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"TOYS OF DESPERATION"
SUICIDE AS PROTEST RHETORIC

CHERYL R. JORGENSEN-EARP

This paper examines the act of protest suicide as a form of rhetoric. Three representative cases of protest suicide, those of Emily Wilding Davison, Terence James MacSwiney, and Norman Morrison/Roger LaPorte, are studied for insight into the following unanswered questions concerning this act. What blend of emotional expression and movement goals motivates the actor? In a free society with other avenues of dissent open, why choose an act as extreme and irrevocable as protest suicide? What is the act's impact on those within and those outside the movement? By viewing protest suicide as a form of "symbolic inducement," this method of dissent may be seen as a rhetorical act whose motivation, form and impact can be better understood.

The very place puts toys of desperation, Without more motive, into every brain That looks so many fathoms to the sea And hears it roar beneath.
—Hamlet
Act One, Scene IV

On Derby Day, June 4, 1913, Emily Wilding Davison, an activist in the English Women's Suffrage movement, ran onto the track at Epsom Downs as the horses rounded the final turn. She attempted to grab the bridle of the King's horse. She was struck by the horse and died four days later without regaining consciousness.¹ In the fall of 1920, Terence James MacSwiney, leader of the free Ireland movement, died as the result of a self-induced fast lasting 73 days.² In 1965, Norman Morrison, an anti-Vietnam war activist, immolated himself in front of the Pentagon. Exactly one week later, Roger LaPorte, a Roman

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Catholic college student, also covered himself with gasoline and set himself on fire near United Nations Headquarters. He died 33 hours later.5

These incidents occurred in different countries, during different decades of the 20th century. The actors in these suicides were, respectively, a graduate of Oxford in English literature; the Lord Mayor of Cork, Ireland; a Quaker husband and father; and a young college student. Despite these differences, each actor shared a common belief: that, through his or her death, a social or political cause would be advanced.

Protest suicides tend to be isolated incidents in the greater life of a social or political movement. They occur sporadically; the actor's name and deed are often swiftly forgotten. Yet, they do continue to occur. It is during this century in particular that protest suicide has increased with the growth of nonverbal dissent. Protest suicides have occurred in practically every decade of the century and in a wide cross-section of countries and cultures.6 Even when not employed, protest suicide, like terrorism, remains a potential part of the arsenal of dissent.

Such an extreme method of dissent, applied in the past and certain to be utilized in the future, should no longer be ignored by those engaged in the study of dissent and social movements. While writers such as Edward Corbett, Jerome Skolnick, and Franklyn Haiman have addressed issues concerning “the contemporary ‘rhetoric’ of the streets”5 none has focused specifically upon acts of protest suicide. Haiman does include self-immolation along with vigils, sit-ins at draft boards, and the burning of draft cards as instances of protest rhetoric.6 However, this method of nonverbal dissent has received a mere nod of acknowledgment from the field of rhetoric. Therefore, many questions concerning protest suicide remain unanswered. What blend of emotional expression and movement goals motivates the actor? In a free society with other avenues of dissent open, why choose an act as extreme and irrevocable as protest suicide? What is the act's impact on those within and those outside the movement?

In an attempt to answer these questions, this paper treats the act of protest suicide as a form of rhetoric. Protest suicide is viewed as “symbolic inducement,” one of “those symbolic principles and functions which lead or invite us on to action.”7
Through this approach, protest suicide emerges not as an aberration but as a rhetorical act whose motivations, form, and impact can be understood.

**CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF SUICIDE**

Before the questions mentioned above can be broached, it is important to differentiate protest suicide from other forms of suicide. As a preliminary step, a general definition of suicide must be chosen. Of the myriad definitions available, the one which best clarifies the issues of this paper is provided by Richard Brandt. He defines suicide as:

> doing something which results in one's death, either from the intention of ending one's life or the intention to bring about some other state of affairs . . . which one thinks it certain or highly probable can be achieved only by means of death or will produce death.*

Emile Durkheim in his typology of suicides provided a specific classification for protest suicide which emphasized the individual's connection with society. He considered protest suicide as “altruistic” (where the act is precipitated by the individual's over-integration with society) as opposed to “egoistic” (where the individual lacks proper integration with society) or “anomic” (where the individual's integration with society is disturbed by crisis).*

The problem with classifying protest suicide as “altruistic” is that it implies an acceptance of societal over-integration as its root cause. In a recent analysis of Durkheim’s typology, Steve Taylor provides a new model for classifying acts of suicide. Taylor challenges the idea that “altruistic” suicides are produced by over-integration, claiming instead that they may be caused by “over-attachment, often to only one other.” It is not unusual for a hunger striker to focus on one person or group who can end the striker’s ordeal through certain concessions. In cases such as self-immolation, an individual or group is identified as responsible but only after the sacrifice is made. Taylor feels that, because of such variations in the certainty of the act, no one category can encompass all protest suicides. Yet, in each case, he views protest suicide as “other directed,” what Taylor calls “symphysic.”
Whether protest suicide is prompted by over-integration or by over-attachment, the term "altruistic" is still a useful one if used in its common meaning of a concern for the welfare of others. As a form of altruistic suicide, protest suicide is further differentiated by its indirect nature. In other forms of altruistic suicide, the act of suicide itself fulfills the actor's ultimate intent. The soldier who throws himself upon a hand grenade in order to save others accomplishes this end through his death. So, too, the infirm member of a nomadic tribe directly enhances the survival of others by removing herself as an impediment to their movement. Protest suicide, however, does not directly accomplish its end of social or political reform. It is a method to persuade others of the importance or correctness of a cause, a symbolic means to "induce to attitude or action" those who are left behind.

The three cases of Davison, MacSwiney, and Morrison/LaPorte have been chosen as representative of this particular kind of act. This paper is not an attempt to comment on all suicide which, it has been argued by others, may have a communicative function. This study is focused upon the very unique rhetorical act where a person, who would otherwise prefer to continue his or her existence, chooses to end his or her life to serve as "symbolic inducement" for a specific cause.

**Motivation: Expressive vs. Instrumental Effect**

The first question which arises in seeking to understand the act of protest suicide concerns actor motivation: how much of the act can we view as expressive and how much as instrumental? In other words, can (or should) a division be made between the theatre/ritual aspect, the venting of feeling by the actor, and the task of reform, the stated goal of the actor?

In each of the three representative cases, the actor had a definite goal in mind: for Morrison/LaPorte it was an end to the war in Vietnam; for Emily Wilding Davison, it was women's suffrage. Morrison and LaPorte's goals were clarified by the symbolic location of their suicides. In the case of Davison, the colors of the Women's Social and Political Union had been sewn to the lining of her coat before she ran onto the Derby track. Her rhetorical intent was thus clarified so that "no mistake could be made as to her motive when her dead body should be
examined. The symbolic clarifying of intent was bolstered by her previous oral assertions to the effect that "one great tragedy, the deliberate throwing into the breach of a human life, would put an end to the intolerable torture of women."

But to illustrate the potential for instrumental effects, the case which stands out is that of Terence MacSwiney. Briefly, on August 12, 1920, Terence James MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, was sentenced to two years imprisonment for the possession of Irish patriot documents. He began a fast to force his release in mid-August, a fast which lasted for 73 full days until his death on October 25th. The immediate response to his death by Irish, and even English, supporters was to acclaim him a martyr, saying "He is not dead. Such men can never die. Their souls go to God, their bodies into the earth, but the memory of them lives forever. Freed at last, he cries out with a voice the whole world heard."

MacSwiney, throughout the fast, made it no secret that his intent was not suicide, though he was well-aware that death could result. He was motivated to continue by the impact he knew his death would have upon the world community; he stated that "knowing the revolution of opinion that will thereby be caused throughout the civilized world, and the consequent accession of support to Ireland in her hour of trial, I am reconciled to a premature grave." In the case of MacSwiney, the actual consequences were very close to the ones he had foreseen; for one year later, partly as a result of outrage over his death, the Irish Free State was established.

