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The Pacifican

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Aug 7, 2020 · 3 min read

Generation Z and the Motion for Progress:

How a Generation who Grew Up on Dystopian Novels and Book are Changing the World

By: Chelsea Igtanloc

With movements such as Black Lives Matter, March for Our Lives, and United We Dream, Generation- Z is at the front lines advocating for social change for racial injustices all across the country. And although it's crazy to find adolescents marching in the streets and calling out politicians and governments, it should not come off as surprising at all. In fact, it makes complete sense that our generation is speaking up and making movements to change nonfunctioning systems that have been in place for too long. BLM, United We Dream, March for Our Lives, and countless other youth-led movements today fuel the fire for change in this world, but what do you expect from young adults who grew up on novels, movies, and even musicals based on that very concept? Change was simply never a foreign concept to us, since we were able to learn about it through the power of our own library cards.

Novels like Harry Potter, the Hunger Games, Percy Jackson, and Divergent fueled this generation. These novels all center around a common theme: teenagers fighting against some form of evil or oppression and saving the world. From books to movies to halloween costumes and fanfiction- Gen Z idolized characters such as Tris Prior and Katniss Everdeen. In a study conducted in 2016, it showed that 49% of teenagers ranging from 15–17 in the United States have read the Harry Potter series. I remember most of my own middle school conversations revolved around which faction we would be a part of and what our roles would be in helping the protagonists. We visualized and imagined our role as activists in their society, but little did we know that it was the blueprint for what would be our own. A large part goes into seeing ourselves in the main characters and how (even though these were works of fiction) they were able to go from being 'just regular teenagers' to being the

catalyst for a new society. These fictitious people gave us real hope and the ultimate power to believe in ourselves, the ingredients to what makes a powerful movement.

When you start seeing young people your age change the world, you start to think you can too. Pairing that energy with this generation's most powerful tool, social media, this generation has proven unstoppable. Youth use social media in every which way: connecting to people worldwide, posting their truths on their accounts, and finding resources that they might not have seen without apps. So many opportunities at our fingertips and it only makes sense to use them to their fullest extent. Youth and young adults take all of their talents and combine them in a communal effort for change. Artists making infographics with information that demands attention, poets and writers putting such complex emotions and needs into words, and speakers giving voice to those who feel like they may not have one. This is what the characters in the books, movies, and shows we idolized when we were younger did, so it makes that we do the same. Power lies in the youth and young adults of today and the works that fueled their upbringings. Continue the efforts so that the youth and young adults of tomorrow can still see Katniss Everdeen and Tris Prior alive beyond the pages.



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Aug 7, 2020 · 3 min read

The New Normal

By: Alex Abley

By the time one reaches university, a student can feel like they have seen it all. The things we experience leading up to this level, such as figuring out how to calculate numbers or write elaborative essays have prepared us for all kinds of academic curveballs that life throws our way. When COVID-19 first entered into the equation, the solution appeared to be almost entirely unsolvable. The virus seemed to come out of nowhere, like something out of a Sci-Fi fan sequence, completely unimaginable to us. It is apparent that no amount of educational background could ever foresee the problems that a pandemic could ultimately unravel. The truth of the matter, was that none us saw it coming.

Among other shaky circumstances brought on by the waves of the pandemic, one thing however, did in fact remain stable. Familiarity can often times be an overlooked expression, but in times of hardships, it can be a great source of comfort to many. There was much buzz surrounding the fate of the university setting and what exactly an education in a post-pandemic world would look like. With endless amounts of information coming out every day, it was a daunting reality that many would have to consider, let alone face. Discussions surrounding the overall safety and well-being of faculty, staff, and students was not going to be muted. University of the Pacific not only delivered in providing a sense of community, but was able to create something of a normal education in a not-so-normal situation.

“Normal” can look differently to many, and replicating a strong sense of familiarity would be no easy task. Challenges would arise, but the end result would turn out to be a most rewarding outcome. Being a student at Pacific has been an incredible journey filled with amazing experiences and established connections that have only enhanced the person I am becoming. As a student, crunching numbers and jotting down information for research papers could happen almost anywhere, but a sense of community perhaps, is a rare thing to come by. Transitioning to remote learning has brought forth an enriching experience that

has left the classroom and entered computer screens all across the world. During the spring semester, professors from every course reimagined the environment without ever compromising the strong feeling of belonging. Connection and creativity were still skills that made navigating remote learning feel recognizable as a new routine that would be required for all to adjust around, the “new normal.”

Being an English major, the significance of words truly became more treasured in these troubling times. The need for expression in the form of colloquy and stringing together sentences to analyze works of literature in a classroom still managed to carry on regardless of the setting. I recall early on in the spring semester giving a presentation on the history behind the word, cyber. Ironically, it would become a word turned into a world where I was quite literally learning my education virtually. Even in this setting, communication remained prevalent in Pacific’s mission to deliver community while fulfilling its promise. Being able to engage with my professors and fellow students remained as prominent as ever, if not more. It was humbling to see that despite the storm, our community was perhaps put to a test to see how well we could withstand the conditions. I am confident in saying that Pacific passed with flying colors. Every class session in remote learning produced an opportunity to explore education from the other side of the lens, shifting the perspective by allowing a creative space to see things from another view. The view in question might have not have been an ideal situation, but it was nonetheless a climb Pacific conquered together as one. There are some things in life no amount of planning can prepare us for, but hope remains and that is a future that looks promising.



