Washington whizbang would elect to take the stand. Yet after the prosecution rested its case, Defense Attorney Edward Bennett Williams called Baker as his first witness. Displaying little of the bravado of his less troubled days, Bobby calmly told the jury of sundry influence-peddling deals. But his own role, he maintained, had been little more than that of an errand boy for Kerr.

Prompt Promise. Baker also evoked Lyndon Johnson's name four times. When he found in the summer of 1962 that he was desperately short of cash for his $1,200,000 Maryland shore Carousel Motel, Baker testified, he took his woes to Johnson, whom he described as "the best friend I had around the Capitol." Baker said: "The then Vice President picked up the phone and called his friend and my friend—Senator Kerr. He then advised me to go immediately to Senator Kerr's office, which I did."

According to Baker, Kerr at once promised personally to lend him $50,000, advanced him $10,000 of it forthwith and arranged an additional $250,000 line of credit from an Oklahoma City bank.

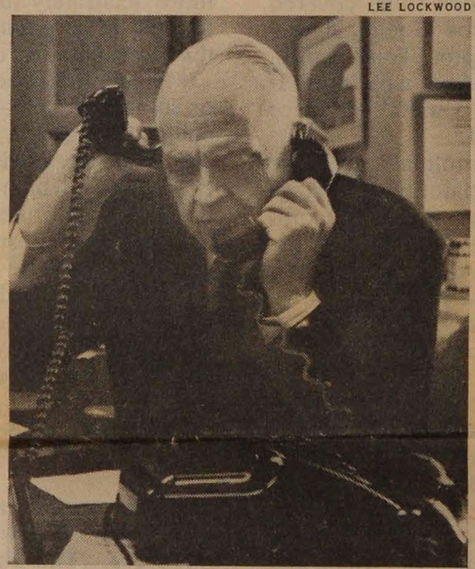
As it happened—and as Baker recounted in court—Kerr was deeply involved at the time in political infighting over the tax reform bill of 1962, which sought to end the special tax treatment enjoyed by savings and loan associations. At the suggestion of an industry lobbyist, Baker arranged a meeting in September 1962 between Kerr and Kenneth Childs, a Los Angeles S & L executive. Afterward, Baker went on, Childs informed him that "as a result of the conference with Senator Kerr," he was going back to California and get together a "substantial contribution to Senator Kerr, to be used in the 1962 election." The tax reform bill was enacted by Congress on Oct. 2—but only after a conference committee knocked out a feature to which stockholder-owned S & L companies had objected.

Baker testified that on three occasions, in October and November, he had been handed envelopes containing money—presumably the disputed $99,600—by executives of West Coast S & L companies. Each time, Baker insisted, he turned over the envelopes to Kerr. On one such occasion, Baker received two envelopes from Stuart Davis, board chairman of Los Angeles' Great Western Financial Corp. (who had previously testified that they contained $50,100 in campaign funds). When he gave the envelopes to Kerr, Baker continued, the Senator loaned him $25,000 of the money, with the comment that he would "replenish" it later from his own funds. Bobby also said that he visited Oklahoma after Thanksgiving, at which time Kerr gave him another $15,000—completing the $50,000 loan he had promised him.

Happy Christmas! On Dec. 16, 1962, Kerr suffered the illness that was to lead to a fatal heart attack two weeks later. Baker testified that at Christmas he received a call from Kerr, but at first could not believe that it was really the Senator. After all, said Bobby, "when Senator Johnson had his heart attack, the doctors insisted that he not make telephone calls." Making Kerr sound like the reformed Scrooge, Baker said the Senator told him that "he wanted to call me to let me know he loved me and my family. He said, 'Bob, I hope this is the best Christmas you've ever had. You've had it tough. The reason I wanted to talk to you was I wanted to wipe your slate clean of money I loaned you.' " According to Baker, Kerr told him that the $50,000 was payment "for the many wonderful things you have done for me."

If Bobby Baker had indeed turned over all the "political contributions" to Kerr, what did the Senator do with them? In his opening statement, Defense Attorney Williams said that when Kerr's Washington safe deposit box was opened following his death, it yielded "an equivalent sum to what had been turned over to him" by Baker. Without specifying that amount, Williams declared that Baker "did not commit theft from the savings and loan executives." Government attorneys this week will try to shake Baker's story under cross-examination. Whatever the outcome, his testimony will only becloud the memory of Bob Kerr—the man with whom Baker, according to his attorney, had "a father-son relationship."

