

The

# CRITIC<sup>®</sup>

SUMMER 1989

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## HARD TIMES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT

by Kate DeSmet

## WHAT BOOK DO YOU WISH YOU HAD WRITTEN?

A Survey by Lisa Galvin

## CORITA KENT

A Memoir by Daniel Berrigan

## YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BE INSTITUTIONALIZED

by Martin E. Marty

## ARRANGEMENTS

A Short Story by Ronald Weber

## THE APPASSIONATA DOCTRINES

by David Citino

## "I WISH I'D SAID THAT!"

AND FINALLY...

Kevin Dean, Joel Wells, Brad Reynolds,  
John L. Sprague, Joseph Larose,  
Abbie Jane Wells



The Summer, 1989  
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Lisa Galvin Asks:  
“What Book  
Do You Wish  
You Had Written?”

**I**T IS NO SECRET THAT posing the same question to a group of distinguished writers, educators, poets and theologians will produce an endless variety of responses — each one shaped by the hindsight that comes from a life of rich experience. Some of the writers I questioned cited works that had broadened their thinking or influenced their own body of work over the years — from a diverse band of authors ranging



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from Mikhail Gorbachev to Pope John XXIII. Others, to quote sociologist Gordon Zahn, considered the question of a “wish” book “a cruel reminder of ambitions unfulfilled” — these respondents talk of books, as yet unwritten, that may or may not come into existence at some point in the future.

### **Tony Hillerman**

*Author (A Thief of Time; Skinwalkers; Talking God, June 1989)*

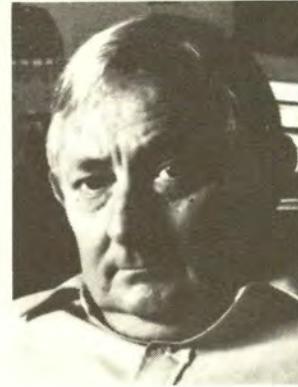


Photo: Tom Lazarevich, Rick Gayle Studio

THE BOOK I WOULD WRITE (and perhaps will write when I have developed sufficient skill) would illuminate an area of American life rich in all the elements of great fiction and which has been mostly ignored. The setting: a ramshackle rooming house at an undistinguished Land Grant University; tag end of the Depression. The characters: the landlady, engaged in an endless war to keep her long-condemned house from being demolished by the city, and her roomers, a mixture of rednecked farm kids and the sons of blue-collar workers. The students have in common poverty of a kind long forgotten in the United States, poor public school educations and an instinctive knowledge that their only way into the middle class is by somehow getting through college. They live on part-time jobs, on boiling incautious squirrels and ducks trapped in the city park and on scraps discarded from sorority and fraternity kitchens.

By the end, most of them would have flunked out, or starved out, as such students did. I would have the last survivor rescued by his draft with the Japanese bombing of Pearl

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Harbor. This novel, I hope, would remind Americans of the nature of poverty and of the hopeless disadvantage of the young who are denied a chance to the sort of education the privileged class gives its children.

### Robert Coles

*Professor of Psychiatry and Medical Humanities, Harvard University*  
*Author (The Call of Stories; Teaching and Moral Imagination; Harvard Diary: Reflections on the Sacred and the Secular)*

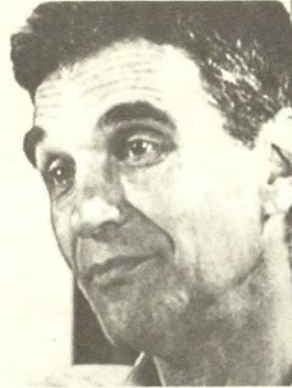


Photo: Hans Tobason, Harvard Film Center

I WISH I HAD WRITTEN — I wish, more properly, that I *could* write a novel such as *The Moviegoer* or, indeed, just one or two of Raymond Carver's stories!

