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MYTH AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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NORTHERN IRELAND

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of the concepts of myth and violence and their inter-relationship, in the specific context of Northern Ireland. It demonstrates that those phenomena have, in Ulster, given rise to a distinct type of group cohesion and group conflict.

The thesis begins with an overview of the treatment accorded to the concepts of myth and violence in social theory. The insights from this discussion are then applied to the concrete socio-historical problem in hand.

The evolution of the myths is examined within the colonial history of the province, and their role in shaping both the present social structure of Ulster and the perceptions of the social actors concerned is emphasized. This thesis also attempts to explain why violence has been chosen as the most appropriate form of social action by a significant section of the population and, moreover, why it has become habitual. The mutuality of the myths and the violence is made apparent.

The thesis concludes that the specific type of conflict now apparent in Ulster is contingent upon and reinforces the special type of group cohesion one finds there. This cohesion and conflict, it is contended, are signifi-

cantly influenced by the myths and the violence, and have rendered unto them their distinct character.

The conflict in Northern Ireland seems, to many, to be a mystifying and anachronistic struggle. By focussing on the factors which give the conflict this seemingly incongruous character, the thesis intends to further the understanding of a complex social situation, and to demonstrate a new application of integration and coercion theories.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Whilst Northern Ireland is of great contemporary interest, there have been very few sociological studies attempted on the subject. The body of literature[1] pertaining to the present situation in Ulster has tended to concentrate on the constitutional and political issues involved and is mostly of a descriptive rather than an analytical nature. Important questions remain unresolved; often they are not investigated or even defined. It would appear imperative, in the light of the events of the last few years, to ask why certain groups in Ulster continue to commit acts of violence and, further, to inquire into the significance that these acts have for those responsible and for Irish society in general.

What, then, is the most useful sociological model to apply to our problem? We are faced with a situation of conflict within which there is strong group cohesion. It would seem appropriate to examine the models of integration theory and coercion theory[2] to determine their validity for the problem in hand.

Integration Theory

Integration theory conceives of the social structure

in terms of a functionally integrated system held in equil-ibrium by certain patterned and recurrent processes. This theory, as displayed in the work of Parsons and the struc-tural-functionalists is founded on the assumptions of:

1) Stability

2) Integration

3) Functional Cooperation

4) Consensus

Now, it should be noted that the social system in Northern Ireland, since the foundation of that state, has contained none of these prerequisites. Yet, it survived with its own government as a functioning unit for more than fifty years. Obviously another conception of society is required to explain this phenomenon.

Coercion Theory

Coercion theory views the social structure as a form of organization held together by force and constraint. Its assumptions are that:

1) Social change is ubiquitous.

2) Social conflict is ubiquitous.

3) Every element in society renders a contribution to disintegration and change.

4) Society is held together by coercion.

Prior to the outbreak of violence in Ulster, there had been very little social change although there was much social

conflict. There were in existence some important elements in that society which were to lead to its eventual disintegration, while coercion was very much in evidence.[3]

Neither of these theories will alone suffice. As Dahrendorf points out, we cannot conceive of society unless we realise the dialectics of stability and change, integration and conflict, function and motive force, consensus and coercion.[4] It is clear that for a society to be in a state of conflict a certain degree of cohesion on the part of the competing groups is required. Within limitations, each of the two groups in Northern Ireland may be thought of as stable, integrated, co-ordinated and consensual,[5] while the society itself lacks any overarching system of values. Thus stability on the group level may be juxtaposed with change on the societal level. Integration within groups co-exists with conflict between groups. What serves functionally to unite the group and to focus their aspirations also provides the motive force to alter the social system. Consensus may exist on the group level, while all that holds society together is coercion and the use of force. Obviously the gap between statics and dynamics has to be bridged. For this purpose, one may use the concepts of 'strain', 'tension','contradiction' and 'differentiation'.[6] Yet, it is also desirable to take into account the manner in which

the groups themselves perceive the situation.

It is the contention of this thesis that the two predominant myths of Ulster significantly affect these perceptions. The myths will be seen to stabilize and integrate the groups while at the same time providing a motive force for action. The ensuing violence both reinforces and is reinforced by the myth. It, too, stabilizes and integrates on one level while leading to change and disintegration on another. This process will be placed within the framework of colonialism in order to explain certain structural contradictions within the Unionist system and to demonstrate how these contradictions have affected the actions of concrete social groups. The section on motivation will be an attempt to outline the actions of these groups and to show how they, in their turn, have shaped their social system. Thus, in the attempt to demonstrate that consensus and conflict co-exist in what otherwise might be regarded as a situation of complete disintegration, we are also posing a dialectic between structural forces and subjective social action. Within this framework, the nature of the relationship between myth and violence in the specific context of Northern Ireland will be examined. Particular attention will be given to the works of Georges Sorel, who linked the concepts of myth and violence in a significant manner.

Hence, this work will investigate the powerful historical myths which prevail in Ireland and demonstrate an intimate connection between those myths and the violence now evident, linking this mode of social thought[4] with this type of social action. In concentrating on this area, it should be made clear that other paths of inquiry are still open. One could, for example, examine the conflict in Ulster primarily in terms of the need to preserve and reinforce specific frames of identity.[7] One's approach is, necessarily, guided by the problems which one seeks to resolve. Thus, this thesis will show the significance of myth in the Ulster context without contending that this is the only approach, or, indeed, that this is the only variable.

There are certain problems of terminology inherent in any discussion of Ulster affairs. The terms, 'Northern Ireland', 'Ulster' and 'the Six Counties' all describe the same geographical area but each has a political bias in its usage. 'Northern Ireland' is the term usually employed by the British Government and the mass media of that country; it is not strictly correct as Donegal, the northern-most county, is in the Republic. 'Ulster' was one of the four ancient provinces of Ireland (the others being Munster, Leinster and Connaught) and is the usage most frequently employed by Ulster Loyalists. Yet, as Richard Rose points

out,

> The term (Ulster) connotes a distinctive identity,
> but it is also a contentious one, for the historic
> boundaries of Ulster until 1921 consisted of nine
> counties, three of which were heavily Catholic in
> population.8

The government and media of the Republic of Ireland have,
in the past, adhered to the term 'Six Counties', with the
implication of a lost six counties. This usage also re-
duces the status of these counties as a (semi) independent
unit. In order to avoid bias, therefore, an attempt has
been made to use these terms inter-changeably. A further
difficulty is presented by the fact that one cannot dis-
cuss the history or affairs of Ulster without presenting
their intimate relationship with the history of the rest
of Ireland. This is particularly relevant when analysing
the development of the myths, the latter having already
evolved long before the partition of the island. Thus, on
those matters in which Ulster has evolved on a similar pat-
tern with the rest of Ireland, no distinction need be made
between Irish affairs and Ulster affairs.

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in his _Democracy in Am-
erica_ that:

> If ever...free institutions...are destroyed, that
> event may be attributed to the unlimited authority of
> the majority, which may at some future time urge the
> minorities to physical force. Anarchy will then be
> the result, but it will have been brought about by
> despotism.9

Such has been the situation in Ulster to the eyes of the outside observer. Less obvious are the myths supporting that unlimited authority and that physical force. It will be seen that they are important ordering factors in the midst of apparent chaos.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1.   Most of the literature has tended to be of a journalistic nature, although there has also been some work by historians. The one sociological study of note is Rose, R., <u>Governing Without Consensus</u> (1971).

2.   These are the models outlined by Dahrendorf in <u>Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society</u> (1965). He stresses that they are models of theories.

3.   These elements will be discussed in greater detail later on. Primary are the contradictions within the Unionist system itself and the continued existence of nationalist groups bent on destroying that system.
      Coercion was practised very effectively through the system of discrimination, resulting in a large degree of emigration and a relative lack of power on the part of the Catholic population.

4.   Dahrendorf, R., <u>op cit</u>.

5.   This is most true relative to the society as a whole. There are, however, certain tendencies leading to the disintegration of this group cohesion, particularly evident among the Protestants.

6.   Terms frequently employed in functionalist theory.

7.   See, for example, the identity theory developed by Mol in his <u>Identity and the Sacred</u> (1976).
      The approach adopted is by no means dissimilar. The notion of 'identity' is also of importance in this work, but it does not serve as the main explanatory variable.

8.   Rose, R., <u>op cit</u>, p. 206.

9.   De Tocqueville, A., <u>Democracy in America</u>. Vol. 1.,(1945) p. 269.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS 'MYTH'?

Myth has provided a focus of discussion for anthropologists, philosophers, psychologists and political theorists for many years. Yet it remains a difficult concept to define. This is partially due to the proliferation of myths throughout different cultures, myths which have assumed many different forms, and partly a result of the differing focuses of the schools of thought concerned.[1] The field is too broad to attempt an extensive overall survey, although each school has its own important insights to offer. Our interest is in the sociological significance of myth and, specifically, that significance in one socio-historic context. We are, in fact, examining _two_ myths, both with a primarily historical nature but which contain important political and social elements. These myths are associated with the two competing groups in Northern Ireland[2], and are themselves in competition. Our research will have these myths as its focus and will attempt to delineate their position in the social structure. Before considering the contribution that other schools have to offer to our examination of myth, the starting point in our description will come from sociological theory. The myth, in our sense, is somewhat akin to what Durkheim called the

"conscience collective"; that is to say, it is in many
respects the social 'mind', comprising of many habitual,
reflexive modes of thought.[3]

The Anthropologists' View of Myth

A suitable point of departure in the analysis of
myth would be to consider the manner in which it has been
viewed in studies of primitive societies. As Cassirer points
out, many anthropologists have viewed myth as being a very
simple phenomenon, which is not the outcome of thought or
reflections. Contained in the myth they saw incongruities
and bizarre elements, which were explained in terms of man's
"primeval stupidity".[4] Others, such as Tylor and Frazer, took
a more charitable view, presupposing that myth was, first
and foremost, a mass of ideas, of representations, of
theoretical beliefs and judgements.[5] Malinowski analysed myth
largely in terms of its cultural function. He saw it as
reinforcing and justifying certain beliefs, rituals and
traditions. Moreover, it provides a practical guide for
social life. In its capacity as a warrant and a charter for
social activities, it is itself embodied in the social
organization of the primitive society. The myth, said
Malinowski, provides a perspective by which to organise one's
experience and it serves to form the necessary link between
the past and the destiny of a given society. It also functions
to cover apparent inconsistencies in the historical train of

events, by supplying a more satisfactory and coherent
interpretation of these events. Malinowski's main emphasis
was on myth as an ordering factor rather than an emotive one:
it functions to tone down and accommodate emotional elements
to bridge any 'emotional void' and to compensate for fear of
the unknown. It is important to recognize, however, that for
Malinowski, myth was not always operative in the same way or
with the same strength; it reaches its full force only in
unusual or dangerous situations. Thus, a mythology makes
itself apparent when special courage and endurance are
required. Here again, one finds the stress upon the reinforcing
and strengthening aspects.[6] To generalize then, one can
postulate that where reason fails there is an appeal to the
miraculous and mysterious.

To Levi-Strauss, as to Malinowski, myth was much more
than the result of man's "primeval stupidity"; it is not the
consequence of turning one's back on reality. Even though he
recognized that mythical thought is entangled in imagery,
Levi-Strauss still thought of myth as being scientific.
Mythical thought, he claimed, consistently orders and re-orders
events and experiences into various structural patterns. This
method of building structural sets "not directly with other
structured sets but by using the remains and debris of events",
he termed "bricolage". By means of bricolage, mythical thought
finds meaning for those events and experiences.[7] The signifi-

cance of myth for Levi-Strauss was, then, its ordering and interpretative activities in society.

Myth as seen by Philosophers and Psychologists

To the thinkers of the Enlightenment, myth was a confusion, a barbarism and a superstition. Philosophy was the true form of thought, myth the false. To the romantic philosophers, however, myth was regarded as the mainspring of human culture. It was thought to be inseparable from and integral to language, poetry and art; myth was held to be the consummation of philosophic thought.[8] Subsequent theorists have indicated the importance of local mythology in giving a fullness to social life.[9] An important breakthrough in thinking about myth came with Freud's theories.[10] Freud felt that the clue to the mythical world was to be found in the emotional life of man and myth was seen as being deeply rooted in human nature. He, like Levi-Strauss, thought that it was necessary to analyse the various objects of myth; to describe, list, order and classify. Myth was no longer a chaos of bizarre and inconceivable things; it became a system and could be reduced to a few very simple elements. By likening myth to dreams, Freud wished to draw a parallel between the psychic lives of savages and neurotics. Dreams express the anxieties, emotions and wishes of the individual's childhood; in a similar fashion, myths are held to be representative of the repressed life of the race.[11] Thus, in so far as myths

express a state of affairs which is not, men experience the fulfillment of their wishes through their belief in them. The imagined somehow becomes real and realizable. Jung, in line with Levi-Strauss, conceived of myths as being the "earliest form of science". For him, they formed the intermediate stage, which was both natural and indispensable, between unconscious and conscious cognition.[12] Both Freud and Jung, however, had as their ultimate point of reference the individual; it would be expedient at this point to consider the more social aspects of myth and, specifically, its relation to culture.

Myth and Culture

The historical myth is closely related to the culture in which it thrives. Now, there is much debate over the meaning of the concept of culture: is it "the totality of man's products" or is it to be primarily conceived in terms of symbol systems?[13] For our purposes, and with the specific context of Ulster in mind, culture may be taken to refer to tradition and its legacy to the present. A culture is, of course, also in the process of evolving; one must avoid a static conception. Yet, the awareness of the past of the society or social group, its life-style, its mores, its values, its language, its literature and its art is crucial for the perception of its own identity. The myth evolves out of the culture and comes to represent that culture in a symbolic fashion. While, to outside appearances, the myth may be seen

as a simple story or legend, further examination reveals that
the myth in many respects encompasses the culture and repre-
sents a distinct set of social values. We will see that once
the importance of culture is asserted, the myth gains in
strength.[I4] The reciprocal effect is also true. Thus, it is
clear that in order to understand a historical myth one must
be aware of the culture from which it springs.[I5] A concrete
examination of the myths and cultures of Ulster will be
presented later in the chapter, after a discussion on the
form of myth.

Myth and Truth

The 'truth' content of myth has proved to be a
difficult area for many theorists and has led to several
elitist conceptions of social action. Le Bon, for example,
contends that the 'truth' is for philosophers while the
people prefer dreams. Dreams can synthetize ideals and
provide motives for action, aided by 'affective and mystic
elements' which transform reasons into sentiments.[I6] The
influence of Le Bon's conception manifests itself in the
thought of Sorel. For Sorel, it is neither useful nor
necessary to discuss the truth of myth; what is crucial is
that it is something in which to believe. Myth is presented
as being superior to rational thought and judgement. It is
projective and impressionistic; its mystic elements allow
for regeneration and sentiments which can transcend the

conscious. Elitist implications are also present in Sorel's work. Horowitz defines three distinct levels in Sorel's theory. First, there is the myth believer whose actions are oriented toward wish fulfilment. Second, there is the myth maker with all the charismatic attributes to which his role gives rise. Lastly, and this is the point on which Sorel has been denounced as 'fascist', there is the rational elite, who by virtue of their position, have the power to transform the irrationalism contained in myth into a tool for social domination.[17] Elitism, in fact, has always been a dominant principle in the group myths of Ulster. The notion is that even though the mass of the people would supinely accept the domination of the oppressor, the nation was to survive through the chosen few who retained faith and hope.[18]

In so far as myths may not exactly correlate with historical facts[19], and are not based on scientific reasoning[20], then their truth content might be deemed as low and they may be conceived as being nonrational forms of thought.[21] Yet, as Pareto demonstrates, non-logical action and thought is predominant in social life. Action determined purely by 'process of reason', thought Pareto, was of a decidedly rare and special kind. Moreover, Pareto emphasized that the truth of a theory or the logicality of an action should not be confused with their social utility. For example, quite unscientific forms of thought, such as myths, and entirely non-logical action,

such as ritual, often had functions of great importance,
particularly in maintaining the solidarity and morale of
groups or indeed the cohesion of whole societies.[22]

Myths: a Classification

A useful classification of myths is supplied by Tudor.
He defines two separate types; foundation myths and eschato-
logical myths. Foundation myths explain the present in terms
of the past. They tend to justify the status quo and be
conservative in their implications. The eschatological myths,
on the other hand, are concerned with the ultimate, the
'cataclysmic act of destruction'. Structures built out of
chaos are envisioned as returning to that state.[23] Hence,
Malinowski's myth may be seen as belonging in the first
category while Sorel's myth can be placed in the second. This
distinction, however, appears overly rigid. One can envisage
myths which contain elements of both types; for example,
those which accentuate the past in an idealised manner and
which are, nevertheless, oriented towards the future. "No man"
said Hobbes, "can have in his mind a conception of the future,
for the future is not yet. But of our conceptions of the past,
we make a future".[24] The foundation and the eschatos are then
not mutually exclusive. The foundation may even supply the
ideal for the 'eschatos', the end of the world as it is known.
These myths combining the different elements described are
equivalent to the myths described by Marcus, which contain a

"combination of ideological conservatism and an eschatological 'expectation' of history"[25]. Further, any given myth can, like the foundation myth, stabilize and integrate certain beliefs while at the same time, like the eschatological myth, provide the impetus for action to change the existing social system. Both types present a fixed point of reference. Tudor's distinction, however, has the virtue of clarity and, if thought of as a Weberian 'ideal-type' device, would provide an appropriate measure of comparison. In a similar vein to Tudor, Camus describes two predominant world views, that of the stable, 'sacred' world and that of the world of rebellion.[26] These world views would appear to correspond to the two group myths found in Ulster. The Orange legends and myth serve to make sacred the existing power structure: they tend to rigidify social relations and expound the idea that any change will be necessarily detrimental. The nationalist myth, as propounded by such groups as the I.R.A., on the other hand, presents a completely antithetical perspective to that of the current power structure; the latter has to be overthrown in order to reach the kind of society envisioned by this myth.[27]

Myth and Ideology

Returning now to Sorel, the myth of the general strike is eschatological in so far as it pictures a cataclysmic event.[28] It is oriented towards the future. Yet, the myth can only be judged as a means of acting on the present: the vision

of the future provided by myth gives a fixed point of refer-
ence by which to interpret the present. The myth is viewed by
Sorel as being necessary to unite thought and action and it
achieves this, essentially, by transforming thought into
belief. A rational ideology, says Sorel, cannot do this.
Ideology appears in his thought in the pejorative sense as
false consciousness.[29] It is also seen as being passive and
defensive and as lending itself to rational criticism. The
myth, however, is seen as being indestructible; it is vague,
nonrational, not possessed of fixed qualities and, therefore,
adaptable to changing historical conditions. Thus, Sorel
views ideology as a rationalized myth which has been laid
open for discussion and is, therefore, refutable. The
distinction between myth and ideology would appear to rest
on the fact that an ideology will often claim as its basis
a rational and scientific interpretation of history.[30] While
both myth and ideology are abstractions in that they provide
ultimate points of reference, an ideology is more likely to
lend itself to the interpretation of day-to-day events and
the more mundane practicalities of life; it is thus, closely
related to the workings of the economy and the polity. The
myth, by its vagueness in this respect, remains on its level
of abstraction, claiming no rational or scientific basis but
resting on 'sentiments'.[31] A myth, however, will often contain
ideological elements and an ideology, mythical elements. The

basic distinction remains, however, and will be illustrated in the chapter on motivation.

