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Toward the Delineation of Vandalism As a Sub-Type in Juvenile Delinquency

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Ferri called criminal sociology. (His subordination of criminal law irritated his antagonists immensely; they preferred to look on the social and biological sciences as "auxiliary disciplines" of the criminal law.) Outside of criminal sociology lay certain other essential disciplines: criminal policy, i.e. the art of the legislator in adapting the defensive and repressive defense measures proposed by criminal sociology in a way to meet the exigencies of a given people; legislative technique, i.e. the actual drafting and adoption of legislation; penal jurisprudence, i.e. the art of judges and attorneys in using scientific ideas, such as bio-social data and juridical doctrines, in the interpretation of the criminal law and its application to the individual case.³¹

We have already noted that Ferri made original contributions both to the study of the crime as an "individual fact" by his researches on prisoners, leading to his works on homicide and suicide, and to the study of crime as a "social fact" by his studies of French criminal statistics, in particular. His most important and lasting contribution was, however, his ideas concerning the reformation of the system of criminal justice, some of the most important of which will be mentioned here.

First, it would be necessary to abolish the concept of moral responsibility and replace it by one of legal or social responsibility. "The positive theory says: every man is always responsible to society for any crime he commits. Whether he is a juvenile, insane, drunk or a sleep-walker, he should always be held responsible, i.e. subject to the consequences of his criminal act, when that act is contrary to public safety and forbidden by the criminal law... There is no more or less of criminal responsibility; either one is responsible or not responsible (for legally justifiable reasons)".³² Moral responsibility was to Ferri a metaphysical concept; it designated something which no one could adequately measure and led to the acquittal or the failure of prosecution of offenders who often were extremely dangerous to social safety. For him, social defense against the criminal required a system based on legal responsibility.

Moral responsibility having been eliminated, the consequences of crime for the convicted offender would no longer be retributive punishments (*pena-castigo*), but scientifically determined sanctions (*pena-difesa*) based on the degree of

danger which the offender constituted for society and the degree to which his motives were blame-worthy, rather than on the objective nature of his act. The function of the court would be to select the proper sanction for the convicted offender. To do so would require a great deal of understanding and knowledge on the part of the judges and prosecutors. In 1896, Ferri said, "The criminal justice of the future, administered by judges who have sufficient knowledge, not of Roman or civil law, but of psychology, anthropology, and psychiatry, will have for its sole task to determine if the defendant is the material author of the established crime; and instead of brilliant logomachies by the prosecution and the defense in an effort to trick one another, there will be a scientific discussion on the personal and social condition of the offender in order to classify him in one or another anthropological class to which one or another form of indeterminate segregation will apply."³³

Any attempt at real individualization of sentences by courts should be discouraged. He believed it utopian to think that any judge could make minute studies of every convicted offender. The judge should have enough scientific knowledge to permit him to place the offender in the proper class, (i.e. in one of Ferri's five or six classes) and then assign the sanction proper to each class whether this would be merely a warning (judicial pardon), the payment of reparations (which Ferri believed to be adequate for a number of offenders); compulsory labor in freedom (the worker's wages being attached); or indeterminate commitment to a mental hospital for the criminal insane, a reformatory, an institution for alcoholics, an agricultural colony, etc. Individualization, beyond this point, should be left to those who execute sentences, but even then he was inclined to think that, considering the numbers involved, real individualization of treatment would remain an incompletely realizable hope. In the treatment of offenders after sentence the greatest effort should be made in the case of the occasional criminal; it was not really worth spending much effort on the mentally abnormal or the congenital offender.

As for those committed on indeterminate sentences to some form of institutionalization, a periodic revision of the sentence should occur. The criminal justice of the future would see the setting

³³ See *Il Congresso d'Antropologia Criminale a Genova*, in *LA SCUOLA POSITIVA*, September 1896, reprinted in *STUDI SULLA CRIMINALITÀ ED ALTRI SAGGI*, 1901, pp. 216-33; p. 229.

