

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S 1963 BIRMINGHAM CAMPAIGN AS IMAGE EVENT

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Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 Birmingham campaign was an exercise in cross-racial vision. Using what Kevin DeLuca has defined as the "image event" as a mode of public address, King targeted the conscience of white moderates by making visible the reality of racial injustice. Through a close analysis of both Charles Moore's Life photographs of fire hoses and police dogs turned against black demonstrators and the effects of their international circulation, I argue that rhetorical critics cannot account for King's success in arousing the conscience of white moderates through an examination of his oral and written address alone; they must take into account King's mastery of visual communication.

Taylor Branch summarizes the major challenge of Martin Luther King Jr. as one of *visibility*: King struggled to "lead whites and Negroes to see the same truths," necessitating, in King's own words, the cultivation of "cross-racial vision."¹ King's speeches and writings are widely recognized as rhetorical masterpieces that function to establish "cross-racial vision" by persuading diverse audiences, particularly white moderates, of the urgent necessity of racial reform.² King's repertoire of rhetorical tactics is not limited to verbal address; his skillful mastery of visual communication and his strategic use of mass media constitute important facets of his public address. Specifically, the 1963 Birmingham campaign demands scrutiny as an *image event*, and the visual counterpart to King's verbal address, particularly his "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

Rhetorical critics have analyzed King's famous "Letter" as a potent appeal to the conscience of white moderates, an address that definitively shifted the

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national discussion on racial reform from *political* to *moral* vocabularies.³ King's success in arousing the conscience of white moderates cannot be attributed to his "Letter" alone, or even the whole of his verbal address. The shift of the civil rights discussion from the political to the moral realm was the product of a multifaceted rhetorical event that included visual, as well as verbal, components. King's Birmingham campaign made the "color line" visible, activating the shame and moral condemnation of white moderates. If King's "Letter" is an articulate description of his visual *strategy*, the Birmingham campaign is its implementation. The verbal appeals to conscience, emotion, and moral sensibility were successful in part because the images of dogs and fire hoses turned against black bodies were an exercise in "cross-racial vision," making the reality of racism immediately visible to an audience of white moderates content in their complacent avoidance of overt conflict.⁴

In this essay, I approach the Birmingham campaign as an image event designed by King to pierce the conscience of white moderates in the context of Cold War concern about global perceptions of America and Americans. Taking as a text for particular scrutiny Charles Moore's photographs, published in the May 17, 1963 *Life* magazine and circulated throughout the world, I examine how the images gained their rhetorical force through both their compelling content and reflexive knowledge of their circulation. Thus, my analysis combines a "close reading" of the images with a scrutiny of the effects of their circulation, a process of "sighting" described by Cara Finnegan and Jiyeon Kang as constitutive, cultural, and reflexive.⁵ After describing the rhetorical situation of this image event, I present a close analysis of three of Moore's photographs. I then turn to a consideration of the circulation of these images, concluding that the persuasive force of the photographs was produced by a combination of their dramatic content and the reflexive knowledge of their status as media spectacle, or the understanding that the depicted scenes were being viewed by others, particularly foreign "others" whose proclaimed moral inferiority was constitutive of the image of progressive American democracy.

"THE COLD PLUNGE": KING'S IMAGE EVENT IN HISTORICAL AND RHETORICAL CONTEXT

An "image event" is a type of rhetorical address that is ocular, rather than verbal.⁶ Image events are often orchestrated by social movements, and they are defined as deliberately staged spectacles designed to attract the attention of the mass media and disseminate persuasive images to a wide audience. Although the events of the Birmingham campaign appear to be an aggressive state reaction to spontaneous protests, King was a strategic visual rhetor who chose Birmingham

as a staging ground. King's challenge was to *make visible* the injustice of segregation for a group of individuals (white moderates) who did not regularly experience or even witness the evils of racism firsthand. King describes the "white moderate," who has only a "shallow understanding" of the problem, as an impediment to progress because of his or her preference for delay over action, and a "negative peace," or the mere "absence of tension," over the positive peace characterized by true justice.⁷ The rhetorical problem is one of visibility: how to get the white moderate to see, quite literally, the actual fact of racism and thus realize the impossibility of laying hold of a moral and progressive identity in the face of the status quo brutality. In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," written just weeks before the Birmingham campaign, he writes:

Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely *bring to the surface* the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out into the open, *where it can be seen* and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tensions its exposure creates, to the *light of human conscience* and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.⁸

As the context of King's letter suggests, his frequent use of metaphors of visibility, sight, and the contrast between light and dark are not merely linguistic flourishes but literal descriptions of his social movement strategy.

For King, the best means of making racism visible was by exposing its action on black bodies. In his "Letter" he explains: "We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would *present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and national community.*"⁹ In *Why We Can't Wait*, he situates the impetus behind the Birmingham campaign by identifying the motivation of the nonviolent protestor: "Instead of submitting to surreptitious cruelty in thousands of dark jail cells and on countless shadowed street corners, he would force his oppressor to commit his brutality openly—in the light of day—with the rest of the world looking on."¹⁰

Before offering a brief synopsis of the events that produced the iconic photographs of dogs and fire hoses, I want to note that although King clearly understood the power of visual images and the potential of the mass media for social movement strategy, image events are, like perhaps all rhetorical events, impossible to "plan" in the sense of entirely mapping out in advance. The degree to which King was an agent, or author, is a question I do not resolve. King could not have fully predicted the success of Birmingham: Commissioner of Public Safety Eugene Connor's use of dogs and fire hoses, the relative lack of

injury to protestors, the fortuitous happenings that contributed to this historical instance. It was, like Martha Solomon Watson's description of his "Letter," "a perfect example of *kairos*."¹¹ Taylor Branch remarks of the campaign, called "Project C," for confrontation: "In the end, Project C was no social science formula, approximation of political risks, or rational exercise of any kind, not even one touched by genius. It was a cold plunge."¹²

The history of the Birmingham events is given elsewhere, and I do not present an exhaustive summary here. Watson presents a succinct summary of the events leading up to the Birmingham campaign, situating the image event in the context of King's "Letter."¹³ Before Birmingham, King led the Albany campaign, a disappointment that drained the movement's resources while failing to provoke the desired reaction from the local administration. The failure at Albany made victory at Birmingham all that much more necessary for King; his leadership hung in balance and the movement could not afford another Albany, financially or psychologically. King and the local leader, Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, planned carefully for Birmingham, certain that the notorious commissioner of public safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, would respond with characteristic violence and unnecessary aggression.¹⁴ Wyatt Walker, the executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), stated that without Connor "there would be no movement, no publicity. . . . We had calculated for the stupidity of a Bull Connor. . . . We knew that the psyche of the white redneck was such that he would inevitably do something to help our cause."¹⁵

