LONGING FOR YOUTH

Youth is in our memories and we are longing for it. As we grow older, we appreciate it more and more; its contours and contents become clearer—and dearer. The time in which we tended to idealize because we could not or would not rationalize is now viewed rationally—and itself becomes idealized. Youthful vacillating emotions now are soberly evaluated—and nostalgically thought of. Youthful actions, often eccentric, now are smiled upon with understanding. The distance in time furthers objectivity but does not totally achieve it, for we cannot free ourselves from emotion. Looking back we see a more or less pure picture which keeps us captive and which we do not want to destroy. As we grow older, we become certain of what we merely sensed in our youth, that nothing can replace experience, yet we want to cry: “Youth can!”

Who, after all, does not cherish the memories of his youth? Who does not remember that first attempt to be himself, to assert himself against his fellowmen, teachers, and parents? Who does not recall his youthful exuberance and foolishness? Who could forget youth’s friendship and love, the time when he asked many questions, wanted many things, and knew and could do so little, when his responsibility was small and he could always take refuge from the harshness of life in his home? “The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft entered with their bones,” wrote Shakespeare in Anthony’s funeral oration to Caesar. In the case of youth, it seems to be the other way around: the pleasant aspects are remembered and the unpleasant ones forgotten.

James Harrington’s remark that the elders could remember that they had been youth perhaps is an understatement. Elders not only remember their youth, they long for it. Homer’s venerable old Nestor, always wise in council, was given to exposition of the glories of his youth.

1 James Harrington, Oceana (London, 1656), 204.
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youth. In Cicero’s essay on the art of growing old, meant to praise the virtue of age, old Cato is an exceptional man who has never found old age burdensome, whereas to most old men it is so detestable that they say they are bearing a burden heavier than Mount Aetna itself. *Je suis tout réjoui de voir cette jeunesse,* wrote Racine. The Dedication in Goethe’s *Faust* shows a longing for youth, as does the poet a few pages later:

> Then give me back the time of pleasures  
> While yet in joyous growth I sang,  
> When, like a fount, the crowding measures  
> Uninterrupted gushed and sprang!  
> Then bright mist veiled the world before me,  
> In opening buds a marvel woke,  
> As I the thousand blossoms broke,  
> Which every valley richly bore me!  
> I nothing had, and yet enough for youth,  
> Joy in illusion, ardent thirst for Truth.  
> Give, unrestrained, the old emotion,  
> The bliss that touched the verge of pain,  
> The strength of Hate, Love’s deep devotion,  
> O, give me back my youth again!

In his first lecture *On the Future of Our Institutions of Learning*, Nietzsche nostalgically thinks back to the carelessness of his youth. Seeing Strauss’s *Rosenkavalier*, who would not sympathize with the Marschallin when she sadly realizes that her youth is gone? Even those whose youth was hard often long for it. We need think only of Hermann Hesse.

Our fondness of youth, however, does not remain confined to our personal lives. We like to remember, as well, the days of our country’s youth. Mazzini’s call for a Third Rome derived from a longing for the youth of his country—the Rome of the Caesars and of the popes. The Germans’ desire for a new Reich derived from the cherished memory of previous Reichs in the youth of Germany. America, having “come of age” ² and having advanced in years, made Americans yearn for the good days of their country’s formative period. The young of civilizations have exercised a peculiar fascination. Whether or not he would agree with the statement that “almost everything that is great has been done by youth,” ³ who would not admire and forgive an Alexander? Who would not think of the beauty of youth when he

² Cf. André Siegfried, *America Comes of Age* (New York, 1927).
³ Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby* (New York, 1906), 111.
reads Byron, Hölderlin, or Schiller? Who would not love Vienna, an old city with one of the oldest universities? In spite of its age, this city, in which Mozart and Schubert lived, to most of us appears as a well of youth in which the Congress danced and people waltz. Edinburgh, guarded by its ancient castle, radiates the austerity of age. Yet, harboring many paintings by young artists such as Raphael and Bonington, it impresses one as youthful—a proper abode for innovators like Hume and Adam Smith.

Some trends in modern art are unmistakably motivated by the longing for the simplicity and genuineness of youthful, primitive, art.

Hippolyte Taine stated that “antiquity is the youth of the world,” and throughout history, men have longed for it. We need think only of the Renaissance, of Winckelmann’s praise of edle Einfalt, stille Grösse, of Lord Byron’s dreaming in the Doric temple at Sunion of the independence of Greece, of Nietzsche’s desperation that the classic world might be lost to modernity, of the continuous attempts by devoted scholars to save humanistic ideals. Even the present popularity of Greece could be prompted by a longing for the youth of our civilization. In recent times, this nostalgia became complemented by a turning to America as the most youthful of modern nations. Perhaps it is not accidental that the author of Iphigenie in Tauris also wrote a poem dedicated to the United States praising youthfulness. Perhaps Goethe hoped America would become a new home of the beautiful soul. Indeed, one could imagine an Iphigenia against the background of colonial architecture or the Jefferson Memorial—reminders of the classic Greek style. Could a beautiful soul also exist among the skyscrapers of the modern mammoth democracy symbolized perhaps by the Kennedy brothers who died young and to many personified good men?

THE LONGING OF YOUTH

At the same time that we long for youth, youth itself has its own longings, its dreams of greatness. Perhaps our longing results from our memory of the latter and the sad realization that the dreams of youth have not come true.

Just as Europeans have seen in the United States a rejuvenation of the old world, Americans have been longing for the realization of the American Dream. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a founder of Dickinson College, and the father of American medicine, spoke for many of his compatriots when he said that the newly independent nation still faced the problem of consolidating
the achievements of the American Revolution and of educating the people in principles which implied an increase of the rights of the individual through an enlargement of the popular basis of government. This plan was complemented by the hope that a powerful America would bring the blessings of free government to the world. Much as the American way of life may have changed, the idea of Americanization is as strong as ever. Robert F. Kennedy’s book, To Seek a Newer World (1967), is only one aspect of it.

The Greeks also longed to spread their ideas. Their ideal paideia, so well described by Werner Jaeger, was education in the Platonic sense, meaning the molding of character: education of human beings to be humane beings. Man was at the center of thought, whether we consider the Greeks’ anthropomorphic gods, their concentration upon sculpturing the human form, their philosophy moving from the problem of the cosmos to that of man, their poetry with its ever-recurring theme of man and his destiny, or their polis as an institution which shaped man. Hoping that paideia would triumph, the Greeks put at the disposition of mankind the universality of their philosophy, drama, poetry, music, and gymnastics, the discipline of speech and thinking through style and science. Young Alexander’s greatness may well have been due to his desire to expand the universitas of Greek culture, although the Greeks might have preferred spreading their anthropocentric views through erudition and peaceful discipline—a hope which Varro and Cicero transmitted to us through their concept of humanitas.