³¹ *SOCIOLOGIA CRIMINALE*, 5th ed., vol. 2, pp. 554-5.

³² *Il dolo criminoso. DIFESA PENALI*, 3d. ed., vol. 3, p. 177

up of "permanent committees in which judges, prosecutors, defenders (who would also be public officials because it is absurd to consider the defense of a suspect as a private affair like the interpretation of a contract) and with them psychiatrists and anthropologists would examine periodically those committed, with the guarantee of publicity, to determine if the term should be prolonged or not."³⁴

The state should also provide for after-care and supervision.

The influence of the positive school has been felt in Italy and throughout the world. The reforms made in the criminal law in all civilized nations in the last half century have resulted in the adoption of many of the proposals of the positivists. The entire European movement to provide so called "security measures" parallel with or subsequent to "punishments" as means of dealing with habitual offenders, abnormal offenders, vagrants, etc. derives from the positivists, and the "social defense school" which has arisen in Europe since the last war owes its stimulus, and many of its basic ideas to Ferri and his co-workers.³⁵

Ferri remained until his death completely certain that regardless of what compromises might have to be made with more traditional views of criminal justice, his ideas would in the end be accepted as the most logical basis for social defense against crime. At the end of his preface to his treatise on the "Principles of Criminal Law" (1928), he wrote: "Thus I close my scientific life, showing the juridical application of these doctrines, originally and obviously Italian, which in the last fifty years I have seen, after the early fearful anathemas, progressively adopted in all

countries; this gives me a serene certainty that they will finally be completely realized."

A few months ago I drove along the Viale Ferri at Rocca di Papa, the picturesque hilltown some twenty miles from Rome, where Ferri had a large villa, from which he had a magnificent view to the west over the Roman campagna, Lake Albano and Castelgandolfo. I first met him there more than three decades ago and still remember the courtesy and kindness he showed a young student. Some days later I heard him give the introductory lecture—in November, 1925 at the University of Rome—a report on the International Penal and Penitentiary Congress, which he had just attended in London. Slender of build, a head taller than most Italians, and with a shock of white curly hair and a white beard, he was an imposing figure and still possessed, at seventy, the clarity of exposition and the manner of the great orator. The labors of a lifetime preceded that address, a lifetime devoted to battling for an idea. In his introductory lecture in 1921, Ferri told his students: "In your life as students and later in your fight for existence in your profession, remember that science and life teach us the lesson to be tolerant with people, because all men of good faith should be respected, whatever may be the philosophy, religion or political belief they profess; but be inflexible and tenacious defenders of your own ideas . . . If the idea is wrong, no amount of ability or propaganda will save it from extinction, but if the idea is true, neither academic fear of novelty nor legal persecution can stop its final triumph"; and in an address on "human justice" delivered in 1924 in Naples at the Congress for the Advancement of Science, he said: "By temperament I am an idealist because I have always believed—and my life is an example—that life without an ideal, whatever it may be—in art or in science, in politics or in religion—is not worth living."

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ MARC ANCEL, *LA DÉFENSE SOCIALE NOUVELLE*. 183 pp., Paris: Editions Cujas, 1954.

TOWARD THE DELINEATION OF VANDALISM AS A SUB-TYPE IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

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Among the many problems confronting the student of juvenile delinquency probably none is as perplexing and elusive as the designation "juvenile delinquency." The numerous and diversified definitions of this term as found in recent textbooks and monographs attest to the lack of agreement as to what is juvenile delinquency. Not only has the concept been subject to a variety of definitions, but it has also been utilized as an omnibus designation. Thus as currently employed the term "juvenile delinquency" has the doubtful function of being an inclusive category, applied without too much foresight to much juvenile behavior in general.

This confusing situation has affected the type of research done in this area, especially the prevailing emphasis on the early discovery and prediction of the potential delinquent. The usual procedure is to take a random and representative sample of delinquents, match it with an equally random and representative sample of non-delinquents, subject them to a variety of diagnostic tests, and thus arrive at a "scientific" formula which supposedly aids the investigator to predict with some degree of accuracy the potential delinquent, regardless of type.