The campaign began in April with a series of sit-ins, marches, and demonstrations throughout the city. King had learned in Albany the dangers of an overly broad agenda, so the Birmingham campaign started with a series of specific demands aimed at the downtown business sector. The campaign began mildly enough, and continued its serene pace to the chagrin of the movement organizers. Although Connor brought out police dogs on Palm Sunday and stirred a mild media frenzy, for the most part the movement leaders found themselves unable to generate the quantity and quality of attention they desired. At the April 29 SCLC staff meeting, King reportedly said, "We've got to pick up everything, because the press is leaving."¹⁶

The tide change came when the SCLC made the momentous decision to allow schoolchildren to join in the marches. On May 2, "D" Day, schoolchildren went to jail in record numbers as Connor ordered mass arrests of the demonstrators.¹⁷ Despite the arrests and the images of young schoolchildren hauled off to jail (ironically, in school buses), there were no significant incidents and King was increasingly criticized for putting the children at risk. Connor's restraint would last barely 24 hours. The next day, groups of youth set off from the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in well-organized waves. With

jails overflowing from the “D” Day arrests, Connor decided to forcefully end the demonstrations, giving the orders to turn fire hoses and sic police dogs on the participants.¹⁸ On May 4, newspapers around the world carried vivid photographs and stunning descriptions of the events in Birmingham, forever changing the direction of the movement and the future of the country.

The effects of the image event are well documented. Michael Durham writes of Birmingham, “Seldom, if ever, has a set of photographs had such an immediate impact on the course of history.”¹⁹ Durham speaks specifically of the photographs taken by Charles Moore, printed in a special issue of *Life* magazine and circulated in newspapers around the globe. Moore’s photographs largely constitute the collective memory of the Birmingham campaign, and I focus on these images in this essay. In the 1960s, *Life* was “the single most important media organ, seen by more than half the adult population of the United States and reaching more people than any television program.”²⁰ Charles Moore, whose fame as a civil rights photographer had started when he captured the 1958 arrest of King in Montgomery, had covered the Birmingham events for *Life*, and several of his photos were included in the May 16 spread. Additionally, many of Moore’s photos were also featured on the front pages of newspapers around the country and even around the world. His photographs include several of young student demonstrators brutalized by fire hoses, as well as one of the most widely circulated images of the campaign, depicting a young black man attempting to flee as police dogs tear the clothes from his body.

I have selected the Moore photographs for particular attention because they are exemplary of the general bevy of images and they all appeared in widely circulated publications, including *Life* magazine. These images were not only circulated widely at the time of the protests, but even today they continue to be reprinted time and again in books and magazines of various genres.²¹ Additionally, at the March on Washington in August, 1963, just months after Birmingham, the official memento of the March was a portfolio of collages of *Life* magazine photographs that included the dog and fire hose images taken by Moore. Over 40,000 of these portfolios were sold to the crowd at Washington for one dollar each.²² In short, the selected images are icons of the movement, widely recognized and widely reproduced representations of a significant historical event that evoke strong emotional reactions from viewers.²³

THE POWER OF PICTURES: THE RHETORICAL FORCE OF MOORE’S PHOTOS

The dramatic images of uniformed police officers wielding fire hoses and snarling dogs against young black protestors constitute a powerful scene in the nation’s collective memory of the civil rights movement. The images of the

savage attack “struck like lightning in the American mind,” shaking white moderates from their complacent assurance of the inevitability of racial progress in a nation deemed the world’s foremost exemplar of democracy.²⁴ Paul Hemphill, a white journalist, describes the gripping spectacle:

[Kelly Ingram Park] had evolved as a buffer between the black and white business areas of downtown Birmingham. It was during the first week of May in ’63 that it became the focal point of the war between Bull Connor and his cops and firemen and Martin Luther King and his demonstrators, mostly preachers and students. Every morning hundreds of blacks would walk across the street from Sixteenth Street Baptist and begin milling about in the park, queuing up for a march on City Hall, four blocks away. Facing them would be Birmingham’s all-white police force with their riot gear and paddy wagons and K-9 dogs and the firemen with water cannons capable of stripping bark off a tree at one hundred yards. Soon enough, the battle was joined, with network television crews there to record it all for the world to see: chanting crowds; stumpy Bull Connor in his short-brimmed straw hat shrieking orders to his troops; frightened young blacks fleeing for safety from the snarling dogs and the water cannons; paddy wagons being loaded with so many demonstrators that ultimately people were being jailed behind fences at the state fairgrounds. Those days in May created the most chilling television images recorded during the civil rights movement in America.²⁵

The scene contained all of the necessary ingredients for an image event that would reverberate throughout the world, searing the conscience of the nation. Hemphill describes the visual impact of this “war” with its clear demarcation between the white establishment and all of its military might, facing off across the “buffer” against unarmed black youth. The “color line” in this scene is quite literally comprised of lines: the border marking off the white officers from the black protestors; the queues of black bodies preparing to march in organized fashion; and the fences imprisoning black bodies in isolation from city life.

This sense of extreme visual polarity resonates with Richard Lentz’s analysis: He describes the event as one of King’s “great moral dramas . . . in which the props were a policeman’s club and his snarling dog, the characters violent segregationists and freedom-loving, nonviolent blacks, and the scenario one that could be easily sketched in starkly contrasting tones of good and evil.”²⁶ In part because of these unambiguous visual markers, the photographic depictions of this drama compress a compelling narrative featuring a clear dichotomy between villain and victim, and inviting unequivocal moral judgment from viewers. The stark contrasts contained in the photographs summoned white moderates to respond to the question “What side of the line are

you on?,” placing Americans “as actors in a drama controlled by high moral purpose.”²⁷ By depicting the question of “side” as a choice between two polar alternatives, the Birmingham photographs visually construed “extremes of ethos,” making it impossible for white moderates to “sit on the fence,” and forcing viewers to choose either “for” or “against” the moral alternatives set out by the civil rights movement.²⁸

Hemphill’s description implies yet another line, the line between presence and absence that is destabilized by the mediations of photography. Hemphill himself was not actually present at the scene but witnessed it mediated by news photographs and television. He reports being struck by his own viewing of the images; however, Hemphill also testifies to the power of the knowledge that many groups of absent others, including those of other nations, were viewing the same scene via the same mediated images. It was not only the visual drama itself that was remarkable, but also the understanding that the drama was a mass media spectacle made available to viewers around the world. This reflexivity of the image event, or the knowledge that many others are able to view the event, is recognized in the title of the exhibit at the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum: “Birmingham: The World Is Watching.”

