

Mind Chains: A Captive Generation

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A popular adage of my youth was, "don't trust anyone over thirty!" Those days saw the youth at the vanguard of reform, social change and social justice, which they succeeded in achieving to a large degree, if only for a brief period. Today, however, we could comfortably reverse that adage to, 'don't trust anyone under thirty!'

The reason is simple -- with very few exceptions, the under thirties group are the digitally captured, alienated, 'ME' generation of self-seeking hedonists without a concept of the 'other' let alone empathy for the plight of those less fortunate than themselves. They are supremely selfish though they would deny the accusation; this is the 'all about ME' generation of desperados seeking acceptance, recognition and a sense of belonging, which is denied them by the digital media to which they are completely addicted and enslaved -- ask them why they legally surrender their sovereignty/identity/freedom to unknown third parties and willingly publish the most personal information about themselves on 'social networks' in order to have digital 'friends,' which are not friends at all; such is the extreme desperation that is characteristic of this supremely (digitally) alienated generation.

This tragic group attempts to compensate for their instinctual deprivations by seeking fame or recognition, but the quest is a dream, a chimera, sold to them by the mass media that created and enslaves them; they cling desperately to the illusory belief/hope that they will be famous (for fifteen minutes) -- a throw-away gimmick line coined by pop artist, Andy Warhol, but made popular by the corporate mass media.

It is not surprising that this is the least intellectually and socially capable of the generations, their memories were designed to be wiped clean every 24 hours to accommodate the next 24 hours of fabricated news/media fictional 'realities' -- also consider the profound effect of a 150 character-limit micro-blogging medium such as Twitter, the ability to comprehend the many hidden and complex themes in great literary masterpieces and acclaimed novels is destroyed by these popular micro-blogging mediums; a social commentator recently asked members of the 'ME gen' about their lack of cultural and historical knowledge, "we don't do books," was the tragic though not unexpected response!

I recently questioned a broad spectrum demographic of this generation regarding the numerous criminal injustices of these times. Their typical response was, "what can 'I' do?" Of course, individually, very little but the powerful 'WE' social option/concept didn't enter their minds.

But perhaps the most appalling and striking characteristic of this lost, powerless, generation of passive consumers is their fascination with electro-gadgets and the digital 'toys' upon which they depend -- they line up for blocks to purchase the latest smartphone or other portable digital device. But what else could we expect from this well-trained, socially captured generation of not very beautiful losers?