The longings of America and Greece are only examples of the everlasting dreams of men. The Greek achievement has been compared to the torch of Prometheus glowing among troglodytes cowering in darkness, for the Greeks discovered the principles of innovation, the moving cause of Western civilization. And with innovation came hope, the dream for a better world, and progress. Wherever there is innovation, there is hope, especially if innovation is not marred by hybris.

Similar as American and Greek yearnings may have been, they were, of course, quite different. Clearly, the American way of life is not and could not be that of the Greeks. But no matter how varied these and other demonstrations of cultural youthfulness may have been, they always were accompanied by hope. This does not mean that this hope always was justified. Innovators, always anticipating improvement, can also bring about deterioration. They wield a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the student of civilization admires how innovations fulfilled the hopes put in them. On the other hand, he cannot ignore how others disappointed those hopes.
In his discussion of historical crises, Jakob Burckhardt argued that the English Revolution was really not a revolution because it was not brought about by a youthful fantasy that challenged the accepted way of life. In examining the French Revolution, however, he commented: "The power of the original vision, on the other hand, is beautifully demonstrated in the Cahiers of 1789; its guiding principle was Rousseau's doctrine of the goodness of human nature and the value of feeling as a warrant of virtue. It was the time of flags and festivals, which saw its last brilliant moment in 1790 on the Champ de Mars. It is as though human nature, at such moments, had to give full rein to its power of hope. We are too prone to take the vision for the specific spirit of a crisis. The vision is merely its wedding finery, which must be laid aside for the bitter workaday life which follows."  

How true this was! The exhilaration of the original revolutionaries about the coming millennium was followed by the persecution of the Girondists by their fellow-innovators, the Jacobins, in a terror which even swallowed up a Robespierre. Young Büchner's Danton's Death is a moving example of the disillusionment of hopeful innovators. A similar situation existed in the Russian Revolution. The hopes of the Menshevik innovators were squashed by the terror of the Bolsheviks, who in the end liquidated themselves. Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago is another telling story of a disenchanted innovator. According to Moeller van den Bruck and other optimistic Germans, the Third Reich was to lead a rejuvenated Germany out of the crisis of liberalism into a glorious future; however, Hitler's Tausendjähriges Reich was not only considerably shorter than its predecessors but was a catastrophe which even its proponents were lucky to survive.

Having mentioned some indications of the youthful spirit in the development of our civilization, I will now turn to modern youth. I shall not, however, concentrate on today's youth. Much as that generation is on our minds, such a concentration would be unduly influenced by headlines and temporary events, and any resulting evaluation might be outdated tomorrow. Rather, I plan to view the youth of our cultural epoch. This epoch, with its roots in the Enlightenment, has been influenced by philosophical schools ranging from German idealism to French-English positivism, and their twentieth-century counterparts, and by revolutions and wars. In a word, I am concerned with youth in the liberal-democratic era.

That era has been a time of youth's longing for ideals. The Enlightenment's quest for truth set free the desires of youth, inspired youth

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perpetually to seek new enlightenments. Onward from the brave new world of the enlightenment, youth rapidly dreamed of new worlds, discovered new heavens. Youth began moving, as if propelled by an irresistible force. Small surprise that this energy would focus on organizations, on youth movements, and that the liberal-democratic era would become an era of movements such as *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress), “Young Italy,” “Young Europe,” nihilism, German youth movements, hippies, and the New Left.

Kant, in stating that the French Revolution “discovered in human nature an inclination and an ability to improvement,”\(^5\) seems to ignore the significant *Sturm und Drang* which preceded that revolution. Who would not be impressed by the *Sturm und Drang* started in 1770 by the twenty-one-year-old Goethe, by Herder five years his senior, and by Lenz and Klinger, who were not yet twenty? Who would not have wanted to hear the young Goethe, then a student of law at Strassburg, converse with his mentor Herder? Or to be present when he met Merck, eight years his senior and the oldest member of the group? Who would not have wanted to share the enthusiasm of the two men for Götz von Berlichingen, the “grand fellow” striving for the realization of his natural abilities? Locke, Hume, Voltaire, the encyclopedists, Richardson, Lillo, and Fielding had made explicit the challenge to traditional thought. Young, Gray, Percy, Sterne, and the Wartons had groped for a new kind of feeling. Rousseau had depicted natural man, in revolt against his time, capable of new raptures and grand desires; Rousseau’s Héloïse reflects a dream for the fullness of life and love. The *Stürmer und Dränger*, resenting the rigidity of bourgher life, the class structure, and the refined French culture of the aristocracy, exalted the idealism of youth. The young writers dreamed of a new humanism; they exalted Shakespeare’s “nature” and extolled originality and power in every aspect. Schiller’s *Kabale und Liebe* and *Don Karlos* show how they fought against monarchical tyranny and for human rights. Following Rousseau, they pitted society against personal life and the inner needs of the individual. As is evident in the Gretchen tragedy, they fought for social justice and for the social outcasts. Werther committed suicide in a protest against the existing social hierarchy and socially controlled love.

Two generations later, Mazzini, at the age of twenty-six, founded the Young Italy movement. Influenced by Herder, his program also reflected the impact of romanticism and idealism, schools which followed the *Sturm und Drang* and absorbed some of its ideas. Mainly conceived as a reaction to the rationalistic and individualistic aspects

\(^5\) Immanuel Kant, *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (Konigsberg, 1798), 149.
of eighteenth-century thought, the program of the *Giovine Italia* was full of hope. Exhibiting its debt to Rousseau and Condorcet, it stood for democracy and republican government and envisaged indefinite progress. I dreamed of a new “social epoch” inspired by a new religion that would supersede obsolete Christianity. Freedom and equality would exist not only as rights but also—and here the influence of German idealism and Saint-Simon is evident—as instruments enabling the individual to perform his duties toward the group and thus to participate in the humanitarian mission of society. The unification of Italy, another dream of the movement, was to be followed by a reorganization of mankind which would associate independent republics under a single moral law. In a future epoch of humanity, economic activity would be organized on the basis of a similar association, and property would be identified with the fruit of toil. Social classes would naturally disappear.

