

THE CRISIS OF CIVILIZATION

[This is the title used by Ralph V. Sampson, of Bristol University, for his translation of an essay by Leo Tolstoy, written in 1908—"On the Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria." Tolstoy viewed with loathing the event which, as Mr. Sampson notes in his Foreword, generated such bitterness among the Serbs that, six years later, they assassinated the Crown Prince Ferdinand at Sarajevo, starting the first world war.

While the "divine right" of kings is no longer an excuse for conquest and pacification, Tolstoy's outrage at the extension of Austrian power has as much or more application, today, when the justification for military measures to subdue other populations is "freedom" and "democratization." Tolstoy neither sought nor accepted excuse for wars. The killing is hardly changed by the excuse given, and it is the killing to which he would put an end. Excuses for war, in his eyes, even in his time, had become a blasphemy. Actually, he speaks little of war here. Tolstoy is concerned with and addresses the high potentiality he sees in all human beings. He cries out to the laggard spirit of man to fulfill its spiritual destiny. The essay is the noblest of exhortations, companion to his *Christianity and Patriotism*. It remains for the men of our time to renew this appeal, and while they may be able to broaden its religious idiom, there is doubt that anyone will increase its strength or heighten its essential vision.

A few copies of Mr. Sampson's pamphlet are available from MANAS at 25 cents, postpaid. The full text of the essay, here somewhat condensed, is worth having.]

WHAT has happened is a very common and frequently recurring event. One of those nests of great robbers, called Great Powers, who by all kinds of fraud, falsehood, violence and every kind of crime against the most fundamental demands of morality, hold millions of people in fear of them whilst they rob them—one such nest concentrating ever greater and greater powers over hundreds of thousands of the Slav peoples who are completely foreign to it, has decided openly to consolidate this particular power, and, when it considered this convenient for

itself, has announced that henceforth it counts these peoples as fully its own subjects.

The Austrian recognition of Bosnians and Herzegovinians as their subjects, quite apart from the diplomatic complications among the powers, has also aroused powerful emotions among the Slav peoples, leading in the Serbian and Montenegrin people even to the desire for war, that is, by means of the most criminal form of human behavior, the killing of their own and other people, to resist the injustice, in their view, the evil and danger to them of the action of the Austrian government.

It is possible to understand that the people, constituting the nests of great robbers, are so confused and corrupted that, doing their evil deeds for their petty, personal, vain and mercenary aims, they can be so blind as to reckon their criminal activity the fulfilment of their duty, and then by talk of compensations, conferences and so forth, not to feel their crimes, and even for the accomplishment of their aims to desire the killing of neighbors, the wars, for which they are always preparing. But it is difficult indeed to understand in our time why those simple working men who compose the people and who by their labour give to those who order them about the possibility of life, whether they be Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Germans, Russians, Poles, Hindus, English, French—it is difficult to understand why these people, feeling the burden of their slavery, striving everywhere for their emancipation, can either endure their slavery, unjustifiable by anything and inexplicable, or for emancipation from it have recourse to that very means, which was the reason for, and now is the principal reason for their enslavement: to violence, to war, to killing.

It was all very well to talk of annexations, compensations, conferences and to threaten wars 500, 100 even 50 years ago. It was all very well in those times to transfer stupefied, deceived peoples, like slaves for sale, from one set of masters to

another, from the Turks to the Russians, from the Russians to the Germans and so forth. It was all very well in those times, under the influence of patriotic, bellicose hypnosis to plunge hundreds, thousands, tens of hundreds of thousands of human beings into the insensate, brutalized slaughter of human beings, as some members of the Serbian people, stupefied by hypnosis, now want to do. But assuredly time does not stand still, nor does the material and above all the spiritual development of human beings.

And these exploits have lost their significance not only because in place of the earlier swords and armour there are now machine-guns, Brownings, every kind of steamer, aeroplane, railway, telegraph, printing press, in consequence of which there is immediately known all over the world whatever is done in any corner of it—not only because patriotism and warlike bravery have lost significance and completely different human qualities have acquired significance and because material conditions of life have changed, but they have lost significance and acquired quite different significance because the whole spiritual condition of humanity has changed.

A few years ago there was a young man in an Austrian prison, one among hundreds of people of the Nazarene sect refusing war service. The mother of the young man arrived to see her son. When the sentry, taking pity on her, allowed her to a window from which she could see her son, this mother, instead of weeping for her son in his helplessness and reproaching him for having forsaken her, called out to her son: "Do not bear arms, my beloved son. Remember God." And the son listened to his mother and to his own inner voice, and stayed to live out the 15 years in prison to which the Austrian government had sentenced him.

