



The Problems  
of  
Separation

essays  
& diatribes

mitchell john warren

## The Control Generation.

I often use this term when speaking and writing - generally to those younger than me\* - so I suppose I should make the attempt at explaining just what it is that I mean by Control Generation.

By this term I mean, the generation that has within it the most discretionary power, the most power to alter, to change and direct in a Democratic Society. This group of people - my Control Generation - has all the natural power in any society and has always had this power in all societies throughout history and I refer to this group as a generation because they are a clearly definable group, or set, within a society though it is a multi-generational set. And as I am concerned about Democracy I will try to confine my explanation to the political systems that like to refer to themselves as democratic - even though it is obvious that many of them are not.

This Control Generation are those who make up the majority of voters. Those of voting age. Our modern world says, or rather, puts artificial limits on this voting age. Here in Australia there is currently some debate as to whether this voting age should be lowered & and this discussion has been the prompt for this essay. The current voting age here in Australia is 18 years until death. My assertion is, however, that even now, the Control Generation is that from the lower limit to 60 years of age.

Why? The first part of my answer should be obvious in that those under 18 years of age don't get any say in their futures nor in the current management of an Earth that they must inherit. This job is done by their elders and is supposed to be exercised with their future in mind. So far so good ...

My placing of the upper age at 60 years harks back to the time before Democracy and Science removed the natural processes of the evolutionary selection of voters - when sickness, infirmity and age put limitations on man. I say here Democracy because even without our progress in science and technology, Democratic Theory says that everyone gets a say in the process. Everyone of course, doesn't include those not yet of voting age - those that are not yet judged to have sufficient

control over their emotions nor to have sufficient knowledge of the workings of man - to be able to responsibly exercise a control over those that are judged to have this emotional control, knowledge and responsibility.

So we have this group - my Control Generation - who on mass exercise the most control over the voting process. They can bring the most weight into the decision process. They, in fact, both make and break democracy. Their votes can be considered to be more valuable, to be bought, and sold, for more. They don't always realise this, but in the so called democracies they are the ones to whom the 'pitch of life' is, and should be made. Of course this isn't always the way the elected representatives approach the game .. the less the democracy is a true democracy the less consideration the Control Generation needs to be given - in reality the power brokers play one generation off against the other. In Australia's form of demockracy, in this early part of the 21st Century, only a small part, and usually those at the higher aged end of the Control Generation really get the pitch, the consideration, because the younger ones have lost the ability to think further ahead than their elders want them to and because technology has given them a sense that their self is best serviced by ignorance and inaction. Also, gradually over the past decade or two the elder generations have seen fit to devalue the education system and remove anything - that in their view - could spoil the view of life. The ignorance of the first generation of this new millennia has been aided by the hidden guilt of the last generations of the Second Enlightenment - the late 20thC.

Those over the age of 60 - And I hear, 'there is a heap of us too!' and, Yes there are - but many of this over 60 age group are no longer really interested in the process. And it is the process that is the important thing. The world that they have built only needs to last them til their time is out - their death. The old saying, that you can't take it with you, is at work here. The Future of the Earth no longer concerns them as long as it lasts - as it is - for their time. The future of the Earth means the future of their Earth. They are much more interested in maintaining the status quo, and they will only really pull together and throw their weight into the election process when the desires of youth are seen as a threat to this status quo - especially if they find themselves in a position that they judge to be good, for them, now. Historically this over 60 age group do everything in their power to

curtail the power of those in the prime of their lives - youth. This is natural when the political system only places human value on the now. But the situation is unnatural. It's an artificial situation and it's unjust. On top of this, they are weary of debate & their vision is by necessity narrowed. They don't want to know of the problems facing the World, they don't want to be reminded of the failures, missed opportunities and broken promises of their youth - their fortunes were enabled by these missed opportunities and their failures were only failures if the future is seen to be further away than their personal futures - that's for youth, and it no longer concerns them. They want to be left alone with their temporal fortunes, facing the sunset with the warmth of the sun in their eyes. Their motivation is low and as I've said, their vision is narrow.

So now the young heads are nodding and some of the old heads have at least sat up and begun to see where it is that I am going ... Again.