Naturally, it seems, the Young Europe movement, founded by Mazzini in 1834, followed upon the heels of Young Italy. The new group was composed of various national “Young” movements; its dreams were outlined in 1835 in a pamphlet characteristically entitled *Faith and the Future*. Later on, Mazzini summed up his ideals in a way that betrays his faithfulness to the longings of his youth: “In eternal dignity, stands Rome. That salient point upon the horizon is the Capitol of the Christian world. And a few steps from it stands the Capitol of the pagan world. Those two adjacent worlds await a third, greater and more sublime than they, which will rise from among their ruins. This is the Holy Trinity of History, and its Word is in Rome. Tyrants and false prophets may delay the incarnation of the Word, but none can prevent its coming. Although many cities have perished, and all in turn may pass away from this earth, Rome, by the design of Providence, and as the People have divined, is the *Eternal City*, to which is entrusted the mission of disseminating the Word that will unite the world. Her life will be reproduced on an ever widening scale. And just as, to the *Rome of the Caesars*, which through Action united a great part of Europe, there succeeded the *Rome of the Popes*, which united Europe and America in the realm of the spirit, so the *Rome of the People* will succeed them both, to unite, in a faith that will make Thought and Action one, Europe, America and every part of the terrestrial globe. And one day, when the Pact of the New Faith shines forth upon the gathered peoples from the Pantheon of Humanity, which will be raised between the Capitol and the Vatican, dominating both, the age-long dissension between earth and heaven, body and soul,
In the 1860's, after Compte and Marx had entered the scene, a youth movement with quite different aims came about in Russia. Known as nihilism, after the hero in Turgenev's *Fathers and Children*, its members were chiefly adolescent intellectuals allured by the movement's promise of freedom and its oversimplified solution of problems. These young disciples rebelled against the sentimentality and romanticism of their fathers. Rejecting the obligations of traditional morality, they tried to free themselves from the past. They questioned authority and every principle and ideal. Their leader, Pisarev, who was only twenty in 1860, hoped that social questions could be solved through an increasing enlightenment of the individual. He dreamed of freeing men of prejudice, piety, obligation, and allegiance to ideals. Suspicious of emotion, he considered the fine arts a futile diversion. His contemporary, Zaitzev, found art even harmful because it distracted people from the study of the natural sciences. Contemptuous of beauty and refinement, the nihilists affected rudeness in speech and manners—all in the name of the sovereign individual and the cultivation of their own personalities. They were anarchists and agnostics. Impressed by Chernishevsky's sober rationalism, they worshipped the natural sciences, hoping that these studies would destroy superstition, mysticism, and metaphysics.

If the aims of the nihilists were utilitarian, positivistic, and materialistic, the dreams of the German youth movement a generation later pursued the opposite direction. Nietzsche had denounced the mendacity of traditional standards of bourgeois behavior. Ibsen and Hauptmann did likewise in their naturalist plays which emphasized the rights of the individual as opposed to society and showed the longings of the individual for happiness. Disgusted with the stiffness and decadence of bourgeois society as it was demonstrated by Thomas Mann in *Die Buddenbrooks*, German youth rebelled against turn-of-the-century attitudes. Opposed to the materialism, conventionalism, and insincerity of Wilhelminian society, these young people dreamed of a new way of life, of beauty and liberty. *Wandervögel*, groups of young men drawn together by the warmth of emotional life, urged their fellow-citizens to escape the stuffiness of daily routine in the cities by making excursions to the meadows, mountains, and castles of the countryside, to return to nature and the genuine. They revived the folksong, folkdance, and folklore. Stefan George, who wandered to

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Paris where he was introduced to the circle around Mallarmé, became their poet. The *Wandervögel* longed to express the true and free individual in a new, true Gemeinschaft which would be a symbol of the rebirth of the nation. In this new community, freedom could become universal after a Führer had replaced conventional authority.

Even though many outstanding leaders of the prewar movement were killed in World War I, youth movements proliferated after the conflict. But the lofty dreams of the prewar period increasingly became centered around a regeneration of social life. Hence, the monthly *Junge Menschen*, which sought to maintain the old liberal and human spirit, did not achieve its aim. Postwar youth dreamed of discipline and authority, of submerging the individual to society, of a super Führer who would be followed blindly by a Gefolgschaft of supernmen.

Today's youth movements also have their dreams—with and without narcotics. International in character and perhaps organization, they turn against the establishment in various nations. In large measure composed of the jeunesse dorée of the affluent society, they revolt against the very society that brought them forth. The German youth dreamed of the Erlebnis, or empathy—the great, unforgettable experience. Today's hippies trip into a psychedelic dreamworld. The Russian nihilists had rejected the romanticism and emotionalism of their fathers. The hippi es, often neurotic and phlegmatic runaways from neurotic and phlegmatic societies, romantically and emotionally long for a modern nihilistic existence. The welfare state has "released" its children, who dream of a life of laziness accompanied by folk and soul music and poetry. In contrast to the Russian nihilists, they are indifferent to scientific achievements. In the atomic age, they have reservations about progress.

Today's more activist youth movements in many ways share the dreams of the hippies but advocate violence rather than apathy. In a way, their relationship to the hippies can be compared to the relationship in Russia of socialist radicals to nihilists. In many respects, they can also be likened to the radical German youth movements after World War I, as distinguished from the movements prior to that war. Modern youthful activists dream of violently overthrowing existing orders. They admire scientific materialism, yet they emotionally dream of a world better than that realized in the Soviet Union. They desire the emancipation of men, yet shy away from emphasizing the freedom of the individual from the government. They dream of a socialist or communist society in which everybody will be taken care of. Their heroes are communists who challenged the establishment: Rosa
Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Che Guevara, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Dubček. Their goal is a millennium of original, pure communism.

Burckhardt felt that the French Revolution produced an “authorization for a permanent revision,” declaring that “the decisively new thing which the French Revolution introduced into the world is the possibility of, and the desire for, changes for the public weal.” 7 Present youth movements are true children of that revolution when they follow Herbert Marcuse and his quest for change. Many of today’s youths even dream of change for the sake of change. In large measure, the longing of youth has become an automatic, soulless mechanism—an empty shell that can be filled with any content at any time. It has become devalued into something that can be everything and nothing, turn out to be good, bad, beautiful, ugly, or what have you. The often daring dreams of freeing definite values from bondage have become indiscriminate, ever-changing designs freed of all value.

THE SORROWS, RISKS AND DANGERS OF YOUTH

We now leave the dreams to take a look at the problems of youth. For youth does not just indulge in wishful thinking. It is torn between childhood and maturity, between dreams and reality, and by harsh realities. There is probably no other age group so plagued by uncertainty, so unsure of itself, and so desperately seeking its identity. Even if this trying period does not lead youths to despair, it might well be harmful to their fellow men. “And in the morn and liquid dew of youth contagious blastments are most imminent,” Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet (1, 3). Jugend kennt keine Tugend.