Yes, it is necessary not to prepare yourselves, Serbs, for war, that is, for the killing of pitiable, lost human beings brought by a whole host of sins and temptations to that stupefied condition, in which they kill and are prepared to kill anyone who comes along.

The way out, not only for the Serbs, from the present which seems such a confused situation, not only for the Slav nations but for the nations of the

whole world, from both the political, diplomatic and social, economic difficulties and tribulations, the way out for all the world's peoples lies in one thing. It is that they should recognise that highest religious consciousness, which the humanity of our time has lived to achieve, and follow it, that is, arrive at that principal condition of a good life—a belief common to men, without which people live only in a temporal sense, as people in general in these last decades now do, and especially people of the Christian world.

I will endeavour to say briefly why, in my opinion, the Christian nations find themselves in this situation which is out of peoples' character, and why the burden of this situation has in our time reached the highest point, and why the way out of this situation can and must, as I think, be accomplished in our very near future.

From time out of mind the peoples of the world have acknowledged a highest principle, which ought to guide their lives, both in invisible imaginary beings, and in saintly teachers of life, and in visible ruling conquerors, heroes whom they have deified and whose commands they have blindly obeyed. The saints, the deified wise men and also the deified heroes have become combined in one supernatural force and power, and the peoples have blindly believed in all that moral teaching, which has been preached by this power, and in the same way have blindly followed all the demands of this power in the affairs of life. These beliefs were diverse in their manifestations, but people's attitude to these beliefs was in every case one and the same. The attitude to belief consisted in this, that the majority of people, not recognising in themselves any independent, guiding spiritual principle whatever, blindly submitted to the leadership of a minority of chosen people in the understanding of the meaning of life and so in the guidance of conduct. A minority then, ascribing to itself supernatural qualities, considered itself empowered to direct both the spiritual and physical life of the majority.

Thus the peoples of the world have lived from ancient times. But the longer people lived, the less and less satisfactory for people's spiritual demands such an attitude to belief became; and more and more often there appeared amongst people teachings

of a new, different understanding of life, in which the previous attitude to belief became less and less possible. This new understanding of life consisted in this, that each man bears within himself a spiritual principle common to all people, manifesting itself in love and drawing all people towards unity, and that therefore the fundamental guidance of the life of man can be only internal, and in no wise external, arising from the will of other people.

In spite of the order of life, based on the subjection of one set of people to another, establishing itself ever more and more, oftener and oftener there appeared such teaching—among the Hindus and Chinese and Hebrews and Romans and Greeks—which revealed to people that in each man is manifest a spiritual principle common to all; and that therefore the foundation of life, which ought to be uniting people, must not be the arbitrary rule and violence of one people over another, but this consciousness of a single spiritual principle in all men, manifesting itself in love.

The teaching that every man bears within him a single spiritual principle, striving towards unity by means of love—this teaching has been expressed many times and amongst different peoples: by Confucius and Lao Tse, and the Hebrew prophets, and the Greek Socrates, and Buddha and Rama Krishna, and the Romans, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, and with particular clarity and validity by Jesus Christ. By Jesus Christ this teaching was expressed no longer as something desirable and only possible for certain people, as it had been expressed before Jesus, but as a teaching, which ought to become the basis of life, obligatory in that it gives genuine happiness not for some but for all men.

The teaching of Christ was the teaching of love, permitting no violence of any kind nor under any circumstances. Such it always was, and so it was understood at the time of its appearance. The very simple truth, easily understood by all, expressed by Christian teaching, consisted in this, that it is more advantageous for people to live in submission to the law of love than to submit themselves to the law of power. This truth was so impossible for reason to refute and so characteristic of the spirit of man that people recognizing this truth could not fail to adopt

it. The teaching was adopted, but life continued to go on in accordance with the previous law of violence contrary to the truth that had been revealed, and it could not immediately be changed to conform to the truth contained in the teaching. Then, those people, to whom the previous old order of life appeared more advantageous than the teaching which followed—those very people who had power over the majority and were their spiritual rulers, began to change the teaching, adapting it to the coarse, ancient Hebrew so that it did not contradict the basis of the old order. And the life of men, for those nominally adopting Christianity, continued to go on as formerly, both in the governmental, international and economic conditions of life, notwithstanding the fact that the whole of that on which the previous order of life had been based, was repudiated by Christianity.