### Maureen Daly

*Author (Acts of Love; Seventeenth Summer)*



THE BOOK I WANT TO WRITE, the "wish book," has been postponed but never abandoned. It was, when the idea was strongest, too painful to put on paper; but now anger at the persisting pain has made the reason for that book even more



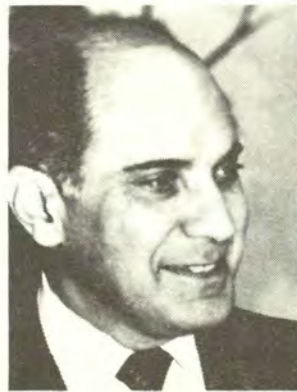
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compelling. When our only daughter, Megan, died a few years ago as a vibrant young adult turned suddenly terminally ill, I felt her brief but brilliant life should be chronicled. Not to please a reading public, but to please *her*. She would expect it of me. Will the tragic end mar the joy of the book? Probably, just as it has so deeply scarred our lives. But I am determined to record the essence of this important human being. Not to would be a second waste. It will be called *Megan: A Different Love Story*.

I only wish I did not know the ending.

### Samuel Hazo

*President and Director, International Poetry Forum; Professor of English, Duquesne University*  
*Author (Silence Spoken Here; Stills)*



THERE ARE ACTUALLY THREE BOOKS I wish I had written, which is another way of saying that there are three books that permanently changed my thinking, hopefully for the truer and also (hopefully) for the better. The first is Alistair Horne's *A Savage War Of Peace*. It remains not only the definitive history of the Algerian War of independence, but it prefigures the oncoming wars that will be with us probably in Palestine and South Africa as the consequences of colonialism continue to unravel to their inevitable and tragic conclusions. The second is Denis de Rougemont's *Love In The Western World* because it delineates the desire for changeless romance as the worm in the apple of the West's view of love between the sexes. It's been institutionalized in everything from grand opera to soap opera, and de Rougemont's book provides the

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books are out there, somewhere between non-being and being, each of them as good as possible gold. Finally, it is the books one writes that he writes. (Tautologies increasingly console me now.) It is the children one fathered that are one's own. In many ways, what distinguishes an author from the great mass of those who hope one day to write a book is that the author learns to accept the imperfect incarnation of his abstract hopes. Most critics are Platonists, alas, longing for separated forms and eschewing enmattered ideas. Readers, thank God, are more forgiving. On the other hand, I have four fingers, a thumb, and a wart and I wish I had written *Huckleberry Finn*.

### Kaye Ashe

*Prioress General, Sinsinawa Dominicans*  
*Author (Today's Woman, Tomorrow's Church)*



I JUMP AT THE OPPORTUNITY to talk about a book I'd like to write. The historian Joan Kelly-Gadol called for a history of the social relation of the sexes. Such a work would explore not only the history of men's and women's relation to one another in various periods, but the relative roles of women and men with respect to production, reproduction, socialization, and political activity and power. Until now, what passes for human history is actually the history of men with, at best, a few lines or chapters dedicated to the history of women. A few works, and notably Mary Beard's *Woman as Force in History*, offer us a history of women that is, in reality, a mirror image of the history of men: women, too, have been monarchs, warriors, inventors, writers, artists, and so forth, they assure us,



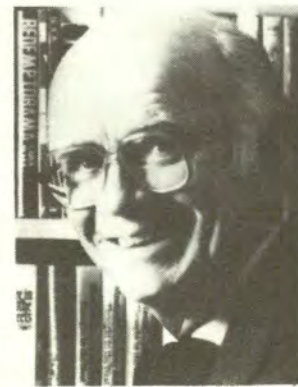
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and women's historical experience doesn't differ significantly from men's. We need a history that places the history of men and the history of women in a new relational unity. And we need a book that makes the connections between gender, class, and race. If I could think all of this through in a brilliant synthesis, after years of leisurely research, I would die happy even if I never committed it all to paper.

My alternative to this project would be an illustrated book of feminist humor. It would squash forever the myth that feminists can't laugh.

