It is a great pleasure and privilege to address you in memory and honor of Dr. Lee Sutton, who was for many years a friend of the Vaughan family, and, as you know, a devoted, able and thoughtful physician who gave much to the care of Virginia's children as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics and as Dean of the Medical College of Virginia.

In discussing certain issues in human development, I would like to touch on three phenomena. On two of them we have information chiefly from animal studies; the third is a more immediate part of our lives and the lives of our children.

The first phenomenon is imprinting, which was described about 30 years ago by Konrad Lorenz, who first observed it in geese. Lorenz has summarized some of his studies in a remarkable little book entitled *King Solomon's Ring*. In it he describes the experience of hatching goose eggs in an incubator, watching these little creatures for a day or two, and then shooing them out into the yard to join their mother. Thereafter, whenever Lorenz appeared in the yard, the little geese who had lived in his presence for the first two or three days ran to him instead of their natural parent. As a thoughtful biologist, Lorenz, instead of missing this as mental retardation in goslings, studied the matter in detail. He determined not only that this behavior is characteristic of newly hatched geese, but that ducks and a variety of birds behave in a similar manner.

In further study of this behavior, it has been determined that newly hatched ducklings will follow any moving object, with maximal drive or urgency at about 11 to 14 hours of age. The moving object can be a mother duck, another animal, or even a little block of wood on wheels pulled by a piece of string. If the object emits sound, the duckling will follow a little more effectively. Depending upon the duration or intensity of his following reaction, later in life in a situation where he is exposed to the imprinting object, to his own mother, and to an anxiety provoking stimulus, the duckling will run to the imprinting object for refuge.

During the initial following reaction, an electrified grille may be put in front of the duckling, so that as he follows, he gets shocked. Any normal adult duck would stop following. During the imprinting period, however, the duckling follows even more urgently, and the intensity of the imprinting is made more powerful by the painful stimulus.

This misidentification of one's natural refuge or parent turns out not to be limited to birds. Most of us first heard of imprinting with the story of Mary's little lamb, plainly imprinted to Mary.

* Sutton Memorial Lecturer, Third Annual Pediatrics Day, December 8, 1967, Medical College of Virginia, Richmond.
Other studies of this phenomenon indicate that dogs, too, have a critical period in which they will become accustomed to human handling. If you mean to make a puppy a lap dog, a house dog, a close friend of the family, you will best bring him into the house at five to seven weeks. If you put this off until 12 to 14 weeks, you will not ultimately have the same kind of dog; for the dog that has lived in a kennel for that period of time has a different social orientation. He doesn't become a big, friendly pup like our family's current watch-dog, who came to us at seven weeks, and who might kill a stranger—by licking him to death.

An earlier dog came to our house at about 14 weeks. We tried for nearly two years to make a friend out of her, but she truly earned the name "Bitch" in the way she used to greet not only strangers but the rest of the family. She was snappish, irritable, unpredictable, and downright mean. Her pups, on the other hand, born in the house and raised by hand by our own children, were domesticated in just the way one would expect house pets to be domesticated. They had none of their mother's evil temper.

One of the most remarkable examples of imprinting is given in the book Born Free. You will remember that Elsa, the lioness, was found with two siblings in a cave, before her eyes were opened and shortly after her mother was shot. She was brought into human company and grew to adult lionhood absolutely free-living in a human family. Her foster parents put a rope around her neck when they went to town, but Elsa was apparently quite able to generalize her identification of the human species, and in her short life, although she roamed quite free in human society, she never made an attack upon a human being.

Within various families of animals there are variations in imprinting. It is apparently necessary to domesticate a wolf, for example, much earlier than a dog in order to make a house pet out of it. It is said that if one brings a wolf into human company before its eyes are open, as Elsa came to the Adamsons, it is relatively easy to raise him as a domestic animal. This is done with increasing difficulty after the wolf has lived for even a short period in the company of his natural parents. It ultimately becomes virtually impossible to make a house pet out of a wolf.

