggest a strange mix. But at second glance they appear to have one ingredient in common which makes their blending at once feasible and potentially appetizing, though this common denominator runs counter to one of the favorite clichés about contemporary Western man. Notice that missing from this list is conformity, standardization: the thesis that we are mass produced, educated by program, packaged by Madison Avenue, spoon-fed by mass media, even buried by the same credit-granting chain of undertakers. Perhaps we are; and the conjectures in the preceding pages certainly imply that we have been standardized. But they also imply a challenge: that the pressures toward conformity are balanced by equal if less obvious forces pushing in the opposite direction.

The bomb is certainly democratic. Ecclesiastes spoke much about the democratic finality of death. So does the bomb. But just as it involves us all in the incipient holocaust, so it involves us all in trying to prevent that Armageddon. We do not have to respond with the alibi that we as individuals are too insignificant to do anything about it. We can instead accept the challenge that we as individuals must do something. The bomb, then, can be a call to action, both individual and collective; and the violence of that action can be proportionate to the potential violence against which we are reacting.

TV news can produce not only numbed responses but a feeling of participation in a world lacking in physical barriers. Such a feeling can move us out of our easy chairs and into the streets—or into the polling booth. The time may come when, satiated, we respond by vomiting. When that happens, the violence of the recovery can also be proportionate to the previous disease.

Anaesthesia, and with it the benumbing effects of affluence, can also be a liberation. The minimization of physical pain, whether in the dentist's chair or by the elimination of brute routine work, can free the individual for more distinctive, more creative, more unpredictable activities—from propelling a bowling ball to painting a picture. The results of such liberation can range from the violent to the apathetic and be either internal or external.

The cumulative effects of the depersonalization of language are a temptation to slip into an increasingly nonverbal world. But these effects can also be a challenge to reestablish meaningful communication, to revitalize language as a humanistic means of talking with other human beings. The potential violence of such a renewal is again dependent on the intensity of one's reaction to the status quo.

Finally, we have the decline of hell and with it the probable death of God. Once more the invitation to apathetic acceptance is balanced by the challenge of liberation. It is possible to relish acknowledging the existential absurdity of our universe, to climb all the way down from the trees. A man is what he does, and he—alone and with his fellows—can do nothing or something. But liberated he becomes responsible, whether he resignedly shrugs his shoulders or violently smashes icons.

In short, those factors which make today's violence different are at once an opiate and a challenge, the calls of two diametrically opposite sirens. Our individual and collective reactions can vary, but I predict

that the more apathetic our external response, the more violent will be our cumulative internal response. Thus tomorrow, too, the amount of violence per person may remain constant. Yet if we settle for overt noninvolvement and covert turmoil, there may be no tomorrow.

The contributors to this issue of *New Mexico Quarterly*, though many of them are committed to the past by their professions, are vitally concerned with that tomorrow. In the opening article R. J. Kaufmann takes a penetrating look at the history of violence, but a look which does not stop at today. Focussing his historical lens on a narrower area, Joseph Boskin in "Violence in the Ghettos" examines the background and implications of our recent urban riots. Judd Marmor, using the scalpel of the psychoanalyst, anatomizes "Psychological Aspects of Urban Violence." Peter Nabokov's "Reflections on the Alianza" provides a firsthand insight into the "rebellion" of a small group of Spanish Americans in rural New Mexico last June. Nabokov was a witness, though blindfolded, to part of the immediate after-effects, but he also sees the revolt as a symptom of what is wrong with the larger Anglo-American society.

The problem of contemporary violence can be approached creatively as well as analytically. Tom Mayer's short story implies a question as to what extent art, by being graphic and specific, can appropriately raise our hackles. But does his "Dead Dog," by immediately involving us, make us more concerned about one dying animal in a Mexican village than about many dying children in Harlem and Hanoi? Or by responding to the death of an anonymous dog do we become more thin-skinned about any needless death? William Hamilton has picked the second option. In "Obscenity, Protest and War" he contends that what we are protesting against determines the nature of our protest, and that the war in Vietnam is violent and obscene. William Eastlake's "The Message" in a quiet tone—though Eastlake spent last summer in Vietnam as a correspondent—serves to dramatize Hamilton's view.

Donald L. Weismann's "Violence and the Creative Act" shifts the focus from what can be called the political arena to that of the arts. To him violence can be a creative force, a force that provides the impetus, the dislocation, and the new vision necessary to true creativity. Clinton Adams, a painter as well as a critic, in "Art among the Letter Writers" indirectly supports this thesis by detailing the angry conformist response to such creativity. The interaction between artist and audience is looked at from another angle and in another light in

OVERTURE FOR VIOLENCE

301

Morris Freedman's provocative "Violence in the Modern Theatre." And the issue concludes with Robert Creeley's "Follow the Drinking Gourd. . ." A "Dover Beach" for 1968, the poem invites us to drive away from the darkling plain where ignorant armies clash by night, even though our vehicle is a jalopy, our window looks out on the courtyard of a motel instead of on the glimmering cliffs of England, and the morrow presumably will bring neither certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain.

What the morrow will bring is our problem.

R. J. Kaufmann

The Knowledge of Violence

*"I have one gift. I don't understand words."
Beggar in Giraudaux's Electra.*

THERE IS NO NEED FOR PARADOX. No one overturns a really fundamental word or a concept by being clever—or by trying to be. Still, I think our confused and disturbing interval of history is very inaccurately described if we call it an "age of violence." It is even conceivable that what is happening to us is very nearly opposite to what this rubric invites us to suppose. One of our psychological losses can be detected in our blurring of violence's clean lines. Most of the basic actions in which violence unadulterated and of sound historical pedigree have been plainly evident are being denatured. Sophistication of this familiar product of human frustration joins innumerable other sophistications of stimuli and response to give a special flavor—and a disturbing one—to our emotionally intricate epoch.

Violence over history's long course has derived its central meaning from the root affiliation of the term "violence" to the notion of violation of what is sacred—sacrilege, outrage and profanation are at its core. Rape is its first obligatory exercise, and rape, for all its secondary resonance, is a very personal and intimate act. In its purest form rape is a unilateral assault upon innocence; it is always the forcible denial of the independent reality and variously authorized private sanctity of another being. Rape is not rightly so named without antecedent crediting of something more than mere social status. Violence in its pristine form is an act of ontological invasion; it is one being acting upon another being. Unless someone or some place or some object is preinvested with sacred meaning, rape degenerates into a pathological

faux pas. Violence loses its spiritual focus as soon as we erase socially suffusing notions of life's intrinsic sanctity.

It is true that usage has extended the notion of "violation" throughout the long evolution of human aggression. Intimate, sexual assault has provided a vivid format for many analogous descriptions of man's abusive treatment of persons and objects. A gigantic catalog of typical fractional displacements of this primitive form of physical assault has been incorporated into legal codes. It is possible to read such codes, from Hammurabi's and the Mosaic one onward, as typologies of recurrent displacements. Those sophisticated identification guides, medieval Christian Penitential Manuals, record in punctilious detail the exact quantum of spiritual aberration represented by each unwarranted act of the aggressive sinner. An equally precise penitential exaction is matched to the act. Violence historically has been performed *against something* and not merely as a form of unilateral explosion *from someone*. Since this sounds like the most tiresome kind of pseudo-profundity—obvious where it isn't opaque—we should try a counterinstance by speaking of the pathos of violence without shapely consequences. Like most psychologically imperial terms, violence is not easy to describe. In fact, one of the easiest ways to describe the master type of contemporary personality is to say that it is feeble and awkward as a violent agent.

We have superior devices for killing people. But beyond sheer increase in the scale of destructive efficiency, these instruments have subtracted from rather than added to our *personal* experiences of violence. Long ago George Orwell discerned the cordon of immunity which our rationalized technologies of language have placed between us and the experiential facts of violence. When creatures are "liquidated" and victims are recorded as "casualties," we begin to lose imaginative affiliation with visualized actions. It is hard to ~~know~~ at what point in the cycle of information processing to locate the act with intent to delude. The crass political psychology which attributes such denaturing of murder-as-experience solely to hard-eyed cynics intent on deluding the public is superficial in the same way that anticlerical philosophes of the eighteenth century were superficial when they devised a simple "conspiracy theory" to explain organized religion. In neither instance can the general run of humanity be exonerated from a complicity compounded of psychological needs and the susceptibili-

ties of ignorance. The defensive mechanism called "denial" by psychologists operates in the public as well as in the private sphere. Just where is it that contemporary man is losing access to spiritually relevant social information?

The dialectical interplay of compassion and alienation in the reasonably healthy individual can help to provide an answer. Seneca asserted that, "As a wise man grows older, he outgrows pity." Freud, in one of his most profound and fruitful books, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, argued that "Protection against stimuli is almost a more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli." Bertold Brecht established both in practice and in theoretical argument the devices he called *Verfremdungseffekts* (i.e., alienation effects or devices). He employed these to provoke a state of detached or impersonal contemplation of the action occurring on the stage. He wanted to jam the conventional circuits whereby spectators made easy romantic or fantasied identifications with characters who were otherwise safely welded into the play's action. He rightly saw that such facile identifications provided a contingent exercise of socially underemployed sentiments and emotions, while protecting the spectator from the purposive involvement in the issues which a fuller, more reflective intellectual response might entail. What Brecht did was to analyze those tactics of self-depoliticization and nonutilitarian emotional release which are packed away in the psychological exercise called "escapism." By breaking through the conventional covenant of mutual immunity from new perception enjoyed by the playwright and his actors on the one hand and by the audience on the other, he hoped to rehabilitate the sense of objective complicity in, and hence of responsibility for, institutionalized injustice. He destroyed the audience's illusion of guiltless "otherness" from those who suffered and struggled within the drama's action. He wanted to convert his audience into judging agents who would extrapolate from his dramatically embodied instances of typical suffering to their analogous situations in the world of actual society. Great drama like his subverts conditioned immunities and usurps the unjustified and unproductive emotional freedom of the individuals who make up the audience. For our purposes, he tried, as in *Mother Courage* for example, to reconstitute knowledge of violence as a large climate which is aggregated from many intimate events. And, in doing so, he stressed the banality, the routinized tri-

viality, the heavy-smallness of violence in action. Like any good artist he forced his audience past their unanalyzed and socially imposed sentiments about war and rape and unreflective cruelty to that marriage of sensory exposure and consequential thinking which betokens responsible experience. By alienating his audience from unearned and merely "official sentiments" he hoped to represent to nerves staled in an atmosphere of conditioned emotional ignorance the jagged actualities which constitute the raw data of social conviction.

From Brecht's lucid vantage point, men are drugged by the mindless emotion called "pity," a response that is transient, mildly titillating, centripetal, and finally socially sterile. Pity is a socially permissible sentiment; it is not a Brechtian virtue. As I said earlier, Seneca argued that wise men outgrow pity. Pity may punish its host, but there is nothing in pity itself which helps the pitiable victim. It is only when other qualities are added to it that pity participates in the nobler transaction known as compassion. How does this bear on "violence" which seems to be a mode of action, a climate of possibilities and a Wittgensteinian clan of related performances? Perhaps the question can be answered, but only if it can first be established that violence is something worth knowing.

INDIVIDUAL MEN HAVE BOUNDARIES. First, they are encapsulated in their skins. Very vulnerable people are described as thin-skinned. Men like Kafka or Strindberg, for example, are preternaturally suggestible and have a genius for pain-reactions. We can describe them as "men without skins" and be reasonably confident of being understood. As Freud said, "protection against stimuli" is as imperative to life as responding to them. Tear away a patch of relatively dull and imperceptive exterior skin and the bombardment of the exposed, naked area by all those sources of stimulation which we normally ignore induces pain so distracting that momentarily we ignore all other channels through which information from the outside world is being reported. We don artificial skins against what, with typical human egocentricity, we reify as "The Cold." Our bodily system is a masterpiece of concentric defenses against the aggression of stimuli. When we are finally dead, we are proof against all the stimuli that stimulate. A dead man enjoys immunity to stimulation: "nothing can touch him further." When we conduct an individual existence, we are the stewards of our receptors.

One of Freud's great contributions to human self-knowledge was to put us systematically in mind of how complex and extensive this stewardship is. We are not only required to preserve our skins—in most cultures a legal as well as a physical obligation—but, through culturally directed repression, we are induced to establish boundaries which limit self-access into many regions of our mental life as well. If our political macro-world is marked by many frontiers to be crossed, if at all, only with special permits, the same is true of the micro-terrain of our interior being. Those who cannot "learn" to construct these interior boundaries are confined—palpable physical boundaries are constructed for them in prisons and asylums. No human agent has total self-access; there are instinctual and emotional bonds confining him, and he is a collaborator in imposing these restraints.

Some of the greatest literature records the historical incubation of these restraints. In the *Iliad*, Achilles is the paradigm of destructive violence; it is, after all, his "wrath" or vindictive anger which is the unbound element and dynamic novelty in the ritualized heroic culture of the poem. Being unbound and deeply personal, this wrath breaks the bounds of the dreamlike, ballet configurations of the battlefield. There many men are killed, but "violence" can properly be used as an adjective to describe these warriors' behavior only as a kinetic term. Their performances are restrained, and performed under many precise sanctions. The psychological effect on the reader of these secondary combats has none of the emotional affects we associate with violence. These combats have the gravity of a game, and even the phenomenology of expiring is stylized. It is only the deep infusion of personal resentment on the part of the bereaved Achilles that sends the action, like the flooding river through which the wrathful Achilles plunges to "murder" the helpless suppliant, Lykaon, surging wildly outside the banks of accredited heroic decorum. And it is only after Achilles' super-human powers of destructive physical assertion have breached all the stiff rules of heroic conduct, that he himself can teach, while learning, the quality of self-restraint through compassionate perception of the courage and dignity of the father of his wrath's prime victim, the aged King Priam.

Violence is not the name for certain actions; it is the condition which transforms those actions. Violence is a form of moral behavior. It is a sentimental projection to describe a lion overtaking and killing

a zebra as an "act of violence." It is brutal, sudden, shocking, natural or lamentable depending on your vantage point. But it violates nothing in its own situational context. The latter would have to be morally transformed before the lion's action could become a moral event.

CLEARLY WE DON'T LIVE IN THE HOMERIC WORLD. Our world lacks the confident vocational dignity of those simple times, when killing appropriate others under well-cogitated circumstances seemed enough to illuminate existence. It is worth adding that for all but a small percentage of historical time, this did seem "enough" for those aristocratic few who could pry the time for such games from the problems of bodily subsistence. The far from consistent record of our efforts to civilize ourselves indicates that man has tried progressively to demote physical assault (rapine and killing) from a dominant place in his scale of values and entertainments. The historical record displays many backslidings and considerable reluctance to implement this putative moral design. It is probable that only the diffusion of the notion of property and the possibility of extended social participation in that institution has promoted any gradual demotion of physical assault as the most interesting application of human energies. It is even debatable whether we have yet discovered a sufficiently gratifying alternative. However, the relevant point here is that the introduction of competing alternatives for value preeminence has steadily enlarged, as a direct coefficient of this process, the content of the notion of violence.

As religion transformed itself from rude animistic intimations into a more sophisticated regulative device, it introduced the notion of sacramentally privileged individuals and locales. It made possible the investment of humanly constructed buildings and fabricated objects with the numinous virtues once confined to natural objects and natural forces. It made possible various idolatries of person, artifact and structure. It also fostered a new formula for violence, iconoclasm. Smashing icons as an act is nearly as graphic as rape, but it takes a much more sophisticated environment and probably one far larger and more urbanized to make it equivalently inviting as a form of aggressive release. But it has the extra virtue of public visibility. When Alcibiades and his hippie cohorts whacked the phalli off the sacred Hermes of the boundaries, their violent-violations afforded a more complex form of

gratification than less highly developed cultures could provide, something to be likened to the rape of a vestal virgin by a conditioned believer. Violence seems to have as one of its attributes the experience of partial belief, of belief that has partly slipped its traditional moorings but which hasn't broken utterly free.

There are exceptions, but the significantly violent person in history is one who has been infected with an attitude of acquiescence in his formative years which he can neither tolerate nor expunge in his adult years. His violently enacted mature mission is hence directed as much towards effecting the hopeless liberation of his residual self as it is towards the political and social restrictions which provide exterior analogies for this internal sense of the violation of his spiritual privacy in childhood. Speculatively, one could say that some of the violence of fanatical Protestantism arises from deeply ambivalent feelings about the absolutely unjust nature of any sort of "works" whatsoever. Not only are we not to be "justified" theologically by our "works" in contradistinction to our faith, but all human actions which purport to be self-justifying instances of "works" of goodness are seen as forms of moral tyranny, as if one had to say "I know what I am doing and this is for your own good. My goodness resides in enforcing your goodness." There is a sense in which radical Protestantism is absolutely dedicated to the prevention of this violation of pristine instinct. It moves towards an atomistic conception of the private soul's agon, forever renewed through the generations with no relevant human inheritance. It is thus totally antihistorical.

Yet in another sense radical Protestantism stands diametrically opposite to this position. In embracing original sin also ambivalently it demands the invasion of the infant self and a perpetual jealous surveillance of adult pretensions to freedom of action thereafter. For by denying the theological pertinence of works, it makes necessary the most minute enquiry into intention as opposed to performance. Thus traditional American Protestantism, in its more rigorous forms, has practiced an ethic of violation. Characteristically, it has answered the Biblical question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" with its own stringent affirmative in which the stress falls on "keeper," so that human responsibility has been warped into a notion of baleful scrutiny of others lest fugitive spiritual weakness harden into social deviation. It is not a very long step from this puritanical deontology to the Ku Klux Klan or

even to our officious attempts to prescribe the political options of the Vietnamese. Violence is often a product of a curdled sense of spiritual responsibility for the opinions rather than the actions of others.

A QUICK INVENTORY of contemporary attempts at violence introduces some puzzling factors. For example, tabloid journalism now has had three full generations of British and American technical inventiveness to amplify its skills. It has the stimulus of brutal competition and a merciless sense of urgency to outdo yesterday's conditioned expectations for an audience whose tastes are presumably habituated to a very special diet. The compound of innuendo, slanting, non sequitur, quasi-slandorous imputation, trivialization, and the heady illusions of voyeuristic access of these newspapers is too familiar to need any spelling out. The long-term effect of tabloid journalism is dulling; its self-imposed canons of extreme simplification quickly gut the most vital issues. Its editorial policies general thump the grosser isms (pro or con); its calculated intent is to induce confident judgments on all issues or pseudo-issues. Its favored topics are sport, sex and violence. There is also a heavy stress on the doings of the glamorous rich and considerable scratching of the acquisitive itch. However, what is most impressive about these tabloids is not what would be expected *a priori*. It isn't their pernicious effect on morals, nor their immediate banality, nor even their vulgarity. There are faint traces of these things perhaps, but very faint. What impresses is their supreme quality as nonconductors. They are like names writ in water. Nothing persists. It is conceivable that a man whose mind was that *tabula rasa*, so appealing to old-fashioned philosophers, might formulate a model of the world from them *faute de mieux*, but even this is problematic. What you might achieve instead is a vague notion that there are a lot of blondes who are disaster prone, that violence is like fireworks in being evanescently noticeable but of no resonant consequence, and that the pennant race in one sport or another has the comforting cyclic regularity of the stars in their eternal courses. Season follows season and the more things change, the more they are the same. Probably a few teetering psychopaths discover cues to or recipes for violence they might have had to encounter elsewhere. Yet if these childish productions do specific harm, it is because they may prevent growth that could occur if they did not provide such a convenient substitute for other

more full-bodied alternatives. But I think we should be suspicious of anyone who describes these journals as violent or inflammatory or as organs of any kind of purposive behavior, violent or otherwise. They are sedative, like Marx believed religion to be. That lovable elderly fiction, the intelligent man from Mars, if he studied a large sampling of this public literature, would be little wiser than before about sociopolitical actualities; but I believe, were he suitably acute, he would form some unflatteringly accurate opinions of the ordinary citizen of our time. He might infer that he is mildly incoherent, parochial, attached to sustaining folkways, content to take his violence at second-hand, systematically incurious about what used to be called first causes, casually sentimental, and mainly loyal to what he knows. Pseudo-violence is not violence, and sublimation of aggressive curiosities by habits lazy and vicarious represents no way of "funding" social violence. Violence seems to require an antecedent emotional congestion, a kind of choking monomania, before it can assume impressive proportions. Tabloid journalism, by its perpetual disjunctions of whole experience, seems to be a counteragent not a propaedeutic to violence.

As for the tarted-up Edwardianism of the James Bond world, with its sexually maimed females awaiting the healing fierceness of oor's post-missionary virility, it pleasantly caricatures itself. Its pneumatic supergirls, "nasty" villains, campish decor and catalogue *raisonne* iterations of perfect meals, perfect scents, perfect potations, and perfect accoutrements owe more to the indolent greed of passive oral longings than to such relatively well-organized emotions as lust and homicidal intent. The terminus of most emotions released by Bondian capers is self-abuse in both its literal and figurative variations. Even as pornography it is unthreateningly adolescent. At worse, its faggot is added to the fire where the "reality principle" is burned at the contemporary stake. Violence as a disciplined capacity is weakened by easy access to predigested triumphs. The fantasy-stoked ethos of Bondism probably increases our failure to react to violence with effective moral concentration; it does not provoke us to it. Like the tabloid, comic-book world it partly derives from, it is a cultural specific against the synthesis of purposive discontent.

When we shift our attention to the racial riots of recent years we move, but only partly, to a different plane of reality. It would be Panglossian folly to deny the potentialities for significant violence in

this sphere. I see that people have been killed, buildings burned, passions inflamed, peaceful relations disturbed. It is categorically important to take what has been going on in Los Angeles, Cleveland, Newark, Detroit and a dozen other places very seriously. Massive injustice has been done, is being done. Those of us who are middle-aged will not see the necessary acts of social purgation and restitution completed in our lifetime. It is certain to get worse before it gets better. What I have to say about these events and their relationship to efficient violence should not be interpreted as an attempt to explain away, belittle the importance of, or to justify the *status quo ante* which helped to nurture these riots.

Yet what is remarkable about these outbreaks is their comparative restraint, their tentativeness, their brevity, their strangely selective programs for destruction. If one compares the worst of them, the 1967 Detroit one, to, say, the forgotten Bristol riots of 1831, it is the Bristol riot which was far more violent and sociologically pointed. There the physical symbols of asymmetrical justice and social intimidation were directly assaulted: the prisons were taken and prisoners released, the Bishop's Palace, the Mansion House, the Customs House were demolished. Casualties mounted into the hundreds, and fifty people were arrested on capital charges, along with many others on lesser charges. And Bristol was then tiny by contemporary American standards. Contemporary America has yet to see any "Bastille gesture." Despite the dangerous rhetoric of the Black Power movement, there is little evidence that it has the thing it proclaims, real power.

