On the Concept of Violence

The classical Greek word for force and/or violence was ‘bia’. According to Homer “insolence and violence reach the iron heaven” (*Odyssey* XV, 329).

The Latin equivalent, from ‘vis’ or force, was ‘violentia’. Lucretius wrote “Denique cur acris violentia triste leonum seminium sequitur?” (Moreover, why does bitter violence go with the lion’s sullen breed?) (*De Rerum Natura* III, 741-2). The French form violence appeared in the 13th century (Bardis, 1973).

The Latin verb from which ‘violent’ is derived, ‘violare’ is clearly normative; it means: ‘to dishonor, to outrage, to violate, to profane’. There is another possible derivation, from the Latin adjective ‘violentus’, which means ‘forcible, vehement, violent, impetuous, boisterous’.

The German form ‘Gewalt’ and Dutch ‘geweld’ is derived from the Gothic ‘ga-waldan’ meaning ‘to use power’; ‘waldan’ meaning ‘to rule, to dominate, to control, to possess’; ‘Jemanden in seinem Gewalt haben’.

Aristotle does not distinguish between force and violence, but uses the term ‘bia’, which, like the German word ‘Gewalt’, may mean both. In his works, ‘bia’ is used in a very general way, standing for the physical concept referring to inanimate nature as well as for ‘compulsion’ in human behavior. As he defines it in the fifth book of *The Metaphysics*, ‘bia’ is a kind of necessity which hinders and impedes the course of impulse and purpose (Metaph. 1015 a,b), In human conduct, ‘bia’ refers to cases where the cause of action lies in things outside the actor, and when the actor contributes nothing (Nicomachean Ethics, 1110 b).

Another Greek term associated with political power, ‘kratos’ (hence ‘kratology’ as the term proposed for the study of violence), often appears in the same context with ‘archè’. It signifies strength or might, and just as ‘archè’ is found in terms such as ‘monarchy’ and ‘oligarchy’, ‘kratos’ appears in the suffix of such terms as ‘aristocracy’, ‘democracy’ and ‘plutocracy’.

In other contexts, however, where ‘archè’ suggests initiative and the voluntary side of obedience, ‘kratos’ indicates force and the involuntary side (e.g. Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, 373).

The poetic tradition, differing from Aristotle in this respect, offers a provocative distinction between force and violence. As mythological personifications, Kratos (Might) and Bia (Violence) are individuated spirits; but they are both forms of force, and they appear together on the same team, servants of divine power. In Hesiod’s (*Theogony*, 385) genealogy of the gods, Kratos and Bia are the ‘wonderful children’ of Pallas – whose name perhaps means the ‘brandisher’ or ‘shaker’ thereby representing threat – and Styx, who represents horror. Kratos and Bia dwell only in the house of Zeus and go where he directs them. In *Prometheus Bound* (Aeschylus), they are the first to appear on stage, dragging Prometheus to his rock.

Kratos (Might) is the first to speak in the play; he discusses the fate of Prometheus and later rebukes him for rebellion. Bia (Violence) is silent throughout the play.
Even though both are instruments of force in the service of tyrannical power, the difference between the roles of Might and Violence is instructive. Might uses words and directs itself to reasoning processes. Violence remains mute (Walter, 1964).

Since times immemorial, man has learned to intimidate, dominate, exploit, coerce, and terrorize his fellow-men by means of violence or the threat of violence, in the pursuit of power, material gain, or in order to impose a particular doctrine, ideology or ‘Weltanschauung’. Violence has been used in the name of the established sacrosanct order, in the name of justice and righteousness, and in the name of fear, anguish, despair, indignation. Human institutions have been founded, consolidated, and destroyed by means of violence. The present political and socioeconomic state of the world is predominantly the outcome of violence, built on the agonies of peoples.

A profound ambivalence toward violence is easily discernible in most, if not all, individuals. Violence is loathsome, disgusting, yet it is fascinating. Violence is terrifying, yet it is attractive, spectacular, glorious. Violence is destructive, lethal, mutilating, atrocious, yet inseminating, generative, germinal. Violence has been diabolized and deified, banalized and glorified. In most cosmogonies and mythologies of creation, the world and human life itself sprang from an act of violence by the gods; in most eschatologies the end of the world will also be an act of violence, but this time committed by man himself... not with a whimper, but a bang...

These observations, however, should not detract us from the fact that it is not at all clear what human acts exactly constitute violence. Circumscriptions and definitions of violence are diverse, heterogeneous, kaleidoscopic; perhaps hard-cored but very much blurred at the edges. Violence has been defined in terms of force, coercive power, authority, (il)legitimacy. It has been defined in terms of behavior, motives, intentions, antecedents and consequences. It has been defined in terms of violation: violation of corporal integrity, violation of territorial or spatial integrity, violation of moral and legal integrity, violation of rules and expectations, even violation of self-esteem, dignity, autonomy.

The concept of violence comprises phenomena as far apart as a drunken embroglio and an all-out nuclear holocaust; and range from the calculated and instrumental aspects to the impulsive, spasmodic and chaotic. The use of the term has been literal, metaphoric, descriptive, explanatory, even prescriptive. The term has been used to blame, to indicate disapproval, to vituperate, to inflame passions, to mobilize support, the define the guilty party, to justify and condone our own actions. Violence is mostly what others do to us. Violence, like beauty, is very much in the eye of the beholder.

‘Violence’ has more often than not been equated with ‘aggression’ which, in view of the same sorry state of affairs concerning the conceptualization and definition of ‘aggression’, has been to the detriment of both concepts.

Typologies and classifications of kinds and forms and types and subtypes of violence abound: for the most part rather crude and static inventories. None of them may even begin to encompass all the subtleties, ramifications and vicissitudes of violence in the real world.
There has been, moreover, a veritable avalanche of adjectives and epithets attempting to further delineate and specify the generic concept of violence: structural violence, systemic violence, institutional violence, mental violence, verbal violence, physical violence, indirect violence, emancipatory violence, revolutionary violence, repressive violence, insurgent violence, incumbent violence, counterinsurgency violence, criminal violence, collective violence, political violence, anomic violence, etc. Instead of being instrumental in clarification of the overburdened concept of violence, the epithets have had a nasty habit of pushing the concept still further into obscurantism, oblivion and utter irrelevance. By and large, a similar dissensus haunts the concept of ‘political violence’. Yet, this babylonic confusion of tongues notwithstanding, the study of political violence has experienced a short but hectic evolution.

**Political Violence**

What is political violence all about? Politics has been periphrased by Lasswell as “Who gets what, when and how”. Politics is concerned with the seizure, the consolidation, or the redistribution of the power to decide who gets what, when and how. If violence is resorted to in this perpetual struggle for power, it is labeled ‘political violence’. Thus political violence is the domain par excellence of power politics. In the macroquantitative literature, ‘political violence’ generally includes all variants of domestic political violence – violence within polities – war, as organized violence between polities, generally being excluded.

Factor-analytically, the forms of domestic political violence appear to have a tricomponential structure:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Turmoil</th>
<th>Revolutionary</th>
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<tr>
<td>riots</td>
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<td>demonstrations</td>
<td>Subversion/Internal War</td>
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<td>non-political clashes</td>
<td>civil war</td>
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<td>guerrilla war</td>
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<td>coups (some)</td>
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Political violence thus appears to be fairly well distinguished from criminal violence: homicide, manslaughter, assault and battery, rape, mugging, armed robbery, gang violence, crime syndicate
violence, feud, freelance multiple murder, etc. Criminal violence apparently does not jeopardize the existing political order (it may sometimes attempt to correct the economic order though).

The Definition of Violence

Gilula & Daniels (1969) seemed to reflect a consensus view defining violence as ‘destructive aggression’. This conceptualization implies the use of physical force to injure persons or property; and this is the core of most definitions of violence. Two major variant views on definitions of violence are found in the Report of the President’s Task Force on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. The first is the Commission’s own extremely broad definition, which includes overt threats of force even toward the reputation of persons, as well as actual application of force toward persons or property. A second major variant definition is found in one of the Commission’s staff reports by Ervin & Lion, who include assaultive or destructive ideations as well as acts in their definition of violence.

Hartogs & Arzt (1970) voice more or less a consensus among political scientists in distinguishing (political) violence in (a) organized violence which is “patterned and deliberate”. These authors regard all organized violence as instrumental in the pursuit of group interests and goals; (b) Spontaneous violence, “an unplanned explosion sat off by the unique chemistry of internal and external conditions”. Spontaneous violence is regarded as reactive, compensatory, or gratuitous (displacement). A third type identified is ‘pathological violence’ committed by individuals on the basis of neuro- or psychopathology.

Grundy & Weinstein (1974) proposed that organized violence may be divided into criminal and political types. Criminal violence is not directed at the defense, disruption or restoration of a normative order, although it may unwittingly contribute to such outcomes. Political violence is directed at the maintenance or change of a normative order. Nieburg (1968) observed that political violence “addresses itself to changing the very system of social norms which the police power is designed to protect”. This conception, however, is too one-sided. Grundy & Weinstein would add that political violence can also concern itself with maintaining or protecting the normative order, the status quo, under attack. They observe, furthermore, that the distinctions between criminal versus political, and organized versus spontaneous violence are not always clear, Criminal bands may become social bandits and finally guerrilla movements. Similarly, a riot may be interpreted by officials as a political conspiracy, and by oppositionists as part of a (spontaneous) movement for change.

Persson (1980) points to the fact that “Violence has had a bad press. Even more so than its equally-misunderstood and much-maligned bedmate ‘aggression’, the term ‘violence’ is almost invariably used pejoratively. However, like aggression, violence may be viewed as an essential survival mechanism”.

In its broadest sense, the term is almost synonymous with ‘disorder’. But this is not of itself condemnatory: violence can be destructive or constructive, retrogressive or progressive, harmful or beneficial. There can be positive consequences of disorder – in fact the prior disorder may be a necessary prerequisite for the positive outcome – and yet, ‘disorder’ and ‘violence’ are almost
universally applied as negative labels. Normatively, however, the term ‘violence’ is neutral. That this comprehensive use of the term is not as strange as it may at first appear is illustrated by the fact that that archetypal pacifist, Ghandi, maintained that all activity involves at least a small amount of violence, that to be active is to be violent (“Strictly speaking, no activity and no industry is possible without a certain amount of violence, no matter how little” Ghandi, Harijan, 1, 9, 1940).

While violence may be positive, neutral, or negative, however, we run into problems if we endeavour to formalize these categories. For one thing, our perceptions and values are culture-bound: violence which is condoned or accepted in any given society may not be tolerated in others. In fact, certain phenomena which are held to be ‘violent’ in some societies will not even be recognized as such in others. Even where there may be a cross-cultural conformity as to the acceptability of violence in certain areas – as in the ‘spectacle’ or ‘entertainment’ of certain ‘physical sports’, for example – there will be different levels of toleration. Thus, the degree of violence accepted in boxing varies to a greater or lesser degree from country to country, while the violence inherent in the national ‘sport’ of Spain, bullfighting, is unacceptable in other cultures. Even within a given society, levels of tolerance change with time: thus we see capital punishment, for example, historically accepted as necessary legal retribution, rejected by several contemporary societies.

Violence is widely sanctioned in certain cases, such as self-defense; protection of innocents; in opposition to crimes against humanity. Thus, the assassination of Hitler would no doubt have been near-universally accepted as being a ‘good thing’, to mention just one clichéd example.

The purpose of the above comments is to illustrate that violence is not necessarily ‘bad’ or ‘immoral’ even though most of the literature concentrates on the negative aspect of violence; as if the word had no positive or even neutral connotations. While it may indeed be useful to talk in terms of ‘violation of an individual’s autonomy’, for example, as some political philosophers do, this can be disparaging use of the term. We need to be clear that this is a definition of negative violence, not ‘violence’ in its most general sense – and more especially so where this negative concept of ‘violation’ is the crux of a definition (Persson, 1980).

**Violence defined in terms of ‘violation’ and ‘social injustice’**

This definition is exemplified by Garver (1968) who considers the core meaning of violence to be the act of violating a basic right of the human being. For Garver, the two basic human rights are the right to one’s body and the right to autonomy. Violation of these rights implies that violence has been done. Garver defines four types of violence: (a) personal overt violence (overt physical assault of one person on the body of another, e.g. assault, mugging, rape, murder, police brutality); (b) Overt institutional violence (people obeying orders: the extreme manifestation being war, but the category includes both riots and ‘war campaigning’-type policies of law-enforcement agencies); (c) Quiet personal violence (a human being deprives another person of autonomy, dignity, or the right of self-determination through the manipulation of symbols; one person driving another to suicide (= psychological violence)); (d) Quiet institutional violence, finally, operates when people are systematically denied access to social options open to others. Garver notes that denial of options is an attack on autonomy and, therefore, constitutes violence. Examples are minority repression,
slavery, apartheid, classroom conditioning. In Garver’s opinion, “There is more violence in the black ghettos than anywhere else in America, even when the ghettos are quiet”. This is to say that while sporadic riots in black ghettos will attract attention and make the headlines, the real violence is in the everyday, routine oppression of racialism (Persson, 1980). As Garver points out, not only is this hidden institutional violence insidious, pervasive, and anonymous, but, once established, it requires very little violence – overt or covert – to maintain it. People tend to accept the system for what it is. It is essentially the violence of the ‘silent majority’, violence by inactivity and indifference.

There are many similarities between Garver’s category of ‘quiet institutional violence’, Sanford & Comstock’s (1971) ‘social destructiveness’, my own category of ‘social spoiling’, and Galtung’s concept of ‘structural violence’. The radical view of violence as social injustice is epitomized by Galtung’s (1969) ‘structural violence’. For Galtung, most commentators who discuss violence are dealing with a highly limited aspect of the phenomenon: direct, personal violence. He argues that we also should consider ‘anonymous’ or ‘structural’ violence. He equates violence with ‘social injustice’, arguing that “violence is present where human beings are influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations”. “Violence is here defined as the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is”. “Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance”. In a 1975 article, Galtung defines ‘structural violence’ as “anything avoidable that impedes human self-realization” and holds that the most important aspect of the idea is perhaps that by means of this concept “a social net is constructed whereby birds of many feathers can be caught and kept”.

The victims of structural violence are estimated to be a multiple of the victims of personal violence. See for operationalizations and figures: Galtung & Hoivik, 1971; Eckhardt & Young, 1974; Köhler & Alcock, 1976; Hoivik, 1977; Alcock & Köhler, 1979.

