

Time stereotype doesn't fit

If you're twentysome years old, like myself, you have problems. You can't make decisions, and you have no one to look up to, no style and no attention span, to name just a few.

You, like myself, are lost. But now, thanks to *Time* magazine, we are found.

In the July 16 issue, our saviors explained all our problems in seven neat pages with spiffy, informative graphics and photos at no extra cost. Everything is spelled out in this seven-page biography of the twentysome-million people labeled the "twentysomething generation."



Brian Shellito

Since I was one of the lucky few to have picked up the issue between MTV videos, it is now my duty to spread the word to all my ignorant brethren. Allow me now to explain in a nutshell what we come to understand as our destiny.

First, we must postpone growing up as long as possible and partake of such frivolous things as world travel and extended schooling. Although the most important thing to us eventually will be a marriage that shall last for eternity, we must postpone it until our wanderlust has been satisfied. Also, we must detach ourselves from any form of strong commitment, because it is imperative that we not get hurt in any of our relationships.

Some of us are contemplating what to include in our resumes. STOP NOW! Any sort of gainful employment should be the second-to-last item on your list--the last being a mate, of course. We must be very careful because our generation is especially prone to the dreaded "burn out" syndrome.

Those of us who are near graduation must find a suitable place to keep a diploma. The best options are to carefully place one in the bottom of a parakeet's cage, or for those who don't own a bird, throw it in a recycled paper bin. It really doesn't matter, as long as it goes to some useful purpose. No one at the gas station graduates will work at will

ever care to see a diploma anyway.

I mentioned recycling. This is also import as a peripheral concept. We know that we will not achieve the amount of world change that our ancestors, the hippies, did. However, it is important to mention such things as recycling occasionally, so we appear to be concerned. Actually, it is a fact that somewhere down the evolutionary road, we have lost the knowledge of how to make a difference. But this is not as serious as it sounds, because we have no clear issues in our society to focus on anyway.

One last thing we must understand is that we have not made and likely will not ever establish a culture of our own. We should be content to know that all our fashion and music has been handed down to us. For us, imagination has no relevance or importance because all we need already has been given to us.

There it is. This is our destiny in life. Everyone that is willing to follow it please stand up. Now, all of you that have guns handy, please shoot the people who are standing.

Those who felt the need to put on knee-high boots while reading this, you can safely take them off now.

What I really want to know from all the thirtysomething and fortysomething and other old farts is: Haven't you learned anything yet? You cannot stereotype an entire generation. Some of the babbling I just did may be closer to the truth than we like to admit, but no one can possibly believe it is the rule rather than the exception. From this article, *Time* seems to think it is the rule.

I look around me at my peers, and I see a diverse group of people. They dress differently, act differently and value differently.

Maybe it's time for psychologists to realize that people cannot be lumped into an orderly column graph to file into some neat report on human nature. If anything should define our generation, let it be the loss of a need to categorize those around us. If we could realize this, then maybe, just maybe, we would be a lot closer to eliminating bigotry and finding that intrinsically we are all frailly human.

Shellito is a junior biology major and the Daily Nebraskan art director and editorial cartoonist.



Music labels offer tool, not responsibility

Jana Pedersen's editorial in the July 19, 1990, *Daily Nebraskan* demands a response. Her logic is so flawed that one wonders whether she has taken the time to seriously consider her position.

She claims that the Louisiana Legislature's attempt to give parents a tool to assist them in their responsibility to monitor the albums their children purchase "only takes their responsibility away and gives it to record shop owners." She fails to explain exactly how warning labels on potentially offensive material will transfer such responsibility. Her logic is like saying that adding a radar receiver to a jet fighter to warn the pilot of incoming enemy missiles will take away his responsibility to protect his aircraft.

Further, she says that "the decision of what is and is not offensive is also taken away from parents and put in the hands of the state." Excuse me, but I thought that the purpose of the labels was to warn of "potentially offensive material." I fail to see how the presence or absence of such a label dictates to the customer whether the material is or is not offensive. It is a tool, similar to the tool which rates motion pictures according to their potential to offend. Such a tool could be very helpful not only to parents, but also to youth who have moral standards of their own.

She concludes with an observation that "warnings won't stop kids from borrowing labeled items." While this is undoubtedly true, it is irrelevant. Does she also think we should do away with motion picture ratings because some kids borrow R-rated video tapes? Should we do away with warning labels on cigarette packages and laws against selling them to minors because some kids still smoke? I'm

sorry, but I don't see what that has to do with the issue.

It is obvious that Ms. Pedersen has little appreciation of at least two important considerations: the difficulty of the task facing parents, and the magnitude of the "offensive lyrics" problem. With hundreds upon hundreds of bands and albums, exactly how does she propose that par

opinion READER

ents fill this responsibility she correctly says is theirs? Are they supposed to purchase every album in the store, listen to each song, make a transcript of the words and then judge them one by one? I believe that purchasers of music deserve advance warning of what it contains before they fork out \$16 for the CD. We require manufacturers of foods to display the contents on the package so we can make an informed decision at the point of purchase. Do our ears deserve less than our mouths?

This is not merely some insignificant issue to be scoffed at and shrugged off. There are albums being sold to minors which not only graphically portray but actively promote Satanism, suicide, rape, gang rape, incest, torture, murder, mass murder and every other imaginable and unimaginable crime and perversion . . .

I personally believe that propaganda of such a nature does not fall under the protection of the First Amendment. Freedom of speech is not, has never been and cannot be absolute. For example, it is against the law to yell "fire" in a crowded theater. It is not lawful to joke about having a gun at an airport security check. It is not a constitutional right to lie in a court of law. Such speech is

prohibited because freedom of expression must be carefully weighed against the potential harm to society of certain forms of speech. (It is more than slightly ironic that my freedom of speech does not extend to prayer in school because it might offend someone else, while certain rock stars' prayers to Satan at a school dance are apparently protected, regardless of how they offend me or my children.)

I believe that audio pornography is as much a threat to young minds as is visual pornography. If it is not outlawed, at the very least it should be regulated. The purchase of visual pornography is restricted to adults over the age of 21; why not verbal pornography? And certain types of visual pornography are prohibited altogether ("kiddie" porn, violent porn, etc.). Why are there no such restrictions on music?

While the motion picture industry can hardly be called a bastion of morality, at least they have seen fit to voluntarily offer parents a tool to warn them of potentially offensive material ("no one under 17 admitted without parent," "parents strongly cautioned," etc.). The G, PG, PG-13, R and X ratings hardly take away anyone's right to judge what is or is not offensive, nor does it take away parents' responsibility to monitor the shows their children see. It is a tool; an imperfect one, to be sure, but a useful one, nonetheless. If the music industry is unwilling to provide such a tool voluntarily, it should be forced to do so by legislation. As a parent who does take his responsibility seriously, I applaud the efforts of the Louisiana Legislature.

Irvin Tom Nelson
graduate student
accounting

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