D.H. Lawrence once said, speaking of understanding books, "Trust the tale not the teller." This can be applied to historical events equally well. If we look directly at these recent riots and not at the editorial rhetoric surrounding them, there are some common denominators. What violence there has been signally lacks revolutionary extension. Those who live in the suburban rings around the inner city have experienced almost nothing, while the riots have been going on a few miles away, that they could not have experienced if the riot had occurred in a sister city two hundred or a thousand miles away. The anger of the rioters has been largely directed against their hated immediate environment, their ghetto as a physical entity, and against their designated legal chaperones, the police. There have been few sorties beyond

sociological boundaries. The resultant inconveniences of their destructive action have penalized their friends and neighbors more than any of those who have the power to alter their wretched state or who might be analytically singled out as their oppressors. It is more like a child harming himself as a form of punishment of and appeal to allegedly callous parents than a showdown between enemies. Or, to change the figure, these efforts at significant violence have the pathos of the bull in the Spanish arena, after he has been tormented and distracted by the supporting cast. He is almost immobilized by doubt; he grows alternately hesitant and desperate. He cannot identify his enemy and the arena shrinks to a tomb. At that moment one feels the brave bull might commit suicide were it within his capacity to do so. The matador who closes with him becomes, by his very definiteness as an adversary, almost a savior. Blessed are those that find their enemy, for they shall be confronted. Successful exercise of violence requires conviction. Conviction stems from knowledge. The requisite knowledge is discovering the proper enemy. Sustained violence requires an ideology, which is to say a persuasive set of notions for identifying the enemy.

I think that Negro capacities for violence will increase in exact ratio to education. We must and we will educate them better, and we will pay, as we should pay, the cost in a more coherent violence, until a genuine mutuality born of a seasoned respect for each other's human qualities restores communication and makes violence, which is a substitute language, obsolete. Substantial equality, as opposed to theoretical equality, rests on people having commensurate amounts to lose by violence. The time when that will be true cannot come very soon. Education will organize deep and formless resentments into a program for action, and part of that action will be violent. There are ways partly to forestall these expressions. I hope we will discover the generosity and intelligence to implement these ways. But it seems to me unlikely we will graduate promptly enough from our "Tory Radical" program of escalated concessions, made in response to escalating attempts at violence, to forestall many further expressions of this slowly organizing knowledge of the technology of violence. Our intervention in Vietnam, with all its lateral damage to our public morale, makes early enlightenment in the civil rights sphere even less likely. There is a problem of enemy-identification in the Vietnam crisis as well.

ARISTOTLE in his *Poetics* introduced the term *hamartia*, employing it in his analysis of the tragic situation; so there is ready justification for applying it to Vietnam. He was concerned to isolate just what it was that catalyzed disaster in some sequences of events when this did not occur in others. *Hamartia*, his term for this tragic catalyst, was long translated as "tragic flaw," which translation carried with it a moralistic judgment that tragic consequences were either the result of reprehensible character or of a fated (we might say "genetic") determinism. Modern research has indicated that "misidentification" may be the more precise translation of *hamartia*. This has opened a far richer world of tragic connotation, for it frees the term from either shallow moralism or rigid fatality. The protagonist in any action can "misidentify": his enemy, his cause, as even, more radically, he can misidentify his own nature, so that his energetic assertions are thrown into opposition with his moral needs or his better interests. The greatest Greek plays, *Oedipus Rex*, the *Oresteia*, and *The Bacchae*, disclose new depth when read in this light.

The *hamartia* of the United States as theoretically well-intended protagonist in Vietnam is a tragic instance of such misidentification. It is very hard to convince thinking men that the workaday Viet Cong member is an enemy of the moral or geopolitical interests of America or of the community of nations. It is only slightly less difficult to see threatening spectres in the beleaguered and impoverished leaders in Hanoi. Since Stalin died, it has been reasonably clear that a gradual rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. was the most likely course of events. It takes a steadily larger input of hysterical editorial bullying to flag the average imagination into orthodox apprehensions of an international communist conspiracy. Even opportunists of the middle-Right are a bit shamefaced about their part in this litany. I think there is an almost endemic longing for a political figure wise, prestigious and brave enough to declare the emperor naked. To say that "the communist conspiracy" is a stale and obsolescent fiction is not to say that *machtpolitik* is dead. The millennium when men will look at each other with clear eyes, and lions and lambs, hawks and doves will fraternize is not upon us. But our specific violence is chartered under the misidentification of Russian readings of their own advantages. It is almost as if we were told, "Better that enemy than none." Our country is doing the worst things being done by any

major sovereign state at the present time. For most of the years after 1945 this was simply not so, and European left-wing doctrinaires were fatuous when they vehemently claimed knowledge of our national viciousness or equated us with the Russians. Now it is almost as if we were retrospectively justifying that Cold War rhetorical flimflam.

I believe our misapplied efforts in Vietnam (to give them no worse name) stem from a frantic belief in the necessity of access. It is as if 1947 and 1948 with their articulation of the Truman Doctrine of Containment were theological benchmarks. We conceded the *de facto* boundaries of the USSR's postwar consolidation of Eastern and Central Europe. China represents a huge, extralegal, extrasystematic anomaly which we neither ignore nor recognize. The rest of the world is either healthily accessible to us, or it must be accounted politically ill. The policy isn't wholly different from the British free-trade diplomatic ethic which evolved in the early nineteenth century under Castlereagh and Palmerston. It might be described as the Doctrine of Imperial Roman Citizenship Revived. Its creed runs that since we know our own motives to be enlightened, and since we travel only to spread the blessings of our technological culture, only those who have sinister designs and something to hide can possibly wish to deny us access. The degree to which self-preservation and self-aggrandizement warp these sincere, if unilateral and psychologically shallow, sentiments is quite invisible to most communicants of this creed. Few want to deny that, in our flawed, sublunary world, strategic schemes for national defense will be necessary for long years to come. To affirm this melancholy truth is not to say that any material instance of "defensive military activity" necessarily falls under this heading. There is no "knowledge" (as opposed to expertise) in our attempt to apply violence in Vietnam. Its misidentifications are legion and not least in our hubristic notion that we can carry on this adulterous affair without its harming the quality of our national life.

Violence is an attitude towards problem-solving, and it both requires and fosters a pernicious brand of ontological contempt. Our newspapers use degrading figures to report the killing of Viet Cong; Marines "bag" sixty-three Cong as hunters "bag" their limit. General Kitchener, the leading British military figure at the dawn of our epoch, solved the worrisome problem of Boer guerilla harassment by system-

atically fencing off areas and hunting down the Boers thus enclosed like vermin. He straddled the eras of colonial hauteur and technical expertise. He gave cues to the future. No amount of vaguely beneficent rhetoric can conceal our racial double standard. The Vietnamese are pragmatically subhuman, expendably inferior. Confused violence feeds on such defects of moral imagination—it leads to ignorant violation of beings who are denied the ordinary quantum of human sanctity.

A measure of this contagion revealed itself during the instant-war between Israel and the Arab States. The classic lucidity of the tactics employed, the open terrain—like the models for war games—and the quick, unequivocal nature of the outcome roused something like nostalgia for lost innocence. Hardly anyone questioned this use of planned violence. The very shapeliness of the applied violence seemed to provide its natural justification. At least for a while violence seemed once again to be linked to specific causes and to be directed toward understood consequences. Violence seemed intelligible.

WHETHER THIS IS FINALLY SO IS NOT THE QUESTION. We live in a world of warped efforts at violence, not in a violent age. We need to think about violence, for we no longer have a consistent and reliable experience of it. Our capacities for testing reality in the sector marked "Violence" are enfeebled and wispy—fed by images for which no useful scale of valuation has yet been devised. We search about us in our art, our recreation, our periodical press, our televisionary mythology, and our personal relationships for reliable paradigms of violence, but still our judgment in this sector is undernourished by practice or counsel. The dominant and possessing classes in American society have removed themselves from the inner city. They live in the suburbs which have rudimentary and out-moded *laissez-faire* governments, so that, paradoxically, those with the most influence have largely disenfranchised themselves as positive political agents, exercising their privileged role almost exclusively in terms of expensive immunities from the areas where violence is incubating; and it is there that needful knowledge can be born. By one of the supreme ironies of history, the most favored citizens of the richest and allegedly freest nation in history are being sealed off from the use of the very cities which their efforts have raised, much as they are sealed off from China or Eastern Europe.

Misspent violence is the logic of imperfect knowledge. It is used against misidentified enemies when self-condemned ignorance prevents the discovery of real enemies. Violence against Hitler owned dignities denied our current exercises. Some of the courageous repudiations by the younger generation of a place in this sordid script are attempts to invent new dignities which, borrowing as little as possible from past canons of behavior, indict the historical ignorance which requisitions their lives.

It is my conviction that men, given any chance, do not condone punishing forms of ignorance indefinitely—in themselves or in others. Living as we do in an age which makes us accessories both before and after the fact to unconsidered and futile violations of human rights, we are fortunate to this extent. There is much that *must* be learned about violence. This clear need to learn is a kind of historical blessing.

Joseph Boskin

Violence in the Ghettos

A CONSENSUS OF ATTITUDES

CONSENSUS: Agreement in opinion; the collective unanimous opinion of a number of persons . . . Also consensus of opinion, authority, testimony, etc. (*Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume II, 1933).

WRITING ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY in the South in the 1830's, Alexis de Tocqueville, in his inimical incisive manner, observed:

I am obliged to confess that I do not regard the abolition of slavery as a means of warding off the struggle of the two races. . . . The Negroes may long remain slaves without complaining; but if they are once raised to the level of freemen, they will soon revolt at being deprived of almost all of their civil rights; and as they cannot become the equals of the whites, they will speedily show themselves as enemies.¹

The revolt of the inner-city Negro in the 1960's reflects the failure of American society effectively to cope with the gap between the Negroes' racial environment and the ideals of American democracy. To have developed a series of programs which would narrow the discrepancies between reality and ideal, however, would have necessitated an understanding of the meaning of black ghetto life. In retrospect, it is clear that the lack of a basic comprehension on the part of the Caucasian with Negro life contributed heavily to the mass violence in the urban areas. Indeed, it continues to be a factor in the growing polarization of the two racial groups, despite the best intentions of various individuals and organizations to prevent it.

Perhaps the readiest indication of the Caucasian's blind spot has been his inability to grasp the message of the mass rioting and to deal with it in any terms but that of Negro lawlessness or primitiveness. Former Los Angeles Chief of Police William H. Parker, a representative spokesman for his counterparts, likened the Negroes of the Watts Riots to "monkeys in a zoo."²

Criticism of the riots was also voiced by some elements of the Negro community. While not using such prejudicial phrases, they argued that the riots would increase white backlash and undercut the Civil Rights Movement, with the result that white-black relations would revert to the pre-World War II period. Ignored by both groups is the fact that violence has been an expression of anger as well as of hope.

The riots reveal a commonality of purpose among their participants, active and inactive. The opening riots of 1964-65 may have been more spontaneous in that they had no antecedents; yet the riots of 1966-67 were remarkably alike in their causes, developments, and adherents. Several discernible patterns lead to the hypothesis that there existed among Negroes an antagonism to their environment which produced a consensus for violence. The continuity of behavior of the various riots, the focus of discontent, the modes of antagonism, the directive force, the composition of the rioters, and the milieu of the ghetto converged to create a commonality of purpose among Negroes.

The basis of this consensus for violence, the perspective of ghetto life which escapes the grasp of the Caucasian, can be summed up in the analogy of the ghetto as a colonial region. This analogy is the theme of several works. Kenneth Clark in *Dark Ghetto* maintains that the Negro urban community is similar in status and in problems to that of a colony:

The dark ghettos are social, political, educational, and—above all—economic colonies. Their inhabitants are subject peoples, victims of the greed, cruelty, insensitivity, guilt, and fear of their masters.³

The analogy is extended in *Black Power* written by Stokely Carmichael, who is associated with the contemporary usage of the phrase, and by Charles V. Hamilton, a sociologist. They argue that the "black people in this country form a colony, and it is not in the interest of the colonial power to liberate them."⁴ Recognizing that the

analogy departs from a strict definition of colonialism, nevertheless Carmichael and Hamilton maintain that—

It is the objective relationship which counts, not rhetoric (such as constitutions articulating equal rights) or geography Black people in the United States have a colonial relationship to the larger society, a relationship characterized by institutional racism.⁵

The basic failures of the Western powers in the developing nations both in Africa and in Asia can also apply to the ghetto. Fred R. Von de Mehden outlines three important areas of neglect: 1) the paternalistic attitude of the colonial powers which "did not foster self-reliance in the native population," 2) the failure of the colonial power to provide adequate education and training for members of the native population to assume positions that had been filled by European citizens, and 3) economic policies of the colonial power which exploited the natural and human resources of the colony.⁶

Colonialism produces certain psychological affects which can be observed in the behavior of natives of colonial regions and of Negroes in the ghettos. The impairment of self-worth is a direct consequence of overlordship. The relationship of the ruling group to the under-advantaged is pervasively demeaning on all levels. Lucien W. Pye thus explains the colonial peoples' "disturbing doubts about the worth of self":

The seeds of such doubts were, of course, planted by the mechanics of colonialism, which inescapably cast one people in the role of superior and the other in the role of inferior. Moreover, the master peoples usually drove their point home with permanent effect by employing either consciously or unconsciously all the thousand and one techniques and tricks by which most elites throughout time have sought to demonstrate their natural rights of mastership and to unnerve and demoralize the common people.⁷

Racism, and its prime form of expression, segregation, has produced the identical psychological heritage of Negro self-abnegation. "Human beings who are forced to live under ghetto conditions," observes Kenneth Clark, "and whose daily experience tells them that almost nowhere in society are they respected and granted the ordinary dignity and courtesy accorded to others will, as a matter of course, begin to doubt their own worth."⁸

A second manifestation of the racially underprivileged is a sense of alienation. Denied the possibility of assimilating into Causacian society either through the occupational door or the split-level, middle-income door; forced to attend substandard, segregated schools; ignored in the history books of the country in which they had worked and lived; associated with the slave, inferior positions of the past; referred to in demeaning terms as "nigger," "boy," or "jungle-bunnies"; and simply ignored, the Negro has been the rejected man of American society. Cast out of English colonial society in the seventeenth century, the Negro has remained the outsider. It was to be expected that his feelings of rejection would produce not only self-doubt but hatred of the oppressor. A Negro youth in Detroit expressed these dual feelings during the summer of the riot:

You know what I learned in school, man? I learned about Paul Revere, who was white, and Christopher Columbus, who was white, and Cleopatra—they said she was white, too. And oh yes, don't forget Little Black Sambo! The Irish had a culture, everybody had a culture, but they told us the black man's culture was picking more cotton than the white man. That won't do. If it's only a jungle culture, then let's have a jungle culture. I may be flat-nosed, kinky-haired, black as sin and big-assed, but I'm a man, and I can knock your block loose.⁹

Frustration, hatred and the urge to retaliate have long been recognized as a smoldering constant in subjugated groups—Negro American or native. Evidence of aggression by individuals and groups in the Old South is abundant; similarly, evidence of retaliation by native groups is equally abundant. However, the basic question as to why the riots occurred in the cities in the 1960's is crucial to an understanding of the ambience of violence. Significantly, in the period following World War II, many African nations gained their independence from colonial control. The concept of self-determination bore the logical fruit of seeds planted by the American Revolution. The connection between the two events could be seen on the scribbled quotations from the Declaration of Independence and Gettysburg Address on Batavian buildings, penned by nationalistic Indonesians against the Dutch.¹⁰

Whereas the postwar period signalled the protest of colonial peoples against the ruling countries, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's heralded the protest of Negroes against the hier-

archy in the American South. It is significant that the actions of an unknown seamstress, Rosa Parks, who refused to move to the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, triggered the massive protest against the Jim Crow regulations in that city.

The actions of the four North Carolina Agricultural College students who devised and initiated the sit-in protest at the Kresge department store in Greensboro in 1960 were reflective of the changed consciousness which had occurred in the young Negro. Moreover, the rapidity with which the Civil Rights Movement developed, the creativity of its techniques, the acceptance of verbal and physical assault and jailings, the revitalization of CORE and the establishment of SNCC as prime civil rights organizations, all point to the growing consensus for action and the tough-mindedness of the Negro.

The convergent result in both the emerging nations and in the Negro, whether in the urban ghetto or rural hamlet, has been the attempt to recreate a positive, historical image of Self. The victim of subjugation can rarely escape from the self-conception of inferiority without first building a new image of himself that offers self-respect and dignity. "Each national group . . . has reacted strongly and, to some extent, defensively to charges of inferiority. Each has demanded a sense of dignity and a feeling of worth."¹¹ Thus the Negro American and the peoples of formerly colonial territories have begun to reexamine their past heritage and to develop techniques of creating self-worth. It is extremely interesting to note that the title of one of the important works in this area by Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, is subtitled "A Search for Identity in America,"¹² and Pye's study *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building* is subheaded "Burma's Search for Identity."

In the forefront of the Negro American struggle to develop a positive identity have been the nationalist movements, the most widely publicized being the [Black] Muslims. This latter movement has been limited to the lower socioeconomic classes and has thus far achieved relatively little influence or support from the urban Negro. Several other organizations have emerged to unite in giving voice to the cry of "Black Power." Imprecise and controversial in its meaning, yet explicit in its implications, "Black Power" expresses the spirit of the young contemporary Negro. The furor created by its usage appears to stem from the word "black." Had Stokely Carmichael called for "Negro Power" during the Meredith March, few objections would have been heard.

That this would appear to be the situation is indicated by the antecedents of the phrase. Lerone Bennett, Jr., in his book *Before the Mayflower*¹³ and in his *Ebony* magazine series, "Black Power," used it without notice. Loren Miller, at the time of his vice presidency of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, made reference to a vital aspect of the concept of black power when he wrote in a widely read article: "To liberals a fond farewell, with thanks for services rendered, until you are ready to re-enlist as foot soldiers and subordinates in a Negro-led, Negro-officered army under the banner of Freedom Now."¹⁴ This statement was reprinted and distributed by the NAACP in 1962. In recent years, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell and Floyd McKissick of the Congress of Racial Equality have made frequent use of the term. There was little reaction either to the phrase or to its antecedents until Stokely Carmichael extolled it passionately to rally a group of protest marchers and sharecroppers in the Meredith March in Mississippi.

The word "black" however, evokes many psychological images to Caucasians, images which frequently connote fearful consequences. More, it suggests a usurpation of power and possession. In the context of the relationship between the colonist or settler and the colonized people this fear has considerable validity. Franz Fanon in his powerful book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, describes the unspoken tension which exists between the two groups:

The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possession—all manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible. The colonized man is an envious man. And this the settler knows very well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive "They want to take our place." It is true, for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place.¹⁵

Despite the absence of a concise definition of "Black Power" in American society,¹⁶ its message is a powerful assertion of self-pride and self-belief. This feeling has been enhanced by the phrase "black is beautiful." Both phrases reject the centuries of denial of dignity.

The accent on the word "black" also derives from another aspect of the alienation of the Negro in the contemporary period, namely, the failure of society to narrow the gap between expectations and ful-

fillment. Contrast of white and Negro levels of living is extremely important. Exclaimed a young Negro to writer Budd Schulberg in the Watts Happening Coffee Shop after the riot:

Drive out of Watts, go north and west and its beginning to look like the El Dorado those Conquistadores were always hunting for. You've conquered it, baby. Groovy. You've got it made. Some night on the roof of our rotten falling down buildings we can actually see your lights shining in the distance. So near and yet so far. We want to reach out and grab it and punch it on the nose.¹⁷

The inclination to draw comparisons with those Negroes who have "succeeded" adds further frustration. A Detroit Negro schoolteacher observed after the riot of 1967: "The cat on 12th Street can look a hundred yards away and see another black cat living in an eight-room house with a 1967 Pontiac and a motorboat on Lake Michigan." Quickly, however, he returned to the different socioeconomic levels between Negroes and Caucasians:

. . . General Motors itself is only a few blocks away. I've seen kids from my school walk over to the showroom and sit down in a new model Cadillac, sort of snuggle their little rear ends into the soft leather, slide their hand over the slick plastic steering wheel and say, 'Man, I feel that.' It's all so far away, and the frustrations just eat them up.¹⁸

Contrast between the hopeful objectives of the poverty programs and their actual accomplishment is another aspect of the dashed expectations. "To raise the level of expectations without providing corresponding opportunity is psychologically devastating," said George Henderson, a Negro assistant to the superintendent of the Detroit public schools.¹⁹ The parallel between the lives of subject peoples and the colonial authorities can be made here as well. Setting themselves apart from the natives, living in noticeably larger houses and estates, travelling in automobiles, the colonials created such an insufferable contrast as to cause rioting natives in many African nations to destroy houses and estates in the turbulent period of the 1950's and 1960's.

Thus the colonial heritage of subjugation and the Negroes' history of ghetto experience are comparable in that each produced a desperate need to alter individual and group identity and to make the potentials

of "mother country" their own as well. In one case this driving need led to nationalistic upheavals, in the other case to the explosion of urban riots.

ONE OF THE MOST CONTINUING SOURCES OF ABUSE for subjugated communities is the police authority. The most visible symbol representing white authority in the ghetto—the equivalent of the colonial official—is undoubtedly the policeman. The colonial voice:

It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native.²⁰

The ghetto voice:

We live in a police state atmosphere down here. . . . From where we see it the police are just down here to keep us in our place, to keep us from getting out of the concentration camp without barbwire we call Watts.²¹

Almost every analysis of contemporary riots places heavy emphasis on the attitude, role and actions of the police either as an initiating factor in causing the riot or in its subsequent development. This assessment, moreover, applies to race riots of the previous period. In practically every instance of Caucasian-Negro confrontations, white policemen have been an integral part of the cause of the race riot and/or have participated in attacking Negroes and their property. In several of the race riots—Chicago and Washington, D.C. in 1919—police actually ignored white rioters and jailed Negroes.