Clearly, MacSwiney's use of himself as a symbol had an instrumental intent. Our tendency as human beings is to "symbolize in ways that we hope will affect and effect the symbolizing of others." Yet it is impossible to "separate out" the instrumental from the expressive aspect of protest suicide, for much of the inducement of the act is bound up in the ritualistic/expres- sive nature of the act. In an attempt to convert "his life into a word which would carry," the actor also issues an invitation to share the reality which the actor perceives. Through the actor's personal "symbolic processing" the viewer is induced to share a similar response to the situation, to share the horror or the frustration which fuels the cause.

David Wood acknowledges the difficulty in attempting to
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take a bifurcated view of protest suicide. He divides suicides in
general into two types of acts: the first, “instrumental suicide,”
is understood in terms of cause and effect; the second, “express-
sive suicide,” is understood in terms of meaning. Wood places
protest suicide in a position where it overlaps the two categories
and designates it as “expressively instrumental” communication.
In this case, it is intended that the meaning of the act and the
feelings behind it should be understood by others (expressive),
but also that “the meaning should have a further effect, such as
inspiring action” (instrumental).23

If, then, the expressive and instrumental aspects of protest
suicide are bound together, we can look at the ritualistic nature
of the act for clues to the power that it has for symbolic induce-
ment. If, as Gregg derives from Kenneth Burke, “ritualistic pro-
cedures operate as means of social control by reflecting, thus
perpetuating, the existing order,”24 then a ritualistic act perf-
formed for purposes contrary to those of the existing order may
serve as counter-control. Since it serves to reflect a different
truth, considerable symbolic power is bound up in the form
which the act itself takes. Much was written at the time of the
incidents themselves concerning the choice of medium through
which the actor died. Morrison and LaPorte were seen as joining
themselves with the deaths by napalm in Vietnam;25 the hunger
striker, MacSwinney, could be seen as representing the slow, wast-
ing death which is that of a society without freedom. Through
such symbols, the actor provided new associations, ones that
were at odds with the reality presented by the sanctioned
order.26

It is, therefore, one function of protest suicide to take a
private feeling and to legitimize it and give it instrumental
power by making it manifest in a public act. As will be discussed
later in this paper, much of its instrumental power is accorded
to a protest suicide by the movement leadership following the
act itself. What might have been largely, though not exclusively,
expressive for the individual is given a primarily instrumental
focus by those within the cause.27 But the same may be said of
many individual acts within a movement. Why, then, the choice
of an act as extreme, and irrevocable, as protest suicide? If we
grant, with Bitzer, that rhetorical situations evolve to a “propiti-
ous moment for the fitting rhetorical response,”28 we still have
no answer as to why this particular response was considered "fitting" by the actor. To understand such a choice, it is necessary to examine the exigences of situations which have led to protest suicide.

FORM OF PROTEST: EXIGENCE AND RESPONSE

Just as a rhetorical situation issues an invitation for rhetorical response, it also constrains the response which will be considered appropriate and effective by the actor. The very exigence which the actor seeks to modify may hamper the search for viable alternatives of thought and action.\textsuperscript{39} If the controlling exigence limits response, it should be possible to look at instances of similar response for a similarity of controlling exigences. In the cases considered here, each of the situations leading to protest suicide has in common an exigence marked by frustration.

It is difficult writing at a distance to give an adequate sense of the frustration attending the causes for which suicide was committed. For dissent to be truly free, there exists an assumption that the dissent may be taken seriously, that the voices of protest will find an attentive audience. This is not, of course, always the case, especially when the protesters are promoting a minority view in the face of general consensus.\textsuperscript{30} The Vietnam war protests had raged for some time; the movement for a free Ireland and the movement for women's suffrage could be measured in decades. Barbara Reynolds, writing at the time of the Morrison/LaPorte immolations, best describes the frustration felt by the powerless in dissent against an overwhelming bureaucracy:

I pictured myself trapped with them, beating helplessly against an irrational, Mars-intoxicated authority, seeking desperately to discover a way to make the voice of conscience, of compassion, heard. I thought of the means by which others had sought to break through. Tales of atrocities, photographs of children wounded, bewildered, clutching in the arms of their anguished mothers. Appeals from logic: "How can you protect the right to live by killing, how can you guarantee freedom by imposing military rule?" - so rational, yet unheeded. Burning of draft cards, withholding of taxes - all futile. Vigils, fasting, days of prayer - all ignored. The rising tide of protest, by letter, telegram, alone or as one among thousands signing a petition - all unheeded. Demonstrations, poster
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walks, peace marches, attempts to halt the launching of a submarine, to invade a missile base— all mocked, derided, written off. In the face of such frustration, there is often a feeling of needing new techniques to "pressure, even to shock the government into change." For some protesters the feeling that the government is impervious to persuasion is enough to dissuade them from further efforts. For others, the blocking of traditional means of persuasion is an exigence which spurs them to find nontraditional, and even extreme, means of inducement. Those who would finally resort to protest suicide must believe that they have exhausted traditional, and even nontraditional, means and are left without acceptable alternatives. It would not be rational, as Wood states, "to kill oneself to promote an end when writing a letter of protest would be equally effective."

The information available concerning the personalities and mental abilities of the actors included in this study, especially Morrison, LaPorte, and MacSwiney, gives little indication of irrationality. What comes across is their sincere desire to remedy social injustice and their compelling belief that "only this desperate witness would avail against it." Yet, despite the actor's sincerity and years of effort in a cause, there is no guarantee that the exigence of the situation was correctly perceived by the actor. The possibility exists that the rhetorical situation, more especially the controlling exigence, may be more fantasy than reality. With a long period of participation and a close identification with movement goals, a movement member is likely to develop the attitude that any means, however violent or irrevocable, are justified in seeking movement ends. And this belief is enhanced when other avenues of goal-attainment appear blocked. This attitude is then embodied in a symbolic act which serves as "lure,' 'goad,' 'enticement,' 'invitation' " for others to become consubstantial with this vision of reality to "participate in the symbolizing." And by thus participating, the audience will become "in thought and action... so engaged that it becomes mediator of change."

But how, it may be asked, are others to "participate" in such an extreme and usually solitary act? To understand this concept it is necessary to enter the mind-set of a movement which has been alienated through a sense of powerlessness and frustration.
For such a group, or individual, suicide is not so much a shocking disruption of life as it is an acknowledgment of a fact: that, to the existing order, the movement members do not exist. In effect, they are already dead. This perception is one reason that protest suicide is less likely to occur in a "new" movement; there must have been a time when "the old optimistic assumptions gave way to a new sense of moral tragedy." Scott and Smith imagine the voice of a radical movement as saying, "We are already dead. In the world as it is, we do not count..."  

If this was all that the movement voice said, protest suicide could be counted as merely a gesture of despair; but there is more: "We can be reborn... We have nothing to hang on to... a new world will certainly be born of the fire we shall create." It is in this rebirth, brought about by the ritual of purification and transcendence which is the protest suicide, that the audience is invited to participate.  

Purification is needed because movements seeking social change constitute a challenge to the socio-political order, one of the four major hierarchic orders identified by Kenneth Burke. Burke sees this challenge as occasioning guilt and the need for "purification," through a "set of symbolic expiations." Purification may come by way of acts of victimage, making others suffer for our sins, or by mortification, suffering for our own sins. In the case of goals, however, "such that mortification takes the form of sacrifice of self-dying for a cause, negating one's own life in order that others may live, be free or happy," the two acts of purification are blended. "Here," according to Rueckert, "mortification and victimage merge in so far as consciously willed self-sacrifice becomes a form of mortification." Martyrdom, as a form of mortification, makes restitution for the guilt induced by the challenge of the hierarchy without destroying anything outside of the person involved.  

