

BY SOME, life is considered to be but a playing of roles. A garment is put on to symbolize that it is school time and the young person goes off to school. He changes his clothing and it is play time. There is a special dress for Church and maybe something more special for a party. As he changes his clothing, he changes the activity and done the role that fits the occasion.

Could it be that each of these specialized experiences gradually enable the average youth to assess life around him and finally to assume the role that is most fitting for a happy and successful life? Every young man and woman has to establish a realistic self-picture during adolescence if he or she is to find the way into an adult world that has meaning, value and worth for him or her. As might be suspected such an adventure or task may be very difficult at times. For some it is equal to the birth pangs a mother suffered to give them life.

What makes it so difficult today for modern youth to achieve this role clarification? Was it always this hard to move from childhood into adulthood? Not at all. The complications of modern living and the increasing amount of education needed to survive economically and socially are the primary factors that constitute the problem. When a boy or girl grew up in a rural environment where the majority of the young people simply followed the pattern of living handed down from previous generations there was no problem of choosing a role. It was clearly defined by the way of life at hand and the absence of knowledge about any other possible way of living. A farm boy learned how to till the soil and raise animals, a fisherman's son learned quickly how to battle the sea and bring home some fish to sell or eat.

How different it is for the young man of college environment in a large industrial city like Cebu. His family may have a special profession picked out for him. He may have marvelous talents for a number of possible professions and interest in still something else. His country and district may not offer many job opportunities for the type of work he wants to equip himself for.

The difficulty of sorting through all this maze of job opportunities, interests, abilities and family pressures to emerge with a clear cut role is indeed a worthwhile challenge for the college adolescent. On the one hand he has to measure his heritage from the family and his necessary dependence on them for support against his inherent growing desire to be independent from such pressures. While on the other side of the picture will be the adventure and risk that youth so often wants to take in launching out into a new field or way of life. It is often said that modern youth wants to find more and more meaning for his actions before he will put out the responsibility that marks him as well-adjusted and

mature. But how can he find meaning if he launches out on his own without an objective except to be different from his parents or family? The resulting confusion sooner or later creates the drifter who cannot cope with the demands of adult living. Witness the hippie culture where well-educated people so often embrace a way of life not too far removed from primitive instinct living. In their midst you hear the words again and again: "I am trying to find myself."

Not having accepted a clear cut role in the days of irresponsible adolescence they are now confronted with a much more difficult task. Stripped of the security of family living and parental assistance they are now confronted with the necessity of providing their own food, clothing and shelter during a time when they would most like to be free for intellectual pursuits, artistic bents or poetic achievements. The results are tragic as we watch them wallow in their own filth, unwashed and unconcerned even for their excrement and other body wastes. The rock festivals in the past couple of years are another example of confusion of role where young people from all over the land gather to experience from each other a solidarity in their common confusion. In idleness and in the stupor of illegal drugs, they attempt to find meaning as they are fed a diet of modern pessimistic music and the sight of seemingly so many fellow young people throwing off the shackles of civilized living by open sex and an accepted nudity. Here in the larger cities of the Philippines a similar thing has been detected in the sex and drug parties of late.

During the period of adolescence it is very proper to change roles and to aspire to many different possible professions before it is time to make a final decision. Parents are often willing to permit this indecision in view of the difficulties envisioned. The teen-ager is not expected to move on his own and become economically independent. Hence when he changes from engineering to commerce no real damage is done. The boy who leaves the seminary, so often quickly establishes a new goal and proceeds toward it with an over-increasing energy. His role has been greatly clarified by the rigorous training and intellectual pursuits of the seminary.

The modern girl has less difficulty than her brother for she can always fall back on the ancient call of every girl and enter marriage. Her motherhood is in itself a clear enough role to fill the soul of the ordinary college girl. Those who need a profession besides are in the minority. Nonetheless the emancipation of women in the western world brings new and difficult problems to our Filipino sisters also. She is not sure she will get married so she has to play safe and seek another possible role in business

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## Modern Youth - A Struggle to Find A Role

by Fr. Henry Schumacher, SVD

## IN THE PHILIPPINES . . .

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2. It made the Philippine economy agricultural and prevented the growth of industrialization.

3. It encouraged the concentration of production to a few agricultural products like sugar, coconut products, tobacco products and hemp to the neglect of other products.

4. It made the Filipino American-oriented in their preference for goods, thus gravely undermining the development of Philippine industrialization.

The result of all this was a colonial economy which fettered the progress of the Philippines. The Philippines became a mere supplier of raw materials and the dumping ground of American finished products.