Myth and Utopia

A myth, moreover, is not a utopia according to Sorél. A utopia is an intellectual product, a blueprint for the future. Myths, meanwhile, see the future not in terms of a rationalized future order, but as a single catastrophic event. They are "not descriptions of things, but expressions of a determination to act".[32] Further, they make no predictions or plans about the state of things after the event: this to Sorel, as well as to Marx, is futile, utopian thinking, as the future cannot be laid down in this manner. The purpose of myth is to evoke existing inclinations and instincts, the effect is to give an air of reality to these hopes in order to bring about their realization. Sorel likens his myth of the general strike to Marx's expectation of a proletarian revolution and to the millennialist doctrines of the early Christian Church. As Horowitz puts it:

> Sorel's defence of history as myth is not an attempt to deny the operations of objective laws in human society. Rather, it represents a denial that such laws can be known with respect to future events.[33]

If, however, we compare Sorel's myth with the 'utopia' defined by Karl Mannheim we find that the two notions are remarkably similar. This is particularly evident in Mannheim's description of the "Orgiastic Chiliasm of the Anabaptists",

in which he claims that it was not ideas that drove these
men to revolutionary deeds but "deeper-lying vital and
elemental levels of the psyche"[34]. For Mannheim, both ideologies
and utopias are "unrealistic mentalities", in so far as they
are incongruous with the state of reality within which they
occur.[35] While ideologies have conservative effects and tend
to preserve the status quo, utopias are revolutionary in
implication. The two notions then, would appear to correspond
to Tudor's foundation and eschatological myths. Utopias are
held to be potentially realizable and the importance of wish-
projection in utopian thinking is brought out. The essential
difference between Sorel's myth and Mannheim's utopia appears
to lie in the fact that the latter is not merely a conglomer-
ation of dreams and desires, but requires a definite relevance
to reality. Mannheim's emphasis is on appropriate conditions,
rather than the social utility of a utopia. Thus,

> social classes become effective in transforming
> historical reality only when their aspirations are
> embodied in utopias appropriate to the changing situation.[36]

For Sorel, meanwhile, the visions impelled by myth are more
vivid than immediate reality and the details of myth cannot
be discussed as historically verifiable facts. Myth cannot be
decomposed into stages or parts; it evolves as an indissoluble
entity. The myth comprises of a group of images which can be
grasped by intuition alone. Logicality and rationality are
set aside in favour of impulses. "It is the myth in its

entirety which is alone important".[37]

Sacred Elements of Myth

Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane posits that the world is separated into two entirely separate classes of objects and symbols, the 'sacred' and the 'profane'. The sacred acquires its special character in being surrounded by "ritual prescriptions and prohibitions" which enforce this separation from the profane.[38] Any given thing may become sacred by virtue of the powers attributed to it, as Durkheim illustrates.[39] Turning now to mythical thought, Cassirer demonstrates that the sacred and the profane are in fundamental opposition.[40] The sanctified elements contained in myth form a common and exclusive totality and become removed and shielded from profane, empirical existence. Yet, the profane can be transformed into the sacred by being understood within the mythical perspective.[41] Further, following Durkheim's insight that the representation of the totem can be more sacred than the totem itself[42], it may be said that the representation of the thing evokes the same emotions as the thing itself. In this subjective respect, the representation is identical with the thing. Cassirer takes this one step further to claim that in mythical thought nothing is represented by something else: the image _is_ the thing.[43] On a similar vein, there is also a tendency in myth to identify the part with the whole: the part can have the

same sacred value as the whole and can evoke the same
sentiments. The individual and the species may also be
equated; the individual, in this case, is held to be not only
representative of but also embodying the species.[44] The images
generated by myth, however, are not thought to be images by
those who believe; they are not symbols but reality. Thus, as
Cassirer indicates, the ultimate concern should not be with
the truth or falsity of the content of myth, but with the
intensity with which it is believed.

The Significance of Myth

If we accept Sorel's idea that history has a fundamental
mystery about it and does not follow predetermined paths, then
myth may well be considered as an important historical force.[45]
Cassirer, following Malinowski, holds that the mythical
organisation is always superseded by a rational one. But in
times of great stress, mythical conceptions surpass rational
forces and compensate for the latter's inability to deal with
the stressful situation.[46] Mythical elements never vanish,
they are merely kept in check. Thus, myth has an enduring
quality; but how can it be a historical force? Cassirer
supplies the answer. It is crucial that we recognise that
although myth can give rise to emotion, it is not emotion. It
is the expression of emotion. Myth is the emotion turned into
an image. It gives definite shape to undefined but emotional
feelings: what was previously a passive and contemplative

state is transformed through myth into an active process.[47]
An Irish writer of nationalist persuasion illustrates this
phenomenon:

> He who acquired that vision is impervious to argument
> - it is not that he despises argument; on the contrary,
> he always uses it to its full strength. But he has had
> awakened within him something which the mere logician
> can never deduce, and that mysterious something is the
> explanation of his transformed life. He was a doubter,
> a falterer, a failure: he has become a believer, a fighter,
> a conqueror.[48]

Hence, the symbolism contained in myth leads to an objectific-
ation of feelings and, as Sorel would maintain, culminates in
the union of thought and action. Cassirer believes that the
essential value of myth lies in its symbolic form and therefore
would take issue with Freud and Levi-Strauss. It is of no
avail to analyse the objects to which mythical thought is
applied, as symbolic forms may be applied to any object
whatsoever.[49] Accepting this view is not to say, however,
that mythical symbolism is not context bound. As Tudor tells
us, "No myth has a true meaning or meaning in itself apart
from the meaning it has for those who tell it."[50].

For Sorel, the crucial consideration is the collective
belief to which myth gives rise and the manner in which it
organizes mens' perceptions. He accentuates the need for this
collective belief so that the proletariat may act as a
collective unit. The myth, for him, supplies the one unifying
element for group coherence and group belief. Fanon also noted

this phenomenon whereby myth unifies and integrates:

> The atmosphere of myth and magic frightens me and so takes on an undoubted reality. By terrifying me, it integrates me in the traditions and the history of my district or of my tribe, and at the same time it reassures me, it gives me a status, as it were an identification paper.51

Thus, it is clear that belief in the myth can lead to both integration and disruption if viewed from different levels of analysis. Malinowski's observations that myth reinforces, interprets and organizes experience are not at all opposed to Sorel's view. The difference is one of emphasis; Sorel discusses myth and its role in _group_ integration with respect to disruption on the _societal_ level, whereas Malinowski's main concern is with stability on this latter level.

<u>Myth and Rite</u>

As we have seen, myth is primarily related to belief rather than cognition; "Fear not; only believe"[52]. The rituals associated with myth reinforce belief and solidarity. Indeed, some ethologists and anthropologists would claim that rite is more important than myth, for it is in the rites and rituals that the emotional element really comes into play. Myth is regarded to be the epic element, while rite is the dramatic. It is therefore deemed necessary to study the latter in order to understand the former.[53] This question of precedence is, however, ultimately confusing. As Cassirer points out, myth and rite "do not exist separately; they are correlative and interdependent; they support and explain each other"[54]. Both

myth and rite lead to a unification of sentiments, although as Durkheim points out, the rite also provides for the regular moral reconsolidation of the group and the various sentiments become raised to fever-point in the collective excitation produced. The rite is instrumental in providing the emotional atmosphere which surrounds and envelops the myth.[55] It intensifies the effects of myth by means of this collective excitation and by reiterating a system of meaning.[56] Our focus is primarily on myth rather than rite and ritual because the 'narrow' definition of rite as enacting a belief is more suitable to our problem than the 'wide' definition accorded by ethologists which would lead to rite as one's fundamental consideration.[57]

The 'Spiritual' Appeal of Myth

It is interesting to note Sorel's interest in the early Christian Church. As Horowitz indicates, the myth of Catholicism and the idea of eternal salvation becomes transformed for Sorel into the myth of socialism: "the idea of salvation on the temporal plane"[58]. In his first full length work, "Contribution to the Layman's Study of the Bible", Sorel states that:

> The Bible is the sole book which could serve to instruct the people, to initiate them into the heroic life, to combat the pernicious tendencies of utilitarianism, to arrest the propagation of the revolutionary idea.[59]

Sorel's myth, however, is man-made rather than divine. The

myth of the general strike is seen by Sorel as a modern version of the Homeric myths, in so far as the war envisioned must be carried out without feelings of hatred and without a spirit of revenge.[60] He places great emphasis on what he sees as the noble ideal of heroism: virtue is associated with action and the struggle itself constitutes the life force. This suggests that Sorel places significance upon the spiritual quality of the myth and this notion is echoed in Irish nationalist writings:

> It is a spiritual appeal, then, that primarily moves us. We are urged to action by a beautiful ideal. The motive force must be likewise true and beautiful. It is love of country that inspires us...6I

Referring back to Malinowski's point about historical inconsistencies, we can see the utility of the spiritual appeal in so far as physical defeats can be compensated for by the myth of spiritual superiority. The myth incorporates the necessary sublimation to live with the fact of physical defeat.

Sorel also stresses the idea of spiritual purity. In this respect, reason and science are viewed as being in some sense debasing. They provide the substance of decadent bourgeois ideologies and the proletarian myth must be kept free of such influences. The myth, though, can be considered as being akin to science in that men believe absolutely in its efficacy and, as a result, will follow certain fitting procedures.[62] The idea of non-contamination by a decadent class or culture forms a point of agreement between Sorel and

Rousseau. The latter advocates in "The Government of Poland"
that Poland should resist the inculcation of foreign ideas
and concentrate instead upon drawing out her own national
virtues.[63] Similarly, Sorel holds that:

> We know the war that the proletariat should conduct
> against its masters is suited to developing in it noble
> sentiments that are today completely lacking in the
> bourgeoisie....All our efforts should tend to prevent
> the bourgeois ideas from coming to poison the rising
> class.[64]

Thus, in a society such as Ulster where there are two contending
group myths, we can see that these myths are kept exclusive
from and unmodified by each other with the use of various
social devices.[65] This leads to a situation where belief in
one myth renders the other absurd.

Sorel criticizes Marx for not placing sufficient
emphasis on the subjective aspects and motivating forces of
social action. That the myth may be in some respects necessary
for revolutionary action has been recognized by some later
Marxist writers. For example, Lefebvre holds that:

> closer study seems to indicate that both mysticism
> and heresies have stimulated the masses far more effect-
> ively and more profoundly than has materialism.[66]

The need for such a stimulus has also been described by James
Connolly, perhaps Ireland's only 'Marxist' revolutionary, who
believed that:

> No revolutionary movement is complete without its
> poetic expression. If such a movement has caught hold
> of the imagination of the masses, they will seek a vent
> in song for the aspirations, the fears and hopes, the
> loves and hatreds engendered by the struggle. Until the

> movement is marked by the joyous, defiant, singing of
> revolutionary songs, it lacks one of the most distinct
> marks of a popular revolutionary movement; it is a dogma
> of a few and not the faith of a multitude.67

Here, myth is seen as being both poetry and drama, the
expression of man's deepest longings and spiritual needs.
Related to this is Sorel's notion of regeneration through the
myth of the general strike. The idea of rebirth also manifests
itself in the thought of Patrick Pearse, one of the leaders
of the 1916 uprising in Dublin. To him, the sufferings of
Christ and the Irish people were one: the sacrifice of Irish
patriots was analogous to the sacrifice of Christ and the
resurgence of the national spirit that such a sacrifice could
set in motion was analogous to the resurrection of Christ.[68]
The Irish nationalist myth, to the same extent as the other
myths described comprises:

> the true Irish mysticism, the mysticism which recog-
> nizes no real dividing line between the seen and the
> unseen, and to which the imagined experience is often
> more vivid than the real experience.69

The Myths of Ulster

Thus far we have examined the position of myth in
social theory, the relationship of myth to other forms of
thought such as ideology, the content, significance and
functions of myth in social life. It would be expedient at
this point to describe the two group myths of Ulster, although
their historical development will be outlined in a later
chapter.[70] The 'nationalist' myth comprises of a historical

interpretation of the struggle against the British for Irish
national independence. Its ultimate point of reference is an
idealized conception of ancient Gaelic society and culture
which will be realized once more when this independence is
gained. In Ulster, this myth has been modified and accentuated
by the notion of another struggle against the Protestant
ascendancy. Since the partition of Ireland in 1921, the
nationalist myth has expressed itself in terms of the aspiration
for a united Ireland, free of British control, in which both
Catholics and Protestants would live in harmony.[71] The 'Orange'
myth meanwhile refers ultimately to the victory of William of
Orange against the 'papist' King James at the Battle of the
Boyne in 1690. Related to this event is the notion of the
freedom of and for the Protestant religion and way of life,
constantly endangered by the authoritarianism of the Catholic
Church. The 'Orange' myth has, then, supported the Protestant
ascendancy in Ulster and the British connection has been seen
as essential to safeguard this freedom. The two myths do not
exist independently of each other; they both react to and
reinforce perceptions presented by the other. They provide
entirely different interpretations of the same events and, in
a sense, thrive on their mutual conflict.[72] Ulster, therefore,
has never had one common system of values by which to integrate
that society.

These myths have also had an appeal beyond simple

class interests. Over fifty years ago, James Connolly wrote:

> According to all Socialist theories North-East Ulster, being the most developed industrially, ought to be the quarter in which class lines of cleavage, politically and industrially, should be the most pronounced and class rebellion the most common.
> As a cold matter of fact, it is the happy hunting ground of the slave-driver and the home of the least rebellious slaves in the industrial world.[73]

The reason for this, we would suggest, is that the myths and the structures they reinforce[74] have served to block the development of class interests by accentuating the division of Ulster society into Catholics and Protestants, thereby providing an alternative form of social stratification. The relationship of the myths with the industrialization process in Ulster requires a historical understanding and will be examined in a later chapter.[75] At this point, it is more suitable to relate the myths to the cultures which they have come to represent.

As Donal McCartney indicates, the manner in which men look back upon their past can determine action in the present. When a significant number in a generation, on looking back, determine to restore what they think they have seen in a more glorious past, the result is what historians call a revival movement.[76] In Ireland, this nationalist revivalism can be seen clearly at work in various cultural movements dating back to the end of the nineteenth century. Running right through these movements, embracing the various cults and ideas about Gaelic society, was the strong and widespread conviction that

ancient Ireland was not only a political nation, but a
cultural one, with one common language, literature and legal
system. Gaelic revivalism gave birth to a distinctive ideal
which expressed itself in the personification of Ireland.
In the literature of the time we find the following example.
"Cathleen ni Houlihan", by W. B. Yeats, is a traditional,
allegorical personification of Ireland, who appears in the
guise of an old woman to summon to rebellion a young man who
is about to be married. She insists on the need to sacrifice
all for Ireland and those who die in this cause "shall be
remembered for ever". At the end, she is transformed into her
true likeness:

> ' - Did you see an old woman going down the path?'
> ' - I saw no old woman but a young girl and she had the
> walk of a queen.'77

This type of thinking is not unusual; in Christopher Hill's
words, "Theories of lost rights, of a primitive happy state,
have existed in nearly all communities"[78]. A similar nationalist
myth is exemplified in the theory of the Norman Yoke; the
Anglo-Saxon community in England before 1066 is believed to
have lived as free and equal citizens, but they were deprived
of their liberty by the Norman Conquest. To regain this once
ideal state, the foreigner and all his works must be purged
from the land. Common to these myths, therefore, is the
attempt to establish a continuity with the past which has been
interpreted in romanticized terms: "No people hate as we do

in whom the past is always alive."[79] It is interesting to
note that both myths in Ulster uphold the ideals of "freedom"
and "liberty", albeit their own distinct versions of the
terms. Hence, equivalent sentiments are expressed in the
Orange myth:

> When we see the men of Ulster filled with that noble
> spirit of self-sacrifice in behalf of liberty which fired
> their ancestors....we cannot hold aloof....It means that
> we are ready to make any sacrifice to avert the greatest
> of calamities. (The Protestant Bishop of Down and Connor,
> 1912)[80]

The same language is used whether the freedom is conceived as
being from the British or from the Catholic Church and the
superstitions of Popery.

A sense of destiny and fatalism seems to be a component
element of almost all mythologies.[81] As was indicated by
Malinowski, the myth supplies a historical perspective, a
coherent view of the past, present and future of the society.
Hence, according to Pearse,

> The Gael is not like other men; the spade, and the
> loom, and the sword are not for him. But a destiny more
> glorious than that of Rome, more glorious than that of
> Britain awaits him: to become the saviour of idealism in
> modern intellectual and social life, the regenerator and
> rejuvenator of the literature of the world, the
> instructor of the nation, the preacher of the gospel of
> nature-worship, hero-worship, God-worship...[82]

It is important to recognise that it is not necessarily myths
which give rise to deeds of heroism; the reverse is true, also.
We can agree with Marcus when he maintains that the historical
event may be transformed into a historical ideal and the ideal

identified with the event.[83] Events and myths, then, may be seen as occurring cyclically.

In conclusion, then, we have examined a form of social thought which both stabilizes on one level and provides the motivation for change on another. The relevance of myth in Ulster has been portrayed. Yet myth both affects and is affected by those forms of social action to which it is related. That form of social action in Ulster is violence.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1.   The concept of 'myth' has been approached from many different angles, according to the problem which these theorists seek to resolve. For example, the psychologists will view myth primarily in relation to the individual, whereas the anthropologists will outline its significance in relation to the culture in which it is found.

2.   The two competing groups are, in very simple terms, the Catholics and the Protestants. It will be seen, however, that the relationship is somewhat more complex than this.

3. See, Giddens, A., _Capitalism and Modern Social Theory_, (1974) p. 102.

4. Cassirer, E., _The Myth of the State_, (1973) p. 4.

5. _Ibid_, pp. 8-9.

6. Malinowski, B., _Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays_, (1954).

7. Levi-Strauss, C., _The Savage Mind_, (1974).

8. Cassirer, E., _op cit_, pp. 5-6.

9. _Ibid._

10. Cassirer, E., _op cit_, pp. 29-36.

11. _Ibid._

12. Jung, C.G., _Memories, Dreams, Reflections_, (1965) p. 311.

13.   For the former conception see Berger, P.L., _The Sacred Canopy_, (1969) p. 6. The latter conception is fundamental to the theory of Talcott Parsons.

14.   This was evident in Ireland, with the formation of various 'cultural revival' movements at the beginning of the twentieth century.

15.   This is not to say that myth cannot be conceived in a universal, abstract sense. It is simply to claim that in order to understand the effects and significance of myth in a particular context one must be aware of those events which the myth portrays.

16. Le Bon, G., *The Psychology of Revolution*, (1913) p.20.

17. Horowitz, I.L., *Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason*, (1961) pp.20-21.

18. MacEoin, G., *Northern Ireland: Captive of History*, (1974) p.162.

19.   The events which the 'Orange' myth in Ulster portrays, for example, do not exactly accord with more objective historical accounts.

20.   This, of course, depends on one's definition of 'science'. Levi-Strauss, as we have seen, would claim that myths are 'scientific'.

21.   They are 'non-rational' in the Weberian sense, representing man's 'affective' life. In any respect, the 'truth' context of myth is not the crucial consideration.

22. See, Goldthorpe, J.H., "Vilfredo Pareto" in Raison, T., (Ed.) *The Founding Fathers of Social Science*, (1969) pp.110-18.

23. Tudor, H., *Political Myth*, (1972) pp.91-92.

24. As quoted in Hill, C., *Puritanism and Revolution*, (1965) p.65.

25. Marcus, J.T., "The World Impact of the West: The Mystique and the Sense of Participation in History", in Murray, H.A., *Myth and Myth-Making*, (1960) p.230.

26. Camus, A., *The Rebel*, (1956) p.21.

27.   This is a rather simplified description of the two myths, but will suffice for present purposes. A more detailed account will be given later in this work.

28. Sorel, G., *Reflections on Violence*, (1941).

29. See the Foreward by Nisbet, R.A., in Sorel, G., *The Illusions of Progress*, (1969) pp.xxxvi-viii.

30. An example of this type of ideology is Marxism.

31. In the sense that Pareto uses the term.

32. Quoted in Tudor, H., _op cit_, p.15.

33. Horowitz, I.L., _op cit_, p.114.

34. Mannheim, K., _Ideology and Utopia_, (1972) p.192.

35. _Ibid_, pp.173-236.

36. _Ibid_.

37. Sorel, G., _Reflections on Violence_, _op cit_, pp.126-7.

38. See Giddens, A., _op cit_, p.107.

39. Durkheim, E., _The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life_, (1965).

40. Cassirer, E., _op cit_, Part I.

41. _Ibid_.

42. Durkheim, E., _op cit_, Chapter 7.

43. Cassirer, E., _op cit_, Chapter 4.

44. _Ibid_, Part I.

45. For Sorel, "It was not science that changes the world, but myth."
See McInnes, N., "Georges Sorel" in Raison, T., (Ed.) _op cit_, pp.100-09.

46. This, presumably, is a result of the emotional commitment to the myth.

47. Cassirer, E., _op cit_, p.43.

48. MacSwiney, T., _Principles of Freedom_, (1921) p.73.

49. Cassirer, E., _op cit_, p.34.

50. Tudor, H., _op cit_, p.37.

51. Fanon, F., _The Wretched of the Earth_, (1963).

52. MacSwiney, T., op cit, p.127.

53. As cited by Cassirer, E., op cit, pp.24-8.

54. Cassirer, E., op cit, p.28.

55. See Cassirer, E., op cit, p.283.

56. See Mol, H., Identity and the Sacred, (1976) p.233.

57. Ibid, p.244.

58. Horowitz, I.L., op cit, p.20.

59. Meisel, J.H., The Genesis of Georges Sorel, (1951) p.48.

60. See the Chapter, "Violence, Its Nature, Causes and Con-
    sequences", Ibid.

61. MacSwiney, T., op cit, pp.13-4.

62. Stanley, J.J., in the Introduction to Sorel, G., The Il-
    lusions of Progress, (1969) p.xxxviii.

63. Rousseau, J.J., The Government of Poland, (1972). See,
    Chapter XII, pp.79-88.

64. Sorel, G., The Illusions of Progress, op cit, p.157.

65.   This is maintained essentially by the existence
    of Separate Schools and other social institutions which
    prevent the spread of ideas and the sharing of a common
    world-view.