LEE LOCKWOOD



KERR IN WASHINGTON OFFICE (1962)
Spirit from the vasty deep.

FOREIGN AID

Agents of the Other War

The county agent, with his farming know-how and scientific savvy, has proved to be one of the Federal Government's most creative contributions to American agriculture. Accordingly, after last year's Honolulu conference, when President Johnson articulated the need for getting on with the "other war" in Viet Nam—the war against hunger and poverty—it was only natural that the Department of Agriculture should think of enlisting U.S. county agents. Last week, after five months of Stateside training, the first volunteers, 16 in all, headed toward Viet Nam, where they will try to assist Asian peasants in much the same fashion that they help American farmers.

It will be no easy job, as the county agents learned during their training at a camp in Florida's swamp country, where the balmy climate approximates that of tropical Viet Nam. They were warned to expect terrorist attacks, told never to travel at night for fear of ambush, and informed about the standoffish peasants' social and religious taboos. The most arduous aspect of the course was learning the language from three Vietnamese instructors (*heo* is pig, *bap* is corn, *ga* is chicken, and farmer is a tongue-twisting *nguoi lam ruong*). Kiddingly, the agents asked their Vietnamese teachers how to say "I surrender"—and were haughtily ignored by the tough former army men. After 450 hours of study, the volunteers feel they have barely grasped the hang of basic Vietnamese. Yet it is their language capability, plus their specialized knowledge of tropical agriculture, that will distinguish the county agents as the best prepared workers the U.S. has sent to Viet Nam.

"Good Sense." The agents will eventually total 90 and work in all of Viet Nam's 43 provinces—none of which can yet be described as totally free from terror. After four weeks of intensive study of rice production in the Philippines and Taiwan, they will get special instruction in booby traps and, if they request it, weaponry when they reach Viet Nam. Only then will they be ready to go out among the Vietnamese peasants, who make up 85% of the country's 14 million population.

With hardship allowances and other premiums, the county agents will boost their average Stateside salaries of $9,000 to about $16,000. They insist, however, that it is not just the money that attracts them. "I believe in this technical assistance," says Marvin Belew of Centerville, Tenn., 53, a civilian air-transport-command navigator in World War II and a county agent for the past 15 years. "It's a chance to help." Charles Wissenbach, 32, of Williamsburg, Mass., is a Mormon who sees his service as "something the Lord would want me to do." William Schumacher, of Catskill, N.Y., a World War II glider pilot, is leaving his wife and ten children behind for his 18-month tour, says philosophically about the dangers: "If it happens, it happens."

At 26, Arthur Gehlbach, of Corydon, Ind., is the youngest of the group, believes that the program "makes good sense." Says he: "A county agent's job is getting people together, coordinating, helping. That's what we'll do in Viet Nam. But I know enough to keep my mouth shut if they know more than I do. Farmers don't push very good."

TIME ESSAY

WHAT IS ART TODAY?

The greatest mystery is not that we have been flung at random between the profusion of the earth and the galaxy of the stars, but that in this prison we can fashion images of ourselves sufficiently powerful to deny our nothingness.

—André Malraux

What images? Among those currently proffered to the public for contemplation: a series of six, large, identically white pictures by Walter de Maria differing only in that on one the artist has written in pencil the word *Sky*, on another *River*, on a third *Mountain*. Four packing-case-sized and identical boxes by Robert Morris, painted white and spaced at equal intervals on the floor. A row of what appears to be eight truncated shoeboxes, the work of James Seawright, each containing a variant of the figure eight in sometimes flashing lights, while every now and then a taped voice croaks out, "Eight." A flight of wooden stairs covered in gold-colored carpet, entitled *Euclid* by Joe Goode. A creation called *Die* by Architect-turned-Sculptor Tony Smith, which he admits he ordered by phone. And why not? It is only a six-by-six-by-six-foot cube in slab metal—a piece of art on which the artist has not laid a hand.