Further observations add to the mystery and wonder of imprinting and related phenomena. In goats a relationship is established between mother and infant in the first day of life which is quite essential to the nutrition of the infant goat. When the kid is taken away from the mother for a period of 40 minutes during the first day, the bond between the two may be irrevocably fractured. After this separation, the mother receives the kid with butts, pushing it away and refusing to nurse it. In contrast, the normal nanny goat, immediately after delivery, will accept any small goat as her own (Hersher Moore and Richmond, 1958).

Something very important, then, is going on in the first day of life in goats, geese, and ducks—something which is very important for the socialization of the animal with other members of its own species.

Have these phenomena anything to do with the human condition? We really don't know. But studies undertaken at Wisconsin and elsewhere are beginning to tell us something about early socialization in other primates. The studies of Harry Harlow have become famous. He has raised small monkeys with chicken-wire mothers, some of them covered with terry cloth and some of them not. The infant associates with these inanimate mothers without much in the way of feedback from his own input to the mother. Harlow has shown that if he gives the infant a choice between a bare chicken-wire mother and one covered with terry cloth—both of which have a bottle attached and an electric light bulb inside, so that they give both nutrition and warmth—the infant will attach himself to the terry cloth-covered mother. There is something in the feel of the available parent that profoundly conditions the behavior of infant monkeys in the area of socialization.

Now what do monkeys have to do with people? We don't really know. There are likely to be differences between monkeys and people, just as there are between birds. Here it might be of interest to examine the difference between a precocial and an altricial bird. When precocial birds are hatched, they are able to feed themselves, follow their mothers, and so on, within minutes of the time of delivery. The altricial bird, on the other hand, is fed in a nest for a considerable period. The ring-necked dove, for example, is fed in the nest for 14 days, then mounts to the side of the nest, and in 21 days flies away. If a human handler is to come into the life of a ring-necked dove with an optimum chance of creating conditions under which this dove will accept human company as belonging to its natural state of living, the human handler has to come in at nine days. Increasingly, prior to nine days and after nine days, up to the time when the dove leaves the nest, one loses the capacity to socialize the dove to the human experience.

The human infant is probably much less precocial and much more altricial than the rhesus monkey. A monkey is able to fend for himself pretty well in a few days; the human infant not for many months or years. If imprinting as a kind of socialization has any counterpart in the human animal, it probably goes through stages somewhat as follows. The human infant begins to smile, as a rule, sometime between three and five weeks of age. If he hasn't begun to smile by eight weeks, we begin to be
troubled. If he hasn't smiled by three months, we know there is trouble; we don't necessarily know the kind of trouble, but we can be sure it is there. When the human infant first smiles, his mother, if she is a healthy person, is likely to smile back at the infant; and immediately a bond of feeling which is the forerunner of socialization is set up between the mother and the infant. Even before this there have been arrangements made between mother and infant for nutrition and the like. These are being very actively studied in many places now, but we don't quite know yet what it is that these arrangements contribute to socialization.

At three to four months the youngster begins to make some adjustments of his body anticipatory to being picked up. As his mother reaches down for him, he becomes active; his muscle tone improves; he is ready to be picked up; and he may show his pleasure at the social contact. At this point his response is not very differentiated. Anyone who comes close to an infant at this time can elicit a smile. But by six months the child responds to his mother differently than to any other living person. This can be shown in a number of ways. For example, the child cries when his mother leaves the room but not when other people do.

It seems quite likely that the period of primary socialization to the human species or to the parent has had a number of important steps taking place within the first six months. Between six months and a year the infant goes through another interesting phase, which is a reaction of fear to the approach of strange people. I entered pediatrics with the naive notion that if I made friends with four-, five-, and six-month-old infants as I gave them shots and various treatments, our friendship could continue, so that we would never enter a period where the child was afraid of the physician. This was nonsense. At eight to ten months every child is afraid of a stranger. Infants may show this in a variety of ways, but we can be sure that there is anxiety both on the introduction of a stranger and on separation from the parent and that this anxiety represents a phenomenon in socialization.

Interference with man's socialization has not been studied in a systematic or controlled way. None of us is going to purposely interfere with normal socialization of the infant, although we may ask what it does to the relationship between mother and infant when, in the neonatal period, we anesthetize the mother, remove both the mother and the baby from the experience of giving birth and being born, take the baby immediately to a nursery remote from the mother, bring him out to her for short periods at long intervals without relationship to his physiologic need for the mother or hers for him, and then, at the end of five days, send these strangers home together to build a social unit. This kind of experience has not been given the name of experimentation; but its impact is something we must begin to study.