Delinquent behavior is often viewed as symptomatic of personality maladjustment, ignoring the nature of the offense. Although personality maladjustment may be significant in some cases, it is certainly not evident in all juveniles called delinquent. Furthermore, there has been no indica-

tion in the various writings as to the degree of personality maladjustment which leads a juvenile to commit one or another of the gamut of offenses. Likewise, there has been no attempt to rank delinquent acts according to the amount of personality maladjustment involved in each offense.

Much the same situation had existed in the field of criminology. Unlike research in juvenile delinquency, however, the study of criminal behavior has been advanced by the proposal that the omnibus meaning of "criminal" be clarified through the use of constructive typology. By this method law violators are placed into more homogeneous subgroups according to the nature of the behavior system. Lindesmith and Dunham employ a continuum with two polar extremes, "the social criminal" and "the individualized criminal."¹ The former includes those whose offenses are committed with companions, while at "the individualized criminal" extreme are grouped those whose crimes are done alone and appear to have been induced by some kind of personality disturbance.

A typological approach permits concentration upon problems of limited scope and enables one to deal with manageable groups characterized by relatively homogeneous behavior. Some of the

¹ See A. R. LINDESMITH AND H. WARREN DUNHAM, *Some Principles of Criminal Typology*, SOCIAL FORCES, 19 (March 1941), 307-314. Also see WALTER C. RECKLESS, *THE CRIME PROBLEM* (2nd Edition; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), esp. Part II.

difficulties in the prediction and control of delinquency are probably due to limited typological research on juveniles.² To understand delinquency more fully it is necessary to study the various career patterns and types of offenses in which the delinquent participates. A fundamental question still to be answered is why a given delinquent engages in a particular act rather than in some other form of delinquency, although, to be sure, some delinquents are involved in several forms of delinquent behavior.³ If comparisons are then to be made, an approach worth a trial would be to compare types; for example, those who commit petty theft or sex offenses with vandals, holding constant the different variables generally included in matched-sample studies as has been done with juveniles who have committed auto theft rather than burglary.⁴

Vandalism is here proposed as an example of the typological approach to juvenile delinquency. By vandalism is meant the deliberate defacement, mutilation or destruction of private or public property by a juvenile or group of juveniles not having immediate or direct ownership in the property so abused. Although a common type of property offense among adolescent boys, the term itself is a relatively recent one, having come into official use as applied to delinquency only since the late thirties. What is here defined as vandalism is often included in such designations of delinquent activity as "malicious mischief," "acts of carelessness or mischief," "wilful and wanton misconduct," "destructiveness," "disorderly conduct," "incurability," or even "assault." Communities utilizing the categories employed by the United States Children's Bureau for reporting juvenile court statistics have included vandalism offenses in the statistical unit "act of carelessness or mischief." However, a number of municipal, county and state agencies are now using the term "vandalism" as a category to describe this distinct type of property offense.

² Steps in the right direction are the following: WILLIAM W. WATTENBERG and JAMES BALISTRIERI, *Automobile Theft: A "Favored-Group" Delinquency*, AMER. JOUR. OF SOCIOLOGY, 57 (May 1952), 575-579; and WILLIAM W. WATTENBERG and JOHN B. MOIR, *A Study of Teen-Agers Arrested for Drunkenness*, QUAR. JOUR. OF STUDIES ON ALCOHOL, 17 (September 1956), 426-436.

³ Cf. WILLIAM W. WATTENBERG and DAVID FAIGENBAUM, *Patterns in Delinquency*, JOUR. OF CLIN. PSYCHOL. 9 (January 1953), 78-81.