In the context of the Cold War and its production of a desired American identity marked by the qualities of liberty, equality, and democracy, the images exploded into the American consciousness, forcing a reconsideration of the assumed collective identity. Charles Moore’s photographs confronted white moderates with images of their political world that were in direct conflict with desired identities of tolerant citizens inhabiting a progressive and moral nation. King was targeting a “culture of white progressivism” permeated by “a pervasive commitment to civility as the value that should govern all relationships between people.”²⁹ Civility made “good manners more important than substantial action,” legitimizing a distaste for open conflict and a placid assurance that change was inevitable with time.³⁰ The value of civility was especially potent in formulating the national identity in the early 1960s, during the Cold War. Ascribing civility and associated “civilized” values to America allowed for a clear “us/them” demarcation line between America and the Soviet Union. In dialectical fashion, two polar identifications were established: American democracy, exemplar of moral progress, liberty, and equality, versus Soviet Communism, bastion of primitive and coercive values.³¹

The associations that comprised this dialectical value system were key in establishing the identities of both the nation and its citizens. In other words, these values pervaded both United States foreign policy discourse *and* popular culture. The national myths of America’s moral superiority comprised an ideology or, in Clifford Geertz’s words, a “socially established structure of meaning” that defined both the state and its citizens.³² King’s target audience was

neither isolated individuals nor an abstract “nation,” but a community of citizens. His stated intention was “to arouse the conscience of *the community*.”³³

Citizens are, of course, individuals, but individuals are only citizens when they are somehow identified with a larger collective. This identification occurs partially through imagination, or as Robert Asen puts it, through “processes of imagining about people they regard as similar to and different from themselves.”³⁴ Visual modes of communication are vital to this process of imagination and constitution of the citizen “identities” that are at once individual and collective. Imagination engages a “power of representation” that necessitates images of the self and others (strangers) to establish the bonds of similarity and difference that define identities.³⁵ Danielle Allen writes of the power of photography in particular: Photographs change “how citizens of the United States imagine their political world.”³⁶ Photographs can be epiphanic, forcing a psychic transformation of the citizenry by rupturing imagined conceptions of identity. Moore’s dissonant images visually identified the state with uncivilized violence and marked the black protestors as symbols of civilization and justice, compelling white moderates to reconsider their own relationships to their nation and its black population. These visual reversals utilized strategies of identification that function, as Michael Osborn has described, through compressed archetypal narration that represents moral opposites in mythic fashion.³⁷ In the following section, I take three images in turn: the first two are images of fire hoses turned against black demonstrators, and the third figure is actually a serial depiction of police dogs attacking a young black man.

Order to Chaos

The first photograph in the *Life* spread fills the full two-page layout and features three firemen, on the viewer’s left, struggling to control a single hose aimed at a multitude of black bodies, half-seated and half-lying, on the pavement. The firemen are the largest objects in the photograph and, with their backs to the camera, the numbers on their hats and the initials “BFD” (for “Birmingham Fire Department”) emblazoned on their jackets are clearly legible. The hose they struggle to control shoots a single stream of water, visible in the photograph as a bright horizontal line, at the mass of black bodies crowded on the sidewalk. The force of the water is evident, as spray shoots from the bodies, forming what appears as a wave and filling the camera lens with droplets of water. The water blurs the image, and the bodies and the far background are difficult to make out because the spray obscures the lens. The black bodies constitute a second line, diagonal to the stream of water, extending from the foreground of the picture to the horizon in what would be a single-file line were it not for the chaotic positions assumed by its members. Black



Figure 1. Birmingham, Alabama (1963). Civil rights demonstrators lie on the sidewalk to protect themselves as firemen hose them down with highpowered jets of water. Copyright Charles Moore/Black Star.

bodies are forced into positions of kneeling, lying and sprawling, partly compelled by the force of the water and partly in an attempt to seek protection, as can be seen by their awkward poses and contortions to keep their heads from the spray and the concrete. In the right foreground, a few bodies try to stabilize themselves around a utility pole.

The image is a study in contrasts, its jarring effect emerging from the “extremes of ethos” arising from the juxtaposition of an orderly street scene with extreme chaos.³⁸ Both the visual composition of the photograph and its content suggest dissonance, the turning of civilization to bedlam and order to pandemonium. The visual composition of the scene is glaringly incongruous: there is a geometrical quality to the image, implied by the stark lines suggesting an orderly grid. Yet, the grid is overlaid with a clouded and obscured scene that overwhelms the implied order. The straight lines on the sidewalk and the perpendicular utility poles constitute a geometrical pattern. This background grid is belied by the slanting line formed by the firemen, leaning into the center of the scene. The line of the hose and the line of black bodies do not conform to the grid, and the mixture of lines eradicates the sensibility of the picture’s geometrical quality. Together, the juxtaposition of perpendicular lines with aberrant, disruptive lines of water and bodies suggest an elusive

order that is being washed away, giving the picture a quality of suspense and an atmosphere of impending chaos. The composition of lines is unbalanced, and the order of the urban setting likewise hangs in the balance.

The content of the photograph amplifies the suspense of a precarious moment in between order and chaos. The line of black bodies, obscured as it is by the water, appears as a mass grave in the midst of urban civilization. The utility poles, the “Telephone” sign on the booth, the sign for “Raymond’s Snack Bar,” and the faintly visible automobiles on the street behind the sidewalk on which the bodies are strewn all suggest a typical American neighborhood with all of the trappings of normal urban life. The line of black bodies cuts this scene of civilization down the center. If the bodies are, in the photograph, a diagonal, nearly vertical line, the stream of water bisects the picture horizontally. The standing figures of the firemen, the line of prone bodies on the pavement, and the symbols of urban civilization, including the utility poles, signposts, and skyscrapers, create three near-parallel lines, all of which are abruptly divided by the stream of water. The sense of visual contrast created by the skewed geometrical composition of the photograph and the incongruity of its content resonate with each other, augmenting the off-kilter sensation.

Further contrast is provided by the juxtaposition of the violence of nature, manifested as a fierce storm, and urban progress. The omnipresent water spray and the soaked streets give the appearance of an intense storm, with the water clouding and darkening the black-and-white image. The impending violence of a storm is out of place in the midst of mundane symbols of routine civilization. Branch’s description of the scene suggests a terrific storm: “The monitor guns made limbs jerk weightlessly and tumbled whole bodies like scraps of refuse in a high wind.”³⁹ Captured as a motionless instant, the suspense of impending natural destruction provided by the storm imagery casts an eerie, surreal tone.