These are examples of the latest in "minimal" art. The present art scene offers other creations: paintings that are an eye-blinding dazzle of stripes; canvases that are cantilevered from the wall right over the living-room sofa; gadgets that jiggle, wiggle, writhe and spin. And, though it is past its peak, there is pop: an assemblage in which a real lawnmower leans against a painted canvas; Brillo boxes designed to look exactly like Brillo boxes; cartoons blown up to mural size, complete with dialogue balloons and lithographic dots; old bits of crumpled automobiles presented as sculpture; an old Savarin coffee can containing 18 brushes in turpentine and frozen in ineffable permanency. Sometimes the subjects are erotic. Edward Kienholz's plaster couple makes love in the back seat of a real, if dismembered, car. Larry Rivers' seven-foot, three-faced Negro in plywood achieves vivid connection with a complaisant friend by way of a flashing light bulb. A disembodied female breast by Tom Wesselman looms, big as a mountain, over a diminished seashore.

Are these images sufficiently powerful to deny man's nothingness? All are declared to be art by the museums that show them, by the critics who explain and hail them, by the collectors who buy them. This has its advantages over the old days when the young artist suffered from neglect and sometimes died unrecognized. But in this day when the most radical young artist is threatened not by neglect but by the possibility that he may be considered over the hill at 30, a few critics and some painters who themselves were radical only a few styles back are beginning to raise an old question: What is art? They are worried not so much by the extravagance of some objects that are accepted as art as by the fact that there seem to be no criteria, no opposition, not even an insistence on the artist's uniqueness or individuality—the very claim that used to animate artistic revolutions. More and more people are beginning to feel that the current state of art, as Robert Frost said of free verse, is like playing tennis without a net.

Broken Illusion

The net has always seemed solid only to those who, with Plato, considered art to be the imitation of nature. The classic anecdote of the triumph of art as artifice concerned Zeuxis: when he unveiled his painting of grapes, birds flew down to peck at them. What the anecdotists seldom added is that Zeuxis' rival won the contest, for when the judges turned to unveil his painting, they were stunned to discover that the veil itself was the painting and declared him the winner because he had fooled the judges, while Zeuxis had fooled only birds.

Actually, mimesis as a theory of art was an illusion, invented by a beholder for other beholders. The artists themselves always knew that they were exaggerating, distorting, filtering—to express worship of the divine or a view of man, to make the real more real. But whether the emphasis was moralistic (said Tolstoi: "Art is the transmission to others of the highest and best feelings"), or emotional (Ruskin: "The first universal characteristic of art is tenderness"), or esthetic (Baudelaire: art is "the study of the beautiful"), or hedonistic (Santayana: "The value of art lies in making people happy"), the theory of art as imitation held on. It was finally destroyed in the 1880s—partly because of the appearance of the camera, which copied nature so much more accurately than could any human hand. Artists began to talk of a painting as "an object" in itself rather than the representation of something else.

"A painting—before being a war horse, a nude woman or some anecdote—is essentially a flat surface covered with colors arranged in a certain order," said one painter-polemicist, Maurice Denis, in 1890. Thus began the rapid but epic evolution in which representation was first blurred, then distorted, then broken into fragments and finally disappeared altogether in abstraction. The artists arrogated to themselves (as did the poets at the same time) the right to say what art was, with the added inference that if the viewer (or reader) did not understand it, that was his fault. "It was as if suddenly," says Painter Robert Motherwell, "an established church had dissolved. Each artist became his own self-ordained priest, charged with deciding for himself such questions as what is god or what is sin."

The New Church

It was an exhilarating experience. But inevitably, within a few years a new church was established. Says Artist Saul Steinberg: "This church has its saints, who are accepted only after they are dead. We have the holy bones of Mondriaan and the miraculous blood of Soutine. This church has its martyrs, like Jackson Pollock. It has its bishops and cardinals—the critics and museum directors. The museums have encouraged the production of icons, holy images, and other good luck charms that have no artistic value outside the church." The church also has its missionaries—the dealers. Among the leading ones right now is Manhattan's Leo Castelli. A few years ago, the story goes, Abstract Expressionist Willem de Kooning remarked, "That son of a bitch Castelli, he has the nerve to sell anything. He could even sell beer cans." Whereupon Jasper Johns proceeded to create his famous pop-art beer cans. Since the emergence of pop, with its move back to representation, abstraction has ceased to be the absolute dogma of the artistic church, whose chief theology today is the "reality theory."