⁴ As an example, see STEVEN M. JACOBS and E. ELLIS GRAHAM, *A Comparison of the Rorschachs of Juvenile Auto Thieves and Juvenile Burglars*, JOUR. OF THE COL.-WYO. ACAD. OF SCI., 4 (October 1952), 76.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF VANDALISM

The available statistics on juvenile court referrals reported annually to the United States Children's Bureau indicate that property destruction is a common offense among adolescent boys. The cost to the American public of this deliberate damage is probably greater than the combined costs of other forms of juvenile property offenses. The cost of an offense is not the only way to measure seriousness. Research has shown that attitudes toward respect for property are not always the same and that any concept of property rights is to a considerable extent fluid and conditional.⁵ Actually a violation of property rights is not, of itself, necessarily serious. Its seriousness is dependent on such factors as the relationship of the owner to the offender, the danger of punishment for the offender, the likelihood of real injury to the owner, the kind of property involved, and the value of the property. Studies attempting to measure the relative seriousness of this offense have shown that vandalism ranks low in order of seriousness when compared with other typical juvenile offenses and that within the general designation of "vandalism" there are different types of property destruction, each with its relative degree of seriousness.⁶

SEX AND AGE

Statistics from the Children's Bureau, over the years it has published such figures, show that as might be expected, far more boys than girls are involved in vandalism. Studies in such diverse localities as Denver, Detroit, Connecticut and Great Britain also bear out this relationship.⁷ There is, on the other hand, considerable disagreement as to whether the typical age group involved in this offense is pre-adolescent or adoles-

⁵ Cf. JOHN C. EBERHART, *Attitudes Toward Property: A Genetic Study by the Paired-Comparisons Rating of Offenses*, JOUR. OF GENET. PSYCHO., 60 (March 1942), 3-25.

⁶ See MERVIN A. DUREA, *An Experimental Study of Attitudes Toward Juvenile Delinquency*, JOUR. OF APPL. PSYCHOL., 17 (1933), 522-534; and EDWIN POWERS and HELEN WITMER, *An Experiment in the Prevention of Delinquency* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), pp. 329-332.

⁷ *A Study of Vandalism*, Denver Area Welfare Council, Inc., April 1954, p. 5; WILLIAM W. WATTENBERG and FRANK SAUNDERS, *Sex Differences Among Juvenile Offenders*, SOCIOLOGY AND SOC. RES., 39 (September-October 1954), p. 26; *Needs of Neglected and Delinquent Children*, Public Welfare Council, Hartford, Connecticut, 1946, p. 14; and HERMANN MANNHEIM, *The Problem of Vandalism in Great Britain*, FED. PROB., 18 (March 1954), p. 14.

cents.⁸ Some of this disagreement may be due to the type of vandalism participated in by juveniles. Particular kinds of property destruction are probably associated with certain age groups since these acts may call for the ingenuity which comes usually with age and experience. There is some evidence that vandalism among children diminishes during the summer months. Most vandalism seems to occur when juveniles are en route to school or have just left school, the largest number of such acts taking place between the hours of 6 and 10 P.M.⁹ There are grounds for believing that destruction as a behavior problem tends to decline with age and tends to be outgrown in individual cases with the passage of time.¹⁰

SOCIAL CLASS

Evidence concerning the relationship of vandalism to social class position is conflicting and fragmentary. Shulman has speculated that while offenses among lower-class boys consist largely of various types of theft, malicious mischief occurring under group stimulus is more characteristic of middle-class juveniles.¹¹ Available empirical evidence is contradictory, however. Gingery's survey of vandalism in 25 cities revealed that this offense is just as high in the poorer sections as in the higher socio-economic districts of the city.¹² On the other hand, a recent Denver study of vandalism showed that the majority of offenders lived in low income sections, whereas Mannheim's study of juvenile delinquency in Kansas City disclosed that the highest incidence was among youth from areas composed of middle-class families.¹³ A few studies have indicated that vandals

tend to commit their acts closer to home than any other offense typical to juveniles.¹⁴

