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WHY IS VIOLENCE BAD?

Vittorio Bufacchi

With the possible exception of Nietzsche, no one would seriously argue that violence is good for its victims.¹ Most people naturally think that violence is bad for the person who suffers the violence, and some even suggest that violence is bad for those doing the violence.² But why? What is it about violence that makes it bad? In an attempt to shed light on the badness of violence, this article will approach the problem by way of a tangentially related question, namely “why is death bad?” Violence is not synonymous with death, therefore “why is violence bad?” and “why is death bad?” are different questions, and the answer to the latter question is not a perfect fit when applied to the former question. Nevertheless, understanding the badness of death can help us to understand why violence is bad. Part I will explore the similarities and differences between the concepts of violence and death. Part II will survey the literature on the badness of death, focusing in particular on its comparative or extrinsic evil (Thomas Nagel) and its intrinsic evil (F. M. Kamm). Parts III and IV will argue that the badness of violence cannot be fully understood simply by looking at the reasons why death is bad, since there are aspects of violence that make it distinctively bad. Part V will ex-

plain why violence (unlike death) is both bad and wrong, and in certain cases worse than death, even when violence does not result in death.

I. VIOLENCE AND DEATH

John Harris (1980: 19) provides us with a useful working definition of violence: “An act of violence occurs when injury or suffering is inflicted upon a person or persons by an agent who knows (or ought reasonably to have known), that his actions would result in the harm in question.” According to Harris, the essence of violence is to be found in the notions of injury or suffering. The vast literature on violence implicitly or explicitly endorses something along these lines, indeed many associate violence with an act of excessive physical force. Thus John Keane (1996: 66–67) tells us that “violence is better understood as the unwanted *physical interference* by groups and/or individuals with the bodies of others, which are consequentially made to suffer a series of effects ranging from shock, bruises, scratches, swelling or headaches to broken bones, heart attack, loss of limbs or even death.” Norman Geras (1990: 22) explains that “by ‘violence’ I shall mean roughly the exercise of *physical force* so as to kill or injure, inflict direct

harm or pain on, human beings.” Finally Ted Honderich (2002: 91) defines violence as “a use of *physical force* that injures, damages, violates or destroys people or things.” This cluster of definitions of violence, which emphasize the notion of physical injury or suffering, will be referred to as the Minimal Conception of Violence (MCV).

It is the emphasis on the physical nature of injury and suffering that brings the MCV within the orbit of the concept of death. After all, death is primarily (but not exclusively) a physical event. Robert Veatch (1978) explains how death symbolizes the loss of vital functions, of the brain’s functions, and of neocortical functions. Such losses represent physical changes in the status of a living entity. F. M. Kamm (1993: 39) refers to death as involving “the destruction of the person,” where “destruction” describes a physical event. Even Jonathan Glover (1977: 43), who prefers to define death in terms of “the irreversible loss of consciousness,” goes on to explain that our best evidence of this is the continued absence of electrical activity in the brain, hence once again the tendency to reduce death to a physical state.³

The MCV interacts with the concept of death on two different levels. First, an act of violence may cause death.⁴ This is obviously true of certain extreme acts of violence, such as murder or genocide, in which case an act of violence is bad exactly because it causes death. Secondly, even when an act of violence does not cause death, as in the case of rape, physical injury, and all other violations of the victim’s body, death still remains the point of reference for all lesser forms of abusive physical force. In other words all physical violence short of causing death is bad either because it takes the victim closer to death, or because the victim is threatened (implicitly or explicitly) with potential death.

The major problem with the MCV is that it fails to appreciate the complexity of violence. Violence cannot be reduced to *physical* injury and suffering. Contrary to what the MCV suggests, not all violence is physical. Psychological cruelty is as much part of violence as the use of physical force against a person, and to reduce psychological violence to intermediate points on the scale of deadly violence is to miss the point about the badness of violence. What is appalling about hate crime, domestic violence, and rape has very little to do with the prospect of death. If that was the case, one could not explain why some victims of violence (torture or rape, for example) are suicidal after surviving the ordeal. This point will come under closer scrutiny in Part V below.