This theory of art as an object turns every object into potential art. As one philosopher, Columbia Professor Arthur C. Danto, admits: "What in the end makes Rauschenberg's real beds streaked with paint and Warhol's Brillo boxes art is the theory. Without the theory, one is unlikely to see them as art." This does not satisfy all the critics. Says the Observer's Nigel Gosling: "Take a table and put it into a gallery, then it's art. But take eight of them and put them into a gallery, then it's a restaurant."

What then is art? The modern sages offer no solid answers. Says Sherman Lee, director of the Cleveland Museum of Art: "It is an expression of individual sensibilities. A neon Coca-Cola sign is in a very real sense a piece of art. The fact that anyone could make it is more or less beside the point. The fact is that no one else did make it." Says the Museum of Modern Art's Alfred Barr, who is viewed by

many as the untiaraed pope of the modern art world: "It is folly to say what is art. Works can become art by fiat —sometimes the fiat of one man. And it can be art for a while and then not art. It's obvious today that comics are art. Just because these things are vulgar, doesn't mean they are not art." Says the former director of the Tate Gallery, Sir John Rothenstein: "Art derives from the intention of the artist. But time is the only impeccable judge."

The necessity for considering the artist's intent and personality is the only common note that modern opinion strikes. It is a doctrine that brings art criticism down to the plane of psychoanalysis. The principle was perhaps pushed to its extreme by Peggy Guggenheim, who has admitted that she was not much impressed by Jackson Pollock as a painter until the day he urinated in her fireplace.

Meaning in Meaninglessness

The situation has produced a new kind of patron. "Most collectors today are not just satisfied with buying art, they want to buy a piece of the artist as well," grumbles one dissenter. "They want to belong to the art world, go see dirty movies at night at Andy Warhol's apartment." And Warhol in turn becomes a feature of gossip columns and a fixture at society's tables. Any day now he may be wrapped in plaster by the plaster master, George Segal, and propped against the bar in somebody's penthouse.

The situation has also produced a new breed of critics whose function is not to enunciate or defend standards but to be explicators and publicists for the new. Rothenstein, once a champion of innovation himself, now complains: "Scarcely anything, when it is quite new, however manifestly idiotic, is forthrightly condemned." Small wonder. Past critics were thoroughly cowed and browbeaten, not unjustly, for their classic misjudgments, beginning with the scorn heaped on Manet's *Olympia* and culminating in the ridicule showered on the impressionists, the Fauves and the cubists. Critics now live in terror of seeming square. The trouble is, as one anticritic remarked, they are now saying more and more about less and less. That includes some museum officials who are critics as well. Describing a box by Richard Artschwager, Ralph T. Coe of Kansas City's Nelson Gallery wrote: "The cheeselike surface of his formica triptych opens to reveal—absolutely nothing. This work reaches clear into the unlimited recesses of the mind: recesses that could frighten." Sam Hunter, critic and director of Manhattan's Jewish Museum, commented on a work by Barnett Newman, maximum leader of the minimalists; it was a large canvas, all red except for four thread-thin vertical stripes. Wrote Hunter: "These fragile and oscillating stripes play tricks on the eye and the mind by their alternate compliance and aggression. Brilliantly visible and all but subliminally lost . . . their cunning equivocation quite subverts the concepts of division and geometric partition." Sarah Lawrence Professor William Rubin said of Jasper Johns: "For him the image is meaningful in its meaninglessness."

The artists themselves do their bit. Painter Ad Reinhardt, who has so "refined" his paintings that they are currently all the same size and all look absolutely black until sufficient staring reveals an invariable cross of rectangles, is wont to make such statements as: "There is no place in art for life . . . the one thing to say about art is its breathlessness, lifelessness, deathlessness, contentlessness, formlessness, spacelessness, and timelessness."

"Esthetics is to art what ornithology is to the birds," quips Barnett Newman. On the contrary, too many modern painters seem to listen first and paint afterward, to be guided by the art theory of others rather than an art instinct of their own. The turnover is so fast that a style is lucky to last more than a couple of years before it is pronounced dead by the critics. With such a declaration, many a collector decides that he had better unload, prices decline, and artists get despondent. More in anger than in jest, Painter Jimmy Ernst ticked off an "unhappy proliferation" of present and possibly future styles: "Op and pop, sop (soft-edge-optical), plop-plop (from catsup bottles), abrev (abstract revisionism), exab (express-abstraction), geopimp (geometric-post-impressionism), kipab (kinetic-post-abstraction), syncromesh (easy to shift), nero (new eroticism), and perhaps even esthex (esthetic experiments between consenting adults in the privacy of their home).