In his recent book, "Delinquent Boys," Cohen has suggested that for the middle-class boy vandalism constitutes a protest against identification with his mother. Because of the small family, the boy's isolation from socially significant adults other than his parents, and the curtailment of his movement outside the neighborhood, the boy's mother becomes the principal agent of socialization and indoctrination of "good" behavior. Thus goodness comes to symbolize femininity for the middle-class boy. Feeling this a threat to his status as a male he reacts negativistically to those conduct norms associated with "mother" by engaging in behavior which functions as a denial of his femininity and an assertion of his masculinity. Because property has great symbolic value for the middle-class adult as an attribute of status, a destructive attack on this symbol becomes especially meaningful to the middle-class boy who has been reared to believe that property should be treated carefully, not carelessly abused or destroyed.¹⁵

Vandalism for the lower-class boy, on the other hand has the same protest function but for a different reason. Whereas the adult world defines the middle class boy as a "good" boy, its definition of his lower-class contemporary indicates suspicion, contempt and hostility. This negative definition is transmitted to him through the attitudes of middle-class adults with whom he has categorical contacts. His participation in property destruction constitutes an attack on the symbols of middle-class respectability and serves as a protest of this imputation of inferiority and devaluation of personal worth by the middle-class group. Destructive behavior emphasizes the difference between himself and middle-class conventionality and demonstrates a contempt for its way of life.¹⁶

If these hypotheses are correct the pressing problem for the middle-class boy is that of attaining freedom of movement and expression, while his lower-class counterpart has already achieved this goal and in so doing has sometimes violated the conduct norms proscribed by middle-class society. The middle-class boy begins at a later age to achieve this freedom of expression

¹⁴ *A Study of Vandalism, op. cit.*, p. 7; and ERNEST MANNHEIM, *op. cit.*, pp. 88f.

¹⁵ ALBERT K. COHEN, *DELINQUENT BOYS* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955), pp. 91f and 164f.

¹⁶ SOLOMON KOBRIN, *The Conflict of Values in Delinquency Areas*, *AMER. SOCIOLOGICAL REV.*, 16 (October 1951), pp. 656 and 659f.

⁸ See BEN SOLOMON, *Vandalism*, *YOUTH LEADERS DIGEST*, 17 (February 1955), p. 162; and HENRY S. DEWHURST, *THE RAILROAD POLICE* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1955), p. 114.

⁹ WILLIAM W. WATTENBERG, *Delinquency During Summer Months*, *JOUR. OF EDUC. RES.*, 42 (December 1948), p. 262. CYRIL BURT concluded that acts of property destruction showed very irregular fluctuations, revealing small correlation with the weather. *Cf. THE YOUNG DELINQUENT* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1925), p. 162.

¹⁰ LUTON ACKERSON, *CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1931), pp. 169f and 233.

¹¹ HARRY MANUEL SHULMAN, *The Family and Juvenile Delinquency*, *THE ANNALS*, 261 (January 1949), pp. 30f.

¹² S. L. GINGERY, *Vandalism in Schools*, *SCHOOL BUSINESS AFFAIRS*, 12 (September 1946), p. 5.

¹³ *A Study of Vandalism, op. cit.*, p. 7; and ERNEST MANNHEIM, *YOUTH IN TROUBLE* (Kansas City, Missouri: The Community Service Division, Department of Welfare, 1945), *passim*.

and thus has less experience in initiating behavior violating these norms. Consequently, his protest is expressed in a form already familiar to him through the reminiscences of his parents and other middle-class adults about the pranks and destructiveness of adolescents and college students. On the other hand, the differential association of the lower-class boy is with such a wide range of behavior models that his protest takes several forms. Basic to both groups is this feeling of role frustration, although the frustration is probably more pointed and acute for the middle-class boy. Whereas for his group vandalism is generally the sole response to this frustration, for the lower-class boy property destruction is one of several ways of expressing this feeling.