As Persson (1980) has pointed out, Galtung’s definition is not necessarily pejorative in terms of intent, for his use of the word almost equates ‘violence’ with ‘inefficiency’. However, violence is the cause of social deprivation and as such a ‘bad thing’; therefore he is attempting to define ‘negative violence’ and not the axiologically neutral category of violence. For Galtung, violence exists in the very dynamics of all existing social systems, for there is no equitable distribution of resources. Where there is preventable disease, an unnecessarily high incidence of infant mortality, a low life expectancy, there is violence. One is reminded of the Negro Rights Campaign slogan ‘Poverty is Violence’. Apartheid in South Africa is merely a blatant, or extreme form of structural violence: social conditioning through, say, education, exists in all societies. In fact, Galtung detects violence in all asymmetrical interactions.

The ‘radical’ definition of violence has been criticized as being too all-embracing to be useful, and Galtung in particular has been accused of having done a greater disservice than a service with his ‘structural’ model of violence (Gronow & Hillpö, 1970; Bay, 1971; Eide, 1971; Derriennic, 1972; Röling, 1973; Arblaster, 1975; Boulding, 1977; Pontura, 1978; van Benthem-van den Berg, 1978; van der Dennen, 1978; Persson, 1980). One of Galtung’s constructive critics emphasizes that the category of ‘structural violence’ is confusing (Derriennic, 1972). Whether or not Galtung’s formulation has done more harm than good, his definition of violence has two serious flaws: the
‘potential’ he speaks of cannot be quantified (or even conceptualized for that matter); and any evaluation of an optimal allocation of resources must necessarily be subjective. As Eide (1971) has observed, the meaning of violence would vary according to the value-structure of the user: “It would be clear that ‘violence’ is simply the cause of what the user of the term does not like”.

One of the more philosophical objections against the term ‘structural violence’ is that it is a metaphor which has replaced the former category of ‘alienation’ as the ‘root of all evil’ in human societies: a quasi-mysticist pancreston; a magic ‘mantra’ for the true believers, the all-embracing, all-explaining formula – a formula like a hospital bed in which all societal diseases have been lying but without being cured – while adding little or nothing to the age-old and comprehensible notions of ‘repression’ and ‘exploitation’. It is, as Minoque (1975) wrote, a “philosophical device of promoting a limited concept to command the whole domain of understanding”. This is a euphemism for ‘semantic magic’. One other major conceptual criticism is that Galtung contrasts ‘structural violence’ with direct, personal violence (regarding these categories as logically as well as empirically independent), thus ‘scotomizing’ the entire continuum of violence phenomena in between (van der Dennen, 1978).

Boulding (1977) comments on the Galtungian concepts of ‘structural violence’ and ‘positive peace’ (the absence of personal as well as structural violence): “They are metaphors rather than models, and for that very reason are suspect. Metaphors always imply models and metaphors have more persuasive power than models do, for models tend to be the reserve of the specialist. But when a metaphor implies a bad model it can be very dangerous, for it is both persuasive and wrong. The metaphor of structural violence I would agree falls right into this category.

The metaphor is that poverty, deprivation, ill health, low expectations of life, a condition in which more than half the human race lives, is ‘like’ a thug beating up the victim and taking his money away from him in the street, or it is ‘like’ a conqueror stealing the land of the people and reducing them to slavery. The implication is that poverty and its associated ills are the fault of the thug or the conqueror and the solution is to do away with thugs and conquerors. While there is some truth in the metaphor, in the modern world at least there is not very much. Violence, whether of the streets and the home, or of the guerrilla, of the police, or of the armed forces, is a very different phenomenon from poverty. The processes which create and sustain poverty are not at all like the processes which create and sustain violence, although like everything else in the world, everything is somewhat related to everything else...

What Galtung calls structural violence (which has been defined by one unkind commentator as anything that Galtung doesn’t like) was originally defined as any unnecessarily low expectation of life, on that assumption that anybody who dies before the allotted span has been killed, however unintentionally and unknowingly, by somebody else. The concept has been expanded to include all the problems of poverty, destitution, deprivation, and misery. These are enormously real and are a very high priority for research and action, but they belong to systems which are only peripherally related to the structures which produce violence”.

Grundy & Weinstein (1974) have warned against the potential ideological justification inherent in such definitions of violence as social injustice. One way of excusing and justifying personal overt violence – explaining in sympathetic terms the overt violence of the oppressed – is to classify it
along with other actions that are called violent because they have some of the same effects on human beings. Thus, these definitions enable one to interpret this personal overt violence as a reaction to the quiet but no less effective and inhumane institutional and/or structural violence of the oppressor (if identifiable at all). At the very least one can claim that personal overt violence is no more immoral than quiet institutional violence. At its most ambitious extension, one can claim that it is morally obligatory to smash quiet institutional or structural violence through personal overt violence. “In all cases the key to this argument is the equation of physical attacks on persons with institutional denial of opportunity”.

It might be argued, however, that violation of corporal integrity is of quite a different order than violation of dignity or self-esteem; the ‘pain’ involved may not be very different in amount, but it may be in quality. Hurting one’s ego and hurting one’s body may not be quite identical. There is a difference between genocide and menticide.

**Violence defined in terms of ‘physical force’**

Although men universally agree that violence and other kinds of force are perennially associated with the exercise of power, there is anything but agreement over the question of the proper – in both a technical and a moral sense – relation between such methods and the power system. Among the several ideas of political power in the vast literature on the subject, two prominent conceptions appear, superficially at least, to contradict each other. One, considering violence as the failure of power, would exclude it from the definition; the other, considering violence as the specific property of political associations, makes it central to the definition of political power (Walter, 1964). One position considers ‘authority’ as the authentic form of power, based on consent, voluntary obedience, and persuasion, and considers violence as a symptom attending the breakdown of authority. The nuclear ideas in this venerable notion may be found far back in the Western tradition – in Homer’s and Hesiod’s beliefs about the antagonism between violence and right, in the Socratic opposition to Thrasymachus, and in Plato’s conviction that persuasion is morally superior to force, to mention only a few sources. The notion is held by many writers in the modern period – by Rousseau in *The Social Contract*, for instance – and expressed in the recent literature of social science by writers such as MacIver and Merriam. Merriam (1950) protests that many observers “make the same fundamental error in analysis of the power situation in society, of overstating the role of violence”. He argues: “In most communities the use of force is relatively uncommon in proportion to the number of regulations, and the success of the organization is not measured by the amount of violence in specific cases, but by the extent to which violence is avoided and other substitutes discovered. The monopoly of force, which is so often declared to be the chief characteristic of the political association, is not meant for daily use, but as a last resort when all other measures of persuasion and conciliation have failed”. Similarly, MacIver (1947) declares: “Without authority force is destructive violence, spasmodic, undirected, futile”. Though writers who hold this point of view recognize that violence may be used as an instrument of force by men in authority, they think of it as a last resort and tend to diminish its significance in the organization of controls. They are inclined to deny not only its moral value but also its effectiveness as an instrument (Walter, 1964).
The contrary idea was expressed recently by C. Wright Mills (1956), who states succinctly: “All politics is a struggle for power; the ultimate kind of power is violence”. Although Mills and others who view power in this fashion may deplore the bitter reality they perceive, a number of writers holding similar points of view have drawn more positive conclusions.

The tradition that includes many of the Sophists, Machiavelli, and Hobbes is a familiar one, and writers within it may not only describe the instrumental worth of violence but also defend its moral value, arguing that it contributes to the termination of discord, the maintenance of order, or the safety of the ruler. The Mirror of Princes genre, which is to be found in many civilizations, frequently combines advice in the form of rules for cultivating personal virtue with a manual of refined violent techniques. In the literature of India, the combination is seen in the classic Kautilya Arthasastra, probably written at the end of the 4th century B.C. In this book, an introductory section on the personal conduct of the saintly king is followed by an elaborate handbook of systematic deception, violence, and internal espionage. Weber (1946) observed “In contrast with this document Machiavelli’s Principe is harmless”. In India’s Code of Manu, which tradition places at the dawn of civilization, violence is described as an instrument of punishment, which in turn is declared to be the most important technique of power.

The picture Manu paints of what the world would be like if the ranking system were violated reminds one of the speech Shakespeare gives to Ulysses in Act 1, scene iii of Troilus and Cressida:

“O, when degree is shaked / Which is the ladder to all high designs, / The enterprise is sick!.. Take but degree away, untune that string / And hark what discord follows... Then everything includes itself in power / Power into will, will into appetite, / And appetite, an universal wolf, / So double seconded with will and power, / Must make perforce an universal prey, / And last eat up himself’.

Since the purpose of punishment is to maintain the social system with its castes intact, the most violent punishments – penalties in terrorem – are to be meted for actions which most seriously threaten the system.

It is clear, then, that according to the ancient text of Manu, the effective and proper use of violence as an instrument of punishment is essential to the exercise of power. The contrast between the two ideas of violence in the system of power may be further illuminated by turning to the social thought of another political culture; namely the literature of China during the latter half of the third century B.C., in which orthodox Confucianism is pitted against the so-called ‘Legalist’ revision of that doctrine.

The Legalists hold that the only way to govern is through force and fear, and in the book named after one of their leading theorists, the Han Fei Tzu: “They set forth, with ruthless clarity and astringent logic, a system of totalitarian despotism. Han Fei Tzu recognizes the supremacy of nothing but force, and aims at making the ruler rich and powerful. The people are to be used completely as instruments of the ruler’s designs, living or dying as suits his purpose... The ruler need only keep [his ministers] and all of his subjects in such a state of fear that they will dare to do no wrong” (Creel, 1960). Moreover, they offer a highly refined, repressive system of ‘shu’ or ‘methods’ and insist that to rule properly, the sovereign must “monopolize the handles which
control life and death”. After the Han Fei Tzu, Creel remarks, “the policies of Machiavelli’s *Prince* seem timid and vacillating”.

The extreme attitudes concerning the proper place of violence in the power system – one minimizing, the other maximizing its importance – may be understood, as usual, as opposite poles of a continuum, with several alternative positions between them. Among the ancient Greeks, for example, Solon of Athens apparently believes that good order is based on the concord of classes and that the state is a cooperative venture, but, disagreeing with Hesiod, he does not think that violence and right are irreconcilable opposites. Instead, he thinks they are coordinate elements in the power system, working together in the cause of good order, and that violent force is sometimes necessary, because it separates warring factions and prevents them from destroying one another and the state (Sinclair, 1961).

In a 1918 address, Max Weber provides a classic modern statement of the line of thought identifying political action with violent techniques: “.. today we have to say that the state is that human community which, within a given territory – ‘territory’ is one of its characteristics – claims for itself (successfully) the legitimate monopoly of physical violence. Specifically, at present the right of physical violence is assigned to all other associations or individuals only to the extent permitted by the state; it is supposed to be the exclusive source of the ‘right’ to use violence”.

The majority of interpretations of violence adopt a definition in terms of ‘physical force’. Grundy & Weinstein (1974) call it the ‘observational definition’ of violence because it is rooted in the observational act of applying physical force and does not distinguish between the source, purpose, or effects of such acts.

Ogle (1950), for example, argues that the term force can be used to refer to a number of different types of action: “It may be purely physical – an overt individual act, such as the striking of a blow or aiming of a gun, or the activity of a crowd as in the case of a mob lynching. Wherever it entails the use of material, measurable force, we may refer to ‘violence’”. Thus, Ogle does not count psychological denials of autonomy and social denials of access to opportunity as acts of violence. A similar interpretation is given by Nieburg (1969) who states that violence can be “unambiguously defined as the most direct and severe form of physical power... It is force in action. Its use is a continuation of bargaining begun by other means, whether it is used by the state, by private groups, or by persons”. For Nieburg, violence is distinguished from force. Force is a “reserve capability and means of exercising physical power” and “amounts to a threat of violence or counterviolence”. Like Ogle, Nieburg does not recognize psychological or social denials of autonomy as acts of violence.

Essentially, the observational definition of violence as “destructive physical action against another person” has narrowed the expansive definition to include only acts of violation involving the use of physical force.

The key to this discussion of violence is equating force exercised by the state and force exercised by people who are not agents of the state. Like Garver, Ogle justifies this equation on the grounds that “the same kinds of results, physical or psychological, might be expected from the use of force or violence”. From the political scientist’s perspective, there is no doubt that force exerted by
officials and force exerted by others have many consequences in common. However, this does not mean that these two types of exercise of force are the same in all respects, or even in all relevant aspects. Attempts to prove that the definition of violence ‘is’ or ‘must be’ destructive physical action against another person fail because both definitions meaningfully lead to different interpretations of the term violence (Grundy & Weinstein, 1974).

**Violence defined in terms of ‘illegitimate force’**

A third usage narrows the definition of violence even further to include only acts of violation in which physical force is applied and which are illegal. This is called the orthodox or ‘narrow’ definition by Grundy & Weinstein (1974). Hook (1945), for instance, has argued in favor of defining violence in this way. He states that violence is “the illegal employment of methods of physical coercion for personal or group ends”.

From this perspective, physical coercion employed by ‘duly constituted authorities’ is legitimate and should be properly called ‘force’, while the term ‘violence’ should be restricted to acts of illegal physical coercion.

Allied with this interpretation is the idea that violence is an aberration – an unexpected interruption in the normal course of events. Wolin (1970) has advanced this point of view. He states that “violence denotes an intensification of what we ‘normally’ expect a particular power to be”. He continues that we designate “acts as violent because the amount or degree of force does not seem commensurate with the circumstances or what we have come to accept as the characteristic style”. Wolin concludes that “violence implies that an unusual amount of destruction will accompany the designated act”. A similar position is taken by Walter (1964), who remarks that violence is “generally understood as immeasurable or exaggerated harm to individuals, either not socially prescribed at all or else beyond the limits established for its use”. He states that when violence is “socially prescribed and defined as a legitimate means of control or punishment, according to the practices familiar to us, the destructive harm is measured and the limits made clear”.

The basis of the narrow approach to defining violence is, thus, neither the experience of violation nor the experience of harmful force, but the experience of having one’s expectations in interpersonal relations disrupted by acts of force (Grundy & Weinstein, 1974).

One problem with defining violence in terms of the violation of the rules which in any society serve to define and prescribe action is that people do not all accept the same rules. Especially in situations of conflict, there may exist consensus neither about what the rules ought to be, nor what they are; and people may live in separate moral and conceptual communities within which the actions of those outside appear deviant and incomprehensible. In such circumstances the actions of outsiders are more readily perceived as violent than similar actions by those within the community (Nardin, 1971).

The narrow definition is based on the assumptions that the official use of force functions to support a system of stable expectations, while the use of violence by those who are not agents of the state
functions to disrupt such expectations. Underlying this position is the assertion that the use of force is inevitable in human affairs.