The widespread bitterness of Negroes towards the police is amply evidenced in their statements and demeanor. The incessant chant of a group of young Negroes as they picketed Philadelphia's Girard College for its "white orphans only" policy is instructive of their attitude:

Jingle bells,
Shot gun shells,
Freedom all the way;
Oh, what fun
It is to blow
A bluecoat man away.²²

How could it have been otherwise? The institutions of law enforcement reflect societal mores and customs. They are neither so structured as to bring about a reconstruction of divergent segments of society, nor are they intended to be involved with other reform instigations. The statement is constantly made by police officials that their functions are basically limited to the "maintenance of law and order." To expect that law enforcement officials would be more empathetic towards minority groups when the national norm implicitly endorsed discrimination would clearly be an impossibility.

The actions of the Los Angeles Police Department after the Watts Riot illustrate what had been the sluggish tempo of police authority response. It is instructive that eleven months after the Watts Riot—the most severe racial outburst in the twentieth century at the time—the Los Angeles Police Commission finally invited Negro community and organizational leaders to a special session, "the first of a series of meetings geared to creating better communications between ethnic groups and the Police Department."²³

The intensity of Negro feelings towards the police is couched in the phrase "police brutality." Even the conservative report of the Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots took cognizance of the antagonisms:

The bitter criticism we have heard evidences a deep and long standing schism between a substantial portion of the Negro community and the Police Department. 'Police brutality' has been the recurring charge. One witness after another has recounted instances in which, in their opinion, the police have used excessive force or have been disrespectful and abusive in their language or manner.²⁴

Nevertheless, despite such statements by the Commission as "The reasons for the feeling that law enforcement officers are the enemy of the Negro are manifold" and "The fact that this charge [police brutality] is repeatedly made must not go unnoticed," the Report made no attempt to ascertain the degree or nature of the charges' validity.²⁵ Rather, the Report ignored the issue and instead emphasized the need for greater respect of the law: "... there is real danger that persistent criticism will reduce and perhaps destroy the effectiveness of law enforcement."²⁶ Although recognizing the consensus of Negro feelings towards the police, the Commission thus called only for its own consensus of law and order.

THE EXPLOSION IN THE BLACK GHETTOS, like the uprisings of the nationalistic groups in the colonial regions, was the observable expression of a consonance of feeling which developed as a consequence of historical and ecological forces. There has been yet another influence, external to the immediate experience of the urban Negro but supportive of his protest. Massive protest movements on almost all levels of American society have been one of the main characteristics of the decade of the 1960's. Protest groups have been active in secular and nonsecular universities and colleges; in high schools via "underground" newspapers; in the middle classes by such groups as the hippies; in the organizations of other ethnic groups such as Mexican-American and Japanese-American; in the rise of "outsider" newspapers such as the *Free Press* and political journals such as *Ramparts*; in the rise of the New Left; in the anti-Vietnam and anti-Draft Movements. The protest of the contemporary period has been synonymous with the younger generation whose energy has been given to action rather than to ideology. The riots of the Negro, therefore, and to a lesser extent the Puerto Rican, are in keeping with the protest of the present. They have become, however, a protest of violence.

The extent of participation in the violence, overt and attitudinal, has been the subject of considerable controversy. From the very first riot of the contemporary period—the third Harlem outburst in thirty years—certain individuals and groups have insisted, *a priori*, that the riots were caused by a small minority within the minority. Extreme political groups have consistently maintained that a cadre of trained and purposeful men organized a portion of the Negro community and directed them into violent actions. George Allen, a Los Angeles journalist, in a pamphlet written for the John Birch Society organ, *American Opinion*, held that the Watts Riot was the result of a conspiracy

The board of revolutionary strategy which planned, engineered, and instigated the Watts Rebellion was composed of some forty to fifty Negroes sent by the Communists into the Los Angeles area from all over the United States This small revolutionary group, which is referred to in Watts and by law enforcement personnel simply as 'The Organization,' has three common denominators among its members: high intelligence, hatred of 'The Man' (Caucasians), and a disciplined commitment to the interests of the International Communist Conspiracy.²⁷

A year before the Cleveland explosion, the highly conservative periodical *Human Events* published a story in which the author, a Negro newspaperman, attempted to link the techniques of extremist political groups, civil rights leaders, and the Watts Riot. Utilizing "traditional techniques of spontaneous disorder, well-known to communists, Nazis and other political perverts," wrote George S. Schuyler, "the self-appointed leaders of the Negro revolution have for years recklessly incited Negroes into mass action. . . ." ²⁸

Political officials, in several instances, have made similar insinuations. Los Angeles Mayor Samuel Yorty circuitously cited subversive elements as a cause of the Watts Riot. Blaming the California State Highway Patrol for their actions in the arrest which triggered the riot, and Sargeant Shriver of the Office of Economic Opportunity for holding up the city's antipoverty program, Yorty also attacked the "communists for agitating over police brutality." ²⁹ "It's the 'Big Lie' technique," he maintained. "The cry of police brutality has been shouted in cities all over the world by communists." ³⁰ Shortly after the Cleveland civil disturbances of 1966, the head of the subversive squad of the Cleveland Police Department stated that he accepted the conclusion of a special county grand jury that the riot was "organized, precipitated, and exploited by . . . trained and disciplined professionals." ³¹

As the riots increased in number and intensity in 1967, similar accusations were heard from political quarters. Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower expressed a judgment which reflected the feelings of many persons. "It does look like there must be some kind of pattern," he declared. "A lot of people think there is definitely a national plan." ³² Governor Ronald Reagan of California made a similar statement: "I believe there is a plan for the riots; it would be pretty naive to believe these riots are just spontaneous." ³³ Senator Strom Thurmond, in consistent fashion, blamed the riots on "Communism, false compassion, civil disobedience, court decisions and criminal instinct." ³⁴ The House Committee on Un-American Activities took up the cudgel of investigation. A preliminary staff study disclosed that extremists helped to foment disorders and that communists circulated hate propaganda in riot areas.

The contention that contemporary riots were initiated or stimulated and directed by only a small segment of the urban Negro population was affirmed by civil rights leaders. Deeply concerned for the future

of the Civil Rights Movement and troubled by the probability that white backlash would be heightened by the association made between violence and the Negro, statements were issued absolving the bulk of urban Negroes from the riotous activities. "We are confident," read a statement from Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Whitney Young of the Urban League, Dr. Martin Luther King of SCLC, and A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters after the Detroit Riot of 1967, "that the overwhelming majority of the Negro community joins us in opposition to violence in the streets."³⁵

The essential basis of the argument was that no more than three to five percent of the Negro community participated in the violence.³⁶ This general figure is supported by two studies. The Report of the California Governor's Commission, directed by the former head of the Central Intelligence Agency, John A. McCone, concluded that whereas the Negro population of Los Angeles County numbered more than 650,000, about two-thirds of whom lived in the riot area, "Observers estimate that only about two percent were involved in the disorder."³⁷ The Commission proceeded to judge the effect of this minority action, lending weight to its previous statement: "Nevertheless, this violent fraction, however minor, has given the face of community relations in Los Angeles a sinister cast."³⁸ The figure of two percent cited in the Commission's final report was an increase of one percent over Chairman McCone's original assessment culled from testimony. "Now we have testimony before this commission that probably less than 1 percent of the 600,000 Negroes of the L.A. community were involved in this riot. . . ."³⁹ Another study underscores the smallness of Negro participation in the riots. The National Institute of Mental Health assigned a staff of forty researchers to screen a sampling of 400 arrest cases, police officers, and others directly affected by the rioting in Detroit in 1967. The survey was directed by Dr. Elliott Luby, assistant director of the Lafayette Clinic, and Robert Mendelsohn, staff clinical psychologist at the clinic. Dr. Luby estimated that "Only 5 percent of our Negro population actively participated in the riot. We are interested in determining whether they differ significantly in terms of age, job stability, family history, and employability from other Detroit Negroes."⁴⁰

The findings of these studies have been dramatically challenged by the Los Angeles Riot Study (LARS) undertaken by members of the Institute on Government and Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles. The number of Negroes in the curfew zone who claimed

to have participated was approximately eleven times that of the McCone Commission Report. To the direct question, "We are not interested in the details of what you actually did, but just generally, would you say that you were: very active, somewhat active, or not at all active?", 4 percent reported being "very active" and 18 percent "somewhat active," making a total of 22 percent.⁴¹ When those indicating activity were asked, "What percent of the people in the area participated?" the mean estimate of the respondents was 20 percent. After refining the data the authors of the report estimated that up to 15 percent of the Negro adult population were active during the riot. In addition, the study demonstrated that 31 percent of the Negro adult population were active spectators of the disturbance and "formed a permissive, if not actively supportive, audience for the rioting."⁴²

An earlier report which dealt with the arrests made during the Watts Riot can be extrapolated in a similar manner. The California Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Department of Justice, conducted a survey of all persons arrested and subsequently charged. In its introduction to its report, the Bureau reported that it had received the full cooperation of all local agencies involved in the processing of riot arrests and that it received additional data from the district attorney, the lower courts, the superior courts, and the Los Angeles Probation Department. In dispassionate tones—in contrast to news media and McCone's Commission Report—the arrest report noted that of the felony charges brought against the 4,060 persons (3,504 adults and 556 juveniles) the majority were dissimilar to types of felony charges more commonly associated with urban area crime:

The relatively minor types of offenses for which the great majority of riot participants were convicted would seem to indicate that this group of individuals was not the same type of persons usually booked on similar felony charges. A review of their prior criminal history fails to show a record as serious as that generally present in many of the nonriot felony bookings usually handled in urban areas by the police and the courts.⁴³

Equally important was the finding that although most of the rioters were originally arrested on the charge of burglary, the great majority were convicted of trespassing. "These case dispositions have also suggested," the report concluded, "that there was little before the court in

the form of evidence or positive proof of specific criminal activity.”⁴⁴ It would appear, therefore, that persons not normally associated with criminal activities were involved in the riot; that is, they either took advantage of the situation to loot or to retaliate against the police or businessman. When the respondents were queried as to the possible consequences of the riot, 58 percent indicated that they felt that favorable results would follow. In sum, well over 50 percent of the inhabitants of Watts and the surrounding communities were not critical of the violent events of 1965 and its anticipated favorable effects.

The consensus of attitudes among Negroes relative to the objects of their attacks in the many riots was equally evident. In essence, the attack was considered as a justifiable retaliation. Statements to this effect were made during and after the riot: “We’re men now”. . . . “We won’t take any more from Whitey”. . . . “It’s finally happened. They can’t get away with everything.” Once the retaliation began, frustrations and anger welled to the surface and were transformed into a released joy. A cleaning woman during the Harlem Riot of 1964 declared:

I clean the white man’s dirt all the time. I’d work for four families and some I don’t care for and some I like. And Saturday I worked for some I like. And when I got home and later when the trouble began, something happened to me. I went on the roof to see what was going on. I don’t know what it was, but hearing the guns I felt like something was crawling in me, like the whole damn world was no good, and the little kids and the big ones and all of us was going to get killed because we don’t know what to do. And I see the cops are white and I was crying. Dear God, I am crying! And I took this pop bottle and it was empty and I threw it down on the cops, and I was crying and laughing.⁴⁵

Attitudinal studies among Negroes in the Watts area further substantiate the argument that the degree of accord was substantial among its residents. The LARS study on Negro attitudes regarding the events in Watts indicated that “support for the riot was far more extensive than the public has been led to believe.”⁴⁶ Moreover, if the ambivalent or neutral respondents are combined with those who were favorable to what happened in Watts, a substantial number of the community (45 percent) were not unhappy with the violence.

Of significance in understanding the meaning attributed to the event by the respondents were the answers to the questions, "What word or terms would you use in talking about it?" "Did it have a purpose or goal?" "Was it a Negro protest?" "Why were they attacked?" Thirty-eight percent of the Negro sample thought that the violence should be referred to as a "revolt, revolution, insurrection"; 46 percent thought the term "riot" was more appropriate. More than half of the Negroes questioned felt that the riot had a purpose; 62 percent considered the riot a Negro protest; and 64 percent thought the attack was deserved.⁴⁷

The areas of restraint which appear to be characteristic of Negro rioting become dramatically important. In the first place, the rioters carefully distinguished between institutions within their communities deleterious to their lives and those which afforded needed services. With few exceptions, Negroes did not attack libraries, schools, hospitals, medical facilities or other civic buildings. Targets of destruction were the small and large business establishments believed to exploit and discriminate. Untouched were those businesses owned or operated by Negroes and protected by signs: "Blood-Owned," "Blood Brother," "Soul Blood," "Soul Brother," "Negro Owned," or as in the case of the spared Chinese laundry in Harlem, "Me Colored Too." The impression broadcast by the mass media was one of wholesale, indiscriminate fire-bombing and looting. Many stores were destroyed, however, not because of direct attack on the part of Negroes but because of their refusal to permit fire equipment into the area.

Secondly, the number of police, firemen and other Caucasians killed or wounded by sniper's bullets during the riot period was minimal. In the Watts Riot, for example, not a single white person was reported to have been killed by sniper fire. The number of civic officials and others hit by bullets from rioters in the other riots was extremely small, indicating that Negroes distinguished between various types of persons.

Related to the small number of injuries from shooting was a third characteristic of restraint. Unlike the race riots before 1964, in which Caucasians generally invaded Negro neighborhoods and caused personal and property damage, Negroes during the recent riots remained essentially *within* their communities. Few forays into Caucasian districts were noted at any time during the period of the riots, despite the fact that automobile mobility makes a white middle-class area

readily accessible. The purpose was to violate or destroy the vestiges of white society, its oppressive institutions, and its visible signs of authority within the Negro community, and to signify Negro antagonism as a symbol of retaliation.

Thus the rioters signalled the significance of the riots. "This is where our calender starts." . . . "We made whitey sit up and take notice." Exclaimed a young Negro man at a youth symposium in the Negro district of Oakland, California: "Many Negroes would rather die than live under conditions as they are now. For these people, riots present the only chance of ever achieving equality."⁴⁸ As an unemployed youth at a street-corner meeting in Watts after the riot told Bayard Rustin, "We won." Rustin asked dubiously: "How have you won? Homes have been destroyed, Negroes are lying dead in the streets, the stores from which you buy food and clothes are destroyed, and people are bringing you relief." The reply was assertive: "We won because we made the world pay attention to us. The police chief never came before; the mayor always stayed uptown. We made them come."⁴⁹

The riots were an emotionally liberating and identifying event in the lives of contemporary Negroes. Many commentators have noted the "carnival" atmosphere, the unrestrained joy on the faces of the Negroes participating in the event. Similar to the cry of Black Power, the riots have

forged a new sense of identity. The riots welded them together, and now they feel capable of serving a new fate, not just passively enduring their present existence. Perhaps every national and racial identity derives from the fact—or at least the legend—of aggressive rising. Is not every revolution a sudden and abrupt break with the past and the potential beginning of a new tradition?⁵⁰

The thirty-one riots which raged in the cities from 1964 to 1967 must be viewed within the context of a consensus on the part of Negroes to gain dignity, status and power within American society in a manner similar to the attempts of the newly emerging black nations. Further, the riots can be said to have been an integral aspect of the protest of the 1960's. Although having become protests of retaliative violence, they represent an expression of the civil rights and other Negro movements. The ultimate objective of these movements is to introduce revolutionary change within the framework of the American

social and political structure. Alexis de Tocqueville noted over a century ago:

If ever America undergoes great revolutions, they will be brought about by the presence of the black race on the soil of the United States; that is to say, they will owe their origin, not to the equality, but to the inequality of condition.⁵¹

NOTES

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America, I* (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), p. 394.
2. *Newsweek*, Vol. LXVI, No. 9 (August 30, 1965), p. 5.
3. Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 11.
4. Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 5.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
6. Fred R. Von de Mehden, *Politics of the Developing Nations* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), pp. 22-26.
7. Lucien W. Pye, *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 9.
8. Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, pp. 63-64.
9. J. Anthony Lukas, "Postscript on Detroit: 'Whitey Hasn't Got the Message,'" *The New York Times Magazine* (August 27, 1967), p. 56.
10. Carl Degler, *Out of Our Past* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 104.
11. Thomas F. Pettigrew, *A Profile of the Negro American* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1964), p. xii.
12. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1962), p. 17.
13. Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Before The Mayflower* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., n.d.).
14. "Farewell to Liberals: A Negro View," *The Nation*, Vol. 195, No. 12 (October 20, 1962), p. 238.
15. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1963), p. 32.
16. For a fuller explanation of the phrase, see Carmichael and Hamilton, *Black Power*; and John Johnson, "A Symposium: Black Power, Its Measure and Meaning," *Negro Digest*, XVI, (1966).
17. Budd Schulberg, "Watts Riots—End or Beginning?" *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1966, *Opinion*, p. 3.
18. Lukas, "Postscript on Detroit," *New York Times Magazine*, p. 41.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
20. Fanon, *Wretched*, p. 31.
21. Schulberg, *Los Angeles Times*, p. 3.
22. *Time*, Vol. 88, No. 24 (December 9, 1966), p. 57.
23. *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 1966, Sec. 2, p. 8.
24. *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?* (Los Angeles: State of California, 1965), p. 27.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
27. George Allen, "The Plan: To Burn Los Angeles," *American Opinion*, n.d., (Belmont, Massachusetts), p. 1. His ideas were subsequently expanded in *Communist Revolution in the Streets* (Boston: Western Island, 1967).
28. "Civil Rights Leaders Should Blame Themselves for Riots," *Human Events*, August 28, 1965, p. 6.
29. *Newsweek*, Vol. LXVI, No. 9 (August 30, 1967), p. 14.
30. *New York Times*, August 18, 1965, p. 20.
31. John Allan Long, "After the Midwest Riots," *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 10, 1966, p. 11.
32. *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1967, p. 18.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Time*, Vol. 90, No. 6 (August 11, 1967), p. 11.
35. *Newsweek*, Vol. 70, No. 8 (August 7, 1967), p. 25.
36. *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1967; *Time*, Vol. 90, No. 6 (August 11, 1967), p. 12.
37. *Violence in the City*, p. 1.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Governor's Report on the Los Angeles Riot, Vol. III, "Testimony of Lt. Governor Glen M. Anderson, September 22, 1965," p. 60.
40. Elliott Luby, "Is Mass Violence an Epidemic Disease?" *Medical World News*, Vol. 8, No. 35 (September 1, 1967), p. 40.
41. David O. Sears and John B. McConahay, "Riot Participation," *Los Angeles Riot Study* (Institute on Government and Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 2-3.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
43. "Watts Riot Arrests: Final Disposition" (Sacramento: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, 1966), p. 37.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Time*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (July 31, 1964), p. 11.
46. T. M. Tomlinson and David O. Sears, "Negro Attitudes Toward the Riot," *Los Angeles Riot Study* (Institute on Government and Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, 1967), p. 5.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
48. "Youth Discusses Racial Problems," *Human Relations News*, Alameda County, Calif., Vol. I (September, 1967), p. 1.
49. "The Watts Manifesto and the McCone Report," *Commentary*, Vol. 41, No. 3, (March, 1966), p. 30.
50. Frederick J. Hacker and Aljean Harmetz, "What the McCone Commission Didn't See," *Frontier Magazine*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (March, 1966), p. 13.
51. De Tocqueville, *Democracy*, II, 270.

Judd Marmor

Psychosocial Aspects of Urban Violence

VIOLENCE IS A FORM OF BEHAVIOR intended to injure or destroy an object that is perceived as an actual or potential source of frustration or danger, or as a symbol thereof. Much controversy has raged for many years over the question of whether violence is rooted in an instinctual aggressive urge that is inherent in the nature of man. Many classical psychoanalysts, following the lead of Sigmund Freud, tend to believe that it is. They hold, moreover, that this urge is of autochthonous, spontaneous origin, requiring some external outlet if it is not to be "turned inward" with resultant psychopathology. According to this theory, all assertive behavior, even that which is creative and adaptive, is a form of aggression, although in such instances the aggression is assumed to be "fused" with positive, libidinal drives which enable it to have constructive rather than destructive goals.

Most behavioral scientists, however, are of the opinion that although man, like other mammals, is born with an innate capacity for violence or aggressive behavior, whether or not this capacity finds expression depends almost always on some external factor rather than on a spontaneous inner urge.¹ To put it more succinctly, the fact that the capacity for violence is innate in man does not mean that the expression of violence is inevitable.

A distinction needs also to be made between violence and conflict. Conflict in one form or another will always be part of the human scene. The modes by which conflict is expressed and pursued, however, are highly variable, responsive to pressures for change, and amenable to controls that can limit the degree of destructiveness involved.

The sources of most violence can be found in man's life situation. Indeed, the fact that in all societies rates of violent behavior can be demonstrated to be clearly correlated with certain types of social patterning (e.g. poverty, urbanization, social class, etc.) is an effective argument against the assumption that human violence arises spon-

taneously on the basis of biological needs or simple idiosyncratic propensities.² The common tendency, moreover, to assume that violent behavior is always correlated with anger or hostility constitutes a considerable oversimplification. In today's world there is at least as great a danger that violence will result from the effects of fear as from hostility. Clinical experience has demonstrated that panic is a potent trigger for violence; and extreme fear of an adversary is just as likely to provoke an aggressive act against him as is hatred of him.

Actually, a great deal of contemporary violence takes place without either anger or fear in relation to the intended victims. This kind of violence, sometimes called "instrumental aggression," is in the service of "just doing a job," à la Eichmann. Much of modern warfare—the dropping of bombs or napalm on faceless, distant, dehumanized dots, or the firing of shells at invisible enemies beyond the horizon—is of such instrumental nature. Indeed, the ultimate achievement of modern war technology, the mathematically precise triggering of intercontinental missiles with nuclear warheads capable of devastating total continents thousands of miles away, is one in which neither anger nor any other passionate emotion has any functional value at all. Thomas Merton, in an essay ironically entitled "A Devout Meditation in Memory of Adolph Eichmann,"³ has recently pointed out that one of the most terrifying aspects of international warfare and genocide is that so much of it takes place on the basis of cold, planned, precise, and deliberate action. As he puts it: "We rely on the sane people of the world to preserve it from barbarism, madness, destruction. And now it begins to dawn on us that it is precisely the sane ones who are the most dangerous . . . who can without qualm and without nausea aim the missiles and press the buttons that will initiate the great festival of destruction that they, the sane ones, have prepared."

However, another kind of social violence, quantitatively less massive and less destructive than that of modern warfare, is assuming more distressing and frightening proportions for contemporary Americans—because it is close at hand and because "enemy" and "victims" are both highly visible. I refer to the violence in our urban ghettos, which has reached climactic proportions in recent mass riots and which has been dramatically brought home to millions of Americans via television.