RELATION OF VANDALISM TO OTHER DELINQUENCY

The recent Glueck study found that 61.8 percent of the delinquent boys and only 3.8 percent of the non-delinquent controls had previously indulged in various acts of destructiveness.¹⁷ On this evidence the Gluecks state that destructive mischief is one of the first clear signs of the delinquent's social maladaptation.¹⁸ However, this idea of vandalism as a first or eventual step in a career of crime is yet to be empirically confirmed by others. Furthermore, little is known about the amount and kind of recidivism in vandalism. Merrill's delinquency study found that only 4 percent of the delinquents had "malicious mischief" as a first offense, whereas theft was the first offense in 57 percent of the cases studied.¹⁹

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

There are some scattered and fragmentary insights in the literature concerning the association of peculiar or particular psychological characteristics with vandalism. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to confuse destructiveness as behavior with destructiveness as a motivation. For the psychoanalytically inclined destructiveness is a "symptom" of personality maladjustment or an instinctual drive; in some cases all juvenile delinquency is considered destructive behavior.²⁰

¹⁷ SHELDON AND ELEANOR GUECK, *UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY*, (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1950), p. 162.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁹ MAUD A. MERRILL, *PROBLEMS OF CHILD DELINQUENCY* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), Appendix B., Table 2, p. 346.

²⁰ Cf. GEORGE E. GARDNER *The Community and the*

It is very doubtful, however, if there is a unitary component in human personality which can be called "destructiveness." More often destructiveness is the synthetic by-product of many complex partial impulses, some of which may actually be constructive.²¹

The Cambridge-Somerville project concluded that most destruction is committed by boys who are socially well-adjusted to the pattern of life within their particular subcultures.²² The Jenkins and Glickman study, however, reveals destructiveness as a behavior trait to be a characteristic of the "unsocialized aggressive" child.²³ On the other hand, Merrill found that the highest percentage of successful adjustments after three years of clinical contact was achieved in cases designated as "malicious mischief".²⁴

GROUP NATURE OF VANDALISM

Studies have shown that in nearly all cases of destruction the acts are performed with companions.²⁵ In certain communities an additional element of gang rivalry is apparent; sometimes rival gangs will compete in destructive acts.²⁶ There is also some evidence that such vandalism is

Aggressive Child: The Expression of the Aggressive-Destructive Impulses in Juvenile Delinquent Acts, MENT. HYG., 33 (October 1949), 537-550; and J. D. W. PEARCE, *JUVENILE DELINQUENCY* (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1952), esp. pp. 18, 75, 289f., and 323ff.

²¹ LAWRENCE S. KUBIE AND ROBERT HOCH KUBIE, *Destructive Personalities*, APPL. ANTHROPOLOGY, 7 (Fall 1948), p. 36.

²² FRED J. MURPHY, MARY M. SHIRLEY, AND HELEN L. WITMER, *The Incidence of Hidden Delinquency*, AMER. JOUR. OF ORTHOPSYCHIATRY, 16 (October 1946), p. 695.

²³ R. L. JENKINS AND SILVIA GLICKMAN, *Patterns of Personality Organization Among Delinquents*, NERVOUS CHILD, 6 (July 1947), pp. 329-339.

²⁴ MERRILL, *op. cit.*, pp. 301ff. For a discussion of motivation in vandalism mainly from the psychiatric viewpoint, see *Symposium on Vandalism*, FED. PROB., 18 (March 1954), 3-16.

²⁵ WALTER HOUSTON CLARK, *Sex Differences and Motivation in the Urge to Destroy*, JOUR. OF SOC. PSYCHOL., 36 (November 1952), p. 170. Also see CLIFFORD R. SHAW AND HENRY D. MCKAY, *Social Factors in Juvenile Delinquency*, REPORT ON THE CAUSES OF CRIME, National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, No. 13, Vol. II, 1931, pp. 122f: "Nothing thrilled me more when I was a kid than to break some windows in the settlement or school with the other fellows . . ."

²⁶ LLOYD T. DELANEY, *Establishing Relations with Anti-Social Groups and an Analysis of Their Structure*, BRIT. JOUR. OF DELINQUENCY, 5 (July 1954), p. 43; and BARBARA BELLOW, *et al.*, *Prejudice in 'Seaside'*, HUMAN RELATIONS, 1 (June 1947), p. 112.

related to racial, ethnic or religious prejudice.²⁷ It is unlikely, however, that such behavior is more typical of certain racial or ethnic groups than others. Data from the Children's Bureau indicate that there is little difference between Negro and white groups in the amount of vandalism.

