



by Chloe Town
MONTREAL (CUP)--

The 'Generation X' mythology was vaguely compelling at first. It really was. Fashioning 'McJob'-trauma and game-show banter as an ideology was hard to resist. So was the chance to further lambaste creepy fortysomethings who still pine for their (pre-sellout) hippie days. But that was all before I realized that the most intriguing aspect of the Gen X phenomenon is the fact that it refuses to go away.

For over a year now we have been threatened and shamed into fearing the impending crisis of a "New Generation Gap". A tirade of magazine articles (*Time*, *Details*, *The Atlantic*), newspaper editorials (hundreds across the continent - just add mine to the pyre) and radio shows (CBC had an hour on 'Morningside' and 'Centrepoint' last week) have successfully duped many of us into believing the rhetoric that Xers are a disillusioned, articulate mass of restless, apathetic, angst-wrought youths.

Now aside from the more obvious objections I may have for this character sketch, I have one big bone to pick with this trend. Far, far too often this high-horse pontificating has been done by didactic, belligerent old-folk -- leaving no room for their victim's response. While they gleefully flay us alive, we are left with no option but to meekly whimper in the sidelines. Figures. Isn't it just like those narcissistic Boomers to, once again, slip their way into the limelight -- even when the talk is about *us*.

My suspicion is that most of this Gen X hype has been fabricated and sustained as a means of 'marketing the millennium'. Through labelling and packaging our generation as lame and unthreatening, we become an easy colour-by-number outlook for the 21st century. Not only are we pigeonholed en masse, but we are targeted to appease the fear of young-blood competition for Boomers.

What was once a charming metaphor for a generation's frustration with mall-culture and a dwindling job-market has clearly festered into our exploitative enemy. And since I don't accept for one minute that "we", as a generation, can be defined by this or any other terminology, I'd really like to see you try to can the X lingo.

And as for that grunge thing I've heard so much about, don't get me started. ●