At first the dogmas, sacraments, rituals, devised by the church to conceal the essence of the teaching, satisfied the religious demands of the people of the Christian world. But as the life based on power grew more and more complicated, and as, side by side with these complications, enlightenment spread more and more, so did the church theories come less and less to satisfy people's religious demands. And matters have finally reached such a point that people, acknowledging themselves as Christians, have to choose between two alternatives: acknowledgement of the truth, determining the meaning of human life and the direction of behaviour that arises out of it, in one of the church teachings, calling themselves Christian, yet incompatible with conscience and common sense, and at war with one another, or, to acknowledge the existing order of life as the basis of life and of the guidance of behaviour, and to acknowledge the Christian religion and in general all religion as unnecessary, a source only of difficulties and cumbersome complications. And Christian peoples, the majority of them—some openly, others secretly—have chosen the second alternative.

Christian humanity has already lived many centuries in a situation quite out of keeping with people's character: it lives without any religious explanation of its life and the direction of behaviour flowing from it. And the longer it lives like this, the

more tormenting and burdensome its life becomes on the one hand, and on the other hand, it becomes all the more clearly conscious of the presentiment it has long had of the law of love for mankind, obliging it to abandon the law of violence.

The clearness of this consciousness has, I think, in our time reached such a point that any impetus can and must summon the nations to awaken from that patriotism and the slavery which results from it, in which they find themselves. The immense importance of forthcoming developments lies not at all in external acts, which can meet with insuperable obstacles, but in the consciousness of people, free everywhere and not brooking in any way the arrest of that freedom. Assuredly, what is now necessary to the people of the whole world for their emancipation, does not consist in heroic exploits of any kind, in difficult feats of arms with more powerful enemies. Only one thing is necessary: the most natural, humanly characteristic and easy act, not even an act, but a condition only, a condition of abstention, of behaviour refraining from activity contrary to consciousness. For nothing can interfere with consciousness, or abstention from activity contrary to consciousness.

People simply being clearly, decisively aware who they are, people aware of that which all the sages in the world have taught and which Christ taught: that in every man there dwells a free, omnipotent spirit, one and the same for all, a son of God, which man can neither conquer nor subject himself to, that there is one manifestation of this spirit: love—these aware people (and people now ready for this awareness) and behaving accordingly, or rather, people simply not behaving contrary to this awareness; and immediately by the simplest means in the world all the difficulties will be eliminated not only in Bosnia and Serbia, but in the whole Christian world, and not only in the Christian world, but in the whole of mankind. Only people vividly aware of this truth which has been revealed to them and behaving in accordance with it, and all those horrors from which they now suffer will end of themselves. There will come to an end the oppression of one people by another, and wars and the preparations for them, and the ruination and corruption of peoples; there will

come to an end these absurd frauds of constitutions, these seizures of land and the conversion of people to slavery; there will come to an end these judgments of people over people, these laws of people over people terrible both in their cruelty and stupidity, these fetters, prisons, executions; there will end the domination by an idle, corrupt minority of men over the majority of working people, reduced to slavery, but still not corrupted and with a capacity for a reasonable life.

"But if this be the case, in order to bring all this about, in order that this whole order of human life be changed, it is necessary that there should be not individuals nor tens of individuals, but everybody or a majority. And so long as the majority will not so understand the demands of life, life cannot be changed." Thus do people speak and continue to live as previously contrary to common sense and conscience.

But only people who are under the influence of patriotism and the superstitions of the State speak in this way. For such people, apparently, man has no meaning outside the State, a man before being a man, is a member of a State. Such people forget that every man, before being an Austrian, Serb, Turk, Chinese, is *a man*, that is, a rational loving creature, whose vocation in no way consists in maintaining or destroying the Serb, Turk, Chinese, Russian State, but in one thing only: in the fulfilment of his human purpose.

It is said: "The State does not permit such disobedience the non-fulfilment of its demands and will put to death all who disobey." But, in the first place, a man, acknowledging the happiness in the fulfilment of the law of love revealed to him by Christ, cannot be afraid of any punishment whatever, if he faithfully believes in the law of life which has been revealed to him and which gives him happiness. In the second place, the frightening of people by those cruelties, which people upholding the order of the State will keep committing, is not so terrible as it appears, if only because people, holding State superstitions, may well suppose that the essence of the State is somehow an abstract being possessed of special characteristics and carrying its decisions into effect also by some sort of special inhuman powers.

But there are after all no such beings, and however they may be named, there are only people, the same as those very ones whom they torment and oppress.

