

# Trials and Tribulations of a twentysomething

I will apologize now to any reader who finds this generational battle that is taking place in the minds of the fortysomethings to be a tad blasé. We, the definitive twentysomethings, did not start this campaign to create a generation gap, and we are not perpetuating the movement either, but someone must come to the defense of a group consistently being harassed for not conforming to the labels that have been placed upon it. If we had started this battle it would not have gone too far. "They" are running the magazines and television networks of this country, so they are the obvious group to blame.

I was prompted to write on this subject once again upon reading January's GQ magazine and an article in the Saturday, January 9th edition of The Globe and Mail entitled "The Twentysomething Myth". In GQ there was an article concerning the nostalgia of the 1990's towards any time other than the present. The author also tied into this the fact that the twentysomethings don't really have an era to call our own because the present is such a such an overwhelming mixture of past times. It goes on to picture young, tie-dye clad Americans at a Grateful Dead concert. Simply because the youth of today can appreciate music and art from the past does not necessarily translate into the idea that we would all sell our souls to be a hippy in 1968. The article then moved onto talking about the resurgence of unnatural fibres (what?) in clothing and Ann Margaret (who?) being back on whatever scene she is known for once being on. These items are of little importance to a collection of shallow X-ers though, so I will continue on talking about us.

It was the article in the Globe that really brought to my attention the lack of understanding afforded to our generation by those a couple of decades older. At least I am assuming the author of this article was older, for if he is less than thirty he really should get in touch with reality and his generation. The article, written by a journalist from The New Republic, focused primarily on which label our generation is deserving of. The author, a representative of all facets of social illiteracy, discusses whether we fit the description of being called the "MTV generation", "the generation X" as coined by Douglas Copeland, or as "slackers" introduced by screenwriter Richard Linklater.

It is not this discussion in its primary sense that makes me angry, it is what is said after the most suitable label has been talked about. What causes certain concern with me -

and it should with you - is the ensuing discussion. After providing the reader with these labels and with reasons forcing one to believe that they are correct, if not necessary, in defining the twentyomething generation, the author, Alexander Star, goes on to say that we actually lack a genuine existence and cannot do anything collective in order to make a change. This is where he loses all journalistic credibility in this slacker's opinion.

How can we be expected to conform to certain labels such as the "MTV generation" when people such as this are telling us we do not know who we are and do not stand collectively for anything? Maybe we don't know who we are, and maybe we don't really care. We are twenty... years old and it is somewhat difficult to form a generational niche in a society that has already told us how to behave, how to think, and how to vote. Those in the midst of their forties should not attempt to define us and then tell us we are not who and what we believe. Those in their forties should also remember that very soon we will have control over the mass media and pop culture industry and then we will tell them just who we are. Television network execs question why generationally conscious programmes such as Melrose Place are failing and the answer is the fact that the characters in these shows are not worthy or realistic repre-

sentatives of our generation.

I am not going to profess to having some sort of aversion to these generational labels they are unavoidable, and those mentioned previously don't seem so constraining. It is discouraging, though, having those beyond the realm of our generation saying that because we hold an appreciation for the movements of the 1960's and for the music and styles of that era that we would like nothing more than to be there. Sorry, they are wrong. By living in the nineties we are given the best of everything. It is bizarre that the fortysomethings are forcing a gap between themselves and the generation that has come to appreciate, but not emulate, its past actions and contributions to society.

It is perhaps due to the fact that the two generations in question are simply too much alike. After all, should it not be expected? The fortysomethings raised the twentysomethings into younger versions of themselves. It's called parenting. I am also sure that there is jealousy involved in this conflict that stayed in the closet until 1990 when Time coined us the twentysomethings and the battle began. The fortysomethings have had their day and as they see us suddenly becoming a very powerful social class they become nostalgic for the days in which everyone answered to them. Woodstock was twenty four years ago. Get over it. ●