66. As quoted in Houtart, F., and Rousseau, A., The Church
    and Revolution, (1971) p.23.

67. Connolly, J., as reprinted in Beresford Ellis, P.,
    James Connolly: Selected Writings, (1973) p.48.

68. See O'Brien, C.C., States of Ireland, (1974). See the
    Chapter "Violence: Its Nature, Causes and Consequences".

69. Pearse, P., The Complete Works of P.H. Pearse, (1924)
    p.158.

70.   This development will be discussed in the Chap-
    ter "Ulster in the Colonial Context".

71.   The Nationalist myth, when compared to the Or-
    ange myth, places less stress on religious elements.

72.   See the Chapter "Motivation: The Role of Religion and Myth".

73. Beresford-Ellis, P., (Ed.), <u>op cit</u>, p.263.

74.   In particular, the Orange Order.

75.   See the Chapter "Ulster in the Colonial Context."

76. McCartney, D., "Gaelic Ideological Origins of 1916" in Edwards,).D., and Pyle, F., <u>1916: The Easter Rising</u>, (1968) pp.41-9.

77. As cited in O'Brien, C.C., <u>op cit</u>, p.69.

78. Hill, C., <u>Puritanism and Revolution</u>, <u>op cit</u>, p.50.

79. MacEoin, G., <u>op cit</u>, p.145.

80. Anonymous, <u>The Complete Grammar of Anarchy</u>, (1918) pp.15-16.

81. See Cassirer, E., <u>op cit</u>, p.290.

82. Pearse, P., <u>op cit</u>, p.221.

83. Marcus, J.T., <u>op cit</u>, p.222.

CHAPTER III

VIOLENCE; ITS NATURE, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

In order to discuss the concept of violence and its
effect on social thought and social life, it is first necessary
to define one's terms and distinguish the concept of 'violence'
from other related concepts such as 'force'. The usual
distinction drawn by social scientists is that force, as
opposed to violence, is to be understood as influence or
coercion by the state; that is, that force is the legitimate
use of power. Violence, on the other hand, is seen as being
essentially illegitimate, often the tool of subversive factions
within a society.[1] The problem with this definition, as
Macfarlane points out, is that it hinges upon the notions of
'authority' and 'legitimacy' which have been interpreted in
absolute terms. The distinction, he suggests, should be
determined not by reference to any absolute standards but
rather with respect to the ascription of legitimacy to a given
action by the various groups or individuals concerned.[2] Thus,
an act deemed legitimate by one group may well be considered
illegitimate by another. Absolute standards have, in fact,
never existed as 'legitimacy' is not constant in time or
space. This, of course, ultimately leads one into the problem
of relativism, where one can only judge the nature of social
action if one is aware of the motives of the parties concerned.

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The attempt, then, to establish a working definition would be facilitated by a consideration of other phenomena such as 'power'.

Violence and Power

Violence may be contrasted with power, leaving the idea of force aside to describe, in general terms, a form of energy or social interaction.[3] Thus, we may begin with the notion as elaborated by C. Wright Mills that violence is "the most flagrant manifestation of power"[4]. This implies a continuum, in terms of physical force, where influence and authority would be placed at one end of the scale and violence at the other. Hannah Arendt takes a different view. Following from Engels, she holds that one of the essential characteristics of violence is that it is always in need of implements whereas power can rely on numbers:

> The extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All. And this latter is never possible without instruments.[5]

The combination of violence and power, however, is common; to use violence successfully the support of numbers is needed. In Mao's terms, water is needed in which to support the fish.[6] The crucial consideration, according to Arendt, when examining the nature of social movements, is the extent of power behind the violence, not the violence behind the power. Violence can destroy power but it can never create it. Every decrease in power leaves the way open for violence, but violence in its pure form is the expression of powerlessness, of impotence.[7]

Arendt's work is a decided advance on C. Wright Mills' notion, in its systematic portrayal of the complex relationship between violence and power. Her description of violence is primarily an instrumental one; violence is seen as being the 'last resort' when all other avenues of influence are closed. Indeed, violence for Arendt is distinguished by its instrumental character; it is a means towards an end, whereas power is "an end in itself"[8]. Working on this assumption, she claims that violence needs guidance and justification for the ends it pursues and hence,

> what needs justification by something else cannot be the essence of anything.[9]

Further to this, she holds that violence can be justifiable, but it will never be legitimate.[10] This comes dangerously close to the problem already described: by what criteria does one decide on the legitimacy or otherwise of a certain form of social action? The dilemma springs in part from the moral presumptions on which Arendt's argument is based: she opposes the use of violence and her intention is to spell out the dangers involved in its exercise. This may be held to be very commendable, but it does not get us very far in our attempt to understand violence per se.

Expressive Theories of Violence

To take issue with Arendt, it can be claimed that violence is not necessarily instrumental; there is also a form of violence, as discussed by Sorel, Fanon and Sartre,

which is best regarded as being 'expressive' in character.[11] The debate between the two positions, violence being primarily instrumental or violence being expressive, ultimately leads to the question as to whether violence is instinctive or whether it is the product of specific social and historical conditions.[12] The inquiry essentially stems from the debate on the nature of man: is he basically aggressive or are peace and cooperation his defining characteristics? Extending this in social terms, we have the two positions described by Markovic:

> If freedom necessarily gives rise to wolfish fighting and eruptions of violence, then any weakening of the existing social order involves great risks. But if, on the other hand, violence and alienation are precisely the consequence of that order, then practical commitment to break that order goes together with an enormous self-confidence and with an almost unlimited faith in the future.[13]

As Markovic points out, these are extreme views and are both guilty of assuming a fixed and reified human nature. They do exemplify, however, two main streams of thought and their relevance for our problem will be elaborated later.

The notion that man is basically aggressive is sometimes based on studies of animal behaviour and often runs perilously close to being a reduction of man's characteristics to those of animals. Lorenz, for example, although admitting that animals have no culture and are, in this respect, different from man, draws a very close comparison between the 'militant enthusiasm' of men and the 'triumph ceremony' of geese.[14] The point about this analogy is not only that it

entirely neglects social and historical conditions[15], but

that man, as distinct from animals, kills out of allegiance

to symbols. Human aggression, therefore, is on a very

different level to that of animal aggression.[16] Now, it may

well be that aggression is an element of man's nature, but

more important to recognize are the factors which cultivate

and channel this aggression into social and political violence.

Violence appears as an important consideration in

the works of both Machiavelli and Nietzsche. For Machiavelli,

violence was an organic part of human life; it was essential

to recognise this fact as only then could violence be

controlled. For him,

> what gave the irrational forces of violence and
> aggression power over (mens') lives was mens' attempts
> to repress them, to deny that these irrational forces
> were part and parcel of human nature.[17]

In this respect, Seigel points out, Machiavelli's thought

resembles that of Freud with all his interest in the forces

of the irrational and their control. In Nietzsche's work,

violence is connected with acts of transcending and innovating;

it is "immanent in creative freedom"[18]. At the same time,

violence is always opposed to something and that something

is order:

> Without order as a background, violence loses its
> meaning, sense, or direction, and can no longer be
> judged properly as violence.[19]

In other words, the nature and the forms of violence will be

shaped by the context in which violence appears. One cannot

understand acts of violence unless one understands the 'order'

to which it is opposed. Of course, violence will often have as its aim the creation of a new order and this professed aim must also be taken into account.

For Sorel, violence was only that energy practised by the proletarian movement against the bourgeois state. The consequence of force was obedience, while violence was to result in disruption. Whatever aspect force takes on, whether it be of economic oppression, of conquest or of labour legislation, it is always for Sorel a middle-class force. In fact, he criticizes Marx for not recognizing the distinction between middle-class force and proletarian violence.[20] This ascription of 'force' to the bourgeois state and 'violence' to the proletariat differs little from the notion already criticized. By restricting the field of vision to either the proletariat or to those groups practising 'illegitimate' forms of social action any analysis of the nature of violence is severely hindered. The question of violence encompasses the main point of departure of Sorel from Marx. Sorel's emphasis on the nobility and masculinity of proletarian violence is quite devoid of the notion of system contradictions which is so important in Marx's thought.[21] There is a very profound difference between that conception which sees violence as a central agency in human affairs and that which sees it as being incidental and which likens violence to "the labor pangs that precede, but of course do not cause, the event of organic birth"[22].

Psychological and Structural Violence

It is important to recognize that not all violence is physical; the violations perpetrated may be psychological. This does not have to assume the extreme form of brain-washing, but it can have more subtle variations whereby the dignity of the individual, the class or the race are destroyed for the sake of manipulation. This is the type of violence which Fanon describes as being practised by the colonial regime upon the natives:

> ..we will have to bind up for years to come the many, sometimes ineffaceable, wounds that the colonialist onslaught has inflicted on our people.23

This is the violence inherent in cultural domination and has formed a significant dimension in Irish affairs, as will be demonstrated at a later point.[24] Often related to this is a phenomenon described by Markovic as "structural violence". This does not have the dramatic character of physical violence but can affect masses of people,

> indirectly, slowly, invisibly through the system and and its legal institutions. The number of people who die from starvation, pollution, carelessness, etc., is certainly no less than the number of those who are killed by bullets.25

This latter area is a difficult one to analyse satisfactorily and takes us away from our main concern, but it is significant in so far as psychological and structural violence may often serve as the backcloth for the physical violence exercised by those subject to them. Thus, it can be seen that violence can also have a reactive character.

Violence: A Definition

What then is the most useful, all-encompassing yet accurate conception of violence? At the simplest level, one has Macfarlane's assertion that "violence occurs when one individual seeks to impose his will upon another"[26]. This, however is clearly inadequate; the same statement could be made of power. More precisely, violence may be thought of as the 'striking of a blow', with the intent to damage, destroy and, in expressive terms, to create. This definition is relevant on the social as well as the personal level. Violence may be used by a social group to destroy what they perceive to be an undesirable social system, while at the same time seeking to establish a better social order. On the personal level, the individual may seek to establish his dignity by destroying what he sees as being the negation of his identity, through an act of violence.[27] Leaving aside problems of legitimacy, force may be seen as an integral part of violence and violence as an active force. Violence is the expression of aggression: the latter need not take on a violent form, although it is always present in violent action.[28] With respect to 'power', it may be claimed that this notion only determines the type and degree of success of violent action. Thus, although the practical results of violence are dependent upon the power behind that violence, violence itself can be conceived of as independent of power. Finally, violence may manifest itself both physically and psychologically; the use

of implements then is not, contrary to Arendt, of the essence
of violence.

Manifestations of Violence

 Bearing in mind this definition, it would be useful
to consider various manifestations of violence. Girvetz, in
his article "An Anatomy of Violence", defines four categories
of violence; economic, anomic, psychogenic and ideological.
Briefly, economic violence results from economic need, anomic
violence occurs when there is a lack of moral standards,
psychogenic violence is associated with personality disorders,
while ideological violence is practised on behalf of a
political or social objective. It is the latter category
which relates to our concern. The essential factor in
ideological violence is that:

> the individual does not directly promote his own
> interest or advantage, i.e., that his use of violence
> serve a 'cause'.29

Using this framework, Girvetz distinguishes three forms of
ideological violence; terrorism, insurrection and revolution.
His discussion of the latter two forms is weak, but his
identification of certain strains in terrorism is useful.
These include the "action of the heroic" and romantic
messianism, both of which forms are readily apparent in the
thought of terrorist groups in Northern Ireland.[30] Those
groups whom he would categorize under the label of 'terrorist'
include:

the Irish Sinn Feiners, the Russian Socialist
Revolutionaries, and the anarchist followers of Bakunin
and of Kropotkin with his 'propaganda of the deed'.[31]

With regard to terrorism, Macfarlane points out that it

usually only develops on a large scale where there seems to

be the possibility of dramatic change.[32] This involves the

elements of hope and belief, factors which require an

investigation of the subjective nature of violence.

The Psychology of Violence

To understand much of the work of Sorel and Fanon, it

is necessary to consider an area of study which may be loosely

termed 'the psychology of violence'. Here, the emphasis is

not so much on the achievements of violence in practical terms,

as on the effects of violence on those who perpetrate it and

those who are subject to it. That is to say, the emphasis now

must be on the 'expressive' nature of violent action rather

than its 'instrumental' character. As Meisel indicates,

Sorel's main interest throughout "Reflections on Violence" is

the effect of violence on the proletarian mind. The struggle

envisaged is itself basically a psychological phenomenon.[33]

It is on this level that Sorel holds violence to be constructive;

it satisfies a positive need, "the individual's struggle to

establish and protect his self-esteem"[34]. For Sartre, violence

is the creating of self, after this self has been abused and

manipulated by colonial exploitation. It is the means by

which to organize one's powers and establish the worth of the

the self.[35] Similarly, Fanon views violence as being the only means by which the natives can restore their dignity; it involves a heightening of consciousness and is interpreted as a stage of development in the endeavour to gain freedom and self-government.[36]

In line with Nietzsche's thought, May sees a self-transcendence in violence which he likens to that achieved in ecstatic experiences. Both involve a "total absorption", which is especially attractive in its reaction against "all things 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'".[37] It is a protest against the "barbarism of reflection" described by Vico in his doctrine of "reflux", whereby this state is considered worse than the "primitive barbarism of sensation" and signals the end of civilization.[38] It is the dynamic and active nature of violence which explains the phenomenon described by Tim Pat Coogan in discussing the I.R.A.'s dilemma over the use of force:

> The guns, the excitement and the secrecy attract new members thirsting for adventure. The guns go off and the authorities act. Take away the guns and the excitement and how do you offer a credible possibility of achieving the I.R.A.'s objectives and so attract new members?[39]

This accounts, at least in part, for the relative success in gaining support that the Provisional I.R.A. has had over and against the Marxist-oriented Official I.R.A.[40] In a situation which has already escalated into violence, it is often of little avail to raise humanistic or pacifistic objections:

> Showing war's irrationality and horror is of no effect

...The horrors make the fascination...(William James)[41]

As May points out, one of the reasons why we have made so little progess in our understanding and mitigation of violence is that our minds tend to castrate the topic; we constantly overlook the elements in it that are fascinating, attractive and alluring.[42] The question, for those involved, essentially turns on the issue of action versus passivity. The destruction of human life and property is, on the one hand, seen as being a necessary sacrifice and, on the other hand, thought to be expressive of masculinity and assertiveness. Thus, for Sorel:

> The fact of violence, not its aimless propagation, lay at the core of his thinking. The uses of violence were to further the manliness of the contending parties, not to destroy whole sections of the population who were blameless or defenceless.[43]

Each battle won, each improvement in conditions, enhances self-confidence and, as de Tocqueville has described, contributes to furthering the violence as hopes are stirred.[44]

The 'Rites' of Violence

A prominent theme, not only in the writings of Sorel and Fanon, but also in the literature of modern revolutionary thinkers, is the notion of rebirth through violence. In the writings of Mao Tse-Tung, for example, violence is a social weapon to be used for the fundamental transformation of individuals, for the creation of "new men".[45] Lenin, opposed as he was to spontaneous violence, advocated a directed use of violence in order to create a true revolutionary consciousness.[46] Fanon envisaged the colonized masses as becoming

transformed in their fight for political and personal freedom

and continually stressed the therapeutic effects of violence.[47]

Proletarian violence, according to Sorel, would not only lead

to the resurrection of a strong and militant proletariat, but

would also restore to the bourgeoisie some of its former

energy.[48] Even Engels spoke of the immense spiritual and moral

regeneration to be achieved from victorious revolution.[49] It

may well appear that this stream of thought has strong religious

overtones; Sorel actually compares the enthusiasm generated by

wars to that provoked by religions.[50] In societies where

religion still forms an important part of individual and social

life, one finds an abundance of religious sentiments and

analogies permeating through the literature. For example, the

Irish nationalist, Patrick Pearse, constantly likens the blood

sacrifice of gallant men to that of Christ.[51] Similarly, there

is a tendency to pose a dualism between good and evil.

Spontaneous social action must necessarily view the world in

terms of 'black and white'. There is no place for 'shades of

grey'. Thus, Sorel states:

> conviction is founded on the competition of communions,
> each of which regards itself as the army of truth fighting
> the armies of evil.[52]

Violence is conceived as a form of baptism; the immersion in

water, the shedding of blood both signify a cleansing and the

start of a new life.

Violence and Resentment

Social conflict and violence must, according to all

theorists concerned, be founded upon the correct motives.
Jealousy, vengeance and resentment are undesirable emotions
and can only lead, ultimately, to a purely destructive form
of violence. "My enemies", says Nietzsche, "are those who want
to destroy without creating their own selves".[53] Resentment,
for Nietzsche, had a negative and fallacious content. The
seeking of revenge was not only a sign of weakness but was
also hypocritical. It is the act of the powerless to seek power
in this manner and can only culminate in powerlessness. It is
a passive force and its only character is that of inertia.[54]
As Polin describes it:

> The forms of violence it supports are the worst
> because they are vain acts of violence, and because
> they turn into violence for the sake of violence.[55]

It is this false morality, which is anathema to life and
destiny, against which Nietzsche rallied so strongly in his
"Genealogy of Morals". Sorel echoes this belief in "Reflections
on Violence"; jealousy, he maintains, belongs to passive
beings, whereas leaders have active motivations. He, too,
recognizes the danger of the former sentiment, but feels that
the general strike "forces the desire to satisfy jealousy by
malice into the background"[56]. It can, instead, generate a
feeling of sublimity and pride. Camus, in protesting against
Scheler's identification of resentment with rebellion, posits
a complete separation between the two notions. Resentment is,
as defined by Scheler, "an autointoxication"; rebellion, on
the other hand, allows the whole being to come into play and

is the source of "super-abundant activity and energy".[57] All
this would appear to signal that there is a need for direction
in the rebellion or struggle, in order to focus the correct
emotions. This need is implicit in Sorel, but it is not
answered in terms of rational planning, strategy or education
of the masses. Rather, his solution is in terms of an elitist
conception, whereby leadership rests with the enlightened few.

The Sociology of Violence

The psychological explanation of violence, however, is
often inadequate unless tempered by sociological and historical
insights. Theorists such as Fanon can avoid the debatable
assertion that man is essentially aggressive by placing their
psychological understanding of violence within the context of
colonialism. The insufficiency of purely psychological
interpretations is exampled by a writer such as Toch. He sees
violence as becoming habitual in certain segments of society
because they put a high value on physical strength and accept
violent conduct as normal.[58] Leaving aside the questionable
nature of the initial assumption, one still has to ask why some
groups or individuals in society should accept violence as
normal and others not. These are sociological and cultural
considerations. Without such insights, the violence seen by
Toch would appear to no real cause, object or consequence and
is therefore aimless. Violence, properly, should be considered
on three levels: an understanding should be sought of the uses
of violence for, and its effects upon, the social system, the

social group and the individual. For example, while violence

may enable the individual to assert himself and a social group

to constitute itself[59], it can often lead to the destruction

of the social system. Within this framework, we can indicate

specific circumstances under which violence arises. Our

interest lies not in the type of violence found on football

fields, which although related does require a somewhat

different conceptual apparatus[60], but rather violence as it is

related to a social movement. In this respect, then, it appears

expedient to centre the discussion on violence as it is

integral to and connected with war and revolution.

Violence and War

For many political theorists, war is deemed to be "the

continuation of politics by other means"[61]. As Arendt indicates,

this implies the continuity of a process determined by

whatever preceded violent action.[62] Presumably, the political

movement involved would also dictate the goal of the particular

process, rather than would the violent means employed. This

'process' is not entirely absent in Sorel's thought, but the

nature of his work necessitates that he should pay it little

attention. He attaches such intrinsic value to the means

employed that the end is somehow envisaged as a natural and

inevitable consequence, and thus does not require extensive

discussion. For Sorel, war was the answer to social alienation;

in and through war, the proletariat would discover those noble

and virtuous qualities necessary for its rejuvenation as a

class:

> Proletarian acts of violence...are purely and simply
> acts of war; they have the value of military demon-
> strations, and serve to mark the separation of classes.
> Everything in war is carried on without hatred and
> without the spirit of revenge.63

Proudhon also stressed the virtue of war; in war, he believed,

the individual discovers his own best qualities, "courage,

patience, disregard of death, devotion to glory and the good

of his fellows, in one word: his virtue"[64]. The avoidance of

war and violent action, on the other hand, is often construed

as being 'effeminate', weak and dishonourable.[65]

War is on many occasions conceived of in poetic terms;

for example, there is Jefferson who believed that:

> The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to
> time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its
> natural manure...66

The glorification of war is, of course, nothing new or unique.