Simply people acting, refusing to take part in deeds of violence, as Christians, not evincing against perpetrators of acts of violence anything apart from love, and less and less will people find themselves both amidst governmental administrators and executives, who by force keep on robbing, tormenting, killing those people, who in the name of love are prepared to endure acts of violence rather than participate in them.

And then, if they ask my advice, what is to be done? Is the advice asked by a Hindu, as he struggles with the English, a Serb, as he struggles with the Austrians, a Persian or Russian man, as he struggles with his own Persian, Russian oppressive government, I say one thing only in reply (and I cannot but believe that this alone is the saving remedy at all times and for all men). I reply only: let them free themselves with all their strength from the governing superstition of patriotism, of the State, and acknowledge in every man his human worth, not tolerating departures from the law of love, and accordingly tolerating neither supremacy nor slavery, and requiring not the doing of anything whatever specifically, but only the ceasing from doing that which maintains that evil from which people suffer.

What are they to do, the Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Hindus, Serbs, Russians, Swedes, all the stupefied nations who have lost their human worth? One thing and one thing only: that very thing that the Serbian woman said to her son.

And how easy and simple and possible this is for all those people with a consciousness still not perverted by that which is called political and scientific. Fortunately, the consciousness of the majority is still not perverted, and the majority of simple working people still *ne sont pas encore assez savants pour raisonner de travers* (are not yet sufficiently learned to reason wrong [Montaigne]), can still understand that simple truth so close to the heart of humanity, that in every man there dwells one and the same spiritual principle, and that on that account a man cannot submit himself to the will of

another man or other men, whatever they may have called themselves: emperors, monopolists, executioners, parliamentarians, police officials and so forth. A man can submit himself only to that one highest law of love, which gives the highest happiness to each separate individual, as it does to all mankind. Only by people acknowledging in themselves the highest spiritual principle and the consciousness of their true human worth flowing from it, can they emancipate people from enslavement by others.

And this consciousness already dwells in mankind and is every moment ready to manifest itself.

LEO TOLSTOY

November 5, 1908
Yasnaya Polyana

REVIEW

LIVES OF GREAT MEN

THE lives of the very great make problems for us. These men pass serenely or heroically—modes not so very different, at root—through situations filled with difficulties for others. How they do it we do not know.

Albert Einstein was a very great scientist. In him the power to formulate mathematical abstractions and to apply them to the workings of the universe reached a height so dizzying that we must rely upon the judgment of other extraordinary men for our sense of what he accomplished. One measure of this judgment was put in a letter by Marie Curie and Henri Poincaré to the Federal Institute of Technology at Zurich, a year or two after his thirty-page, handwritten paper, "The Special Theory of Relativity," was first submitted for publication in 1905. "Herr Einstein," they said, "is one of the most original minds that we have ever met." They continued: "He does not cling to classical principles, but sees all conceivable possibilities when he is confronted with a physical problem. In his mind this becomes transformed into an anticipation of new phenomena that may some day be verified in actual experience." Einstein was then not yet thirty years old.

What sort of problems could a man like Albert Einstein make for us? They are problems in the understanding of man, including ourselves. Fundamentally, as A. H. Maslow points out in *The Psychology of Science* (Harper, 1966), and as we know from thinking reflectively about our own lives, there are two prime ways in which we relate ourselves to our experience. We may call these ways theory and practice. Our theoretical approach is by use of generality and abstraction, while the practice involves action with whatever wisdom we possess, often in areas where we have theoretical knowledge, but also in the enormous region where we do not. You could identify theory as the study of the constant symmetry in

the universe, apart from ourselves, and refer to practice as the moment-to-moment balancings that life requires of us nearly all the time.

In the case of Einstein, his immeasurable capacity for recognizing the elements of constant symmetry seemed somehow to displace the issues of the day-to-day balancings—problems which loom so much larger than theoretical considerations for the great majority of mankind. Dimitri Marianoff, Einstein's son-in-law, who lived with the great physicist for years, says in *Einstein—an intimate Study of a Great Man* (Doubleday, 1944):

Once he said to me in Berlin—the exact phrasing of the words is lost but the fact in them was this—that when the truths of cosmic law and order became the inhabitants of his mind and took full possession they brought with them a tremendous calm and a divine balance, and he was never to know restlessness or impatience again, ever. . . . To Einstein, the presence of the truths of the universe are so plain, it is as though his theory lies against the wall of his consciousness like a huge map, and in thought he can go to it instantly, exactly as a general does when he goes to a material map to find any desired locality.