The most incongruous elements are the firemen themselves. They appear as soldiers straining in formation to train their weapon on its targets. These soldiers, visually marked by their uniforms and symbols as officers of the state, turn their weapons against defenseless citizens in the heart of their own country. In this visual reversal, the very tools designed to protect the community from threats of nature (fire) are turned into weapons turned against the citizenry, creating a scene that conjures up the brutality of nature. The news accounts estimate the force of the high-pressure hoses at 100 pounds per inch, enough to strip bark off of trees at 100 feet and knock bricks from mortar. Eyewitness Len Holt describes the scene:

When I emerged [from the church area] I saw 3,000 Negroes encircled in the Kelly-Ingram Park area by policemen swinging clubs. The hoses were in action

with the pressure wide open. On one side the students were confronted by clubs, on the other, powerful streams of water. The firemen used the hoses to knock down the students. As the streams hit trees, the bark was ripped off. Bricks were torn loose from the walls. The hoses were directed at everyone with a black skin, demonstrators and non-demonstrators. A stream of water slammed the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth against the church wall, causing internal injuries. Mrs. Colia LaFayette, 25 year old, SNCC secretary from Selma, Ala., was knocked down and two hoses were brought to bear on her to wash her along the sidewalk.⁴⁰

The hoses had to be mounted on special stands designed to allow the firemen to control their aim. Today, realistically sized models sit in Kelly Ingram Park. These models are a continuing visual testament to the brutality of Birmingham: they appear as powerful weapons and at a glance are indistinguishable from mounted machine guns.

Civilization to Nature

In this photograph, no firemen are visible, only three bodies against a building. This scene, like the previous figure, displays a visually striking composition of lines and angles. Three black youth attempt to brace themselves in an



Figure 2. Birmingham, AL (1963). Protestors are caught in corner with a fire hose during a protest. Copyright: Charles Moore/Black Star.

upright position against the side of a building. They are against a window, and the neat horizontal lines of the shutters are exactly perpendicular to the vertical lines of the window frames and the side of the brick building. These lines form a perfect grid, functioning as a ruler to illustrate the extent of the youths' struggle: their bodies are diagonal lines, in contrast to the horizontal and vertical precision of the grid. The stream of water is horizontal, exactly parallel to the bars of the shutters. The shutters form a visual echo of the water stream. They are a host of horizontal white lines that form the backdrop of a single white line, parallel but far brighter and more luminous in appearance. This forceful line of water is the brightest thing in the picture, and appears as a horizontal flash of light in the black-and-white photograph. At a glance, it could be the flash of a sword, or a lash at the backs of the youth. The contrast of the black-and-white photograph is heightened by the visual disparity of the stream of water and the blackness of the bodies it targets.

The water spray obscures the image, but details of the three figures are visually accessible, and viewers are able to glimpse at least one of their faces. On the viewer's far left, a young woman turns her head from the blast, offering her profile to the camera. Her features are barely visible behind the curtain of water, and her face appears to be set in determination. In the black-and-white picture, the woman's body and dress are dark, making her earring and the line of her petticoat strikingly visible as light objects against the dark background. These two light objects reinforce the sense of incongruity. Along with the woman's petticoat, signaling that she is formally dressed and a "lady" by conventional standards of appearance, the jewelry does not seem to belong to the scene. These two signs associate the young woman with connotations of civilization and breeding, and make her struggle against faceless foes inexplicable. What could this woman, with her symbols of respect and gentility, possibly have done to warrant the violence that is directed toward her body? The line of her petticoat is parallel to the horizontal lines of the shutters and the hose, and sets off the angles of her body, creating a sense of suspended motion. The contrast between the lines and the woman's leaning body creates a sense that she is perilously suspended without balance at the moment of the camera's flash.

The young man in the middle covers his face entirely with his hand, seeking protection from the blast. He is entirely dark, and his body appears to lean the furthest, partially protecting the woman to his left. The far right figure is another man, who stands almost completely upright. His hands are against the window for support, and his head is partially bowed. A gold watch is visible on his left wrist, a symbol of civilized order (the regimentation of time) in a scene of chaos. The figures seek refuge against the brick building with its shuttered windows; if the onslaught is from nature, a storm, then why do they not seek refuge within the walls of civilization? The building is at once a protective



Figure 3. Birmingham, AL (1963). Police dogs attack protester during Civil Rights demonstration. Copyright: Charles Moore/Black Star.

force and a visual reminder that they are outsiders, bodies without access to the privileges of society. They remain caught between the building and the flash of water. There is in this photograph a stronger sense of the figures as individuals because the viewer can see glimpses of their jewelry and their facial features; however, the bodies remain turned away from the viewer against the force of the water, their postures suggestive of both victimhood and a quiet submission, or perhaps supplication.

Human to Beast

If the images of firemen attempting to cleanse the streets of downtown Birmingham of its black population powerfully reversed desired associations of the state and values of civility in the white imagination, the pictures of police dogs attacking protestors dramatically reinforced this dissonance. These images had an especially profound effect on viewers. Photographer Moore recalled:

My emotional involvement in the story grew as I saw what was happening. The police dogs were what really did it for me. I knew that those high-pressure hoses hurt people—I saw them ripping off their clothes, knocking them down, and rolling them around—but somehow I didn't see them getting hurt that badly.

But the sight of snarling dogs, and the possibility of dogs ripping flesh, was revolting to me.⁴¹

Moore's reaction is an emotional response, produced by a "story," the witnessing of a visual narrative. In this narrative, the state is the unambiguous perpetrator and the black protestors occupy the role of innocent victim. This clear-cut visual dichotomy between the "good guys" and "bad guys" constitutes a narrative designed to shatter complacency by eliciting emotions of shock and shame from white viewers.

Life includes a full, two-page spread featuring three serial photographs depicting the action of the police dogs as they attack a young black man. The pictures, clearly taken in rapid succession, show the man trying to flee as the policemen allow the dogs enough slack in their leashes to seize the man's pants and pull them from his body, exposing his flesh. In one photograph, a dog lunges up on his hind legs at the man, and the dog's bared teeth are visibly sharp. The verbal descriptions that accompany the visual images often accentuate this brutal character: *Time* describes "snarling dogs and club-waving cops," the *Chicago Tribune* refers to "vicious police dogs" and "growling dogs," and in the *Washington Post*, a caption for one of the aforementioned Moore photos describes the depicted dog as a "lunging police dog" and the "advancing animal."⁴² Glenn Eskew describes the scene even more graphically, attributing an evil bloodlust to the canines: "Loosened, the dogs lunged at the protesters, ripping at their clothes in search of flesh."⁴³

In all of the pictures, the dogs are visibly attached to the police officers, clearly and visually marked by their uniforms as representatives of the state. In all three of the pictures, the leashes are visibly wound around the officers' hands. Even when the pictures are cropped to remove the officers, the leash leading outside of the frame is always visible, permanently reminding viewers that the dogs are not lone forces of nature but creatures acting as part of, and at the will of, particular human agents. In the pictures, the leash functions to visually solder the dogs and the officers, assimilating their characters into an unambiguous villain-image. The visual metonymy fuses the officers with the associations connoted by the dogs, constituting a visual reversal where the traditional characteristics of the uniformed authorities are transposed into their opposites: the protector of order becomes the oppressor who brings chaotic brutality into the scene of civilization.

