



# OVERCOMING THE CAGE OF CIVILIZATION: TRANSGRESSION AS FREEDOM

*Posted on September 1, 2023 by Henri Hude*



The recent riots in France served once again to highlight the continuing iterations of chaos that are the consequence of the agendas of the Western ruling class.

French philosopher, Henri Hude, recently sat down with Rodolfo Casadei of *Tempi* magazine in Milan, to discuss the ramifications for ordinary people living in a society made deeply hostile. This interview comes to us through the kind courtesy of [\*Tempi\*](#).

---

**Rodolfo Casadei (RC):** What is the cause of the riots that swept through France between June 27 and July 3, 2023, after the killing of Nahel Merzouk? Some say French police brutality. Some say social inequality and the lack of opportunities for young people in the banlieues. Others, like Francophone intellectual Mathieu Bock-Coté, say the cause is the "identity rift" produced by massive immigration that structurally cannot be integrated. Still others denounce a misguided integration policy incapable of offering strong values. Which of these answers convinces you most?

**Henri Hude (HH):** The four hypotheses you make are not mutually exclusive. Regarding police brutality, one must distinguish objective brutality from subjective feelings of brutality. Objectively, the French police were much more brutal to the Yellow Vests than to the youth in the banlieues. If we ask, "how many people lost an eye in a week of rioting?" the answer is "zero." The average, at the height of the Yellow Vest demonstrations, was 1.5 per day, although their violence was incomparably less. If, therefore, the brutality was objectively the same, and proportionate to the threat, we would have had dozens of blinded eyes (in the Nahel riots). Subjectively, it is different. This kind of gap between the objective and the subjective is a phenomenon frequently observed by sociologists. In the present case, the reason for the gap is that the Yellow Vests were not questioning the legitimacy of the state and the police. Public force, even excessive and disproportionate force, remained essentially a legitimate force, which was only blamed for abuses. In the banlieues, force is immediately perceived as violence because the state has lost its legitimacy. Hence a hypersensitivity to the slightest use of force, or to the simple request for papers. The first hypothesis therefore is not to be discarded, but it is not sufficient.



*Henri Hude.*

Regarding inequality and the lack of prospects, the hypothesis is valid but not specific. It would explain as much the Yellow Vest movement or the protest against pension reform as the riots in the banlieues. It is not only the young children of immigrants, but the whole youth that somehow shares the same sentiment. It is a sentiment grounded in reality. The social democratic pact has been broken by the globalization of the economy, and it is impossible to reestablish it or replace it with something else. It is impossible to see how to get out of it. The current marasmus is not sustainable, but it is perfectly in line with the principles of the dominant postmodern culture. Inequality is lower in France than in the United Kingdom or the United States, countries we model ourselves after and systematically align ourselves with. France lives far above its means by printing money and going into endless debt. For the moment we can still spend without doing the math. When the system stalls and we need to return to reality, there will be Revolution. What we have today is nothing but the "Flour Wars" that preceded the French Revolution.

As far as integration policies are concerned, I think that these young people are, unfortunately, much more integrated to the current French culture than people say. They are integrated to the culture of the arbitrary freedom of the deified individual, thanks to an integration policy that works perfectly. We hear the Minister of Justice scolding parents for not exercising their authority, when all politics for decades has organized the destruction of authority and the family! With the family out of the picture, that left the school. Hegemonized by pedagogical leftism, it became a model of an ideal society: without authority, without power, without discipline, without tradition. It perfectly fulfilled its mission to impose and transmit a culture whose result is complete intellectual and moral anarchy. This postmodern culture has a perfectly clear ideological function: it justifies the economic arbitrariness of neoliberal elites and protects them by injecting into the people an impotence to act rationally, organize and decide. It should only be added that it is not the bureaucrat-class that is doing so much harm to the people. It has been content to take advantage of the absurdities, especially pedagogical ones, invented by a "social-traitors" left that, having closed any historical horizon of emancipation outside of increasingly monstrous sexual extravaganzas, retreats into its neurosis and claims to retreat the people into it. Let's say that postmodern pedagogues are subjectively at the service of their egalitarian neuroses and objectively at the service of monstrous inequality.

Talking about the identity rift brings us closer to the most important issue, but we need to understand it well. Every society needs a common substantive culture to make strong decisions of general interest. In France there were two, Catholicism and the Enlightenment. They clashed, but both were serious and universalist. Both now have been marginalized for the benefit of neoliberal, libertarian arbitrariness and its ghosts. The "identity-rift" lies here, between two strong, serious, tested cultures and the great absurdity, the great nothingness of the irrational individual living in his bubble, immoral and moralistic, anarcho-Orwellian.

In the absence of a common substantive culture, we need a common political culture that enables a *modus vivendi* among substantive cultures. Secularism was intended to be something like that. But to tell the truth, in France it was rather a way of establishing the Enlightenment as the state religion of the Republic, at the expense of Catholicism. But some accommodation existed. Having become postmodern (in the rest of the world more generically), secularism no longer holds back as it used to have the decency to do. A purported formalist and procedural culture has become an intolerant substantive culture. And this culture is a dogmatic nihilism. It has, in caricatured form, all the defects that the Enlightenment held against religions: dogmatism, intolerance, persecution, absurd superstitions, etc.