Yet scientists, as David Lindsay Watson has shown only too clearly, are also "human." Einstein was no exception. He was a man, a parent, a member of a vastly persecuted race, and in his span of years felt the blows and disorders of the most terrible period of history we know. Yet his talent for balancings, for practical decision, sometimes seems to have been as great as his theoretical genius, and while we cannot say they were more "intuitive" than his mathematical physics, these balancings were not rationalized in the same way, nor with the same particularity.

And it is useless to argue, although in his case it seems to have been true, that the way to get practical wisdom is to become a great theoretician. The pursuit of scientific knowledge is an exercise of self-consciousness. Giving the universe a rational structure is an act requiring self-consciousness. But the daily balancings, accomplished in widely varying degree by us all,

are seldom self-conscious, and they were not especially so in Einstein's case. Yet a kind of perfection by reduction pervaded them all. Marianoff writes:

My life with Einstein is not a story that falls easily and smoothly into sequence. . . . He is difficult, as a person, to place on broad planes. His career affords few eccentricities, or intriguing items of private life, capable of whipping up scenes in the theater of most men's biographies. . . . I do not see Einstein as a person. The presence of reality in his consciousness repudiates the human sense of things. It is as though the vast cosmic processes of the universe in which he dealt had introduced themselves into his character. He cannot act in small human ways.

You are most conscious of this when you see him with people. Regardless of how many surround him, he is always alone—not lonely, but alone. Einstein does not need people. He receives them with warmth and kindness, but they are in no way necessary to him. You see this when he leaves them; the expression is already one of extreme contemplation, and he is barely aware he has been with them; the line of his thinking is unbroken.

It must be realized that Einstein took part in many things. He was a kind of "socialist," a kind of "pacifist," and he loved music and the arts and the ancient Greeks. The symmetry in all these individual balancings apparently came from a higher principle. He told Marianoff in Berlin, a few days before he left Germany forever:

"I live not for Socialism. I live not for nationalism. I live not for democracy. I live not for pacifism. Everything must serve life. Either a thing is useful in life, or it harms life, then it is bad."

The common people everywhere loved him. They could not understand his ideas, but they loved him because he was *good*, and they had the means to find this out. "They loved the little things about him; his life was an open book, all his acts a testimony of himself; he had no interest in the accumulation of money, or the occupation of high positions or in self-aggrandizement."

No doubt a kind of ultimacy was reached by Einstein in the development of theoretical science; can we also say that this achievement would not

have been possible except for the balancing presence in him, also, of the wisdom of day-to-day practice, pursued with the kind of understanding that has not been allowed any "scientific" reality at all?

So there is this question: Since we cannot deny the reality of this wisdom, even though we have left it "invisible" in our accounts of Nature and Man, could there be a scientific study of its extraordinary presence in some men? Are there any detectable "symmetries" in human wisdom?

If you study Dr. Maslow's book on the psychology of science, it becomes plain that such symmetries exist; and also that there are serious obstacles to their recognition. Understanding of these symmetries is not possible without equal attention to the obstacles, and the two approaches provide a discipline suitably called self-knowledge. One sees that, for many men, the pursuit of self-knowledge is a threatening thing. It is gained only in the light of a moral or spiritual canon, and this involves the seeker in a self-exposure that is likely to make him ashamed. So it is claimed that self-knowledge cannot be "scientific." Science was to have put an end to all such embarrassments, on the ground that they are unreal, a device of priestcraft, a tool of thought-control.

It was, one may suspect, mainly the constant presence of these inner symmetries in the lives of the great, the distinguished, the humanely committed, which obliged Dr. Maslow to accept his scientific obligation to investigate them. In time he found that all is not dark in these areas of study. While there is no pitiless, impersonal glare of inert objectivity, the symmetries exist and may be seen in the half-light of self-awareness, and some reliable generalizations may be made.

Despite the Puritan tastelessness of saying it, Dr. Maslow practices a form of moral science. He invites attention to the proposition that what is truest about man is always in some sense what is right about him. And he shows that scientific studies pursued in this way can have an appropriate objectivity—an objectivity found in

two mutually corrective sources: the actual symmetries studied, and the individual sense of fitness of the investigator. Curiously, the confirmation of this work—admittedly barely begun—comes often from the same reason that appreciation of Dr. Einstein came: a sensing that it is good.

Great men still give us problems, of course. It is still a mystery how the astronomer's devotion to the stars and the naturalist's sympathy with living things generate by some hidden inductive process the symmetries of inward human balance. All or most of us would like to be good men, to be filled with self-understanding, but simply "willing" to be these things does not seem to work. But the study of great men also gives us the promise of opportunities, clues, even, to a science of human life. We have tried to do without it long enough.