Mayer (1926) has presented the narrow interpretation with clarity. He states: “Organization, off hand, is of many forms — cultural, scientific, religious. But underneath them all there is just one type, namely, the organization of force. This is basic. It is the tap root from which all other forms of organization spring and upon which they rest for their ultimate sanction”. The socialization of force allows the function of protection to take precedence over the function of defense in human affairs. Adopting a Hobbesian position, Mayer argues: “Protection is the string upon which the social beads are threaded. Take away community protection, and nothing but personal fighting and general anarchy can result”.

The narrow constructionists distinguish legitimate from illegitimate force because they observe consequences of force different from those noted by those who employ either the expansive or observational usage of violence. The first group notes that one consequence of force is violation of human rights to body and autonomy, while the latter group notes that a consequence of illegitimate force is violation of the right to stable expectations of orderly interpersonal relations. The definition of violence as illegal force and the idea advanced by Hook (1945) that power “which has legal sanction and which expresses itself in the imposition of physical constraint as well as in the use of less conspicuous but more effective social pressures, such as discriminatory economic, cultural, and administrative measures, should not be considered violence”, are important supports for a basically conservative interpretation of political morality. They allow the defender of established institutions to claim that the use of force by officials of the state is justified, while the use of force by others is illegitimate, and hence not justifiable (Grundy & Weinstein, 1974).

In Parsons’ (1964) thought (exemplifying structural-functionalism), force, as distinguished from violence, functions to deter deviations from compliance with the requirements of a normative order. Violence is an attack upon that normative order or system of expectations. Force is one of the many means by which human behavior is controlled and is distinguished from the others by its status as the ultimate symbolic basis of security and the residual means of deterrence that are more effective than any other in a showdown. Parsons’ theory of the place of force in the social process shows a theoretical background for justification of violence in legitimist ideologies. In legitimist ideologies, the force of the state is justified when it protects and defends an ongoing normative order, or, in short, the status quo.

Most discussion of political violence concentrates on violence ‘from below’, i.e. violence against power-structures (‘insurgent’ or ‘partisan’ violence), while ignoring the violence ‘from above’, the violence by power-structures (‘incumbent’ violence).

Persson (1980) has argued that considerations of ‘scale’ cannot be a positive determinant of the tendency to concentrate on violence from below, as, throughout history, there have always been many more victims of state repression than of anti-governmental violence: one does not need to cite the gross excesses of Hitler, or Stalin, or Idi Amin in order to make this point. Political violence has existed ever since the first power-structure, and it has always been a two-way process. The ultimate sanction of any Leviathan has always been violence (usually cosmetically relabelled ‘force’), and, likewise, violence has often been the final resort of the disaffected. Perhaps the
preoccupation with violence against power-structures is due to its sporadic, aberrational nature, as opposed to the ubiquitous repression of the state, which is largely taken for granted?

The persistence of the superstition of ‘legitimacy’, whereby violence becomes something other than violence when employed by the state, partially explains this ‘social myopia’ as it has been called (Cameron, 1970). Thus, what is termed ‘insurgent’ or ‘disruptive’ violence against the power-structure is often, or even usually, perceived to be initiatory: a first blow, a provocation, against the forces of ‘law and order’. Thus, we get the ‘violence’ of the ‘insurgents’ and the ‘counter-action’ (rarely ‘counter-violence’) of the ‘security forces’. Even the use of ‘counter-violence’ reflects a heavy bias. The use of the term presumes that the ‘insurgents’ provoked the retaliation, whereas throughout history the initiator in cycles of violence and counter-violence has more often than not been a state agency. The terms ‘insurgent’ and ‘disruptive’ are very loaded, also. Persson suggests for consideration the terms ‘enforcement’ and ‘agitational’ violence in connection, respectively, with those in power and those pressurizing ‘from below’; this follows Thornton’s (1964) formulation concerning the use of political terror.

But a large part of the explanation of the one-sided treatment of ‘political violence’ in the literature surely lies in the realm of data-availability. There is a morass of information relating to assassinations, riots, demonstrations and so on – much of it generated by government agencies – and most of it highly accessible; but there is little to be had in the way of accurate data relating to ‘disappearances’, minority repression, police brutality and the like. Even in a relatively less repressive society such as a Western liberal democracy, we are highly restricted in terms of our access to ‘sensitive’ information, and much governmental violence successfully masquerades as ‘law-enforcement’ (Persson, 1980).

**Violence as a natural form of political behavior**

While Parsons relates the use of force to the maintenance of a normative order, Coser (1966; 1968) relates the exercise of violence to the long-run minimization of physical conflict. In his essay *Some Social Functions of Violence* Coser (1966) argues that violence sometimes functions as a badge of achievement, a danger signal and a catalyst for social action. In each case violence serves a collective purpose.

Many authors distinguish two basic types of violence: rational and irrational. Blumenthal et al. (1972) distinguish between “violence that is instrumental and violence that is expressive”. Instrumental violence is here obviously equated with ‘rational’ (at least in the sense of short-term ‘Zweckrationalität’), while ‘expressive’ violence is denied this possibility. “Expressive violence” they write “arises primarily in response to feelings of hate or rage, while in the case of instrumental violence such feelings are secondary, although they may arise during the course of committing violent acts. Instrumental violence is violence used to some end”. Terrorism is the apex of such instrumental violence (Zinam, 1978).

Nieburg (1969) places conflict among groups at the center of analysis, rather than the maintenance of normative order. Nieburg puts political violence in the perspective of ongoing social bargaining relationships by the state, groups, or individuals. His thesis is provocative: far from being erratic,
exceptional, spasmodic, or anomalous, violence is to be considered a natural, highly instrumental form of political behavior, and disorder as intrinsically related to the social process. At the heart of Nieburg’s theory is the notion of bargaining. Nieburg holds that bargaining is a process of adjusting conflict through threatened or actual escalation and counter-escalation of sanctions. The limit of bargaining is the pure test of physical strength aiming at the annihilation or complete submission of the other. Most political violence stops short of such ‘warfare’ and represents a phase in the bargaining process: “The threat of escalation as a deterrent, made credible by actual escalation from time to time, constitutes a claim to dominance or a challenge of existing patterns of dominance”. Thus, violence is an integral part of the bargaining process. Violence and “the threat of violence – pure pain and damage – can be used to deter and to coerce, to intimidate and to blackmail, to demoralize and to paralyze, purposefully and meaningfully in a process of social bargaining”. Violence, then, is “not only the last resort in the bargaining spectrum but also a potentiality or a threat which does in fact change the bargaining equation itself. In a sense it is the ultimate test of viability of values and customary behavior”.

Thus, the use of violence is profoundly ambivalent. It defines boundaries which sometimes lead to separation and stagnation and sometimes lead to higher levels of integration. Social existence is defined by competing normative orders and the frequently violent struggle among groups for influence is society’s instrument of creative growth, of continuous adaptation and choice among various options for internal integration. Thus, in Nieburg’s view, violence can be creative as well as disruptive and symptomatic.

An interpretation of violence similar to Nieburg’s has been presented by Roucek (1956; 1957), However, instead of making the bargaining process the core of his analysis, Roucek offers reflections on the proposition that “the relationship of force and justice is, apparently, a problem facing all ages and all cultures... violence is a useful social instrument, especially if we acknowledge that law in the modern state is based upon force”, However, he warns that violence is least effective when it cannot create moral sanctions for its practices.

These conflict approaches place the state on the level of all other groups and thereby make violence a possible means of substantive change (Grundy & Weinstein, 1974).

The justification of violence

(1) Legitimist ideologies justify political violence when it is aimed at protecting or restoring a single normative order which the ideologist deems legitimate, or at disrupting an order which he deems illegitimate. For example, many people claim that the state is justified in using protective violence to quell disruptive violence, while others claim that the violence of revolutionary groups is justified when it aims at restoring a traditional normative order. Legitimist ideologies are, in general, related to narrow definitions of violence.

(2) In expansionist ideologies political violence is justified as a means of imposing a normative order deemed superior on alien groups. For example, an ideologist defending racial inequality may defend the imposition of a political order by force on a racial group he deems inferior.
(3) In pluralist ideologies political violence is justified as a means of winning the right of a group to have its own normative order (‘liberating violence’, ‘emancipatory violence’). For example, an ideologist defending the right of an ethnic group to political and national self-determination may defend rebellion against established authorities as a means to attain these rights. Both expansionist and pluralist ideologies of violence are, in general, related to operational and behavioral definitions of violence.

(4) In intrinsic (apologetic) ideologies political violence is justified by its direct contributions to the development of personal character, commitment to cause, and quality of social structure. For example, a revolutionary ideologist may argue that if oppressed individuals undertake violent acts against the ruling classes, they will be purged of their feelings of inferiority and become new persons, opposed to the dominant social structure and firmly committed to the society of the future (Fanon, Sartre). Intrinsic ideologies of political violence are, in general, related to expansive and ethical definitions of violence (Grundy & Weinstein, 1974).

‘Aggression’ versus ‘Violence’

If a minimum definition of violence implies the violation of corporeal integrity, or physical hurt to a human organism, then ‘aggression’ (as a motivational construct) cannot be equated with ‘violence’. This point should be emphasized because in most Anglosaxon literature ‘aggression’ and ‘violence’ are coterminous, though human aggression does not need to be violent per se. Humans may hurt and injure others and satisfy aggressive dispositions in a multiplicity of ways and in the most subtle, malignant, pernicious, venomous and cruel manners without even touching them (van der Dennen, 1974; Firestone, 1974; Wentholt, n.d.). As Rummel (1977) observed: “A pugnacity need may be gratified by sticking pins in an enemy’s effigy, making a culturally indecent gesture toward him, purposely stepping on his shadow, spreading malicious gossip about him, or belting him one... As any academic soon learns there are many ways of attacking and cutting up a rival without lifting a finger in anger”. Cruelty and terror, plus the human serendipity to implement them, are not exactly confined to war.

As we have seen, in many definitions ‘aggression’ and ‘violence’ are coextensive, coeval, or identical (sometimes they are even defined in terms of each other, thus yielding a perfect circularity); in others ‘violence’ is considered to be the extreme pole of an aggression-violence continuum: the paroxysmal form of aggression; in still others violence is tacitly implied, sneaking in, as it were, through the backdoor: e.g. Groen (1974): “Aggression is defined as a form or mode of conflict behavior between organisms, usually conspecifics, in which participants attempt to induce flight, defeat, or submission; to inflict pain, injury or damage, or to kill (eliminate)”. In such a definition, the term aggression implicitly embraces all phenomena of violence.

As the term aggression in colloquial language is used to denote a quality or style of behavior (referring to the vigor, vehemence, persistence or forcefulness of certain behaviors), as a descriptive behavioral category, as well as an explanatory motivational construct, there is always the temptation to ‘explain’ behaviors which may be labeled ‘aggressive’ by the construct of ‘aggression’. Thus, such pseudo-explanations amount to the tautological formula that someone
manifests aggressive behavior because he is ‘aggressive’. And if ‘violence’ and ‘aggression’ are considered to be synonymous, then it is obvious that violence stems from ‘aggression’.

Many arguments may be adduced in favor of a stringent, circumscribed definition of aggression, especially in experimental designs in which an adequate operationalization is a prerequisite. But at least as many arguments may be found in favor of a not too restrictive use, not to narrow the concept down unnecessarily which is of paramount importance in the area of theory formation, because too many phenomena would be excluded per definitionem which might be conjectured to have something ‘to do’ with aggression, or in which aggressive co-motivation is prima facie evident; e.g. hostile humor, ‘Schadenfreude’, aggressive components in sexual ‘perversions’, in rape, but possibly also in ‘normal’ sexual behavior, to mention but a few examples. An unnecessarily restricted delineation of the concept of human aggression may well lead to a spurious sense of scientific ardour, and to sterility.

Should intentionality be an integral component in the definitions of aggression and/or violence? Organisms may be trampled to death in a stampede or a panic, yet we do not generally call it aggression or even violence because it is unintentional, accidental. The same applies to ‘traffic violence’. Traffic deaths and mutilations are numerous; but is ‘traffic violence’ more than a metaphor? People do kill and maim each other on the road, but sometimes they have no alternative. A rat cannot be interviewed regarding his intentions; thus ‘intentionality’ is rejected as an anthropomorphism from the vocabulary of ethology (as did extreme behaviorism). Yet, in human aggression, intentionality is the key concept. Furthermore, limiting the concept of human aggression to ‘fighting behavior’ misses the mark entirely by disregarding the range, scope and psychodynamics of human aggression. In humans we do not only deal with acts of aggression, that is, observable aggressive behavior, but also, and to a much wider extent, with aggressive ideation, aggressive fantasies (of a sometimes compulsive character), intrapersonal aggression/dependence conflicts and resulting neuroses and psychosomatoses, auto-aggression (with suicide as an extreme), hostility and antagonism, prejudice, ethnocentrism and ideological dehumanization, aggressive proselytism and fanaticism, destructive games and strategies: the psychodynamics of aggression. As McNeil (1965) observed: “Killing through kindness is a subtle sadist’s delight”.

Wentholt (n.d.) has most cogently argued in favor of a conceptual decoupling of the categories ‘violence’ and ‘aggression’, and the inclusion of intent in the definition of aggression. In order to be considered ‘aggressive’, the behavior of the aggressor must have the intent to inflict pain, hurt, damage. If intent is not considered, a dentist or a surgeon would be aggressive per definition, while the jealous lover attempting to shoot his rival, but missing his target, would not be aggressive by the same token. Thus, a definition of human aggression in terms of observable consequences of the act is deficient when intent is not taken into account. At that very moment, however, we do not consider the observable behavior any more. We are forced to consider (or infer) the sense, meaning, motivations underlying the behavior.

This state of affairs introduces some new problems. For instance, what kind of intention do we take as valid: the professed intention of the perpetrator, the perceived intention, the articulated intention, the attributed intention, the believed or self-perceived belief in intention, etc.
People may not even be aware of their intentions; they may lie about their intentions, especially to themselves – people are prone to self-delusion and self-deception. The motivations of human beings are an intricate, and to some extent, inextricable and undecipherable mixture of conflicting, fragmented, and often unconscious ‘forces’ – even, or especially for themselves. People are liable to label their own behavior in terms of standardized, culturally sanctioned and socially respectable ‘motives’. Subjects cannot, in general, adequately report what they are doing and why; what they can report are cultural or idiosyncratic myths about behavior. The web of rationalizations subjects may spin to disguise their motivations serves to protect them from the painful necessity of examining them. But if humans may not even be consciously aware of their ‘true’ motivations, who is to assess them?

An additional complication of an ‘intentional’ definition of aggression is that a whole body of literature concerning the neuro- and psychopathology of aggression may become irrelevant because it may legitimately be argued that those who suffer from e.g. organic disorders do not aggress with the conscious intention to injure others (e.g. Goldstein, 1975).