In considering the sources of this phenomenon it is useful to distinguish between its basic underlying roots on the one hand and the

trigger mechanisms that set it off on the other. At first glance it would seem to be an obvious truism that the source of much of the contemporary violence in our urban ghettos is rooted in the poverty, poor housing, inadequate education, and generally degraded living conditions with which the residents of these ghettos are confronted. Although no one would deny the relevance of these factors, the question still remains, however, of why these outbursts are taking place now with greater frequency and intensity than in the past. One might point out, for example, that the lot of the Negro under slavery was certainly worse than it is today; or that the lot of poor immigrants at the turn of the century in our urban ghettos, with their sweatshops, twelve-hour day, child labor, etc., was worse than the lot of the poor today. And yet there was not as much violence in terms of organized mass riots then as now.

The significant difference between these earlier situations and those of the present lies in what has been called the "revolution of rising expectations." Only when people have been stimulated to hope that their unhappy lot can be changed does it really begin to feel unendurable. As De Tocqueville, referring to the French Revolution, pointed out, "A people which has supported without complaint, as if they were not felt, the most oppressive laws, violently throws them off as soon as their weight is lightened. The social order destroyed by a revolution is always better than that which immediately preceded it. . . . The evil which was suffered patiently as inevitable, seems unendurable as soon as the idea of escaping from it is conceived."⁴

What has happened in contemporary America to account for this revolution of rising expectations, and for the sense of unendurable frustration that many of the masses in our urban ghettos, particularly our Negro masses, have begun to feel? It seems to me that there are four major factors that account for this change.

The first has been the heightened affirmation of the democratic ideals on which our nation was founded. Two world wars have been fought, presumably to make the world safer for democracy, and a succession of American presidents have emphatically publicized these aims. The eloquent idealism of John Kennedy upon his accession to the presidency was particularly influential in raising the hopes of millions of young people that we were finally on the verge of bringing the American dream of equality and security for all to a living reality. The drive to end discrimination took a new lease on life, and American

students who, for a generation, had been "playing it safe" began to become politically active again through the medium of the Civil Rights Movement. Despite Kennedy's tragic assassination, these hopes for a "great society" received further impetus during the first year of the Johnson administration when new civil rights legislation was pushed through Congress in a way that Kennedy himself had not been able to accomplish. The nation's poverty programs, Operation Headstart, new housing laws, and apparent progress in desegregation of schools and other public places, all seemed to hold high promise for new and hitherto unattained levels of American democracy.

The stimulation of these hopes has been enormously heightened by the communications explosion growing out of modern technology. There is hardly a house in America today which does not have a radio set and more than 90 percent of all households are now reported to have a television set. This has meant that the message of democracy is being carried into every community and home in the United States, and can be comprehended even by the totally illiterate. "Madison Avenue's" visible demonstration via television, slick magazines, and other mass media, of better ways to live—with constant tantalizing offers of beautiful homes, tempting foods, attractive clothes, and luxurious holiday resorts—offers increased tangibility and substance to the great promise, in a manner that had never before been possible.

The progressive dissolution of colonial empires (at least in their traditional form) in Africa and Asia after World War II, with the emergence on these continents of many new nations whose representatives are accorded full diplomatic respect in the forums and councils of the United Nations, has lent additional strength and impetus to the expectations of our own black population. It has given them renewed pride in their historic traditions, made them less ashamed of their black skin, and heightened their impatience and resentment at the residual manifestations of discrimination which they continue to encounter in their own country.

Given these three factors and the rising hopes and expectations which they have stimulated, it is inevitable that the steady and inexorable escalation of the war in Vietnam, with its inhibiting effect upon the social welfare programs of our country, has tended to create a sense of mounting frustration in our urban ghettos. Poverty programs have had to be curtailed or eliminated, civil rights advances have ground to a standstill, and the massive financing which is needed to rehabilitate the ghettos is no longer available. It is in this context that

much of what is going on in contemporary America can be understood. The growing disaffection on our college campuses, the rise of the hippie movement with its rejection of conventional middle-class values, and the mounting anger and frustration of our black populations are all related to the factors described above. Hopes have been stimulated and are not being fulfilled. Among blacks, the intense frustration they have experienced has led to intense anger at the whites who have failed them, particularly white liberals. This apparently irrational focussing of their anger on those who have tried hardest to help them is not quite so illogical when we realize that these whites are perceived as the main instruments who have stimulated their hopes and then failed to carry through.

Other factors must be considered also. Violence is rarely something that takes place totally unilaterally. It is almost always a transaction involving two parties. The mounting anger on the part of the deprived black, and the growing insistence of his demand for equality now, has stimulated much anxiety, particularly among the lower middle-class white population, who have then responded with counter-aggression and renewed prejudice—the so-called white backlash. This, in turn, has intensified black nationalism, and the chasm between the two groups has grown deeper and wider, with greater polarization of feelings and a greater predisposition to violence on both sides.

Moreover, although the negative aspects of violence are quite obvious, the constructive aspects of violent behavior are often lost sight of. Violent behavior on the part of masses of people represents a kind of crude signalling device or communication to the body politic that something is wrong. Thus, riots or acts of violence serve as a means of opening channels of communication between the ghettos and the power structure, channels that in many instances have never existed previously. Also, as has been thoroughly documented in some of the descriptions of recent riots, they provide a release mechanism which gives a sense of power and status to people or groups who have been feeling inadequate or humiliated. This explains the sense of elation among riot participants that has so frequently been observed, particularly in the early phase of the rioting, before the suppressive weight of control measures has had a chance to take effect.

With these underlying factors, what are the triggers that have set off mass outbursts of urban violence? Not surprisingly, most of these riots have taken place at the height of summer when the unbearable heat in the central-city ghettos has lowered the threshold of irritabil-

ity of their teeming inhabitants to dangerous levels. Given the basic setting of chronic anger and frustration and such a lowered threshold of irritability, any police action which seems unwarranted, inconsiderate, or insulting can become the incendiary fuse, as the recent report of the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at Brandeis University has pointed out.⁵ An unjust arrest, or rumors of a black person being injured or unfairly handled by law enforcement agencies or by some whites, can suddenly release the pent up anger in the group, anger which then spreads by mass contagion to explosive proportions.

THE "TREATMENT" of mass urban violence needs to be dealt with at two levels. The immediate, short-term need is to reduce and eliminate such triggering mechanisms as much as possible. This calls for better police relations and communications with the members of the urban ghettos, for greater use and employment of black police officers, for a greater degree of local rule wherever possible, and for the elimination of the kinds of patterns of behavior that intensify the sense of degradation which the members of these ghettos feel. Thus, while one can appreciate the tensions under which white police officers operate within a black urban ghetto, certain actions that traditionally are often taken by them seem psychologically indefensible. For example, the common practice of "spread-eagling" a black suspect over the hood of his car while he is searched is a "castrating" procedure that arouses deep feelings of humiliation and resentment among black men whose masculine self-image has already been rendered deeply vulnerable by chronic unemployment and racial discrimination.

On a more fundamental basis, of course, the deep sources of frustrations in our central cities have to be dealt with. Although it might logically be argued that if one could eliminate the expectations of our poor, they would be better off, this is no longer possible in today's world. Hopes brought to life are not easily stifled, and the American commitment to a democratic ideology is now too deeply rooted in our traditions to be eradicated. It therefore becomes a matter of urgent necessity to tackle the basic sources of frustration of our poor so that their hopes can again acquire the potentiality of realization. In today's explosive urban situation gradualism or tokenism will no longer suffice. To the underprivileged blacks "gradualism," through long and bitter experience, has come to mean "never." Only a crash program of massive proportions that will enable them to see results rapidly will have

any effect in lessening their level of frustration. Unfortunately the tragedy of present-day America is that so long as the war in Vietnam continues, there is no prospect that such a crash program will be or can be undertaken.

Finally, there are certain other long-term considerations that are relevant to the prevention of violence in American society. Perhaps the most important of these is the need to alter some of the social institutions and basic values of our present-day culture which subtly tend to glorify violence and, not so subtly, to desensitize people to its manifestations.⁶ Our history books glorify wars and generals; the millions of victims of war are treated merely as ciphers, and, as Arthur Koestler has so aptly put it, "statistics don't bleed." Our movies, our television stories, our comic books, and our newspapers all "sell" violence in huge doses to our children, our adolescents, and our grown-ups. War games and toys grow ever more realistic.

The issue here is not whether such marketing of violence "creates" aggression in people. The roots of aggression, as we have seen, are of a deeper sort. Moreover, to argue, as many psychologists and psychiatrists have, that war games and toys, and violence in communication media provide "an outlet for hostility" is completely to miss the essential point. Granting that they are indeed such an outlet, the question is whether this is the kind of outlet that is healthy either for the individual or for society. The insidious fact about such marketing of violence is that it *desensitizes* people to the spectacle of human brutality and killing and teaches them techniques for encompassing such ends. Our society needs institutions that will strengthen the dignity and sanctity of human life, not degrade it. "Outlets for hostility" do not have to be directed at goals of death and brutality. There are "moral equivalents" of violence, to adapt William James's well-known phrase, that serve such psychological purposes equally well. Cheering for one's side in an athletic contest, or participating in one, is also an outlet for hostility, and a much healthier one, socially and individually. There is a crying need in our society to identify the various acculturation processes, subtle and not-so-subtle, that abet patterns of human violence, and to try to modify them. Not only can war no longer be considered a rational political instrument in an age of nuclear weapons; the patterns of socially sanctioned violence and brutality in any form need to be eliminated if man is to survive the challenges that face him in the decades ahead.

NOTES

1. Judd Marmor, "War, Violence and Human Nature." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March 1964, pp. 19-22.
2. L. A. Coser, "Violence and the Social Structure." *Science and Psychoanalysis*, Vol. VI (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1963), pp. 30-42.
3. T. Merton, "A Devout Meditation in Memory of Adolph Eichmann," *Raids on the Unspeakable* (New York: New Directions Publishing Co., 1966).
4. Alexis de Tocqueville *L'Ancien Regime*. Trans. by M. W. Patterson. (Oxford, England: Basic Blackwell, 1949), p. 186.
5. *Six City Study*. A survey of Racial Attitudes in Six Northern Cities: Preliminary Findings. A report of the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence. Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., June 1967 (Mimeographed).
6. Judd Marmor, "Psychological Problems of Warlessness." In A. Larsen (ed.), *A Warless World* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), pp. 117-30.

Peter Nabokov

Reflections on the Alianza

INTRODUCTION

IN THE MIDDLE of the six-day Arab-Israeli War a minor social eruption in New Mexico caused newspaper readers to blink their eyes and check the dateline to see if they were still in the twentieth century.

On June 5, 1967 a band of armed men attacked the county courthouse of Rio Arriba in the movie-set town of Tierra Amarilla. They shot and wounded a state policeman and a jailor and held the pink and blue building for two hours, before leaving in a getaway caravan with two hostages.

The raiders were allegedly members of an organization known as the "Alianza," or Alliance of Free City States. Four years earlier this group of Spanish Americans had incorporated as a nonprofit organization whose goal was the return of some 1,715 land grants comprising millions of southwestern acres to the descendants of their original Spanish owners. These lands had been given by the Spanish Crown and Mexican Government to the original pioneer settlers. But when the United States took over the lands after 1848, most of them were lost to various Anglo owners.

The organization's prime mover, Reies Lopez Tijerina, had come into New Mexico in the late 1950's from Texas via Arizona. His group's first public protest was a march from Albuquerque to Santa Fe in July, 1966. Its next demonstration was a camp-in at Echo Amphitheater in Rio Arriba County. But the amphitheater—a natural cavity in a sandstone cliff—is in Carson National Forest, and the "takeover" saw five members of the Alianza (including Tijerina and one of his four brothers) convicted in court a year later on various charges.

Then came June, 1967, and the publicized plan for a large Alianza meeting at Coyote in Rio Arriba County. The night before the meet-

ing many Alianza leaders were arrested. The meeting itself was described as a "bust" in the press.

Enraged, members of the Alianza assaulted the courthouse in an attempt to arrest the man they felt to be at the bottom of their injustice: the district attorney of the first judicial district of New Mexico. During the two hours they held the building they shot out windows, herded the county employees into a room, shot up state police cars, and terrified the entire town. But they failed to find the district attorney. After the largest manhunt in New Mexico history, with a mobilized National Guard to aid in the search, the alleged raiders were rounded up within the next two months. Their preliminary hearing, conducted in early February, saw eleven of the original twenty held over for trial on twenty-four counts reduced from first-degree kidnapping to false imprisonment.

I MODEL

FOUR OPTIONS are open to any minority group caught in the political and territorial confines of a majority group. One is to stay put, to accept the status decreed by the governing group and its ideology. Second is to try to return the majority group to an uncorrupt reestablishment of its original principles. Third is to revolt and grab the majority group's bastions of power, military or monetary. Finally, the minority can emigrate en masse.

These possibilities confront any minority caught in the flux of history. Each of the ideological choices implied has different relations to the use of physical force as an injurious or coercive act. Violence as a social or antisocial occurrence, violence as a tactic, and violence as a political *sine qua non* are socially regarded as entirely different beasts. The manner in which the minority group incorporates violence, what violence it permits and what it forbids, is often an index of what political choice that minority has made, no matter what it says it is doing.

Violence is a threat to the status quo. Unless it is acculturated, pacified, the majority group will not permit it. A gas chamber might be termed pacific violence in that it has the effect of maintaining the status quo. A bank robbery, a crime of passion, an assassination, could, depending on the majority group's code, be unlawful, violent violence, and thus bring down on the criminal some manner of *pacific* violence.

Often a fervent minority attempts to return the status quo to its alleged historical or mythological purity. Sometimes violence is em-

played as an illustrative or persuasive tactic toward this end. It can be used symbolically, or in a well-publicized court case chosen for its publicity impact. It can also become a demonstration of displeasure, and of the urgency of that displeasure. It is a rhetorical device to augment the often-disregarded power of words. It gives body to purpose. It is hint. It is threat. It is also gamble. He who waves the gun must be ready to use it. Reform carries within it the seed of revolution. And in revolution, violence is more than threat; it is the lever. It is *reducto ad arms*, even if no shot is fired. "Bloodless coups" and "quiet turnovers of power" only occur when the assailed party knows it is whipped. Resistance will not be tolerated, therefore it is up to the assailed party either to counter the coup, in which case open warfare is bound to ensue, or to accept the demands and bow out.

II PEOPLE

AS SUCH A MINORITY GROUP, the Spanish Americans of northern New Mexico appear to face these options. As a discontented minority group, some of them have longed for something more than their permitted status quo. A portion found that longing satisfied when a Texas-born Spanish-American ex-evangelist named Reies Lopez Tijerina wandered into their communities.

Facing options does not mean one sees them. Given their social and political nature, the survival mechanisms of the localized power groups, the historical reluctance to corporate engagements, the Spanish Americans perceived no such political smorgasbord. Before the advent of Tijerina they made few forceful public choices. Their discontent leaked out in "unlawful," poorly-organized violence against Anglos, or in private family vendettas often precipitated by a drunken brawl or an unfaithful wife. These outlets temporarily alleviated the personal pressures but not the political situation. One problem was that their own status quo was not that of the American majority. Since the land shennanigans of the late nineteenth century a wild-west immunity has allowed for actions in violation of the majority group's stated laws.

When Reies Tijerina entered the northern villages in the late 1950's, he talked from an instinctive eye and ear through a gifted tongue. His words were not the fruit of a calculating brain; they vibrated with innate, rhetorical power. He struck all the blood chords: language, cul-

ture, and race. He stretched his amateurish historical research. His migrant Texas upbringing gave him little knowledge of the real political and cultural heritage of Spanish American "free city states," as he defined the historical land grant villages of northern New Mexico. But he had a vision. Along with a romanticised utopian return to past prosperity and personal freedom, he promised the northern disenchanted an ideological basketful. He would give them reform by forcing recognition of historical treaties affirmed once upon a time by the majority group. He would demand cultural recognition within the confines of the majority group. He gave them biological and royalist pride by reciting the very day when their "new breed"—the offspring of Spanish and Indian marriages—was decreed legal by King Ferdinand of Spain. Lumping revolution and emigration, he preached the escapist paradise of the Free City States, at once appealing to cultural nostalgia, current deprivation, buried racial pride, and political alienation.

The northern New Mexico villages had remained almost prepolitical in the general American sense, but they were and are a more essential component in the political structure of their respective counties than are most American communities. The villages do not vote from conscience or conviction. They do not sit in on county governing councils. They write few letters to their "representatives." But they are reliable fuel for their county political machines.

The northern New Mexican is for family and immediate community—what is left of it. He is conditioned to be wary of wider involvement. This has not always been the case. The first land-grant communities were self-contained, self-governing entities, with complex distribution of duties and controls. But the gradual destruction of their economic base made their populations revert instead of "progress."

Outside of family interaction remained the artificial "familia" of a *patron's* radiating circle of dependents, from its inner core of confidants to the subsistence farmer who every few years receives a sum to pull a lever with a name written over it. Adept at meeting the crisis needs of his extended "children," the *patron* can usually outlast progressive but inconsistent outside attempts to reform the status quo. Politics was not conceived as an arm of reform. "Politics" remains a dirty word and an accusation in the northern villages. The tactic which the villagers learned through rough handling by Spanish, Mexican, and

United States authorities was minimum involvement. With survival having top priority, the enjoyment of political choice was impossible.

But there were rumblings. Bandit gangs known as "gavillas" raided parts of Taos, San Miguel, Mora, and Colfax counties in the 1890's. San Miguel County later saw "Las Gorras Blancas," the "white caps," who terrorized Anglos, settling on their former land grants. Through the 1920's the "mano negro" or "black hand" activated crude insurgent activity—cattle rustling and arson—against Anglo ranchers and shopkeepers. Since then stud-horse shootings, fence-cuttings, and barn-burnings have served as an outlet for complex Spanish-American frustrations.

Besides, the central issue of land ownership, less identifiable but perhaps just as permeating fissures in village life were caused by two world wars, the revolutions in technology and communication, and the implied demand that rural America somehow join in. Yet resentment submerged itself in the desire to return to village security. Unlike the American Indian, the Spanish American was given no warning that outright conquest was at hand. Even then it is doubtful that there would have been any communal resistance, for village life under Spain and Mexico had come to depend to a large extent on local, mediating "jefes" or chiefs. And unlike the American Indian, consolidated reaction had been sublimated to minimum involvement. But minimum involvement does not mean blindness.

There is a difference between violence as a last resort, as the animal reaction of either being cornered or wanting to see the whole works go up in flames, and violence as an habitual release. There is a difference between violence as culturally natural and violence as culturally unnatural. America defines violence as unnatural because of her pretensions to justice, peace, freedom, all of which it feels are both prerequisites and results of the democratic process. Hence the terror of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," where the trick lies in the reader's gradual awareness that an American community is participating in seasonal human sacrifice, with all the attendant emotions—gaiety, festiveness, expectancy—of a "pagan" culture.

But within America, among minority groups of peasant heritage, violence is sometimes a sanctioned expression. It is also frequently the correct political response prescribed by a code which functions alongside the established political code, and is the element which

keeps the two from amalgamating. Thirdly, it is the factor which often keeps the common people, caught between the two codes and forced to develop the savvy not to compromise either, from being assassinated by the Mafia for talking too much or being arrested by the police for aiding a "lawless" group.

In such a situation, law becomes relative, and under the pressure of both codes the common people learn consciously to react instead of act. Perhaps where their pride lodges they would like to make some sort of commitment. But the unconscious tactics of survival have become cultural habits. The people remain uninvolved, even if the battle is on the very fields they till.

The habits of leaving well enough alone, of distrust in cooperation or consolidation (although northern New Mexicans once cooperated to make their villages self-sufficient autonomous social cells) are the lessons of grim experience. Self-sacrifice is not within the ken of family-oriented villagers habituated for six generations to doing what they are told to do.

Thus when villagers precipitate violence it can barely be called a tactic. It is an explosion under pressure, a reaction followed by bewilderment even by its perpetrators. It is a sanctioned outlet, but whispered about and hidden from the outside world. Or it is an attempt to express group opinion without actually acknowledging, to outsiders or to themselves, that they are a group. Since lawful but effective consolidation has been decreed as out of the question, ad hoc secret groups undertake limited actions which are usually never tied to a calculated follow-through.

By virtue of their inherited psychology, the political choice of maintaining the status quo had been made by the northern New Mexican villagers in spite of themselves. They depend on their homegrown patterns to translate, both into their own tongue and into an understandable system of rewards, the demands of the dominant American system. They allow their young people to be lost to the barrios of industrial centers, and they let their aged fight to make a meager living on the dwindling distribution of grazing allotments from the Forest Service.

A myraid of cultural shocks and prejudicial atmospheres frustate the young caught between two ways of life. The dregs of village traditions, preoccupation with family ties, and the dreams of what has been are the opium of the traditional elements who remain in the villages.

III CATALYST

REIES LOPEZ TIJERINA walked into a veritable gallery of archetypes of primitive leaders. He also became a catalyst for a variety of frustrations he was never fully to comprehend.

America is a cunning colonizer. In their time of country-claiming France and England shipped the cream of the native crop back to the old country's best schools. Somehow it never rang a bell that Mahatma Ghandi, Jomo Kenyetta and Ho Chi Minh would be stronger adversaries because of this assistance. For all its promises of equality and the availability of its civilized resources, America was much less generous to its subjugated peoples than these unapologetic colonizers. Thus Reies Tijerina's education began in a smattering of rural schools near migrant camps. It culminated in the Assembly of God Bible School in Ysleta, Texas.

Because of this limiting rather than liberating background, Tijerina never understood the dimensions of the instinctive, rhetorical, intellectual powers he possessed; he only intuited their results. He never remained at arm's distance from the effect he had on people, but he was never at ease with the cause of that effect, himself. He remains driven, guided and blinded by his intense intuition and the immediate feedback of faith he is gifted to instill. Living on the momentum of his undeniable charisma, he is not an analyzer and therefore not an initiator. His actions are inevitably reactions, either wild ones against the crimes inflicted by a dominant system on his poverty-stricken family in his youth, or specific ones on the heels of some sudden action by his official adversaries.

To the northern villages he brought a message incredibly attractive in its power and simplicity. Only a gifted man could overcome entrenched passivity and cynicism with this broad rallying cry. Only a gifted man could make such a message specific. It was that justice should prevail. Whether Tijerina himself was con artist or political agitator or true deliverer, it did not for a minute mean that America and her New Mexican citizens could deny the message, or ignore the underlying accusation. Tijerina's simplicity remains his handicap and his power.