COMMENTARY TOLSTOY'S CASE

IT seems clear that for Tolstoy the annexation of some Balkan territories by the Emperor of Austria was only an ugly incident, one among many, giving him another excuse for declaring his overwhelming conviction of the law of human progress. He plainly felt that he was giving voice to a reality emerging from the grain of life, although unrecognized by most men. His witnesses are the extraordinary and the distinguished few—the great religious teachers, the visionaries, the inspired men of all ages.

How important is it to try to explain the resistance to Tolstoy's appeal, and to seek explanation not in the "facts" as recognized by mass opinion—or mass timidity and mass lethargy—but in individual human psychology?

To ask this question is to ask about the possibility of his being *right*. For if this possibility exists, then it must be regarded as a working hypothesis deserving consideration along with other hypotheses about the nature of man.

Well, what is his hypothesis? In humanistic terms, it is a theory of evolution in which the moral qualities of human beings are regarded as the essential factors of development. Great teachers, philosophers, religious reformers, on this hypothesis, may be regarded as forerunners of the evolution of all mankind, and not as miraculous interveners, sinless gods who ask the impossible of sinful or imperfect men.

Consistent with this hypothesis would be the longings of all mankind. What the hypothesis lacks, however, is an understanding of the obstacles to these longings. For resistance to an evolutionary process is not something to which we have given much attention. This may be because, for man, the field of future development lies in *consciousness*—an area conceded until very recently to contain no more than epiphenomena, mere clues reflecting the "real" physical processes going on in the world.

But if Tolstoy is right, the obstacles to human development, which exist in consciousness—in feelings of weakness, in dependence upon authority, in the terrible loneliness of being "different" from other men—are but the raw materials of further human evolution. Yet so strong are these obstacles that the situation would be entirely hopeless if we did not have the example of men who have seemed to overcome them.

The case for progress—Tolstoy's case—rests on that. To look at Tolstoy's case is to saturate oneself with the thought of these few men, as he did. How else can one even get ready to test his hypothesis?

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves LIGHTS GOING ON

THERE is growing recognition of what it means to be a teacher. Some months ago, MANAS published an article called "Toward Unbribeable Man" (Oct. 5, 1966), in which Ortega y Gasset was quoted as declaring that the essence of man lies in his endless questioning—"What must I do now?" and "What must I be?" This essence is not defined by trying to find out more about the levels where the questions are asked, nor by measuring the "intelligence" involved. The *questioning* and the *deciding* make the essence. The activities may be seen in degree, but their essence is not in degree; the essence is in asking and choosing in *any* relation. This is the heart of the matter for education.

The isolation of a particular level of questions and decisions as containing the sole and proper content of education is the stultification of the learning process. This is what is being found out by people devoted to human beings and to teaching. It is being found out throughout the fields of education. An article in *Look* for Dec. 27, 1966, by George B. Leonard—"What Your Child Can Teach his Teacher"—is a rich deposit of such findings. In one place Mr. Leonard tells about the work of Dr. and Mrs. J. Richard Suchman in *Inquiry Development*, "an educational approach that helps children to work out their own concepts of the way the world is." Their work began as an attempt to find out why ordinary schooling has the effect of slowing down the learning process in children. Mr. Leonard writes:

Children see the world pure and clear, without hypotheses. "It's a different and more exciting world than ours," Mrs. Suchman said. "Children come into the schools open and unique. If you took an interest inventory with the middle-class kid in kindergarten, my bet would be you'd find a wider range of interests than at any other time until he gets out of the educational system. He wants to know why waves

break, why trains go, all about seashells and literature. Of course, he must become more sustained, more controlled in his interests. But if the price of control is deadening the interests of kids, it's too big a price."

The Suchmans' idea is to learn how not to interfere with the awakening and excitement of discovery in children:

The teacher provides information and encouragement, but does not force his or any other theories on the children. "We believe children are tremendously motivated to do their own thinking," Dr. Suchman said. "Most artificial motivators we use on them—grades, prizes, adult approval—actually get in the way of the inner desire to learn. The whole idea of school achievement is tied in with this old system. Naturally, the child wants 'achievement,' so he sets aside his own way of seeing, he betrays his own honesty, he stops pursuing meaning and starts reciting approved, adult answers.