The dreams of the youth movements just described often turned into unforeseen realities. In a way, those dreams share the fate of the dreams of revolutionary movements which often are furthered by the young. They go up in smoke. The Sturm und Drang, which exalted self-destruction, deified crime, polygamy, and ecstatic insanity, developed into classicism under the guidance of the more form-conscious Goethe. On the other hand, it turned into romanticism which moved Stürmen und Drängen toward extremes. Herder’s glorification of the folk spawned not only national movements which, as shown in Meinecke’s Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat, were mitigated by cosmopolitan thinking. It also originated the kind of chauvinism which made Jakob Burckhardt fearful of German unification 8 and prompted

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7 Jakob Burckhardt, Historische Fragmenten (Stuttgart, 1942), 205.
Nietzsche’s remark in *Ecce Homo* that the Germans are *canaille*. Mazzini’s program, influenced by Herder and romanticism, was brushed aside by the sober Cavour as a fantasy which appealed just to youth. Yet Mussolini, an admirer of Nietzsche, was also captivated by the Young Italy movement. Significantly, the fascist anthem was *Giovinezza*. In the end, Mussolini headed the Italian Socialist Republic. Rebelling against their fathers, the Russian nihilists fathered political radicalism. Chernishevsky’s politico-philosophical novel, *What Is To Be Done?*, published in 1863, was followed by Lenin’s pamphlet of the same title; Lenin admired the great populist’s steadfast materialism. Would the nihilists, who were intellectuals, have sanctioned the persecution of intellectuals in the Soviet Union? In Germany, the idealist *Gemeinschaft* of the youth of the Wilhelmine era was replaced by a desire to perpetuate the comradeship of the battlefield, by a quest for “fronts,” “shock brigades,” “storm troops,” and materialistic communities. In the end, Hitler’s *Volksgemeinschaft*, composed of a Führer and a Gefolgschaft, was a far cry from what youth had dreamed of. An aesthete like Stefan George, dreaming of the *Erlebnis*, would have condemned the “exciting experience” of burning books and “degenerate art,” of beating and killing innocent people. We can only speculate as to the results of today’s youth movements. Toynbee has ventured to predict that the hippies will bring about the end of the American way of life. Today’s activists could well contribute to the end of Western civilization.

Youth movements following the Enlightenment, then, caused pains out of proportion to the evils against which they originally reacted. And these pains seem to have increased with time. The *Sturm und Drang* resulted in a nationalism which was mitigated by the cosmopolitanism of people who were educated, had a sense of measure and high ethical standards, and believed in the rule of law. Its later result, chauvinism, was more dubious, as was the legacy of the Russian nihilists. Although communist literature considers nihilism a petty bourgeois movement, it also credits it for having inspired the radicalism that brought about the Russian Revolution. The legacy of German youth movements was as disastrous, for some of these movements helped to bring about the Third Reich.

The deterioration of youth movements hardly can be due exclusively to vagueness, lack of experience, and exaggerated self-esteem. While these features characteristic of youth movements may have grown in the course of time, other factors must have been present. Po-

litical development is an important factor, and since that development was characterized by the march of social democracy, this march, perhaps more than anything else, increased the dangers of youth movements.

Youth movements remind us of romanticism, a movement in which young people, student fraternities, and such men as Bonington, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Hölderlin, Mendelssohn, and Schubert played a role. Perhaps romanticism can be considered a youth movement by definition. This is not surprising in view of the fact that it derived from the Sturm und Drang and, in turn, spawned youth movements. Romanticism also is as varied as youth movements and seems to defy definition. Hardly another movement has been given as many interpretations. It means different things to different people not only because it occurred in various countries and fields but also because within these fields there existed an unusual variety of interpretations. Isaiah Berlin pointed to this confusion in his Andrew Mellon Lectures and showed how hard it is to disentangle oneself from the romanticist labyrinth. Repeatedly collectivistic in outlook, romanticism frequently is manifested in a highly individualistic if not anarchistic guise. Shelley’s lyrical Godwinism is paralleled by the bitter anarchism of Stirner or Bakunin. Schubert’s Lieder, Beethoven’s Promethean sonatas, Wagner’s grandiloquent musical dramas, the enormous orchestrations of Berlioz—they all are romanticist, as are the pious calmness of Caspar David Friedrich and the restless motion of Delacroix. The situation is not different in literature. Romanticism ranges from the delicate poetic diction of Coleridge to the rustic language of Wordsworth, from Novalis’s melopoeic phonetics to Uhland’s cult of the mediaeval ballad technique and Rückert’s metrical experimentation, and from Hugo and Lamartine to their critics, the Parnassians. “The element of contradiction and opposition which is encountered in romantic philosophy and aesthetics is even more pronounced in the sphere of romantic political and social theory. Not only was there a wide variety of social and political doctrines as between different schools of romanticism, but the same individual might in the course of his intellectual development embrace a succession of apparently antipodal points of view.”

Romanticism reflects many a dichotomy, which indicates a schizophrenic nature. Jean-Jacques, the revolutionary, satanic, and passionate enemy of society was matched by a loving, pious Rousseau who

quietly sought solace in solitude and the contemplation of nature. In a dramatic reversal of the sexes, Madame de Staël stated this dichotomy in the persons of the passive, submissive Oswald and the active, aggressive Corinne. Balzac juxtaposed the satanic revolt of Vautrin and the Christ-like resignation of Goriot. Romanticism shows the dreams and disappointments of youth, its joy and sadness. “Exulting to Heavens, saddened to death,” wrote Hölderlin, who lived a full youth and yet could not see the summer for which he was longing, perhaps because of his despair over the world. For the romanticists, hopeful joy is matched by despondent *Weitschmerz*. This *taedium vitae* can be seen in Goethe’s Werther, Byron’s Childe Harold, and Chateaubriand’s René. The *mal du siècle*, developed by Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, Musset, and other sad young men of the nineteenth century, brought Flaubert to the verge of suicide before he was thirteen and led him to write these lines in his early anecdote, *Voyage in Hell*:

> “Will you show me your kingdom?” I asked Satan.
> “There it is!”
> “What do you mean?”
> And Satan answered:
> “The world, you see, is hell.”

And yet, Goethe also created Götz; Byron, Prometheus; and Chateaubriand, Eudore. Flaubert shared the attitude of the Jeunes-France who indulged in Dionysian rituals and pseudosatanic excesses. Romanticists seem to be torn among values, seeking ideals, trying to understand themselves, and trying to find understanding from others. Already *Dialogues: Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques* indicated this fact. Insecurity and uncertainty, often compensated for by an exaggerated self-esteem and an uncompromising consistency of idol and action, are characteristic of romanticists.