The MCV needs to be replaced with a broader, more precise conception of violence. Arguably the most inclusive definition of violence is still Robert Audi’s (1971: 97–98): “The physical attack upon, or the vigorous physical abuse of, or vigorous physical struggle against, a person or animal; or the highly vigorous psychological abuse of, or the sharp, caustic psychological attack upon, a person or animal; or the highly vigorous, or incendiary, or malicious and vigorous, destruction or damaging of property or potential property.” Audi’s definition will be referred to as the Comprehensive Conception of Violence (CCV). The CCV has many virtues over the MCV. Apart from reminding us that violence can be both physical and psychological, the CCV does not trivialize violence by suggesting that all physical and psychological abuses are acts of violence. Surely the act of breaking the tip of your pencil ought to be distinguished from the act of breaking your arm. Similarly embarrassing or humiliating a person is a form of psychological abuse, although not necessarily an act of

violence. That is why Audi is careful to qualify the nature of the physical or psychological abuse as “vigorous.”⁵

While broader than the MCV, the CCV would appear to offer only a more obscure and less precise definition of violence. Indeed Audi himself recognizes the vagueness of his definition.⁶ In order to avoid the indeterminacy surrounding the CCV, while overcoming the inadequacy of the MCV, in this article the following definition of violence will be endorsed: An act of violence occurs when forceful physical and/or psychological injury or suffering is inflicted upon a person or animal by another person who knows (or ought reasonably to have known), that his actions would result in the harm in question.

According to this definition there are some fundamental differences between violence and death. First of all, violence defines a social relationship, while death describes an event. Secondly, violence is much more complex than death. There are degrees of injury and suffering, but not degrees of death. With death, it is an all-or-nothing affair. On the other hand there are different levels of violence. Physical and psychological injury or suffering may be more or less intense, more or less severe, more or less aggressive, more or less sustained. Hence to the extent that violence is bad, there are also different degrees of badness.⁷

This suggests that the reason violence is bad cannot be reduced to the badness of death, even if violence were to cause death. But if violence is bad for reasons independent of the badness of death, what are these reasons? In order to capture what makes violence distinctively bad, in what follows the different arguments for the badness of death will be analyzed from the point of view of violence. The aim is not to force the solution to one problem (why is death bad) to fit another problem (why is vio-

lence bad). On the contrary, it is the nature of the misfit between the badness of death and violence that is most revealing. From the comparison between the badness of death and violence, one distinctive aspect of the badness of violence will emerge, namely, that violence is bad because of the way it makes the victims of violence feel about themselves. In other words, what makes violence bad is not only the experience of injury and suffering per se, although that is certainly part of it, but also the social meaning of *being* harmed. An act of violence is a social act, which can be either bilateral (performer and victim) or trilateral (performer, victim, and witness). The badness of violence must be understood in terms of the logic of this social relationship.⁸

II. WHY IS DEATH BAD?

There are two dominant ways of approaching the badness of death, as an extrinsic or intrinsic evil. The best known and still most influential argument for the extrinsic evil of death is Thomas Nagel's (1979: 1–2) Deprivation Factor: “If death is an evil at all, it cannot be because of its positive features, but only because of what it deprives us of. . . . [D]eath is an evil because it brings to an end all the goods that life contains.” The Deprivation Factor requires a direct comparison between what a person has experienced up to the moment of death, and what the person would have gone on to experience had death not interrupted the life process. Although the illegitimacy of this comparison has been questioned,⁹ not least because of the hedonistic nature of experiences, there are many who are prepared to defend the Deprivation Factor. As Fred Feldman (1991: 218) points out, what is required is to develop a rough system for quantifying an individual's welfare level in different possible worlds: “my death would be bad for

me not because it would cause me to suffer pain, and not because it would itself be intrinsically bad for me. Rather, it would be bad for me because it would deprive me of 600 units of pleasure that I would have had if it had not happened when it did. More precisely, it would be bad for me because my welfare level at the nearest world where it occurs is 600 points lower than my welfare level at the nearest world where it does not occur."

There are some notable advantages to the Deprivation Factor, but also some major problems. The Deprivation Factor deserves credit for explaining why the premature death of a young person strikes us as being tragic in a way that is different compared to the death of someone who has had "a full life." Nagel uses the example of Keats who died at the age of twenty-four and Tolstoy who died at the age of eighty-two.¹⁰ Yet notwithstanding its virtues, the Deprivation Factor has severe limitations, the most serious of which is that it fails to plausibly distinguish death from prenatal nonexistence.¹¹ This point has been raised by F. M. Kamm, who faults the Deprivation Factor on the asymmetry problem, namely the fact that death is worse for the person who dies than his nonexistence prior to his creation. According to Kamm, what makes death bad is not fully captured by the fact that death deprives the person who dies of goods of life he would have had if he had lived. This suggests that there is more to death than an extrinsic evil.