"In our new approach, there's no punishment for coming up with an idea that doesn't match the experts'. This way, we've learned just how inventive children can be. For example, fifth- and sixth-graders have worked out very good theories to explain sinking and floating. Without knowing anything about Archimedes' Principle, just working from raw data, they've come up with explanations I consider in some ways more elegant and precise than Archimedes'. Even if they could just come up to his Principle, I'd think it was pretty good, but they do even better. With this kind of thing going on, teachers *must* learn from their students, if only to keep pace with them."

The kind of freedom the Suchmans want for all children won't just happen. For one thing, after students have learned to play the old, adult-approved school game, they need time to get accustomed to freedom. They need teachers who are both patient and flexible, both resilient and free-swinging. The usual critical line is that teachers are unwilling or unable to change creatively. My meetings with hundreds of them convince me this is not true. Today, as a matter of fact, many teachers seem eager for new ways to meet new challenges. It's just that the usual rigid classroom situation and the vague methods generally available to them make change difficult for even the best. That so many of them *are* searching seems remarkable.

In his address, "The Future of Teaching," delivered before a meeting of the American Council on Education in New Orleans last October, William Arrowsmith spoke strongly on the absence of what he regards as real teaching in the modern university. Early in his address he said:

I mean the ancient, crucial, high art of teaching which alone can claim to be called educational, an essential element in all noble human culture, and hence a task of infinitely more importance than research scholarship. With the teacher as transmitter or conductor of knowledge, as a servant or partner of research, I have no concern. He is useful and necessary and, because he does the bulk of university teaching, it is important that his job be effectively performed and intelligently evaluated. But so long as the teacher is viewed as merely a diffuser of knowledge or a higher popularizer, his position will necessarily be a modest and even menial one. And precisely this, I think, is the prevalent view of the teacher's function, the view overwhelmingly assumed among even those who want to redress the balance in favor of the teacher. Is it any wonder then that the teacher enjoys no honor? . . .

Only when large demands are made of the teacher, when we ask him to assume a primary role as educator in his own right, will it be possible to restore dignity to teaching. Teaching, I repeat, is not honored among us either because its function is grossly misconceived or its cultural value not understood. The reason is the overwhelming positivism of our technocratic society and the arrogance of scholarship. Behind the disregard for the teacher lies the transparent sickness of the humanities in the university and in American life generally. Indeed, nothing more vividly illustrates the myopia of academic humanism than its failure to realize that the fate of any true culture is revealed in the value it sets upon the teacher and the way it defines him. "*The advancement of learning at the expense of man,*" writes Nietzsche, "is the most pernicious thing in the world. The stunted man is a backward step for humanity; he casts his *shadow* over all time to come. It debases conviction, the natural purpose of the particular field of learning; learning itself is finally destroyed. It is advanced, true, but its effect on life is nil or immoral." . . .

It is my hope that education . . . will not be driven from the university by the knowledge-technicians. . . . Socrates took to the streets, but so

does every demagogue or fraud. By virtue of its traditions and pretensions the university is, I believe, a not inappropriate place for education to occur. But we will not transform the university milieu nor create teachers by the meretricious device of offering prizes or bribes or "teaching sabbaticals" or building a favorable "image." At present the universities are as uncongenial to teaching as the Mohave desert to a clutch of Druid priests. If you want to restore a Druid priesthood, you cannot do it by offering prizes for Druid-of-the-year. If you want Druids, you must grow forests. There is no other way of setting about it.

Mr. Arrowsmith grows specific in the development of his thesis—but his chief contention is already laid bare. There is neither respect for man nor understanding of his growth in the prevailing conception and practice of the higher learning. The turning of human subjects into objects and the essentially manipulative ways of "developing" them, in conformity with the methods we have learned from valuing and dealing with objects—things, wealth, and related servo-mechanisms—have corrupted the educational process. As soon as the young come to birth, we begin telling them what to do and think next, in the bland assumption that we *know*. We do not know, yet our faith that we do, as reflected in all these educational institutions, is greater than our faith in man. The idea that the young, freed of preconceptions, might do better than we have, is seen as a subversive threat. So, appropriately, in beginning his address in the carnival city of New Orleans, Mr. Arrowsmith recalled the Roman Saturnalia, when "even slaves were permitted to speak freely, even about slavery." He asked "the ancient privilege of immunity for saying almost exactly what I think." But even more than he needs immunity, he needs allies. Fortunately, they exist.