### **Martin E. Marty**

*Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Modern Christianity, University of Chicago*  
Author (Modern American Religion Volume 1; An Invitation to American Catholic History)



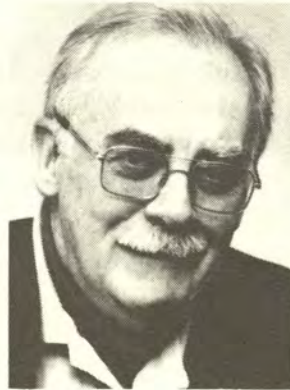
FROM 1958 UNTIL 1998, the beginning of my book writing career until my retirement, I will have written only books solicited by editors and publishers. Not once have I sat down and chosen a topic, written a book, and submitted it to a publisher. But at 3:00 p.m., March 20, 1998, I intend to retire, and may then initiate a book for the first time. I think I would write one called *A Sense of the Presence*. Some years ago I wrote a reflection called *A Cry of Absence*, on a "wintry sort of spirituality" when God seems remote, absent. But we also get signals of presence: experience, story-telling, access to myths and symbols and rituals all confirm this sense. I may want to take a turn at this obverse side of faith.



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### Gordon C. Zahn

*National Director,  
Center on Conscience and War  
Author (In Solitary Witness; German  
Catholics and Hitler's Wars)*



TO A SEPTUAGENARIAN, your question could be a cruel reminder of ambitions unfulfilled. In my youth I dreamed of writing “the great American novel” (Thomas Wolfe style) or surpassing Benchley in comic genius; in my middle years British-type thrillers struck me as a most tempting retirement pursuit. Instead I ended up writing sociology and publishing “socio-theological” works which many of my fellow sociologists dismissed as pure theology and most theologians rejected as intrusive (possibly heretical) pacifist polemic.

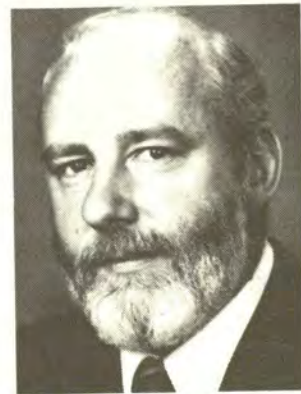
Given this chance to improve the score and recharge faded ambitions, I find to my surprise that I cannot think of a book I would rather have written or of a more satisfying book I could set out to write today. This attitude may reflect consummate ego or (more likely perhaps) resignation to the inevitabilities of advanced age, but I am quite pleased to settle for being “recycled” instead. One book (*German Catholics and Hitler's Wars*), source of a heated controversy when it first appeared more than a quarter century ago, is about to be republished and another (*In Solitary Witness: The Life and Death of Franz Jaegerstaetter*) almost as old had a new edition released a couple of years ago. The former has been frequently credited with contributing to recent significant changes in Catholic thought and teachings on the morality of war and conscientious objection; the other, perhaps my *magnum opus*, “discovered” an unknown latter-day martyr and, if current efforts succeed, may ultimately lead to his canonization.

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Now I am content to devote my time remaining to lectures, articles, and other activities devoted to assisting in the formation of conscience of young people on issues related to modern war and the limits of obedience. Although there are great books waiting to be written that could inspire Catholic readers to a fuller awareness of, and involvement in, the pacifist mission of their Church, I'm willing to leave that task to younger generations in the faith-based confidence that — sooner or later, one way or another — the message is certain to get out and be accepted.

### **William A. Herr**

*Author* (Catholic Thinkers in the Clear;  
This Our Church)



IN THE SUMMER OF 1967, when I was a graduate student in Belgium and a very young twenty-five years old, I hitchhiked from Amsterdam to Ankara, and back to Belgium through Greece and Italy.

I walked beside the Rhine, and the Danube, and the Tiber and the Arno and the Seine, and the Sea of Marmara in the moonlight. I spent many hours by the roadside, daydreaming and singing Pete Seeger and Tom Paxton songs to myself. I saw the Tyrol, and the Parthenon, and the celebration of a Turkish boy's circumcision. I saw a man being led, handcuffed, into a police interrogation room in Hungary . . . and I saw Dachau.

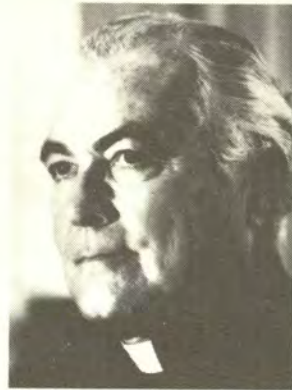
All of my belongings were stolen in Budapest, and I was caught in a hailstorm in the mountains of Greece. I was often thirsty and almost always dirty and tired. For two months or so



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I made do with what I could carry; and when I finally returned to my tiny student room, even hot water and a chair to sit in seemed almost shamefully luxurious.