The scene appears to take place on a paved surface, and there are white lines marking the ground. The lines on the ground, orderly and parallel like traffic lines, are an incongruous presence in the midst of the chaos of the events taking place on the surface. The scene is a disorganized mixture of black bodies, uniformed officers, and dogs, with no apparent order. The gazes of the subjects

add to this sense of disorder and chaos. In the largest image, two officers look down at the dogs they are attempting to control, and the dogs' attention is directed toward their black target. Other black spectators mill about: some of them watch the two dogs attacking the man, but others look in different directions, suggesting that other events, possibly even more shocking than the one depicted, are occurring just outside of the camera's view. A third policeman, in the foreground, stands with baton in one hand and leashed dog in the other. His dog is the only figure in the scene that stares directly at the camera, drawing the viewer to imagine the sensation of the confrontation. This officer looks out of the scene to the viewer's left, away from the victim and away from his dog. His expression suggests that he is startled, or taken off guard. A fourth policeman is visible in the background, his back to the camera. He looks out of the picture to the viewer's right, with his hands loosely at his sides. This is not a deliberately ordered procedure, designed with military precision. It is a scene of confusion and chaos, and the contrast of the scene with the straight lines on the street suggests a massive disruption of order. The orderly markings of civilization are juxtaposed with the chaotic introduction of vicious dogs, their presence turning civilization into bedlam.

The dogs signify the presence of madness in the midst of civilization: wolves, and wolf-like dogs, are associated with madness in history and myth. These dogs, German shepherds that are visually similar to wolves, are an unpredictable threat to the boundaries dividing order from chaos. In the pictures, these wolf-like creatures are not excluded from the boundaries, respecting the demarcation between the civilized and the primitive; rather, they have been brought into the fortress, destabilizing the apparent harmony of the viewer's political world. The presence of the dogs attacking black bodies also disrupts the narrative of inevitable racial progress preferred by white moderates and some of the politicians of the time. The depiction of blacks hunted by dogs resonates with powerful images of slavery, when bloodhounds regularly hunted down fugitive slaves. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriett Beecher Stowe captures the ferocious practice in striking literary detail when Haley and Marks discuss the use of dogs to track down the fugitive Eliza. Haley is concerned that the dogs might damage the escaped slave, and Marks concurs, reminiscing, "Our dogs tore a feller half to pieces, once, down in Mobile, 'fore we could get 'em off."⁴⁴ The "Negro dogs" were an integral part of the slavery system, so widely used that slaves were often identified by scars and bite marks on their bodies.

In the black-and-white *Life* pictures, the lack of fear on the expressions of the black spectators is striking. The subjects look in different directions, some with hands at sides and others folded in front of them. One man even has his hands in his pockets. There is perhaps shock, but not terror, on the faces that

are visible. The spectators appear to be standing within a few feet of the man who is being attacked, and there are dogs and officers in close proximity. The lack of extreme emotion gives the viewer the sensation that the picture has captured events occurring so quickly that there has not been time to react to the initial shock. This lack of terror gives the already gray image a surreal cast, imbuing the scene with a sense of unreality: surely this cannot actually be happening.

A GUILTY CONSCIENCE: THE EMOTIONAL REACTION

If King's "Letter" aimed, as Watson writes, to arouse the nation's moral sensibilities by appealing to "Americans' perceptions of our nation's controlling ethos," then the Birmingham campaign was a necessary counterpart to these verbal strategies.⁴⁵ Watson argues that while Birmingham was the immediate context for King's struggle, King "positions the struggle on a larger canvas."⁴⁶ This metaphor of "canvas" suggests King's literal use of image events to paint for the nation the bold contrast between the desired American image and the reality of racial injustice. King successfully shifted the debate over racial reform from political to moral grounds, melodramatically framing the movement against the forces of delay and appealing to the "moralistic" side of the American myth.⁴⁷ King's indictment of the conscience of the white majority was a multifaceted rhetorical event, utilizing verbal and visual modes of public address.

In the Birmingham photographs, the fire hoses, dogs, and uniformed officers of the state grounded and oriented a dissonant sense of reversal. The values of civility, manifest in the common markers of civilization—the lines of paved streets, sidewalks, utility poles, shops, and vehicles, and most of all uniformed policemen and firemen—became the scene and agent of a primitive brutality, connoted by the untamed forces of nature: a storm, a pack of wolves. The disruptive photographs hit their intended target: the psyche of the white majority. The compelling and unambiguous content of the Birmingham photographs functioned to provoke their "collective conscience" by refuting the myth that gradualism was an appropriate moral response. King's "Letter" situates his purpose as fashioning a moral collective from individuals assured of their status as tolerant and generous "good citizens." Visualization was an essential strategy: When white moderates did not *see* the reality of racism, they did not comprehend the urgency of the situation and they were complacent in their assumption that the passage of time would somehow naturally smooth things over. King had to find a way of making time itself visible, exposing the brutality of racism to make his audience *see* the immediacy of the threat.

The reaction to the photographs was an emotional one, defined by shock but also by shame. The emotions of suspense, dread, and shame conjured by

the photographs suggest that King's image event was, at least in the manner of imparting a sense of urgency, successful. Burke Marshall, assistant attorney general in charge of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, commented that the pictures "stirred the feelings" of most whites in the country.⁴⁸ Hemphill describes "feeling shame and remorse wash over me" as he witnessed, via television, the horror taking place in his former hometown.⁴⁹ The descriptions of shame and embarrassment, along with the discourse of "conscience" surrounding the events, suggest that the images made the viewing audience feel guilty. The sense of guilt implies recognition of wrongdoing, an emotional reaction that strongly suggests viewers identified themselves with the uniformed officers. Even if they were not actively attacking black youth, to claim membership in a nation that carried out such violence was itself a form of participation. The prototypical police uniforms of the officers visually marked them as agents of the duly constituted authority, and hence in the depictions they are synecdochal representations of the national identity, rather than independent individuals whose actions could be dismissed as deviant or aberrant in relation to "normal" citizenship.

That the photographs were interpreted as shameful and embarrassing scenes is attested to by the fact that many local southern newspapers omitted the photographs in their coverage of the events. These newspapers often interpreted the events in such a way that the black protestors were viewed as the aggressors who "asked for it," and the white officers as legitimate defenders of civil order. That this interpretation was afforded little credibility indicates that the power of the images overwhelmed the attempts to verbally contain the event through interpretations favoring the status quo. For instance, in his analysis of news magazine coverage of the Birmingham events, Richard Lentz documents a number of different verbal strategies used by conservative and moderate publications to downplay the significance of the events or to articulate a story at odds with the blacks-as-heroes/whites-as-oppressors version that eventually came to dominate the public consciousness.⁵⁰ There are more egregious examples from local southern newspapers that overtly told stories of aggressive black deviants challenging the stability of a genteel social order.⁵¹ What is notable, however, is that the news coverage that assigned King and the protestors the role of villains (troublemakers, opportunists, disrupters of public order) and the establishment characters as heroes, rarely published photographs alongside the verbal narration of events. There is something essential and unique to the *visual* documentation of the events that constrains interpretation and deters narrative divergence.