Many explanations have been given for the dichotomies of romanticism. I would follow the early Carl Schmitt and say that the main reason for those dichotomies is probably the basic “occasionality” of romanticism. As he pointed out, occasionality does not necessarily produce insecurity and uncertainty. One need think only of Malebranche’s metaphysics, in which God is the final authority. However, insecurity and uncertainty are likely to come about once the individual, the genius “I,” assumes all authority and becomes his own priest, his own king, his own prophet, philosopher, and poet, and his own architect in the building of his personality, and once he takes whatever he happens to notice as an occasion for his activity. And this hap-
pened in the era of romanticism. Novalis stated that in romanticism everything becomes "the beginning of an indefinite Roman," a novel in which everything can happen, depending upon the occasio experienced by the author and his inclinations. Just as everything may become the beginning of an indefinite novel, everything may become the beginning of an indefinite poem, composition, oration, program, sentiment, dream. Everything can be the occasion for everything—with unforeseeable consequences. Everything can become an adventure. Depending upon the occasion of departure and the individuality of the romanticist, one moves—piously or demonically, quietly or enthusiastically, timidly or aggressively, and in innumerable other ways—into the realm of the limitless and intangible. The occasion may end with the fantastic. New occasions may create new worlds and new fantasies, and so it goes on and on, under the guidance of nothing but the magic hand of chance. Such an attitude would be ridiculous and impossible in other spiritual spheres and in the reality of life. In romanticism, it produces an "interesting," colorful world. To comprehend what this really means one must see not only the idylls of romanticism but also its desperation. One must see the three men whose disfigured faces stare through the colorful romantic veil, Byron, Baudelaire, and Nietzsche—three high priests who became the slaughtered victims of romanticism's private priesthood.11

Romanticism has always hovered over youth whether they belonged to youth movements or not. Characteristically, Eduard Spranger's study on the psychology of youth12 is framed by poems by Hölderlin. As youth is the most romantic of ages, romanticism is the ageless companion of youth. It is the companion of today's youth. In saying this I do not mean that the young people of today share all the values of the nineteenth-century movement known as romanticism. Whereas many of these values are cherished today, our youth have new values. What I mainly have in mind is that the occasionality of the romantic era is as evident today as it was ever before—perhaps even more so. And this fact is a cause for apprehension.

In many ways a youth's lot is not an enviable one. Coming of youth in many respects is harder than coming of age. The latter means entering a legally sanctioned status which implies some certainty about one's position vis-à-vis one's fellow men. It gives one self-confidence. On the other hand, coming of youth only means crossing the thin borderline between childhood and the vague land of youth, a crossing which legally implies criminal responsibility but no civil rights. The

11 Carl Schmitt, Politische Romantik (2d ed.; München, 1925), 23ff.
youth is not yet fully accepted by his fellow citizens. His status is not equal to theirs. He wants to be independent, yet wherever he looks he realizes that he is dependent upon parents, teachers, legislators, and so on. Youth means uncertainty, doubt, and confusion. It means pain. Coming of youth has rightly been considered a second birth.

Many a youth nostalgically looks back to his childhood. The child knows that he still belongs to the people and things that surround him. While he notices the restrictions on his ego with sadness, he does not yet know *Weltenschmerz*. His inner life, the inner life of others, and the lifelessness of the world are not yet torn apart. Everything is in harmony, and there is a naive confidence in the past, the present, and the future. There is the happiness of childhood. How different is youth! The child may ask where he came from, what existed before he came into the world. The youth asks more desperate questions. He wants to know why he is, whether there is any sense in his being, and whether it might not be better if he and the world did not exist at all. He no longer considers himself part of the world that surrounds him. He is a desperate loner in a world which he does not understand and which does not understand him. There is no age in which the individual wants more to understand and wants to be more understood. There is no age in which he is more confused.

The confusion is comprehensive. It exists in space and time, with respect to the present, the past, and the future. As he grows up, the individual becomes confused about what is going on in his home, what he hears in his church and his school, or what he reads in the newspapers. As he grows into society, he comes to dislike its regulations and questions the prevalent way of life. He wonders about everybody and everything and often is desperate. He takes to *Wanderlust* to console himself. When this proves to be of no use, he seeks consolation in the assurance that his time is unusually confusing and difficult. He wanders into the “good old past,” hoping to find clarity; however, he becomes aware that the past does not offer clarity either, that there are no rules to help him get his bearings. He tries religion. Confused about current religious beliefs, he may be impressed by faiths like the young Shelley’s aesthetical pantheism or Mazzini’s post-Christian religion, only to find out that such faiths are not the answer either. His search is anything but a pilgrim’s progress and often looks like the path to Hell. He tries philosophy and law and finds that former philosophies and laws are as full of problems as present ones. He turns to ethics and becomes confused by varying standards. In aesthetics, he finds that tastes differ. In his desperation he seeks consolation in the enlightened idea that there has been a continuous progression from
theological-mythical thinking via metaphysics to positivism, only to
shudder in the end over the latter's inhumanity and coldness. We
know of Faust's desperation when after a full life of studies he recog-
nizes that he cannot know. We can imagine how an earnest youth
must feel when he comes to the conclusion that his yearning for
finding his way has yielded no results in spite of his many attempts.
Faust no longer had illusions. A youth thrives on illusions until he be-
comes disillusioned.
Uncertainty and insecurity produce a peculiar behavior. Two souls
seem to live in the youth's breast. Systolic indications are followed by
diastolic ones, saintly by diabolic desires. It is as if the youth had a
split personality. A craving for breaking records and for excellence is
followed by an incredible laziness. Exulting happiness makes room for
desperate melancholy. Tenderness and cruelty, nobility and mean-
ness, sociability and the desire for solitude, belief in authority and in
revolutionary radicalism—I could name many more opposites which
reflect the attitudes of youths. Mendousse speaks of an "anarchy of
tendencies." 13 This condition must torment the youth. Again and
again he will attempt to overcome that anarchy—and fail. Small won-
der that he will try to compensate for his failures. He will become a
martyr, a secessionist, an actor who experiments with characters and
situations. Impressed by the heroic, the adventurous, the pathetic, and
the passionate, he will be loud, nasty, and demonstrate an exaggerated
self-esteem. He will show off. Youth means a search for truth but
often becomes a cult of the lie. In his never-ending attempts to dispel
his doubts, to prove himself, and to find his identity, the younger, ill
educated and by no means wise, tends to look upon everything
subjectively—and becomes the captive of the objects he discerns. He
will grab these objects and consider them occasions for furthering his
good or bad ends. Like a romanticist, he wants to be his own priest.
The preceding paragraphs mirror scholars' evaluations of youth
during the first quarter of this century. It is evident that at that time
youth already was confused, probably more so than a generation or
two earlier. This would be natural, for later generations face more
value alternatives than earlier ones. As choices become more numer-
ous and more difficult, confusion grows. Wer die Wahl hat, hat die
Qual. Still, at the beginning of this century, there prevailed an impres-
sive set of traditional values. Consequently, youth was not too con-
 fused. This has changed. Today's youth is faced with a veritable in-
undation of new values and beliefs. As a result of major changes in
the economic, political, social, moral, and scientific spheres, the old