So the exigence of frustration and alienation leads to a symbolic act which provides not only a challenge to the socio-political hierarchy but also an expiation for that challenge. At the same time, however, that the act of suicide assuages guilt, it also uses guilt as an inducement for change. The martyr not only "arouses indignation against the opponents of the movement" and elicits guilt within these opponents, but he or she also "symbolizes true and unwavering devotion to the cause, and thereby evokes guilt and shame in the half-hearted adherents."
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IMPACT: DISTANCING AND BOUNDARIES

While the controlling exigences of frustration and alienation serve as the organizing principles for change, they also determine which audiences will be addressed. The expressive aspect of protest suicide may be addressed to the self or the “ideal mind” as an audience. The expressively instrumental aspect, however, would certainly be addressed to the “rhetorical audience,” to those capable of being induced by the act to effect the desired change. For the cases of protest suicide emerging from social movements, this would mean a double audience: those inside the movement (participants) and those outside the movement (non-participants).

It is an aspect of socialization to place others into groups and categories, to catalogue the world using an index of “us and them.” According to Gregg, a stable social order is encouraged through two principles: distancing—the subordination of the individual to the group collective will—and boundaries—the protection of the borders which separate the group, its goals, and its “moral certitude” from threats from the outside.

The very alienation from the existing order felt by the individual prompts a need to escape this feeling by a subordination to group goals and behavior. It is a distancing from self to find a collective identity. For the individuals who commit protest suicide, this collective identity and action is not enough. The constant struggle between individual ego and activities sanctioned by the movement leadership is finally resolved in favor of a personal vision of the movement. Through a “dramatically unsettling, even eerie kind of selflessness,” the actor seeks to rally those within the movement with inducements toward greater effort and commitment.

According to Turner and Killian:

The function of the martyr symbol appears to be chiefly to strengthen the determination of those who are already adherents and to marshall active support from those who are giving passive support or are ambivalent about the movement.

To say that the inducement is directed in part to the movement membership is not to say that it is directed by the movement leadership. Occasionally the suicide is sanctioned by the
movement, as in the Irish Republican Army hunger strikes of 1981, or personally undertaken by a movement leader, as in the case of MacSwiney. But the cases where the martyr is selected, or even worthy of the title, are in the minority. Often the actor is a person “who has been a constant embarrassment to move-
ment leaders and whose demise takes place in a foolhardy and profitless undertaking.”53 Emily Wilding Davison had often acted on her own without approval from movement leadership, as when she set fire to a letter box in Parliament Square in 1911, considerably before guerilla militancy was sanctioned.54 The distancing from self which leads an individual to group membership may also allow a distancing from the core movement by members on the periphery. This distancing may be accompanied by a different belief about justifiable means and a different choice of symbolic activity.55 Even if the protest suicide is not a symbol sought by the movement, the actor’s “image is quickly translated into that of the true martyr.”56 For Davison’s funeral, the word went out to women to attend the funeral procession dressed in either black, white, or crimson and to carry specific varieties of flowers.57 The funeral procession was a peaceful demonstration of movement unity. In her death the movement found the symbol of martyrdom needed to reintegrate those followers of the cause alienated by earlier violent action.

One reason to “close ranks” behind the martyr symbol lies in the need for boundaries. A clear difference between the movement and outside forces, a clearly superior “moral cer-
titude”58 in the movement, serves as a stronger inducement for the existing order to change. But the fragile nature of symbolic activity as a means of inducement must be acknowledged. The actors may “turn their own bodies into signs”59 but with no guarantee that these signs will be properly interpreted.

Often, a movement will not be successful in its attempt to enshrine the suicider as a martyr. The very fact that the death is self-inflicted will lead many to refuse the actor victim status since “he brought it all on himself.”60 For the martyr role to be successful in terms of popular sympathy, there needs to be a public sense of the strength and oppressive nature of an opposing force. There must, in other words, be a villain.61

In MacSwiney’s case, the English government cast itself in the villain role through his wrongful imprisonment. Neither
Morrison/LaPorte nor the Davison case had the same clear, dramatic structure of the small, honest individual oppressed by a large, immoral force. Public ambivalence at the time toward Vietnam and, at the time of the Davison case, toward women's suffrage made difficult the assigning of hero/villain labels. Without such clear roles, it is far more likely for an act of self-sacrifice to be labeled that of a "fool" or "crackpot" rather than a martyr.