A large category of definitions attempts to circumvent the problem of intent by means of identifying acts of aggression and acts of violence. Such a solution is also unsatisfactory and deficient. When observing violent behavior, we still do not know whether and how much ‘aggression’ is underlying the violence of the perpetrator: The killer may have killed out of panic, fear of discovery or arrest, greed, material gain, cold calculation, to restore self-esteem, to ‘escape from insignificance’, or a paranoid delusion, instead of aggression or hatred. The professional torturer, inquisitor, executioner, hangman may be a sadistic psychopath, but most probably he is just doing his duty because of institutional obedience in a hierarchical command structure, because he is ordered to by his superiors, because of conformism and fear of losing his job or fear of ostracism, because of sheer indifference concerning the suffering of others, or even because of sincere idealism (Torquemada), even if we do not appreciate his value priorities and ethical principles. Examples abound: the soldier in combat (though some have argued that combat motivation is a form of controlled and redirected aggression: Russell & Russell, 1968; Dixon, 1976), the bombardier, the member of an execution squad, the policeman confronting a riot, the Pentagon executive who pushes the red button. The latter does not need to be more aggressive than a Doomsday-machine, though he controls the ultimate Armageddon.

Obviously it is misleading to suggest an ‘aprioristic’ connection between violence (a behavioral category) and aggression (apparently a motivational category or construct). This is not to deny that such a link may exist, but then it should be empirically ascertained, and not proclaimed by definition. Violence cannot be reduced to aggression and vice versa. Even in violence, we have to consider the meaning of the act: “Placing a man on a table and cutting him open with a knife may be surgery, religious sacrifice, a warrior rite, or torture” (Rummel, 1977). This conceptual separation of violence and aggression implies that aggression may exist without violence, and violence without aggression. Familiar examples of aggression without violence are: hostile humor, malicious gossip (character murder), black magic, teasing and pestering, invective, vituperation, insult, discrimination. Not ‘violence’, but one common denominator: the aggressive intent, the intent to hurt or injure, to humiliate.
The protean, multifaceted character of manifestations of aggression in everyday life, often disguised beyond recognition, is shown particularly by the forms of indirect aggression. Most of us will be familiar (from experience or from hearsay, and as protagonist or as recipient) with the subtle – sometimes not that subtle – struggle for dominance in e.g. marital relations or love affairs, the ‘Mommy-is-gonna-love-you-till-you-don’t-know-what-to-do’ syndrome (the crippling, asphyxiating ‘love’; ‘killing through kindness’), the mean, venomous, underhand tricks, the whole repertoire of dirty, malicious stratagems and long-term destructive scripts or scenarios (the ‘Games People Play’: Berne, 1964), people may utilize in order to gain the upper hand or in order to subjugate, humiliate, intimidate, terrorize or literally obliterate others; or in order to provoke, by means of incessant pestering and nagging, direct physical violence from the desperate victim, who is subsequently mercilessly punished. Even young children are aware of the double standard and the hypocritical attitude of parents and teachers toward direct versus indirect aggressive behavior, and they soon make fine apprentices themselves.

“When the child discovers the benefits of hurting others and as he gains experience and learns more about the motivations of others, he will become more and more skilled in using this knowledge of their motivations as a means of controlling them and getting what he wants. As the child progresses in his education in hostility, he acquires greater finesse and soon perceives that symbolic injury and psychological pain are much more excruciating than simple physical hurts. Once this insight is gained, he stands on the threshold of graduate study in the fine art of cruelty” (McNeil, 1965).

People can devise subtle tactics and strategies to hurt one another – for some hatred may even become the sole ‘raison d’être’; “mörderische Lust und Gier nach dem Glück des Messers” as Nietzsche called it. I can, for instance, hurt a man I dislike by seducing his wife or paramour. According to Seigneur de Brantôme, writing in the 16th century, this kind of ‘fucking around’ for the purpose not of satisfying erotic urges but of ‘cuckolding’ and hurting male rivals, was a very popular pastime in his days. Gift-giving may have the intention to embarrass or humiliate the receiver of the gift, who is now (morally) obliged to reciprocate in kind or quantity (cf. the Kwakiutl potlatch). Honesty about extramarital sexual affairs is probably more often than not used to hurt the partner. Honesty, in this case, is not the best policy, but an aggressive strategy (The cult of honesty in erotic affairs often proves to be self-defeating). There are in fact few human acts which may not be used as a pawn in some aggressive or long-term destructive game.

My argument to separate aggression and violence as distinct categories may also be exemplified by child neglect and the act of suicide.

Child neglect may be as detrimental and deleterious in its sequelae as direct child abuse or infanticide, yet it does not involve direct physical violence (The motive, however, may be aggressive: aggressive neglect, passive aggression). Suicide is distinctly violence inflicted on the own body, or an act in which perpetrator and victim of violence are identical. Yet, many suicides are of the so-called ‘balance-account’ type, many are committed in a state of clouded consciousness, and only some are probably self-aggressive in motivation (motivated by self-hatred, self-loathing, etc.) in which the wish to die, the wish to kill and the wish to be killed probably coincide (Menninger, 1967). On the other hand, suicide may be an act of revenge (as it is in infantile fantasies). We are all probably also familiar with instances of violence in which aggressive intent is minimal if not non-existent. I hold as a general rule-of-thumb that most violence (in the
criminal domain and, especially, political violence having an instrumental – and in the case of war
highly institutionalized – character) is not and not necessarily aggressively motivated, but consists
of purposely calculated, instrumental acts only remotely related to whatever motivations may have
initiated them (fear, wrath, moral indignation, greed, etc.); and that most aggression (aggressive
behavior) is not and not necessarily violent. In other words, aggression is one source of violence
among many; and violence may be one manifestation of aggression among many. Once more I
would like to remind the reader that “To focus on an objective behavior to define aggression is to
commit the typical behavioral physicalistic fallacy” (Rummel, 1977).

Van der Dennen (1978) introduced the category of ‘social spoiling’ which may be circumscribed as
“more or less institutionalized social behavior and traditional and/or ritual practices and customs
resulting in the reduction of viability or inclusive fitness of single or multiple individuals in a
population (group, ethny, tribe, society, etc.) ranging from denial of access to the gene pool of that
population to downright extermination”. Most human societies treat their members with careless, if
not callous, indifference. Wide-spread practices, for instance, are clitoridectomy and pharaonic
circumcision, forced illegal abortion, bloody male initiation ceremonies and ‘rites de passage’,
resulting in increased chances of bleeding to death, sepsis affecting the internal reproductive organs
thus leading to sterility, and in general reducing the viability and fitness of the individuals
subjected to them. But also included are such phenomena as capital punishment; the ‘suttee’
(burning of widows at the stake in India); the witch-burnings, heresy hunts and religious
persecutions of the European Inquisition; infanticide, child exposure and neglect; senilicide;
customs of euthanasia in the sense of ‘mercy killing’; religious human sacrifice (Aztec), ritual
anthropophagia, Kwakiutl ‘slave-killing’, etc. (In animals we find the phenomena of nest desertion
and kronism: parental behavior resulting in death of the offspring).

Some might add the recurrent political purges and state terror and torture of certain political
regimes, the extermination of the Jews in Nazi Germany, the Armenian genocide, and so on and so
forth. Still others might include legal abortion (considered by some to be violence against a living
fetus: feticide). In wars – ‘recurrent mass homicides’ as they have been called – millions of human
lives are more or less consciously and deliberately sacrificed.

Most of the phenomena mentioned above are instances of institutionalized and traditional violence
without an (obvious) aggressive motivation by the perpetrators. Moreover, in many human
societies we encounter forms of culturally sanctioned violence which are hardly recognizable as
such: indoctrination and menticide, cruelty against animals, ecocide, social destructiveness,
institutional violence, ‘structural’ violence, racial or ethnic prejudice and discrimination, apartheid,
the caste system, etc.

There may be an overlap between non-violent aggression and non-aggressively motivated violence:
the more bizarre, voluptuous, savage, brutal, cruel and devastating acts of violence (massacres,
genocide, atrocities), as we know them from civil wars, and ethnic, tribal, religious and racial
conflagrations, may be co-motivated by intense and rabid hatred, vengeancefulness, bloodthirstiness,
hostility, destructiveness, vindictiveness, the urge to retaliate, lust to annihilate, or whatever other
terms are used to describe such a motivational state. Furthermore, there are ‘border-line cases’. For
the victim of ‘police violence’ the violence done is obvious; but as far as the police is concerned it
was just restoring law and order. Where is the dividing line between corporal punishment (the
‘sound spanking’ which is sometimes called ‘prosocial aggression’) and unacceptable child abuse and maltreatment? Stabbing someone with a knife is considered to be violence, but what about a chemical or nuclear power plant releasing poisonous or radioactive materials in the environment slowly killing hundreds? Is the threat of violence, as in terrorist acts, to be considered violence? What is the significance of the barely concealed relish with which people indulge in reports and pictures (‘cartoons’) of sickening violence?

I would like to conclude this section on the relationship between ‘aggression’ and ‘violence’ with the contention that from whichever point of view we approach the phenomenon of aggression, aggression appears to have to do with the impulse, the desire, the urge, the need to inflict hurt, pain, injury. It may be directed or undirected, conscious or unconscious, violent or non-violent, impulsive or calculated, and may vary in intensity from mild irritability, an inclination to strike out, via transient anger, paroxysms of blind fury, to malicious animosity, rabid lethal hatred, hostility, cruelty and veritable destructiveness. As soon and as long as this impulse or urge is operative, we are dealing with aggression. This is a formulation in terms of motivation, and not in terms of behavior (Wentholt, n.d.). This concept of ‘aggression’ as a motivational construct is neither particularly novel nor extraordinary, In fact, in ethological analyses of intra-organismic conflict (fight/flight conflict), ‘aggression’ (the fighting disposition, the tendency to attack) actually is treated as a motivational construct.

**Aggression, Violence, and Evolution**

In *Homo sapiens* the core problem is not so much his aggressive heritage, but his capability of massive violence – dehumanized, instrumentalized, ideologically or religiously justified, morally condoned and socially sanctioned (“Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition”); his calculated, level-headed, large-scale destructiveness: internecine wars, genocide, massacres, terror bombardments, the Inquisition, the witch and heresy hunts, the Conquistas and subsequent imperialist violence, the extermination camps, the political purges, the terror regimes, etc., committed for highly idealistic and self-transcendent reasons. As eloquently voiced by Koestler (1968):

“It is not the murderers, the criminals, the delinquents and the wildly non-conformists who have embarked on the really significant rampages of killing, torture and mayhem. Rather it is the conformist, virtuous citizens, acting in the name of righteous causes and intensely held beliefs who throughout history have perpetrated the fiery holocausts of war, the religious persecutions, the sacks of cities, the wholesale rape of women, the dismemberment of the old and the young and the other unspeakable horrors which distinguish mammalian behavior...”

Can these kinds of detached death-dealing behaviors be properly called aggressive? Is the pilot who drops the napalm, burning alive and mutilating hundreds of human beings, aggressive? In most cases he does not even see his target, the enemy or the effect of his mission. Does the perpetrator of an act of violence necessarily have to be aggressive? The combat soldier facing the enemy fire? The policeman facing an agitated mob? The addicted mugger who needs money for his ‘shot’? Is the Maffia contract killer aggressively motivated? Or the bombardier who just pushes the button? Or the paranoid schizophrenic acting out his morbid destructive fantasies? Or the...
psychopath who just grabs what he wants? Or the mother in a ‘primitive’ tribe practicing infanticide? Or the bank robber eliminating an obstructive cashier? Or the camp official neatly exterminating unimaginable numbers of human beings in the gas chambers? Or the concerned and frightened mother who spanks her child for crossing the street too carelessly? Or the hangman who executes a criminal? Is the latter more aggressive than the judge who passed the death sentence, or the general public supporting the death penalty?

Does it clarify anything if we suppose they are aggressive, or ascribe it to them by definition? I contend, as may be surmised from the foregoing, that it only obscures matters.

There is another, and more compelling, reason to distinguish violence and aggression, the rationale of which is an evolutionary one. Ideologically- and morally-inspired large-scale destructiveness and havoc (and cruelty as a particular quality of violence) is virtually confined to the species Homo sapiens though Goodall (1979) describes some form of ‘primitive warfare’ in chimpanzees. Considering the evidence on human aggression (from the neurological data on limbic system substrates to the anthropological data on ritualizations and the various societal ‘solutions’ of the ubiquitous problem of human aggression), there would seem to be two main lines of reasoning purporting to ‘explain’ the transition from aggression (which man shares with most animals) to the particular forms of violence in H. sapiens.

The first would, somewhat naively, argue that the human propensity to violence and especially the category ‘belligerence’ – is simply an extension, exaggeration, pathological distortion or hypertrophication of his natural aggressive heritage. The other would be the assertion that human aggression with its many intricacies and ramifications in everyday life has been on balance evolutionarily adaptive and relatively benign and, indeed, necessary for survival as an ‘emergency mechanism’. But the ‘toomuchness’, the vindictiveness, the cruelty, the lust in the agony of peoples, the sadistic overtones, the persistent hostility, the relish in human violence, as well as the massive scale (as in wars and other forms of political violence) – i.e. the peculiar ‘intensionality’ as well as ‘extensionality’ of human violence – are to be considered biocultural evolutionary ‘neoplasms’ and correlates of the same neocortical superimpositions which also make possible the manipulation of symbol systems, mentifacts, and artifacts.

Man is violent mainly by virtue of his neocortical brain, and not so much because of his limbic system heritage (if such a crude distinction is permitted for the sake of argument).

The latter line of argument is essentially schizophysiological. An intricate interrelationship is postulated between the evolutionary development of the human cortical brain, memory – somewhat oversimplified: no hatred or vengefulness would be possible without memory, or without some symbolic representation or image or trace of the ‘enemy’ stored within the memory -, the capacity of tool-use and the production of artifacts (technology, arms, etc.), the ability to manipulate symbol systems (especially language, ideological and ethical systems, cathexed with strong sentiment structures), and the human capability of horrid and pernicious acts of violence either instrumental and calculated (as in organized warfare) or ‘for its own sake’ (as in many sadistic acts, war atrocities, etc.), in which aggressive motivation may or may not enter. It has been observed time and again that “Men will die like flies for theories and exterminate each other with every
instrument of destruction for abstractions” (Durbin & Bowlby, 1938), and that “All the constitutive myths of history have promised something besides pale peace to their devotees” (Lasswell, 1935).

In humans, the evolved emotions have the character of ‘sentiment structures’, complexes of which the emotion sec is the raw material, elaborated and superimposed by conventional symbols and highly abstract concepts. “It is largely through his ‘sentiment structures’ that man is capable of the frantic antics of cathexis upon diverse symbol clusters, is able to fan up and maintain hostilities in thought and deed toward symbol clusters and their human associations” (Holloway, 1968).