Pearse, who was not only obsessed by his own notion of blood-

sacrifice but was also under the influence of the prevailing

militarism, wrote in 1915:

> The last sixteen months have been the most glorious
> in the history of Europe. Heroism has come back on earth.
> War is a terrible thing, but war is not an evil thing ..
> Ireland has not known the exhilaration of war for over a
> hundred years. When war comes to Ireland, she must
> welcome it as she would welcome the Angel of God.67

Physical force, too, can be held to be brave, righteous and

honourable, especially when those involved perceive them-

selves as being in a war-like situation. When the element of

nationalism is present, most actions can be justified in the

name of one's country, the need to defend it against an
outside aggressor or the necessity to strike for national
freedom against the oppressor. Moreover, when a people feel
themselves to be in an embattled situation, frequent use is
made of military titles. In Ulster this is particularly
marked; the one-time Prime Minister was known as Captain
Terence O'Neill and among the followers of the Rev. Ian
Paisley one finds such names as Major Bunting. From the Irish
nationalist viewpoint, the I.R.A. perceive themselves as
being at war with an invading force, the British Army. The
gunmen are seen as "freedom fighters", each of whom feels
himself to be:

> a man committed to the simple ideal of freeing his
> country from its oppressors, authorized to use all
> available means for that end, seeking no glory other
> than martyrdom, faithful in his own way to a Church that
> did not understand him. Watered with his blood, as with
> the blood of those who had gone before, the seed of
> freedom would sprout from the ground and bloom at the
> moment least expected.68

Sorel felt that a state of war was necessary for the
founding of moral convictions; the latter do not depend upon
education or reason but on the involvement of the person in an
active social or national movement. Through engaging in battle,
the proletariat subordinates all other considerations to that
of attaining glory and demonstrating its heroism and valour.
Morality has to be charged with enthusiasm, which comes not
from thought but from action. Hence:

> the idea of the general strike (constantly rejuvenated

by the feelings roused by proletarian violence.) produces
an entirely epic state of mind..69

The proletarian war was, for Sorel, free of abominations as it

was to be carried out without hypocrisy and in "broad daylight".

Difficulties encountered in the struggle were to be reconciled

if they were conceived as being battles in the war which will

surely result in victory. Thus, Sorel cites the example of the

Catholics who have never been discouraged in even the hardest

of trials because:

> they have always pictured the history of the Church as
> a series of battles between Satan and the hierarchy
> supported by Christ; every new difficulty which arises is
> only an episode in a war which must finally end in the
> victory of Catholicism.70

The element of belief, or at least of hope, must be present in

militancy in order to overcome any setbacks.[71] Most of the

above observations may also apply to the nature of violence in

revolution.

Violence and Revolution

Camus draws a distinction between revolution and

rebellion in so far as the former always implies the establish-

ment of a new government while the latter is unplanned

spontaneous protest.[72] As May points out, a value is presupposed

in every act of rebellion. The revolutionary tends to collect

power around himself but the rebel does not seek power in this

fashion and has little use for it. The rebel fights for the

belief of his fellow men and for his own personal integrity.[73]

Rebellion is the assertion of rights and, in a sense, signifies

a collective dignity: "I rebel - therefore we exist"[74]. The

rebel makes a personal sacrament of his cause and is prepared
to accept death rather than be denied the fulfilment of the
commitment he has made; "Better to die on one's feet than to
live on one's knees"[75]. The sacrifice is for the sake of 'the
common good' which is placed above any personal aspirations.
As Lorenz puts it,

> One soars elated, above all the ties of everyday life,
> one is ready to abandon all for the call of what, in the
> moment of this specific emotion, seems to be a sacred
> duty..[76]

Paradoxically, this leads to the situation where it is necessary
to kill and be killed in order to live. It is basically the
notion of creation through destruction which Nietzsche felt to
be central to his work. Although the notions of revolution and
rebellion are both present in Sorel's thought, it is the latter
concept to which he addresses himself. The spontaneous action
envisaged, supported by the myth which admits of no rational
planning for the future, is far closer to the phenomenon
described by Camus than a 'Marxist' revolution. In not
recognizing this distinction, Sorel's assertion that proletarian
violence necessarily constitutes a revolutionary approach is
at best questionable.[77] Revolutionary violence is, of necessity,
tactical. As Macfarlane points out, from the standpoint of the
revolutionary it is essential to distinguish between "desirable
(progressive)" and "undesirable (reactionary)" violence - only
the former type can be justified in revolutionary terms.
Further, "Violence as such should never be welcome to the

revolutionary, since it cannot be assumed that all violence will further his cause"[78]. One may debate, therefore, whether or not violence is a necessary adjunct of revolution, but one can be quite sure that revolution is not an inevitable consequence of violence.

The Anarchist Conception of Violence

Violence is not endemic to the anarchist movement. There has been much debate on the uses and desirability of violence between such schools as "conspiratorial anarchism", "communist anarchism" and "pacifist anarchism"[79]. In general, the anarchists have believed that the purposes of violence determine its good or evil character, and not the fact of violence as such.[80] Bakunin, as a representative of "communist anarchism", was not opposed to violence on principle but was opposed to a form of violence that was not at the same time educative and instrumental in gaining lasting advantages for the oppressed.[81] There are instances of individual terrorism whose professed aim was to awaken the consciousness of the people against their oppressors.[82] These were, however, largely unsuccessful in that respect and the recognition grew that acts of violence "must be motivated by social rather than individual necessity"[83]. The anarchists' treatment of violence is not systematic, however, as this notion does not form a central point in their thought.

Unifying Aspects of Violence

In view of our interest in collective rather than

individual social action, it would be appropriate to inquire into the unifying aspects of violence. A suitable starting point, in this regard, is the work of Simmel and Coser on the phenomenon of group cohesion through conflict. The thesis is that with the presence of an outside aggressor the group draws together and finds a new solidarity. The aggressor can also act as a 'scapegoating' mechanism to channel undesirable hostility within the group onto an outside target. The group itself constitutes its identity in and through conflict.[84] Coser goes as far as to say that Sorel's advocacy of violence is to be entirely understood in terms of Sorel's own awareness of the intimate relationship between group cohesion and conflict.[85] It is, hopefully, clear that Sorel means rather more than this, but the point remains that, for him, the proletariat could only preserve its distinctive social character by being engaged in warfare with the middle-class. Such a theme is summarised by Schemerhorn:

> There are times when integration can only occur in and through conflict, and conversely, other times when conflict is necessary to reach a new order of integration.[86]

Another crucial aspect of unity through violence is the commitment or allegiance to a cause. Thus, as Macfarlane demonstrates, allegiance must be distinguished from obedience; the former cannot be expected unconditionally and depends upon a definite purpose or sense of shared benefit.[87] The commitment to the cause was essential for Sorel, who recognized that men

do not act collectively in the name of an idea or institution
to which they feel spiritually opposed or from which they are
alienated.[88] Turning now to violence specifically, the
essential quality of this form of conflict seems to be that
described by May: "The physical element which bulks so large
in violence is a symbol of the totality of one's involvement"[89].
It is, as Arendt describes, the physical proximity of death
which lends the air of vitality and excitement, especially
when faced collectively and in action. The possible death of
the members of the group is somehow seen as contributing to
the potential immortality of the group itself and this
awareness moves into the centre of experience.[90] For Camus,
solidarity and rebellion are inextricable: "Man's solidarity
is founded upon rebellion, and rebellion, in its
turn, can only find its justification in this solidarity"[91].
This solidarity would appear to rest largely upon the symbolic
nature of the conflict and, in this respect, Fanon holds that
the commitment to violence, rather than its actual consummation,
is of ultimate importance.[92] It is the _readiness_ to sacrifice
all which is fundamental: the act of doing so will follow as
a natural consequence if the commitment is established.

The Consequences of Violence

Where, then, does violence lead? Is it primarily
engaged in to change the individual rather than the social
condition? Social science has few answers on this score; as

indicated by Bienen, we know much more about the duration and intensity of violence under certain circumstances than we do about its actual causes and consequences, and especially little about its consequences.[93] There appears to be no methodological course to follow in this instance and the only analysis available would seem to be an ex post facto one. Thus, we shall, like Camus, have to content ourselves with studying its actions and results in order to ascertain whether violence remains true to its initial premises or whether it "forgets its original purpose and plunges into a mire of tyranny or servitude"[94]. There is always at least one positive result according to Camus; an awareness, whether it be clear or confused, develops from each act of rebellion. It takes the form of a perception of identity, even though this may be momentary, of the individual's own nature.[95] This, as Fanon has shown, is brought about through the commitment to violence rather than by violent action in and of itself; thus, the evil of violence is seen as being exorcized through the commitment, and violence can be viewed as, in some respect, a cleansing action.[96]

Sorel felt that one could not examine the effects of violence by a consideration of its immediate results; one had to start with its distant consequences.[97] Recognizing, perhaps, the methodological laziness and even impossibility of such an analysis, he later repudiates the whole endeavour by stating that "the end is nothing, the movement is all"[98]. Sorel does

concede to "those in favour of mild methods" that violence can
be detrimental to economic progress and that there is a limit
beyond which it becomes a danger to morality. The defence of
his position is that his only concern with violence is from
the point of view of its influence on social theories.[99] In
the light of his work, this claim is debatable and, in any
instance, for an understanding of recent world history in
particular, it is necessary to look beyond this very immediate
and narrowly proscribed conception and consider seriously the
possible ill effects of such a mode of social action.

Engels indicated that appeals to violence tend to
obscure the understanding of the real development of things.[100]
This concern is also evident even among those anarchists who
supported the use of violence. Thus, Berkman questions the
use of arms: do these "rockets of iron" he asks, does this
"lightning really illumine the social horizon, or merely
confuse minds with the succeeding darkness?".[101] The ever-
present danger is that violence can easily become a value in
itself; in Arendt's terms, the means overwhelm the end.[102]
When we consider the famous 'paradox of unintended consequences',
we realize that the ends of human action can never be reliably
predicted and that there is always an element of arbitrariness.
The possible result, then, is the introduction of violence
into the body politic, the only development of which being an
escalation of that violence. There are, as Bienen has pointed
out, many examples of violence which serve to widen divisions

within societies. This occurs when there is no adequate
reallocation of political power, where social disorganization
is manifest, where the predominant motives behind the violence
are personal or clan vengeance or where "violence is a
necessary adjunct of politics - that is, the politics of how
to stay in power".[103] Violence, in almost every circumstance,
leads to a backlash and, therefore, a cyclical process of
ever-increasing violence. The emphasis of Sorel, Camus, Fanon
and Sartre has tended to be on the beneficial effects of
violence in psychological, spiritual and emotional terms;
these effects are judged primarily on the levels of personal
and group unity. What, then, are the malevolent possibilities
in this area? It is quite simply that the propensity towards
violence can take on a habitual or permanent character;
violence can, metaphorically speaking, assume a life of its
own.

Let us examine the possible effects on the societal
level. Quite apart from a disruption of the existing social
system, there is also the danger felt by Tolstoy and Gandhi
that:

> the history of class society bears witness to the
> fact that violence has never established its opposite,
> a consensual society. It only intensifies and
> institutionalizes the uses of violence. The impasse of
> violence can only be broken in the triumph of conscience.. [104]

On the level of the individual, Markovic points out, and
there are historical examples to support his case, once
violence becomes a value in itself, it turns against those

who use it. It can actually destroy individuality in a process whereby not only does the victim of attack become an object, a symbol of repressive forces and deprived of individuality and humanity, but the killer also denies his own humanity and turns himself into an instrument of the cause.[105] Further, as May indicates,

> This desire to destroy may so completely take over the person that any object that gets in the way is destroyed. Hence the person strikes out blindly, often destroying those for whom he cares and even himself in the process.[106]

We have seen that violence has a role in forging group cohesion. Yet, it is the commitment to a cause and to a form of social action which holds the group together, rather than violent action per se. Thus, we may posit that once violence is allowed to become independent of that commitment, there will be resultant strains within the group and a possible splintering into sub-groups.[107]

A further tendency is the creation of an external source of evil. This lends a spiritual virtue and a justification to the actions of a given group. The enemy may be imagined or real; he serves the same purpose either way, that of an absolving of blame and, ultimately, of responsibility from those who perpetrate violent acts. He even creates an aura of necessity for these actions; the perfect example of this is given by Orwell and his representation of Goldstein in '1984'. Thus, as Rubinoff demonstrates, this is likely to initiate a situation where the individual or the group

may indulge themselves in acts of violence, while either

pretending to be ignorant of their actions or justifying

them on the grounds that they have been provoked.[108] There

is also the problem of resentment. Contrary to Sorel's belief,

any social movement will inevitably contain something of this

sentiment and must always strive to tame these destructive

elements.

It is important to recognize, finally, that the

perpetrators of violence are acting within their own sets of

perceptions. An understanding of the meaning of violence

necessitates a study of motivations. As Sorel noted at the

turn of the century:

> There are so many legal precautions against violence,
> and our upbringing is directed towards so weakening our
> tendencies towards violence, that we are instinctively
> inclined to think that any act of violence is a
> manifestation of a return to barbarism.[109]

It is the task of the social scientist to free himself, or at

least to admit the existence of such preconceptions, as far

as possible. With a proper understanding of the social and

historical conditions, moreover, we can then discriminate

between different types of violence. From outside appearances,

"The sniper who acts out his individual desires commits the

same kind of action as the sniper who assassinates on orders

of a movement, but the political act is different in cause

and probably in consequence"[110]. A study of motivation and

specific conditions is, thus, imperative.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. See the discussion in Macfarlane, L. J., <u>Violence and the State</u>, (1974), pp.43-6.

2. <u>Ibid</u>, p.46.

3. Arendt, H., <u>On Violence</u>, (1970).

4. Quoted, <u>Ibid</u>, p.35.

5. <u>Ibid</u>, p.42.

6. See O'Brien, C. C., <u>States of Ireland</u>, (1974), p.124.

7. Arendt, H., <u>op cit</u>, p.87.

8. <u>Ibid</u>, p.51.

9. <u>Ibid</u>.

10. <u>Ibid</u>, p.52.

11. A term used by Markovic, M., "Violence and Human Self-Realization", in Weiner P. P. & Fisher J., (eds.), <u>Violence and Aggression in the History of Ideas</u>, (1974), pp.235-6.

12. <u>Ibid</u>.

13. <u>Ibid</u>, pp.238-9.

14. Lorenz, K., <u>On Aggression</u>, (1966), Chap.13, pp.236-74.

15. Markovic, M., <u>op cit</u>, p.240.

16. May, R., <u>Power and Innocence</u>, (1972), p.156.

17. Seigel, J. E., "Violence and Order in Machiavelli", in Weiner P. P. & Fisher J., (eds.), <u>op cit</u>, p.62.

18. Polin, R., "Nietzschean Violence", in Weiner P. P. & Fisher J., (eds.), <u>op cit</u>, p.66.

19. <u>Ibid</u>, p.68.

20. Sorel, G., <u>Reflections on Violence</u>, (1941), p.203.

21.   That is to say, the "contradictions" between "property institutions" and the "forces of production". See Lockwood, D., "Social Integration and System Integration", in Zollschan, G. K. & Hirsh, W., (eds.), Explorations in Social Change, (1964), pp.244-56.

22. Arendt, H., <u>op cit</u>, p.II.

23. Fanon, F., <u>The Wretched of the Earth</u>, (1968), p.249.

24.   See Chapter IV, "Ulster in the Colonial Context".

25. Markovic, M., <u>op cit</u>, p.246.

26. Macfarlane, L. J., <u>op cit</u>, p.99.

27.   This is the sense in which Fanon uses the concept. Thus violence for Fanon is a positive action, through the destruction of a negation.

28.   For example, one may approach one's work 'aggressively':this implies a positive and active force of great energy, it does not imply violence.

29. Girvetz, H., "An Anatomy of Violence", in Stanage S. M., (ed.), <u>Reason and Violence, Philosophical Investigations</u>, (1974), p.189.

30.   This is particularly evident among those groups who have broken away from the central authority of either the main nationalist or loyalist groups.

31. Girvetz, H., <u>op cit</u>, p.190.

32. Macfarlane, L. J., <u>op cit</u>, p.113.

33. Meisel, J. H., <u>The Genesis of Georges Sorel</u>, (1951), p.127. See also Horowitz, I. L. <u>Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason</u>, (1961), p.122.

34. May, R., <u>op cit</u>, p.31.

35. Sartre, J. P., Preface to Fanon, F., <u>op cit</u>, pp.7-31.

36. Fanon, F., <u>op cit</u>.

37. May, R., <u>op cit</u>, p.167.

38. Cited in Sorel, G., op cit, (translator's note) p.98.
       The mind is seen as rising from sensation to the
    rational, but it is bound "in conformity with its eternal
    nature" to reverse the course and so rise again, "to
    commence a reflux".

39. Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A., (1971), p.59.

40.   The I.R.A., before the split into 'Provisional'
    and 'Official' camps, was far more interested in ideo-
    logical and theoretical issues than in violent tactics.
    As a result, when the disturbances in Northern Ireland
    first began, various sections of the population deemed
    that the most appropriate meaning for their initials was
    'I Ran Away'. The Provisional faction are those who
    decided to take 'action'.

41. Quoted in May, R., op cit, p.173.

42. Ibid, p.165.

43. Horowitz, I. L., op cit, pp.169-70.

44. De Tocqueville, A., Democracy in America, Vol.I, (1945).

45. Cited in Bienen, H., Violence and Social Change, (1968),
    pp.45-6.

46. Ibid, p.61.

47. Fanon, F., op cit.

48. Sorel, G., op cit, pp.98-9.

49. Cited in Bienen, H., op cit, p.70.

50. Sorel, G., op cit, pp.102-3.

51. See O'Brien, C. C., op cit, p.287.

52. Sorel, G., op cit, p.244.

53. Quoted in Camus, A., The Rebel, (1956), p.9.

54. Nietzsche, F., On the Genealogy of Morals, (1969), III,
    #14.

55. Polin, R., op cit, p.74.

56. Sorel, G., op cit, pp.186-7.

57. Camus, A., op cit, p.17.

58. Quoted in Macfarlane, L., op cit, pp.105-6.

59.   Marx, too, believed that social classes only constitute themselves in and through conflict.

60.   In so far as the elements of loyalty and intense excitement are also present, this type of violence is related. Yet, this violence does not involve an attack upon the social system as a whole.

61. Clausewitz, quoted by Arendt, H., op cit, pp.8-9.

62. Ibid.

63. Sorel, G., op cit, pp.121-2.

64. Quoted in Meisel, J. H., op cit, p.96.

65. Marmor, quoted in Lorenz, K., op cit, p.284.

66. Quoted by Markovic, M., op cit, p.246.

67. Quoted in Edmonds, S., The Gun, the Law and the Irish People, (1971), p.54.

68. MacEoin, G., Northern Ireland: Captive of History, (1974), p.158.

69. Sorel, G., op cit, p.294.

70. Ibid, p.22.

71. As discussed by Gary T. Marx, quoted in Wilson, W. J., Power, Racism and Privilege, (1973), pp.47-8.

72. Camus, A., op cit.

73. May, R., op cit, p.221.

74. Camus, A., op cit, p.22.

75. Ibid, p.15.

76. Lorenz, K., op cit, pp.268-9.

77. Sorel, G., op cit.

78. Macfarlane, L. J., op cit, p.139.

79. See Horowitz, I. L., (ed.), <u>The Anarchists</u>, (1964), pp.15-64.

80. <u>Ibid</u>.

81. <u>Ibid</u>, p.45.

82.   For example, Alexander Berkman and his attempted assassination of Henry Clay Frick. See Ward, J. W., "Violence, Anarchy and Alexander Berkman", in <u>The New York Review</u>, (November 5, 1970) pp.25-30.

83. <u>Ibid</u>.

84. Coser, L. A., <u>The Functions of Social Conflict</u>, (1968).

85. <u>Ibid</u>.

86. Quoted in Wilson, W. J. <u>op cit</u>, p.8.

87. Macfarlane, L. J., <u>op cit</u>, p.139.

88. Indicated by Horowitz, I. L., <u>Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason</u>, op cit, p.130.

89. May, R., <u>op cit</u>, pp.187-8.

90. See Arendt, H., <u>op cit</u>, p.68.

91. Camus, A., <u>op cit</u>, p.22.

92. Fanon, F., <u>op cit</u>.

93. Bienen, H., <u>op. cit</u>, p.2.

94. Camus, A., <u>op cit</u>, p.22.

95. <u>Ibid</u>, p.14.

96. Fanon, F., <u>op cit</u>.

97. Sorel, G., <u>op cit</u>, p.47.

98. <u>Ibid</u>, p.158.

99. <u>Ibid</u>, p.208.