All this provides no answer to the question, what is art? The artists' own attitude in general is a questioning, as in science, rather than an affirmation, as in humanism. Being heretics with no common cause, rebelling against a permissive society with no settled faith of its own, they often seem driven into intellectual dead ends or fragmented tantrums of defiance, fighting unseen gusts that are perhaps not there. It is hard to be different among crowds of other people trying to be different. In the Dada decade, Marcel Duchamp could shock people by exhibiting a urinal turned upside down and calling it *Fountain*. Seeing it for the first time today, hardly anyone would flinch—although a few might try to flush.

If art no longer shocks, it seldom edifies. Gone is the romantic reverence that made a work of art an object of worship; now it is apt to be just a household object, a neatly executed artifact. Is that enough? "If a painting does not make a human contact, it is nothing," says Motherwell. "The audience also is responsible. Through pictures, our passions touch; therefore painting is the fulfillment of a deep human necessity, not a production of a handmade commodity. A painting, or a man, is neither a decoration nor an anecdote."

Duty to Judge

Perhaps the best thing about all the decorations and anecdotes that clutter the scene is a sense of humor, a sense of freedom, a suspicion that anything can happen—perhaps even passion. In this welter of the current art world, it is still possible to say, or sense, that some things are good, some bad. There is the almost haunting fact that one metal glob or set of blinking lights will somehow tug at the imagination, while another will not. That Savarin coffee can full of paint brushes, which is in the Museum of Modern Art at the moment, is a visual bore. But Rauschenberg's goat with a tire around it is somehow amusing. Kienholz's latest exhibit, an abortionist's chair, complete with curette, bloody rags and fetus, has some horrid documentary interest, even if it need not be confused with El Greco's best work. Tony Smith's huge constructions have a presence (even if they are ordered by phone) that a pile of concrete blocks by Carl Andre have not. Something called *Liaison*, by John Bennett, has some strange charm, looming like a cross between an oversized scuba diver and a mechanical caricature of an elephant (though it's hard to see in what corner of the living room it would fit). But there is no such justification for those *Euclid* stairs; even as a literary joke, they are not worth the floor space they occupy, and someone ought to have the energy to say so. George Segal's plaster figures, produced by the ostensibly simple method of wrapping a subject in plaster-soaked rags, are unaccountably melancholy and powerful. Why? Modern esthetics sayeth not.

Yet it is that "why" to which today's art viewer must cling for dear life. It may be futile to insist any longer that one thing is art and another is not. Let everything be called art. But if so, it is more necessary than ever, in a time when to mention beauty has become a gaucherie, to decide that one work but not another has authority; that this one but not that one expands the senses or compels the imagination. The gallerygoer cannot stop the tastemaker from talking. But he can stop listening quite so docilely. Ultimately, art can be of value to him or to posterity only if it somehow enhances his own awareness of the world—by sight, touch or emotion—but it has to be his own decision. He has a duty to look long, learn and then judge, to like or not to like. He may make hideous mistakes. That is his risk—too few people take it—and better than abdicating personal reaction in favor of fashionable theory. For time, as today's uncertain men agree, is the only final judge; and the live viewer with his feet aching is the first voter in a poll whose results he may never know.

In the end, André Malraux expects too much when he asks for images to deny man's nothingness; that is turning art into religion. But if art need not deny the nothingness of man, it is urgent for man to deny the nothingness of art.

EUROPE

Scurrying in the Wings

"Eu-ro-pa! Eu-ro-pa!" chanted thousands of Italian university students as British Prime Minister Harold Wilson stepped last week from an R.A.F. Comet at Rome's Ciampino airport. The cheer fitted Wilson's mood. Britain—once great but long insular—was again seeking admission to the six-nation Common Market, and through it to the larger Europe that the Market envisions. Wilson and his Foreign Secretary, George Brown, were in Italy on a dramatic mission to explore, with top Italian officials, Britain's chances for acceptance.

DUFOTO

WILSON, SARAGAT & BROWN IN ROME
Grand visions for an eager audience.