value structure to a large extent has collapsed and is about to be replaced by a new one. To make things worse, the replacement has not yet been completed. Furthermore, what the new values will be is not yet clear. Thus, youth no longer is confronted merely with the labyrinth of the firm values of the older generation but with an enormous number of vague and ever-changing values. The traditional vagueness of youth has become complemented by the vagueness of adult life. Youth is erring in the dark more than ever before. To many young people today, the *mal du siècle* has been superseded not merely by the *fin de siècle*. They feel that the catastrophes of our century have ushered in the end of civilization. Since the age of romanticism, *Welt­schmerz* has become a Leviathan.

This condition is aggravated by the fact that occasionality is more widespread than ever before. It is a characteristic feature of our time. We are aware of it every day, every hour. Whether we look at a newspaper, listen to the radio, or watch television, innumerable impressions storm into our minds. A few minutes of news—local, national, international—on politics, crime, sports, and what not, are followed by a few minutes, often only seconds, of music, advertisements, dancing, prayer, funnies, talk, song, and so on and on. The cocktail party, in which men flimsily move around superficial groups, has replaced serious discussion. The job is superseding the profession, the multiversity the university. Flirtation is ascendant over love, sex over eros, and free love over marriage, an institution which in the age of divorce has become more and more transitory. We have become insecure in the crowd, erratic followers of slogans. We have lost our roots. We have become wanderers who go from station to station, only to be disappointed again and again. We are torn between isms and destroyed by schisms. In 1897, after the pleasant illusion of impressionism, Gauguin asked, “Where do we come from? What are we? Where do we go?” They became the desperate questions of our century. After van Gogh shot himself, the expressionists depicted men and their surroundings in the desolation of human existence; however, in their works one still can recognize men and matter. Who can now that abstractionism has led us into a no man’s land? We not only suffer from an opportunistic use and abuse of values. We see values in things that have little value and in an opportunistic way make the most of them.

And where is youth—confused by definition—in this turmoil that brings desperation even to disciplined, mature adults? Their confusion must have grown immensely—and with it, their potential threat. For the growth of uncertainty and insecurity is likely to increase the desire to compensate. During *Sturm und Drang* and romanticism, *Welt­
schmerz drove youth to suicide and mild reforms. Youth today go beyond that. The dreams of youth have been replaced by fantastic obsessions. Mild reforms have been superseded by wild plans, the thought of suicide by that of murder. If God is dead, why not the world?

**YOUTH, EDUCATION, AND DEMOCRACY**

The dangers of youth have always been recognized and prompted educational measures. Aristophanes, considering himself a youthful rebel against the sophistic corruption of his time, has given us a debate between philosophy and sophistry, in which Philosophy says:

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Gentlemen,

I propose to speak of the Old Education, as it flourished once beneath my tutelage, when Homespun Honesty, Plainspeaking, and Truth were still honored and practiced, and throughout the schools of Athens the regime of the three D's—DISCIPLINE, DECORUM, and DUTY—enjoyed unchallenged supremacy.

Our curriculum was Music and Gymnastic, enforced by that rigorous discipline summed up in the old adage: BOYS SHOULD BE SEEN BUT NOT HEARD. This was our cardinal rule, and when the students, mustered by groups according to region, were marched in squads to school, discipline and absolute silence prevailed.

Ah, they were hardy, manly youngsters. Why, even on winter mornings when the snow, like powdered chaff, came sifting down, their only protection against the bitter weather was a thin and scanty tunic. In the classes, posture was stressed and the decencies firmly enforced: the students stood in rows, rigidly at attention, while the master rehearsed them by rote, over and over. The music itself was traditional and standard—such familiar anthems and hymns as those, for instance, beginning A Voice from Afar or Hail, O Pallas, Destroyer!—and the old modes were strictly preserved in all their austere and simple beauty. Clowning in class was sternly forbidden, and those who improvised or indulged in those fantastic flourishes and trills so much in vogue with the degenerate, effeminate school of Phrynis, were promptly thrashed for subverting the Muses.

In the gymnasium too decorum was demanded.
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The boys were seated together, stripped to the skin, on the bare ground keeping their legs thrust forward, shyly screening their nakedness from the gaze of the curious.

At table courtesy and good manners were compulsory. Not a boy of that generation would have dreamed of taking so much as a radish or the merest pinch of parsley before his elders had been served. Rich foods were prohibited, raucous laughter or crossing their legs forbidden.

Philosophy's ideal of education, then, was characterized by discipline, decorum, and duty. This *paideia* was generally accepted by the Romans, who believed in the principle, "a healthy mind in a healthy body." Basically sanctioned by the Church, it prevailed until the Enlightenment as "humanistic" education. Since then, it has been superseded by educational methods which put less emphasis upon those values. Goethe, judging the two children of *Sturm und Drang*, felt that classicism was healthy and romanticism, sick. For him, disciplined, decorous *Mass* was preferable to the undisciplined, occasional mess of *Schwärmerei*. Educators, on the other hand, increasingly followed the man who has been considered the father of romanticism—Rousseau. Known also as the father of modern democracy, he stands in the middle of educational reforms between John Locke and John Dewey, the former living at the beginning of constitutional democracy in England and the latter at the beginning of absolute democracy in the United States.

After the efforts of Rabelais, Montaigne, Bacon, and Comenius, John Locke became the major spokesman for a new conception of education in a revolt against the highly disciplinary methods of the "humanists." Advancing most of his ideas in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), Locke considered discipline a prerequisite to the physical, moral, and intellectual development of the individual. Believing that a sound mind could best flourish in a sound body, he formulated strict rules for body culture: frequent cold baths, open air, light clothing, frugal meals, early to bed and on a hard bed, and plenty of exercise. Discipline of the body was to be complemented by moral discipline: immediate and willing obedience to elders, self-control and self-denial, to be enforced, as a last resort, by corporal punishment. Great impor-

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tance was placed on good breeding. The formation of character and a fine personality were more important than the cultivation of mere intellectual faculties. It cannot be denied that Locke's emphasis on discipline, virtue, wisdom, breeding, and learning comes close to the classic, humanistic ideal of education. And yet, the philosopher of the American Revolution made inroads upon that ideal. Subordinating comprehensive learning from books to down-to-earth things such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, and subordinating the study of Latin to French and the mother tongue, Locke's educational method was mainly geared to preparing the young for practical life. It was likely to prevent an acquaintance with philosophy and humanistic values. It reduced discipline by the sheer fact that it no longer required discipline for the learning of "non-practical" matters. It hampered education in the sense of paideia and made it harder for the youth to strike philosophical roots, to gain clarity, to find his bearings, to become a humane, as distinguished from a mere human, being. It was likely to make him a mere object of, and adjust to, the occasions of daily routine, an opportunistic and confused errand boy.