FRONTIERS The Disordered Will

WHILE we have already devoted space to Kenneth Keniston's *The Uncommitted* (Harcourt, Brace), what is said about this study of "new alienated" youth by Lewis Yablonsky, in the *Synanon Magazine* for December, 1966, calls for special attention. Dr. Yablonsky is head of the department of sociology at Valley State College, California. He is author of *The Violent Gang* and *The Tunnel Back* (on Synanon), and has devoted many years to understanding the character and problems of the urban slum delinquent. He finds unmistakable parallels between the members of city street gangs and the privileged Harvard students described in *The Uncommitted*.

Central to Keniston's work, as Yablonsky puts it, is "the puzzle of the somewhat sharp, tweedy, highly intelligent youth who appears to be heir-apparent to all the goodies of American Society and then rejects them." Pre-World War II students in the thirties seldom exhibited any such tendency. Mainly, they wanted "a piece of the action," or, if socially minded, called for "a more equitable distribution of the wealth and power." These familiar categories among the young are no doubt still with us, but something very different is also happening. Discussing Keniston's book, Dr. Yablonsky observes:

The new-alienated reject all that American culture offers; they have "a pervasive mistrust of any and all commitments, be they to other people, to groups, to American culture, or even to the self."

This last reference ties Keniston's revelations into themes I have found operative among so-called "lower class delinquents." The more richly endowed Harvard boys he describes parallel violent gang members, who also ferociously reject a coherent self or ego. Not to do so would entail accepting a role in the community of Man, and this they refuse to do. The extreme gang boy rejects the urban new-slum mess he grows up in and the more learned, yet similarly alienated, college youth rejects the over-all society and any part in the precariously balanced

world of not-so-civil rights, poverty abscesses, and Vietnam.

The parallel continues:

The alienated in Keniston's milieu are in certain respects like the new criminal. Older, more skilled offenders stole with style. They planned their burglaries and they formed cohesive gangs. There was a sense of camaraderie and participation in the adventure even if the caper was illegal. Today's new-criminals and violent gang youths, like Keniston's upper class alienated, live in the here-and-now. They are not involved in planning or long-term goals, because they are consumed with the immediate gratification of the moment.

Somewhat like gang youths who are always trying to one-up each other with wilder and more senseless violence, the new-alienated attempt to outdo their fellow students in discovering new proofs for alienation and being uncommitted. They accomplish this by discovering in the literature of Sartre and Marx and others newer and more vehement proof of the nonsense of the prevailing order. According to Keniston:

"They are philosophers with hammers, their favorite theoretical occupation is destruction, reduction, pointing out inconsistencies, chicaneries, hypocrisies, and rationalizations—whatever, in others or in themselves."

One way to get at the possible causes of this development would be to say that society has itself lost its morale, and, instead of helping these youth to relate constructively with their environment, turns them away. A therapeutic community might hold them together until they are able to generate inner cohesive forces, but the existing society encourages them to come apart—to deny, in effect, that they are responsible selves. There is also confirmation, here, of Leslie Farber's name for the times—the Age of the Disordered Will. Wholeness, in the environment inherited by these boys—one which neither shelters nor pleases—is no longer possible for them, in view of their weakness. Often the pseudo-wholeness afforded by drugs seems an answer. As Dr. Farber says:

The resulting feeling of wholeness may not be a responsible one, but at least within that wholeness—

no matter how willful the drugged state may appear to an outsider—there seems to be, briefly and subjectively, a responsible and vigorous will. This is the reason, I believe, that the addictive possibilities of the age are so enormous.

Dr. Yablonsky notices in Keniston's description of the psychic longings of the students he studied a close resemblance to the feelings reported by the takers of LSD "trips." Dr. Keniston says:

The alienated value most those moments when the barriers to perception crumble, when the walls between themselves and the world fall away and they are "in contact" with nature, other people, or themselves. These times of break-through are relatively rare, for much of their lives seems to them dull depressed, and ordinary. But when such moments come the alienated describe them in mystical terms, emphasizing the loss of distinction between self and object, the revelation of meaning of Everything in an apparently insignificant detail, the ineffability of the experience, the inherent difficulty of describing a moment which transcends ordinary categories of language.

Dr. Yablonsky concludes with a brooding comment on the possibility that the present "war on poverty" is an anachronism—a solution that should have been more vigorously applied back in the thirties, when the deeper ills of the present had not yet appeared. Today, economics has neither remedy for nor awareness of the disorders endemic in the young.

Misapplication of "helping" efforts is a characteristic result of basing them on studies of easily objectified parts of human beings and on abstractions drawn from past "patterns of behavior." We need to stop these rigidifying forms of analysis. People change, and the understanding of the needs of a changing society requires insight into whole human beings. Even "helping," when guided by dehumanizing theory, cannot fail to reinforce the mutilations of man.