The power of a symbolic act as inducement can also be lost if the extremity of the act causes the effect to "boomerang." As Jerome Skolnick points out, we have a "cultural fear of violence" which is "psychologically damaging and may be politically inhibiting." Subconsciously, the observer of protest suicide may react defensively by seeking reasons to objectify the actors and ignore the issues for which they gave their lives. It was just such a defensive reaction that caused the press, following the Derby-day suicide of Emily Wilding Davison, to bemoan the enormous bets that were lost by her interruption of the race. Protest suicide, as a rhetorical response to an exigency, serves itself as an exigence prompting further rhetorical response. However, the actor has no power over what that response will be.

**Conclusion**

In summary, protest suicide is an expressively-instrumental act prompted as a rhetorical response by an exigence of frustration with traditional methods of social change. Its rhetorical content is a mixed one: it draws attention to the importance, the necessity, of a cause; and it serves as both admonition to opponents and rallying cry to followers. It is an invitation, an inducement to action, a "manipulation of public conscience (to give) power to the weak." In arguing for the recognition of protest suicide as rhetoric, this paper in no way exhausts the subject. The act of protest suicide raises a number of conceptual and ethical issues for the field of rhetoric. Conceptually, it is possible that a clear category in which to place such acts of self-sacrifice does not exist. The actor may be functioning under a more transcendent view of time than will neatly fit into the usual cause-to-effect frame of reference. In-depth examination of individual instances of protest suicide may help to provide insight into another way of thinking, one that is too quickly labeled as irrational. Of particu-
lar interest may be cases such as that of Mishima or the self-immolation of Buddhist monks. Such studies would require considerable understanding of the cultural and religious foundations underlying these acts. Other forms of suicide, whether mass suicides such as those at Masada or Jonestown or individual suicides not connected to a political cause, should be examined for their own power of symbolic inducement.

Students of rhetoric also need to give consideration to questions raised by the ethical aspects of protest suicide. With the move toward rationality as a standard for defining suicide, it must be asked if this is the criterion to be used in assessing the ethics of the act. Should the intentions of the actor and the consequences for the receivers be of equal importance? Is this an act of persuasion or coercion? In general, in the case of protest suicide, how can we answer Haiman’s question, directed at all nonverbal rhetoric: “On what ethical basis can these strategies of physical and psychological manipulation, insofar as this may be what they are, be defended?”

As long as there are “restrictions on legitimate avenues of expression imposed by the larger structure” there will be recourse by social movements to more extreme or questionable means. Since similar exigences tend to inspire similar rhetorical responses, it is certain that other protest suicides will take place in the future. Within the past year there have been fasts by Vietnam veteran Gino Casanova and Andrei Sakarov to force change. While non-fatal, these protests had at least limited success in attainment of their goals. By his 1984 self-immolation in Chile, Sebastian Acevedo actually succeeded in forcing the Pinochet government to release his daughter from prison. It is likely that the success of these methods will prompt other self-sacrificial efforts. It is, therefore, the place of those who study rhetoric to increase our understanding of this ultimate form of nonverbal dissent.

Notes

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While this paper focuses on three specific cases of protest suicide, there have been many more in this century. Prior to 1965, many of the reported protest suicides grew out of Eastern traditions. Some of these are well known, such as the self-immolation of a number of Buddhist monks in the early sixties. Others were less widely reported, such as the 1963 suicide of Nguyen Tuong Tam, a revolutionary novelist, in protest of the Diem Regime. ("Symbolic Suicide," Newsweek 22 July 1963: 43). Protest suicides in the past two decades have also varied in the amount of world attention they have gained. Much was written about the 1970 suicide of Mishima in Japan and the series of hunger-strike deaths staged by IRA prisoners in 1981. Few, however, are familiar with the death of Australian heiress, Lynette Phillips, or the seven other deaths by self-immolation of members of the Proustian Universal organization. ("The Guardian," 9 October 1978.) Even the recent self-immolation by Sebastian Alcevedo in protest of his children's imprisonment in Chile received less attention than one would anticipate. "Immolation and Resistance in Chile," Christian Century Feb. 1984: 159.