His simplicity meant that he was never quite able to make his Alianza into an engine of reform. He was challenging the basic tenets of the dominant system by reverting to a simplistic basic principle which, apparently, had become superseded by intervening laws and

habits. The Establishment could pass off his calling it "hypocrite" because of his scatter-gun approach, but his accusations hang like a banner over New Mexico. They will remain whether Tijerina lives or dies.

While reform was out of the question—because he was adhering to laws which the dominant system said were outdated, de-legalized, negated through "right of adverse possession," archaic, almost mythological—something of Tijerina's words still struck receptive chords in a segment of the northern population.

Walter Lippmann analyzes this receptiveness in his *A Preface to Morals*. "When an agitator wishes to start a crusade, a religious revival, an inquisition, or some sort of jingo excitement, the further he goes from the centers of civilization the more following he can attract. It is in the backwoods and in the hill country, in kitchens and in old men's clubs, that fanaticism can be kindled. The urban crowd, if it has been urban for any length of time and has become used to its environment, may be fickle, faddish, nervous, unstable, but it lacks the concentration of energy to become fiercely excited for any length of time about anything. At its worst it is a raging mob, but it is not persistently fanatical. There are too many things to attract its attention for it to remain preoccupied for long with any one thing."

However northern New Mexico was not a calculation, says Tijerina, it was a divination. In a spirit true to one of the archetypal facets of a self-made messiah, Tijerina explains his coming to the northern villages by a dream:

"... I went to sleep, and in the morning the sun woke me and that white, how do you say, dew, had covered me all over. That night I asked God to show me the future of my life. It shook me—shook like this—it shook all my life, from there I turned to New Mexico. I saw frozen horses, they started melting and coming to life in a very old kingdom, old walls. Then I saw three angels of law and they asked me to help them. They said they had come from a long ways, had travelled the earth and come for me. Those tall pines I saw meant New Mexico."

Tijerina is also the millenarian leader who foresees a time of eventual reckoning when the Spanish American will receive his land grants back. His own past history of voluntary poverty and cross-country preaching partly fits him into the pattern of such fundamentalist leaders as Anthony the Counselor, whose nineteenth-century messianic

revolt is described in the Brazilian epic, *Rebellion in the Back Lands*, by Euclides Da Cunha.

Again, Tijerina's character contains something of the archetypal Robin Hood style of social bandit. Conflicting with his idealistic platform and his expressed adherence to nonviolence is an obvious pride in his wiles as a fugitive. His statements reveal an enjoyment of contests with the law. In this life-gambling some observers have sensed a fatalism, an embracing of the encounter to have done with it, a desperate leap to unload some private demon from his back. Tijerina says it is the concept of Justice which drives him with such unrelenting force.

Writes E. J. Hobsbawm in his study of archaic forms of social agitation, *Primitive Rebels*: "It is important that the incipient social bandit should be regarded as 'honorable' or non-criminal by the population, for if he was regarded as criminal against local convention, he could not enjoy the local protection on which he must rely completely."

Reies could never trust the villages completely, partly because he did not come from them and partly because they are in such flux. But he could trust most of their traditionalists. The fact that he could find any refuge, however, was implicit proof that an entire segment of the northern population was politically and socially alienated from the country at large.

Hobsbawm further quotes from an Italian treatise on the origins of the social bandit. "The career of a bandit almost always begins with some incident, which is not in itself grave, but drives him into outlawry, a police charge for some offense brought against the man rather than for the crime. . . ."

The Tijerina clan has always attracted official dogging. Reies Tijerina attributes his talk-back, fight-back reputation to the spirit of his grandfather, who, he says, was finally hung by Texas Rangers. Reies himself has a propensity for scrapes with the law. His three-year utopian enterprise in Arizona, the establishment of a fundamentalist commune called the Valley of Peace, folded after civilian and police harassment. A larceny charge during this time made him a wanted criminal. The police scrutiny which surrounded the Tijerina brothers through their wanderings in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico fits this same pattern.

Hobsbawm defines the goals of social banditry as "a universal and virtually unchanging phenomenon . . . little more than endemic

peasant protest against oppression and poverty; a cry for vengeance on the rich and the oppressors, a vague dream, of some curb upon them, a righting of individual wrongs. Its ambitions are modest: a traditional world in which men are justly dealt with It becomes epidemic rather than endemic when a peasant society which knows of no better means of self-defense is in a condition of abnormal tension and disruption."

For a man of Tijerina's drive and imagination, northern New Mexico was a logical last stop. It is the one pocket where something of what can be called Spanish-American culture still exists. For a Spanish American concerned with cultural roots and searching for an indigenous political and social model to inform his vision, it was his Athens—and his people's historical destiny.

But some of Tijerina archetypal characteristics were anachronistic in the second half of the twentieth century. They even conflicted with each other. The fundamentalist and the social bandit clashed over the specific use of violence. The millenarian and the reformer argued over the kind of future to plan for. The revolutionist and the messiah could not get together over the contradictions between long-range and short-range goals.

Whatever the inbuilt obstacles to a concrete, single-minded platform which married tactics with goals and realities, Tijerina did effect "a condition of abnormal tension and disruption" in New Mexico. How this condition will itself be employed as a tactic or a lever remains to be seen.

IV ORGANIZATION

IT WAS ACTUALLY A MINORITY within a minority which supplied the members of Reies Tijerina's Alliance of Federal Land Grants, now known as the Alliance of Free City States, or "Alianza." It had Spanish Americans who had found a niche and new values in Anglo society against it from the start. It threatened their compromises and their social investments. But there was a sublimated empathy even from some of these for the rural, romantic movement. An undercurrent of spirited satisfaction, of pride, even of vengeance, could be sensed after the Tierra Amarilla courthouse raid. Although if Tijerina had ever tried urban street warfare he would not have enjoyed the refuge of city Spanish-American homes—that would have meant too much

jeopardy, and in their own way they had transferred the rural tactic of minimum involvement into the city barrios. Still many were vaguely gratified that their historical injustices and veiled present derogation were being paid back.

The character of the Alianza was traditionalist. Violence was never defined as a tactic; in fact no tactics were defined. The movement operated on a pre-political, play-by-ear philosophy. The unifying factors were frustration and resentment, even if no attempt was made to dissect the variety of frustrations. But violence did lurk somewhere in the promises of total return to the northern villagers of their land-grant acreage, although violence was not a weapon which was stated as possible in either the arsenal of rhetoric or of actual victory. As it turned out, it lay only in the gun closet of retaliation. For the Alianza reflected the strategic cultural deficiency of both its leaders and its followers: its actions were always reactions. Somewhere overhead hung the visionary goals, the comforting fulfillment of a nostalgia born of despair, the romanticised return to a society where "La Raza" were again full citizens of their own communities. But a complete break existed between this static realm with its vague historic trappings—coats of arms, papal bulls, royal decrees, and historic treaties—and the busy, fluctuating, painful present.

As the Alianza emerged, its conservatism was its trademark. Although Tijerina never realized the gamut of frustrations for which he became a catalyst, he understood this bedrock traditionalism. For ten years he had wandered the country preaching from the Bible to just this sort of traditionalist audience. But he never really understood that the same support, based on nostalgia for old values, a return to a cultural golden age, a desire for the resurgence of village economics and family unity, meant that the Alianza had no future with its present following. Youth, caught between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, found little attraction in such dreams.

Tijerina's personal shift from concern over saving souls to the cause of retrieving land and a cultural heritage was another unconscious fulfillment of an archetypal pattern. But his earlier calling was still reflected in the rituals of the Alianza. The lax tent-meeting style of "convention" and the Saturday night rural dances in the Alianza headquarters were never strategy sessions. Tijerina would squander much of his rhetorical power by allowing himself to be the link between the speeches of others. The dramatics of these meetings were

cumulative and passive rather than aimed at any planned peak or purpose. The collection of donations by the old twenties, tens, and fives calls, the alternation of pointed jokes and slogans, the singing of homemade "corridos," the break for native food, the final hours of dancing to jukebox mariachi music, these had the air of a Sunday religious outing rather than of a political meeting.

Another device which Tijerina and his followers found necessary in order to channel their enthusiasm was personification of their enemies. Lawyers who had once served for land-grant organizations were prime targets. Politicians, past and present, were other King Johns. Anglo ranchers were also villains. Finally the Alianza found its Sheriff of Nottingham in the person of Santa Fe's district attorney, who had all the attributes of a villain. He was Spanish American, therefore a traitor to his people. For a brief period he had apparently served as attorney for the land-grant corporation which was the precursor to the Alianza. And he seemed to have a personal animosity toward the Tijerina brothers and their organization.

The pressures from within—unsophistication, little young blood, political and organizational immaturity—meant that the Alianza reversed the process of normal evolution for a grass-roots protest movement. From talk of justice and old treaties it reverted to social banditry, once it found itself unable—both because of these inner pressures and because of the overwhelming official might against it—to prepare any other viable coercive tactic. Except for its July, 1966, march, poor planning and lack of alternatives got it into hot water every time. That the Tierra Amarilla raid was such a publicity success, while it was actually a botched last-ditch maneuver of desperation, was due to outside forces which were to bewilder the Alianza so much that it never really capitalized on the raid.

The Alianza was never sure what the peculiar violent heritage of its membership could mean to it, and never brought the question out into the open. Partly this was because it could never decide whether it wanted reform or revolution. Actually it wanted something else: return. Thus when violence did occur, as ineffective force in the "take-over" of Echo Amphitheater in October, 1966, or as full-scale assault in Tierra Amarilla on June 5, it was not tactically linked to any strategy. Without a precise definition of long-range objectives in the cold reality of present-day America, it is unlikely that the Alianza will ever draw up a coherent strategy.

V FUTURE

THE SHOTS FIRED AT TIERRA AMARILLA on June 5 were also heard around the world. To foreign countries it meant Le Far West was not dead. It diverted this nation from its impotent concentration on its solitary confinement in Vietnam. But to the Southwest and to the Spanish Americans in the cities it was a blessing not to be missed. It was the symbol which evoked Zapata and Murieta; it was the archetypal minority protest and had all the cinematic ingredients.

Increasing outside sympathy was the continual mishandling by local law-enforcement officials, whose questionable tactics had apparently brought about the raid and which continued to arouse public indignation in favor of the Alianza. Soon Denver, Los Angeles, and Texas Spanish-American organizations were either sending protest contingents or arranging alliances. A large convention held on October 21 and 22, 1967 highlighted both the triumph of the Alianza and the questions for its future.

It was attended by urban "chicano" militants, Black Power advocates of all stripes, and the hard-core Alianza. Although the speaker's platform in the Albuquerque Convention Center was festooned with the customary home-sewn coats of arms identifying various land grant pueblos, Tierra Amarilla no longer meant the 595,515-acre land grant but the incident which had made such a varied cultural gathering possible.

The Alianza stalwarts quickly learned of their organization's sudden and widespread reputation. They appeared almost awed by the switch caused by that handful of men on June 5. The urban was now paying tribute to the rural, the dislocated were paying homage to their roots, the young had come to praise the old. With that praise, however, was joined an unspoken message. Along with their tribute the speakers brought a subtle warning: the current nationwide winds of social discontent would ride over the stagnant, the nostalgic, and the romantic. Whether it liked it or not, the Alianza was now a particle in those winds. Beneath the expressions of unanimity and cooperation voiced by all at the convention lay the hard message that unless you adopted sophisticated methods, looked toward the problems and potential of your youth, and employed militant means, you would wither. If the Alianza remains the old-guard movement it has been, that weekend will have been its pinnacle moment.

As it stands, the organization could not last without its driving engine, Reies Tijerina. Although the recognition he gave to the plight of the northern villagers would not fade with his organization's demise, the Alianza could not survive without his energy. Changes are now being wrought in its infra-structure which suggest that it is broadening the scope of frustrations it will consolidate and that it is exploring new activities, both of protest and of social change.

After the Tierra Amarilla raid the Alianza made its rallying cry the legal support of the raid's defendants. It was outsiders who had to remind it of the significance of that event. It was they who had to coin the phrase, "We'd rather die in Tierra Amarilla than in Vietnam." The Alianza, given a great boost by the raid, immediately narrowed its focus to fund rallies—and this at a time when almost anything it said about the injustices to Spanish Americans, and any serious overtures it made for representation in federal or state poverty programs, would have been heeded. Instead, it pursued only the short-range exploitation of its new-found publicity.

The future of the Alianza will reflect the future of the villages. If they die it dies. If they consolidate into various micro-urban centers in the northern counties, perhaps the movement can adapt to this new direction and the new problems which will then certainly confront Spanish Americans who stay there.

Tom Mayer

Dead Dog

IT MUST HAVE BEEN HIT IN THE MORNING sometime and then wandered around before it picked my doorstep. The way that leg was broken, though, it couldn't have wandered very far. I found it about two-thirty when I went downstairs to get the mail. The box was empty and I thought maybe the mailman might be coming up the hill, so I opened the door to look and the dog was lying there against the wall.

The first thing I noticed was the eyes. It was a pretty dog, white, with long soft fur, sleek looking and not knobby-boned and emaciated the way most of them are down here, but at first I didn't notice that or the way it was breathing or the leg, just the eyes. They were deep and hot and sad, but not yet filmy. Then I saw that its breathing was labored, and that there was blood dripping out of its nose. Every third or fourth breath a little bubble, lung-pink and transparent, would form and pop, and dribble on down the muzzle. The fur on its side, just below the ribcage, was crusted and matted with blood and its left hind leg was broken above the joint. The bone ends had pierced the skin, splintery and gray, and there was some dried blood there too. Clusters of green-black flies were buzzing in both wounds. Somebody had put a dish of water near its muzzle. It looked at me steadily with those hot sad eyes, but never made a sound.

I began to feel queasy and at the same time very tired and a little angry that it hadn't picked some other doorstep. I looked down the hill, but nobody was coming, not even any children. It was hot, one of those blank blue afternoons we get here before the rainy season begins, and I felt a light sweat break out on my forehead. I wanted to go back inside, to shut my door and forget the whole thing, but there it was, with the splintered bones and the flies and the blood bubbles, and I couldn't. I knelt down beside it, and, not wanting to touch it, pushed the dish of water closer. It couldn't drink, or didn't want to, and its eyes followed my face. The fur on the side wound was too thick

and matted to tell much, but the leg was beginning to fester. I looked away and got hold of myself, scooped my hand in the water and patted some on its head.

Then I stood up and looked around. The second-story windows of the house across the street were open, and I yelled, "Juana." A couple from Berkeley, Vernon and Laura Schwartz, were renting the place—he was taking a degree in painting at the Instituto and they'd been there since January—their *criada's* name was Juana. "Juana," I yelled again. I was really sweating now, the heat came up off the cobblestones in waves, the back of my shirt was wet and my face was running salt. I wiped my face on my sleeve and shouted a third time.

Laura came to the window. She was a breastless girl, with a too big nose, who wore tight pants to show off her legs. She didn't look at me, but instead at my door.

"What happened?" I said.

"I don't know," she said. "I can't look at it."

"How long's it been out here?"

"I don't know. Since I came home for lunch. I had Juana put some water out for it."

"It can't drink," I said. "Have you called the police?" The house had a phone.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I didn't think of it," she said. She was looking down the hill. "I was waiting for Vern to come home."

I glanced down at the dog and it was still staring at me. I scooped some more water on its head and patted. The blood at its nose gathered, began to expand like a balloon, the walls stretching transparent and tissue-thin and the color washing, popped, slid away in separating drops down the black muzzle skin between the white hairs.

I straightened up, and a man and a burro were coming up the hill. The burro was piled with *leña* and the man was walking with his head down so that his hatbrim hid his face. They came up the hill steadily, the burro's unshod hooves making a regular tocking noise on the cobbles, until the man saw me and the dog. Then he slapped the burro on the neck with a rod to move it over to the other side of the street, and stopped. His huaraches were old and mud-colored; some of the leather cross-strands had snapped and curled back and I could see his split, dirt-black toenails; his pants and shirt were so patched that the original material was unrecognizable; and his left eye was blind and

rolled up into his forehead with only the white showing. The burro stood twitching its ears and tail at flies.

"Buenos días, maestro," he said. "*Quiere leña?*"

"No."

"*La vendo bien barato.*"

"No." I said.

"*Y la señorita?*"

"Ni ella," I said.

"Bueno," he said. "*Con permiso.*" He tipped his hat, whacked the burro on the rump, and started on up the hill.

"What did he say," Laura said.

"He wanted to sell his wood. He said he'd sell it cheap."

"None of them care," she said. "They don't have any feeling for animals at all. When I came some little boys were throwing rocks at it. They ran when they saw me."

I could feel the sweat sliding down my forehead and cheeks and throat.

"I'm going up to Biggs's for a minute," I said. "Maybe he can think of something."

"I can't look at it," she said.

I started up the hill after the leña man. For a moment I was dizzy. I wiped my sleeve across my face again; but the sleeve was too wet to absorb much. I caught the leña man and passed him, and he tipped his hat again. I came to Biggs's place and banged on the door. Nothing happened and I banged again.

"*Quién va?*" he yelled.

"Me."

"Who's me?"

"Jack, for Christ's sake."

"O.K.," he said. "Come on in. It's unlocked."

I pulled the plastic cord and pushed open the heavy door into the patio. It was cool and green, with a pale green tile floor and banana trees and a jacaranda and potted palms and rubber trees. Watery sunlight filtered through in irregular oblongs and patches. He was sitting in a wicker chair under one of the rubber trees reading a paper.

"What's new?"

"Not much. Can I use your phone?" I had thought of using Laura's, but hadn't wanted to.

"Sure," he said. "Then sit down and have a drink. It's my day of liberty. Madeline's gone over to Celaya."

I went in the living room and cranked the phone. I could see him through the open window reading the paper. It was the *Des Moines Register*. I told the operator to give me the police and there was some static, then someone said, *presidencia*. I said I wanted to talk to the inspector and the voice said the inspector was out. I told where I lived and said there was a dog dying and could they do something. Certainly, he said, they'd send somebody up at five o'clock. Couldn't they send someone sooner? He didn't think so. Why not? The inspector wasn't there. Couldn't he personally send somebody? For a dog, he said. Yes, I said, for a dog. At five o'clock, he said, without fail. I thanked him and hung up. I went outside. Biggs put down the paper and said, "Is it rabid?"

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes," I said. "Somebody ran over it."

"That doesn't mean anything," he said. "When they get rabid they lose their heads and do all sorts of things. You'd better be careful."

"I will," I said. "Where's your shotgun?"

"I loaned it to Enrique." Enrique was his gardener. "But he went with Madeline. You'd do better to leave it to the cops."

"You heard," I said. "The sonofabitch wouldn't send anybody."

"Is it frothing?"

"No," I said. "I told you it was run over."

"Sam has a gun," he said. "You could use it." Samuelson was one of the painting instructors at the Instituto.

"I hadn't thought of him," I said.

"Watch yourself," he said. "Be careful you don't handle it."

I went out into the heat. It engulfed me, like stepping into a steam room. I got to my place and the dog hadn't moved. Its eyes locked on my face. Laura was gone from the window. Samuelson lived way down the hill, almost to the Jardín, and I thought it would be quicker to drive than walk. Also cooler. I went inside and into the garage. It was dark and I stood a minute, letting my eyes adjust and feeling the sweat begin to dry. I thought that I could go back upstairs and maybe it would die, or I could wait an hour and maybe the inspector would be in. Or maybe its owner would come by. It was too nice looking a dog not to have an owner. I was angry with Laura for not having done anything, and I was angry with Biggs for not helping, for just sitting there with the *Des Moines Register* telling me to be careful, but the last thing I myself wanted was to be involved, to be responsible. I felt

sorry for it and I did not mind calling the police, but I did not want to have to kill it. What I wanted was to go back upstairs to my terrace. I had just about decided the whole thing was no business of mine, to hell with it, when the dog yelped twice, and howled. I pulled the bar out and opened the big double doors and went out into the heat again.

Vernon Schwartz was beating the dog's head with a rolling pin. It had gotten itself turned around and was trying to drag itself down the hill, and Vernon was swinging away at its head with the rolling pin. The dog tried to get to its feet, but its hind legs wouldn't work, the broken leg dangled uselessly and the other one kept buckling, so that it had to drag itself along by the forepaws, howling and yelping, and Vernon's arm rising and falling.

"What the hell are you doing?" I yelled.

I must really have shouted, because he straightened up and turned around right away. He was short, an inch or so shorter than his wife, and he always dressed neatly, with a jacket and usually a tie, no matter how hot it was. He wore his hair long and also had a beard, which he kept neatly trimmed.

"This dog's hurt," he said. "Nobody would do anything. Somebody had to do something." He looked at the rolling pin. "The police won't come."

"I know," I said. "Put that thing away."

"Now wait a minute," he said. Sweat glistened like hot dew in his beard.

"You stupid shit," I said.

I walked past him to where I could see the dog clearly. It was moaning and the blood ran out of its nose now in a steady stream. The eyes were the same, though, hot and deep and clear, and when it saw me it stopped moaning.

I went back in the garage and hunted around for the ax. When I came outside Vernon hadn't moved. I looked for the water dish, but it had been turned over, and I went to the dog, leaned down and patted it. I held the ax behind me. I straightened up, stepped behind the dog's shoulder, where it couldn't see me, and took aim at the top of the skull. But for a minute I couldn't swing. Maybe it was more than a minute. My anger at Vernon had carried me that far, but now it was dissolved away, and I stood there with the ax in my hands and the sweat running down my face and into the corners of my eyes and my eyes were stinging and my knees were liquid and I couldn't swing. Then I made myself do it and the back of the ax-head hit the skull

with a sound like dropping a ripe watermelon on pavement. The dog moaned and writhed and I waited for it to be still and Vernon said, "Don't, please." It was still writhing but I hit it a second time and the watermelon sound and one of the eyes popped out and hung beside its jaw by a thick white thread like damp spaghetti and it stopped moving.

I turned away and walked back toward the garage. The skin on my face felt tight and cold, even though I was sweating, and the ax blade was bloody and the handle and my hands and forearms and shirt were spattered. Vernon was walking beside me, still carrying the rolling pin. I went in the garage and propped the ax against the wall and shut one of the doors.

"I'm a dog-lover," he said. "I've always loved dogs. I can't stand to see them suffer."

I picked up the bar and started to shut the other door in his face. I did not know what to say to him. Before I had wanted to take the ax to him, but now the dog was dead, the thing was done, and he was the one who had had the courage to start it. Then he shifted the rolling pin from one hand to the other and I began to get mad all over again.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"Upstairs," I said. The skin on my face was cold and my throat was dry tight and my stomach was churning and flipping, as if I were a frightened child on a roller coaster. "I want to wash."