I wish that I had written a book about what it felt like to do those things, because I do not expect ever to be trusting, or patient, or brave, or poor enough to wander that way through the world again.



### Theodore M. Hesburgh

*President Emeritus,  
University of Notre Dame*

I WISH I HAD WRITTEN Secretary Gorbachev's *Perestroika*. First, it breaks new ground by calling for human dignity and human rights. It also calls for a totally new attitude toward arms control and peace; either everyone is secure or no one is. It calls for the elimination of nuclear weapons, freedom of religion, international cooperation for economic development in the Third World, and many other initiatives that would stand the Soviet Union on its head. Will all this happen and will Secretary Gorbachev, through *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, be able to create a new kind of society? Whatever one thinks, this book is a blockbuster with many paragraphs never before encountered in the books of Soviet leaders and completely devoid of Soviet cant. How about this one? One might think it was from an encyclical by Pope John Paul II: "Today our main job is to lift the individual spiritually, respecting his inner world and giving him moral strength. We are seeking to make the whole intellectual potential of society and all the potenti-

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alities of culture work to mold a socially active person, spiritually rich, just and conscientious. An individual must know and feel that his contribution is needed, that his dignity is not being infringed upon, that he is being treated with trust and respect. When an individual sees all this, he is capable of accomplishing much.” (Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, p. 30, Harper & Row, New York, 1987.)

### **Rosemary Radford Ruether**

*Professor of Theology, Garrett-Evangelical  
Theological Seminary  
Author (Women-Church)*



AT THE MOMENT I can't think of a book I wish I had written and did not, although there are books that I still hope to write in the future. But there is one book that I did write but have never published.

In the late 1960s, after finishing my Ph.D. in Classics and Patristics, I turned to working on a vast manuscript that sought to trace the development of Christology from its ancient Near Eastern and Jewish roots in sacral kingship and messianism and its Greek philosophical roots in the cosmic Logos. In this manuscript, which was almost five hundred pages when I completed it, I brought these two traditions to a synthesis in the New Testament and patristic theology. Then I tried to assess what all this means for us today. Is it still a meaningful lens for understanding history and the cosmos?

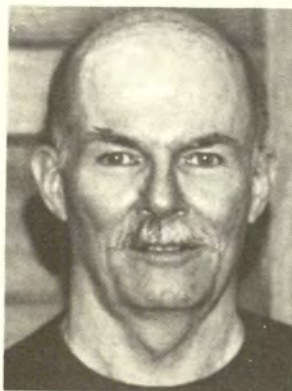
This research and writing has been a mine of information which I continue to use. Many parts of the manuscript have been the source of lectures, books and articles. But the origi-



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nal book sits in my drawer unpublished. Today, twenty years later, a generation of new scholarship has arisen in this area. Many questions, such as ecology and sexism, undiscussed in that manuscript, have become pressing implications of such study.

The manuscript today is partly obsolete. It would need to be completely reworked to make it publishable. Yet it is very important to me. Maybe someday I will do the work of rewriting it. Then again maybe I won't.



### **Frank Wessling**

*News Editor, The Catholic Messenger*

WHAT BOOK DO I WISH I HAD WRITTEN? *The Brothers Karamozov*, but Dostoyevski got there first.

This discouraged me, so I gave up the idea of writing a book. Instead, I'd like to start newspapers for the racial ghettos of America. There wouldn't be much advertising, and the readers wouldn't have much spare change, so it would be a penny press. But that would be OK because everybody would read my papers.

Everybody would read them because our news would be whatever folks in the community are talking about, with a bias toward talk with hope in it but with interest as well in talk about ugly things that need attention — who's pregnant, who got a school honor, where were the garbage trucks last week, who got a job, where drug gangs gather, who had out-of-town

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visitors last weekend, who's in the hospital and who's out, who found a good deal in used furniture. We'd need two or three fact-checkers on our staff for every reporter, but I see that as the cost of doing good business.