Definitely involved in human violence are highly complex and elaborate, abstract and rule-governed, cognitive conceptual and symbolic processes, meanings, and constructs of ‘reality’, attitudes, norms, values, codes of conduct, anticipations, strategies, etc. This, in turn, has its negative side: the ability of man to create psychological ‘distancing devices’, to dehumanize, diabolize, to exterminate his enemies like vermin in fantasy and in reality, to generate Weltanschauungen in which only a small portion of humanity fits, and social paradises from which the misfits have to be expelled.

Furthermore, the human being has a very vulnerable sense of ‘self-esteem’ and group identity. “These considerations lead to the following formulation that the capacity for human aggression [= violence] is an outcome, in part, of natural selection for heightened sentiment structures focused about self-identity and cooperative social structure” (Holloway, 1968).

For most ethologists ‘aggression’ is operationally defined in terms of fighting behavior (biting, kicking, pecking, etc.). Because fighting is considered to be a subcategory of violent behavior, or is violent by definition, the equation ‘aggression’ = ‘violence’ is easily and precociously made. Hence the pretension that ethology may contribute to the understanding of human violence. In my opinion, this notion is misleading, because it is based on the logical fallacy of ‘subreption’, i.e. the logically illegitimate sequential substitution of terms or definienda in an argument – moves unaccounted for, so to speak. One blatant example of a double subreption (‘aggression’ being equated with ‘violence’, and ‘violence’ with ‘belligerence’) is Wilson’s (1979) illustration of human aggressiveness by quoting examples of primitive warfare.

Apart from the fallacy of subreption, it contains the ‘cumulative fallacy’: knowing what makes individuals aggressive does not automatically provide any insight into that form of collective, instrumental, sanctioned, organized and institutionalized violence called warfare (van der Dennen, 1978, 1980). (And by restricting the term ‘aggression’ to behavior, it contains the physicalistic fallacy as well).

War is a very special category of violence; it is not obvious that aggression has anything to do with it at all (even if war is defined by some as ‘collective’ or ‘group aggression’). In war many individuals engage in violent behavior, but does it make sense to insist that they necessarily act from aggressive motives, and not from e.g. obedience, conformism, loyalty to the own combat group, fear of the consequences of desertion, conviction, or even courage? Studies of combat motivation of infantry soldiers have unequivocally shown that a man may kill an ‘enemy’ without feeling any aggression, rancour or hostility towards that enemy (Marshall, 1947; Stouffer et al.,
1949-50; van Meurs, 1955; Ashworth, 1968; Moskos, 1969). The same, by the way, holds for a bank robber vis-à-vis a cashier, a Maffia contract-killer vis-à-vis his victim, etc.

To the understanding of the great scourges of mankind (internecine wars, political violence, ‘structural’ violence, ecocide) ethology has virtually nothing to contribute. (How could the study of maternal aggression in the rat or schedule-induced aggression in the squirrel monkey contribute to the understanding of the behavior of e.g. American soldiers in Vietnam, gang-rapeing a peasant girl, cutting off her breasts, putting bayonets into her vagina, cutting open her abdomen, and finally slitting her throat – and enjoying it? To be quite frank: Goodall’s chimps seemed to enjoy their killing too.)

The ethological and biological pretensions have had other perils as well. Numerous critics (e.g. Montagu, 1968, 1973; Berkowitz, 1969; Fromm, 1973; Chorover, 1973; Coleman, 1974; Nelson, 1975) have commented on the diversionary function that biological approaches may serve: by focusing debate on causes of aggression that allegedly lie within the individual, they distract the public attention from those economic, political and social factors which even several of the pro-biology writers acknowledge account for the greatest share of human violence. The public impression is encouraged that the ‘solutions’ to aggression and violence – to the extent that any solutions are thought to be possible at all – involve changing individuals rather than cultural institutions (Nelson, 1975; see van der Dennen, 1977, for a more moderate view).

Further, the biological approaches have been accused to serve a number of justifying and legitimating functions; e.g. status quo orientation (Easton, 1965; Gamson, 1968); violence against ‘insurrectionaries’ or political dissidents (Boulding, 1973), exacerbated by biomedical or psychiatric labeling (Goldstein, 1974; Coleman, 1974; Eisenberg, 1972); assuaging of guilt over and relieving of responsibility for human destructiveness (Montagu, 1973; Sennett, 1974); and limiting attention to ‘person-blame’ explanations of social problems (Caplan & Nelson, 1973).

Furthermore, they may have a self-fulfilling quality in terms of ‘what image of human nature shall prevail’ (see Kelley & Stahlesky, 1970; Lefcourt, 1973; Siderits, 1973), while the terminology may evoke reminiscences of Social Darwinism, racism, German Nazi ideology; pseudosciences repeatedly used for purposes of exploitation, repression and diversion (Hofstadter, 1955; Ludmerer, 1972; Kamin, 1974; Nelson, 1975).

And finally, biological advocates exaggerate the seriousness of aggression and violence in its own right, rather than as being a symptom of deeper and more pervasive problems – Some of the greatest threats to human well-being and even sheer existence (ecocide, exploitation, massive nuclear war) have little or nothing to do with aggression or violence (as conceived in the biological literature) at the same time misleadingly assuming that the kind of aggression or violence that we ought to be most concerned about is that of the common man, civilian violence which is usually defined as criminal (and which can be ‘remedied’ by administering drugs, neurosurgery, implanting monitoring devices into the skull, or genetic screening). This orientation, as Nelson (1975) points out, conveniently ignores official and ‘legitimated’ violence such as war and political actions, the scale of which destruction causes other types to pale in insignificance.
Some of the critics mentioned above have obviously overstated and exaggerated their case, others have used rather unfair and low-level methods of argumentation and polemics, but in their generality these criticisms merit serious attention by all students of animal and human aggression and violence. As Horn (1973) has pointed out, nomothetic psychology still in part supports the thesis that the alternatives innate or acquired cannot be transcended, and that one has to take a decision for one of the existing theories (e.g. Jakobi, Selg & Belschner, 1971). In view of the already popular alternative consequences of the theoretical assumptions – phylogenetically inherited aggression could only be manipulated or channeled, whereas aggressive behavior is learned, it had to be influenced to take a peaceful direction – this controversy is not without political relevance. The frequent imputation that the champions of an instinct of aggression are reactionaries, while the theorists of learning are progressive, places the latter ones methodologically on a plane with other monocausalists, who swear by societal factors alone – e.g. those for whom a theory of imperialism suffices and who regard the psychological approach as a repression of the hypothesis of class struggle (e.g. Hollitscher, 1970), seeing in it the danger of an excessively anthropological interpretation.

The visualization of the relationship between aggression and violence

In my lectures, I have found it very useful and instructive to conceptualize and visualize the relationship between aggression and violence as a simple Venn-diagram, as follows:

(1) Adopting the term ‘aggression’, sensu stricto, as a ‘non-reified’ non-unitary motivational construct (2) which generates, together with other motivations, instigators, facilitators and inhibitors a (phenomenal) category of behaviors (or behavioral polymorphism) to be called ‘aggressive’ or ‘agonistic’ behavior;

(3) to be distinguished from (not coinciding with) ‘violence’ as the category of (instrumental) behaviors involving elimination and/or destruction; (4) the intersection of the two sets to be called ‘violent aggression’. (The ‘universe of discourse’ being ‘conflict behavior’).

The sets of aggression and violence are to be considered ‘fuzzy sets’. In other words:

- ‘Aggression’ proper is a motivational construct (whether conceived of as ‘impulse’ or ‘drive’ or ‘attitude’ or whatever

- which may, together with other motivations (some synergistic, some antagonistic) give rise to a category of behaviors, some of which may be labeled ‘aggressive behaviors’

- Some of the ‘aggressive behaviors’ may also be labeled ‘violent behaviors’

- Most violent behaviors (especially in the political -including war – and criminal domains) are not aggressively motivated but are purposely calculated, instrumental acts only remotely related to whatever motivations might have initiated them (cf. the premeditated homicide versus the ‘crime passionel’).
Now focusing on the category ‘violence’, I found it very instructive to visualize ‘violence’ as a set of expanding concentric circles of diminishing restrictions, ‘hard-cored’ but becoming nebulous and blurred at the edges (the outer circles): (i) the hard core may be considered to be direct physical violence done to human beings; (ii) dropping the restriction of ‘physical’, we may include ‘mental violence’, menticide, malicious manipulation, etc.; (iii) dropping the restriction ‘direct’, we may include indirect forms of violence; (iv) dropping the restriction ‘human beings’ we may include other organisms: organismic violence, cruelty to animals; (v) dropping the restriction ‘organisms’ we may include ecocide, violence done to the environment.

And so on, dropping more and more restrictions we may expand the conception of violence to include (vi) violence done to structures, systems, ideologies, etc.; (vii) violations of self-esteem, dignity, autonomy, etc.; (viii) ritualized social violence or ‘social spoiling’, meaning the reduction of viability or individual fitness due to traditions, customs, rites of a population; (ix) institutional violence; (x) structural violence, etc.

Anger

Anger is generally considered to be a manifestation of the broader phenomenon of aggression. Theories of aggression, therefore, are considered to be theories of anger as well. ‘To be angry’ is considered to be an aggressive act, and ‘to feel angry’ is considered the subjective awareness of aggressive impulses. Since anger is considered to be invariably a manifestation of aggression, but since it is well known (but never spelled out) that anger is not invariably destructive, it is thought that aggression itself is not necessarily destructive. From this chain of reasoning, it seems a small extension to consider such intrinsically nondestructive behavior as assertiveness, mastery, or motor movement as other derivatives of aggression (Rothenberg, 1971).

English & English (1958) define anger as an ‘emotional reaction’ aroused by specific stimuli; although they enumerate the stimuli, they do not describe the characteristics of the anger phenomenon which they consider a “passing emotional disturbance”. Eccles (1953) points to the fact that anger, the psychological peculiarities of which remain unexplained, may become a conscious experience without one’s awareness of the explicit stimulus: anger is presented as an example of “the private observation of one’s self-consciousness”. Whitehead (1927), a philosopher, explains anger as a “feeling... clearly entwined with the primitive function of ‘retreat from’”. Fischer (1950) depicts anger “as an increased affective sensitivity” (which is a tautology). Sullivan (1952), in his singularly descriptive fashion, contributed an exposition referring to anger: “Sometimes the development of the situation is such that the possibility of any easy resolution of the situation, any reasonable prompt satisfaction of need or elevation of self is contradicted by elements of the situation”. Wolf (1970) calls attention to the frequent distinction of emotion and feeling state. He stresses that anger is an emotion (a ‘psychosomatic manifestation’). Menninger (1959) has given a relevant description of anger, although he does not use this caption: “One of the first evidences of failure of the ‘normal’ devices of the ego for handling emergencies is the development or persistence of stress awareness. The subject is conscious of discomfort in connection with efforts at concentration and self-control. Aware of this, he consciously exerts an extra increase of ‘will power’ in the mastery or concealment of these phenomena. Less uncomfortable, because unconscious, is the greatly increased use of repression. Externally, this
appears as restriction and increased inhibition. Utilizing of these devices of a first degree emergency is nearly always a transient phase. Frank (1950) points to the selectivity of emotional reaction and the feedback situation which may be found in anger.

Etymologically, the English word ‘anger’ is derived from the old Norse word ‘angr’ which means affliction (Latin: ad-figere = to strike at). In German, ‘Ärger’ is the noun of ‘arg’ which means wicked; ‘Ärger’, therefore, is the emotional response to ‘wicked’ stimuli. In Spanish ‘enojar’ (to get angry) derives from ‘en’ and ‘ojo’ – something which offends the eye; the noun ‘enojo’, therefore, also signifies disgust. Another Spanish term for anger is ‘enfado’, which simply refers to trouble. In French, sometimes ‘chagrin’ (from the old French ‘graignier’) translates the English anger. More to the point is ‘dépit’, which corresponds to displeasure.

In all of these languages, anger is well-delimited concept and response to an offending stimulus. In none of these languages is the term associated with hostility, aggression, or rage. Essentially, the term in all the cited languages confers uneasiness, displeasure, and resentment (Stearns, 1972).

Kaplan & Goodrich (1957) consider frustration involved in anger responses. Jersild (1962) has pointed out that a person is likely to be ‘angry with himself’ if he fails to live up to his expectation, which is only another expression for frustration. Jersild (1965) defines anger as a “response to thwarting under circumstances in which the individual is not completely at a loss or momentarily overwhelmed as in terror. The term anger, like the term fear, denotes a vast variety and gradation of responses including momentary outbursts of rage, temper tantrums involving a great amount of undirected activity, and more prolonged and recurring states such as those involving chronic feelings of hostility, or milder forms of annoyance, sulkiness and peevishness”.

Yacorzynski (1951) contends that anger is an “approach to attack the threatening stimulus”. And G.G.Thompson (1962) defines anger as “an emotion in which the child makes an aggressive approach (either overtly or covertly) towards some person or object”.

Stearns (1972) comments that anger is, in most instances, not a reaction to a ‘threatening’ stimulus (which might be fear or hostility) and, thus, is not an ‘approach to attack’ – meaning abortive aggression.

Abrahamson (1958) explains anger, and the possibility to express it, as a sign of emotional maturity, whereas hostility and hate characterize emotional immaturity. This means that anger and hostility belong to different categories of emotional reactions. He also, elsewhere in his book, differentiates between constructive anger ‘based on realism’; and hostility ‘based on immature feelings of fear’. Anger may be best described as a combination of uneasiness, discomfort, tenseness, resentment (which is a response to selective stimuli) and frustration. According to Stears (1972), anger is a very well delimited emotional reaction. Any additional emotional response would eliminate the anger response. Anger can, on the other hand, either subside or be repressed, and it can be replaced by emotional reactions such as anxiety, depression, hostility, or aggression. In the view of Stearns fear is not a constituent of anger. Fear can replace anger when the informative communication (verbal stimulus), which originally caused the anger response, is rationalized as to its determinant contents; the same may take place when the anger response is supplanted by hostility or aggression. (For a different view see the paragraph: Anger and Anxiety).
Anger can be both suppressed and repressed (still according to Stearns). If suppressed, it lingers on consciously and may become converted into motor or sensory manifestations (restlessness, headache). If repressed (secondary repression) as a defense mechanism, the anger response becomes excluded from awareness; a distorted ‘symptom formation’ may be the result, or the anger may any time emerge into consciousness when recent occurrences create situations associated with the original repression of the stimulus response.