William Hamilton

Obscenity, Protest and War

SOMETHING IS HAPPENING to our moral words and actions, and it is most clearly seen in the protest against the war in Vietnam. It is almost as if our protest is being forced to become more violent, more bizarre, as the war itself becomes more violent.

War protest is changing from the political to the moral. This is largely based on a feeling of impotence, that there is nothing we can do to stop it, that our protests up to now have, if anything, hardened the defenders of the war. Moral protest gives up, as a primary motive, the desire to change policy, even the desire to persuade. All that remains, it seems, is the need to "speak out," to go on record, to lay our bodies on the line. The problem of moral protest is the problem of the right kind of visibility.

Camus' words, in his address to the Dominicans, are relevant: "What the world expects of Christians is that Christians should speak out, loud and clear, and they should voice their condemnation in such a way that never a doubt could rise in the heart of the simplest man. That they should get away from abstraction and confront the blood-stained face history has taken on today. The grouping we need is a grouping of men resolved to speak out clearly and to pay up personally."

Mary McCarthy has stated the moral form of the protest as simply as anyone: "Either it is morally wrong for the United States to bomb a small and virtually defenseless country, or it is not."

But what is the right form of speaking out, of paying up personally? Norman Mailer, one of our strangest but wisest political observers, has put his finger on it. Obscenity, he says, which is verbal violence, is the only kind of moral language that rightly expresses the moral horror of this war. Just as the urban riots have been seen as a kind of communication, a cry for attention and visibility when other forms of communication have been cut off, so something like obscenity in language and

act is the direction our moral language and action must take while we are being made accomplices in the murder of a distant people. In a nation that can blandly defend what it is doing in Vietnam, nothing else can be truly obscene; nothing sexual, nothing anal, can be as obscene as this war. When one is obscene about death, the other obscenities lose their power to offend, and thus their obscenity. It doesn't matter whether we speak or write the four-letter words or not; whether we insert one, two or three dashes after the "s" and the "f" is no longer to the point.

One of the reasons that men are seeking for new words and new gestures—one almost says, new sacraments—is that the old moral and religious coinages have been captured by the foe. Notice how the grand old word of religion and existentialism, "commitment," takes on a piously obscene character in the mouth of a member of the executive branch of government. Notice how "sacrifice," beloved by pagan, Jew, and Christian, has virtually become the single justification for the war's continuation. Because our young men are "sacrificing themselves," we must press on to full military victory.

Before we can decide what we are to do with this pressure toward the bizarre, the violent, the obscene in our language of protest, we must first decide just what we believe America is doing in Vietnam. There is no reason to postpone this decision. The evidence is in, and no further public hearings will give us anything we do not already have. It may be that we are preventing the spread of an expansionist China; it may be that we are repelling an aggression, helping a besieged people toward freedom and self-determination; it may be that we are honoring our international commitments; it may be that we are driving the Russians and Chinese closer together. It may be that we are acting immorally. Any one of these positions is possible, and one need not refuse candor or sanity to those whose stance is different from ours.

But if the important issue is the moral one, then it is immoral, at this time and at this place, for this nation to do to that nation what it is now doing. Therefore we have made up our minds on a matter of fact, and what we are to say or do further must follow from that. Fighting inside or outside the system, persuading the young, defeating Johnson, all become secondary to the moral perception. The war is immoral not because it is illegal or politically false, but because we have taken a stand. At this point, we may have to run closer than we ordinarily like to moral absolutism.

What should we do? Thirty years ago men joined international brigades to fight against the armies of their own countries. A little less than thirty years ago Dietrich Bonhoeffer left a haven in America to return to Germany, determined to work for her defeat. Do we stay within the sick nation, find some equivalent to an underground, and try to heal from within? Many good Europeans did this at the time of Nazism, and what do we say of that decision now? But it is just this despair of making an effective protest or of any expected success, that is afflicting the protest movement. This is why mere speaking out, mere signing yet another newspaper advertisement, is no longer morally sufficient.

I WISH TO LOOK BRIEFLY at four possible answers to the problem of the increasingly violent, bizarre, and obscene nature of protest. They are: expatriation, martyrdom, treason, and civil disobedience. All are more or less unthinkable, all extreme in different ways; none is effective by any traditional tests; but some may be, for some people, and given their moral commitments, necessary.

Expatriation has been going on for some time among the young and among the Left. There is the actual external expatriation to Canada, Northern Ireland, or Australia, and there is the older, inner expatriation that one sees in some of the more recent work of Bob Dylan, and in the hippies, when they were still with us—a withdrawal from the external communities of family and nation into smaller, healing communities, that may or may not be parasitic on the larger communities from which they departed.

Martyrdom we have also seen, and still see. Father Camillo Torres, the bandit priest recently killed by the police after he had joined the revolutionary movement in Colombia, remarked, shortly before he died, that martyrdom is the only politics left when rational politics have broken down. Today's martyr tries to fashion his act to point to the thing protested against: the Buddhist's self-immolation is designed to look like the effects of a napalm raid. Martyrdom is partly a self-inflicted violence designed to negate and to stress a vastly more violent situation.

There is treason, and the protest movement may be coming close to this already. If the war is deemed immoral, will not there have to be some sort of dissociation from the immoral nation? Iris Murdoch recently wrote (*Listener*, September 21, 1967):

Let me then state what seems to me the case, that the war being fought now by the Vietnamese against the Americans is a just war fought by the indigenous inhabitants of a territory against aggression by an intruding foreign power. What we have before us, moreover, is the detestable spectacle of the richest and most powerful country in the world attacking a small poor country just emerging from colonialism, and using that country as a testing place for some of the more loathsome minor gadgets of modern warfare.

This seems to me to be just, and if their war against us is a just war, are we not committed to thoughts and acts that come very close to treason? What is willing that your country not win, what is saying that your country ought not to win, if not willing that your country lose?

For Johnson and the Pentagon are right. Dissent at home does make the war more difficult to win, and unity at home would be a weapon for victory. So we should not be offended when someone claims that protest hurts us and helps Hanoi. We ought not to deny this and mutter some thoughts about the need for dissent in a free society. Of course our protest helps them and hurts us; that is one of the things it is designed to do.

But these three unthinkable moves are at the end of the line, and we are not there yet. This is why civil disobedience may well prove to be the moral strategy most appropriate to the nature of the war and to the moral placed upon our style of protest.

In a recent article ("The Obligation to Disobey", *Ethics*, April 1967), Michael Walzer has called attention to a very important element in the process by which a man takes upon himself the obligation to disobey a law or a group of laws. This act is rarely done alone, Walzer points out, for the obligation to disobey is almost always an obligation that members of a small group, within one of the larger social groups, take upon themselves. Conscience itself is a social thing, involving a commitment made to others, in the presence of others. And civil disobedience, unlike revolutionary action, is always committed to merely partial claims against the state. Men are obliged to honor the pledges they have made, and the decision to disobey a law, made in the context of a group of one's peers, is such an obligation. Men must honor such obligations, so long as their disobedience of law or authority does not threaten the existence of the state or the lives of its citizens.

This is why the movement, now so widespread and so bewildering to many, to disaffiliate with the draft system, to refuse to serve under

any auspices, is such an important and significant one. The draft resister today does not insist that only his position is truly pure; he does not legislate for anyone besides himself. But he has come to this, usually, after extended discussions with his elders and his friends, and he has made his decision in the presence of a morally serious community. He is not violating obviously bad laws, like the civil disobedience of Dr. King in the early days of the civil rights movement. He is violating an appropriate law, tied inextricably to this war, and favoring the educated and the well-to-do in its actual administration. His disobedience need not entail burning flags but only a willingness to take the consequences the courts deem necessary.

Civil disobedience is, I think, a form that moral protest can take today, for it can face without shirking the twin problem of the violence of the war itself and the need for our moral language to take on something of the character of the very thing we protest. There is almost a sacramental character to moral protest, and just as a religious sacrament partakes directly in the reality it points to (wine points to blood), so our "no" today must unmistakably point to that which we are negating, but reflect its violence in ways that are socially and morally constructive.

William Eastlake

The Message

SOMETIMES THE WAR GOES SO WELL for us in the daytime that you want to help the other side, but the night belongs to the enemy. So we rode out to the old French fort in the daytime from where our attack would begin.

The whole countryside between Hue and Danang is pimped with French concrete and steel outposts and bunkers.

"We don't use them," the American Marine sergeant said, pointing to the French bunkers. "They were death traps where the French stayed inside and got killed."

"Not at all," the French correspondent, Marcel Vervier, said. "When we French were fighting here, the roads were open all the way from Danang to Hue. I know. I was here. Now they are closed. America is losing the war."

"We use the top of the French bunkers," the sergeant said, pointing to our new American construction on top. "That way you have a perfect field of fire and they are not a trap."

The French correspondent said nothing, as though he were satisfied that the Americans used part of the French forts. Then he seemed annoyed, and he said, "Stop this jeep." Marcel got out and went over to a thorn bush that was marked with a torn strip of red rag and removed a new white piece of paper. When he got in the jeep and handed it to me I read: BY HIGH COMMAND OF THE SOUTH VIETNAM LIBERATION ARMED FORCES DEAD BODIES OF THE U.S. AND SATELLITE ARMYMEN LEFT ON THIS BATTLEFIELD WILL BE BURIED CAREFULLY.

Inside the great and old French fort that overlooked the still older and very green valley below, the officers and correspondents were given the battle plan.

"Of course," the Marine colonel said before he said anything else, "The enemy knows when, where and how we are coming." On his

desk was a sign which read: THE U.S. MARINES, THE FIRST TO GO, THE LAST TO KNOW. The colonel pointed to a topographical map to explain the plan that everyone knew excepting the Marines, so I decided to explore the secrets of the French fort.

The fort is built around a great inner wine cellar so that the attacking enemy would have to fight through a maze of rooms and corridors with false dead-end passages, trip doors, booby traps, mined stairwells, and secret tunnels to arrive at this inner Egyptian tomb. I also suspected that the wine cellar was mined so the French could blow themselves and their wine to hell in one final and glorious explosion if all else failed. An alcoholic Dien Bien Phu.

"You must admit," Marcel said, "we French were civilized."

The French ammunition dump was located in a small closet near the front door. A corridor ran around the entire fort with a two-foot aperture through which the French could fire when they felt like doing that sort of thing, excepting that there was no field of fire. There was a heavenly view of a Vietnam flower garden across the draw, but the concealed draw ran right up to the edge of the fort so that the enemy could pop in and out of the fort apertures any time the spirit moved them.

"We French," Marcel said, "were polite."

Since the American occupation of the French fort, the wine cellar had become an ammunition chamber. Barbed wire was strung along the outside apertures, completely ruining the view to the perfect Vietnamese flower garden. Pepsi-Cola cans, bright and tinny, were perched on desks where wine bottles once stood.

"Progress you think," Marcel said. "You will see."

"When the colonel was ready to move into the attack, a Norwegian correspondent named Gunnar wanted a flack jacket, a helmet and a weapon because the Marines had them. "You can get all that stuff on the black market," a lieutenant said, "but I'll get you a helmet."

Marcel wanted a drink. The lieutenant offered him a can of coke that Marcel said would kill a Frenchman. A Marine got on our armored Amtrack and handed me a piece of paper he said he had found on the trail ahead while sweeping for mines. The wet piece of rice paper about two inches by two inches said: IF ANYONE INVADED YOUR COUNTRY, MASSACRED YOUR COMPATRIOTS, DESTROYED YOUR HOMES, VILLAGES AND PROPERTY, HOW WOULD YOU REACT TO THAT?

Our amtrack jerked away suddenly. There were four amtracks and five tanks in the column. The walking infantry had jumped off earlier and were moving in a giant semicircle on our flanks. They were to cross the river at midnight, secure a bridgehead and dig in, but this plan had already been changed. Now we would all rendezvous at the river and cross in the morning, taking ourselves completely by surprise.

The tank column lumbered off the dirt trail and slithered across the rice fields to avoid land mines, tearing up the low dike as it went. Now we entered a jungle growth of elephant grass and bamboo. The lead tank paused, then hit it all down and our amtrack crossed through the jungle on a carpet of trees. We entered a pleasant Vietnamese village through someone's backyard and took the house with us into the main dirt street.

When we left the village the low green bushes alongside the sharp glittering rice ponds were festooned with white papers. As we turned a corner the trooper manning our fifty-calibre machine gun reached out and took a paper as he would have taken a brass ring on a merry-go-round at Coney Island.

This is what the rice paper said: THIS COUNTRY IS NOT YOURS. WE DO NO HARM TO YOUR HOMELAND. GET OUT OF VIETNAM BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

We entered more jungle and now the rice papers began to say: WHEN YOU GO INTO BATTLE, IF THE SOLDIERS OF THE UNITED STATES SURRENDER TO THE VIETNAM LIBERATION ARMY THEY WILL NOT BE KILLED.

And they also said: WOUNDED PERSONS LEFT ON THE BATTLE FIELD WILL BE BANDAGED AND CURED IF POSSIBLE BY THE LIBERATION ARMY.

And the last of the rice papers said finally: IN FIGHTING IF SURRENDER TO THE LIBERATION ARMY YOU QUICKLY LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS, RAISE YOUR HANDS UP. YOU CAN USE THIS WHITE PAPER AS A SIGN WHEN YOU ARE TOO FAR FROM LIBERATION ARMY.

"Explain to me what we are doing here," Marcel said.

We reached our rendezvous point on the river now and we all piled out and the military got all their gear ready for the crossing the next day. Night fell and we could not find Marcel. The next morning we went to the edge of our perimeter and on the other side of an early morning, gleaming rice paddy sat Marcel on the veranda of a Vietnamese peasant's beautiful, low, thatched house. He was dandling a child on his knee. He had dumped all of his belongings in the river that he would not cross.

THE MESSAGE

371

"Explain to me," Marcel said, "what am I doing here? Maybe now I know. I am happy, *non*? Have a good trip. Much bad luck."

As our forward elements made enemy contact, Marcel waved a white paper at us, then raised both his arms in the attitude of surrender and goodbye.

Donald L. Weismann

Violence and the Creative Act

SOMETHING like the resurgence of that Puritan moralism which assured the social acceptance in America of the presuppositions of Freud's psychoanalysis is today operating to convince men of a dark and sinful violence underlying their intentions and actions. In the case of Freud's psychoanalysis, it was essential that its repostulation of the doctrine of original sin be agreed to—either expressly or tacitly—in order that specific sins might be diagnosed and by acts of faith transmuted and expunged. The controlling wish back of this was, of course, to “come clean,” to be decent again.

It appears that the same wish lies back of today's will to believe not only that a fundamental violence exists in men, but that this violence is morally bad, entirely destructive, and that, were it to be expunged, then decency and love would reign—in fact, man would be redeemed. And since this wish continues to be more than incidentally related to certain presuppositions of psychoanalytic theory, it may be in place to note how that theory came about and whether its very invention may not have depended upon acts of both compulsion and violence. For if an alternate theory by which men are being convinced of the powerful energy—indeed violence—generated by their repressions is, in itself, an example of the positively productive—not totally destructive—character of this force, then some revaluation of the role of violence in the creative life of men would be called for.

What we are apt to overlook or fail to value in the matter of psychoanalysis is that it first appeared as the invention of a man, Sigmund Freud. His first works—on the *Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena* (with Josef Breuer), *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory*—stand, even after more than a half century, as commanding creative works. They are as much the lively expressions of a particular person at a particular time and place as they are cool

scientific discoveries. Put in another way, the corpus of Freud's works, the hypotheses and convictions it expresses, amounts to a highly organized presentation of Freud's own personal case—a case ready for psychoanalytical or other interpretation by someone besides Freud. And this interpretation could be made at least as successfully as Freud's interpretation of the case of Leonardo da Vinci which he called a *Study in Psychosexuality*. In the absence of such an interpretation of the case of Sigmund Freud, however, we can only wonder about what it might hypothesize, should it be written, concerning an extraordinarily gifted Jew who passed most of his life at an ancient crossroads on the fringe of a decaying empire. We can only speculate about the relationships that might be shown to have existed between this exile's adult life on the battleground and outpost that was Vienna, and his postulation of an unconscious conversion of psychosexual trauma in earlier life. Of one thing we may be relatively sure, however, and that is that Freud's work was one of compulsion and even of violence.

Now, in referring to Freud's work, and perhaps most especially to his earlier writings, as being works of compulsion, all we mean is that the conditions of Freud's life in some way obligated him to create those works. And although he might have done other than what he actually did, it is still true that he did what he did as if he were urged irresistibly to do so. In fact, one senses that Freud created and perfected his psychoanalytical theory as if compelled by moral necessity. Having responded to the first intimations of what was to become his psychoanalytical system, he sought—as any artist seeks—for their logical consequences in a coherent whole. Every person who has ever engaged in creative activity of a high order, whether he be scientist, philosopher, or artist, is familiar with the quality of compulsion that pervades the process of creation. Once begun, the process moves forward by stages relating to each other because each provides the substance and the means for action toward the next stage. And throughout the whole process the performer is led, or compelled, by the ambivalent and strong allure of a potential coherency which keeps asking, as it were, to be achieved. This is all we mean when we say that Freud's creative works were works of compulsion. And it is meant to say no more about his innovative work than we might say about Einstein's or Picasso's—or even about our own.

But we also used the word violence in connection with the work of Freud. We said that his work was one of compulsion, and even of

violence. To point out what was meant by that we must remember that the word violence is not limited to the narrow meaning into which it is pressed most often today: "the exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury or do damage to persons or property."* It also means, as part of its first definition, the "wresting or perversion of meaning or application." It is this part of the definition in which we are most interested now. Its words are strong and highly charged. But if we understand the two strongest words, *wresting* and *perversion*, in terms of their prime definition, we have *wresting* meaning "the subjecting of (something) to a twisting movement; to turn or twist," and we have *perversion* meaning "the action of . . . turning aside from truth or right."

Now, the fundamental works of Sigmund Freud were, in their time, hardly restatements of traditionally accepted meanings or applications of those meanings. The import of those works served to subject traditional knowledge and accepted truths to a wrenching action. And that knowledge and those truths were perverted in the sense that the attention of men was turned aside from them. Certainly by his writings and demonstrations, Freud wrested and perverted traditional meanings back of such a concept as conversion, and back of such myths as those of Oedipus and Electra. What else can we believe happened to the traditional concept and meaning of conversion in his works? In what other way is his concept of an unconscious "conversion" of psychosexual trauma in earlier life related to and continuous with the concept of "conversion" as traditionally applied in the understanding of the experiences of St. Paul, St. Augustine, Savonarola, John Knox, John Wesley or Jonathan Edwards?

Wresting action and perversions of meaning, then, characterize the works of Sigmund Freud—and by this fact they can be properly thought of as works of violence. But far from wishing to emphasize them as destructive, we wish to emphasize their creative quality. In a word, we wish to bring attention to the fact that violence, in the terms in which we have been speaking, is a concomitant of the creative act. In this context violence is not necessarily bad in a moral sense, nor is it necessarily destructive. And to take the next step: decency and love would not necessarily reign, nor would man be redeemed if violence were expunged from his vocabulary of action. More to the point, innovation of a seminal variety would be next to impossible if violent

* All quoted definitions are from *The Oxford University Dictionary*, Third Revised Edition, 1955.

attitudes toward earlier stages of knowledge and truth were not part of the creative life of men.

So when it is understood that the very doctrine which has encouraged feelings of guilt in men for their acts of violence born of childhood repressions—that this doctrine itself came about through attitudes of violence born of dissatisfactions with earlier existing truths—then we are apt to be less nervous about the dark functions of violence and more concerned with the potential of violence for creative activity.

The present-day concern with the phenomenon of “violence in art” is the preoccupation mainly of journalists and reviewers of exhibitions, books, movies, and television programs. Usually these people single out for comment—often for outrage—only the *representations* of acts of violence in the works under consideration. They dwell on the numbers and kinds of shootings, strangulations, flagellations, rapes, and tortures. They remark the violence done to “civilized sensibility” by painted metaphors of pornography and scatology, but without feeling called upon to say what they mean by either civilization or sensibility. They reconstruct and review in words the physical conditions under which these representations of acts of violence take place. They occupy themselves with, and offer opinions about, the destruction of life and property as represented or alluded to in the works they review. Seldom, however, do they comment in any depth upon violence as creative or destructive of meaning.

This may be because today there is in general a great hesitancy to deal with matters of meaning or purpose. In these times it appears easier, less personally painful, to describe specific acts and conditions than it is to attempt to discover their relationships in any pattern of purpose or in any context of meaning. And those writers on art who do feel a responsibility in this and who do try to say how it is for them, those writers often end up offering their readers a combination of gingerly held attitudes and self-conscious evasion. But no matter how this comes about, those critics and reviewers exhibit little or no concern for meaning. As a result, their observations of and opinions about violence in art have little or no relevance to anything creative or destructive in the expressions of the art they review.

To come to grips with the nature of meaning, and to measure and evaluate degrees of creative or destructive violence in terms of meaning, that is the task that awaits doing in our time. To avoid considerations of meaning—whether through ignorance or through fear—on the one

hand, and, on the other, to take a stand for or against specific evidences of violence, is to act without intelligence and without responsibility.

There is an old catch-all cliché which is often quoted or paraphrased by politicians running for public office: "I am against sin." Today there is another such cliché that has to do with being "against violence." The strong attraction of both of these clichés lies in the inappropriateness of their opposites: "I am for sin," "I am for violence." But when we are aware of the varieties, qualities and functions of violence, so that we can recognize their role in such creations as Freud's psychoanalysis and Copernicus' *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, then we should also recognize them in the wrenchings and perversions of old truths by artists from Akhenaten's studio in ancient Akhetaten to Andy Warhol's "factory" in present-day New York. Then, too, we can recognize and value the crucial difference between sporadic and destructive outbursts and the coordinated creative efforts which have contributed to turning civilization away from exhausted modes of order, truth and right, and on toward the new.

There is sufficient evidence of dark and destructive violence operative in this world of men, but it has been with us no longer than its creative counterpart. There may be as much reason for hope as for despair.