100. See Hunter, R., <u>Violence and the Labor Movement</u>, (1914), p.xi.

101. Ward, J. W., op cit, p.28.

102. Arendt, H., op cit, p.4.

103. Bienen, H., op cit, p.81.

104. Horowitz, I. L. (ed.), The Anarchists, op cit, p.54.

105. Markovic, M., op cit, pp.235-6.

106. May, R., op cit, p.182.

107.   This process of splintering and the resultant proliferation of groups is evident in Ulster.

108. Rubinoff, M. L., "Violence and the Retreat from Reason", in Stanage S. M., (ed.), op cit, pp.85-6.

109. Sorel, G., op cit, p.205.

110. Bienen, H., op cit, p.103.

CHAPTER IV

ULSTER IN THE COLONIAL CONTEXT

The choice of a colonial context by which to analyse
the myths and violence of Ulster is guided by the conviction
that the historical roots of the modern Ulster problem can be
traced to the early seventeenth century, when the province
was first brought under English control and colonized by
Protestant settlers.[1] It is important to recognize that the
social relationships which developed from the colonization
process have been of deep significance in the subsequent
history of the province.[2] Placing Ulster in its colonial
context also has the advantage of outlining its relationship
with Britain as well as with the rest of Ireland. This frame-
work would appear to be the most applicable for our partic-
ular problem; violence in another context may require a
quite different conceptual apparatus.[3]

What is Colonialism?

Colonialism, as defined by Blauner, refers to the
establishment of domination over an external political unit,
where the inhabitants are most often of a different race and
culture. The domination is political, economic and cultural
and the colony is subordinated to and dependent upon the
mother country. With regard to the economic domination, the

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colonizers typically exploit the land, the raw materials, the labour and other resources of the colonized people.[4] As Fanon points out, however, colonialism hardly ever exploits the whole of a country: it extracts natural resources to meet the needs of the mother country, marks out certain regions for growth and thereby allows these sectors of the colony to become relatively rich.[5] In addition to this, "a formal recognition is given to the difference in power, autonomy and political status, and various agencies are set up to maintain the subordination"[6]. Sartre sees three distinct types of colonial rule. The first is where the mother country simply pays some feudal rulers to keep the colony under control, the second is the creation of a native bourgeoisie and the third is the planting of the colony with settlers while exploiting it at the same time:

> Thus Europe has multiplied divisions and opposing groups, has fashioned classes and sometimes even racial prejudices, and has endeavoured by every means to bring about and intensify the stratification of colonized societies.[7]

On a somewhat less obvious level, there is also the factor of cultural domination as described by Blauner, which involves the wiping out of traditions, language and culture. This process, according to Fanon, leads to feelings of inferiority and self-contempt on the part of the native. Thus, colonialism has been viewed as violence, political, military, cultural and psychic[8]; for Fanon, only a counter-violence can eradicate

it.[9]

Colonization in Ireland

A historical view of the English colonization of Ireland shows that successive English governments had seen Ireland not only as a centre of native intrigue but also as a 'back-door' for potential European aggressors. Thus, from Tudor times, a major object of English policy had been to secure Ireland politically and militarily. It seems that economic exploitation followed afterwards, its major source being the land which had been expropriated on behalf of English landlords.[10] The 'Ulster Plantation' involved the settlement of large numbers of colonists on half a million acres of "profitable land".[11] The natives, Catholic and Irish-speaking, now worked on the land as labourers or retreated to the forests and hills where the living was poor and where they were a constant threat to the newly settled colonists. Thus, those who settled on the confiscated lands lived among a hostile people who harboured a deep sense of wrong. The situation may be compared to that of the early colonists of North America whose little settlements lived under constant threat of Indian attack. Machiavelli wrote in "The Prince" that:

> Settlements do not cost much, and the prince can found them and maintain them at little or no personal expense. He injures only those from whom he takes land and houses to give to the new inhabitants, and these victims form a tiny minority, and can never do any harm since they remain poor and scattered.[12]

Although Machiavelli's "victims" in Ulster were poor and scattered, they formed more than a tiny minority. A series of rebellions by the native Irish were to prove that the colonizers had not carried Machiavelli's advice far enough. Furthermore, even at this early stage, one can see elements of the modern conflict in Ulster; as O'Brien points out, religion, politics and economic status were tied together from the very beginning. The group which held the land were Protestants and loyal to the Crown of England, the disposs-essed were Catholics and loyal to the Pope.[13] Ulster became, in Fanon's terms, the sector of the colony which was allowed to become relatively rich. By the late seventeenth century, Ulster was the most prosperous part of Ireland and unlike the remainder of the island was experiencing a fairly rapid economic development.[14] Its relative prosperity over and against the rest of Ireland is still an important factor in Irish affairs.[15]

The Evolution of the Myths

The potent myths of Ulster were already beginning to evolve. In the minds of the settlers, Ireland had been sunk in the superstitions of Popery previous to the plantation. This, in accordance with seventeenth century thought, was viewed as being "the perverted form of Christianity described in the Book of Revelations, its leader the incarnation of the 'scarlet woman of Babylon' on his throne in the Vatican"[16].

For them, Ulster was a wilderness to be settled with bible and sword. Erikson discovered a similar sentiment in his account of the settlers' view of Massachusetts, "a lonely pocket of civilization in the midst of a howling wilderness"[17]. He believes that this idea remained one of the most important themes of Puritan imagery long after the underbrush had been cut away. Thus, when the visible traces of the wilderness had receded, the settlers invented a new one by "finding the shapes of the forest in the middle of the community itself"[18]. For the settlers of Ulster, the shapes of the forest were ever present, they thought, in the form of treacherous Papists who posed a constant threat to their livelihood. The most significant event, however, for both the development of the Orange myth and the history of the province itself, occurred in 1690 when the armies of James II and William of Orange met at the Battle of the Boyne. William's forces triumphed over the 'papist' James[19] and the battle became the major feast in the Orange calendar and the theme for two and a half centuries of Ulster Protestant legend and song.[20] Hence, the belief grew that the settlers had, by means of a 'glorious revolution', overcome the threat to "freedom, religion and laws"[21] caused by the accession of the papist king, James II.

After the Williamite victory, a set of penal laws were enacted; they were designed, essentially, not to punish

Catholics for their beliefs but to prevent them from obtaining, as a group, property, position, influence or power. These laws not only reinforced the separation of settlers and natives into "Protestants" and "Catholics" but also had an unforeseen result. The ablest and most active among the Catholic gentry took service abroad, while those who remained were excluded from public life. In the absence of a professional middle class, political leadership passed to the clergy. Furthermore, religion became the criterion whereby a man's civil rights and economic opportunities were determined.[22] A century of peace followed the Williamite victory in which most of the population lived in poverty. As de Paor points out, the Northern Protestants were now, in general, no longer Scots but Scotch-Irish. They were Ulstermen, a distinctive kind of Irishmen, but still increasingly conscious of being Irish, with interests distinct from those of England.[23]

In the later eighteenth century, the population of Ireland was increasing rapidly and pressure increased on the land. In Ulster, this accentuated the division between Protestant landlords and their tenants, Protestant and Catholic. Agrarian secret societies were formed to impose, by threats and terror, moderation of the landlords' demands.[24] Under these circumstances, when the French Revolution took place in 1789, it was watched closely in Ireland and republican ideas began to spread. The Society of United Irishmen was founded in Belfast, advocating "the rights of man" and

urging all to forget religious differences and rejoice in "the common name of Irishman".[25] It is this movement, paradoxically led not by Catholics but by Presbyterians, which first articulated the elements of the nationalist myth.[26] They made their appeal not only to the grievances of the Catholics but also to the Gaelic past. The rebellion which followed was unsuccessful[27] but the movement was significant in so far as it provided a focus for Catholic grievances and furnished the first martyrs for the 'republican cause'. Before proceeding to analyse the development of the myths in the nineteenth century and their relationship with the industrialization process, let us examine the significance of these events for the present conflict in Ulster.

The Relevance of These Events

These events portray the origin of the modern Ulster problem. As O'Brien puts it,

> Since those distant days, the outlines of the problem have shifted many times, but the seventeenth century settlement was so massive and vital a fact that its original character continued to dominate every aspect of the life of the region affected and to permeate the politics of the whole island.28

Thus, the conflict may be regarded as having originated as one between the colonizers and the colonized, and one which has been modified along these lines as a result of subsequent social, political and economic discrimination. Myths developed at that time still carry potency today. The element of fear has been continuously present, to a greater or lesser degree,

among Ulster Protestants. They have always tended to be on

the defensive, possessing what O'Brien calls a "siege-

mentality"[29]. As Rosita Sweetman indicates,

> Like the Afrikaaners in South Africa the level of
> their repression of their opposites was in equal measure
> to their sense of aloneness, their idea that Ulster was
> theirs and all that was theirs.[30]

The fear of physical attack experienced in the early years of

colonization was replaced by the fear of real and imagined

bogeymen, such as the spectres of Home Rule and Popery. Liam

de Paor is partially correct in saying that the events of the

seventeenth century have special meaning for Ulster Protestants

and that they are not mistaken in attaching a great signifi-

cance to these events. He believes that in the incidents of

this time lie some of the meanings of the events of the last

few years.[31] His qualification of this statement is perhaps

more accurate: that a good deal of the meaning lies in the

ideas that Ulster Protestants have today about what happened.

These ideas, we believe, are heavily influenced by the group

myths. The role of the myths in ordering peoples' perceptions

is crucial.[32]

As for the Catholics, O'Brien notes that by the end

of the nineteenth century they had become to a large extent

Anglicized. Simple hate for the English now included a new

element, that of self-hate and self-contempt.[33] Their dis-

satisfaction was expressed by means of nationalist movements,

which had gained the support of a population taught to think

of itself as inferior by the colonial power.[34] These move-
ments contained definite messianic elements which, as
Balandier points out, are an important form of resistance
to domination by the colonial power when the road to political
resistance is blocked and there only remains the religious
channel.[35] For each group, their myth became involved with
their political demands as a way of maintaining their commit-
ment to them and very quickly absorbed the original source
of conflict.[36] They clung tenaciously to these myths which
were often devoid of present political practicality, but
which inflated their own demands in the various conflicts
and served to reinforce the picture that the other group held
of them.

Myth and the Industrialization Process

The liberal tradition for which Belfast had been
known continued into the I830s. The Presbyterians of the town
were distinguished from the Protestants and Catholics of Mid-
Ulster by their willingness to live in harmony with other
traditions and creeds, and the small Catholic population were
not seen as a threat to the livelihood or dominance of the
Protestant inhabitants. Yet, with the industrial revolution,
poor Catholics crowded into Belfast to work in the developing
industries. The fear that their standard of living would be
undermined grew among the Protestants. By the mid-century, a
third of Belfast's population was Catholic and the city was
divided by resentments and fears. The despised "Papists"

retreated from a hostile society to find security in the
ghettos that grew up around their churches and schools. It
is in this period that the first sectarian riots appear to
have occurred; from 1835 to thé close of the century, they
were reenacted at three to ten year intervals.[37] The Prot-
estant Orange Society, later the Orange Order, which had
emerged in Ulster at the end of the eighteenth century, was
now a vigorous movement. In this atmosphere of strife, there
was a severe potato blight in 1845 and the Great Famine
struck. The long-term effects of the famine were immense.
The upward trend of the population was reversed and emigration
and late marriage became the rule. The traditional hostility
between landlords and tenants intensified[38] and resentment
of the British Government's inadequate measures lent a new
bitterness. The two myths, nationalist and orange, gained
credence from these events[39] and were now instrumental in
integrating the grievances and aspirations of the two separate
groups, while at the same time motivating and justifying the
conflict between them. In 1858, the Fenian Brotherhood (or
Irish Republican Brotherhood, later the I.R.A.) was founded,
committed to the use of force in the fight for national
independence.[40]

The Role of Britain

The mother country, having brought the colony under
its control, had for many years little knowledge or interest

in its prevailing conditions:

> As to Ireland, (the English) know little more than
> they do of Mexico, further than it is a country subject
> to the King of England, full of Boggs, inhabited by wild
> Irish Papists, who are kept in Awe by mercenary troops
> sent from thence (i.e., from England); And their general
> opinion is that it were better for England if this whole
> Island were sunk into the Sea; For they have a Tradition,
> that every Forty Years there must be a Rebellion in
> Ireland.[41]

This type of ignorance, or more correctly negligence, on the

part of the English government is fairly typical of a

colonial power and their attitude has been remarkably con-

sistent:

> It is the miserable fate of Britain to have remained
> the one constant factor throughout the dynamic changes
> of Ireland. Consistently, the British authorities have
> clung to a political behaviour which has stimulated
> charges of treachery and cruelty where the reality is
> merely incompetence and ennui.[42]

The Irish meanwhile were engaging, in Sorel's formula, in a

series of battles with the hope if not the certainty of a

final victory. As Engels noted in 1870,

> the English were never able to cope with the Irish,
> the reason for this being the enormous flexibility of
> the Irish nation. After the most savage suppression,
> after every attempt at extermination, the Irish would,
> following a short interval of time, rise once more in
> a revolt that eclipsed all their preceding rebellions:
> it seemed that they drew their main strength from the
> foreign garrison hung around their necks in order to
> oppress them.[43]

It was not until the late nineteenth century and the intro-

duction of a Home Rule bill in the British parliament that

a real interest arose in Irish affairs. There were powerful

interests who wished to maintain the union between the two

countries and perceived the utility of the myths for achieving
this end. Lord Randolph Churchill wrote in 1885,

> I decided some time ago that if the G.O.M. went for
> Home Rule, the Orange card would be the one to play.
> Please God it may turn out the ace of trumps and not
> the two.44

The "Orange card" proved to be an ace. There was serious
large-scale rioting in Belfast and inflammatory preaching by
various clerics who greeted the Home Rule bill with a call to
arms. The bill was defeated and so, in 1893, was a second
bill, together with further rioting in Belfast. In 1912,
nearly half a million people throughout the province signed
a Solemn League and Covenant binding themselves to resist
Home Rule by every means at their disposal.45 A provisional
government was formed, a Protestant defence force (the U.V.F.)
enrolled and a consignment of arms brought in from Germany.
In this, the Ulster Protestants were actively supported by
powerful interests in Britain.46 In spite of this, the bill
was passed, but the outbreak of war in 1914 prevented it from
being put into effect. At Easter 1916, there was a rising in
Dublin of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and James
Connolly's "citizen army". "The provisional government of the
Irish Republic" was declared.47 The British imposed martial
law and there was widespread arrest. The leaders of the
rebellion were executed, one by one, and consequently became
martyrs to the nationalist cause. This event, and the heroism
and self-sacrifice which became associated with it, may be

considered as providing the focal point of the modern nation-
alist myth.

Decolonization

In discussing the notion of colonialism, we have

examined various attempts at decolonization. Fanon conceives

of 'this latter process as being national in form and violent

in content.[48] Violence is seen as necessary because the world

of the native can only be called into question by absolute

violence. Decolonization sets out to change the existing

order and is, therefore, a programme of complete disorder.

The colonial world is seen as being a static and petrified

one, which has to be burst asunder. Violence, for Fanon, is

an existential and psychic necessity.[49] Similarly, the sub-

ordination of Catholic to Protestant in Ulster can be con-

ceived as the result of force and the threat of force. It is

a question of the changing historic relations between con-

queror and conquered, something not likely to happen without

violence. Thus, the situation may be conceived as one of

frozen violence and any attempt to thaw it out (by means of

reform, etc.) could only liberate the violence which was

then static.[50] On a more complex level, there is the notion

of the colonizer's violence being taken over by the native

in the moment of revolt.[51] This occurs because violence in

the colonies dehumanizes men by wiping out their traditions,

language and culture.[52] The importance of culture has been

widely recognized; hence Blauner writes, "The colonial situation differs from the class situation of capitalism precisely in the importance of culture as an instrument of domination"[53]. The acknowledgement and appreciation of their own culture, then, on the part of the colonized is the first step towards the creation of a nationalist movement.[54] The national revolutionary myths of the I.R.A. owe much to the cultural revival movement in Ireland.[55] As a result of this dehumanization, then, the violence of the colonizer turns in on itself and leads to the mad impulse to murder on the part of the colonized. The target at this point is irrelevant; the natives will often fight each other because they cannot face the real enemy.[56] The aggression gradually becomes more directed, however, and the native, by using force to drive out the settler, cures himself of his own neurosis. This is helped along by the development of a nationalist movement and by the claim to a national culture which rehabilitates the nation, justifies the hope of a future national culture and brings about an important psychological change in the native.[57] The colonizer is presented as being the negation of the native's identity; in order to re-establish this identity, the colonizer must be banished.[58]

<u>Reforms and Civil Disobedience</u>

In the history of colonial societies, as Balandier indicates, conflicts may be either latent or manifest,

according to religious, political and economic circumstances.[59]
It should be noted here that conflict is always present. It
has, on occasion, expressed itself non-violently, examples
being Gandhi's campaign in India or the Civil Rights movement
in Ulster prior to the eruption of violence. Civil disobedience,
as O'Brien pointed out, was likely to prove an effective lever
for change within the Six Counties. In places like South
Africa, where the ruling group acknowledges no superior auth-
ority and had no inhibition about using any kind or degree
of force necessary, civil disobedience had failed. In condit-
ions where there was, as it were, a right of appeal, it could
work.[60] A glaring contradiction had been revealed in Northern
Ireland, by the use of civil disobedience to publicize
grievances, between the actual status and living conditions
of a sizeable minority of British citizens and the professed
values of British society in general. As Rose notes,

> The exclusion of Catholics from sharing executive
> power in Northern Ireland is matched nowhere else in
> the Western world. The nearest equivalent was the
> exclusion of American blacks from senior posts in
> American federal government.[61]

In almost all situations, however, civil disobedience and
non-violent tactics attract violence; they constitute the
beginning of the thaw. Subsequent reforms may remedy some of
the grievances but the involvement of the myth leads to the
demand for much more sweeping changes. A movement inspired
by a myth can never be satisfied by piecemeal measures.

Contradictions in the Unionist Structure

The myths developed in Ulster during the first years of colonization are by no means unusual or out of keeping with their age. What is striking is their enduring quality and the power they still possess in the latter half of the twentieth century. In an era of rapid economic and social change, they appear fixed, immutable and anachronistic: hence, the observation forwarded by Bernadette Devlin,

> Should an anthropologist or a sociologist be looking for a bizarre society to study, I would suggest he comes to Ulster. It is one of Europe's oddest countries. Here in the middle of the twentieth century, with modern technology transforming everybody's lives, you have a medieval mentality which is being dragged painfully into the eighteenth century by some forward-looking people.62

The values of the old colonial settlers had been surprisingly little eroded by the new material values of advanced capitalism. 'Remember 1690' is still a highly emotive slogan largely because then, as now, the Ulster Protestants have perceived themselves as being in a siege situation. Their social and political standing has never been regarded as a stable one, either by the Protestants themselves or by the Catholic nationalist groups. Thus, the threat or the promise of change, according to the interpretations of the respective groups, has served to reinforce and strengthen their respective myths and world-views.

It may be contended that many of the problems which Ulster has experienced in recent years are the outcome of a

basic contradiction in its social structure.[63] Within the
Unionist system, one can identify strains of two different
types of social formation. The first is that associated with
the old colonial system whereby power and privilege rested in
the hands of the landlords and, as we have seen, was bolstered
by the Orange myth. The second is that of a modern capitalist
social formation, which is associated with the large inter-
national corporations and the concepts of monopoly capitalism
and the Welfare State. The problems would appear to have
arisen in the attempt at transition from the one formation
to the other. Bernadette Devlin's observation pinpoints the
dilemma faced by Captain Terence O'Neill while he was Prime
Minister.[64] He belonged to that faction within the Unionist
party which realised that the old mechanisms by which Prot-
estant power and wealth had been maintained would no longer
serve the purpose in the new 'affluent society' with its
instant communications. Thus, a transition was called for,
from 'old' unionism to 'new' unionism. Old unionism, however,
had called up forces which had never been easy to control;
the very mechanisms which had served to build and preserve
this system had become, to a large extent, rigidified.

> O'Neill, like his cousins and kindred of the settler
> squirearchy who occupied commanding positions within
> the Unionist party, was an Orangeman, a member of the
> Order, and so was involved in the whole paraphernalia
> of drums, sashes, bowler-hats, crudely-lettered temp-
> erance banners and the vulgar enthusiasms of industrial-
> revolution religion.[65]

O'Neill's attempts at reform of the system and the adverse reaction they received from many Protestants[66] made manifest the contradictions within that system. They brought about "a confrontation between two irreconcilable views of the future political, economic and social order in Northern Ireland"[67]. As Richard Rose describes it,

> From an international perspective, O'Neill's programme was hardly novel. In Northern Ireland terms, however, Terence O'Neill was an innovator, even a revolutionary.[68]

The effect of his attempts was, on the one hand, to activate the Orange myth as a result of the fear of change, and on the other hand, to renew the nationalist myth with the hope of change.