We also need a minimum of dialogue between cultures, which also presupposes a common reference to philosophical principles accepted by all. A certain humanism could fulfill this function. But today humanism coincides with the monstrosity of the Superman and subhumans. So, the real divide lies here: between the self-proclaimed superhumans à la Macron, and the subhumans, the "deplorables," the "savages," etc. I am not surprised that the subhumans hate the superhumans who shower them with contempt. It has been said that young people do not express demands. This is true. They practice a barbaric ritual of the barbaric religion they learned in school. They express their will and sheer violence—this is their freedom.

What people like Macron have not understood is that postmodern libertarian deregulation cannot be limited to economics and sex. The Nazis, who were as postmodern as Trotsky, knew this well: libertarian deregulation must release the violence of the beast that suffocates in the cage of civilization. Sex then is no longer an end in itself; it is the warrior's repose—the right is that of the strongest, amassing quick fortunes and building empires while quenching a thirst for cruel transgression and destruction.

So, if we wanted to reduce the identity divide, we would need nothing less than a new culture. If we preserve the one that currently dominates us, we will die. Benedict XVI said, "We need a new humanist synthesis."

**RC:** The magnitude and severity of the riots that followed the killing of young Nahel suggest that there was a widespread expectation of a pretext to unleash a vast riot. Are we dealing with a generic suburban youth malaise, or do these riots have political significance? Is there a political direction? Are there political actors pulling the strings of these riots? If so, what are they aiming at?

**HH:** A pretext? More like a match thrown on a barrel of gunpowder. The malaise, what Freud called "the malaise of civilization," is certain. It not only affects the youth of the banlieues—it is general. Postmodern culture makes one mad, because individual freedom no longer accepts objective truth. Intended to free the individual from all constraints, this culture on the contrary develops a fatal set of frustrations in him. Absolutized individual freedom, detached from all reference to the good and the true, the beautiful and God, the Absolute, nature, reason, society—kills love, kills freedom, kills free love and pure pleasure. Law without the divine Lawgiver kills.

The good, then, consists in surviving, in spite of everything, through transgression, which becomes the

only form of freedom. The virtual world kills the sense of the real and replaces the real. The art of governing becomes that of administering an asylum of madmen. But the rulers are also insane. So, it is this world that makes us crazy. The youth of the banlieues are merely sharing and expressing in their own way a radically dysfunctional culture that makes all of society sick, and will destroy us if we do not get rid of it.

Does the riot have political significance? Yes, certainly, but on the condition that we understand well the paradoxical character of the radical rejection expressed by the banlieue youth. They are subservient unconsciously to postmodern culture—but on a conscious level they consider themselves rebellious and more or less connected to Muslim culture; but what is truly Muslim about this destructive nihilism and individualism as a Tiktok and Snapchat user? We are a long way from the fury of the "Arab street." The phenomenon of destruction without political objective is of a typically postmodern transgressiveness, irrationality and arbitrariness. But together, it is also clearly a critique and self-critique of this very postmodernity. Objectively, what is being expressed is a call for reform, or even cultural revolution. What cultural revolution? Certainly not a Salafist revolution. This same youth would not support it in power any longer than Egyptians supported President Morsi. It is a matter of decisively getting out of this system and defining that new humanist synthesis of which Benedict XVI rightly spoke.

As for pulling the strings, there are some who see in this movement a reservoir of energy, and they would like to capture it for their own purposes; they would like to recover it. But this energy is not political, or even economic; it is cultural and spiritual. And I do not think those who want to recover it, without responding to the precise need that aroused it, will be very successful. Some who imagine they are flanking it and directing it actually control nothing. As Jean Giraudoux said, "Because these events overtake us, we pretend to be the organizers of them." A vast majority of the political world condemns this violence in principle, but without much imagination. A minority, gathered around La France insoumise, the party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, and the Trotskyists, supports them. Mélenchon benefited from the Muslim vote in the first round of the presidential election in 2022. But this success carries with it a certain ambiguity and thus probable fragility, because the party is simultaneously pro-immigration, pro-immigrant, and in favor of all postmodern transgressions. But immigrants also oppose these transgressions overwhelmingly, and very vigorously. Some think the movement may be encouraged from outside, to pressure France on the eve of the NATO summit. But if this were true, it would only be the opportunistic exploitation of an event whose origin is clearly fortuitous.

**RC:** All observers agree that these young people who have caused so much damage, especially in the neighborhoods where they live, do not feel French. But if they do not feel French, is it their fault or is it France's fault?