Haiman 132.


There have been numerous attempts to find classifications for acts of suicide. Klopfer divides suicide into its phenomenological dimensions: collective and individual; active and passive; sincere and attention-getting; and planned and impulsive. (See: Bruno Klopfer, "Suicide: The Jungian Point of View," in Norman L. Farberow and Edwin S. Shneidman, eds., The Cry for Help (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961) 193-203.) More recent studies have focused upon viewing instances of suicide as either justified or unjustified (See: Samuel E. Wallace, "The Right to Live and the Right to Die," in Samuel E. Wallace and Albin Esser, eds., Suicide and Euthanasia: The Rights of Personhood (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981) 99-86.) or in asking when suicide can be considered as rational (See: Glen C. Graber, "The Rationality of Suicide," in Samuel E. Wallace and Albin Esser, eds., Suicide and Euthanasia: The Rights of Personhood (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981) 51-65. This new emphasis upon the rationality of suicide has been influenced in part by modern issues of euthanasia and the "right to die." Although beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to note that Christian ethicists writing in response to Morrison/LaPorte focused upon the rationality of the actors in defense of their actions. (See, for example, Anthony Towne, "Immolations and Consensus: The Justification of Innocence," The Christian Century Jan. 1966: 73.)

Steve Taylor, Durkheim and the Study of Suicide (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982) 192. Very briefly, Taylor's model places acts of suicide on a pair of axes,
one axis ranging between uncertainty (where the suicidal action is an ordeal with a "gamelike" quality) and certainty (where the suicidal action is purposive) and a second axis ranging between ectopic (where the suicidal action is inner-directed, prompted by a sense of detachment from others) and symphic (where the suicidal action is other-directed, prompted by a sense of attachment to others).

11Taylor 191.
12A recent example is that of Vietnam veteran, Gino Casanova, who ended his 53 day fast upon Ronald Reagan's promise of a meeting on the MIA/POW issue. At this time, the meeting has not taken place and Casanova has been widely reported as planning to resume his fast.
13Taylor 192.
15Pankhurst 468.
16Pankhurst 242.
17Edwards 459.
18Edwards 458-459.
19Gregg 127.
21Gregg 127.
23Gregg 119.
25The blending of ritual/spectacle and instrumental purposes can be further seen in Alfred Alvarez's proposal that certain political suicides were based in "magical thinking." He believes that these suicides were reminiscent of suicides in primitive societies designed to cause revenge, either by the suicide's ghost, by relatives, or by tribal laws which would cause the enemy to take his own life. The suicide is a supernatural or "magical" act which triggers the equally magical response of the demise of the suicide's enemy. Alvarez's point is that, with modern political suicide, it is as though the suicide believes, despite all evidence to the contrary, that he will finally have his posthumous way, provided his death is sufficiently terrible." Alfred Alvarez, The Savage God (London: Weidenfeld and Nichobon, 1971) 45.
28Bitzer 43-45.
30Reynolds 81.
32Wood 157.
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“Towne 73.
“Bitzer 46.
“Simons 193.
“Gregg 148.
“Bitzer 41.
“Scott and Smith 185.
“Rueckert 150.
“Bitzer 43.
“Gregg 122.
“Gregg 120.
“Turner and Killian 473.
“Turner and Killian 474.
“Gregg 122.
“Turner and Killian 474.
“Mackenzie 242.
“Gregg 122.
“Browne 212.
“Klapp notes that, “ ... the success of a ‘troublemaker’ in gaining popular sympathy rests on a number of dramatic conditions that will define him, say, as a ‘little party’ or martyr against a cruel tyrant or bigot, and not as a traitor.” Klapp 189.
“Haiman 149.
"Simons 193.


"At the time of this writing, Charles Hyder, an astrophysicist, is conducting a fast in Washington, D.C. to call for nuclear disarmament by the year 2000. His fast has continued for over 70 days. When reporters asked what would happen if the Government did not comply, Hyder replied, "I'll die. I know what moves the system." ('Fasting to Death?' Time 15 Dec. 1986: 37)"