

## Hixson At Large

By DUMONT F. HIXSON, JR.



Sanity sometimes seems to consist solely in the recognition of insanity. Each of us, perhaps, feels at times that he is not quite sane -- that he is, in fact, somewhat mad.

Montaigne, whose writings give every indication of the man in control, says that "Man is the only creature capable of despising himself."

Dostoyevsky, whose behavior gave every indication of sanity, wrote knowingly of insanity in "Note From The Underground." Our fascination with the bizarre in Kafka is perhaps a glimpse into ourselves.

THE LITERATURE of our time also contains this same suspicion of "madness in the system" -- our system.

"One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest" is a novel about an individual's attempt to escape into the peaceful atmosphere of a mental institution. "Lord of the Flies" describes the cannibal that is released when the veneer of civilization is removed.

The "Feminine Mystique" describes the frustrations of the modern woman. And the "Lonely Crowd" describes the alienation and loneliness of modern man.

If Freud was correct, there is something of the headhunter in each of us. Everyday newspaper headlines validate this hypothesis. Overstressed, "The Mature Mind" describes the process of maturing as the process of taming the child-savage within ourselves. Unfortunately we frequently automate ourselves to tame ourselves -- in ritual, routine or the adoption of a fixed concept.

IT IS OFTEN the man who does not recognize his own potential for madness who releases the most madness in the world. Hitler and Stalin in the guise of supermen discharged all kinds of lunacy.

It is he who is most certain who causes the most uncertainty. The good minister or teacher is, perhaps, the one who fumbles a great deal.

The psychiatrist informs us that it is the lack of knowledge of impulse that causes us to act the most impulsively. A preoccupation with "law and order" sometimes masks the disorder within ourselves.

THE HUMANITIES are characteristically concerned with inhumanity. The value of the humanities is that they help us to recognize that which is most inhuman within ourselves.

Moll Flanders is not about the wise use of leisure. King Lear is not about the well-rounded personality. Macbeth is not about the boy who made good. Literature frequently externalizes that which is really within ourselves. For Pascal, "Man is so mad, that not to be mad, is but another form of madness."

We are, perhaps, at our best when we know ourselves and love our fellow madman.

### Fictional Obit

John Galsworthy's most important work was his series of novels about the Forsyte family. The main character, Soames Forsyte, became so well-known that when he died (in a book) the London Times announced his death in its headlines.

## TV 'Visibility' Makes Public Leery Of Disorders

What is new about today's public disorders is that they are seen from every living room. And, unlike riots of other periods in American history, the "enhanced visibility" through television has become a primary source of public insecurity.

Dean Francis A. Allen of the University of Michigan Law School analyzed the disorders in testimony before the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.

"But regardless of how the public becomes alarmed," Allen noted, "the path out of our present difficulties is neither that of brute repression nor of anarchy."

"Neither accords with a regime of law and order. Neither accords with the temper of a free society and the achievement of the goals to which such a society is dedicated."

"America must devise techniques and strategies that will de-escalate the uses of violence in the conduct of public controversies, both as an instrumentality of law enforcement and of social protest," said Allen. Law and order are threatened when "those groups whose commitments to social reform lead to the defiance of law and the creation of disorder,"

Allen noted. "The rule of law can be destroyed through lack of fidelity to the law by large numbers of citizens as well as through abuses of authority by governmental officials."

"IT IS TIME," the dean suggested, "for those participating in the protest movement, on the college campuses, to subject their measures to realistic appraisal."

"Fascism--even for laudable goals--breeds fanaticism in opposition. The fears and resentments created by symbolic law violation have provided an opportunity and an occasion for the seizure of political power by the worst elements in American society. Only naive and willful blindness can obscure the strength of these dark forces."

"The complex relationships between law and order are dangerously obscured by those who advocate 'massive applications of public force in the streets of our cities and on the campuses of our universities'."

Among other things, Allen said, there is a need "to inquire into the factors that lead to widespread support for the law and those which erode or destroy that support."

People tend to obey the law when their society disapproves

of those who violate it. But the society's attitudes toward law and order depend, in turn, on how widely the justice is convinced of the justice and decency of its law.

"WHEN THE PROBLEMS of law and order are viewed from this perspective, much that is being said today, including much being said by persons of great public prominence, is revealed as fallacious and mistaken," Allen said.

"I do not doubt that the technical efficiency of many aspects of American law enforcement can and should be improved. And yet I do not believe that the problem of 'law and order' today is basically a problem of technical efficiency."

"The fundamental problem is to convince large groups of Americans of the legitimacy of law and the society of which it is a part."

Some of the recommendations of the Kerner Commission and of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice might be adopted "to re-establish the legitimacy of the system of criminal justice," Allen suggested. "Although the political process has failed to define the choice facing us, a choice exists."

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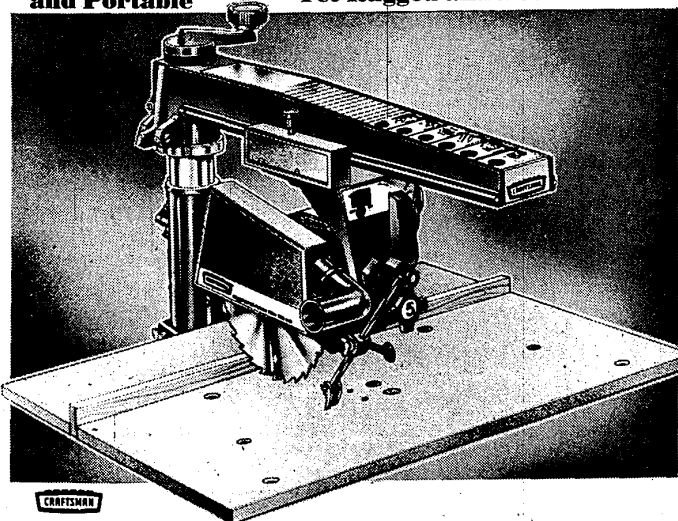
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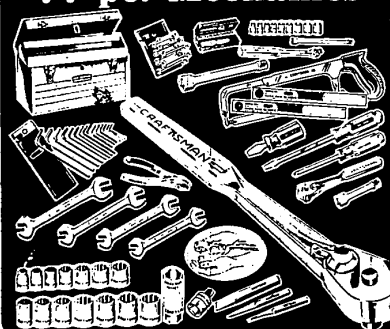
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