President Kennedy, perhaps the white moderate par excellence, reported an intense emotional response to the images. Carl Brauer writes, "Intellectually Kennedy had long believed in the principle of racial equality,

but the disturbing events of the spring added an emotional dimension to that belief.”⁵² Taylor Branch notes, “The visual power of the Gadsden photograph was so profound that President Kennedy, like millions of readers, could see nothing else.”⁵³ When Kennedy spoke to the nation on June 11 in response to the events, he described civil rights as a “moral issue” and called on each individual American to examine his or her conscience and actively pursue racial equality.⁵⁴ Thomas Borstelmann writes of Kennedy’s response: “Kennedy knew . . . he had to provide leadership to the nation by framing the issue, for the first time, in moral terms.”⁵⁵ In this address, he took sides like he had never done before. “The atypical fervor with which he spoke,” Borstelmann observed, “reflected both personal revulsion at the violence inflicted on black Southerners and a determination to get new civil rights legislation passed by Congress.”⁵⁶

The images of Birmingham, in this sense, literally forced white moderates to reconsider their relationship to the state as citizens, as well as their relationship to black citizens. Theodore White’s description of America’s response to the visual coverage captures the emotion: “The entire nation winced as the demonstrators winced.”⁵⁷ The incongruity between the nation’s understanding of itself as the ultimate manifestation of progress and democracy and the depictions of the nation’s official representatives brutalizing its own citizens created a national wincing—an involuntary shrinking-back from its own image, exposed to the eye in all of its barbaric violence.

All Eyes on Birmingham: Circulation and the Reflexivity of Identity

In Hemphill’s description, the act of seeing King’s image event triggered emotions of shame and guilt. Theodore White’s description of the “national wincing” similarly suggests the immediacy of the reaction to the sight of the brutal scene. These reactions were amplified, and in some cases perhaps generated, by the additional *knowledge* that the scene was visually mediated in order that others might see it. Finnegan and Kang write, “It is not just that discourse circulates, but also that we *recognize* that it circulates.”⁵⁸ The images themselves implicitly testify to their status as image event by their very existence (some persons not visibly present in the picture must have manipulated the cameras). The photographs contain, in addition, explicit evidence that the scene is an image event. One of the photographs published in *Life* magazine, for instance, depicts police officers giving their dogs enough slack in the leashes to tear the clothes from a young black man. In the near background, two men (both white) visibly document the unfolding events, one with camera to his face and the other apparently adjusting his lens. Viewers were thus instantly reminded that the images were photographs, and hence subject to media circulation.

The photographs were widely circulated in the international press; over 250 journalists from the United States and around the world had covered the events in Birmingham.⁵⁹ In the Cold War context, there were strong perceptions that the Soviet Union would capitalize on the opportunity for foreign policy leverage. Adam Fairclough writes, "It went without saying that Birmingham gave the Soviet Union a propaganda bonanza."⁶⁰ America's story touting racial progress as an inevitable part of democracy was "an important Cold War narrative" used to contrast democracy and communism.⁶¹ Thus, the depiction of American police officers brutalizing blacks with dogs and hoses risked substantial diplomatic consequences. The United States Information Agency (USIA) reported "the damaging pictures of dogs and fire hoses have been extremely widely used," expressing particular concern over their use by the Soviet Union and African nations that the United States was trying to woo to its own side in the Cold War.⁶² The international context was of crucial importance because the Birmingham events corresponded to the first Organization of African Unity (OAU) meeting in Ethiopia. A Nigerian journalist, for instance, observed that the United States appeared to be becoming "the most barbarian state in the world."⁶³ In general, the domestic perception was that the photographs were widely circulated and acutely dangerous to the nation's image. The reaction was one of shame and embarrassment. Glenn Eskew writes of Connor's "made-to-order legal violence" that, "when packaged by the media as footage, photo, and story line embarrassed a presidency that touted the American consensus of freedom and democracy."⁶⁴ Burke Marshall states that Kennedy was acutely worried about the international perception of America's image, and that these fears were a primary motivation for subsequent legislative action.⁶⁵

In terms of the rhetorical force of the photographs, then, more important than the actual circulation of the images is the fact that there was widespread domestic coverage *about* the international attention. In other words, it is not only that the event received substantial foreign coverage, but also the reflexive knowledge that the event was circulating in the foreign press that is important. Americans were aware of the scope of the international coverage: as Kasher explains, for example, "The photos of the dogs and hoses were conjured up in countless speeches and writing as the epitome of American racial brutality. The repercussions were international. The *Post* ran a story about how the Birmingham struggles were 'front page news in Europe,' giving people there the impression 'that the United States is a land of brutality and repression.'"⁶⁶ Donald Wilson, director of the US Information Agency, documented the international coverage in his daily reports, noting that "sensational aspects of the Birmingham crisis including arrests of children and use of dogs and hoses . . . have received widespread play," and Senator Jacob Javits of New York

inserted news stories about the foreign press coverage into the *Congressional Record*.⁶⁷ A Harris Poll taken in August of 1963 reported that 78% of white Americans surveyed thought race discrimination harmed the nation abroad.⁶⁸ A Kingsport, Tennessee man observed: “The pictures of dogs attacking colored people in Birmingham have been sent abroad and you know what kind of opinion that gives them about us.”⁶⁹ This keen sense of “national disgrace” spurred domestic support of racial reforms.⁷⁰ For example, the images are credited with transforming the psyche of the nation and bringing about the necessary momentum for massive legislative changes, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act. A once-complacent Kennedy stated that the news photographs made him “sick”: he described them as “shameful scenes” that were “so much more eloquently reported by the news camera than by any number of explanatory words.”⁷¹ In June 1963, Kennedy addressed the nation and announced the introduction of what eventually would become the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Such legislative changes would come to be viewed as a direct consequence of Moore’s *Life* photography.⁷²

CONCLUSION

King did not merely use confrontation to gain attention for his movement; he used the power of images to stage public dramas that made racial conflict visible. He understood the unique power of visual rhetoric as a crucial part of social movement strategy. Rhetoricians persistently note King’s frequent use of dark and light metaphors to illustrate the contrast between an ignorant, backwards racism and an enlightened, joyous equality. Yet, for King, the dark/light contrast is not simply a linguistic metaphor: a central part of King’s strategy was literally to *make visible* the oppression of black Americans, to rout out the abuses that occurred on a regular basis and display them before the eyes of the nation and the world. For King, the best means of making racism visible was by exposing its action on black bodies. In *Why We Can’t Wait*, King describes the impetus behind the Birmingham campaign: “Instead of submitting to surreptitious cruelty in thousands of dark jail cells and on countless shadowed street corners, he would force his oppressor to commit his brutality openly—in the light of day—with the rest of the world looking on.”⁷³