Another kind of early experience of unplanned impact has been described by Sally Provence and Rose Lipton in a little volume called Infants in Institutions. Here we learn what may happen when the opportunities of the human infant for socialization are denied. The authors describe an institution in an East Coast city which operated as a foundling home, in which most infants who were admitted came for adoptive placement, born out of wedlock. They were from predominantly lower middle class or upper lower class strata of society, but possessed relatively little that would differentiate one from the other. The institution had a number of nurseries for these children, each containing as many as 20 to 30 infants. Cribs were generally set around the wall, and the infants were in the care of two to three people in the daytime and of, perhaps, one person at night, who spent the night changing them and feeding them with propped bottles because there was relatively little time to do anything else.

Some curious things were observed when Provence and Lipton began to watch these infants. As early as two months of age it was quite evident that they had less vocalization than the normal infant. The growth of two groups of these infants was further studied, as measured on the Gesell scale. Both groups fell into a reasonably normal pattern of distribution with respect to developmental quotients at three to four months of age. Children in the first group were put into adoptive or foster home placement prior to four months, and at the end of a year they were restudied. Again, they had a normal distribution of developmental quotient. The second group of infants remained in the institution a year or more for reasons that are not at all clear, though it appears that random selection determined which youngsters were going to stay in this institution for that period of time. Testing at the end of a year in this second group showed these youngsters to be defective. Without exception they scored below the infants who had been placed in adoptive or foster home care. The best of them scored below the least adequately functioning child in the other group. Other observations indicated they had been slower to develop use of gross muscular activity. They were able to stand, but they didn't have much to stand for; so they were likely to lie in their cribs and show relatively little interest in their surroundings except to look at them. As a result they became very visually oriented.

Some of the second group of youngsters were placed in adoptive homes during the second or third year of life, and, interestingly enough, were able to make up most
of the measured deficiency by Gesell standards. By three years
the children in the two groups were not far apart in gross intellectual
function.

At six years it was still difficult
to find intellectual differences be­
tween the two groups, but differ­
ces now emerged in the area of 
behavior which are quite striking. 
The children who spent the early period of life in the institution now
seemed to be relatively impulsive
in their behavior, have a short at­
tention span, have difficulty in
forming really warm human rela­
tionships with others, and, in these
and other respects, resembled the
so-called brain-damaged child. We
don’t really know what the brain­
damaged child is, but we do know
that there are homes in which the
quality of care the child gets much
more resembles the institutional
quality of care than the quality of
care given by loving foster, adopt­
tive or natural parents.

These observations raise many
questions. We are reminded that
the monkeys raised by Harlow with
those surrogate chicken-wire moth­
ers presented possibly counterpart
disabilities in socialization. When
such animals are raised to adult life,
they appear totally unable to
make places for themselves in mon­
key society and live both sexually
and socially incapacitated. Interest­
ingly enough, in monkeys, and pos­
sibly in man, too, some contact
with siblings or other animals of
the same species and same age can
sometimes substitute to a remark­
able degree for mothering.

The concept of primary sociali­
zation, then, determines what kind
of moving objects an animal is go­
ing to relate to as members of its
own species. We may ask whether
the relationship that schizophrenic
children have to objects which they
have set into motion may somehow
reflect experiences in this early pe­
riod which we don’t fully under­
stand as yet.

So much for imprinting or pri­
mary socialization. It has some
very powerful effects. How power­
ful and how durable the effects are
for man we don’t know. How dur­
able they are for some birds we do
know. There is a story told of the
jackdaw, which, having been raised
by Konrad Lorenz in his backyard,
fell in love with Lorenz. The court­
ing behavior of the male jackdaw
in mating season is to feed his
ladylove mealworms. He lights on
the branch next to her and stuffs
mealworms into her mouth, while
she accepts all this with carefree
disdain. Lorenz became aware of
the affection of this jackdaw when it
sat on his shoulder and began
stuffing mealworms into his mouth.
Needless to say, he was anything
but happy about this, but he loved
the bird in return in his own way
and didn’t want to do the animal
violence. In his gentle way he tried
to persuade the bird that something
was wrong, and we are told that
on at least one occasion, when
Lorenz got a mouthful of meal­
worms and jackdaw saliva, the
whole episode came close to com­
ing to an end. But the bird survived
and got the message. With the dis­
covery that something was wrong,
the jackdaw desisted from trying to
put mealworms in Lorenz’ mouth,
but, for the reminder of this court­
ing season, let on his shoulder and
tried to stuff them into his ear.