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Aug 20, 2020 · 6 min read

The Sad Reality of the Two Party System

By: Jasmin Prasad

There is undoubtedly large amounts of tension brewing between the left and right — a result of a myriad of differing opinions on how to handle COVID-19 and all too common racial injustices. The stark dichotomy between the two parties will only intensify as we near the presidential election date, and perhaps the most common means of predicting what will ensue in such an unprecedented election is examined through voting psychology of a two party system election. The two party system — which will be analyzed later — has effectively trapped voters into feeling that they have to vote for one of the *only* two candidates. This is sadly a reality that must be accepted but can and will be criticized; it just means that change happens much more slowly than we would like it to.

According to an article written by “ABC News,” the most common motivation to vote is not out of altruism, out of a sense of American responsibility, or even out of overwhelming support for any one candidate: the motivation is *hatred*. Hatred of a candidate and the subsequent attribution of a villain identity to said candidate most definitely makes an overwhelming case to either vote for “the other side,” or live in an America where the villain is in control — a circumstance that certainly does not align with pompous American fairy tales. But what happens when there are villains on both sides? What happens when we are limited to placing our faith in either Vice President Joe Biden or current President Donald Trump?

Neither Biden or Trump have the wherewithal to play the “hero” in the 2020 election. We have all witnessed the alarming disregard of COVID-19 by the presidential office who would like to claim that COVID-19 will “miraculously go away,” and who seem to take issue with hard facts and science. We have sadly also witnessed the dismissal of issues of race and police brutality — where there are only a couple of words given at a press conference and a photo op in front of church instead of tangible solutions. This is of course coupled with the fact that Trump has engaged in harmful and blatantly racist discourse towards people of color, bigotry, misogynistic comments, birtherism, has been accused of sexual misconduct by 25 women (as reported by “Business Insider”), and sadly the list of heinous behaviors goes on and on.

Biden however, is not exempt from large criticism either. Biden too has been accused of sexually assaulting Tara Reade and making uncomfortable and invading the personal space of 7 other women, as reported by “Business Insider.” Additionally, Biden assisted in authoring crime legislation in the 90’s that helped to facilitate three strike laws and expanded mandatory minimums for non-violent drug offenses; this created a cycle of incarceration for black men and women. Biden has also subscribed to a demeaning

stereotype of black men when, according to CNN, he described former President Obama as “the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and nice-looking guy,” maintaining that such a person could only be found in a “storybook.”

Of course, this isn't to say that any one candidate in America's history has been perfect. With Hillary Clinton, there was the Benghazi report and the infamous email scandal. With Mitt Romney, it was his “binders full of women,” and self-deportation plan. However, it seems as if years of discrepantly wayward behavior by candidates and even the President himself have highlighted a problem with the schematics of elections: the two party system.

The two party system effectively mandates that the votes from the electoral college only go to the two *main* parties — Democrat and Republican. Those who are third party candidates or independent will never win an election as they will never get votes from the electoral college. According to an article written by “PBS,” the candidates outside of the two parties face “limited media coverage to legal barriers and Congressional leadership rules... popular belief holds that a third-party candidate won't win an election so there is no need to give him or her publicity.” Collectively, this warrants that the American public is limited to only two candidates regardless of whether those two candidates are who the general public truly wants in office.

Undeniably, there are a large majority of people who are proponents of the two party system: which is not surprising as it is rooted in historical precedent. The two party system is also seen as convenient, where the fact that there are only two candidates is *actually* good because the common public would not have to engage in political discourse or research about a given candidates prior stances on groundbreaking issues or what they plan to do in the future (an error I believe many in the last election to have committed). More specifically, a common argument for a two party system is in the creation of parties that are overall centrist and prevent any sort of extreme overhaul of our norms and institutions. However, those who champion this belief don't understand that in the American context, this translates into a politic that would be considered “right of center” compared to the rest of the world (oftentimes, our moderate democrats would be considered conservative in Canada and some areas of Western Europe).

Other proponents claim that a two party system allows for a certain level of judicial predictability. To a certain degree, liberal and conservative justices may disagree on a whole host of issues but generally tend to see the role of the court as engaging in judicial review and tend to default to *stare decisis* — or letting decisions stand. The problem with *stare decisis* lies in the prevention of courts as being fully utilized as actual agents of change. Forgoing the idea that legal norms are to always be preserved would allow for these justices to stand up to injustices within laws as opposed to being tied to enforce laws as they are written.

To address the aforementioned question, there is in fact lower voter turnout when both candidates are unfavorable; the voter sees no point in casting a vote when the outcome of a disastrous state is inevitable either way (as reported by “ABC News”). Not surprisingly, in countries where there are multiple party systems and subsequently *multiple options*, the

percentage of voters is much higher than in the United States. As reported by the “PEW Research Center,” the U.S. is far behind other developed democratic states when it comes to the percentage of the voting age population that actually casts a vote; in 2016, only 56% of the U.S. voting age population voted whereas for Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands the percentages were 82.6%, 80.3%, and 77.3% respectively.

Clearly, there exists a correlation between the multitude of options available to a voter and the probability that they will vote, making the flaws with a two party system glaringly apparent. However, while criticisms and open discussions about the state of our electoral system are important as a means for change, it is also imperative to recognize that the two party system has been in place for centuries. Again, it is rooted in historical precedent and likely will not be changing anytime soon. And while voting psychology predicts that hating both candidates ultimately leads to lower voter turnout, I believe that the very reason it is critical to vote in this upcoming election is *because* both candidates are unfavorable.

Recognize that not voting because you don't like the candidate who represents your party is effectively a vote for the other side. Recognize that you are not only voting for whichever candidate you choose but also for policies and reform that will change the nation. I implore you to vote in this election to help protect the rights of every individual, regardless of their color, faith, gender, or sexual orientation — and don't let former Vice President Joe Biden or current President Donald Trump get in the way of that.