King’s nonviolence, often viewed as a moral alternative to violent militancy, is best viewed not as a moral posture, but as a crucial linchpin for a carefully orchestrated rhetoric of bodies. The Birmingham pictures confronted a nation with visible evidence of its racism, putting before the eyes of the American people irrefutable proof that barbaric practices were not solely the purview of places far away and times long ago, but immediately present. The photos made racism appear repugnant by constructing a dramatic narrative where whites

(and the status quo) were identified with vicious animal violence and blacks were codified as brave innocents willing to martyr themselves for justice. The Birmingham imagery pierced the conscience of white moderates, depicting the immediate reality of racism and making complacency tantamount to immorality. Jesse Jackson, attempting to understand why the American people are willing to intervene on behalf of the victims of injustice in some situations but not in others, states that the essential difference is the visibility of the violence: "When people can see, our humanity transcends our politics."⁷⁴

In a discipline historically devoted to the study of verbal texts, rhetoricians are increasingly taking visual rhetoric seriously. This essay has argued that King's strategy of shifting the debate over race from political to moral vocabularies was only successful because it combined visual and verbal modes of public address. The Birmingham campaign was an image event that accrued its rhetorical force both from its dramatization of racial injustice and from the reflexive knowledge of its circulation.

NOTES

1. Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954–1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 761.
2. A recent issue of *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* focuses on King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Several of the essays focus on King's appeal to white moderates. Contributions include Martha Solomon Watson, "The Issue is Justice: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Response to the Birmingham Clergy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 1–22; Michael Osborn, "Rhetorical Distance in 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,'" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 23–35; Michael Leff and Ebony Utley, "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,'" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 37–52; and John H. Patton, "A Transforming Response: Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter From Birmingham Jail,'" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 53–66. In addition, King's "I Have a Dream" address has achieved unparalleled public prominence: it is almost universally acknowledged as King's crowning achievement in a career marked by rhetorical brilliance and is widely considered one of the masterpieces of civil oratory. Thus, the number of rhetorical studies devoted to this prominent address is not surprising (for example, J. Robert Cox, "The Fulfillment of Time: King's 'I Have a Dream' Speech (August 28, 1963)," in *Texts in Context: Critical Dialogues on Significant Episodes in American Political Rhetoric*, ed. Michael C. Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld (Davis, CA: Hermagoras 1989), 181–204; Al Weitzel, "King's 'I Have a Dream' Speech: A Case Study of Incorporating Orality in Rhetorical Criticism," *Communication Reports* 7 (1994): 50–56; David Bobbitt and Harold Mixon, "Prophecy and Apocalypse in the Rhetoric of Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 17 (1994): 27–38. King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" is also a popular text for rhetorical consideration. See, for example, Ronald E. Lee, "The Rhetorical Construction of Time in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,'" *Southern Communication Journal* 56 (1991): 279–88. Other examples of rhetorical treatments of King's oratory include George N. Dionisopoulos, Victoria Gallagher, Steven Goldzwig, and David Zarefsky, "Martin Luther King, the American Dream, and Vietnam: A Collision of Rhetorical

- Trajectories,” *Western Journal of Communication* 56 (1992): 91–107; Christopher Lynch, “Reaffirmation of God’s Anointed Prophet: The Use of Chiasm in Martin Luther King’s ‘Mountaintop’ Speech,” *Howard Journal of Communications* 6 (1995): 12–31; Edward Appel, “The Rhetoric of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Comedy and Context in Tragic Collision,” *Western Journal of Communication* 61 (1997): 376–402; Gary Selby, “Framing Social Protest: The Exodus Narrative in Martin Luther King’s Montgomery Bus Boycott Rhetoric,” *Journal of Communication and Religion* 24 (2001): 68–93.
3. See Watson, “The Issue is Justice”; Osborn, “Rhetorical Distance”; Leff and Utley, “Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric”; and Patton, “A Transforming Response.”
 4. King’s speeches, writings, and image events reached many audiences, and his address was not limited to white moderates. In this essay, I focus on white moderates as King’s target audience.
 5. Cara A. Finnegan and Jiyeon Kang, “‘Sighting’ the Public: Iconoclasm and Public Sphere Theory,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (2004): 377–402.
 6. Kevin Michael DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999).
 7. Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” in *Why We Can’t Wait* (New York: Signet, 2000), 73.
 8. King, “Letter,” 73, emphasis added.
 9. King, “Letter,” 66, emphasis added.
 10. King, *Why We Can’t Wait* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 27.
 11. Watson, “The Issue is Justice,” 2.
 12. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 707.
 13. Watson, “The Issue is Justice.”
 14. Birmingham was chosen as the staging ground for these image events precisely because of its legacy of intense segregation and no-holds-barred racial violence. In *Why We Can’t Wait*, King describes Birmingham as “the most segregated city in America” (43). Indeed, Birmingham had shown itself as a city that would cut off its nose to spite its face: the city had given up its professional baseball team rather than have it play in an integrated league; it had closed at least 68 parks, 38 playgrounds, 6 pools, and 4 golf courses rather than follow federal orders to implement desegregation measures; and there was no opera in Birmingham because the city government refused to integrate its municipal auditorium. See Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Years, 1954–1965* (Middlesex, England: Viking, 1987), 179. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth (“Martin Luther King, Jr.: Minister, Civil Rights Activist, and Public Opinion Leader,” *Journalism Quarterly* 18 [1992]: 291) even reports that the city officials had banned a book containing pictures of black and white rabbits. In the years leading up to the Birmingham campaign, the city had witnessed dozens of racially motivated bombings and more than 50 cross burnings. Birmingham’s government already had a national reputation as a brutal regime because of the media coverage of the 1961 Mother’s Day incident when police stood back and allowed whites to viciously beat Freedom Riders forced from their burning bus, provoking Kennedy to send in federal marshals.
 15. Quoted in David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 251.
 16. Quoted in Glenn T. Eskew, “The Alabama Chapter Movement for Human Rights and the Birmingham Struggle for Civil Rights, 1956–1963,” in *Birmingham, Alabama, 1956–1963*:

- The Black Struggle for Civil Rights*, ed. David Garrow (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1989), 81.
17. The reported number of arrests made on “D” Day varied widely in the press coverage. In *Eyes on the Prize*, Williams estimates over a thousand, with 959 children arrested. The May 3 *New York Times* states that there were 2,000 participants and 500 arrests (Foster Hailey, “500 Are Arrested in Negro Protest at Birmingham,” *New York Times*, May 3, 1963, 1); the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* puts the number at 700 (“Estimated 700 Negroes Jailed,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 3, 1963, 1); and the *Atlanta Constitution* also estimates 700 arrests (“700 Are Jailed in Negro Protest at Birmingham,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 3, 1963, 1).
 18. Unlike Pritchett, Connor did not grasp the logic of image events; he tended to work against the press rather than with them. In 1960, Connor had sued the *New York Times* for libel for a story titled “Fear and Hatred Grip Birmingham” (see *The Media and the Movement* [Birmingham: Birmingham Bar Association, 1981]). During the Birmingham campaign, he attempted to exclude whites from witnessing certain demonstrations in an attempt to minimize media coverage. See Glenn T. Eskew, *But for Birmingham* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 273. However, Connor seemed torn between a desire to avoid negative press coverage and an intense longing to display his power. He is quoted in several newspapers as yelling at an officer who was holding back white crowds, “Let those people come to the corner, Sergeant. I want them to see the dogs work. Look at those niggers run.” See “Fire Hoses and Police Dogs Quell Birmingham Segregation Protest,” *Washington Post*, May 4, 1963, 1.
 19. Michael S. Durham, *Powerful Days: The Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore* (New York: Steward, Tabori and Chang, 1991), 90.
 20. Stephen Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954–1968* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 13.
 21. John Kaplan, “The *Life* Magazine Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore, 1958–1965,” *Journalism History* 35 (1999–2000): 134.
 22. Kaplan, “The *Life* Magazine Civil Rights Photography,” 137.
 23. John L. Lucaites and Robert Hariman list the criteria for iconic photographs in “Visual Rhetoric, Photojournalism, and Democratic Public Culture,” *Rhetoric Review* 20 (2001): 37–42. The four criteria they list include (1) widespread recognition by everyone within a public culture; (2) representative of significant historical events; (3) objects of a strong emotional identification and response; and (4) they are regularly reproduced or copied across a range of media, genre, and topics.
 24. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 761.
 25. Paul Hemphill, *Leaving Birmingham: Notes of a Native Son* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 8.
 26. Richard Lentz, *Symbols, the News Magazines, and Martin Luther King* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 4.
 27. Watson, “The Issue is Justice,” 18.
 28. Osborn, “Rhetorical Distance,” 33.
 29. William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 8.
 30. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 8.
 31. For discussions of the dialectical fashioning of American and Soviet identities see David Campbell, “Cold Wars: Securing Identity, Identifying Danger,” in *Rhetorical Republic*:

- Governing Representation in American Politics*, ed. Frederick M. Dolan and Thomas L. Dumm (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
32. Quoted in Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 12.
 33. King, "Letter," 66.
 34. Robert Asen, "Imagining in the Public Sphere," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 35 (2002): 349-50.
 35. Asen, "Imagining the Public Sphere," 353.
 36. Danielle S. Allen, *Talking to Strangers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 4.
 37. Michael Osborn, "Rhetorical Depiction," in *Form, Genre, and the Study of Political Discourse*, ed. Herbert W. Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986), 79-107.
 38. Osborn, "Rhetorical Distance," 33.
 39. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 759.
 40. Len Holt, "Eyewitness: The Police Terror at Birmingham," in *Reporting Civil Rights, Part One* (New York: Library of America), 799.
 41. Quoted by Durham in *Powerful Days*, 28.
 42. "Dogs and Fire Hoses Turned on Negroes," *Chicago Tribune*, May 4, 1963, 1; "Dogs, Kids & Clubs," *Time*, May 10, 1963, 19; Wallace Terry, "3 D.C. Rights Chiefs to Lead Pilgrimage to Birmingham," *Washington Post*, May 4, 1963, A4.
 43. Eskew, "The Alabama Chapter Movement," 83.
 44. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003), 82. Original published in 1852.
 45. Watson, "The Issue is Justice," 3.
 46. Watson, "The Issue is Justice," 17.
 47. Watson, "The Issue is Justice," 19. She is referencing Walter Fisher.
 48. Quoted in Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 170.
 49. Hemphill, *Leaving Birmingham*, 154.
 50. Richard Lentz, "The Prophet and the Citadel: News Magazine Coverage of the 1963 Birmingham Civil Rights Crisis," *Communication* 10 (1987): 5-29.
 51. For example, the May 6, 1963 *Birmingham News* article headlined "Hundreds of Hooky-Playing Demonstrators Arrested Here Along With Negro Comedian" states, "Police had earlier sealed off Kelly Ingram Park where Negro mobs had gathered for the last several days to throw rocks, bottles and bricks at police and firemen. Negroes crowded the sidewalks in all directions, however. Firemen stood ready with high pressure hoses to quell any outbreak of violence" (2). The May 5 *Selma Times-Journal* includes the headline "Negro Leaders Intervene to Halt Demonstrators: Trouble Averted by Peace Pleas and Birmingham," and describes a "taunting crowd of Negroes" who were seen "yelling, waving their arms and dancing about" in defiance of authority (1). The bold sidebar to this front page story is titled "One Bull for Birmingham" and states that Police Commissioner Connor "takes great pride in his K-9 Corps, which has been used effectively during the month-old desegregation effort" (1). Other examples from local Birmingham papers and other papers from Alabama and Georgia abound. A full-blown analysis of the local coverage of the Birmingham events

and its divergence from national accounts is a project in itself, but these examples are suggestive of the different modes of assigning value to the Birmingham events and the different ways the events were assimilated into competing narrative frameworks.

52. Quoted in Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 180.
53. The image is referred to as the "Gadsden photo" because the young black man attacked by police dogs in some of the most widely circulated photographs is Walter Gadsden. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 764.
54. See Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 179–180.
55. Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 161.
56. Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 161.
57. Quoted in Richard E. Wiley, "Do You Believe in Miracles?" *Federal Communications Law Journal* 55 (2003): 611–614.
58. Finnegan and Kang, "'Sighting' the Public," 394.
59. Kern-Foxworth, "Martin Luther King, Jr.," 293. See also Lentz, "The Prophet and the Citadel," 9.
60. Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 127.
61. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 13.
62. Quoted in Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 169–170.
63. Quoted in Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 160.
64. Eskew, *But For Birmingham*, 4.
65. Quoted in Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, 191.
66. Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement*, 90–96.
67. Quoted in Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America*, 127.
68. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 187.
69. Quoted in Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 187.
70. Quoted in Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America*, 137.
71. Quoted in David Benjamin Oppenheimer, "Kennedy, King, Shuttlesworth and Walker: The Events Leading to the Introduction of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," *University of San Francisco Law Review* 29 (1995): 646–70, and Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America*, 138.
72. Kaplan, "The *Life* Magazine Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore," 127; Kasher, "Introduction," 88. Kasher quotes Congressman Peter Rodino: "I was attending a conference in Geneva . . . and the incident of the police dog attacking the Negro in Birmingham was printed all over the world. One of the delegates from one of the nations represented at the conference there showed me the front page of the European edition of the *Times* and he was a little more frank than some of the others, and he asked me, 'Is this the way you practice democracy?' And I had no answer."
73. King, *Why We Can't Wait*, 27.
74. Jesse Jackson, "A Tale of Two Countries," *Newsweek*, June 7, 1999, 4.

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