In Rome, where he also talked with Pope Paul VI about Viet Nam, Wilson made only the first of a series of forays into the heart of Europe. This week he takes his case to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, then goes to Paris for a meeting with the man whose *non* in 1963 blocked the first British attempt. Next month Wilson will visit the other Common Market capitals. Says he: "What we seek is to make a practical reality of a vision—a vision of a Europe which, strong and united, will be able to play an effective part in the world."

Wilson's words were addressed to a changing Europe that is eager for visions. The postwar period has ended; old alliances are shifting. Western Europe is gripped by a sudden fascination with building bridges to Eastern Europe. For the first time since World War II, Europe feels that it has the strength and stature to shape its own destiny. So far, the most insistent influence on that destiny has been Charles de Gaulle, who wants an inward-looking Europe of independent yet friendly fatherlands extending from the Channel to the Urals—and free from U.S. influence.

Dominating Issue. Harold Wilson puts forward a more inclusive vision. British entry into the Common Market would mean a bigger, potentially far more powerful Europe, adding to the Market 54 million more customers. Britain's science-based industries would help the Continental nations close the technological gap with the U.S. Its participation would pave the way for the eventual inclusion in the Market of most, if not all, of the other EFTA nations with which Britain is now economically allied. That would boost the Market's population to more than 250 million, give Europe an economic might nearly equal to that of the U.S. and superior to the Soviet Union's.

But, as De Gaulle clearly recognizes, a bigger Europe could not so easily be dominated by one nation, as France now dominates the policy of the Common Market. He let it be known last week that he was furious that Wilson had the gall to speak on French soil to the Council of Europe before paying his respects at the Elysée Palace. Wilson's aides let it be known that they considered such sensibilities "petty."

Meanwhile, Wilson pushed ahead. In 7½ hours of talks with President Giuseppe Saragat and other Italian leaders, he emphasized that Britain no longer wanted any special privileges. "If we join the Common Market," he pledged, "we shall abide by the rules, and we shall play a full part in encouraging the advancement of political unity in Europe." Naturally, Britain would need a few years to adjust its agricultural system to the Market's, and some provision would have to be made to help Commonwealth trading partners that would otherwise be locked out by the Market's high external tariff. But none of this worried the Italians. Said Premier Aldo Moro: "The door is open."

The Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium feel the same way. As Belgium's Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel declared last week: "We have reached the conclusion that it is no longer possible to have Europe without Britain." West Germany also favors British entry, though it is unlikely to push too hard for fear of offending the French.

High Price. Thus the score is 5 to 1—just as it was in 1963. Do the British stand a better chance this time? That depends entirely on Charles de Gaulle. He, of course, was not saying. There was speculation in Paris that he may be considering a compromise under which Britain would become an associate member for several years while it proves its devotion to Europe. Full membership is another matter. In a recent background briefing for French newsmen, Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville ticked off the French conditions for full British participation. Britain must agree to withdraw from its military commitments east of Suez and become a purely European power. It must agree to a devaluation of the pound, end sterling's special role as one of the world's two reserve currencies (the other: the dollar). It must also loosen its ties with the Commonwealth and stop trying to exercise its "special relationship" with the U.S.

Such a price seems unreasonably—perhaps unreachably—high. As much as Britain might yearn to withdraw from east of Suez, it is nevertheless held there by defense treaties, family ties to former colonies and substantial pressure from the U.S. Though Britain is burdened by its responsibilities for protecting the pound, it is not a duty that can be shucked off without endangering the world's fiscal system.

Nevertheless, Wilson tried to please the French by making anti-American noises. Reporting to Commons after last week's Rome talks, he deplored, as De Gaulle does, American take-overs of Continental and British firms—though he last week approved Chrysler's taking control of the Rootes automaking group. He also praised the Franco-British plan to build a swing-wing fighter-bomber in the 1970s. The project, said Wilson, "really means the integration of our aircraft industries."

Political Considerations. For once, De Gaulle himself was in a dilemma. Legally, under the Market charter, he can blackball Britain as he did in 1963. Politically, such a move could backfire. An anti-British stand would hurt his party in the March elections for the National Assembly. A *non* would also produce what West German Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger calls *"eine Auseinandersetzung"*—a vast disruption—in the