There are two aspects to Kamm's suggestion that death may also be intrinsically bad: the Extinction Factor and the Insult Factors. The Extinction Factor is an attempt to shed light on the endlessness of the nothingness of death, the fact that death means everything for oneself is *all over*. Kamm (1993: 64) defines the Extinction Factor in the following terms: "The Extinc-

tion Factor is that death ends permanently all significant periods of a person's life; there is no more possibility of significant periods of life." Kamm explains that the Extinction Factor applies to death but not to prenatal nonexistence, since the latter holds the possibility of life to come. Furthermore, it is the end of all possibilities of life, rather than the loss of goods of experience and action, that awakens terror in us. The Insult Factors exposes a different dimension of death as an intrinsic evil. As Kamm (1993: 64) explains: "The Insult Factors arises because death involves a loss of goods happening to a person who already exists. . . . In confronting us when we already exist and undoing what we already are, death takes away what we think of as already ours and emphasizes our vulnerability." Like in the case of the Extinction Factor, the Insult Factors has the advantage of applying to posthumous nonexistence but not to prenatal nonexistence, hence reinforcing the thesis of the badness of death as both an extrinsic and an intrinsic evil.

III. WHY VIOLENCE IS BAD: EXTRINSIC REASONS

In the next two sections the analysis will switch from the badness of death to the badness of violence. As already mentioned, the concepts of violence and death are not interchangeable, since violence has a much broader scope than death. Nevertheless, it may be informative to see to what extent the three dominant approaches to the badness of death also apply to the badness of violence. Of course the fit will not be perfect. In fact, it is precisely where the badness of violence fails to fit into the framework provided by the badness of death that the distinctive nature of the badness of violence is to be found.

Starting with the Deprivation Factor: does violence inflict deprivation on the victim, and if so could the badness of violence be understood along the lines of the Deprivation Factor? Assuming that the victim of an act of violence survives the attack, any deprivation they may experience would be of a different nature compared to the deprivation of someone who dies. The Deprivation Factor defines deprivation in terms of not getting more goods of life. In the case of violence the victim does not suffer a deprivation as such, if by deprivation we mean an absolute and timeless withdrawal,¹² instead it is more accurate to say that the victim suffers a restriction in her choice set. What the victims of violence are being restricted in will depend on the nature of the act of violence, although some generalizations can be inferred. First of all, the victim of violence is restricted in her well-being for the duration of the injury. If a villain breaks your arm, you will be restricted in the use of the arm (and all the benefits that may bring you) for as long as it takes for the broken arm to heal. On the other hand if the injury is so serious to be permanent, or even to necessitate the amputation of your arm, the violence has restricted you in the use of your arm from that moment in time until death. But whether your arm is in a sling for ten weeks, or amputated, the injury inflicted by the villain's act of non-deadly violence is fundamentally a restriction on the victim's freedom, not a deprivation.¹³ In the case of violence this can be referred to as the Restriction of Freedom Factor.

Of course physical restrictions are not the only deficits generated by violence. At a psychological level, violence (whether physical or psychological) may impair the victim's integrity and sense of security. An act of violence may instill in the victim the fear that the same calamity may strike

again. This sense of fear may be paralyzing, it may undermine the victim's confidence, their ability to trust others, and it may even lead to other psychological dysfunctions such as paranoia or panic attacks. In the well-documented case of rape, the psychological effects may include depression, silent withdrawal, hypochondria, lack of self-confidence, feelings of shame or guilt, and self-destructive behavior.¹⁴ This will be referred to as the Psychological Damage Factor.

It is possible that something along the lines of the Restriction of Freedom Factor and the Psychological Damage Factor can account for the badness of violence. The badness of violence is, at least in part, an extrinsic evil. Yet, it would be wrong to suggest that violence is *only* an extrinsic evil. Part II above shows how in the literature on the badness of death the Deprivation Factor gets into trouble for failing to account for the fact that death is worse than prenatal non-existence (the asymmetry problem). In terms of the badness of violence, the Restriction of Freedom Factor and the Psychological Damage Factor also run into a problem, albeit of a different nature; namely, they fail to account for the fact that restriction of freedom and fear may be the result of accidents rather than violence, in which case the Restriction of Freedom Factor and the Psychological Damage Factor are not exclusively the domain of the badness of violence. This will be referred to as the equivocation problem.