It may be argued that the underlying structure of the Unionist system is not unique to Northern Ireland. Boserup, for example, sees close analogies in other societies which find themselves in an embattled situation, which are divided along ethnic or racial lines and where political life is centred around the small provincial town.[69] He gives the example of Mississippi where, he says, there is (or was until very recently) the same type of coalition of all classes. Thus, we find the Democratic Party on the one hand and the Citizen's Councils and the Klan on the other, playing much the same roles as the Unionist Party and the Orange Order in Northern Ireland. One meets there the same cult of historical myths (about the ante-bellum South and reconstruction), the same patriarchal type of rule by local bosses and the same

united front in the dominant group, based not on a unity of
political aims in the normal meaning of 'politics', but on
an ideology of ascendancy, bolstered by religious fundament-
alism. Loyalty is maintained when necessary by economic
pressure, ostracism and, occasionally, by exemplary violence.[70]

The Strength of the Myths

The immense importance of the myths in Ulster is as
a focus of stability for one side and as an advocate of change
for the other. In anarchic circumstances[71], such as those
presently prevailing, myth can provide the sole point of ref-
erence, thereby assuming a special significance. The myth, as
Malinowski indicated, compensates for fear of the unknown and
reaches its full strength and effectiveness in an unstable
situation.[72] The relationship between myth and violence is
reciprocal; each act of social violence, each pogrom, forces
the group to sink more tightly into the safety of the ghetto
area, thus making it extremely difficult for one group to
have much contact with the other.[73] The preconceptions formed
as a result of the myth are, therefore, less likely to be
challenged. Further, as Sorel pointed out, myth unlike
ideology is not affected by social, political or economic
developments: it remains unmodified and hence has an especially
enduring quality.[74] The attitudes and activities of the
Orange Order, in particular, demonstrate the sacred character
of the myth. The importance of Orange verbal and visual
symbols in integrating Protestant Ulstermen cannot be over-

stressed. The rites of reaffirming common beliefs and senti-. ments and of dramatizing the Orange myth are practised in the parades of July I2th each year.[75] These parades may be compared to the ceremonials and rituals observed by Durkheim:

> The glorious souvenirs which are made to live again before their eyes and with which they feel that they have a kinship, give them a feeling of strength and confidence: a man is surer of his faith when he sees to how a distant a past it goes back and what great things it has inspired.[76]

On the nationalist side, the symbolic significance of the tricolour is great[77]. In a somewhat similar vein, the uniforms of the para-military groups give them an army-like status[78] and reinforce their identity.

In Ulster, the myth often possesses certain ideological elements. The I.R.A. and some of the Protestant para-military groups[79] are fighting a strategic campaign, are allowing their demands to be modified in accord with present circumstances and even at one point reached something of a rapprochement.[80] Where myth appears to have come into its own, in a pure form, is in the thought of those groups claiming responsibility for the sectarian killings in the province. Just as the strength of the myths in Ulster appears to outside observers as incomprehensible, the sectarian assassinations are dismissed as being senseless and animalistic. Understanding does not involve justification but it is essential if one is trying to prevent such actions. Sheer force may halt the killings temporarily, but force alone can

never provide a lasting solution. One cannot ignore such statements as made by the U.F.F. (Ulster Freedom Fighters) who have claimed responsibility for many of the murders: "The world is condemning us as murderers - we call ourselves patriots. We are fighting for Ulster's freedom"[81]. Perhaps it would be more correct if the point of reference was Ulster nationalism rather than patriotism[82], but the point remains that these men clearly believe that they are fighting in the name of a higher ideal.[83] The "freedom" referred to is the same freedom for which the early settlers fought, the freedom from domination by the 'Papist hordes'.

The Element of Fear

If each and every member of the opposing group is considered to be 'the enemy', not an individual but an anonymous representative of the 'forces of evil', then the killings take on a symbolic character. Here, as Cassirer has demonstrated, the individual is held to be the representative and the embodiment of the species.[84] In a sense, the killings serve a dual purpose in the minds of the killers; they are at one and the same time a blow against the enemy and an act of self-assertion, a positive factor in the midst of insecurity and normlessness. Fear is an important element not only in the actions of the terrorist, but also for the population as a whole. Fear not only affects mens' outward actions, it also affects their beliefs; 'noble passions' often arise or are

interpreted out of a very basic fear and insecurity.[85] The outside threat is often a crucial factor not only for the cohesion of a movement but also for the commitment of an individual. As for the rest of society, whether they actively support the actions of the terrorists or whether they remain, to coin a phrase, the 'silent majority', the element of fear is again present:

> In times of trouble the chances of victory are peculiarly difficult to calculate, except that there is a general feeling that the ruthless are more likely to win than the mild. Therefore, at such times, even a small group, known to be cruel and vindictive, are apt to be generally feared. We may therefore hazard this generalization: the greater the disorder and uncertainty, the greater the apparent popularity to be gained by violence and terror.[86]

'Myth-Manipulation'

Without advocating a type of 'conspiracy theory' on the part of those in power, it can still be held that sectarian feelings in Ulster have, to a large extent, been deliberately fostered. There are, in Northern Ireland, the three distinct groups which Horowitz finds in Sorel's theory.[87] First, there are the myth believers who constitute the active proponents of the conflict. Second, there are the myth makers with their various charismatic attributes, the most obvious being the Rev. Ian Paisley. Lastly, there is the "rational elite" who can manipulate the myth in order to achieve social domination. British industrialists and politicians took on this role in the nineteenth century, as we

seen, but the Unionists have been more in evidence in this capacity since the establishment of Ulster as a separate state in 1921.[88] As de Paor states, the Unionists maintained power for fifty years by "a classic application of the principle of divide et impera"[89]. The very success of this tactic, however, depended on its drawing upon deeply rooted traditional antipathies and fears. It is not, therefore, a question of the creating of a myth on the part of the Unionists, but rather the phenomenon of 'myth-manipulation'. This, as suggested, refers to the practice of applying the existing myth to stimulate certain fears in order to give justification to particular policies or actions. As previously demonstrated, an important element of the Orange myth is the portrayal of the horrors and indignities of being subject to an authoritarian Catholic regime, exemplified in their terms by the Republic of Ireland.[90] Ulster Catholics have been seen as a group fomenting disorder with the intent of submerging Ulster into this 'pernicious' regime. The permanent threat has been that of the higher Catholic birth-rate, so that by sheer force of numbers the Catholics would achieve their end. Thus, a one-time Prime Minister of the province, Lord Brookeborough, advised that Catholics should not be employed because:

> Catholics are out to destroy Ulster with all their might and power. They want to nullify the Protestant vote, to take all they can out of Ulster and then see it go to hell.[91]

This notion, in fact, has formed the justification for several types of discrimination, in employment, housing and franchise. Nationalist groups such as the I.R.A. gave substance to this myth on occasion and provided further legitimacy for discriminatory tactics on the part of the Unionists. For example,

> The main effect of the (I.R.A.'s) unsuccessful campaign (of 1956-62) was to strengthen Unionism by renewing, at a time when it might have begun to fade, the Ulster Protestant sense of being an embattled community, under siege from the forces of evil.92

Myth and the Threat of Violence

An interesting aspect is that, in Ireland, myth also exists in association with the threat of violence, a threat rarely realised: it exists in institutionalized party politics and depends for its existence upon emotionally taught versions of Irish history. As Fanon noted,

> Sometimes violent in their language, Nationalist parties were invariably cautious, reformist and non-violent in their performance. They never broke off the dialogue with colonialism. They might cash in on the results of armed rebellion, but they never organise it.93

This association has been particularly marked in the Republic of Ireland and its political attitudes towards partition.94 Thus, according to O'Brien, Fianna Fail was a party which exploited a Republican-revolutionary mystique while practising very ordinary middle-class politics. Certain events in Northern Ireland were to bring the mystique into sharp collision with the pragmatism practised.95

One-party government in Ulster brought corruption,

inefficiency and discrimination as its consequence[96] and Unionism tended to maintain itself by making the most of sectarianism, charges of "disloyalty" and whatever ammunition was given by Dublin politicians and the I.R.A. It is probably no exaggeration to say that without the sporadic attacks of the I.R.A. and the loud noises from the Republic about its determination to see partition ended, the Unionist system would have had difficulty in surviving.[97] Militant noises from the South were largely rhetoric. This rhetoric, however, was a political necessity in the Republic and it both reinforced and was reinforced by the sectarian and oppressive character of Unionism in the North. Thus, it can be seen that violence and the threat of violence are an integral part of the respective myths in which both Irish states, north and south, are rooted. It is also clear that these myths both reinforce and sustain each other.

If there was ever any doubt concerning the power of myth in Ulster, it was soon to be dispelled by a document issued to the British Army purporting to be an oath of the I.R.A. It was, in fact, forged by Unionists and still appears in Loyalist news-sheets:

> I swear by Almighty God...by the Blessed Virgin Mary ...by her tears and wailings...by the Blessed Rosary and Holy Beads...to fight until we die, wading in the fields of Red Gore of the Saxon Tyrants and Murderers of the Glorious Cause of Nationality.....and we shall not give up the conquest until we have our Holy Father complete ruler of the British Isles...so help me God.[98]

As the writers citing this document correctly point out, it tells one nothing about the I.R.A. but quite a lot about the impulses to violence on the part of its Unionist authors.[99]

Instrumental and Expressive Violence

Violence in Ulster has led to more violence and, more significantly, to a different kind of violence. An organized, defensive and strategic type of violence on the part of the I.R.A. and the main Protestant para-military groups has degenerated, in many respects, into disorganized, sectarian assassinations where the killers often remain unknown.[100] This can be said to represent a transition from 'instrumental' violence to a more spontaneous 'expressive' violence, a transition which contradicts both Sartre and Fanon who posed the development the other way around.[101] In this development, the myths have rid themselves, to a large extent, of ideological elements. History looms large once more, tainted by an unqualified bigotry. Why then, one may ask, did the majority of the population who were not involved in these acts of violence not act against the perpetrators?[102] Intimidation, although a significant factor, cannot be regarded as the main reason. The answer, we would suggest, is a twofold one. The group myths of Ulster are so tightly bound into the social fabric of the province that even if one is not predisposed towards violence, it is not difficult to remain the silent observer. Secondly, reactions towards acts of violence always

range in degrees of horror; the longer the violence continues, the more people will come to accept it as a condition of life and the senses become dulled. "Too long a sacrifice" wrote Yeats, "Can make a stone of the heart".[103] This holds both for those who are making the sacrifice and those who are witnessing it.

Violence in Ulster has had a specific character, distinct from more conventional types of warfare. It has been both a response to social conditions and a significant factor in shaping them. The question which remains is that of why this specific form of social action is prominent and what effects this action has had for Ulster society as a whole.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

I.　　　This is also the point of departure for several historical studies, for example, De Paor, L., <u>Divided Ulster</u>, (1972). For a very good and detailed description of the plantation, see Chapter I.

2.　　　This will be seen to be true in political, cultural, social and economic terms. These relationships not only refer to the situation of Catholics vis-a-vis Protestants, but also the relation of both groups to Britain and to the rest of Ireland.

3.　　　Obviously the violence of the Russian Revolution, for example, cannot be best understood in this manner. The colonial context, however, does have a fairly wide applicability. Fanon uses it for his study of violence in Algeria. An analysis of the present conflict in Rhodesia could also merit such a framework.

4.　Blauner, R., "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt", in Geschwender, J. A. (ed.), <u>The Black Revolt</u>, (I97I), p.235. Blauner uses a modified version of the colonialism model to analyse racial conflict in the United States.

5.　Fanon, F., <u>The Wretched of the Earth</u>, (1968), p.I59.

6.　Blauner, R., <u>op cit</u>, p.235.

7.　Sartre, J. P., Preface to Fanon, F., <u>op cit</u>, pp.IO-II.

8.　Caute, D., <u>Fanon</u>, (1970), p.8I.

9.　<u>Ibid</u>.

IO.　See Moore, R., "Race Relations in the Six Counties: Colonisation, Industrialization and Stratification in Ireland", in <u>Race XIV</u> I (1972).

II.　De Paor, L., <u>op cit</u>, Chap. I.

I2.　Quoted in O'Brien, C. C., <u>States of Ireland</u>, (1974), p.37.

I3.　<u>Ibid</u>, p.38.

I4.   Economic development in the eighteenth century, and more especially in the nineteenth century, had the effect of separating the province from the rest of Ireland.

I5. .   Ih practical, economic terms, the South has always coveted the North for its industries, while Protestants in the North have felt that this prosperity would be lost in the event of union with the South.

I6. MacEoin, G., Northern Ireland: Captive of History, (1974), p.40.

I7. Erikson, K. T., Wayward Puritans, (1966), p.157.

I8. Ibid.

I9. . .   James had replaced Protestants by Catholics in positions of power and influence throughout Ireland.

20.   The irony of this development is that the Battle of the Boyne was the result of an alliance formed by Pope Innocent XI with William, Prince of Orange, against Louis, King of France. King James of England joined with King Louis to obtain help to save his own throne, and the Pope joined in the league with William to curb the power of France. When the news of William's victory at the Boyne reached Rome, the Vatican was illuminated by order of the new Pope, Alexander VIII, and special masses offered up in thanksgiving.
See Connolly, J., Labour, Nationality and Religion, (1969), pp.9-IO.

2I.   :.   The freedom which is referred to is, of course, the freedom of the Protestant religion.

22. See Magee, J., (ed.), Northern Ireland: Crisis and Conflict, (1974), p.2.

23. De Paor, L., op cit, Chap. I.
     It seems to be a fairly common development in the history of colonized societies that the colonizers soon realise that their interests diverge from those of the mother country.

24. De Paor, L., op cit, Chap. I.

25. Ibid.

26.   Up to a certain point in Irish history, Presbyterianism had been distinguished by a high degree of liberalism, if not radicalism. Hence, the sentiments of Wolfe Tone (leader of the United Irishmen) were that "to fear the Catholics is a vulgar and ignorant prejudice". See De Paor, L., op cit, p.31.

27.   This was the Battle of Vinegar Hill, which is still an important event in the Republican calendar.

28. O'Brien, C. C., op cit, p.38.

29. Ibid.

30. Sweetman, R., On Our Knees, (1972), p.215.

31. De Paor, L., op cit, Introduction.

32.   The myths are, then, representations of different systems of meaning. In the respect that they are projections, they can exert a considerable influence on perceptions of mundane events.

33. O'Brien, C. C., op cit, p.67.

34.   This process is described in Wallerstein, I., (ed.), Social Change, the Colonial Situation, (1966), p.6.

35. Balandier, G., "The Colonial Situation: a Theoretical Approach", in Wallerstein, I., op cit, pp.34-61.

36.   Hence, economic grievances which were often the origin of the political conflicts were subsumed by the myths.

37. See Boserup, A., Who is the Principal Enemy?, (1972), p.5.

38.   Many landlords had ignored the plight of their tenants and even engaged in large-scale eviction.

39.   The resultant scarcities led to further clashes between poor Catholics and poor Protestants. The old animosities, fears and distrust between the two groups was, thus, intensified.

40.   With the presence of many priests in repeal and tenants-rights movements, fenianism and popery came to be equated.

41. Jonathan Swift, Letter to Lord Chancellor Middleton, 1724, quoted in MacEoin, G., op cit.

42. Edwards, O. D., *The Sins of Our Fathers*, (1970), p.319.

43. Marx, K., & Engels, F., *On Colonialism*, (1972), p.260.

44. Quoted in De Paor, L., *op cit*, p.57. The "G.O.M." refers to Gladstone, the then Prime Minister.

45.　　　The Ulster Covenant was the declaration of this intent:
　　　Being convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as of the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship, and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of his gracious Majesty, King George the Fifth, humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant in this our time of threatened calamity to stand by one another in defending, for ourselves and our children, our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland; and in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us, we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognise its authority. In sure confidence that God will defend the right, we hereto subscribe our names....
　　　　　Ulster Day, September 28, 1912.
Quoted in The Complete Grammar of Anarchy, (1918), p.14.
　　　The Ulster Provisional Government was declared established at Belfast on Sept. 24, 1913, under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson.

46.　　　Bonar Law, leader of the Conservative party, stated in 1912 that:
　　　I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster can go in which, in my belief, they would not be supported by the overwhelming majority of the British people.
Quoted in Gwynn, D., *The History of Partition (1912-1925)*, (1950), p.46.

47.　　　The following is some extracts from that declaration:
　　　Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom...
　　　We declare the right of the people of Ireland to

the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by destruction of the Irish people....

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Quoted in Coogan, T. P., _The I.R.A._, (1971), pp.36-7.

48. See Caute, D., _op cit_, p.81.

49. _Ibid_, p.85.

50. See O'Brien, C. C., _op cit_, p.152.

51. Sartre, J. P., _op cit_, p.15.

52.   This was particularly evident in Ireland. The Irish language, for example, was almost completely supplanted by the English language.

53. Blauner, R., "Colonized and Immigrant Minorities", in Rose, P. I. (ed.), _Nation of Nations_, (1972), p.254.

54. Fanon, F., _op cit_.

55.   See Chapter II, "What is Myth?".

56. Sartre, J. P., _op cit_, p.18.

57. Fanon, F., _op cit_, p.210.

58. _Ibid_.

59. Balandier, G., _op cit_, p.57.

60. O'Brien, C. C., _op cit_, p.148.
            The writer later changed his position, feeling that the desire for a united Ireland significantly changed the situation.

61. Rose R., Governing without Consensus, (1971), p.443.

62. Devlin, B., The Price of My Soul, (1972), p.53.

63.   This is the argument forwarded by Boserup.

64.   O'Neill was in power from 1963 to 1970 and was known as a 'moderate' Unionist.

65. De Paor, L., op cit, p.46.
        Thus, Unionism could not free itself from its association with the Orange myth and the sectarianism which the latter engendered.

66.   These reforms would have improved the position of the Catholic population. Paisley was vociferous in his criticisms of both the man and his policies.

67. Boserup, A., op cit, p.16.

68. Rose, R., op cit.

69. Boserup, A., op cit, p.10.
        The strength and cohesion of the Orange Order also tends to be found on the local level.

70. Ibid.

71.   That is to say, circumstances of disorder and confusion.

72.   See Chapter II, "What is Myth?".

73.   This lack of contact is an important factor. Impressions and opinions, in this case, tend to be founded on hearsay.

74.   See Chapter II, "What is Myth?".

75.   This is a public holiday in Ulster, and the streets, during the month of July, hold an array of flags and banners.

76. Durkheim, E., The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, (1965), Book 3.

77.   The tricolour, being the flag of the Republic of Ireland, is the representation of nationalist sentiments.

78.   For the significance of this status, see Chapter III, "Violence: Its Nature, Causes and Consequences".

79.　　　　Notably such groups as the U.D.A. (Ulster Defence Association) and the U.V.F. (Ulster Volunteer Force). There is, however, a confusing proliferation of organizations on the Protestant side.

80.　　　　The U.D.A. and the Official I.R.A. have, on at least two occasions, come close to sharing a common, socialist policy. There have been, however, some mysterious murders of U.D.A. leaders on these occasions.

8I. Quoted in Dillon, M., & Lehane, D., _Political Murder in Northern Ireland_, (1973), pp.I69-76.

82.　　　　As Plamenatz puts it,
Patriotism and nationalism are not the same thing; patriotism is a love of one's people which does not carry with it hostility to strangers, whereas nationalism is emotionally in arms against the foreigner, the intruder, the outsider.
Plamenatz, J., _On Alien Rule and Self-Government_, (1960), p.I3.

83.　　　　The ideal is incorporated in the myth.

84. Cassirer, E., _The Myth of the State_, (1973). See also Chapter II, "What is Myth?".

85. Plamenatz, J., _op cit_, p.94.

86. _Ibid_, p.93.

87.　　　　See Chapter II, "What is Myth?".

88.　　　　With the growth of large-scale corporations, industrialists have held sectarian strife to be detrimental to efficiency. Although it has not been in their interests to foment sectarian disorder, it was still for the Unionists an effective means of maintaining their power structure.

89. De Paor, L., _op cit_, p.94.

90.　　　　The influence of the Catholic Church in the Republic has been quite substantial, in political matters, educational and health services.

9I. Quoted in Magee, J., _op cit_, p.4.
These statements had the ultimate effect of encouraging Catholic emigration, thus balancing the higher birthrate.

92. The Sunday Times Insight Team, <u>Ulster</u>, (1972), p.37.

93. Caute, D., <u>op cit</u>, p.69.

94.   This aspect will be discussed in the following chapter, "Motivation: the Role of Religion and Myth".

95. O'Brien, C. C., <u>op cit</u>,
        The inaction on the part of the Southern Irish government when the troubles in Northern Ireland were at their worst engendered much contempt from nationalists on both sides of the border.

96.   Discrimination was practised in housing, employment and franchise.

97. See O'Brien, C. C., <u>op cit</u>, Chap.9

98. Quoted in The Sunday Times Insight Team, <u>op cit</u>, pp.152-3.

99. <u>Ibid</u>.

100.   It would appear that these assassinations are conducted simply because the victims are either Catholics or Protestants.

101.   These types of violence do not, of course, exist in their pure forms. Lately, however, the 'expressive' form seems to have been more in evidence.

102.   The present peace movement in Ulster has been the only organized, large-scale protest since the start of the violence eight years ago.

