

The great pity of world youth
by Georges Henein

*To M. Louis Rougier,
Those reflections made by a rough youngster.*

The pity of modern youth is that they're not young anymore.

Their excuse : one does not allow youth to be young – one even fears they could be young !

All is closed in front of them. The youth, they're in a mousetrap. they cannot go back, nor ahead. In fact, they can. They can go backward, but only through suicide. They can go forward, but through of revolution. Suicide is useless and condemned by morale. Revolution is useful and punished by law.

Between those two kinds of violence and pessimism – pessimism, a walk to deliverance, wrote Sorel – there's room for nothing else but a dreary waiting of dough coming from above.

Coming to a world which was not expecting them, youth has the distinct impression of being superfluous, undesirable, a bit like the thirteen guest.

Like we had some spare time to take care of them. Be patient ! When they'll be old and humiliated enough we'll store them, haphazard, haphazardly in still working offices, serving civilising and deficit companies en route to zero.

Mind you, it's not the end of the world. But this world can only save itself, i.e. restore its lost spiritual and material balance, in two ways, whatever form they might take :

- either buttress on conservatism, classicism, old lamps and rediscover the XXth century, and that includes the sacrifice of the entire youth whose spirit is stalled.
- Or launch a Revolution, get rid once and for all of systems, disciplines, economies, precepts and laws, gloriously consecrated by bankruptcy, war and misery : this time the word and above the action will belong to the youth.

Hence two processes, of a tragic scale – both possible. In the first one, there will be, if I may say so and I may, “senilization” of the youth to the benefit of the established order, or worse, of an outdated order we would be supposed to go back to.

In the second case, there would be renewal of the whole society, to the benefit of an order yet to be established. It's for the youth, a question of presence or absence.

The real age of man – nothing to do with civil status ! – this real age is defined by the action of the Spirit on the Matter. Is the spirit acting efficiently on the matter ? Is it forcing the matter into new forms ? Is it drawing from it unknown fruits ? We'll say it's young, we'll say it's creative. On the contrary, is the spirit moved by the existing matter ? Is it yielding to its injustices and deformities without rebellion ? We'd say it is old if not mortal. Nowadays, at the very time when all the capacities and all the rapacities contrive to repair a societal machine which has reached the end of its journey, repairing is not needed anymore, creating is. Inserting a new spirit in a new matter. And that's what would be the epic role of contemporary youth, the role its been refused because it's a dangerous one, and because old people, hidden behind their respective powers – executive, legislative, judiciary, clerical, academic and scholar – abhor creation and danger. They would have the whole youth imprisoned rather than let it create. No one dares to open the mousetrap. Or when they open it,

they'll see some pale citizens, polites and malnourished, with eyeglasses and bald, ready for any job, betrayal included. But beware if in the meantime, the cage bulkheads explodes...

And on top of this, modern youth has no ideal to accomplish. The one of 1830 fought for liberty, the one of 1848 for universal suffrage, that of 1900 for Dreyfus, that of 1915 for an atrocious illusion. All of this is outdated. There is nothing left. Nothing human. But one has become really difficult, tragic, that it's acquiring the value and force of an ideal : to live in accordance with one's consciousness, not just with dough

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Youth ? All is closing shutting down when it comes. And it will not open anything, but by forcing locks.

But youth is alone. Alone in front of the obstacle.

Alone before the future.

And here's maybe its worst distress.

Un effort, n°48 (Cairo, November 1934)