Consider the following example. In scenario A you lose the use of your right arm after being tortured by a villain. In scenario B you lose the use of your right arm after being attacked by a shark. In both cases your freedom has been restricted, but only scenario A is a case of violence, which suggests that the Restriction of Freedom Factor fails to distinguish between an act

of violence (scenario A) and a mere accident (scenario B). But that is not all. As a result of the torture that you have endured, you now suffer from psychological inhibitions. But you may suffer from similar psychological inhibitions after the shark attack, for example you panic anytime you get near the sea. This suggests that the Psychological Damage Factor also fails to distinguish between an act of violence and a mere accident.

It is because the Deprivation Factor fails to deal adequately with the asymmetry problem that Kamm argues for an intrinsic approach to the badness of death. Similarly the Restriction of Freedom Factor and the Psychological Damage Factor fail to deal adequately with the equivocation problem. This suggests that there are other reasons why violence is bad. In Part IV below, following Kamm's lead the intrinsic badness of violence will come under close scrutiny.

IV. WHY VIOLENCE IS BAD: INTRINSIC REASONS

Just as in the case of death, there is also an intrinsic dimension to the evil of violence. The literature on the badness of death suggests two ways in which death can be an intrinsic evil: the Extinction Factor and the Insult Factors. In the case of murder or wars, the fact that violence is the cause of death is bad because for the victim it is all over, that is to say, violence ends permanently all significant periods of the victim's life. This is fine as far as it goes, but unfortunately it does not go far enough. The problem is that not all violence is deadly, therefore the Extinction Factor is only of limited value, since it fails to capture the badness of violence for all those cases (arguably the majority of cases) when violence is not deadly. If violence in all its forms is an intrinsic evil, it must be

for other reasons apart from the Extinction Factor.

The Insult Factors are more promising. Kamm emphasizes the fact that death takes away what we think of as already ours and therefore emphasizes our vulnerability. The idea of vulnerability is crucial to Kamm's (1993: 41) intuition: "death exposes the vulnerability of what exists." Another way of capturing this vulnerability is in terms of our powerlessness. Kamm's decision to refer to the Insult Factors as an instance of "insult" is perplexing, considering that insults usefully refer to harmful judgements of a personal nature, although there is nothing personal about the timing of one's natural death. The insult refers to one's vulnerability, or as Kamm (1993: 56) puts it "the *vulnerability* exhibited when something is destroyed." By calling it the Insult Factors, Kamm is referring to a cluster of factors that exhibit a person's vulnerability, from destruction (a person is destroyed by death) to decline (death constitutes a declining state of affairs), which are not captured by the loss of goods of life the person would have had if the person had lived longer.

The example used by Kamm (1993: 42) to explain the nature of the Insult Factors is telling: "So the person who never had an arm and the person who has lost an arm live equally hard lives. A court may say one is no worse off than the other. But one has suffered an insult the other has not suffered, and in this sense, something worse has happened to him." The point of this example is to illustrate that death is a decline. Yet what is particularly interesting about this example is that losing an arm is not an issue of death, but could be an issue of violence. In the account of the Restriction of Freedom Factor and Psychological Damage Factor, the example of a villain breaking your arm was used. The badness

of this act of violence is not only that the villain has deprived you of a set of goods for the duration of your injury, but also that by breaking your arm the villain has exposed your vulnerability and powerlessness. In many ways, the insult (the sense of vulnerability and powerlessness) hurts as much as the physical injury.

One could go as far as saying that what Kamm calls the Insult Factors apply much better to the badness of violence than to the badness of death. After all, it is not the general state of vulnerability *per se* that is problematic, since we are all aware that mortality is the essence of the human condition. It is being vulnerable *to* someone, or having our mortality being determined by another person, another mortal, that is the issue. Another way of stating this point is by saying that what is most troubling is not being powerless *per se*, but being powerless in relation to someone else who has power over us. There is a social dimension to vulnerability and powerlessness that is not fully captured by Kamm's account of the Insult Factors. This social dimension is prevalent in issues of violence, but lacking in issues of death.¹⁵ Furthermore it is this social dimension that is the worse part of our vulnerability: death as a result of an earthquake is undoubtedly bad, extrinsically and intrinsically, but death as a result of murder or genocide is even worse. In order to distinguish between the insult of death, and the insult of violence, the latter will be referred to as the Social Vulnerability Factor.