Another phenomenon is forgetting (repressing) the specific stimulus of the anger response; whereas the anger response persists consciously. The duration of this forgetting varies; however, whenever the stimulus is recalled, the anger response generally is attenuated and slowly subsides. Jersild (1962) has pointed to the phenomenon of ‘displaced anger’. When there is a situation which prevents the individual from expressing anger toward the offending stimulus (person, situation), he may direct the anger toward someone or something else. Displacement is a common emotional process and is particularly frequent in dreams. Menninger (1959) coined the concept of ‘sublimated anger’ and quoted Martin Luther who stated: “When I’m angry.. my whole temperament is quickened, my understanding sharpened”. This coincides with Abrahamson’s (1958) classification of anger within emotional maturity and the Russian Pavlovian psychologists who consider anger a ‘positive emotion’.

In infants “anger is the most common emotional reaction” (Watson, 1924; 1925). Stimuli are “interference with movements”, “..putting on his clothes when he wants to play”, “Thwarting some wish – as being picked up”, “having property taken away”, etc. Goodenough (1931) touches upon the anger response in babies and emphasizes that “in an angry outburst the energy is not directed toward any serviceable end”. This is a rather trite statement, considering the mental and central nervous system development in babies. However, it is essential that the expression of the anger response in babies is automatically motor and apparently due to subcortical discharges (‘in a random fashion’) and not relatively fixed and scant in motion as in adults. In children, the frequency of anger responses reaches its culmination point in the second year of life. There is an increase of motor and verbal resistance (Goodenough, 1931). The stimuli which produce anger responses in adolescents differ from those in childhood; they are prevalingly social in nature: teasing, unfairness, lying, bossiness, sarcasm, failing in accomplishments. Generally, the duration of anger response in adolescents is longer than in children (Hicks & Hayes, 1938). In late adolescence the predominant stimuli are “Thwarting of self-assertion and restraints on desires, unjust accusations, insulting comments, unwelcome advice” and interruption of activities (Gates, 1926; Meltzer, 1933). After late adolescence, the essential stimuli of the anger response remain more or less unchanged; however, some “threats that arouse fear in the young, arouse anger in the older”. Yet, anger continues to be evoked by “thwarting of activities or intentions and assault on self-esteem” (Jersild, 1962). Kaplan & Goodrich (1957) stress particularly the factor of intention, i.e. that thwarting or provocation perceived as being inflicted against intentions or designs are primary stimuli of anger response in the adult.

Anastasia, Cohen & Spatz (1948) found that 52 % of anger responses were due to thwarted plans. The second most frequent stimuli causing anger response (20.9 %) were situations of inferiority and loss of prestige.
Findings such as these indicate that the child’s need to protect his pride, his independence, and his self-respect represent the most important basis for anger (Jersild, 1946; 1965).

According to Murray’s (1965) definition, anger is nothing but an “hypothetical state of excitation in certain not-yet-definitely-localized, subcortical regions of the brain (say, in the hypothalamus and limbic systems) which, if sufficiently intense, produces various manifestations of which the following will be discriminated in our data, (1) Covert manifestations: experienced or felt anger, aggressive words or images, etc. (2) Physiological manifestations: autonomic excitation, including changes of the heart rate and respiration. (3) Overt manifestations: physiognomic and motoric phenomena – verbal productions.. vocal qualities”, And he adds: “...everything modulated to some degree by the subject’s efforts to control and conceal them”. We can only speak of anger if all the factors listed by Murray are present jointly.

Heller (1979) makes the very important comment that “if the presence of all the factors listed is necessary in order to be able to speak of anger, then the acts of aggression or destruction cannot be derived from anger since they are in no way related”. Hence the sole biological factor as demonstration of aggression as an ‘instinctual’ necessity, proves to be irrelevant. She illustrates this thesis by literary examples from Shakespeare:

“Richard the Third hires two murderers to kill his younger brother Prince Clarence. When Richard assigns the commission, at least two of the three symptoms of anger are definitely missing. He acts in cold blood, and nothing indicates a ‘state of excitation’ in him. Undoubtedly, neither does his breathing become more rapid, nor does the production of his hormones change. If we examined his physiognomy and, indeed, this is how every actor acts out the scene – we would only note expressions of pleasure, glee, success, plotting, victory, determination. Without a doubt, he does not blush, does not pale, and does not tremble. (Incidentally, this same Richard is particularly proud of the fact that in order to attain a certain goal he can manipulate a fit of rage without actually feeling anger). Now let us recall what the two murderers feel before and during the execution of their assignment. The first is psychologically indifferent, he is an ‘artisan’ of murder, for him it is a matter of routine. In Shakespeare’s description the other murderer’s state of mind is characterized by the feeling of pity. He is only inclined to execute the act when his accomplice reminds him of the expected high reward. Thus, in this case, aggression was clearly motivated by interest. One might say that among Shakespeare’s heroes it is rather the ones with a noble soul who kill out of raging passion (Mercutio, Romeo or Othello). Quite often, however, those with an obviously angry and passionate disposition do not kill (Lear).

The ones who kill do it out of the most varied motivations which may be, in some cases, free of passion, and in other communicated by passions other than anger. For instance, Brutus kills out of virtue, MacBeth out of desire for power, and out of fear; Hamlet as a matter of chastisement; and Richard III, Edmund, or Iago out of frustration – although these latter have rather people killed than kill themselves.

I believe this should be already sufficient to prove the thesis that the most extremely aggressive act, the annihilation of another human being, is not at all in necessary connection with the sole biological fact the believers in the theory of the instinct of aggression have used to justify the existence of that instinct. But all this does not pertain simply to the extreme manifestation of
aggression. The parent who considers corporal punishment an excellent means of education, hits most of the time in cold blood, without any anger. One person may shout at another not only because of anger, but may do so intentionally: in order to intimidate, in order to make him shut up, or even to keep the other person from some fateful act. The cousin may have fantasies about the death of his uncle without any anger involved; they may not even be acquainted, the cousin may simply want to inherit the wealth. The businessman may ruin his competitor without any feeling of anger either because he does not want to get ruined himself or because he wants to obtain greater profits (again, possibly, without being acquainted with his competitor). And the examples can be multiplied. Of course, all this does not mean that I want to deny the significance of anger in eliciting certain types of behavior that may be qualified as aggressive, it only means that in my opinion there is no necessary and generalizable connection between anger and the act of aggression, the former does not necessarily motivate the latter, whereas the latter is not necessarily motivated by the former” (Heller, 1979).

Heller also makes clear, through an analysis of everyday word usage, that ‘anger’ and ‘rage’ have social implications: even here we do not consider them as mere spontaneous biological phenomena.

Granted that the expressions of rage are provided in the genetic code and are species-specific, the types of behavior and coordinations of movement differ according to culture and to individual. In humans, there is not a single movement coordination that would be species-specific with regard to action. Anger itself does not in the least determine the nature of the acts, of the coordination of movements, or of a sequence of these in which it will find release. (cf. the different motor patterns involved in beating someone to death, killing by means of poison, arrows, rope, the sword, revolver, gun-barrel, stone, or atomic bomb. Or ‘character murder’ by cursing, invective, or slander).

Let us take the case of someone hurt in his dignity. In such cases the aboriginal inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands, as we learn from Malinowski, climb up a tree and commit suicide. The medieval nobleman challenges his offender to a duel. Certain British citizens write indignant letters to the editor of the Times.

Thus it is not merely the coordination of movements that differs, but even the social content of the action differs qualitatively. It is clear that in the reactions to similar feelings (or to occasions eliciting these feelings) cultural expectations and individual dispositions play equally important roles; what is more: the individual disposition and morality assume increasing importance in our time.

Since our value judgments vary according to culture and individual moral choice, we will differ in which reactions to deem correct, praiseworthy, and which to be condemned. There were times when to react to the faithlessness of a wife in the lofty manner of Anatole France’s M. Bergeret would have been the ‘sign’ of cowardice rather than that of spiritual nobility. Nowadays it is this type of ‘response’ we consider noble and adequate, and there is nothing we condemn more strongly than killing for the sake of jealousy (of course, as we know even today this is not the case in certain civilized countries such as Southern Italy). Often human rage is not at all directed against the stimulus that has elicited it. It is often not even a human being that has elicited rage. Thus we may discuss to what extent rage may be a typical response in case of inability to solve a problem
Köhler has already noted this phenomenon among apes. The common characteristic of this event and of similar ones is that in such a situation we cannot respond with a rational act. This kind of rage is the expression of impotence. Yet, even in these situations rage is not the only possible response. In the same situation we may find release in crying or laughter. The child unable to solve a mathematical problem may ‘respond’ to his or her inability by a fit of rage or by crying. If we are harmed by powers whose force surpasses ours manifold, against which we are unable to fight or to act, then we may respond with rage, with plaintive crying, or with a laugh; what is more, one ‘type of reaction’ may well spill into another, our rage may turn into laughter or crying, or vice-versa, demonstrating the undetermined nature of the internal stimulus and the ‘response’ (Heller, 1979).

As will be discussed later on, some authors consider ‘anger’ and ‘rage’ to be quite different phenomena.

Anger and Hostility

‘Hostility’ is derived from the Latin ‘hostis’ which means enemy. Enmity is open antagonism against one or many individuals. There may also be hostility against ideas, dogmas, but only – at least according to Stearns (1972) – when they are represented by persons. Hostility is generally a long-lasting affective phenomenon, which may persist, once established, without repeated stimuli. This is one essential difference from anger response. Another is that hostility is always directed against a person or persons, either the person as an individual or as a representative or agent of an ideology or action-complex.

For Rothenberg (1971), hostility, like anger, is either an affect or a behavioral manifestation or both – one can feel hostile or be hostile. The critical distinction between anger and hostility is that hostility always has a destructive component, whereas anger does not. ‘Feeling hostile’ always involves the wish or intent to inflict harm, pain, or actual destruction on another person or object. ‘Being hostile’ always involves inflicting or trying to inflict some type of destruction, psychological or physical, upon another.

According to Kagan (1974) the primary aim of hostility is to inflict physical or psychic distress on another. But hostility can lead to a variety of derivative behaviors. Although physical assault, verbal criticism and dominance are popular outcomes of anger and hostility, less frequently sexual behavior, mastery, seeking of recognition and accumulation of wealth and signs of status are used to gratify hostility motives. Indeed, any time a person believes he can hurt another by gaining a particular resource that the resented one values, the basis for an instrumental aggressive action is created. But many of these aggressive behaviors can also be the product of other motives – affiliation or sexuality, for example. Hence many responses that appear to gratify hostility do not always do so, and most of these psychodynamically complex behaviors are ambiguous with respect to their primary motivational origin.

Hostility, like other basic impulses, carries the demand for action: the removal or destruction of the stimulus. Should the stimulus agent disappear before he can become the object of hostile action, a hostile response still requires execution against substitute targets. The powerful self-punitive response seen in certain bereaved individuals after the death of a hated person suggests such a mechanism (Lindemann, 1949). Newcomb (1947) pointed out the vicious circle by which an
individual or a group once ready for hostile responses gradually reduces the channels of communication with the potential enemy, thus preventing rectification of the early impression of hostility and redress by friendly actions. Hostile isolation (autistic hostility) is likely to make hostile tension more enduring. The dammed-up hostility from other sources will then be channeled against the enemy, and any efforts to make the enemy unsuitable as a target will only arouse renewed and increased hostility. There seems to be a great readiness for the hostile response to revert to the most primitive form when pressure of hostile tension reaches a certain maximum, The profusion of destructive fantasies in frustrated individuals, the furious self-destruction of melancholics, the arsenal of substitute reactions and more or less well-disguised defenses against hostility, need hardly be mentioned here. Stearns (1972) denies that hostility against oneself (as exemplified in self-destructive tendencies and suicide attempts) is possible.

Arieti (1970) describes rage as a first-order emotion or protoemotion which follows the perception of danger to be overcome by fight, that is by aggressive behavior, not by flight. Anger is a second-order emotion (mediated by images). In its simplest form, anger is image-determined rage, that is rage elicited by the images of the stimuli which generally elicit rage. While rage usually leads to immediate motor discharge, generally directed against the stimulus which elicits it, anger tends to last longer, although it retains an impelling character.

The prolongation of anger is possible because it is mediated by symbolic forms, just as anxiety is. If rage is useful for survival in the jungle, anger was useful within the first human communities to maintain a hostile-defensive attitude toward the enemy, whether the latter was present or not. Hate is the third-order emotion which corresponds to the second-order emotion anger and the first-order emotion rage. The three together constitute hostility, but hate is the only one among the three which has the tendency to become a chronic emotional state sustained by special thoughts. Thus a feedback mechanism is established between these sustaining thoughts and the emotion. Hate leads to calculated action, and at times to premeditated crime.

In everyday parlance hostility refers to those feelings and impulses that contain an element of destructiveness and ill will toward others. Fromm (1963; 1973) distinguished (1) reactive hostility; hostility as a response to a threat to one’s life, dignity, property, etc.; (2) compensatory hostility; destructiveness which is the compensation for a deep sense of powerlessness and impotence. It is to be found in a person who feels incapable of influencing or changing people and circumstances by reason, love, example, etc. yet who cannot tolerate the resulting feeling of impotence, and who uses force, and thus gives himself the illusion of strength. Force is the universal coin which is used to hide and to deny impotence; (3) necrophilous hostility, the most malignant type of destructiveness, the one rooted in the love of death.

Closely related to necrophilia is sadism. Sadism is different from the wish to kill inasmuch as the sadist does not want so much the physical destruction of his victim as the sensation of complete control and power over him. Through sadism a living being is transformed into a thing – not, as in killing, into a ‘dead’ corpse – but into a living corpse, into a thing which has no will of its own, into the sadist’s thing. In one necrophilous person the wish to kill may be dominant, in another the wish to torture – yet they are usually both present and necessarily so, because they are rooted in the same orientation. “All factors that make man into a psychic cripple turn him also into a sadist or a destroyer”.
Anger is often equated with hostility because we observe the two phenomena occurring together fairly frequently. However, constant association between anger and hostility may be more true of animals than it is of man. In animals, the physical manifestations we associate with anger always appear prior to an attack. Hair stands on end, pupils dilate, muscles tense, and loud piercing or deep voice sounds are made, continually or in repetitive pattern. In some species, destructive attack always follows these physical manifestations, whereas in others, attack may be delayed, deferred, or even aborted at times. In humans, however, careful statistical documentation of innumerable instances of everyday anger (McKellar, 1949), as well as general clinical and everyday experience, indicate that anger is seldom followed by destructive attack. Furthermore, destructive attack often occurs without preceding anger (Rothenberg, 1971).