Free trade between a well-developed country and a greatly underdeveloped one is a very unfair form of economic relationship. It is tantamount to a highly-organized business enterprise competing with a small "sari-sari" store. This was exactly the situation that prevailed between the Philippines and the United States with the establishment of free trade. The U.S. was very much aware of the adverse effects of free trade to an underdeveloped country when the other party is economically advanced. American experience with British imperialism had taught it this lesson. Thus, after it gained independence from England, the first thing it did was to refuse free trade with the English. What the British failed to impose on the Americans, the Americans succeeded with ease on the inexperienced Filipinos.

### Seventy Years After

More than seventy years have elapsed since the Philippines fell into the clutches of American imperialism. Presently, we find the Philippines still clinging to the skirts of the United States. Its economy instead of growing became stunted as a result of neo-colonial policies enforced in the Philippines during those years. Indubitably, American imperialism in the Philippines today is as deeply and seemingly irremediably rooted as ever.

The further entrenchment of American imperialism in the Philippines today is traceable to later developments. Supposedly granted political independence in 1946, the Americans rammed into the throats of the Filipinos unequal treaties calculated to maintain the continued presence of US military bases of its own designs, preserve the privileges of US investments, manage Philippine economy along the lines drawn by US policy-makers, and make the Philippines remain forever a source of cheap, raw materials and a sure market of American goods. Their country ravaged, not only by the Japanese invaders but much more so by the American "liberators" who bombed every inch of the Philippines to "liberate" it, the Filipino leaders, in their desire to rebuild their country from the ashes, were forced to accept these unequal and exploitative treaties. Once again, the American imperialist successfully took advantage of the Filipinos in their moments of confusion and difficulties.

### Proofs of U. S. Imperialism

The imposition of such treaties as the Military Base Agreement, the Military Assistance program, the Bell-Traide Agreement and the Parity Agreement was the apogee of American imperialism — the treaties its masterpieces of exploitation and duplicity. Take for instance the L-L Agreement. The agreement stipulates mutual right of the Americans and the

Filipinos to exploit under similar terms the natural resources of the country, of each. At first glance, it appears fair enough.

A closer look, however, would reveal that it smacks of imperialistic dissimulation for the following reasons: (1) there are more than fifty states in the United States, each of which has its own economic policies. To indulge in business in any part of the United States, the Philippines has to make separate deals with the state involved. Think of all the difficulties the Philippines would meet! Whereas for the United States, it is very much easier to transact business in the Philippines because it is a one-state country; (2) Filipino investments can never compete profitably and equally with those giant corporations in the U.S.; and, (3) There are no more natural resources in the United States which the Filipino can exploit. Everything had been exploited by the Americans themselves. In fact, the exhaustion of U.S. natural resources is precisely the reason why the American imperialist is all over the world exploiting underdeveloped or developing countries like ours.

As a result of these treaties, American investors at present are having a lot of fun milking the Philippine economy. During the period of 1963-70, they siphoned out of the country \$128 million from investments which totalled \$41 million only. This means that for every dollar they spent in the Philippines they received in return three dollars. From 1962 to 1969 P2.1 billion were taken out of the country as invisible disbursements or \$316.69 million annually. These disbursements reached the peak of \$990 million in 1966 which exceeded the total export of that year!

Indeed, there is no doubt that the Americans control the Philippine economy. Eighty seven percent of the petroleum industry is American controlled. Of the four oil refineries in the country, three are owned by Americans. The production of fire is absolutely controlled by American capital. Our mining industries are dominated by 15 American corporations. The

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or some other available profession.

The fact that we have so many drop-outs during the four years of college illustrates the actuality of role confusion. The existence of so many college trained unemployed emphasizes the tragedy of failure to achieve a clear cut role and the energy to arrive there. Notice how many professionals even do not practise their trade. Our governor is a doctor. I know a banker downtown who is a psychologist. Many a lawyer is working as a casual, I am told.

Here in the Philippines we have an added confusing element in the present struggle to establish an identity in the nation itself. The question about a genuine Filipino is asked again and again. Is it any wonder then that we have so much confusion as the modern Filipino youth attempts to sort out his or her future from these pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. The fact that so many succeed is indeed encouraging. Youth has that plasticity which allows itself to fit in so much better than the adults of later life. The idealism of youth goes a long way to make up for what is lacking in the ordinary choice of a role. His willingness to start again if one proves too unrealistic allows him to climb even Mount Everest if necessary. When he cannot find the role, he makes the one he is doing fit his present needs.