The Social Vulnerability Factor is distinctive to violence, hence it is an essential part of the answer to the question: "why is violence bad?" The Social Vulnerability Factor underlines the fact that victims of violence are not only harmed but wronged, and their self-respect suffers as a result of it. Violence is degrading, more so than death. It destroys a person's self-confidence,

it diminishes the sense of a person as a person, and it deprives a person of their self-esteem. John Rawls famously points out that self-respect is arguably the most important primary good (things that every rational person is presumed to want). He defines self-respect (or self-esteem) as having two aspects: a person's sense of one's own value, and a confidence in one's ability. As Rawls (1971: 440) puts it: "Without [self-respect (self-esteem)] nothing may seem worth doing, or if some things have value for us, we lack the will to strive for them. All desire and activity becomes empty and vain, and we sink into apathy and cynicism." Unlike accidents, violence represents an assault on a person's self-respect (self-esteem). Such assault may be more difficult to perceive than an assault of a more physical nature, but it is not less real. The extensive literature on domestic and family violence is enlightening on this issue.¹⁶

Figure 1 below summarizes the arguments put forward in Parts II, III, and IV above. Part V below will suggest why the Social Vulnerability Factor makes violence not only bad, but also wrong and worse than death.

	DEATH	VIOLENCE
EXTRINSIC BAD	DEPRIVATION FACTOR	RESTRICTION OF FREEDOM FACTOR & PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE FACTOR
<i>PROBLEM WITH EXTRINSIC BAD</i>	<i>ASYMMETRY PROBLEM</i>	<i>EQUIVOCATION PROBLEM</i>
INTRINSIC BAD	EXTINCTION FACTOR & INSULT FACTOR	SOCIAL VULNERABILITY FACTOR

Figure 1: Badness of Death vs Badness of Violence

V. WHY VIOLENCE IS BAD, WRONG, AND WORSE THAN DEATH

Death is bad, but it is not necessarily wrong. Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603 from natural causes. Mary, Queen of Scots, cousin of Queen Elizabeth I, was beheaded in 1587. Both deaths are bad, but only the latter is wrong. What makes it wrong (for the person who dies, of course) is the fact that Mary, Queen of Scots, did not just die, but was killed, by order of Queen Elizabeth I. Although Kamm (1993: 21) does not mention violence in her work, she discusses the nature of killing, and points out that what makes killing wrong is to some degree independent of what makes death bad: "wrongness is not derivable from the badness of outcome." Kamm is right, the wrongness of killing is not derivable from the badness of death, but it is derivable from the badness of violence. Killing is a form of violence, therefore knowing why violence is bad may shed some light on why killing is wrong.

Kamm (1993: 21) explains why killing is wrong in the following terms: "The fact that one person determines the nonexistence of another person against his will, even in his own interest (as in involuntary euthanasia), is a factor in making killing wrong." This sentence is full of hidden meaning, therefore it needs to be carefully unpacked. First of all, in the act of killing there is a social relationship between two persons, the Killer (K) and the Victim (V). The wrongness of the act of killing has something to do with the power relationship between K and V. Kamm says that one person "determines" the nonexistence of another. This means that K not only has the power to determine the nonexistence of V, but also acts upon this power. After all, power is a dispositional concept, which defines a potential rather than an outcome. By the act of killing, K is interacting with

V directly, not potentially. Kamm also says that the non-existence of V is determined by K "against his will." This strengthens the thesis that wrongness has something to do with a relationship of power. Max Weber (1978) defined power as the ability of an actor within a social relationship to carry out his will *despite the resistance of others*. What makes K's act of killing V wrong is precisely the fact that killing V is against the will of V.¹⁷

The reason for emphasizing the power relationship between K and V is not to draw attention to the power of K, but to the powerlessness of V. Powerlessness leads to vulnerability, and vulnerability is an intrinsic evil. Kamm says that the awareness of our vulnerability is what makes death bad. She is probably right. But if that is true in the case of death (the Insult Factors), it is even more so in the case of violence (the Social Vulnerability Factor). In fact, as mentioned in Part IV above, one could argue that Kamm's argument applies much better to the badness of violence than to the badness of death. Vulnerability like violence is socially constructed, being one side of a power relationship. We become aware of our vulnerability when violence forces us into a power relationship.