DIMENSIONS IN A TYPOLOGY OF VANDALISM

Providing there is not serious injury to property, the American public tends to view pranks with a kind of careless tolerance, probably because most American males were once participants in this kind of activity. There are, however, certain implied limits to juvenile vandalism growing out of ambiguous definitions of the roles and status of children in contemporary society. The destructiveness of very young children is often excused with the rationalization that they have not yet matured to a responsible understanding of property rights and its value. Much of the damage by this group is probably accidental, hence more readily excusable. Furthermore, most of this vandalism seems to grow out of random play-group activity. In its beginning stages this activity is inherently neither recreational nor delinquent. Later it may be defined as one or the other, depending upon whether the culmination of the activity is acceptable or unacceptable to the community. With younger children vandalism is not, therefore, necessarily malicious; rather it is more often destructive play motivated largely by curiosity.²⁸

The adolescent, on the other hand, is generally held morally culpable for his destructiveness. More often than not, his vandalism is considered deliberate and malicious even by the juvenile, as a fourteen year old boy has stated:

Well, my parents came over to Gene's. I told my father we'd go over to the (drugstore)... Went over to the apartment house where cars were parked... wanted to "split tires" and did... meanness, I guess, —get an urge to do it—start with one and keep on doing it... Well, it didn't matter, any car would do... Teenagers are different from adults, feel urge to do something ornery... I didn't know the people,

of course, just something mean to do... everybody does something mean.²⁹

How severely the teenager is censured is often dependent on the nature of the damage and the property vandalized. Community tolerance limits of various types of property destruction also appear to be affected by whether it occurs in a rural or urban area. As Ellingston has suggested, to overturn a farm wagon or an outhouse on Halloween may be regarded as permissible skylarking, but to overturn a truck in the urban community is labelled destruction of property.³⁰

These normative aspects are important in the assessment of the meaning of vandalism to the community. It is commonplace for the community to overlook certain forms of vandalism on Halloween. But even within this institutionalized setting the norms are undergoing change and less destructive behavior is approved than formerly.³¹ The social situation in which the offense takes place is another important dimension. Although the society may not have a well-structured and consistent set of norms relative to property destruction, within the society certain groups or members of particular social classes, may be accorded a well-defined field in which to indulge in vandalism. One British writer has stated:

... the party of public schoolboys who damage property during the course of a "rag" are behaving very differently from the street corner gang who smash street lamps or shop windows "just for the fun of it," or work off their aggression. The mores of the Public School community allow and even encourage such explosively expressive behavior and the scholars' participation in its restricted setting, whereas the casual destructiveness of promiscuous gangs has no such social approval to sustain it.³²

Often there is a certain flavor of spontaneity

²⁹ This and subsequent undesignated interviews were obtained as part of a research project on teen-age vandalism financed through a research fellowship by Community Studies, Inc., Kansas City, Missouri.

³⁰ PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN FROM CRIMINAL CAREERS (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), pp. 197f.

³¹ Cf. RALPH AND ADELIN LINTON, HALLOWEEN: THROUGH TWENTY CENTURIES (New York: Henry Schuman, 1950). In Great Britain, the Guy Fawkes Day Celebration (November 5th) is an institutionalized occasion for college-boy pranks; students let off "steam" mainly by setting bonfires.

³² JOHN BARRON MAYS, GROWING UP IN THE CITY (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1954), pp. 18f.

²⁷ RAYMOND GORDON, *Vandalism*, FEDERAL PROBATION, 18 (September 1954), p. 50. Also see SHAW AND MCKAY, *op. cit.*, p. 117: "Niggers and an Indian family lived next door to us and we didn't like niggers. The boys would break their windows, holler in their doors, and throw tin cans into their houses..."

²⁸ A. H. MASLOW, *A Comparative Approach to the Problem of Destructiveness*, PSYCHIATRY, 5 (November 1942), p. 520.