Imprinting, then, is a very pow­
erful and very persuasive phenome­
on in the socialization of animals.
We need to know very soon and in
very great detail what its counter­
part is in man, because we have
no reason to feel that we are so
different that there isn’t somewhere
a phenomenon that has like mean­
ing for us.

A second powerful phenomenon
in socialization has been given the
name “territoriality.” It has been
celebrated in recent literature by
Robert Ardrey’s book Territory
Imperative: A Personal Inquiry
into the Animal Origins of Prop­
erty and Nations. Territoriality
shapes the interpersonal relations
or intergroup relations that will
exist in a society of animals so­
cialized to each other.

One of the remarkable experi­
ments dealing with territoriality is
that which was carried out off the
coast of Puerto Rico some 30 years
ago by C. R. Carpenter. Several
hundred rhesus monkeys in a state
of total social disorganization—
they didn’t know each other, came
from all parts of India and Africa
—were put on the island. Carpenter
made sure they had enough food
and patiently watched the way in
which the island became organized
as a home for monkeys. It took the
monkeys about a year to get the
situation under control. At the end
of that time they had an island
which they had divided into various
territories; each had a home tree
where its monkey colony tended
to rest at night; each territory
had borders; and each had its own
activity. The supreme activity on
the island was the defense of ter­
ritorial borders by the various
groups of monkeys. Each group
was organized under a male leader,
with a pecking order among sub­
or dinates similar to that which
exists among barnyard chickens.
The wives had a somewhat similar
pecking order, corresponding in
some measure to that of their hus­
bands.

When a monkey from one group
came close to the border of another
group’s territory, monkeys in the
other group would run over and
scream to him to go home. Indeed,
monkeys gathered at the border
sometimes in such masses that the
border was pushed in a little bit,
whereupon all the monkeys in an
“invaded” group would stop what­
ever they were doing and defend
territory. We do mean whatever
they were doing. The call to de­
fense of territory took precedence
over feeding, over sexual activity,
over grooming, over anything else
that was going on in the monkey
colony except the care of infants.
Everybody would run out and push
the border back to where it was or
a little farther. These borders, then, were somewhat fluctuant.

The one thing that did not occur, generally, was that a moving border overran a home tree; as invaders came close to the home tree, the defenders became invincible.

We don't really know what would happen if you threw a bunch of human beings onto a medium-sized planet in a state of social disorganization; but the planet might look a bit like this one, and if history hasn't taught us that the defense of home and territory is an extremely powerful biologic organizer of social action in primates, including man, then we haven't yet learned our lesson. I, for one, think the lesson we are learning in Viet Nam is that when one invades peoples' territory from the air or by any other route, they become fantastically courageous and angry. To find peace in this kind of setting is extraordinarily difficult. I am sure that we are reaping the failure to anticipate this kind of biologic lesson in our difficulties there.

There are many, many examples of this kind of thing that we might touch on. Let us examine one that is closer to home. We now have children growing up in a state of relative or massive social disorganization in many of our big cities. What happens when this occurs? "West Side Story" is our most graphic description. The territory is known as "turf"; the borders of the territory are certain streets or avenues; and the defense of the borders of the territory takes precedence over other activities. The real tragedy is that this game is played out with switchblade knives and zip guns rather than with the howls and screams of monkeys.

We have symbolic representations of this, too. I offer you a game. It is played on a rectangle with a symbolic object which is put into play in the center of the rectangle. There are 11 primates opposing 11 other primates, the object of the game being for one group to move the symbolic object into the home territory of the other group. You know that the object moves relatively easily in midfield, but that when defenders get their backs to the goalposts, they often draw on reserves of strength, courage, or whatever that throw back the invaders. There are 102,000 other primates gathered around vicariously, enjoying this struggle. The name of the game has to be "Territoriality."