We'd have some of that small-town newspaper flavor that helps tie people together in a universe of shared concern and hope. I think such newspapers are needed in the ghetto-slums because the folks don't seem to get a balanced diet of news. To the extent that they get any at all, it's too heavy on concern, anxiety, dread, and too light on hope. To really be hope, the news has got to have origins in the community itself, not in do-gooders from outside and certainly not in *USA Today* and its imitators.

From the inside perspective, there is hope in those communities, but it has no institutionalized voice. The book I wish I had written is the idea for such a voice.

### John Tracy Ellis

*Professorial Lecturer on Church History,  
Catholic University of America*

*Author (Faith and Learning: A Church  
Historian's Story)*

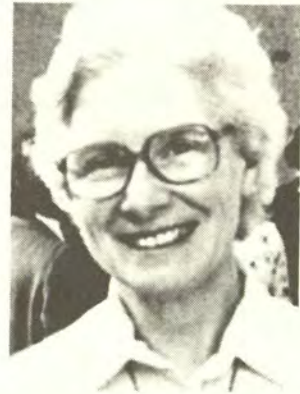


I WOULD BE PROUD to have written any of the books of Sir Owen Chadwick, but especially his volume entitled *Catholicism and History: The Opening of the Vatican Archives* (Cambridge University Press, 1978). There are few living historians who can display the enviable combination of scholarship, literary grace, and wit as is true of this distinguished English church historian. In the book cited above, Chadwick shows a



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deep understanding of the inner workings, so to speak, of the Roman Curia of the nineteenth century, an understanding which is enhanced by his critical yet sympathetic approach. It is not the first time that this Anglican divine has shown a marked interest in Catholic history, and I hope it will not be the last. Would that all Catholic historians of ecclesiastical history had the balance and sound interpretation of Owen Chadwick.



### Mary Beckett

*Author* (Give Them Stones; A Belfast Woman)

I HAVE A GOOD NAME for a family saga: "If you want to live to a ripe old age, don't marry a widow's daughter." I have noticed how birthdates repeat, generation after generation. The ages at which people die might owe something to inherited genes, and the kind of people they marry can be connected to upbringing and opportunity. But no woman can engineer her daughter's birth on the same day of the year as her sister's or her aunt's. But it happens.

Where is the publisher who would accept such a title — so many words trailing all down the dust jacket. "Why not just 'A Widow's Daughter'?" they would say. "Much neater and more effective." So the idea, which begins lightheartedly, becomes at once ponderous, doom-laden. The gleam in the eye fades.

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### Steve Allen

*Entertainer, Composer*  
*Author (How To Be Funny)*

OVER THE PAST THIRTY YEARS OR SO, I have produced many books, and no doubt at the time of death will not have completed all those I have contemplated writing, given that I am now sixty-seven years old. But there is one I would be interested in reading and, since I am not aware that anyone else has dealt with the subject matter, perhaps eventually I will have to turn to the task myself.

The subject is cruelty, a form of behavior that grows out of anger. Anger is, in its simplest essence, a perfectly "reasonable" form of human emotion as, for that matter, is fear. While we would be very unfortunate indeed if we were always angry and fearful, the two emotions, nevertheless, serve a life-sustaining purpose. But everything human produces both good and evil results. Anger and cruelty have, since long before the dawn of history, brought about an amount of suffering so enormous that our limited imaginations are unequal to the task of even measuring, much less contemplating it. While in most respects the human animal may be superior to all others, he is clearly inferior to them in certain regards. One is that man may be the only animal creature that kills his own readily, constantly, and in massive numbers. All the other creatures, even those we regard as fierce and dangerous, seem to kill only when hunger forces them to do so, when defending their own lives, or protecting their young. But man goes far beyond this limited deadly range. Men will kill others simply because of anger, even in the total absence of the likeli-



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hood that any material gain will result from the criminal act.

But since all of this has long been recognized, why should I perceive the need for a book about it? The answer is that I detect a certain recent expansion in that latent viciousness which has always lurked in the human heart. I refer now only to American society. This is not to suggest that the problem is uniquely ours; it clearly is not. But because I am most familiar with American experience, I am therefore most concerned and depressed about the fact that the resort to violence now seems to have become common and casual. And even in the absence of overt killing and physical assault there is something new about the ugliness of spirit in our society.