One interesting aspect of Kamm's (1993: 21) analysis of the badness of death is that she does not think there is a difference between natural and human causes of death: "Then anything, whether occurring naturally or by human intervention, that stops the process maintaining the person already present might be bad . . . it may be offensive for people or even for nature to stand in the relation of causing death to a person." That may be the case for death, but it certainly does not apply to violence. In fact, it is the opposite in the case of violence. To suffer as a result of a shark attack is bad (for extrinsic reasons), but to suffer as a result of torture is not only bad

(for extrinsic and intrinsic reasons), it is also wrong. The wrongness is determined by the unequal power relation between the torturer and the tortured, which is intrinsic to the act of violence, whether it results in death or not.

It is important to remember that not all violence is deadly. If killing is wrong, not because of the badness of death but because of the badness of violence, it follows that all other non-lethal forms of violence are also wrong. In fact, with the possible exception of consensual violence,¹⁸ all violence is *prima facie* wrong. What makes violence bad and wrong is not only that the vulnerability of the victims of violence are being exposed, but also that the perpetrators of violence have taken advantage of the power they enjoy over the victims.

The reasons why violence is bad are different from the reasons why death is bad. The awareness of social vulnerability that makes violence bad also makes violence wrong, whereas the wrongness of death cannot be derived from the badness of death. At this point there is one last question that needs to be addressed: is violence worse than death? This is a complex question, but it is worth exploring the idea that perhaps some types of non-lethal violence may be worse than death. The assertion that violence is worse than death is counter-intuitive, since as the Extinction Factor suggests, death is arguably the worst thing that could happen to us. Nevertheless, the fact that the wrongness of violence (and death) is derived from the badness of violence, suggests that there may be something about the Social Vulnerability Factor that could make it even worse than the Extinction Factor.

Apart from the actual pain and suffering, what makes violence bad is the awareness of one's vulnerability. One can only be aware of one's vulnerability if one is alive, which is why non-lethal violence is

not only bad and wrong, but worse than deadly violence. In the last analysis, from the victim's point of view, one of the worst aspects of violence is that he or she has to live with the violence, that is to say with the awareness of their vulnerability and subordination in a power relationship. Once again, the literature on domestic violence is revealing on this point. Living with the trauma of violence can be an on-going torment. The fact that some victims of violence seek refuge in the act of suicide suggests that death is not the worst thing that can happen to a person. The assumed suicide of Primo Levi on April 11, 1987, forty years after he survived Auschwitz is a testimony to the pervasive evil of violence.¹⁹

VI. CONCLUSION

There are extrinsic and intrinsic reasons why violence is bad. Violence is extrinsically bad because of the Restriction of Freedom Factor and the Psychological Damage Factor, and intrinsically bad because of the Social Vulnerability Factor. The Restriction of Freedom and Psychological Damage Factors refer to the experience of injury and suffering, which is certainly part of the evil of violence, although its importance has perhaps been exaggerated in the literature. Apart from the harm of experiencing violence, the Social Vulnerability Factor suggests that violence is also bad because of the way it makes the victim feel *before* the act of violence (being threatened with violence, even if the threat never materializes), *during* the act of violence (the feeling of powerlessness and subordination), and *after* the violence has occurred (memories of violence). These feelings cannot be reduced solely to the anticipation or recurrence of a certain unpleasant experience, although this is certainly part of it, as any victim of torture will testify. Instead, these feelings are bad also because they make the victim feel

vulnerable and inferior to the perpetrator of violence. Experiencing violence can undermine a victim's self-respect and self-esteem.

The Social Vulnerability Factor states that violence exposes the powerlessness of the victim, making the victim vulnerable to the perpetrator of violence. The Social Vulnerability Factor is similar (but not identical) to Kamm's Insult Factors on the badness of death. The difference is that the Social Vulnerability Factor emphasizes the power relationship between two social actors: the person who performs the act of violence, and the victim who suffers from

it. The Social Vulnerability Factor makes violence both bad and wrong, therefore unlike in the case of death, the wrongness of violence is derivable from the badness of violence. Finally, because not all acts of violence lead to death, and violence captures the unequal relationship of power between perpetrators and victims, violence can be even worse than death: as a victim of non-lethal violence, living with the awareness of the Social Vulnerability Factor can be even worse than the eternal peace that comes from non-existence.

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NOTES

I have benefited greatly from conversations with Dolores Dooley and from the comments I received from the editors of *The American Philosophical Quarterly*. I also owe thanks to an anonymous reader for some extremely helpful remarks.