Before we rush too quickly to attribute this fact to learning and the effects of civilization, let us consider whether anger in humans is in any way essentially distinct from hostility and destructiveness. For one thing, human anger occurs most frequently under conditions of need, love, and involvement. During the course of development, we feel anger most consistently toward our parents and in our later years we feel intense and frequent anger toward those we love, those we need, or toward situations in which we are involved. Furthermore, the physiological events associated with anger, events that Cannon (1929) called the ‘fight-or-flight’ syndrome, are integrated into behavior differently in humans than they are in animals.

In animals, flight and fight are the only alternatives in the face of threat or significant obstruction, but humans can employ complicated communication. Anger is particularly suited for communication. The physiologic concomitants of anger and the state of motoric readiness they produce are involuntary and discernible phenomena. Muscle tension, vascular changes, and involuntary voice change (although this may be consciously controlled) are minimally present. This is true even when a person is unaware that he is angry, so that an observer can infer it. For humans, therefore, anger is an alerting phenomenon for the individual and for others that provides a basis for communication. According to Rothenberg (1971) human beings can and do separate anger from attack. Because anger affords possibilities for communication, it is potentially constructive rather than destructive, given the inevitable threats and obstructions that occur in human experience.

In essence, hostility does not allow the object of the feeling or action to remove particular threats or obstructions but it tends to destroy the object itself. Thus attack, violence, and revenge are manifestations of hostility, but so are sarcasm, teasing, gossip, and passive obstructiveness. These manifestations in thought or action are not simply the result of intense or increased anger, as is commonly thought. They are related to the angry state, but they occur primarily when the angry individual resigns in advance. He feels that direct communication will be ineffective or else he feels that anger itself must be suppressed or avoided.

In other words, it is hidden or unexpressed anger that leads to destructiveness. Unexpressed anger does not become a clear communication, but it still requires motor discharge or symbolic expression allowing for muscle relaxation. The sense of threat or obstruction and the internal communication of arousal persist and often lead to diffuse and indirect expression or discharge. Indirect avenues of discharge such as gossip, teasing, and obstruction are destructive because they are aimed at the integrity of the individual rather than the specific threat or obstruction he produces.
Violence and revenge are destructive direct discharges, but they are not expressions of anger per se; they are in part expressions of failed or unattempted communication.

Actually, anger is highly related to love, both because of its connection to need and involvement and because of its constructive communication aspects. When anger is accompanied by a clear communication, it is a sign of basic respect for a loved person (Rothenberg, 1971).

When we consider hostility and anger in the perspective of Selye’s (1956) general adaptation syndrome, we may assume that both are alarm reactions evoked by certain stressors. This parallel cannot be maintained beyond the alarm reaction. In hostility, a state of resistance can be maintained as long as hostility is repressed and remains subconscious, or as long as conscious hostility is not exacerbated by new, adequate, and/or repeated stimuli. These may cause an ‘adaptational crisis’ and thus may lead to the last stage of the general adaptation syndrome, the state of exhaustion. In this state, resistance is no longer sustained and, although some of the alarm reaction hostile attitudes may sporadically recur, the exhaustion state is distinguished by a cessation of active emotional reactions, by a withdrawal from reality, and/or by regression to paranoid attitudes. In anger, on the other hand, after a short alarm reaction, the state of resistance or adaptation will never break down by the appearance of an adaptational crisis, as the single episode of an anger response is generally short-lived; so that a state of exhaustion will not occur. The organism will reattain homeostasis.

Another quite apparent difference between anger response and hostility is that the latter is by far not as clearly delimited as is the former one. Hostility can easily transmute or enhance into aggression, which is distinguished by motor expression. Freud (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1922) has even linked hostility and aggression together, as both may be expected to be directed “toward those factors interfering with the pleasure principle”.

Dunbar (1938) stated that aggression would be expected “to be characterized by a tendency to attack others directly or symbolically. It may be directed outwardly against the world or become manifest in internalized conflicts as observed in some psychosomatic disorders”. Aside from the already mentioned fact that hostility is generally an enduring, expanding, and overshooting emotional reaction in contradistinction to the anger response which is limited as to time, intensity, and symptomatology, hostility may also prompt neurotic phenomena at times in form of conversion reactions or psychosomatic signs and symptoms. This does not occur in anger responses (Stearns, 1972).

There is no doubt that in hostility and aggression sympathetic discharges are operative as they are in anger responses. In contrast to anger responses, where parasympathetic effects are only either rare or temporary, they are by far more prevalent than sympathetic activity in hostility and aggression. Gellhorn (1953) has even emphasized that hostility causes predominantly parasympathetic discharges. While depression is not an underlying condition in anger responses, the importance of hostility as a feature of depression has also been emphasized by Whitehorn (1952): “Psychopathologically depressed patients exhibit stiff-necked resistance; one senses in many bitterness and hatefulness. The perception of this component of hostility... is a point of disagreement among psychiatrists. Some assume an element of hostility in all depressive psychotics as part of the mechanism; others admit its presence only on overwhelming testimony;
still others perceive evidence of hostile feeling in many depressed patients without assuming its universality in depressions”.

**Anger and Anxiety**

It would be a serious mistake to present anger as a totally constructive and adaptive process and to neglect its noxious aspects, particularly the state of insecurity and defensiveness from which it arises. In fact, the hint from clinical practice that gave rise to some of the preceding deliberations about the distinctions between anger, aggression, and hostility was the well-substantiated two-step therapeutic approach to patient anger: recognition and acceptance of the anger; and exploration of the underlying reasons for it. When this second step is undertaken and the roots of anger are adequately explored, another more basic phenomenon almost invariably appears: anxiety,

Lest it be argued that this finding pertains only to persons manifesting psychopathology, it must be hastily affirmed that experimental work with normal subjects following Cannon’s (1929) work tends to confirm the strong connection between anger and anxiety. This assertion is also true of more recent experiments, notably those of Ax (1953); Schachter & Singer (1962) and Funkenstein, King & Drolette (1957), which demonstrate some differentiation in the physiological accompaniments of fear and anger. Although the operational definitions of anger and anxiety differ in these studies, Ax’s conclusion from his own careful work could clearly apply to the results of the others: “These results do not refute Cannon’s hypothesis of a unitary visceral excitement reaction but merely reveal a further differentiation in physiological reaction pattern”.

On the basis of all that is currently known about anger and anxiety, both clinically and experimentally, it seems likely that both of these phenomena are aspects of a diffuse alerted and aroused state. Anger becomes the predominant manifestation of this state when the motoric arousal begins to be directed at the source of threat or obstruction or at an imagined source. Anxiety is the predominant manifestation when the motoric arousal is undirected or is directed toward avoidance or escape. However, neither of these manifestations ever seems to occur exclusive of the other. Anger, especially, is always accompanied by anxiety (Rothenberg, 1971).

The presence of anxiety associated with anger is apparent in those instances where action is inhibited and anger is unexpressed. The state of arousal and motoric readiness continues and subtle involuntary reactions occur such as trembling, overall tension, and hyper-alertness. A vicious cycle ensues where further arousal occurs readily and anxiety increases until there is a disruption of thought processes, the irrationality associated with outbursts of temper or acute anxiety. The presence of anxiety helps clarify further the threatening quality of anger and the hostile destructive thoughts and words that accompany it. In addition to the previously discussed alerting function of these hostile words and thoughts, this quality of anger is an immediate, ingrained response that defends against the anxious aspect of the state of arousal with its associated sense of helplessness. As Sullivan (1956) has pointed out, the destructive thoughts and words that occur thus give us a sense of strength and power. If we think of hitting someone or even killing someone, we feel far more powerful and in control of the situation than if we think of fleeing or doing nothing. Indeed, such thoughts are often accompanied by forceful motor acts, such as pounding the table and stamping the foot. Although anxiety may also instigate the motor discharge of running away,
pacing back and forth, or other aimless movements, such acts create a vicious cycle. They reinforce a sense of helplessness and may lead to even greater anxiety.

Destructive thoughts and words, of course, are themselves associated with anxiety and guilt because of social prohibitions, fear of loss of control, and other factors. Furthermore, since anger itself is socially unacceptable in varying degrees, experiencing anger produces anxiety in its own right.

Since anxiety is more disruptive and more uncomfortable than anger, it seems reasonable to assume that anger is a defense against anxiety or, at the very least, a preferred reaction (Rothenberg, 1971).

Anger, Aggression, Violence

Berkowitz (1964) spoke of anger in the absence of any aggressive behavior tendency. Buss (1961) clearly distinguished between the emotional aspects of arousal and the voluntary ones of aggression, while Schachter & Singer (1962) presented impressive evidence that anger may be largely a cognitive labeling of physiological arousal. Anger, though, is a term used to denote a multiplicity of phenomena, which are not necessarily related. Kaufmann (1965) gives the following examples:

1. Anger has been defined as the diffuse maladaptive agitation or rage response displayed by lower organisms and poorly organized humans upon being presented with an unsolvable situation. This anger response involves no evaluative or instrumental components, and the aggression to which it may lead is usually quite unspecific, perhaps even a chance component of random behavior. The response patterns observed by Janis (1951), Kardiner & Spiegel (1947) and Berkowitz (1962) as well as temper tantrums (at the early, noninstrumental stage), fall within this classification. Feshbach (1964) spoke of this undifferentiated emotional arousal as an instigation to hit rather than to hurt. However, the consummatory nature of the hitting response is open to question.

2. Anger recurs as a result of classical conditioning. Initially unlabeled emotional arousal has in the past of an individual’s experience been conditioned to stimulus situations regardless of subsequent responses. When such a stimulus situation recurs, so should the arousal, which is then labeled anger in the manner described by Schachter & Singer (1962). Since labeling has the property of providing gratifying cognitive clarity, it may on subsequent occasions be mediated in the absence of the ‘model’.

3. The third possibility, one that heretofore apparently has been largely ignored, is that of anger conditioned classically to certain preparatory responses which may initially have been selected independently of emotional arousal. The possibility of anger as a classically conditioned response should not, however, be interpreted as a necessarily permanent pairing of certain stimulus situations and emotional arousal. Recent findings by Shapiro, Lider & Tursky (1964) and in Liu’s (1964) two-factor theory of classical conditioning suggests that anger (or emotional arousal in general) is not a built-in, unalterable response to certain stimuli, but becomes established only if its presence fulfills an instrumental role.
(4) Anger accompanying preparatory aggressive responses may also be deliberately instrumental. Where aggression has been rewarded in the past, the subject may well have learned that emotional arousal, labeled anger, facilitated or intensified such aggression: he therefore reproduces it – works himself into a rage thus energizing his present aggression. This susceptibility of autonomic state to cognitive influences received some support from recent studies by Brehm, Rack & Bogdonoff (1964).

(5) Again a rarely considered possibility, anger may follow aggression – or increase after aggression – as a gratifying, guilt-reducing response. The subject has aggressed, feels guilty, and rationalizes by producing emotional arousal, perhaps claiming that he is still quite upset. More generally, self-stimulation to anger following aggression may have dissonance or anxiety-reducing properties. Berkowitz (1964) distinguished anger-produced and habitual aggression but continued to place heavy emphasis upon a preexisting state of internal arousal, despite rather ample evidence that physiological factors play an unpredictable role in aggressive behavior even in animals (Beach, 1945; McNeil, 1959; Scott, 1958). Berkowitz himself cited ample evidence that physiological arousal alone is not sufficient to produce aggressive behavior where suitable cue stimuli are absent, and Pepitone (1964), by implication, considered aggression without anger as a function of attempt at cognitive validation. Evidence for the occurrence of aggression without arousal ranges from Scott’s (1958) mice, which, accustomed to successful aggression, displayed no arousal symptoms preparatory of aggression, to the mass executioners of an extermination camp, who (Höss, 1963) managed to commit inconceivable acts of horror without apparent displays of anger or other emotions. Emotional bluntedness or stultification in the latter case and in others similar to it would seem to be an inadequate interpretation, since many of these individuals displayed a normal range of emotions, from joy to rage, in dealing with their environment other than the camp situation. One might well venture, then, the arduous step of relinquishing the constructs of frustration and anger as either necessary or sufficient conditions for aggressive behavior. Such a position does not, of course, deny the occasional, or even usual, presence of physiological arousal where aggressive behavior occurs. It simply maintains that, to paraphrase Brown & Farber (1951), a nonemotional theory of aggression may be sufficient to account for the class of behaviors which are perhaps most economically categorized as a subset of learned social interactions (Kaufmann, 1965).

We all know that violence does occur in conjunction with anger and that actual destruction can be associated with the angry state. According to the formulations presented by Rothenberg (1971), the relationship between anger and violence is as follows: First, violence occurs when anger cannot serve as a sufficient alerting process for the angry person himself or for other persons who can remove the threat or obstruction, largely because of poor intrapsychic and interpersonal communication. Second, violence occurs when anger is unexpressed and threats cannot be removed; motoric readiness is not discharged and the presence of the threat continues either in memory or in actuality. Subsequent threats and the motoric response to them are enhanced and destructiveness follows. Human beings can and do remember experiences of threat, anxiety, and anger, and these memories influence the perception of threat throughout life. Therefore, there are predispositions to anxiety and anger in relation to particular situations and persons or classes of situations and persons. Such predispositions are so constant and predictable that they may be considered to be structural features of the personality that tend to instigate violence. Since no such special structural features are necessary to account for anger, it is clear that anger is both
qualitatively and quantitatively different from violence. Finally, violence occurs, to a significant
degree, when there is too much anxiety associated with the angry state itself regardless of previous
experience with particular threats. This may be due to the intensity of the perceived threat (it may
be immediately life threatening, for example), and it may also be due to excessive guilt about the
experience of feeling angry or excessive fear of destructive thoughts or words. Excessive guilt
induces anxiety in its own right when anger is in the offing. The added burden of this anxiety
coalesces with the initial anxiety associated with anger and can result in violence.

It is necessary in closing to say a few words about hate, rage, and guilt in order to clarify anger
further. Hate and rage are products of ongoing states of anxiety, truly destructive predispositions,
and concomitant guilt about the destructiveness. Neither hate nor rage is simply a manifestation of
an intense degree of anger, as is commonly stated, but is predominantly a manifestation of
prolonged or intense anxiety. Such prolonged or intense anxiety is usually related to guilt, shame,
or extreme deprivation. Violence is frequently associated with hate and rage, and violence is often
a means of overcoming an extreme sense of helplessness and worthlessness.

Clinical discussions pertaining to anger often fail to make a distinction between anger and rage.
Consequently, psychodynamic formulations about obsessive-compulsive behavior, schizophrenia,
and other syndromes often refer inappropriately to anger rather than to rage. Although rage
sometimes has the communicative potential of anger and can sometimes serve as a constructive
response to threat or obstruction, it is commonly directed at the integrity of others rather than their
specific behavior, and, therefore, like hostility, it tends to be destructive. As such it is a more
constant psychodynamic factor than anger in many organized psychopathological syndromes.