The game can be played in another way which makes the territorial nature of the game a little more obscure. Here the territory has a corner, and in the corner there is a little plastic device having a symbolic meaning which will become clear. The symbolic object is thrown by a primate from a point known as "the mound" past another primate who stands holding a stick. If the second primate is able to hit the symbolic object as it goes past in such a way as to have it land in the territory being defended, then he has the privilege of entering the territory along one margin, where he comes to occupy a symbolic spot, a small rectangular canvas bag. According to certain rules which I won't go into now, he may further invade the territory to occupy another safe spot and possibly even come to a third point. Then, if he is a winner, he goes—where? It cannot be an accident that we call it "home" plate. He has made an invasion of enemy territory, and he has come home.

This game is played in another setting and is in this form disappearing, for which we can be everlastinglly grateful. The territory in this case is a restaurant in a nameless Southern town, defended by white diners and proprietors against the anxieties created in them by black people who want to use the facilities. Black people have, in fact, used the facilities for a good long while, according to the rules of the game. The rules permit one of this group to enter the restaurant along the first base line (the front door), but he can remain safe only if he goes directly to second base (the kitchen). If he enters the front door with any other intent, there is panic. At second base he can disappear, and no one will care. If he re-enters from the kitchen, he can only be safe if he goes out the door (the third base line), the two doors being topologically equivalent.

It helps me, and I think it would help us all, to understand the deep biologic meaning of the anxieties and anger that take place in settings like this, to know what they symbolize and how they serve to trigger feelings and actions. Such an understanding is our best hope of finding controls or acceptable vicarious outlets for feelings of anxiety that lead to hostility, aggression, defensive responses, mounting violence, and so on—feelings which constitute the greatest threat to the world at this time.

There is another noteworthy aspect to territoriality, and that is the personal dimension of territory. All of us walk along surrounded by a certain space which we don't like people to invade. If somebody is too close to us or touches us under the wrong circumstances, we tend to back off. Styles in personal space tend to vary in various parts of the world. We don't use the embrace between men that is so common in Latin countries. We react to it uneasily and think it funny, for example, that Frenchmen embrace each other. The Latin American transacts business several inches closer than we do. When we find him that close, we back off and get a reputation for being cold, for not liking people, for being difficult to get along with.

People who transact business even more closely are the Middle Easterners. In Kahlil Gibran's poem, "The Prophet," you may recall that the prophet says, in taking leave of the people among whom he has lived, that he has felt their breath upon his face. In the Midwest, there is no conversation among friends really unless they feel each
other's breath upon their faces. It has been suggested that the distance at which various societies transact business around the world is inversely proportional to the amount of garlic consumed in the society. Whether garlic permits a closer relationship because everybody eats it, or is simply a defense against such a relationship, I don't know.

The personal dimension of space is very important, and it is felt by animals other than man. If you stride along the boardwalk at Atlantic City through a group of pigeons, a circle will open up around you that accurately measures the distance within which a striding man can approach a pigeon before the animal takes evasive action. As another example, visualize a heron sitting on a nest of eggs. You can move to a distance of about 27 inches before the heron will leave the nest. At a distance of 28 inches you can stay there and look at the bird all day.

Lion tamers know about this setting of distance. When the lion tamer enters the cage, if he is bright, he will enter when the lion is far from the door. Then he will move toward the lion. The lion will generally move away until, as the tamer follows him, the tamer gets close enough to transgress the lion's definition of the critical distance. At this point, the lion will turn and start stalking the trainer. Now the trainer maneuvers in such a way that the pedestal on which he wants the lion to stand is between him and the lion. The tamer stays just within the critical distance. The lion sees no obstacle to seizing the man and moves straight toward him, climbing over the pedestal. As the lion reaches the top of the pedestal, the tamer immediately steps back outside the critical distance, and the lion remains fixed there on the pedestal, looking rather silly. The gun, the chair, the whip—these are all props. The lion tamer is using the lion's critical distance to evoke behavior in him. I would not, myself, give up the props.