103. Quoted in Edwards, O. D., <u>op cit</u>, p.176.

CHAPTER V

MOTIVATION: THE ROLE OF RELIGION AND MYTH

Having examined the notions of myth and violence and having noted their significance in the context of Northern Ireland, it remains to analyse those factors which provide the connecting link, which activate the myth into an expression of violence.[1] Most notable is that the conflict in Ulster, as opposed to the majority of struggles in the modern world, appears to have a specifically religious character. It is common to see two main antagonistic groups, Catholics and Protestants. Yet the quarrel is not one of theology; basic tenets of faith are not in question.[2] In analysing the role of religion in this struggle, it is then necessary to state the reasons why it does not form the basis for the violence and subsequently to define particular religious aspects and examine their strength.

A Definition of Religion

Religion can be widely or narrowly defined; the 'wide' definition is used to encompass all belief systems, including those of a primarily political nature, and has the advantage of providing a more universal framework from which to generate one's theories. It does, however, lack a certain degree of clarity by this expansion and also deviates from the common understanding of 'religion'[3], which is a hindering factor in the

investigation of subjective beliefs. In an analysis of moti-
vation, the crucial consideration is how the actors them-
selves perceive the situation. It would seem appropriate,
then, to use one of the more conventional, sociological def-
initions of religion, such as that supplied by Durkheim:

> A religion is a unified system of beliefs and prac-
> tices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things
> set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which
> unite into one single moral community called a Church,
> all those who adhere to them.4

This definition has the advantage of stressing both the
spiritual and the institutional aspects of religion. As
Durkheim points out, the second element of this definition
is no less essential than the first.[5] Of course, the spirit-
ual and institutional elements are often in conflict.[6] This
will become especially apparent in the forthcoming examin-
ation of forces at work in Ulster.

The Uses of Religion

Discrimination on religious grounds in the province
of Ulster has tended to be based on fear and basic insecurity.
As previously described, from the days of the plantation,
religion had become the distinguishing mark of the disposs-
essed on the one hand and the invaders on the other.[7] Later
on it came to represent the possession or otherwise of power.
The fear of all that is equated with Catholicism could be
said not only to have united Northern Protestants but also to
have formed the platform of the Unionist party. As several
commentators have indicated, Unionist politicians have

encouraged and played upon these fears as a means of main-
taining the solidarity of the Protestant vote and of con-
centrating political struggles on a single issue.[8] Hence,

> Parties in Ulster emphasize traditional religious
> and racial antagonisms in order to exact a rigid loyalty
> from their supporters. They intensify a sectarian
> bitterness which civilised opinion deplores.[9]

Thus religion has been used to obscure some very fundamental
economic and political conflicts, giving these latter the
character of purely religious divisions. There is little
doubt that some very real material interests lie beneath the
surface of this ostensibly religious conflict.

Influence of the Religious Institutions

The religious institutions have shown themselves to
be relatively powerless in their attempts to counter the
violence. The Catholic Church, for example, in its capacity
as a social organization, has tended to be conservative and
anti-revolutionary:

> The teachings of the Catholic Church, in Ireland as
> elsewhere, have traditionally emphasized acceptance of
> civil authority....For example, the hierarchy denounces
> membership in the oathbound I.R.A. as a mortal sin.[10]

The fact that this does not prevent practising Catholics from
committing acts of violence in the name of the I.R.A. may be
attributed to three main factors. First, there is the observ-
ation made by Weber that the surveillance of the Catholic
Church over everyday life is loose and that the movement to
Protestantism involved the acceptance of a very much higher
degree of regulation of behaviour than that demanded by

Catholicism.[11] As Bryan Wilson states:

> Whereas Protestantism relies on the self-control of
> the laity, Catholicism relies on the hierarchic control
> of the priests; once priestly authority is recognised,
> the actual commitments of the laity may, in some circum-
> stances, be not too closely questioned.[12]

This phenomenon is also related to the possible conflict

between the spiritual and institutional aspects of a religion.

Thus, while the spiritual aspects are not in question, the

Church's pronouncements on mundane matters may be rejected.[13]

More significant for our purposes would be the claim that

the preaching of the Ulster churches against violence is

relatively useless because the battles are not fought in their

name, they are fought in the name of the respective myths,

focussed upon such symbols as 'King Billy' or 'Easter 1916'.

The influence of the Catholic Church, in particular, appears

to be largely a negative one, best summed up by Rosita

Sweetman: "their answer to anything new is 'Don't'"[14]. The

churches in Northern Ireland have, however, provided a major

form of the expression of polarization between Catholics and

Protestants. Richard Rose believes that:

> Ulster churches have an institutional interest in
> propagating their distinctive doctrines because they
> provide an explicit and transcendental justification
> for the continued existence of each denomination.[15]

This is surmise on Rose's part, yet it cannot be denied that

the churches' opposition to ecumenicism and to any inter-

mingling of the religions is pronounced.[16] There have, for

example, been angry reactions to the proposals to terminate

segregated education. The system has been widely viewed as being responsible for reinforcing the traditional divisions between Catholics and Protestants and, in our terms, is an important contributory factor in the maintenance of the competing group myths. Yet, the Catholic bishop of Down and Connor has recently warned Catholic parents that he would refuse to confirm children who went to Protestant schools.[17]

Religious Prejudice

That religious prejudice[18] exists in Ulster is beyond dispute; the forms it takes, however, are worthy of investigation. The main Protestant objection appears to be to the *political* power of the Catholic Church, as seen in the Republic of Ireland.[19] This has been exemplified in such Orange slogans as "Home Rule is Rome Rule", implying the general condition of being priest-ridden, the over-riding authority of Catholic bishops and priests, the Catholic state.[20] This objection involves such political notions as the separation of Church and state and issues of personal freedom. Thus, Ulster Protestants, even where they have no strong objection to some particular aspect of Catholic moral teaching, have very strong objections to the incorporation of specifically Catholic moral teaching into the laws of a state which claims jurisdiction over them. Thus, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church pronounced in I950 that:

> One root of the Catholic-Protestant conflict,
> especially here where numbers are sometimes nearly

equal, is the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is
a world-wide religious organization that seeks to gain
control of the institutions of mankind and of public
life generally; it is not merely a Church, it is a
political organization...
Thus the Protestant often fears the dangers of the
violation of his freedom and/or ecclesiastical power in
religious, political, and social affairs.2I

Such fears have also been expressed by Ulster politicians.

Hence, the statement made by Captain Terence O'Neill,

...if you treat Roman Catholics with due consider-
ation and kindness, they will live like Protestants in
spite of the authoritative nature of their Church.22

This formulation is notable, quite apart from its condescend-

ing manner, in that it clarifies the situation; it is not

Catholics per se who are seen as the main threat, it is the

institution to which they give their allegiance. On the

Catholic side, religious elements are less important in the

perception of the other group. As Conor Cruise O'Brien puts

it:

What Catholics take seriously about Protestants are
their material prosperity and power, their hostility
towards Catholics, and the politics which are the
instruments of preserving (these) .. That politics is
Unionism. A Protestant who changes his politics without
changing his religion, is welcome because he has shed
the important distinguishing characteristic of Protest-
ants, which is not their religion.23

It may be noted in passing that some of the great heroes of

the Republican cause were Protestants and are held in vener-

ation by a large number of Catholics to this day.24

The Orange Order

It is, in fact, other related institutions which have

proved to be the most influential in the conflict. The Orange

Order, for example, has functioned to unite all classes of
Protestants in an anti-Catholic hostility. A large proport-
ion of its beliefs are concurrently upheld by complementary
institutions, the Ulster Protestant Churches. The emotional
spirituality and feeling associated with these beliefs is
not only experienced within the Orange context, but certainly
the political, religious and nationalistic[25] excitement
generated is of a highly emotional and almost mystic char-
acter, and would approximate to an experiential encounter
with the holy and ultimate. As David Roberts observes, the
Orange Order supports Protestant Churches which have unequi-
vocal supernatural elements, but contains its own myths and
values which are above any possible empirical proof; for
example, the black and white juxtaposition of "heretical"
Roman Catholicism and "true" Protestantism.[26] The Orange
Order has also provided an important alternative form of
social integration to that of class stratification. This is
epitomized in the ballad, "The Orange and The Blue":

> Let not the poor man hate the rich
> Nor rich on poor look down
> But each join each true Protestant
> For God and for the Crown.27

The Orange Order has been seen as a mixture of a non-denom-
inational church, a local club, an interest organisation and
a link to the ruling class.[28] The Orange Order is, then, an
institutionalization of the Ulster Protestant sense of
identity. Further, as Roberts observes, it serves to maintain

a 'secular' tendency in much of Irish Protestantism, keeping

it from a politically impotent other-worldliness, by provid-

ing a reminder of a necessarily intimate connection between

religion and politics.[29] It would appear that religion or

religious beliefs do not tend to be used as a justification

for actions from the Catholic groups. That this justification

is, however, quite manifest from the Orange Order and the

Unionist party poses an interesting question. The answer, we

would suggest, must be understood in terms of the need to

establish an identity. The problem of self-identity forms an

especially important part of Protestant myth-making. This

would appear to result from the fact of a strong association

between being Irish and being Catholic. Protestants, there-

fore, reject political identification with the 'mere Irish':

> This act of rejection does not, however, give
> Protestants a positive sense of community focussed
> on political symbols; instead, they fall back upon
> their religion for symbols of identity.30

This, of course, reinforces the 'religious' labelling process,

which leads many to conceive of the conflict as a 'religious'

war.[31] The Unionist violence of 1969 was, in part, an attempt

to preserve a sense of Protestant identity[32], but more funda-

mentally it can be seen as an ill-conceived means of main-

taining a fragile power structure. As The Sunday Times

Insight Team points out, this proved to be:

> a fatal error by the ruling Protestants. It was to
> mistake the Civil Rights movement of the sixties for an
> attack on the State of Ulster itself. Thus, by choice

of the ruling elite, the energy of the reformist impulse
has been made to shake the foundations of society.33

The Orange myth supporting Unionist rule, because of its

tendency to interpret developments in terms of 'black and

white', led to the perception on the part of many Unionists

that the Civil Rights movement was I.R.A. inspired.34 Basic

economic and social issues became, therefore, translated into

questions of religion and national sovereignty.35

Religious Aspects of the Myths

Recognizing, then, the importance of religious aspects

in the struggle, it is contended that to identify the

conflict as a type of religious war is dangerously misleading.

The situation in Northern Ireland is primarily a political

problem, a struggle for power, and this requires a political

solution. The pitfall is that:

> We pick out that factor which puts most things into
> immediate order for us. Where religion satisfactorily
> encompasses the whole logic, it becomes the prime
> identifier. At the same time, that shorthand also traps
> people into a primarily religious identity.36

Thus, while recognizing the influence of religion upon moral

and political thought and conceptions of national identity37,

we must avoid the reduction of a complex situation to a

simple religious basis. Religion has also had a profound

influence on the myths. The religious dimensions of the myth

have allowed the latter to become a "receptacle for ultimate

aspirations"38. Yet, it is the myths, not the religions, of

Ulster which validate any behaviour on behalf of the visionary

goal. The myths provide the justification for violence in the name of an absolute belief or ideal. While the churches preach against violence, the myths provide the morality of violence. The religious influence lends to the myths the intractible belief, the unconditional certainty, the feelings of solidarity and the intense loyalty. The myths, with their potent religious elements, give the conflict that unique character which distinguishes it from more conventional types of warfare; they provide that "zealotry that exists outside time and immediate circumstances, an implacability that is directed from within"[39]. Further, it is in this type of conflict that the distinction between myth and ideology, as outlined by Sorel, becomes clear. The myth encourages a tribal loyalty and the battle ensuing is quite different to an ideological conflict which is "susceptible to detente"[40]. The myth is deeply intolerant of accommodation; there is no compromise. Thus,

> When people fight over territory for economic advant-
> age, they reach the point where the battle isn't worth
> the cost and so compromise. When the cause is religious,
> compromise and conciliation seem to be evil.[4I]

Religious aspects add to the sacred quality of the myth and also serve to enhance the commitment and strengthen the sense of identity. Religion would appear to have an important two-fold effect: on the one hand, it stabilizes and integrates, and on the other, it rigidifies, making the myth more impervious to changing circumstances. It is as if whatever religion

touches acquires sacred characteristics.[42] This rigidification
counters Sorel's idea of myth being vague and accommodating.[43]

Religious Aspects of the Violence

The religious factor also lends a special character
to the violence. Hence, the question is asked:

> Why, at this point in the 20th century, the strange
> vitality of what seem to be religious wars? Westerners
> tend to regard them as something anachronistic - an
> offense against the heritage of the Enlightenment,
> spasms of violent superstition. If war is often enough
> inexplicable, religious conflict at least seems to
> carry war's inherent irrationality into an even uglier,
> throwback realm of absolutes, beyond the reach of
> compromise.[44]

An essential feature of these seemingly religious wars is
the depth of commitment. Thus, we see men prepared to lay
down their own lives in the service of a cause and, in Durk-
heim's terms, committing acts of 'altruistic suicide'[45]. It
is the readiness for self-sacrifice which Fanon held to be
fundamental for both the unity of the individual and the
native movement.[46] This conviction, as Sorel indicated, is
founded on the belief that one is fighting for an "army of
truth" against the "forces of evil".[47]

Catalytic Forces

Yet, one may argue, the myth with all its religious
significance is continuously present and violence is not
always the end result. The presence of the myths, then, can
be seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the
outbreak of violence in Ulster. The question to be answered
is, what is the force which acts as a catalyst and sets off

the reaction? Most obvious in the history of the province
has been the presence of demagogues, capable of arousing
sentiments from the hitherto subconscious to the conscious
mind. The spreading of propaganda not only strengthens the
myth by making apparent its intractibility but also, by
making people aware of their own sentiments, provides the
motive force for action.[48] It increases the isolation and
non-compromising nature of the conflicting group myths, a
necessary condition of their effectiveness: "As soon as by
one's propaganda even a glimpse of right on the other side
is admitted, the cause for doubting one's own right is laid"[49].
The demagogues are the 'myth-makers'[50], although strictly
speaking they are not creating a new myth, they are merely
elaborating on old but powerful themes. Most apparent in
this respect is the Rev. Ian Paisley, whose bible-thumping
activities have served to greatly increase sectarian
hostility. He has proved to be both an embarrassment and a
powerful threat to the 'rational elite'[5I],although he has
simply acted on the Orange myth in a more blatant fashion
than they, thereby exposing its crude and violent nature.
Thus,

> Paisley's first political challenge came in I965
> when he accused O'Neill of betraying Unionism by enter-
> taining at Stormont a 'Fenian Papist murderer' - a
> reference to the mild-mannered Irish Prime Minister,
> Sean Lemass, which astonished even many Unionists.
> Religion was Paisley's weapon.
>   As the religious climate in the world outside soft-
> ened through the sixties, Paisley lambasted Protestant
> clerics who had ecumenical intercourse with the scarlet

whore of Rome.52

Without drawing dangerous political or ideological comparisons,
it can still be held that Paisley has attempted to represent
the 'Loyal Protestants of Ulster' in much the same fashion as
Hitler represented Nazi Germany. He, like Hitler, may be
described in Lasswell's terms:

> The self of the representative German incorporated
> the symbol 'German' and with it the entire myth of
> German history, character and destiny. The extremes of
> self-admiration and self-debasement present in this
> mythology provided a potent determiner for the accent-
> uation of power in the name of the collective self
> throughout the group, and for the service of the central
> myth by the power-seeking personality.53

The fact that Ulster Catholics do not have such a
single charismatic leader is attributable in part to the
idea that they are not in need of a figurehead of identity.[54]
It can also be claimed at this point that the violence prac-
tised by the two groups has been of a quite different nature.
For the Protestants, the possible loss of the "Ulster that
is theirs and all that is theirs" would be a cataclysmic
event; they are fighting for their very survival. The Cath-
olics, meanwhile, have seen their violence as part of a cam-
paign, a battle in the war against British control. The I.R.A.,
for example, conceives of a united and politically independ-
ent Ireland as only the first step: the economic war with
Britain then has to be fought.[55] In circumstances such as
those in which Ulster Protestants find themselves, the emer-
gence of a single charismatic figure has been common; such a

person is usually conceived as being a "saviour". These charismatic figures generally come from within, responding to the tensions which emerge inside a society, relying upon an emotional response from their followers.[56] This is not to say that Ulster Catholics do not also have their heroes but that these figures are most often of the past and are representative of a tradition rather than being the bearers of personal charismatic attributes.

Patriotism

It is in the development of patriotic feelings that the significance of separate schooling becomes manifest:

> How you look at history, who your heroes are, depends on your education here. Do you see Irish history as a history of oppression or keeping down the rebellion? Do you see it as fighting for unity and freedom from Britain, or part of the U.K.'s history? One child's hero is another child's villain.[57]

The myths themselves have been developed far beyond the history books, being closely related to and affecting present day events. Yet, the element of idealism is always there to be called upon, rejuvenating the historical myths and giving force to differing perceptions of the situation. To be a patriot is the ultimate personal goal, patriotism having been defined by Irish nationalists as "in large part a memory of heroic dead men and a striving to accomplish some task left unfinished by them"[58]. In the thought of these nationalists, revolution and religion are intermingled in a compelling manner, accentuating the power of the myth and

the intensity of the violence:

> One of the sins against Faith is presumption which is defined as: 'A foolish expectation of salvation without making use of the necessary means to obtain it'. Surely it is a sin against national faith to expect national freedom without accepting the necessary means to win and keep it. And I know of no other way than the way of the sword: History records no other, reason and experience suggest no other.[59]

Thus far, we have examined the roles of religion, national differences and history in forming peoples' perceptions. It is now time to examine the influence of more recent social and economic developments, and to investigate the relationship of myth and violence to another form of stratification, the class structure.

Social and Economic Issues

With the establishment of the separate state of Ulster in 1921, the Catholics were subjected to a new and more blatant form of discrimination than they had previously experienced. They were now governed by the laws of "a Protestant Parliament and a Protestant State"[60]. Their position was established as one of inferiority within the province, justified by the Unionist conviction that Catholics were enemies of the state. The introduction of the Welfare State, which the Unionist government had had reluctantly imposed upon it by Westminster, served to weaken Unionism. The effect of introducing national insurance, family allowance, state aid for education and so on, was to diminish the pressure for emigration[61] on the Catholic side and to shield them

from the worst rigours of the system. It also contributed
to the rise of a Catholic middle class and, by bringing the
North ahead of welfare and social security measures in the
South, it tempered the enthusiasm of Northern Catholics for
unification under Dublin.[62] The Civil Rights movement of the
1960s was, in many respects, an attempt to break down the
very foundations upon which the myths of Ulster were laid.
Its aim was to unite Catholics and Protestants in the camp-
aign for better housing, employment opportunities and an end
to discrimination. Simply because it advocated change and
reform, it was quickly branded as "Civil Rights Association
- Crafty Romanist Agitators"[63], and never did succeed in
breaking through sectarian lines. The economic struggle,
involving issues of housing and employment, in this context,
could not be conducted on its own but quickly called into
question certain political and religious relations.