**HH:** I am not surprised that young immigrants say they do not love France, because postmodern France is anything but lovable. One loves it in spite of everything when one has had one's roots here for a long time. Otherwise, it leaves one indifferent or hostile. If France were France, the question would not arise: one would be proud of it, love it, feel part of it. The problem is that France is invisible, especially in the banlieues. It is invisible because it is like turned off, asleep. Culturally, politically, economically, France, like all other countries in continental Europe, is tyrannically prevented from expressing its own genius. France captive in the shackles of postmodern culture, and subservient to the Anglo-Saxon model, now transmitted through Brussels and NATO, is not France. The fundamental reason for the misfortunes of President Macron, who goes from crisis to crisis and is hated as Louis XVI and Charles X were, is that he uses the monarchical powers of the president of free and radiant France to destroy France's freedom, its constitution and its genius.

You can love France or not, but you have to understand it. It is clear that Macron does not understand it. One would think he does not know what it means to feel French. As if his homeland is an English-speaking international social class. France is a great country, with excellent climate and soil, rich, inhabited by property-holding but egalitarian individuals, endowed with a strong state in which a monarchical-type power is allied with the people, while respecting the freedoms of an elite, firmly committed to serve the common good, the Republic. De Gaulle had restored France's historic constitution and national independence. The constitution of the Fifth Republic is clearly incompatible with a regime of inequality, in which economic elites and special interests rule unchallenged. A president who conducts such a policy is seen as a tyrant, and indeed he is.

Culturally, France is a country of strong reason, of clear and distinct language, where aristocratic freedom must cooperate with monarchical work, popular monarchy serving the common good of a free nation (i.e., the Republic), without which there is no true democracy. To want to impose English-style parliamentarism, postmodern EU institutions, or the cultural delusions of the transatlantic on France is to try to destroy it. But nations are indestructible. France will remain France and I do not think it will be destroyed.

**RC:** We often hear that two organized groups rule in the banlieues: drug dealers and radical Islamists.

We never hear about the "forces of good": teachers who ask to be assigned to difficult neighborhoods, motivated social workers, volunteers. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the "forces of good" present in the banlieues?

**HH:** Regarding drug trafficking, senior officers of the gendarmerie told me that it was forbidden, by some prefects, to fight drug trafficking in the banlieues. It is often the only economic activity in these places. Without it, there is no telling what people would live on. In addition, drugs are a cynical means of subjectively solving objectively insoluble problems, and of reducing certain risks by weakening potential rioters. About Islamic radicalism, on the other hand, there would be much to say. My guess is that, in Western countries, it is as much an anti-modern and postmodern ideology for its adherents as it is a religion. When ideologues operate side by side with traffickers, as in Colombia or the Sahel, the ideologues, more violent and stronger, end up taking the place of the traffickers. Eventually, ideologist-traffickers become traffickers tout-court, behind the ideological pretext. It is very likely that this kind of process tends to occur in the banlieues.

As for the "forces of good," the state has invested quite a lot of money in education, and numerous professors go to these neighborhoods like lay missionaries. But because postmodern pedagogy contradicts all the fundamentals of serious education and effective instruction, and because atheistic and woke dogmatism scandalizes little Muslims and their parents, trust is lacking, tensions are high, and results are poor.

**RC:** Some politicians and observers are proposing to take away social benefits from the families of minors who took part in the riots—among the 3,486 people arrested for the violence, there were as many as 1,124 minors, or one-third. What do you think of this proposal?

**HH:** I think it is the prototype of technocratic measures that always tragically remain below the level of the problem. Which depends on three variables: education, family and work. The first two are necessarily defective within the cultural regime we undergo. The third would depend on a recovery of our sovereignty and emancipation from the Anglo-Saxon system. Because we cannot talk about the essentials, we discuss the accessories.

**RC:** What would have to change in France to reabsorb the malaise and anger that led to the riots of the past days? What would Henri Hude do if he had government responsibilities?



**HH:** I think that the problems of immigrants are the same as those of all society, of all young people, and that between the banlieues and everything else there is only a difference in degree, not in kind. What is needed today is nothing less than a cultural revolution, in France but also in the rest of Europe, spreading to all spheres of life (couple, family, home, school, economy, health, etc.) to the point of bringing about a complete change of civilization and probably demanding a complete re-founding of the political regime. Without cultural revolution, the probability of such an operation succeeding is close to zero. The people and a large part of the bourgeoisie are kept in almost complete ignorance of the bankrupt state in which our finances find themselves. Reforms are marginal and there is no one with sufficient authority to get people around a table to share the losses fairly.

For the time being, therefore, the French can sustain neither their ills nor their remedies. We will inevitably have to go through a time of chaos, from which another power will emerge. But even such a power will only be able to reset the country if it has the indispensable cultural vision. Because you only have power if you have authority. And authority comes from culture. Postmodern culture only offers authority to deconstruct. We have taken the wrong path. We need to rediscover the Absolute, God, reason, nature, etc. And the true man God, the Christ. He has His full rightful place in a humanist society.

In conclusion I would say this: if France is France, immigrants will never be a danger to her. Not even if they are Muslims. France's fault is that she is not France. Her mission is to liberate herself to become what she is again, and to play her role without arrogance, without contempt for others, in a noble and fraternal way, in the magnificent concert of the nations of Europe, so that Europe can re-enter History—and this is the condition of world peace.

---