Clinton Adams

Art among the Letter Writers

THE PEOPLE WHO WRITE LETTERS attacking modern art are seldom temperate in their language. One viewer, after a visit to an exhibition of contemporary paintings, wrote: "I felt as though I had just been through a mental garbage dump and I could hardly wait to get home and give my mind a bath."¹ Others have protested "the amorphous blobs and insane squiggles of the so-called modern artists"² and the "so-called art of men who have prostituted whatever talents they possess to the foulest conspiracy in the history of man."³

The "foul conspiracy" is that of Communism, a spectre linked in the letter writer's mind with that of modern art, both un-American and ungodly. "There may be an excuse for foreigners to condone what is vacuous and demoralizing—for they have grown up with such in their own countries. But to degrade the beautiful, clean and would-be decent land of the United States—is pretty disgusting and unforgivable. . . ."⁴ And further: "This current sickness fad that portrays man as a misshapen, sluglike, soulless shape stripped of all dignity and humanism is an insult to those of us old-fashioned enough to believe that 'man is created in God's own image.'"⁵

The themes that run through these comments are hardly new. Although the works of art which serve as their targets change with passing time, the letter writers of the present closely echo the words used by critics in the past:

1876 [commenting on the work of Renoir, Degas and Pissarro]: "These self-styled artists give themselves the title of noncompromisers, impressionists; they take up canvas, paint and brush, throw on a few tones haphazardly and sign the whole thing It is a frightening spectacle of human vanity gone astray to the point of madness."⁶

1883 [commenting on Whistler's Venetian series]: "Disastrous failures." ". . . for who wants to remember the degradation of what has been noble, the foulness of what has been fair."⁷

1891 [on Gauguin]: “. . . a manufacturer of pornographic images whose sublime ignorance has never been surpassed. . . .”⁸

1895 [on Cézanne]: “It’s the painting of a sewage collector!” one critic cries, while another comments on the “nightmarish sight of these atrocities in oil which exceed the amount of practical joking legally permissible today.”⁹

1905 [on Matisse and the Fauves]: “What we see—apart from the materials used—has nothing to do with painting. Formless streaks of blue, red, yellow and green, all mixed up, splashes of raw colour juxtaposed without rhyme or reason, the naïf and brutal efforts of a child playing in its paint box.”¹⁰

1913: “The Armory Show is pathological! It is hideous!” “Some of the most stupidly ugly pictures in the world. . . . This is not a movement and a principle. It is unadulterated cheek.” “. . . nasty, obscene, indecent, immoral, lewd and demoralizing. . . .”¹¹

1938 [on Braque and Dali]: “So far as I can figure it out, the cult of the monstrous and weird originated when a would-be artist dashed off an abortion and gravely offered it as art (ye gods) to see how far he could ‘pull the leg’ of the (subnormal) art world. . . . Any committee selecting such atrocities demonstrates the eminent qualifications of its members as eligible candidates for the nearest lunatic asylum. . . .”¹²

1949 [on Picasso’s *Girl Before a Mirror*]: “Why are these so-called intellectual masterpieces dished up by so many modernistic artists in such grotesque and hideous form?” “Many of us accept the right of the artist, but reserve our right to turn the other way when passing the pathological excrement. . . .”¹³

1954 [on a reclining figure by Moore]: “I am horrified by this monstrosity It makes me not angry but frenzied. That figure has got leprosy. It has got cancer. . . . If we go down to hell we will see something like that.”¹⁴

1965 [on paintings by Chagall]: “How could *Time* print such meaningless airy-fairy prose on an artist who foists his polychromatic private hallucinations on the public as art?” And a second letter in the next issue of *Time*: “I may be a clod, but I do not see any art in Chagall’s paintings. They are just a mess. In fact, they rather remind me of nightmares.”¹⁵

But enough is enough. The paintings and sculptures produced by the leading artists of the past century have demonstrated a remarkable power to stir their viewers and to provoke responses of verbal hostility

and violence. By their nature, these responses involve a complex intertwining of emotions and ideas, although, upon analysis, certain leit-motifs are evident.

THERE IS A STRONG desire to disassociate modern art from the noble and the pure; hence the reiterated terms, *so-called art*, *self-styled artists*, and the use of quotation marks. Whatever the means, modern art must be kept separate from what the letter writer holds dear; it must be kept in isolation so that the virus may be contained. This desire reflects itself in the demand that amateur art groups so often make of museums: that "a separate jury for Traditional Art should be appointed to select an equal number of paintings and works of art that are understandable and enjoyable to the normal citizen."¹⁶ This wording is typical of such demands in that it asks the separation of *Traditional Art* from *so-called "Modern" Art* and at the same time associates the former with understandable and *normal* and the latter, by implication, with *unintelligible* and *aberrant*.

Modern art is persistently identified with sickness and disease, particularly insanity. A psychiatrist among the letter writers commented in *Life* that "patients who have withdrawn from the world of reality express their fantasies in drawings and paintings which are quite without meaning to a normal individual but which help diagnosis of the underlying conflicts. . . . The so-called modernistic representations illustrated in *Life* would seem to me to be in the same category. . . ."¹⁷ The key to this view is found in the phrase, *without meaning to a normal individual*. The syllogism follows: these works are meaningless to me; I am a normal individual; therefore these works are the products of diseased minds. The further implication is that what is meaningless to the letter writer is meaningless *per se*. Arrogantly he assumes that if meaning were there he would perceive it. There is no suggestion that the understanding of art requires more than the untutored perceptions of a normal mind. Certainly there is no suggestion that study or knowledge might be involved, for to admit this would be to admit that some of the responsibility for a failure in communication might rest upon the viewer, not all of it upon the artist.

Linked with claims of unintelligibility are assertions of ugliness: *macabre-looking*, *grotesque*, *horrible*, *disgusting*. Reading through the letters one is soon struck by the fact that the most violent language is used with respect to paintings which are representational in their

imagery. Totally abstract paintings seldom provoke responses involving strong language. In 1937 *Life* reproduced Braque's *The Yellow Cloth* and Dali's *Premonition of Civil War*, both included in the Carnegie Exhibition of that year. An irate reader wrote to protest the "floods of such products of drink, drugs or dementia, ranging from the futile, meaningless (and relatively harmless) *The Yellow Cloth*, to the monstrous and horrible incubus, *Premonition of Civil War*. If it expresses what the artist feels (as they usually profess), then the padded cell yawns for such."¹⁸ The words *monstrous* and *horrible* refer to the subject matter of Dali's painting as much as to its style. The notion persists that the artist should choose his subject matter from things both pleasant and pretty, avoiding all reference to poverty, death and war. "Too many . . . paintings emphasize the poverty and misery of people in America and there is too much exploitation of ugliness when there are many things of beauty to show."¹⁹ Beauty is seen to be a function of subject matter, not of artistic form, and the role of the artist is to "communicate uplifting and beautiful thoughts."²⁰ In the world of the letter writers, Courbet's battle is not yet won. Truth is beauty and beauty is truth, but only so long as the truth is not unpleasant.

Particularly among amateur artists there is a conviction that the artist's style should be, in essence, a rosy-tinted naturalism. His art should be familiar, accessible, and easily perceived. A man identified as a painter and as president of a California art club stated this view when he wrote that "we are used to having things of known beauty held up to the people. Every man likes to look around a known world. When he does not see that he begins to lose faith. . . ."²¹ The style of the modern artist, whether Picasso, Moore or Chagall, is seen as an undermining of *known beauty* in a *known world*. And as it is taken for granted that the artist should describe this world in naturalistic terms, his failure to do so is an affront not only to art but to God as well. "Let us . . . testify [to] the wonders of the beauties of the world God has created and that the highest creative human minds have been able to add to in their own way. Let us think of our own Judeo-Christian heritage. . . ."²² Let us, in other words, reject deviations from naturalism not only because they are unfamiliar but because we believe the artist to be obligated to portray man as God created him.

If modern art is ungodly and disturbing, it follows that it is *radical*, *subversive*, *left-wing*, and *communistic*. Over and over again the letter

writers attach one or more of these terms to the art they do not like, either unaware or unconcerned that their vocabulary bears a disturbingly close relationship to the similar terms used (about the same art) by the Nazis and the Soviets. The fact that the Soviets have long suppressed modern art, as did the Nazis before them, is blithely forgotten. "Modern art is communistic because it is distorted and ugly, because it does not glorify our beautiful country, our cheerful and smiling people, and our great material progress. Art which does not portray our beautiful country in plain, simple terms that everyone can understand breeds dissatisfaction. It is therefore opposed to our government, and those who create and promote it are our enemies."²³ This statement made by the late Congressman George A. Dondero in 1949 was, in a sense, an open letter to the American people, a warning not only against the dangers of modern art but, indeed, against the subversive dangers that lurk in all ideas that are other than plain and simple. Again and again since then the letter writers have repeated the warning. If modern artists are not in fact card-carrying communists they are "being unconsciously used as tools of the Kremlin in this very effective propaganda field."²⁴ The paranoiac fear that the Russians are coming becomes so mixed with fear and hatred of an unfamiliar art as to confuse the two beyond separation.

What is Red and ungodly may be dirty as well. Gauguin was not the first artist to be called a pornographer, nor will he be the last. All representations of the nude may seem obscene to those whose beliefs remain strongly rooted in Victorian morality and American puritanism. For many, however, the nude is not in itself obscene; obscenity creeps in when the nude is represented in a manner which violates established conventions. Manet's *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* and *Olympia* were called indecent, gamy and degraded at the time Cabanel's far more erotic but academic *Venus* was accepted with acclaim. The outcries against the Armory Show by Chicago clergymen, teachers, and other defenders of law and order had a similar basis. "The idea that people can gaze at this sort of thing without it hurting them is all bosh. This exhibition ought to be suppressed."²⁵ Russell Lynes's account of the investigation of the Armory Show by the Illinois Vice Commission²⁶ would be nostalgic and amusing were it not for more recent episodes, most notoriously those centering upon the 1966 Kienholz exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Now, as a hundred years ago, the representations most likely to provoke a violent response are those in

which realism is unmoderated by classical conventions—the naked, not the nude—and Kienholz's highly moralistic tableaux are no exception to the rule.

Certain pop artists have managed to touch a new nerve with their tongue-in-cheek parodies of the pin-up girl, a lowbrow icon previously unviolated by art. When Tom Wesselman's *Great American Nude* (a wonderful title) was published on the cover of *Arts Magazine* the response was both immediate and predictable: "Where do you get off charging me \$1.25 for pure smut? Do you think I can't get pics of girlies like the one on your January cover at the pool parlor for thirty cents?"²⁷ Again, more than the nude itself, it is the style and attitude of the artist that offend the letter writer. "Upon suggestion of my art instructor, I became a subscriber to *Artforum*. . . . The last few issues have been, in my opinion, contemporary trash and moral depravity. . . . Since it is not my policy to supply perverse material for the influence of my children, and since I in no way wish to contribute to the abasement of art standards . . . I must ask that you cancel my subscription immediately. . . ." ²⁸ If it can't be suppressed, in other words, then at least let me keep my blinders on.

In April 1947 President Harry S. Truman wrote in an often-quoted letter that "I don't pretend to be an artist or a judge of art, but I am of the opinion that so-called modern art is merely the vaporings of half-baked lazy people. An artistic production is one which shows infinite ability for taking pains and if any of these so-called modern paintings show any such infinite ability, I am very much mistaken."²⁹ The premise that art should reflect an *infinite ability for taking pains* cannot be easily contested. The difficulty lies in the assumption that were the artist truly to take pains, the result of his efforts would necessarily be a painting something on the order of Andrew Wyeth's. A portion of Wyeth's tremendous popularity is due to the fact that he paints the kind of painting the layman fancies that he himself might paint, if only he had the skill. Skill is thus identified with but one kind of style and, beyond this, is given disproportionate emphasis, virtuosity becoming the sole criterion of art. "There are a great many American artists," Mr. Truman continued, "who still believe that the ability to make things look as they are is the first requisite of a great artist—they do not belong to the so-called modern school. There is no art at all in connection with the modernists in my opinion." The notion that creativity might lie more appropriately in the realm of concepts, ideas and formal invention is not encompassed here.

It is for this reason that abstract expressionist painting causes particular difficulties for the public. Superficially examined, the work of Pollock and de Kooning creates the impression that "drawing has been abandoned, as have familiar compositional concepts."³⁰ And indeed, familiar concepts (known beauty in a known world) have been abandoned: that is the core of the problem. "Why does *Time* waste *Time* by writing articles on Willem de Kooning's new women? His nudes are sensuous? They are hateful and macabre-looking, painted by a third-rate news reporter who reports his own feelings."³¹ Earlier articles on abstract expressionism provoked a spate of such comments: "Allow me to inform you that someone has spilled some watercolors on the pages of your August 4 art section."³² "I think it is dishonest of *Time* to overplay modern art, and show such senile distortionists and juvenile paint slingers. . . ."³³ "Your coverage of the Venice Biennale so inspired me . . . that I gleefully smashed a hole through my copy of *Time*."³⁴ The letter writers are outraged that the artists have so far departed from what they feel to be accepted norms; they are disturbed (profoundly in the latter case) by work which is so lacking in apparent skill as to raise once again the question as to whether it is all a put-on and a fraud. "We live in an age in which art has become a grotesque hoax on the public. Art standards are now largely dictated by critics who jeer at the understandable, by galleries which exhibit the messers and reject the masters."³⁵ "To paraphrase another artist: 'Never have so many been duped by so few' "³⁶ Given the premises, the conclusions follow, but the premises won't hold water. Critics do not jeer at the understandable; rather they comprehend forms which the letter writer is unable (or unwilling) to perceive. Pollock was not a messer; rather he employed skills and developed forms which are widely divergent from those the layman expects and accepts. The best way to avoid being taken in by a hoax, were there to be one, would be to learn something of the subject in question. The letter writers apparently find it easier and more satisfying to rely on preconceptions than to seek new answers to new questions.

As LEO STEINBERG HAS POINTED OUT, the artist cannot always escape the plight of the public.³⁷ He can, in fact, become a part of the public when, upon encountering new forms which are in violation of his expectations, he responds as the public does. Steinberg cites as examples Signac's distaste for Matisse's *Bonheur de vivre* and Matisse's dislike for Picasso's *Les demoiselles d' Avignon*. Characteristically, however,

the responses of major artists to new forms have been moderated by their own experience as members of an avant garde. It is the academic artist who expresses himself most negatively. Bouguereau and company reacted against the Impressionists, the members of the entrenched American academy were outraged by the Armory Show, and more recently Thomas Hart Benton, representing the academy of the Thirties, commented on one occasion that "the movement Braque represents [cubism] . . . has no more importance than those stitchings ladies do when they have nothing to do."³⁸ At another time Benton wrote to *Life* that the magazine's "Round Table certainly bolsters the Russian view that our contemporary Western Art is illusory, decadent and given to an empty formalism utterly incapable of coming to grips with solid cultural meanings. . . ."³⁹ Like other letter writers who have been quoted, Benton feels his values threatened by the new forms of art and responds defensively to these threats. Even more than the academic artist, the "professional amateur"—the art club painter of local reputation—feels insecure in the presence of an art that he does not know and comprehend. The violence of his response and of his attacks upon modern art is rooted in this insecurity. The banal buckeye paintings which serve so commonly as substitutes for art are safe and familiar, a part of the American Dream, secure and comfortable. Modern art, or high art of any kind, brings accepted values into question. "The fear," David Riesman observes, "is to be caught liking what the others have decided not to like." The letter writer, unable to live with fear or insecurity, casts himself as defender of the true faith and fights with evangelical zeal against what he (rightly) considers to be a severe challenge to his own values. It does no good to tell him, "If you don't like it, don't look at it." Modern art is the enemy incarnate and must be exorcised.

NOTES

1. Letter, *New Mexico Lobo*, Feb. 19, 1964.
2. Letter, *Time*, Feb. 19, 1965.
3. Letter, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Sept. 17, 1961.
4. Letter, *Art in America*, Vol. 53, No. 1, 1965.
5. Letter, *Time*, Apr. 13, 1963.
6. Albert Wolff in *Figaro*, 1876, quoted by John Rewald in *History of Impressionism* (1946), p. 295.
7. Critics quoted by A. J. Eddy in *Recollections and Impressions of James A. McNeil Whistler* (1904), pp. 99-100.

8. Critic quoted by John Rewald in *Post-Impressionism: From Van Gogh to Gauguin* (1956), p. 463.
9. Critics quoted by John Rewald in *Cézanne* (1948), pp. 177, 180.
10. Marcel Nicolle in *Le Journal de Rouen*, Nov. 20, 1905, quoted by Jean-Paul Cre-selle in *The Fauves*, (1962), p. 14.
11. Critics for *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald* (Royal Cortissoz) quoted by Russell Lynes in *The Tastemakers* (1954), p. 206; and a news story in the *Chicago Record-Herald*, Mar. 27, 1913, reproduced in the catalog of the 50th Anniversary Exhibition: 1913-1963, p. 167.
12. Letter, *Life*, Jan. 10, 1938.
13. Excerpts from two letters, *Life*, Nov. 1, 1949.
14. Comment quoted in *Time*, Apr. 12, 1954.
15. Letters, *Time*, Aug. 6 and 13, 1965.
16. Letter written by Duncan Gleason, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee of Traditional Art, Los Angeles, May 27, 1950.
17. Letter, *Life*, Nov. 1, 1949.
18. Letter, *Life*, Jan. 10, 1938.
19. Letter from the president of the California Art Club to the Director of the Los Angeles County Museum, quoted in a news story in the *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 1947.
20. Letter cited, Note 1.
21. Letter cited, Note 19.
22. Letter, *Art News*, Feb., 1962.
23. Statement by Rep. George A. Dondero in an interview with Emily Genaur, quoted in "Still Life with Red Herring," *Harper's Magazine*, Sept., 1949.
24. Report of the Building and Safety Committee to the Council of the City of Los Angeles, Nov. 5, 1951.
25. Arthur Charles Farwell, president of the Chicago Law and Order League, quoted by Russell Lynes, *op cit.*, p. 219.
26. Lynes, *op cit.*, p. 219.
27. Letter, *Arts Magazine*, Feb. 1966.
28. Letter, *Artforum*, Apr., 1966. Specific works referred to in portions of the letter not quoted are collages by Wallace Berman, paintings by Harold Stevenson, and sculpture by Frank Gallo.
29. Letter, President Truman to William Benton, Apr. 2, 1947, quoted in Drew Pearson's syndicated column, June 3, 1947.
30. Ernest W. Watson in *American Artist*, May, 1966, p. 62.
31. Letter, *Time*, Mar. 12, 1965.
32. Letter, *Time*, Aug. 18, 1958.
33. Letter, *Time*, Mar. 5, 1956.
34. Letter, *Time*, July 13, 1962.
35. Al Capp quoted by Jenkin Lloyd Jones in his syndicated column, Feb. 3, 1963.
36. Letter, *Time*, Aug. 18, 1958.
37. Leo Steinberg, "Contemporary Art and the Plight of its Public," *Harper's Magazine*, Mar., 1962.
38. Quoted in *Life*, Dec. 20, 1937, p. 24.
39. Letter, *Life*, Nov. 1, 1949.

Morris Freedman

Violence in the Modern Theater

NOTES ON THE NEW SENEKANISM

A FEW YEARS AGO, an off-Broadway group in New York called The Living Theater crystallized, or perhaps anticipated, a trend by producing two works that attained national notoriety, *The Connection* and *The Brig*. The first depicted a group of dope addicts awaiting the arrival of their necessary provision. The second was a literal, moment-by-moment record of life in a service prison camp; that is, the prisoners were themselves Marines who had broken some military law, and their guards were fellow Marines.

For *The Connection*, the theater was made virtually part of the stage: the action started in the audience and moved across the footlights, the curtain was never lowered, and members of the audience on occasion expected the characters to come down among them and panhandle to pay for the delivery of the awaited heroin. (In his review, Lionel Abel suggested that it might have been especially effective "to announce that anyone seated in the theatre had a right to a shot of 'horse.' Actors could have been stationed in the audience who would respond, and we would have been fascinated by the possibility of being in the fix too.")

The Brig was impressive in the amount of sheer noise and energy it generated: the humiliating shouting of the prisoners when making the simplest requests, the banging of garbage cans, the hitting of men and objects; the play was, among other things, a violent assault against our usual level of decibel tolerance.

For all of their documentary appearance, perhaps precisely because of it, the two plays' forms, tightly observed the simple classical unities of time, place, and action. The time was equal to chronological time; the setting remained the same; there was a single action and tone. Yet there were no other qualities of the classical drama: no hero flawed

by hubris or hamartia, no peripeteia, no deus ex machina (unless Cowboy, the Negro dressed in white who delivers the heroin, can be considered as such). The plays could have started earlier and ended later and might have included any other group of men. The Living Theater might as readily have been called Theatrical Life. Not so irrelevantly as might first seem, the group had its actual demise in a spectacular public event when police closed down the box office for nonpayment of taxes.

What was the point of these plays? Both were marked by frequent outbursts of savagery and by a coolness toward excesses that by itself, to use Kenneth Tynan's word, was "shattering." In both works, toilets were prominent in the setting. The language was bluntly direct and obscene. The candor was total. Lionel Abel suggested that the audience at *The Connection* was itself looking for a fix, to make connection with a meaningful experience, to find some stimulation in the theater that carried over into their lives. Robert Brustein suggested that, to the extent the audience got caught up in the action, it was itself "motivated by a voyeuristic interest in freak shows," that to the extent it believed in the reality of the characters, it was violating "their privacy." Tynan, Brustein, and Abel each emphasized the honesty of the work and its close connections to what we think of as "normal" life.

The acknowledged pretense of Broadway theater, which is to say of conventional American drama, was no longer capable, however skillfully it broke down for the moment any suspension of disbelief, of provoking the necessary visceral response preliminary to genuine sympathy and catharsis. (Not that it didn't try. Miller's *After the Fall* is an exhausting, pleading harangue to the audience for understanding and exculpation by the main character.) But the new Senecans are trying to bring the bull pit into the theater; unlike Shakespeare, they are not merely going to compete with bearbaiting and other forms of actual bloodletting. The eye-gouging and limb-amputating in Shakespeare were to be only a small part of the make-believe to satisfy audiences expecting genuine gore.

In our time, the Broadway theater has become too sharply separated from other forms of American mass entertainment. There is a total abyss between it and wrestling matches, rodeos, prizefights, and those multitudinous other events that attract crowds throughout the country to covered tents or large open fields. Because drama is so specifically literary, made up of words arranged in an order, we separate theatrical

drama from the drama of life. But there is a continuum between Ugo Betti's *Corruption in the Palace of Justice* and the transcripts of the Congressional hearings involving Frank Costello, the late Senator Joe McCarthy, the present Senator Dodd; between the Philadelphia, Mississippi, lynching of a Negro boy and his two white companions and James Baldwin's *Blues for Mr. Charlie*; between LeRoi Jones's *Dutchman* and the Newark riot.

The recent phenomenon of "happenings," a little old-fashioned by now if not altogether played out, indicates the need to look in reality itself for theater. It is fashionable to speak of "making the scene" as though we are indeed walking into a theatrical setting.