The actual social conditions of the Protestant work-
ing class were often no better than their fellow Catholic
workers. Michael Farrell tells us that despite the system-
atic use of discrimination as a shield against the worst of
poverty,

> tens of thousands of Protestant workers and farmers
> earn low wages and live in depressing hovels. In the
> overwhelmingly Protestant Shankill Road, 96 per cent of
> the houses have no hot water, bath or wash-hand basin
> and have only an outside toilet.64

These facts have led many to question the absence of a class
consciousness and sense of class interests. Circumstances

seemed to have little changed since Engels' observation in

the nineteenth century that:

> Ireland still remained the Holy Isle whose aspirations
> must on no account be mixed up with the profane class
> struggles of the rest of the sinful world.65

The view has been taken that the sectarian riots are them-

selves an indication of the workers' dissatisfaction. Owen

Dudley Edwards believes that:

> The zeal with which Catholic and Protestant workers
> destroyed one another's slum dwellings was subjectively
> directly the expression of sectarian bigotry and indir-
> ectly the consequence of upper-class directed sectarian
> agitation...their explosion into violence was at bottom
> a protest against the conditions forced upon them.66

Thus, if the workers react violently towards each other and

not against their real oppressors, it could be that easy

victims near at hand tend to be sought out rather than inacc-

essible ones at some distance. This brings to mind Simmel's

'scape-goating' mechanism, an institution which serves to

channel hostility and prevents the release against the

original object, thereby maintaining the structure of the

social system.[67] Edwards' assertion, however, is rather a

difficult one to support. A more feasible answer to the

question is that class awareness does exist within each of

the two groups, but that the myths serve to inhibit the

development of inter-group class consciousness. The events

of the I930s came the nearest to fulfilling a simple class

conflict. In I932, Protestant workers on the Shankill Road

rioted in protest against police brutality to the unemployed

on the Falls Road (a Catholic area). Yet, by 1935, the famil-
iar sectarian riots had started again. This suggests that
class lines of cleavage had been present, but that sectarian
issues once more gained prominence over economic issues.[68]
The myth, then, may be seen as transcending the class struc-
ture and subordinating class interests, especially in times
of conflict.[69] This pattern was to repeat itself in the 1960s.
The original issues soon became blurred with the acceleration
of violence and the subsequent decline in vigour of the
Civil Rights campaign. As early as 1969, The Sunday Times
Insight Team wrote:

> The monster of sectarian violence is well out of its
> cage. The issue now is no longer civil rights or even
> houses and jobs. The issue is now whether the state
> should exist and who should have the power, and how it
> should be defended; and this is an issue on which the
> wild men on both sides have sworn for 40 years, fre-
> quently in blood, that they will never back down.[70]

Outside Influences

Thus far, our analysis has concentrated on forces at
work within Northern Ireland itself. It is important to
remember, however, that Ulster is geographically part of Ire-
land and constitutionally part of the U.K. What, then, have
been the roles of the Irish and British governments respect-
ively? The partition of Ireland has always been an emotive
issue in the Republic. There have been, in the last fifty
years, a galaxy of proud declarations against partition,
while the objective consequence of this behaviour has been
to strengthen the legitimacy of partition in the minds of

the Unionists. Anti-partition, as preached in the Republic,
not only did much to strengthen the hand of the Unionist
government in the north, it also proved of great service in
insuring specific political gains in entirely different fields
for its advocates. As Richard Rose comments,

> One of the classic complaints about Irish politics -
> both before the Rising and since - is that men who have
> at one time espoused idealistic causes have been only
> too ready to turn to the machinations of machine polit-
> icians, and adopt policies showing too much regard to
> their personal and private fortunes.7I

As for the widespread support of anti-partition, it seems to
have been less a response to conditions in the north than to
an emotive ideal which was expounded with very little pract-
ical stress on northern realities. Owen Dudley Edwards argues
that the emphasis placed on Britain's fundamental responsibi-
lity for the origin and maintenance of partition was used as
an excuse for avoiding serious discussion of the degree to
which Unionism and militant Protestantism were indigenous to
Irish society in Ulster, and hence were an Irish political
attitude.72 Yet, this tendency to blame the British for all
Irish ills is an integral part of the nationalist myth and
one which is still extremely influential.

In times of crisis in Northern Ireland, the national-
ist party in the Republic, Fianna Fail, has faced a political
crisis of its own. While in government, it has found itself
in the position of trying to accommodate the wishes of the
British government on the one hand and its own hard-line

nationalists on the other. This, understandably, is a very
delicate balance to maintain and Fianna Fail's pendulum has,
on occasion, swung too far in one direction.[73] Perhaps the
most inflammatory statement of the last eight years came from
Jack Lynch in 1969, while he was Taoiseach (Prime Minister);
"The Irish Government can no longer stand idly by..."[74]. To
those Unionists of the 'siege-mentality'[75], this meant a
forthcoming invasion by the Irish Army. The resultant hard-
ening of attitudes inevitably led to more violence. Although
the Irish Army was not preparing for combat, the I.R.A. was.
The latter organization, as Magee points out, is not a power-
ful political movement for it has never gained the active
support of more than a minority of the population. They have
symbolized a mixture of idealism and terror, bearers of a
tradition of physical force and political separatism. For
the main part, it has not been an intellectual movement but
has drawn its inspiration from folk memory, ballads, comm-
emorations and a selective and emotionally taught versions
of Irish history[76]:

> Such are the books that, forty years after, still
> trumpet forth the revolution, as though nothing had
> happened but the work of Tone, the Young Irelanders,
> the Fenians and the I.R.B., and as though that century
> could go on for ever, with its passions, and its suff-
> ering, and its heroism and its mistakes.[77]

Such was the emphasis upon emotional responses and idealistic
formulae that the Provisional I.R.A. inherited, that the
head of the more strategically grounded Official I.R.A. has

commented:

> For them...the fight had become an end in itself.
> They were not planning to <u>achieve</u> the freedom of Ire-
> land. They simply wanted to <u>fight</u> for it.78

In other words, the violence became an end in itself, as

Arendt has warned.[79] The means overwhelmed the end and the

transition took place between 'instrumental' to 'expressive'

violence.[80]

The role of the British government in the present

conflict is rather a difficult one to define without being

caught up in somewhat dubious assertions regarding the nature

of "British Imperialism"[81]. The British Army presence in the

north of Ireland is, ostensibly, one of a 'peace-keeping'

force, as an attempt to contain the violence. Without enter-

ing into the debate as to whether troops, guns and armoured

cars can ever be used to 'keep the peace', there is little

doubt that its presence has given new life to some deeply-

rooted and traditional hostilities. A certain lack of compre-

hension has always characterized Britain's involvement in

Irish matters. The cultural climate of Britain is ill-equipped

to deal with the pervasive myths which influence so many of

Irish affairs. Nor does this climate dispose itself towards

violence. George Bernard Shaw summed up the difficulty in

the first years of this century:

> political opinion in Ulster is not a matter of talk
> and bluff as it is in England. No English Home Ruler
> has the faintest intention, in any event, of throwing
> actual paving stones at any English Unionist...the

> Ulsterman is not like that. He is inured to violence.
> He has thrown stones and been hit by them. He has batt-
> ered his political Opponent with fist and stick, and
> been battered himself in the same manner....Consequently,
> when he sings 'Oh God Our Help in Ages Past', he means
> business. And there is a strength in his rancour which
> lifts it above rancour.[82]

The most significant role of the British would appear to lie

in the past and the contribution they have made to the group

myths. For the Irish nationalist, Britain's legacy in Irish

history has been one of exploitation and atrocities, from

Cromwell to the Black and Tans.[83] For the Unionist, Britain

until recently has protected Ulster from the greatest evil

that could befall it, rule from Dublin.[84] British involvement

in recent years has basically consisted of attempts to ease

the tensions within Ulster society by accommodating some of

the Catholic demands. Because of the sectarian nature of the

group myths, however, the main effect of this policy has

been to increase hostility from the Protestant side. This has

given rise to a new phenomenon, which may be described as

'Ulster nationalism', now that Britain's loyalty can no

longer be taken for granted. Corresponding to this develop-

ment has been the growth of various Protestant para-military

groups and private armies. As Rose points out,

> The slogan 'Up the UVF' painted on a wall off the
> Shankill Road is just as much a challenge to the auth-
> ority of the regime as the slogan 'Up the IRA'.[85]

The greater the polarization of the two groups, the greater

the power that the respective myths have and the greater the

intensity of the violence. It is, thus, not sufficient to

simply remedy certain social injustices. Until the myths of Ulster with their potent religious elements are exposed and recognized, the 'monster of sectarian violence' will remain out of its cage.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1.   Of course, the violence may also give rise to
the myths. Our interest is now, however, in violence as
a dependent variable.

2.   Some of the Rev. Ian Paisley's statements may
lead one to believe that there is a quarrel over theo-
logy. The basic motivation behind such statements is,
however, political.

3.   Although religion may be used in the vernacular
to describe political movements for example, the common
understanding is that of a set of a supernatural beliefs
under the earthly guidance of a church.

4. Durkheim, E., The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,
(1965), p.62.

5. Ibid.

6.   Hence, we have the phenomenon of 'rebel' priests
who reject the Church's authority on non-spiritual
matters.

7.   See Chapter IV, "Ulster in the Colonial Context".

8. For example, Wallace, M., Northern Ireland: Fifty Years
of Self-Government, (1971).

9. Nicholas Mansergh, quoted in Magee, J., Northern Ireland:
Crisis and Conflict, (1974), p.93.

10. Rose, R., Governing without Consensus, (1971), p.249.

11. See Giddens, A., Capitalism and Modern Social Theory,
(1974), Part 3.

12. Wilson, B. R., Magic and the Millennium, (1973), p.107.

13.   This is especially true in times of conflict.
Most of the rebellions and uprisings throughout Irish
history have been conducted with the expressed disapp-
roval of the Catholic Church.

14. Sweetman, R., On Our Knees, (1972), p.17.

15. Rose, R., *op cit*, p.260.

16.   This is particularly marked on the part of the Catholic Church, although the Rev. Ian Paisley's attitude towards ecumenicism is the most extreme.

17. "Shared schools proposal stirs angry debate in Ulster", *The Globe and Mail*, (August 12th, 1976).

18.   That is to say, there are many preconceived opinions about the members of the other religion.

19.   The political power of the Catholic Church has been considerable. Until recently, it had a special place in the Irish constitution.

20.   This was a slogan which carried particular weight just before the partition of Ireland, when it appeared to Ulster Unionists that independence was to be granted to all 32 counties.

21. Quoted in De Paor, *Divided Ulster*, (1972), p.143.

22. Quoted, *Ibid*, p.125.

23. O'Brien, C. C., *States of Ireland*, (1972), p.162.

24.   These include such figures as Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet and Charles Stuart Parnell.

25.   The Orange Order glorifies the British connection, while also stressing the unique character of Ulster.

26. Roberts, D. A., "The Orange Order in Ireland: a religious institution?" in *The British Journal of Sociology*, 1971.
       The fervour of this early nineteenth century toast has scarcely diminished today:
       To the glorious, pious and Immortal Memory of King William III, who saved us from Rogues and Roguery, Slaves and Slavery, Knaves and Knavery, Popes and Popery, from brass money and wooden shoes; and whoever denies this Toast may he be slammed, crammed and jammed into the muzzle of the great gun of Athlone, and the gun fired into the Pope's belly, and the Pope into the Devil's Belly, and the Devil into Hell, and the door locked and the key in an Orangeman's pocket.
       Quoted in De Paor, L., *op cit*, p.33.

27.   This ballad also dramatizes the close historical link between Unionism, Orangeism and the British Conservative Party.

28. Boserup, A., Who is the Principal Enemy?, (1972), p.12.

29. Roberts, D. A., op cit.

30. Rose, R., op cit, p.216.

31.   This notion has been encouraged by the media. Their reporting, in this respect, is often inaccurate and many believe that it has served to increase hostility.

32.   This identity, as we saw in the previous chapter, was undergoing a conflict between the forces of change represented by O'Neill and those of inflexibility. The violence on the part of the 'hard-liners' only served, however, to further weaken this identity.

33. The Sunday Times Insight Team, Ulster, (1972), p.27.

34.   As far as can be ascertained, the I.R.A. wielded no influence over the Civil Rights movement at this point.

35.   These issues were seen as a challenge not only to the structure of Ulster society itself but also to the union with Britain.

36. "Religious Wars, a Bloody Zeal", in Time magazine, July 12th, 1976.

37. See Boserup, A., op cit, p.11.
            Boserup argues that religion is not just more strongly experienced in Northern Ireland than it is elsewhere but that it is the religion itself which is qualitatively different.

38. Time magazine, op cit.
            The writer, however, stresses religion as the motive factor.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42.   Hence the killings may even be seen as 'holy'.

43.   See Chapter II, "What is Myth?".

44. Time magazine, op cit.

45.   Altruistic suicide rests upon the existence of a strong conscience collective, which so dominates the actions of an individual that he will sacrifice his life in furtherance of a collective value.
See Giddens, A., op cit, Chapter 6.

46.   See Chapter III, "Violence; its Nature, Causes and Consequences".

47.   Ibid.

48.   The effectiveness of propaganda lies in its capacity to play upon sentiments and fears which already exist.

49. Adolf Hitler, quoted by Edwards, O. D., The Sins of Our Fathers, (1970), p.I4.

50. A term of I. L. Horowitz.
See the chapter "What is Myth?".

51.   As above - in this case, the 'rational elite' are the 'moderate' Unionists.

52. The Sunday Times Insight Team, op cit, p.42.

53. Lasswell, H. D., Power and Personality, (1969), pp.53-4.

54.   Ulster Catholics also have their heroes, but there is no single figure in which their collective aspirations are focussed.

55.   This objective, however, is often lost from sight. The battle is very close to being the entire war.

56. See Mol, H., Identity and the Sacred, (1976), p.45.

57. The Globe and Mail, op cit.

58. Patrick Pearse, quoted in Coogan, T. P., The I.R.A., (1971), p.295.

59. Pearse, Ibid.

60.   The words of the first Prime Minister of the province, Lord Craigavon.
Quoted in Magee, J., op cit, p.4.

61.   Emigration, up to this time, had balanced out the higher Catholic birth-rate, thus leaving the number of Catholics in the province at a stable level.

62. This, in its turn, lessened any justification on the Unionists' part for further discrimination.

63. O'Brien, C. C., op cit, p.147.

64. Farrell, M., Struggle in the North, (1972), p.14.

65. Quoted in Rose, R., op cit, p.275.

66. Edwards, O. D., op cit, pp.78-9.

67. See Coser, L., The Functions of Social Conflict, (1968).

68. It also suggests a degree of myth-manipulation on the part of the Unionists. A common understanding between the Catholic and Protestant working class would probably have resulted in the downfall of Unionism.

69. As Malinowski indicated, myth reaches its full force in unusual or dangerous situations.
See Chapter II, "What is Myth?".

70. The Sunday Times Insight Team, op cit, p.8.

71. Rose, R., op cit, p.454.
The phenomenon of myth being used for individual gain is also quite marked in Northern Ireland at this time. The crime rate in Ulster, quite apart from illegal actions in the name of a 'cause' , has escalated with the non-idealistic phenomena of protection rackets and other criminal activities conducted for personal motives. In the present confusion, however, it is difficult to ascertain whether a crime has been committed for 'political' or personal motives.

72. Edwards, O. D., op cit.

73. Fianna Fail has had to face the conflict between espousing nationalist aspirations, which have been necessary to maintain its political standing in the Republic, and not antagonizing the British government on whose economic cooperation it depends.

74. Quoted in O'Brien, C. C., op cit, p.171.

75. A term used by O'Brien, op cit.

76. See Magee, J., op cit, p.27.

77. Professor Hayes-McCoy, quoted, ibid.
This is a condemnation of some of the textbooks

‚used in schools in the Republic of Ireland.

78. Cathal Goulding, quoted in The Sunday Times Insight Team, op cit, p.24.

79.   See Chapter III, "Violence; its Nature, Causes and Consequences".

80.   See Chapter IV, "Ulster in the Colonial Context".

81.   It has been noted by various writers that British imperialism is simply not an important force in contemporary Irish politics. To the limited extent that it is, its interests are antithetical to those of Protestant rule in Ulster, not coincident with them. The profit flow from British business interests in the Republic back to Britain is 2½ times that from Ulster. British government expenses, in terms of annual subsidies to the North, have been recently estimated at 300 million pounds.

82. Quoted in Coogan, T. P., op cit, p.22.

83.   The massacres committed by Cromwell's army in 1649 are remembered by Irish Catholics to this day. The brutality of the Black and Tans after the first world war also served as a confirmation of British oppression.

84.   In this, the Unionists received considerable support from British politicians.
            See Chapter IV, "Ulster in the Colonial Context".

85. Rose, R., op cit, p.153.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to examine the theoretical and practical significance of the dual phenomena of myth and violence. Thus, we have seen that in relation to the present social structure, both myth and violence have had certain cohesive effects. They both serve to unite the respective social groups, in the first instance by providing an interpretation of events and focussing aspirations, and, in the second by joining individuals together in collective social action and in the affirmation of the group identity. The myths and the violence have also lent themselves towards conflict in the society as a whole by increasing the divisions between the two groups and by the subsequent disruption of the social system. The relationship between these two concepts and the various social structural aspects and contradictions of Ulster society has been examined. Thus, we have been able to investigate the manner in which these structural aspects have both affected and been affected by the social actors concerned. Within this context, we have noted the reciprocal relationship of the myths and the violence; how each has served to engender and reinforce the other.

Let us, then, return to the models of integration theory and coercion theory outlined at the beginning of the

thesis. As previously suggested, the insights of both need to be taken into account for a comprehensive conception of society. This study of Ulster society demonstrates not only the dual presence of the forces of cohesion and conflict, but also their intimate and reciprocal relationship with each other. Ulster, however, has been a society which could not contain its forces of conflict. The social and political system established in Ulster in 1921 lacked any functional cooperation or consensus upon basic values. The boundaries of the new state were drawn up specifically to ensure that the Catholic population were in a minority and, therefore, would have no claim to power.[1] It incorporated into its structure not integration but very important divisions, not stability but force and discrimination. The two groups were, thus, polarized from the outset. The problem in Ulster is not one of the breakdown of a basic cohesion; the cohesion never existed on the societal level, but only on the group level. It comes as no surprise, then, that a social system founded upon such elements should give rise to further conflict.

What is of special interest, however, is the _type_ of cohesion and conflict to be found in the Six Counties. The cohesion of the two groups, as regards their values and perceptions, is founded upon selective versions of history which, in their turn, are represented by the myths. As Karl Marx wrote:

> The tradition of all the dead generations...weighs
> like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just
> when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves
> and things...they anxiously conjure up the spirits of
> the past to their service and borrow from them names,
> battle cries and costumes in order to present the new
> scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise
> and this borrowed language.2

Such is the lament of Ulster, its traditions, its myths and
its heroes. The myths are embedded in the history and struct-
ure of Northern Ireland, bolstered by political institutions
such as the Orange Order and social institutions such as
that of separate schooling. Nor is violence incidental to the
politics of Ulster; in many respects, it is the politics.
'Politics', in the normal sense of the word[3], has little
place in a society where popular leaders advocate the use of
violence to achieve certain ends and where, in the past,
democracy has been little more than a sham. Having identified
these forces of cohesion and conflict in Ulster, we then
examined their close inter-relationship with each other. The
myths while providing a necessary motive force for the
violence, were themselves engendered and bolstered by certain
violent acts. In demonstrating the intimate relationship
between myth and violence, the theories of Georges Sorel have
been of great significance. His insights have been extended
to analyse a situation of competing group myths and the
special character of the violence which co-exists with them.

To most observers, both the cohesion and the conflict
which exist in Ulster seem eminently undesirable. Few would

wish to see the continuance of the violence now prevailing and the competition of two irreconcilable sets of aspirations. The "monster of sectarian violence" will not disappear quickly; it may be caged by force, but only temporarily. Force can only give further credence to the myths. As demonstrated by Edmonds, one cannot fight ideals with guns, tanks and planes, but only with other ideals.[4] There are, as we have seen, two 'types' of violence, 'instrumental' and 'expressive'. It has been suggested that something of a transition has taken place between the two. Instrumental violence, as Arendt points out, can only be justified as a means towards an end. Once the means have overwhelmed the end, then the violence assumes a life of its own.[5] Expressive violence, meanwhile, can only help man 'create himself'[6] when it is not habitual. When it is, it becomes a purely destructive impulse and its motivation, as seen in the sectarian killings in Ulster, is not creativity but revenge. The Sorelian notion that "The end is nothing, the movement is all"[7] has dangerous consequences for a society such as Ulster. If the goal has become relatively unimportant and it is the fighting for the goal which has become most significant[8], then the violence may continue indefinitely.

It is not the intention of this thesis to advocate constitutional solutions. Whether Ulster is united with the Republic of Ireland, whether it becomes subject to permanent

direct rule from Westminster or whether it becomes a fully
independent unit is not the matter under debate. This
analysis has attempted to answer questions of 'why?' not
'whither?'. Recent developments, however, have allowed
this thesis to end on a more optimistic note. The present
Peace Movement in Ulster has so far succeeded in breaking
through sectarian lines and has united both Catholics and
Protestants, desirous of an end to the violence, in a common
cause. The 'ideal' of peace is presently challenging the
ideals incorporated in the group myths. If it maintains its
present momentum, it may not only dry up the water in which
the 'terrorist' fish swim[9], but may also give rise to a new
form of commitment which will have the effect of uniting
Catholics and Protestants rather than dividing them. This,
for Ulster, would be a fairly unique form of social unity.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

I.   This careful drawing up of boundaries ensured that the Unionists would have as much territory as possible and that their position of power and majority would not be challenged.

2.   Quoted in Tudor, H., _Political Myth_, (1972), p.132.

3.   That is, the politics understood in most western democracies, where political decisions are reached by an elected and representative assembly.

4.   Daily Mail editorial, cited in Edmonds, S., _The Gun, the Law and the Irish People_, (1971), pp.87-8.

5.   Arendt, H., _On Violence_, (1970).
        See also Chapter III, "Violence; its Nature, Causes and Consequences".

6.   As suggested in the writings of Sartre and Fanon. See Chapter III.

7.   Sorel, G., _Reflections on Violence_, (1941), p.158.
        See also Chapter III.

8.   This, as we saw in Chapter V, has been the tendency on the part of the Provisional I.R.A.

9.   In stretching Mao's analogy a little, we are simply claiming that the power behind the violence may decrease with the growth of the Peace Movement.

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