We can see territoriality operating in another area. This could be in a streetcar, a subway car or a bus, but, for our purposes, take an empty subway car. There are only two people involved. One man gets in at one station and sits a few feet from the door. At the next station, the second person gets on. If he goes to the other end of the car to sit, no new problem is created. But the second man has an old problem. He has had a bad day. A number of things have not gone well; he is sick and unhappy, or something of that sort. Normally he would sit on the side opposite the first man, not directly across from him, though, people having an uneasy feeling about things directly opposite them. His comfortable location would indicate, "I notice you here; we’re friends, but we are not going to have much to do with each other."

If, on the other hand, the second person gets on the car and sits immediately beside the first man, bringing about the possibility of bodily contact between them, the second man’s need to situate himself thusly, has, in turn, created a problem for the first man.

It has been fun watching an auditorium like this fill up. As it fills up with people who don’t know each other, you will find that the density with which people sort themselves out is a measure of their personal space, and not necessarily of their desire to be close to the speaker. As a matter of fact, most people, if I am to judge the empty front row correctly, prefer not to be conspicuously close, but to be in the second, third, or fourth row, for example. Late-comers sit in the back.

The way in which people move themselves and locate themselves in space, reflecting a personal dimension in territoriality, has its counterpart in feelings of families about territory. This, too, is something that we need to study in the human condition. Some of the most violent altercations people have are those which involve property lines. Let a man’s property come to a given point. If he imagines that something has been built or hangs six inches over his property, a situation develops which, lawyers tell us, makes for most unpleasant feelings and violent quarrels between neighbors. Territoriality, then, is something we need to be more aware of; we need to see not only how it affects children but adults as well.

There is a third phenomenon I would like to comment on as an issue in human development which flows rather naturally from the first two. We have indicated that aggression—as impulsive action in reaction to anxiety or as an expression of hostility—has biologic roots in socialization, important elements of which are imprinting and territoriality. Aggression takes a peculiar form in man. Man is the only animal that routinely destroys other members of his own species. In most other species of animals, destruction of other members occurs only in response to population pressures. In rats, destruction occurs with the introduction of new members into an already ordered group. If a group of rats is reasonably well established on a plot of ground and a few new rats are introduced, those on home territory will destroy the outsiders. Population pressures of other sorts have been shown to be responsible for fatal warfare within species. However, among the various species, aggression and violence tend mostly to disperse the species, rather than destroy the individual members.

Violence, like territoriality, has two dimensions—the personal and the social. Our experiences as individuals breed tendencies to act out impulsive behavior. These are a result of hostilities engendered by our unique personal lives as we grow up in our homes or neighborhoods. While speaking of neighborhoods, I cannot help but reflect upon how difficult it is for children in a crowded slum to develop loving and gentle attitudes toward others or toward life in general.
The personal dimension of violence is unique for the individual, but there is a social dimension, too.

In our own society we may ask, "Is this really an issue? How much violence is there?" I was struck by, and would like to share with you, the words of Jessamyn West on violence. She has indicated, rather more plainly and better than many writers, what aspects of our present society we need to consider as we plan a future for our children.

Miss West says:

Never in the history of man has any generation been as free of pain as ours. We lose teeth, have babies and undergo five-hour operations, all without pain. We are not only pain-free, we are comfortable. The air is conditioned, in home and cars; the bed preheated when we get into it; and the rocking chair, if we like, wired to oscillate without any effort of ours. And never has any generation, without knowledge of pain or experience of discomfort, spent so much time watching others experience pain and suffer discomfort. Never has any generation tried harder to hide from itself the fact of death—and at the same time been so absorbed in watching others die.

We do not call what we see on the movie and television screens "death." We call it "violence"—and the way in which we use the word "violence" today is new in the world. We all know what is hidden beneath its parlor-proper syllables; but by using it we let into our parlors and our family rooms what, rightly named, we would not care to be seen inviting in, let alone feasting on, evening after evening....

Death on the screen is so easy a matter. The fast draw, the quick collapse. We are never permitted to see very much of the man who is going to die. We must not learn to care for him, to feel that his death matters; otherwise our enjoyment of his violent end will be weakened. We must never see him as a fellow who planted radishes, made kites for his kids or patted a dog on the head. We must not,

in fact, see him as anything but a dirty dog himself, who deserved all he got and more. Excite and enthrall the customers with violence, but don’t upset them. Let’s not make it tragic. Lots of death and disaster, but for fun....