1. Nietzsche (1977: 100–101) says: "Examine the lives of the best and most fruitful men and people, and ask yourselves whether a tree, if it is to grow proudly into the sky, can do without bad weather and storms: whether unkindness and opposition from without, whether some sort of hatred, envy, obstinacy, mistrust, severity, greed, and violence do not belong to the *favoring* circumstances without which a great increase even in virtue is hardly possible."

2. Gandhi (1997) famously argued that violence is detrimental to its perpetrators, as it corrupts their soul. This article will be dealing exclusively with the badness of violence for those who are the victims of violence, not its perpetrators.

3. The reason Glover distinguishes between the irreversible loss of consciousness and the loss of all brain activity is because while loss of all brain activity guarantees loss of consciousness, the converse does not hold. People in a vegetable state have no consciousness even though there may be some electrical activity in some parts of the brain.

4. Some social scientists even go as far as to define violence strictly in terms of what causes death. See Welsh (2002: 67): "This chapter explores the interrelationship among these three factors—globalization, weak states, and violence. 'Violence' is defined here only as murder."

5. Audi (1971: 60) is aware that the term "vigorous" is vague, and to some extensive subjective, although it qualifies the idea of abuse in important ways: "I shall not attempt to give a definition of 'vigorous abuse,' but it should be of some help to say that, typically, vigorous abuse of persons is very rough treatment, especially shoving, punching, dragging, slapping, stabbing, slashing, trampling, crushing, burning, and shooting. Vigorous psychological abuse may be thought of, in rough terms, as the psychological counterpart of these abuses, and it is usually accompanied by sharp tones and screaming and often by insults and threats."

6. "This definition is certainly not without vagueness, but I hope that through qualifications, through examples, and through contrasting violence with force and other concepts with which it may be confused I have gone some distance toward reducing the vagueness of the definition" Audi (1971: 98).
7. While there are obviously no degrees of death, there are different ways of dying, and some at least do not invite being called "bad" as such, as in the case of euthanasia. Yet death and dying are not the same thing. Dying is the last stage in the process of living, therefore it is still part of life, not part of death.
8. This points to another important difference between the badness of death, and the badness of deadly violence. Death is bad even if it occurs naturally at the end of a full life-cycle. Deadly violence is bad not only because of the badness of death, but because the action of the perpetrator has interfered with the victim's natural life-cycle.
9. See for example Silverstein (1980).
10. Nagel says that *only* the death of Keats is generally regarded as tragic, but not the death of Tolstoy. This is debatable. The death of John Rawls on November 22nd, 2002, at the age of 81 is tragic, even though one could argue that he lived a full life. The point is not whether one death is tragic as supposed to another that is not tragic, but why one tragedy is different from the other tragedy. One could even argue that the death of Rawls at the age of 81 is in some ways more tragic than the death of a baby born with AIDS in Africa, whose short life is destined to be one of suffering.
11. It is interesting to point out that something like the Deprivation Factor is used by pro-life advocates. See for example Marquis (1997), who argues that the termination of life of the fetus deprives it of its future experiences, and it is for this reason that abortion is not only bad but also wrong.
12. One important exception is when A suffers from the murder of B by C, in which case A is deprived of B (for example, A is the child, B is the mother and C is the father). In this example A and B are both victims of C's violence.
13. Freedom is defined here along the lines suggested by Steiner (1994: 8): "a person is unfree to do an action if, and only if, his doing that action is rendered impossible by the action of another person."
14. See McCluskey and Hooper (2000).
15. Killing is violence that results in death; it is not about being dead as such.
16. See Vincent and Jouriles (2000); Hester, Kelly, and Radford (1996); Mullen et al. (1996).
17. If killing is not against the will of the victim, as in the case of voluntary euthanasia, then killing is not wrong. The fact that it is against the will of V, but not necessarily against the interest of V, suggests that perhaps Kamm is operating within the framework of a will or choice theory of rights, rather than an interest or benefit theory of rights. This point will not be pursued further here, although anyone interested in these two different conceptions of rights is advised to consult Kramer, Simmonds, and Steiner (1998).
18. Sado-masochism and assisted suicide come to mind here. On the former see Archard (1998).
19. There is no conclusive evidence that Primo Levi committed suicide, or that Auschwitz was on his mind as he did so, since he did not leave a suicide note. For a skeptical view on Levi's suicide thesis, see Gambetta (1999).

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