In times of old, times when humans were still a part of the Earth's evolutionary process, before we had risen up and become gods and altered the natural scheme of things. Not just through our burning and wasting of the land, but through our technological advances in science which have enabled those humans who were once sick and or old, who would have died through the process of nature, to live for longer and longer. And through these same so called advances, we now bring to life many sick and unhealthy humans who also would have died as a part of a healthy natural process. I say healthy here because no matter what you think about this enabling and prolonging of human life it is an unnatural and unhealthy process for the Earth we inhabit. In the times of old it was the Control Generation that fought the battles and wars that brought both the progression of technology and the natural limiting of life. And because force of arms really was the vote of these pre-democratic times it served as a useful way to curtail the curtailment of the power of the old and frail. They had to really think and find ways to keep the Control Generation on side .. through deceit and imposed ignorance. Democracy has supposedly changed this, so that now, the weight of age is an artificially imposed weight in the power selection process, it is an imposed burden upon the Earth we live on.

So while I have the heads of youth nodding and It's now known that I'm a doddering old fool devoid of weight to throw into the decisions of a new and

future society & while I acknowledge that it is unlikely that the Control Generation feels any necessity to share some of my wisdom ... I still have some small strength, enough to pass my knowledge and wisdom into the wind where it may or may not be taken up by youth.

And now as I come to the real point of this essay and bring some ancient wisdom to a truly modern problem, to strive, to seek to find and not to yield as Tennyson's Ulysses has said. And because the only hope to save the Earth is to start with a truer form of democracy or to go back to fighting wars the old way, as it doesn't appear to me that we have left a natural time to experiment with utopian outcomes, that in any case, the elders will do everything in their power to resist. Geological time is now despite our science and technology.

So if you can try again and revisit Democracy and exercise your weight with a little more far sighted vision and a little more physical action than my generation has, I would ask you to consider this ...

... By all means lower the voting age and allow a bigger portion of under developed emotion into the Control Generation, because this under developed emotion is also less corrupt and braver. It has the nobility of youthful ideals in it. It has both more and less to lose in its exercise or power within a Democracy. But consider this also, shut off the membership to the Control Generation at 55 years of age. Now I have alot of old heads nodding, perhaps they have even sat upright and turned their eyes from the sun, to see as they used to ...

Why? Because if you shut off the exercise of power to those whose main interest is in the protection of their own self interested, narrow vision of your future, and of the Earth on which you must build your future on, they will be entirely reliant on the decisions they make when as members of the Control Generation they still have some nobility of ideals and purposeful emotion to add to the power they exercise ... Before the system swallows them up and corrupts them. Before they have built their wealth, and assumed their privilege, from the resources of the future.

*" .. suprainstinctual survival strategies can generate (out of constraints) something probably unique to humans: a moral point of view that, on occasion, can transcend the interest of the immediate group and even the species." - Antonio Damasio on Altruism & Free Will.*

They will exercise that power knowing it's a temporary power and therefore, with a better view to the future because their old age will be reliant on decisions they make as members of the Control Generation. They will exercise their democratic duty with a greater degree of responsibility for a shared and enduring future - with a broader and longer vision into the future. Now since everyone is now sitting up .. and before the carnage begins, I would like to add that I'm not suggesting that only members of the Control Generation are able to be elected to positions of trust within this rejuvenated Democracy. The wisdom and knowledge that - regardless of the supersonic speed of science and technology - can only be gained through age, through actually living life is useful to both the present and to the future. Without this history there is no tempering of the present with which to build a better and enduring future for all. Without this history, we have no mistakes whose consequence is known with which to manage the present .. in the interest of the future.

So elect elders but curtail their power to act in the present - their present is narrow despite their wisdom - but remember that the future of youth is age. Every member of the Control Generation will sooner or later be at the mercy of a Control Generation that they are no longer a member of. It's a thought worth thinking on - is it not?

An added suggestion, that with lowering the entry age to 16 and lowering the age of actual participation to 55 years in the Control Generation we also cap the age where one human being can sit in judgement on another to 70 years of age. Why? Because if you are healthy and happy at 70 you deserve to be looked after with dignity and in safety, without the burden of a public duty, and to do as you wish with your remaining years without being seen as a liability. And, because there will be a sufficient number of Control Generationers who are looking down the barrel of no longer having direct control over the lives of youth, the common

future and on the Earth we must share, and who should have exercised their powers responsibly, with an eye to both their immediate futures and to the future of the Earth.

And what's more, that no one should sit on a jury who is more than 10 years older than the person being judged .. but I would suggest that there was a panel of elders - those in the upper age of public life - who cannot cast a vote but who should be consulted by the empanelled jury before their final decision. And that this consultative panel should be acceptable to the accused, the accuser and the jury. Science Fiction and Utopian? Perhaps, but where else do you go?

Mitchell Warren October 2018

\*I am 56 years old and do not vote. Not through desire but through the circumstance, and trick, of political disenfranchisement.