By dehumanizing the action (real persons don’t die, only the “bad men”), by never giving the proper name to what we see, are we blinded to reality? Is a generation of Americans being prepared for the routine and casual killings of concentration camps and gas chambers, of death marches and saturation bombings, of mass evacuations and 100-megaton explosions? Violence is a big word with sonorous syllables. Do we never see behind it the small boy with his face blown away? The child without hands? The men with dreams and promises oozing from their broken skulls, along with the gray matter that gave rise to dreams and promises? Are these facts forgotten?

There are many intelligent, thoughtful people who believe that there is too much violence on our movie and television screens and that it is particularly bad for children to see it. But what is really wrong is that the children do not see it. They see only the pleasure of landing the blow without ever imagining the pain of receiving it, without even imagining that the one who receives the blow is capable of suffering pain.

The TV screen whereon only bad men die, and then neatly and with dispatch, dulls and kills the imagination—and whatever destroys the imagination limits and ultimately destroys man. “When there is no vision, the people perish.” It is doubtless sad that children must learn of pain, suffering, and death. But it is tragic for them to believe that bullets and blows do not cause suffering and death. The child who is conditioned by screen and parent to identify only with the one who lands the blow, never with the victim, loses the humanizing power of compassion.

With these dramatic words, Jessamyn West gives us a slightly different picture of our television screens and of what we are offering our children. The picture is not unique; but I think it describes phenomena in our lives and the lives of our children which are part of our scene, and which we recognize. Jessamyn West is not alone in calling attention to them. H. Rap Brown says that violence is as American as apple pie. I don’t know whether he is talking about the Ku Klux Klan or riots in the ghettos, but the impact of all this on the individual is just now beginning to be assessed. In the assessment of it, I don’t care whether it is violence of the right or of the left. There are a great number of people in the middle who are moved more or less by this without taking action. I suggest that perhaps those of us who are concerned with the growth and development of children ought by now to be moved to action which we haven’t taken in the past.

I am reminded here of the cover of the December 9, 1967 Saturday Review on which appears the following quotation by Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, past president of the U.N. General Assembly: “If fools and folly rule the world, the end of man in our time may come as a rude shock, but it will no longer come as a complete surprise.” That’s a pretty pessimistic view of things. But for all that I may sound pessimistic, I am in fact optimistic about what we can do and what we are going to have help in doing.

For example, in closing I would again like to refer you to the Saturday Review. Its October 7, 1967 issue contains an article by Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell entitled “The Split-Level American Family.” He points out some of the difficulties that we are up against and discusses some of the studies being made of which we should be aware. He points out that there has been movement from the agrarian to the urban society and that it

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causes enormous constriction in the lives of children. The separation between the lives of children and the lives of adults is greater than it has ever been. Our neighborhoods have become homogenized; the suburbs are residential, and the things that people do to live there are lost upon children growing up where there are only homes, lawns, and people who are quite similar. As far as the children are concerned, their mothers and fathers tend to be less familiar and less available to them than was once the case.

We now have a society in which one-third of the mothers work. The father’s absence has already been shown—especially in boys—to correlate with low motivation for achievement, inability to defer gratification, low self-esteem, susceptibility to group pressures, and juvenile delinquency. In the absence of parents, and in the homogenized neighborhood, whether in a suburb or in the urban core, children turn to devices as substitutes for parents. One is the peer group; the other is the television set. Some parents consciously foster the child’s choice of the TV set as a babysitter. Studies almost ten years old indicate that children five years of age spend two hours a day watching TV. Jessamyn West has told us what they see on it. By 12 years of age, the average child spends three hours a day watching TV. He sees, again, the “Great American Story” that combines noble elements of territoriality and personal space. Typically, the story is played by two men, one known as Good and the other known as Bad, who face each other at noon on a dusty street. As they approach each other, with guns at their hips, the rules of play are such that the critical distance is always a little longer for the bad man than for the good, so that the bad man draws first and the good man kills him—in self defense. This is the Great American Story, the legend of our time. The bad man dies; he doesn’t suffer. And what of our children? Do they learn courage, compassion, affection, empathy, love, from identification with the “goodie”? Healthy kids with other socializing experiences may have a chance. But the image of the bad man is as vivid as that of the good, and for many children it is a good deal more exciting. Many youngsters with low self-esteem, susceptibility to group pressure, inability to defer gratification, low motivation for achievement, and delinquent tendencies have learned from western or crime shows how to behave like the “baddies” they feel they are.