Much recent modern drama has returned to the Senecan practice of showing on stage offstage acts of violence. Today the audience is invited to share in the bloodletting. Gorki's *The Lower Depths* or O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* aimed at involving the audience atmospherically rather than literally. Today we become accessories, witnesses. In Albee's *The Zoo Story*, we see a character stabbed to death; similarly in Jones's *Dutchman*. Instances may readily be multiplied.

Curiously, one might argue that these particular violent acts are not significant in and of themselves; they give special meaning to the central action. When Grandma slowly buries herself alive while lying in a beach sandbox, the process of the self-immolation seems to be the point rather than simply the final asphyxiation. In *The American Dream*, the epitome of young American manhood occupying the center of the stage in a golden glow, all muscles flexing away simultaneously, talks at length about his physical dismemberment by his parents because of his infantile interest in his sexual parts. Whitney Balliett, writing in *The New Yorker*, remarked on the "forbidding" presence in *The American Dream* of "the butchery and perversion of the Greek theatre." The anatomizing of the peculiar yet powerful marital relationship in Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is a prolonged and excessively clinical study of the tortures and horrors of a domesticity built on suppressed but necessary brutalities in the given circumstances. The play gives us the raw material traditionally antecedent to familiar tragedy. We never see Captain and Mrs. Alving confront (or affront) one another in Ibsen's *Ghosts*; what we see are the ultimate consequences of what we surmise must have been as mutually abrasive and destructive a daily encounter as that between George and Martha. Harold Pinter, too, specializes, as in *The Caretaker* or in *A*

Slight Ache, in the immediately mysterious and frightening emanations of the directly clinical.

We should not respond to the new Senecan plays as a group. The horror, the shock, the sadism in many is frequently and in good measure gratuitous; the lunatic excesses in *Marat/Sade* (*The Persecution and Assassination of Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade*) are those of the carnival sideshow, isolated, ends in themselves, animated figures out of the wax museum. One of the most immediately offensive of recent works, on the other hand, is LeRoi Jones's *The Toilet*, whose very title has the quality of Senecan shock. With a title like that who needs to read the play to get the point? But it also happens to be, in its final effect, one of the genuinely touching plays of the modern Senecan repertory. The details of the play are loathsome, but in totality it breaks through our instinctive revulsion and engages our sympathy. (As Hoyt Trowbridge once argued, may not Yeats's "Leda and the Swan," about a rape by an animal of a human, be "sublime" in the original Longinian sense? Neither content nor form can predetermine aesthetic achievement.)

The Toilet is especially effective in outraging expectation, in disarming our resistance. How are we to have the arms we throw up to shield our vision twisted so painfully behind our backs that we acknowledge and then regard the toilets of our civilization? The new Senecanism may have other intentions and other effects, but the insistence on holding an unsparing dialogue with the audience seems paramount. Pirandello, of course, also put a burden of responsibility on the audience for the action on the stage. He anticipated the current Senecan fashion of forcing the onlooker—in *It Is So! (If You Think It is So)*, for example—to share in the thoughtless lustfulness and then the frustration of the privacy-invaders on the stage. Brecht's alienation effect, Artaud's theatre of brutality, the absurdist, also recognized that audiences had to be first invited, then forcibly compelled to participate in the ceremony of experience in the modern theater.

The theater of violence makes the stage a part of life and finds in life its own stage. In Genet's *The Blacks*, Archibald, the master of ceremonies, directly confronts a member of the audience, invites him into the action and viciously rejects him, offers him a stick used in a stage ritual, then violently takes it back and cracks it in half. We are not different from the actors on the stage, nor they from us; what hap-

pens there happens here; as we surround the action in an arena stage, it surrounds us. (Negroes at performances of *The Blacks* muttered revival-like calls of approval at the nightly ritual murder of a white woman.) In Albee's *Tiny Alice*, the sickness on stage is communicated in waves outward, enveloping us, for as the tiny replica of the house on stage reproduces in miniature the action taking place around it, so the microcosm of the actual stage, we sense with nausea, may be reproducing the action of the total house we are in, balcony, lobby, street, city, nation, and all.

One of the most shocking, classically Senecan plays of recent times does not involve persons at all. *Motel*, one of the three works in *America Hurrah* by Jean-Claude Van Itallie, portrays a male and a female manikin who enter a motel room to the accompaniment of the recorded monologue of the lady motel manager, proceed to copulate, draw dirty pictures on the mirror, then tear the place apart, including the figure of the droning motel manager, dismembering her totally, even her head covered with hair rollers. (Here, too, incidentally, the toilet is important. It "flushes of its own accord," the recording assures the manikins. "All you've got to do is get off. Pardon my mentioning it, but you'll have to go far before you see a thing like that on this route." And indeed the sound of the flushing can be heard at appropriate intervals. The toilet seat itself is ripped off in the course of the vandalism.)

Robert Brustein, in his review of the play, later published as the introduction to the trilogy, speaks of *Motel* as "based on a metaphor so powerful that it may well become the objective correlative of the Johnson age. . . . Vladimir Nabokov effectively used motel culture, in *Lolita*, as an image of the sordidness and tastelessness in the depths of our land; Mr. Van Itallie uses it as an image of our violence, our insanity, our need to defile. He has, in short, discovered the deepest poetic function of the theatre which is . . . to invent metaphors which can poignantly suggest a nation's nightmares and afflictions. These metaphors solve nothing, change nothing, transform nothing, but they do manage to relax frustration and assuage loneliness by showing that it is still possible for men to share a common humanity—even if this only means sharing a common revulsion against what is mean and detestable."

That the new Senecanism reflects some deep-seated and even popular need of our time may possibly be demonstrated more vividly through Michael McClure's *The Beard*, an extended theatrical meta-

phor (to use Brustein's expression) about two American culture heroes from widely separated periods and entirely different contexts—Billy the Kid, the young New Mexican killer of the nineteenth century, and Jean Harlow, the quintessential and reputedly sexually insatiable movie star of our own century. *The Beard* may be described, before anything else, as self-destructive by its own nature, like those pieces of mechanized sculpture by Jean Tinguely which operate slowly toward their own extinction.

The play is of such a character, in vocabulary and climax (the only significant action comes at the end; all else is a nearly static dialogue, although there is some movement by the two principals and at one point Billy the Kid tears some of Jean Harlow's clothes) as to demand almost immediate closing down by the authorities of whatever establishment in which it is performed. It provokes an immediate cathartic reaction to itself, overflowing with the sorts of obscenities and exchanges, blunt, monosyllabically Anglo-Saxon, simple and simple-minded, the vocabulary of toilet-wall graffiti, which are normal idiom only in the depths or on the outskirts of our familiar, polite society.

It is repetitious in a compulsive, palimpsestic manner; the underlayers are images of the top surface of shallowness and constricted mindlessness, the result of the public and long sustained nurturing of that selfishness which can so readily reduce our popular culture heroes to puppets who destroy themselves by believing in themselves. The final scene is explicitly sexual, including an act declared by statute to be illegal in most parts of the United States.

Yet the work is obviously metaphorical and can hardly be described by any usual theater-goer as erotic—any more than those fornicating manikins in *Motel* are erotic. The monotonous, near-moronic, childishly chantlike exchanges between Billy the Kid and Jean Harlow in their tinsel heaven have nothing to do with any recognizable, documentary reality. The intensity of their sustained mutual insulting of and swearing at each other is reminiscent only of other metaphorical situations, those in *Waiting for Godot* or in *No Exit*. It seems to me extravagantly over-responsive to surface to allow anger or outrage to blur the horror, the abominable extremity of their fate, of what consciousness must be like in eternity for the doll-like creatures who have greatness thrust upon them by what, in context, is clearly a rotten, increasingly rotting culture.

The police, the uniformed and thus immediately identifiable representatives of the establishment, will have nothing to do with Cole-

ridge's injunctions about responding to poetry. They believe, they believe. They act on what they see and hear, on the evidence, on what can be recorded on tape or on film. They do not look for symbol. They purge society of what is clearly antisocial or extrasocial; this is their role, and their playing of it may be a guide to what is literal, to what precedes any larger vision. In its immediate purgative effectiveness, in its insistence that it be taken in the first place literally, works like *The Beard* may be measured by almost objective, quantitative standards: how fast before the fuzz moves in to arrest actors and audience? Lenny Bruce's performances met the same criteria.

Saved by Edward Bond, a British play, was refused "a license for public performance . . . as it stands," an introductory note to the published text tells us. The situation which made the play offensive, causing some members of the private audience to rush out of the theater vomiting, was the brutal pummeling and squashing to death of an infant in its carriage by a group of British hoodlums. Actually, in the context of the work, the murder of the baby is, as in so many other modern plays incorporating forms of violence, on the edge of the central action, the attempt of the central character, Len, to keep himself attached to a family arrangement.

Part of Edward Bond's prefatory comment to *Saved* may suggest some of the intentions of the new Senecanism. "*Saved*," he says, "is almost irresponsibly optimistic. Len, the chief character, is naturally good, in spite of his upbringing and environment, and he remains good in spite of the pressures of the play. But he is not wholly good or easily good because then his goodness would be meaningless, at least for himself. His faults are partly brought home to him by his ambivalence at the death of the baby and his morbid fascination with it afterwards. . . . The play ends in a silent social stalemate, but if the spectator thinks this is pessimistic, that is because he has not learned to clutch at straws. Clutching at straws is the only realistic thing to do. The alternative, apart from the self-indulgence of pessimism, is a fatuous optimism based on superficiality of both feeling and observation. . . . [Len] lives with people at their worst and most hopeless . . . and does not turn away from them. I cannot imagine an optimism more tenacious, disciplined or honest than his . . . the murder of the baby shows the Oedipus, atavistic fury fully unleashed. The scene is typical of what some people do when they act without restraint, and is not true just of these particular people and this particular occasion. Everyone knows of worse happenings. This sort of

fury is what is kept under painful control by other people in the play, and that partly accounts for the corruption of their lives. Clearly the stoning to death of a baby in a London park is a typical English understatement. Compared to the 'strategic' bombing of German towns it is a negligible atrocity, compared to the cultural and emotional deprivation of most of our children its consequences are insignificant."

ART DOES MORE THAN REFLECT REALITY; it also does more than record it. Art sometimes gives us a way of understanding reality, of assimilating it to some order and informed apprehension that provide a comfort of feeling or of understanding or, ideally, keeping in mind Eliot's objection to the dissociation of sensibility, of both. In an affluent society we can buy not only forms of happiness but also the means to insulate ourselves from feeling altogether. All art must shock *le bourgeois*, the middle-class establishment, one way or another, before it goes on to do other things, including the offering of pleasure. Picasso's *Guernica*, as horrible as it is carefully ordered, if it satisfies in any aesthetic way at all does so because of its truthfulness as well as its excess. Senseless, unmotivated, casual, frivolous, profitable, self-indulgent brutality, murder, torture in the world at large do not penetrate our usual defenses because they are unstructured, inorganic, accidental; organized forms of man's inhumanity to man, like concentration camps, atomic explosions in populated areas, war itself, we exclude altogether as threats to our esteem and psychic well-being, for they are sanctioned by society. It is possible for the serious playwright today to take on Senecan techniques in small, realistic situations (or in large but metaphorical ones) more readily than to take them on in the dimensions called for by concentration camps, apartheid, Latin-American dictatorships, the Vietnam confusions. But always the immensity of the larger world looms over the stage; we focus on the microscopic disordered cell, for we sense that it is organically linked to the larger cancer.

Drama in any age has a social dynamic. It is not critically heretical to remark that some of our leading Senecans today are or have been activists in violent affairs, Jean Genet, LeRoi Jones, Joe Orton, Norman Mailer. The gulf between the ideal and the real, between the best for man and the worst, is visibly getting wider. Simultaneously, we are being forced to become more aware of that gulf. It was in South Africa, the only country in the world today where human beings are by law defined to lack even minimal human capacities or needs, that

the first successful heart transplant was sustained. Progress in the Western world to minimize pain and discomfort of every sort has been enormous, an achievement that makes all the more dismal our failure to ease poverty, illiteracy, human disfranchisement generally. Our affluent Western society, to labor the point, has marvelously learned to anesthetize itself. It has not learned altogether how to kid itself about all the abominations. However reluctantly, someone is paying attention to the new Senecans; we can't imprison every Lenny Bruce or LeRoi Jones, and we cannot always defend ourselves by charging with sickness all the writers who speak to us disturbingly. The Jonathan Swifts will be heard in any age.

Robert Creeley

"Follow the Drinking Gourd . . ."

*Present again
present present
again present
present again*

*leaves falling,
knives, a windspout
of nostalgic faces,
into the air.*

*Car glides forward.
Drive from Bloomington,
Indiana to Lexington,
Ky. Here the walls*

*of fall, the stone,
the hill, the trucks
in front with
the unseen drivers.*

*Stoney Lonesome. Gnaw-
bone. A house
sits back from
the road.*

*A Christmas
present—all
present and ac-
counted for? Sir?*

*Passage of time.
The sun shone level
from the left-
hand side of*

*the land—a flat-
seeming distance,
left, east? South?
Sun shines.*

*Go on. Tell
me, them, him,
her, their
apparent forms.*

*The "present dented,"
call it "long
distance," come
here home. Then*

*a scarecrow there, here a
snowman. Where in
the world then an-
other place?*

*Drive on
what seems an
exceptionally smooth
and even surface,*

the forward cars
way up there glint
in that sun of
a universe of mine.

And for twenty-eight
dollars—all this.
All in the mind
in time, in place—

what it costs to rent
agency? Give
me a present, your
hand to help

me understand this.
So far, so long,
so anywhere a
place if not this

one—driving,
screaming a lovely
song perhaps, or
a cigar smoke—

“When they were
young in Kentucky
a man to freedom
took them in a cave. . . .”

A famous song,
to drive to,
sing along the
passing way—

or done or
right or
wrong or
wander on.

CONTRIBUTORS

✿ Painter and lithographer CLINTON ADAMS' works are included in numerous private and museum collections. The recipient of many awards, he has exhibited in major museums in the United States and Europe. Both teacher and critic, he has written for a number of art magazines and has collaborated on a book on lithography. He has been a member of the faculties of UCLA and of the Universities of Kentucky and Florida; he is currently Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico.

✿ JOSEPH BOSKIN, Co-Director of the American Studies Program and member of the Faculty of the University of Southern California, served as consultant for the Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, 1965-66. The author of numerous articles on social and political movements and of two books, Professor Boskin has taught at the University of Minnesota, Brooklyn and Queens Colleges and UCLA. He is co-editor and one of the authors for Glencoe-Macmillan's twelve-volume *Issues and Problems in American Society*.

✿ Noted as poet and novelist, ROBERT CREELEY's most recent work is the editing of *Selected Writings of Charles Olson* for New Directions. Creeley is currently a member of the faculty of the State University of New York at Buffalo.

✿ WILLIAM EASTLAKE, author of many novels, articles and stories, has recently returned from Vietnam where he served as correspondent for the Nation. His latest novel, *Castle Keep*, is currently being produced as a movie. When not traveling throughout the world, Eastlake lives on his ranch in central New Mexico.

✿ JOSEPH FRANK, the editor of this issue of *New Mexico Quarterly*, is Professor and Chairman of the Department of English, at the University of New Mexico. Author of *The Levellers*, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper*, and of the forthcoming *Hobbled Pegasus*. He also edited *Literature from the Bible and Modern Essays in English* and is associate editor of *Seventeenth-Century News*, a professional journal.

✿ Author of a recent volume of drama criticism entitled *The Moral Impulse*, MORRIS FREEDMAN has written several books as well as critical articles which

have appeared in *Harper's*, the *New Yorker*, *New Republic*, and *American Scholar*. Now Chairman of the Department of English at the University of Maryland, he previously taught at the University of New Mexico.

✿ WILLIAM HAMILTON teaches Religion in the Division of Humanities at New College, Sarasota, Florida. He is known for his contribution to the radical or death-of-God theology and has written a number of books, articles, and plays. His forthcoming work will include a theological book in the form of an LP recording, and a series of three one-act plays.

✿ Historian R. J. KAUFMANN teaches literature and history at the University of Rochester. His publications are in the fields of the Renaissance and various aspects of modern culture. He is now collaborating on a book involving a new approach to world history. The author of *Richard Brome: Caroline Playwright*, he has edited and written introductions for editions of the works of John Dryden, G. B. Shaw and Thomas Middleton. Over twenty-five of his articles have appeared in prominent national magazines.

✿ DR. JUDD MARMOR, Director of the Divisions of Psychiatry, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, has been Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA since 1953. He is the editor of *Sexual Inversion: the Multiple Roots of Homosexuality* and of a forthcoming volume, *Modern Psychoanalysis: New Directions and Perspectives*. Over one hundred of his articles have been published in distinguished professional journals. Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons honored him in 1967 with an award for "distinguished contributions to the field of psychiatry."

✿ Novelist TOM MAYER is the author of the best-selling *Bubble Gum and Kipling* and of numerous stories which appear frequently in major publications in the United States. The recipient in 1966 of a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship for writing, he is now living in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where he has just completed a novel.

✿ PETER NABOKOV is a staff writer for the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, and was the first newspaper man to interview Reies Tijerina while the manhunt for the participators in the Tierra Amarilla courthouse raid was in progress. He has worked on Navaho, Sioux, and Crow reservations in a variety of capacities, spent some of his life in Mexico, and wandered the Western Hemisphere from the Amazon to the coast of Nova Scotia. He is author of *Two Leggings, the Making of a Crow Warrior*.

✿ Director of Comparative Studies at the University of Texas, DONALD L. WEISMANN is noted as a teacher, as an artist and as writer with many articles and books to his credit. He was the writer-performer for some forty video tapes on the visual arts and is a member of the National Council of the Arts.

INDEX TO VOLUME XXXVII

ARTICLES

- Adams, Clinton, *Art among the Letter Writers*, 377; biog. 397
 Allen, John Houghton, *Gen'l Wm. Walker*, 211; biog. 231
 Allen, John Houghton, *Solano Lopez*, 33; biog. 41
 Boskin, Joseph, *Violence in the Ghettos: A Consensus of Attitudes*, 317; biog. 397
 Eastlake, William, *The Message*, 368; biog. 397
 Frank, Joseph, *Overture for Violence*, 293; biog. 397
 Freedman, Morris, *Violence in the Modern Theater: Notes on the New Senecanism*, 386; biog. 397
 Hamilton, William, *Obscenity, Protest and War*, 363; biog. 398
 Hillerman, Tony, *Las Trampas*, 20; biog. 32
 Kaufmann, R. J., *The Knowledge of Violence*, 302; biog. 398
 Marmor, Judd, *Psychosocial Aspects of Urban Violence*, 335; biog. 398
 Myers, Francis M., *Toward a Theory of the Humanities*, 5; biog. 13
 Nabokov, Peter, *Reflections on the Alianza*, 343; biog. 398
 Newman, Stanley, *Relativism in Language and Culture. Fourteenth Annual UNM Research Lecture*, 196; biog. 196
 Scott, Winfield Townley, *The House Next Door*, 258; biog. 275
 Springer, George P., *Prague Revisited*, 68; biog. 79
 Weismann, Donald L., *Violence and the Creative Act*, 372; biog. 398
 Wiegand, William, *The Non-Fiction Novel*, 243; biog. 257

FICTION

- Casper, Linda T., *The Transparent Sun*, 281; biog. 288
 Connell, Evan S., Jr., *Puig's Wife*, 129; biog. 156
 Freedman, Morris, *The Earring*, 14; biog. 19
 Froscher, Wingate, *A Letter from Nueva York*, 59; biog. 67
 Hillerman, Tony, *The Replacement*, 276; biog. 280
 Logan, Louis Dell, *Alligator's Hopes in a Tadpole Town*, 112; biog. 128
 Loomis, Edward, *Three Love Stories*, 177; biog. 191
 Mayer, Tom, *Dead Dog*, 357; biog. 398
 Momaday, N. Scott, *Two Sketches from House Made of Dawn*, 101; biog. 111
 Steele, Max, *A Caracole in Paris*, 157; biog. 176
 Weismann, Donald L., *If You Live Long Enough*, 54; biog. 58

POETRY

- Adler, Lucile, *Bus Stop at Delgado Street*, 42; *Orphan*, 43; *The Sandias*, 44; biog. 53
 Allen, John A., *Not an Elegy*, 235; biog. 242
 Childs, Barney, *B47s Shooting Landings, Tucson*, 49; biog. 53

- Creeley, Robert, "Follow the Drinking
Gourd . . ." 395; biog. 397
Fielding, Gabriel, *Corrida in Azpeitia*, 232;
biog. 242
Ford, Edsel, *Sestina for a Familiar Lob-
ster*, 236; biog. 242
Frumkin, Gene, *Condors above Water*, 48;
The Poet, 49; biog. 53
Legler, Philip, *The Playground*, 46; biog.
53
Scott, Winfield Townley, *Gardenias for
my Daughters*, 50; *Aspasia*, 51; biog. 53
Silverman, Stuart, *On a Line by Lu Lun*,
45; biog. 53
Strong, Dick, *Spring Winds*, 52; biog. 53
Stryk, Lucien, *Image*, 237; biog. 242
Summers, Hollis, *The Study of History*,
240; *Flagship*, *Tourist Class*, 241; biog.
242
Weeks, Ramona, *The Violent Country*,
238; biog. 242

BOOK REVIEWS

- Adler, Lucile, *The Traveling Out and
Other Poems*, 82
Dietz, Florence A., *Stitches in Time*, 88
Goodell, Larry, *Cycles*, 84
Lowell, Robert, *Near the Ocean*, 93
McCord, Howard, *Fables & Transfigura-
tions*, 84
Sexton, Anne, *Live or Die*, 89
Snyder, Gary, *A Range of Poems*, 80

REVIEWERS

- Harris, William, 82
Legler, Philip, 84, 92
Frumkin, Gene, 88
Dorn, Alfred, 89
Malkoff, Karl, 96

\$1.50 ,

: Full Issue

NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY

Spring 1968

PEASANTS IN THE MODERN WORLD

Edited by PHILIP K. BOCK

Cultural Traditions in Developing Countries
by ALEX WEINGROD

Peasants and Purchasers
by MARY W. HELMS

Agrarian Reform in Three Latin-American Countries
by CHARLES J. ERASMUS

Local Courts in Rural Mexico
by EVA HUNT

Peasants' Progress: Dominicans in New York
by NANCIE L. GONZALEZ

The "Balkan" Peasant: A View from Serbia
by E. A. HAMMEL

