

If a young man is loose in his principles and habits; if he lives without plan and without object, spending his time in idleness and pleasure, there is more hope of a fool than of him.

—J. Hawes.

degradation has almost reached the point of barbarism. They seem to be lost in the forest of sins and crimes. To most of them, decency is a thing of the past, so that admirable traits and age-old traditions are utterly neglected; respect and reverence for the elders, women, and superiors are miserably thrown aside as if they were ugly garments of antiquity which hold no iota of significance.

Ubiquitously, newspapers scream in bold headlines about the sadistic and immoral crimes feloniously committed by the youth of the land, the majority of whom are students. Lamentably, despite the fact that

the table. And emboldened by the effects of the liquor, they began banging their fists on the table and kicking the chairs nearby, much to the annoyance of the rest of us. The proprietor tried to pacify them but a deft left hook caught him on the chin, sending him on all fours on the floor. The timely arrival of a plainclothesman saved the victim from further beating.

Low morality is equally true to girls nowadays. Time was when great respect and reverence were duly accorded them. Today, it is different.

Most women are wanting of propriety and decorum as manifested

Youth On Fire

MORALITY when withdrawn from the vortex of man's life, creates a vicious untoward effect: it reduces his life into a meaningless animal existence. It is an eloquent manifestation of the flesh's triumph over the spirit, of passion's success over reason. Nothing is more odious and lamentable than a civilized, educated being who willfully casts aside his noble ideals into the mire of immorality. A man who breaks away from moral standards can only find himself within the category of beasts.

Youth today is on fire. He seems to be groping about in the darkness and confusion of the future. Most of them do not know or refuse to know what morality is or seems to be. . . what it means to their future and their country's. To those who do not know, God might be more merciful. . . more merciful than those who refuse to know. The latter kind is most common among the students today. Their morals are simply awful. Perhaps, the conscience of every Filipino parent will be shocked to know that their children's morals have "gone to the dogs." It is pitifully painful to witness the "hopes of our fatherland" bask under the filthy beams of immorality. They are on the right road to damnation. Their moral

by

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such bits of information are dissipated in almost all parts of the archipelago, no positive action has been undertaken to alleviate the worsening predicament. To many, these have become "ordinary incidents."

Everyday, crimes ranging from simple theft to murder or rape fill the police records. In Manila, for instance, sons of elite and respectable families have gone berserk by causing tremendous damage on the property of innocent taxpayers just for the joy and heck of it. Yet, these boys come from exclusive colleges and universities!

I was having lunch in one of the downtown restaurants when a bunch of unruly boys made a boisterous entrance, kicking the door wide open. Once inside, their voices, permeated with indecent remarks, rang loud and clear in the dining hall. In less than thirty minutes, empty bottles of gin filled

by their gaudy attires and slovenly manner. They prefer to spend most of their times uselessly. They easily soil their chastity. They consider morality a jigsaw puzzle the fragments of which can be put together after being shuffled. It is, therefore, not surprising to hear that a certain college girl is a mistress of a married man, or is engaged in clandestinely selling her flesh.

But should we point an accusing finger at the youth for being lax in morals? Must we let the ax fall on them? Must we remain cold and indifferent to their sad plight?

We must bear in mind that they were born in a most critical period of the history of the world so that they seem to be lost in the maze of conflicting ideologies. The government has remained passive and cold to their sad predicament. Government officials are too obsessed with the idea of enriching themselves, setting a bad example to the youth. Like Machiavelli, they believe that ordinary morals do not apply to state matters and the ends always justify the means.

There's something wrong here. Very wrong. But who is to blame? The youth? The parents? The state? The answer lies in every Filipino conscience. ‡