Guilt about angry feelings is a puzzling phenomenon. It has been considered to be the result of fear
of destructive impulses, a manifestation of aggression turned against the self, and a result of social
inhibitions. Also, as suggested, it is produced by a fear of exposing one’s involvement and
vulnerability. Regardless of the explanation, it is a consistent observation that the most truly violent
people are those who have difficulty dealing with angry feelings. Clinically, we meet such
problems every day. In trying to help people deal more effectively with angry feelings we operate
implicitly on the basis of the definition of anger presented here: Anger is an assertive, alerted
communicative state that arises as an alternative to and defense against anxiety and is not the same
as aggression or true destructiveness (Rothenberg, 1971).

Hatred

The book by Eibl-Eibesfeldt about the instinct of aggression bears the title *Love and Hate*. The
Freudian impact on the theory of aggression becomes evident from the fact that the identification of
the object of hatred and the object of love occurs so frequently. There lies, according to Meerloo
(1946), embodied in every hatred the deep realization of incapacity, of impotence – hence the
association of hatred with suicidal fantasies. And Fromm (1963; 1973) contends: “What we hate is
something inside ourselves, we really hate our limits; and that self-hatred is projected onto
somebody else”. According to Mitscherlich (1969) and Horn (1972) we hate what we do not or can
not permit ourselves to love. Hatred as aborted love. Lorenz (1966) calls ‘hate’ “the ugly little
brother of love”. As opposed to ordinary aggression, it is directed toward one individual, just as
love is, and probably hate presupposes the presence of love: one can really hate only where one has loved and, even if one denies it, still does.

Fromm (1973) comments: “That love is sometimes transformed into hate has often been said, even though it is more correct to say that it is not love which suffers this transformation, but the wounded narcissism of the loving person, that is to say, the non-love which causes hate. To claim one hates only where one has loved, however, turns the element of truth in the statement into plain absurdity. Does the oppressed hate the oppressor, does the mother of the child hate its murderer, does the tortured hate the torturer because they once loved him or still do?” Furthermore, hatred directed against the out-group (hatred of Blacks, anti-semitism, etc.) cannot at all be interpreted as a (form of) manifestation of love. As always, the advocates of the drive theory have, of course, found an explanation for this phenomenon: they speak of projection. We actually hate our father or our lover, but we ‘project’ this hatred onto the representatives of other nations or ethnic groups, representatives we do not even know personally (Heller, 1979). Are the concepts hatred and aggression synonymous?

“If I should intentionally push someone who has jostled me on the city bus, then I have undoubtedly acted out of rage, but can I really say that I hate the person I have pushed? In general, I cannot, for I do not even know him. I will interpret my own action as motivated by hatred only if the offender belongs to a group towards which my hatred has formed previously (if I classify the offender into the hated group). Thus ‘I have been jostled by that dirty nigger’ or ‘I have been jostled by that suave gentleman’ or ‘I have been jostled by that filthy bum’, etc. Thus at most I can say: someone I hate (in his person or his group) will more easily stimulate my rage than somebody I do not hate – the first is more likely to fill the role of stimulus. Or: I can more easily rationalize my gesture of rage by the communication of a hatred that already exists” (Heller, 1979). Rage is always of relatively short duration, the ‘state of excitation’ of the organism describes a rapidly declining curve. Hatred has no ‘curve’ determined in time. No permanent ‘state of excitation’ pertains to it, the biochemical processes and the physiological ‘symptoms’ typical of rage do not characterize hatred. Yet the mention of the object of hatred, especially if positively mentioned, may bring about symptoms similar to, albeit not as intensive, as rage, whereas information about some misfortune affecting that object may arouse completely different feelings such as glee or even satisfaction.

If man is capable of hating strongly, it is only because he is capable of feeling strongly, of loving strongly, of feeling enthusiasm, of feeling very happy or very sad, of enjoying and desiring strongly, of feeling inebriated with happiness or despondent with pain.

Hatred undoubtedly has a drive function, and this is the circumstance which the advocates of the drive theory have isolated from its other functions. This drive function signifies that hatred may be the cause of my action, but it may not be the purpose of my action, as happiness or enjoyment in their most varied forms and contents may well be. People cannot strive to hate, just as – apart from a few exceptions – they cannot have as their purpose to fear or be hungry. Yet the types of action motivated by hatred are indeed of the kind usually classed under the heading ‘aggressivity’: the annihilation or harming of others, or at least fantasies regarding such actions. Heller (1979) holds that the social function of the pair of affects love-hatred resides in the fact that they are orienting affects.
Hallowell (1940) aptly expressed the advantages of the indirect, covert means of hostility: malevolent magic and sorcery. He said: “With sorcery and magic at my disposal, in fact, I can vent my anger with greater effectiveness than would be possible by verbal insults or even a physical assault, short of murder. I can make a person suffer a lingering illness, interfere with his economically productive activities, and thus menace his living; I can also make his children ill or lure his wife away by love magic; I can even kill him if I wish.”

In general, having an enemy provides many evident pragmatic advantages. It provides a clear manichaean structuring of the world; it simplifies the social cosmology. It provides an affirmation of one’s own moral superiority (and, by implication, the moral inferiority – even to the point of diabolization – of the enemy). Moreover, it provides the opportunities for gratification of the satisfactions inherent in all kinds of ego-defense mechanisms, especially those of projection and scapegoating (see Gladstone, 1959).

Furthermore, when ‘the enemy’ is a member of the out-group in a social conflict situation, one of the major pay-offs is the increased sense of purpose and personal identity that participation with others (the in-group) in a conflict can bring. Often, the act of transforming a category of individuals into a collectivity and then an organization consciously sharing goals, policy and purposeful behaviors brings a tremendous increase in positive self-evaluation, and sense of belonging to a worthwhile cause and worthy grouping.

In the case of the ‘lunatic fringe’ members of such ‘hate-monger’ groups as e.g. the Ku Klux Klan, a grandiose pseudo-personality is provided for those who would otherwise be insignificant social ‘non-entities’ or peripheral psychotics. Apart from increasing an individual’s sense of identity with a larger social entity, engaging in a conflict can also result in the release of a considerable amount of personal tension, fear and frustration in a legitimized manner. There is evidence from a wide variety of fields from psychology (Stein, 1976) to anthropology (Vayda, 1968) that conflict can relieve intrapersonal tensions. Moreover, the idea of ‘psychologically functional’ conflict is clearly connected with contemporary theories of ‘scapegoating’, a process by which feelings of deprivation, aggregate frustration, and mass discontent are often channeled onto scapegoat groups, either domestic or external (Feierabend & Feierabend, 1966). In these last circumstances conflict behavior is directed not at a party that is causing another stress, tension and anger through its ability to prevent the latter attaining its desired goals, but often at some third party, perhaps more accessible to such behavior. This process has been used, for example, by Fanon (1967) to explain violent behavior among different racial or ethnic groups in a colonial situation, where such behavior could not be directed against the colonial rulers, the real source of discontent and frustration.

In another field, many anthropologists have noted that ‘primitive’ wars can serve as ‘flight from grief’ devices (Turney-High, 1949), or as ways of preventing anxiety and tension from exceeding bearable limits within family or tribe (Vayda, 1968).

Alternatively, mass frustration may be channeled into political activism aimed at change, and recent theorizing about the source and nature of civil strife, mass protest and revolution has made much of protest or insurrection as a means of relieving tensions caused by widespread deprivation.
and a shared sense of frustration (Gurr, 1968; 1970). The stages in this argument can be simply summarized as follows (Mitchell, 1980):

(a) Sources of social conflict must be sought in the frustration of individuals attempting to achieve what they see as desirable goals; and the tensions that arise from such frustration which demand some form of release in order to attain psychological comfort and stability.

(b) The release of such psychological tensions involves a spectrum of behavior which often includes violence towards others.

(c) Although such concepts as ‘psychological tension’ or ‘frustration’ apply only to individuals and their intra-personal psychological conditions, this does not mean that social or international conflict can be (solely) attributed to the frustrations, tensions, or personal problems of single leaders. It is possible that a sense of frustration can be experienced by a large number of individuals within a social group, an organization or an entire society. The key concept is that of aggregate rather than individual frustration.

(d) It may be that the behavior which results from this sense of being frustrated is directed towards the source of the frustration, in an attempt to remove the obstruction.

(e) However, it may equally be that such behavior is not possible. For a variety of reasons, it may not be advisable to direct conflict behavior against the real source of the frustration, the party whose goals or behavior prevent the attainment of goals. Hence, as frustration builds up, it demands some form of ‘release’, and this may take the form of violence directed against a substitute target. This process is normally an unconscious one, so that the transfer of hostility takes place initially, at least, without the conscious realization of the frustrated party. The small boy who has been humiliated and punished by his father (who is too big to be attacked directly) goes off and beats his teddy bear, or trips up the little girl next door; a majority community under an external threat finds release by scapegoating a resident minority as spies, traitors or fifth columnists. in this fashion unrealistic conflicts “arise from deprivations and frustrations from the socialization process or they result from a conversion of originally realistic antagonism which was disallowed expression.” (Coser, 1956). Thus, engaging in conflict can perform a ‘safety valve’ function for highly frustrated individuals singly and in the mass, and provides aggregate psychological benefits, although whether this constitutes ‘functional’ conflict for the scapegoated group or society at large is another matter.

The main point is that conflicts can fulfil a variety of needed functions for human individuals, whether a prominent leader or a rank and file follower, apart from the disbenefits of fear and suspicion more usually associated with disputes (Mitchell, 1980)

**Cruelty and Sadism**

Rapoport (1974) seems to voice a consensual view when he writes: “If by cruelty is meant the inflicting of pain or distress on others for its own sake rather than incidentally to, say, predation, instances of cruelty are difficult to find in non-humans”. And he goes on: “While callousness is
simply lack of identification with others, cruelty is, on the contrary, evidence of identification with the ‘opposite’ sign as it were. Cruelty is the property of deriving pleasure from the suffering of others, just as empathy is sharing the suffering of others. The bill of particulars charging man with cruelty is long indeed, and perhaps it is true that man is the only really cruel animal. But this may be precisely because man is also the only animal capable of empathy, since both cruelty and empathy presuppose identification with the object of brutality or of compassion. Cruelty and empathy are two sides of the same coin. Aggression and empathy may be nearer each other than either is to indifference.

When inward life dries up, when feeling decreases and apathy increases, when one cannot affect or even genuinely touch another person, violence flares up as a daimonic necessity for contact. To inflict pain and torture at least proves that one can affect somebody. Violence is the ultimate destructive substitute which surges in to fill the vacuum where there is not relatedness (May, 1969). The unmistakable practice of cruelty for cruelty’s sake depends on the same human faculty that on other occasions manifests itself in love and compassion – the ability to transcend the self and to guide one’s actions by imagining how the other feels” (Rapoport, 1974).

It is a matter of course that sadism may not be derived exclusively from the aggressive drive; long ago Freud, the most thorough researcher of this theme, has demonstrated that the ‘libido’ is at least as much a motive of sadism. If we abstain from a direct identification of ‘libido’ with sexuality, something that is not characteristic of Freud himself, then we must accept this explanation as an incontrovertible fact. Sadism is distinguished from all other forms of destruction aimed against man by the fact that it procures pleasure, causes enjoyment. The release of rage may well result in a release of tension, but not in sensual enjoyment. If we bang our fist on the table, this gesture does not imply enjoyment on our part; and if we strike somebody out of rage, this act does not cause pleasure. Or rather, insofar as it also causes pleasure (and this is only possible in the latter case), sadism already plays a part in the gesture. Since rage is not enjoyment and, at the same time, it is a compulsive force at the time of the appearance of the given stimulus, it cannot be planned and cannot be retarded. By dint of will-power it may be possible to diminish the duration of the fit of rage, but it may not be increased (for then it would become manipulated). On the contrary, the act of sadism can well be planned, may well be delayed, extended; what is more, intentionality and purposefulness are essentially part of it. It will suffice to think of Justine by the Marquis de Sade. The sexual sadists in the novel have planned with gothic fantasy the ‘situations’ in which the victims of their sadism are most apt to be humiliated. There is rage among animals, even if the stimuli provoking it form but a small percentage of the stimuli that provoke human anger, but there is no sadism among animals. The capacity for purposeful action is an intrinsic part of sadism, as is planning and, what is perhaps even more important, so is the perverted relationship between subject and object.

In the majority of cases the sadist subject is not ‘enraged’ against his object. But this object can only be a subject-object. No one can be sadist with regard to a mere object. The pleasure of the sadist is derived from the fact that by his act he is proving the power of his own subject: the power of turning another subject into a mere object. Only a subject can be turned into an object. What is more, the main source of pleasure of the sadist is that, in the process of becoming an object, the ever more humiliated, more trampled subject always ‘manifests’ his own subjectivity. A former prisoner at Auschwitz told about a Lithuanian member of the SS that before shooting to death
women prisoners picked at random he would always shout at them: ‘Weinen’. He only derived pleasure from shooting the woman to death if she cried, and begged for her life, if he was able to convert the subject into mere object. The desire of the sadist is not simply to destroy the other, but rather to torture or destroy on the basis of an imagined ‘libretto’. This is a perverted form of playfulness: the other person has to perform the rites of the conversion from subject to object. All this, of course, is valid not only in case of the physical destruction of the other, but also for sadism that destroys its spiritual and moral subject, the so-called ‘intellectual sadism’. The other is made into an object by being changed into mere instrument. Therefore it would be absurd to talk about sadism as a manifestation of some kind of ‘instinct’. It is not related to the only biological constituent of aggression, namely to anger. It may be compulsive in the case of certain individuals, as in the case of those who kill in the course of some sexual act, but it is not compulsive in most cases. Sadist personalities are psychopathological cases, but in the case of non-sadist personalities rational and moral motivation may always prevent the realization of sadist impulses, whereas these motivations are not capable of preventing anger.

Yet it is not a species-specific phenomenon: among the majority of ‘primitive’ peoples we never meet with sadism, as far as action is concerned, and it is only among a small minority of modern men that we meet with sadism realized in behavior or action. Yet rational and moral factors may considerably codetermine sadist action and behavior in general. To refer once again to the Marquis de Sade, they were the conscious ‘apostles’ of the principle of pleasure and egotism (Heller, 1979).

The genius of Freud can also be seen in his detection, even if concealed by his theory of instincts, of the affinity between the weakness of the ego and sadism. The weaker the ego, the less it can identify with its own self, the less self-assurance finds strength in sensible actions, the more the need for self-identity appears in a perverted form.