



A Boomer on What's Wrong With Millennials. But What's Wrong With Boomers?

An article was recently penned titled “A Baby Boomer Explains What’s Wrong with Millennials.” This could, possibly, be followed by hearing a Silent Generation member explain what’s wrong with Boomers, although, if such people really are silent, I suppose we won’t hear anything. But perhaps what’s truly necessary is to transcend generation-constrained thinking and explain what’s wrong with the typical concept of generational blame.



Selwyn Duke

In his article on Millennials, writer Rob Jenkins makes some good points. “If you’re over 50,” he [begins](#), “you might remember occasionally seeing small children throw temper tantrums in public, 25 or 30 years ago, and wondering what those kids would be like when they grew up.”

“Well, now you know.”

“The problem is twofold,” he continues. “First, we Baby Boomers raised a generation of selfish, entitled brats.... Second, in their entitled brattiness, an alarming percentage of that generation — the Millennials — has embraced socialism.”

It’s not only that socialism is evil, mentions Jenkins — its proponents murdered approximately 100 million people during the 20th century — it’s also childish. The ideology’s “adherents seem perpetually stuck in preschool, demanding that everyone receive exactly the same number of cookies and insisting that ‘it’s not fair’ that Suzy is prettier, Jimmy can run faster, and Rachael is better at flashcards,” is how Jenkins puts it.

More ironic still, “most young people these days seem to desire two things above all else: to live in a socialist utopia and to become internet millionaires — completely oblivious to the reality that those two pipe dreams cancel each other out,” Jenkins writes a sentence later. “Entrepreneurship requires free markets, which is why there are no hipsters happily blogging away for six-figure salaries in Caracas or Havana coffee shops.”

Of course, wanting what you want in defiance of all reason reflects childishness. This gets at Jenkins’s point: Many Millennials have been so coddled, raised so permissively, that they’ve never been forced to grow up. Often not having learned to delay gratification and not having been told “No!” very much, they can’t tolerate it when the market says “No!” and doesn’t quickly gratify them. (“I should have that nice house and 300k salary right out of college!”)

In fact, one way to understand leftists, and it can be framed in at least a few ways, is that they’re overgrown children. They’re impulsive like children, operate emotionally and ignore reason like children, kowtow to their whimsy like children, and have temper tantrums like children. Jenkins is correct, too, in his implication that the job of parents is to *civilize* their kids. Failure in this can leave society with barbarians, morally speaking, who happen to have smartphones.



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Yet before we lower the boom (and the Boomer) on the younger, remember that the latter have their generational putdowns, too — “OK, Boomer!” used to mock their elders’ attitudes, comes to mind. Then there’s the [documentary *Generation Zero*](#), which puts the onus for the 2007-’08 financial crisis and our general social decay on the Boomers. As Steve Bannon, its writer and director and a Boomer himself, put it, his is “the most spoiled, most self-centered, most narcissistic generation the country’s ever produced.”

We should also ask when excoriating the next generation, however: Who raised them? The Boomers raised the Millennials, and who raised the “spoiled” Boomers?

The “Greatest Generation” did.

Ahem.

Of course, it’s typical for people to lament the next generation’s (and sometimes the former one’s) character. Yet two mistakes are often made here. The first is to figure that since every generation thus gripes — and since this phenomenon is evident (or at least seems to be) in many times and civilizations — it’s all just perception and empty talk. “The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

The second mistake is to reflexively assume that one’s own generation is the gold standard — the problem is those other people.

As to the first error, if people essentially didn’t change character-wise, it’s hard to imagine why civilizations would change, radically, and rise, mature, plateau, decline, and fall. Rome should still be the world’s hegemon.

In reality, the sameness assumption is much like hearing an octogenarian complain about aches and pains and declining vigor and saying, “Oh, old men always say that, in every time and place. Blah, blah, blah! So there can’t be anything to it!”

Of course, it’s a repeated lament because aging is a repeating process. Likewise, generation-oriented lamentation is repeated also because of a repeating process: civilizational aging — that aforementioned rise-to-fall life cycle.

Viewing one’s own generation as ideal is common because, just as with a tadpole spawned in a polluted pond, a person is accustomed to the status quo, to the norms, social codes, traditions, and conventions he’s raised with — and often is inured to their negative aspects. Then, when seeing a pond polluted differently or more so, he recoils. Even a cleaner pond may strike him as odd, as he mistakes the purity for banality (“That’s booring!!”).

Yet our own generation’s norms will more likely be our standard for goodness if, having fallen victim to relativism and perceiving no absolutes, they’re *all we have*. We of course then will view our generation as ideal because it will be our yardstick for rectitude, and how can something not conform to itself?

It’s much as with how, absent stopwatches, we couldn’t know whether recent generations’ running records are faster; all we’d have are opinions and chronological chauvinism.

Without a “morality stopwatch,” the reality is that anyone slamming another generation is operating based on feelings, or a *sense*; oh, this sense may be right or wrong, but that’s all it is. Yet there is a morality stopwatch. It’s called “Truth.”

Defining it further, elements of Truth are those objectively good moral habits called *virtues*. A comprehensive list would be: Faith, Hope, Honesty, Charity, Courage, Justice, Temperance, Prudence,



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Chastity, Diligence, Patience, Kindness, Forgiveness, Humility, and Love.

Space constraints preclude a thorough examination here of a given generation's character. But consider the "socialist" lament that "'it's not fair' that Suzy is prettier, Jimmy can run faster, and Rachael is better at flashcards." Those issuing it are almost never upset when *they're* superior in an area. Rather, disturbed that other people have *more than they do*, they're evidencing why British statesman Winston Churchill called socialism "the gospel of envy." Note, however, that the Deadly Sin of envy is forestalled by the virtue of Kindness.

In other words, "civilizing" children is not a mysterious process: It literally means *inculcating them with virtue*. Insofar as this isn't done, they'll be vice-ridden creatures attracted to a lie (socialism or something else) that corresponds to and preys upon their wanting character. It is what civilization's fate hinges upon.

Having the Virtue Yardstick also means that we can intelligently rate the generations. And applying it makes quite clear that we've experienced a steady degeneration of the generations for a long time. If anything, the greatest generations were the ones that founded and built our nation. But the American pond has become progressively more polluted over time and now is, as communist agitator Willi Münzenberg [reportedly hoped](#) it would become, "so corrupt that it stinks."

Slamming other generations, however, without rightly diagnosing the problem won't bring anything but division. We instead need to effect the cure, which is to rediscover God, Truth, and Virtue.



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