The first instance in which I detected this happened about thirty years ago when an unfortunate man, threatening to kill himself by leaping to his death from a window ledge of a New York skyscraper, stood for hours undecided, teetering on the brink. There were, of course, those decent citizens — police and a clergyman — who tried to save the poor fellow's life. But at the same time as these efforts were being made, there were many, in the crowd that had gathered below in the street, shouting — God, I shudder to think of it again — encouragement to the poor soul standing on the wind-swept ledge so close to death.

“Come on, jump, you jerk,” one man shouted.

“Let's get it ovah with,” someone else said.

Newspapers at the time reported this. I shall never be able to forget the horror that the story evoked in me. Here were dozens of men — apparently no women — standing below, having not the slightest idea who the poor sufferer was but encouraging him to jump to his death anyway. What sort of homes did these men come from? Were they chiefly members of one religious denomination or another? They were presumably lower-class or lower-middle-class residents of New York City. They were all of the Caucasian race. Perhaps they represented various economic strata. But how do we account for their disrespect for life itself? For that is what they were demonstrating since they could have held no animosity for a man



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totally unknown to them. They actually wanted to witness death. They wanted to see a hideous spectacle, that of a tender, sensitive human body plummeting, at increasing speed, onto the pavement below.

It is doubtful whether any of them would have given voice to such cries were they alone. Something about the mob-factor made these men less than human, depending on what one thinks the word *human* means.

In any event, one of my first reactions to all of this distressing reality was to devise a short story in which the scene of the would-be suicide is presented on the first page. But then — a switch. A squad of about twenty men move quickly and efficiently through the crowd. In pairs, they one at a time quietly approach the shouters, handcuff them and take them away. It was not made clear as to what the fate of such sadists would be but, if I insert myself into this fantasy, I would very much like to sit down with those men, first one at a time, and then perhaps in a “therapy” group, and ask them questions. I would like to know if, even after the fact, they could be brought to feel the slightest guilt, or whether they would seek to justify their vicious insensitivity.

Another development of the story, still found among my notes, would stipulate that the man who threatened suicide was actually protected by an invisible wire fastened to his belt and was, in fact, an *agent provocateur*, assigned to exhibit himself as a way of drawing out of the waters below, so to speak, the killer sharks who infest our society.

Whether I shall eventually write a book that addresses this problem I do not, at the moment, know. First, there are at least four others I must complete, but there is a problem here that needs to be addressed. It needs to be addressed by the churches, by the art/science of psychiatry, and by our philosophers.

Almost every indicator of violence seems to have worsened in recent years. As of 1989, four thousand women in America each year were being killed by their husbands. The statistics on child abuse are horrendous, war among our criminal gangs



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has made our streets more dangerous than ever, life in our slums is ever more precarious. There are so many guns in the hands of private citizens now, including murderous rapid-assault weapons, although never enough to satisfy the National Rifle Association, that gun control may be a lost cause. Even life in our prisons is more dangerous than it has been in the past.

And there is a mysterious increase in the kind of killing that used to be described as "senseless." In the past, robbers, burglars, and thieves might carry guns chiefly for the purpose of intimidation. Now it is common for victims to be shot even after they have given up their money, jewelry, or other belongings.

Language itself has become more debased and vicious. Thirteen- and fourteen-year-old girls now use language of the sort that in earlier years was encountered only in military life or among the lower class.

In our schools both students and teachers are physically assaulted, sometimes with weapons. On the American Far Right you can almost detect a bizarre greenish glow over the spectacle of paramilitary groups, parties of vengeance, training in terrorist and "survival" techniques. We see a resurgence of activity by the Ku Klux Klan and even more violent organizations. Even comedy is now debased, defaced, abusive, and critical to an unprecedented extent. The writers of popular music flaunt violent images.

Violence enlarges constantly, moving like a blight or deadly viral disease across our society. Simple social courtesies are rarer now. In a word, ours has become a strangely sick society. Much of this, accompanied by other evidences of physical and moral collapse, has happened during the recent eight years in which a doddering old smile-specialist has reportedly been making us "feel good about ourselves."