Well, what does all this do? It worries us, and has done so for a long time. Numerous studies have appeared, such as those of Albert Bandura, Richard Walters, Leonard D. Eron and Muzafer Sherif discussed by Bronfenbrenner in the Saturday Review. Bandura of Stanford exposed a group of children—as they entered a playroom—to the sight of someone in the corner batting around a doll called Bobo. All of us know Bobos; one pushes or smashes them down, and they bounce up to be hit again. The children were uncommitted to any particular activity in the playroom, which had all kinds of opportunities for creative activity. If someone was engaged in violent activity as these children entered the room, they engaged in significantly more violent activity than a control group. When the TV people heard about it, they objected that the situation was unnatural. But Bandura has shown that films work as well, that even cartoons will set the tone of children’s activity, and that a ten-minute experience of this sort has an impact that can be measured for at least six months.

It has been shown by Walters at Waterloo University in Canada that exactly the same things are true for adults. The evidence mounts. Eron, at Iowa, showed in a study of 600 children that the most aggressive children watched the most violence on TV. Which is cause, and which is effect? Is it because they are the most aggressive children that they watch the most violence? The answer has to be no, because aggression can be turned on and off. The Robbers’ Cave Experiment conducted by Sherif at the University of Oklahoma reaffirms this.

Two groups of children, known as the Eagles and the Rattlers, were set up in a summer camp experience near Robbers’ Cave, Oklahoma, and, under the control of the counselors, deliberately exposed to conditions designed to create animosity between the two groups. With relatively simple techniques emphasizing competition between the two groups, these youngsters were at each other’s throats at the end of two or three weeks of camp, hating each other, calling each other names, and seizing on every opportunity for an imagined slight to emphasize the difference in the two groups—“we” were the “goodies”; “they” were the “baddies.”

Now when this gut hate was well established, the counselors tried to undo it. They found that they could, with procedures whose effectiveness was predicted by them.

What they did was exemplified by two crises which they created and which involved the whole camp—not one group or the other. A leak in the water line that brought water to the camp was fabricated somewhere in the mile and one-half that this line ran, and the camp was organized to go out and find the leak and repair it. The truck that was going to get the food developed a lesion and wouldn’t move. The whole camp went out and took turns pushing the truck to where it could get help. With these and other cooperative activities, the tensions between these two groups began to diminish. They ended up being the very best of friends through what was finally termed joint activity in superordinate goals.

There are many superordinate goals in our society to which we could address the attention of
adults and children alike. There are needs in health, education, and other areas which afford enormous opportunities for greater involvement of adults in the lives of children and greater opportunities for involvement of children in the problems and tasks of adults and of a larger society. I think that such programs as Head Start, the Peace Corps, VISTA, and VISA are only the beginning and are not just for the poor.

In summary, then, there are deeply rooted biological forces upon which we draw unwittingly for attitudes and behavior. There are pressing problems before us, ranging from war and slum riots to the misery and hopelessness of hundreds of thousands of infants and children leading empty and desperate lives in an unproductive way without society ever noticing that something preventable and irrevocable is happening. All of us, as citizens devoted to the healthiest kind of childhood and adulthood for our children, know that this represents an appalling tragedy for the individual. Multiplied by the hundreds of millions, it may represent a catastrophe for mankind. As physicians, we and other students of human behavior have unique opportunities and responsibilities in these matters. We must make our concerns widely known and be ready to fight vigorously not only for the formulation of public education programs but the implementation of public policy, to the end that all children have the best possible opportunity for fulfillment—fulfillment through behavior which manifests the altruistic qualities of sharing, caring, giving, loving, and, if need be, of sacrificing.

References