This possibility increased with Rousseau's Émile (1762). Believing that everything degenerates in the hands of man, the philosopher of the French Revolution left education to nature itself. Placed under the care of a tutor about his age, Émile grows up a healthy animal. Far removed from society, he yields to no authority but that of his own instincts. He never is forced to do anything he does not wish. He is not taught by his tutor who merely shelters his free development. His own experiences teach him what is wise and good, what leads to success and what to failure. Body and mind grow naturally in various stages. Having developed a strong body, Émile obtains most of his intellectual training. He engages in practical studies, in scientific orientation, manual labor, and excursions into nature. One discovery leads to another. In time, learning becomes more systematic because the youth learns to judge and reason. At eighteen, the "age of humanity," Émile's social and moral education intensify through historical studies and the reading of fables. He now can be exposed to religious questions so that he may freely choose a religion. At twenty, he engages in more refined studies. He learns Latin, Greek, and Italian and reads drama and poetry in their original tongues. He becomes a gentleman, able to head a household and to be a distinguished citizen. His moral values will be relative to need, time, and place. In a word, they will be determined by the occasions of daily life and routine. Like Locke's youth, Rousseau's youth is supposed to adjust himself to fleeting, temporary values. Since a humanistic education from the twentieth year
on can hardly make up for the earlier neglect of humanistic studies, Rousseau's youth is likely to be as confused as Locke's. As a matter of fact, he probably is worse off. Whereas Locke, discouraging humanistic studies, had only decreased discipline, Rousseau largely eliminated it. Putting his trust in a dubious self-discipline of children and youngsters, he left an unstable youth lonely in a corrupt society.

In spite of their lightening of discipline, Locke and Rousseau could still hope to approach the humanistic ideal of paideia. They believed in the existence of fixed ideas and considered education a means to achieve some kind of humanistic, genuine virtue which could aid youths' orientation and provide them with confidence. For John Dewey, who wrote at the height of American democracy, there are no fixed beliefs. He considered the search for certainty a "compensatory perversion"—an illusion which diverts men's attention and abilities from the possible and practical realities within their comprehension. He subordinated the end to the means and even abolished the distinction between them. Life is meaningless, the aimless life is to be commended. The same principles of explanation apply to animal and human life. There is no realm of ends. Everything is provisional. Change is a fruitful category. The act precedes the thought. Small wonder that Dewey became an advocate of an educational method which negates discipline and permits the child to drift according to his instincts and desires. The youth Dewey had in mind is surrounded by nothing but provisional values. He finds himself living in a world in which every value is as provisional and as important as every other—a world composed of provisoria which are equally inadequate. Robert Hutchins summed up this situation: "Today the young American comprehends only by accident the intellectual tradition of which he is a part and in which he must live . . . holding that nothing is any more important than anything else, that there can be no order of goods and no order in the intellectual realm. There is nothing central and nothing peripheral, nothing primary and nothing secondary, nothing basic and nothing superficial." 16 On the face, it looks as if this conglomeration of equalities would put youth at ease. If all things are equal, then accepting one must be as good as accepting another. If nothing is better than anything else, nothing can be worse than anything else. Weltschmerz must lose its rationale. But this is not the way it works. Equalities exclude values, and youths are desperately looking for values. They will be disappointed when they find nothing. When an empty world stares into their face, they will stare back and ask the old question: "Why am I and why is the world?" The product of "progres-
sive education,” an undisciplined and spoiled youth sooner or later must fall into complete confusion. Dewey’s *The Way out of Educational Confusion*, published in 1931, fifteen years after his *Democracy and Education*, indicates the dilemma which his educational theories helped to bring about.

It sometimes is argued that the increasing loss of discipline in education could be compensated for by compulsory public education, which came about in most nations after the eighteenth century and received its greatest boost during the French Revolution. Indeed, it is conceivable that a guaranteed minimum of education for a large part of the population might have prompted a lessening of discipline. Perhaps there is significance in the fact that Locke, a disciplinarian, was lukewarm about public education; that Rousseau, less disciplinarian, wanted it; that Dewey, not disciplinarian at all, took it for granted. It appears doubtful, however, that the imposition of education upon more and more people justifies less and less discipline in education, for it basically amounts to an expansion of quantity at the cost of quality. And this is too high a price to pay. Whereas education is desirable for as many people as possible, it must remain genuine education and not become diluted. “Education for all is no education at all” is a specter which cannot be dismissed lightly. Public education, then, did not alleviate the basic decline of education even if we see public education at its best and discard the warning of John Stuart Mill’s article “Endowments” that, if permitted to replace private education, public education would mold all men into the same intellectual pattern.

In answer to Mill’s fear, disciplinarians will argue that such molding is exactly what the young need if they are to be delivered from confusion and despair and to be brought to clarity and hope. Others will add that such a molding must be especially effective if it is favored by, and in turn favors, the new deities which in modern times have replaced the church, such as nationalism, socialism, and democracy.

We can dispose of the former two easily. Our interest is in the free education of men to be free men, and both nationalism and socialism have hardly proved to be conducive to this aim. While the nationalism of a Fichte or a Mazzini was compatible with the humanistic idea which at that time was threatened by Napoleon and British imperialism under the slogan, “my country, right or wrong,” German and Italian nationalism later degenerated into the opportunism of Hitler and Mussolini. Under their regimes nationalism no longer was disciplined
by humanism but disciplined humanism out of existence. As to socialism, a dictatorship of the proletariat, or of those who pretend to speak for it, is incompatible with true education. It also has been shown that forms of socialism that are mitigated, or disciplined, by liberal democracy lead to serfdom.\(^\text{17}\)

Our hope, then, rests upon democracy. Could the growth of democracy make up for the loss of discipline in education? Could democracy have become an ideal so overpowering that it would instill the young with so great a devotion, give them so great a sense of belonging and direction, as to alleviate the risks and dangers of youth? Is there significance in the fact that Locke, hoping for limited democracy, still believed in disciplinary methods; that Rousseau, desiring a less limited democracy, believed in “negative education”; that Dewey, seeing the actual progression in the United States from limited to unlimited democracy, favored “progressive education”? Did democracy beware of the pitfalls of nationalism and socialism? Did it remain disciplined by humanism in order that men might be freely educated to be free? Without much doubt, this had been the hope of democratic educators. Locke the student of Coke, Rousseau the contemporary of Condorcet, Dewey the student of Jefferson—they all felt that popular government should provide for the rights of man and thus be limited, or disciplined, by those rights. They all hoped that democratic development would make democracy a safer and safer haven for paideia. Increasing participation by the individual in government would result in increasing emancipation of the individual from government. The individual’s freedom would not be the freedom of anarchy but the freedom under the rule of law. Education for a liberal democracy in a liberal democracy would bring clarity to the mind of youth, give hope to youth, and eliminate the dangers of youth.

In the last analysis, this hope was based upon the speculation that liberal democracy would remain free of the occasionality characteristic of romanticism. It was a vain hope. To begin with, democracy has a romantic burden, for it was tied up with historical romanticism. Rousseau, the father of modern democracy, was also a father of romanticism. Even after Jacobin democracy and Napoleon’s democratic Caesarism had made room for a more liberal democracy, democracy remained connected with romanticism. As a matter of fact, democracy can be said to be the alter ego of romanticism. As late as the 1870’s, Taine considered romanticism a bourgeois movement against the aristocratic rule of the eighteenth century, a democratic revolt at a time when the human mind was becoming plus capable d’abstraire, a

\(^{17}\) F. A. Hayek, The Road to Serfdom (Chicago, 1944).
revolt which denounced traditional forms as artificial and searched for the truthful and natural—often at the cost of all form. When speaking of democracy, he had in mind the then existing liberal democracy, a democracy that found its purpose and limits in the rights of man, a democracy which the bourgeoisie in 1789 created in a revolution against the aristocracy and in 1848 defended against the proletariat. Romantically, Taine hoped that romanticism would bring about a new order—but feared that it would end in chaos.18

Events have shown that Taine’s fears were more justified than his hopes. The leadership of democracy, at his time basically confined to an educated bourgeois élite, has since been transferred to the less educated masses. Whereas the liberal democracy of the romantic era was largely determined, as Taine put it, by the plébéien occupé à parvenir, modern democracy became more and more the domain of plebeian parvenus. The revolution of the bourgeoisie has been superseded by the revolt of the masses.19 Now this development does not necessarily prevent the creation of a new order. It is probable that the masses in their own democratic order will be run by their kind or by a demagogue representing them—who like Stalin, Mussolini, or Hitler may well be a plebeian parvenu. No one would doubt that this would constitute an order, if only an order in which people stew in their own juices. Such an order, however, is likely to be so authoritarian and so incompatible with a humanistic education that we need not elaborate on it. What is of interest to us is democracy as it exists in Western nations. Whereas some of these democracies perhaps have already reached the stage of absolute majority rule, there are still liberal elements present in them to qualify them as potential havens for humanism. Regrettably, these democracies not only have failed to achieve the order which Taine hoped they would but have become increasingly formless. Modern mass democracy, being less rational than the elitist liberal democracy of the nineteenth century, has become confused and confusing, in spite of the fact that the most “confusing” innate aspects of liberal democracy, divisions of power, in large measure have been discarded.

Modern democracy has become an empty shell to be filled with the contents various occasions may demand and to be emptied again on new occasions. We need think only of campaign promises which are forgotten after elections and replaced by new promises directed toward winning coming elections. Modern democracy in large measure has become an opportunistic race to influence those naive recepta-

19 José Ortega y Gasset, La rebelión de las masas (Madrid, 1929).
cles of wishful thinking, the voters’ brains. Or consider the decline of that traditional stronghold against confusion and uncertainty—the law. Everything seems fit to be poured into legal forms today. Modern legislators seem to be obsessed with revising old and making new laws. Worse still, legislative acts increasingly have become complemented by executive rules and regulations. In view of this inundation with laws and regulations, I asked a few years ago whether the “motorized” lawmaker, noticeable since World War I, is not about to be replaced by the “jet” lawmaker. Today, the situation is worse still. The opportunistic attitude of lawmakers has been followed by opportunistic attitudes of judges, who are obviously reluctant to enforce the law in a way that would secure law and order. This has resulted in an increasing disregard for the law and in the deplorable breakdown of law and order which has occurred in the past years in the major democratic nations. As can hardly be otherwise, the decline of the law was accompanied by a decline of morals, which are in a state of confusion and are rapidly approaching a complete breakdown. Many of these aspects of modern democracy still are concealed by facades, but these facades only enhance the basic deceit of our time. And woe to the youth who looks behind them!

If a youth hopes to find a democracy similar to that described in Pericles’ Funeral Oration, a way of life which provided paideia in a firm order, he will see instead humanistic ideas trampled by neurotic and inconsiderate masses in an environment that approaches chaos. Instead of Winckelmann’s “noble simplicity, silent grandeur,” he will find vulgar pomposity and loud pettiness. Instead of a refined democracy, disciplined for the sake of the individual by divisions of power, he will encounter a coarse and undisciplined majority rule which has discarded constitutional safeguards and indulges in abuses of power. He finds political science replaced by politics. He will become aware that the noble citizen, who took the place of the noble savage and defended democracy, has been pushed aside by the savage citizen, the petty bourgeois. He becomes convinced that the voice of the people cannot possibly be the voice of God.

This, then, is the lot of youth today. Rather than ameliorating the confusion natural to youth, modern democracy has enhanced it and has increased youth’s desperation. Born with romanticism, democracy has reduced romanticism to its skeleton of occasionalism, to its bare, value-free essentials. Youth in the era of romanticism still saw ideals, beauty, and harmony around themselves, ideals which could make them forget the occasionality of their time. Today’s youth, while they

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20 See the author’s *In Defense of Property* (Chicago, 1963), 152.
like to dream on, see themselves surrounded by materialism, ugliness, and disharmony and are constantly aware of life’s occasionality. Youths in the romantic era committed suicide out of *Weltenschmerz*. Today’s youth strikes out against the painful world. The romantic youth basically was gently passive. Today’s youth is unseemly active; however, their activism is likely to increase their confusion and desperation. Schiller’s *Räuber* knew what they wanted. Today’s youth are too confused to know what they want. They want to have a voice in everything, but their voice betrays indecision. It adds another dimension of confusion to a society that already is confused and fast moving into the turbulence of anarchy and collapse.