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Calculatrices interdites

L'usage de tout système électronique ou informatique est interdit dans cette épreuve.

Rédiger en anglais et en 400 mots une synthèse des documents proposés, qui devra obligatoirement comporter un titre. Indiquer avec précision, à la fin du travail, le nombre de mots utilisés (titre inclus), un écart de 10% en plus ou en moins sera accepté.

Ce sujet propose les 4 documents suivants :

- une illustration publiée dans *The Economist*, le 28 septembre 2013 ;
- une adaptation d'un article intitulé **Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation** publié dans *Time*, de JOEL STEIN, du 20 mai 2013 ;
- une adaptation d'un article publié dans le magazine *The Atlantic*, intitulé **The Persistent Myth of the Narcissistic Millennial**, de BROOKE LEA FOSTER, du 19 novembre 2014 ;
- un poème de JONATHAN REED, « **The lost generation** », paru en 2007.

L'ordre dans lequel se présentent les documents est aléatoire.



The Economist, 28 September 2013

I am about to do what old people have done throughout history: call those younger than me lazy, entitled, selfish and shallow. But I have studies! I have statistics! I have quotes from respected academics! Unlike my parents, my grandparents and my great-grandparents, I have proof.

Here's the cold, hard data: The incidence of narcissistic¹ personality disorder is nearly three times as high for people in their 20s as for the generation that's now 65 or older, according to the National Institutes of Health; 58% more college students scored higher on a narcissism scale in 2009 than in 1982. Millennials got so many participation trophies growing up that a recent study showed that 40% believe they should be promoted every two years, regardless of performance. They are fame-obsessed: three times as many school girls want to grow up to be a personal assistant to a famous person as want to be a Senator, according to a 2007 survey; four times as many would pick the assistant job over CEO of a major corporation. [...] Their development is stunted: more people ages 18 to 29 live with their parents than with a spouse, according to the 2012 Clark University Poll of Emerging Adults. And they are lazy. In 1992, the nonprofit Families and Work Institute reported that 80% of people under 23 wanted to one day have a job with greater responsibility; 10 years later, only 60% did.

Millennials consist, depending on whom you ask, of people born from 1980 to 2000. To put it more simply for them, since they grew up not having to do a lot of math in their heads, thanks to computers, the group is made up mostly of teens and 20-somethings. At 80 million strong, they are the biggest age grouping in American history. Each country's millennials are different, but because of globalization, social media, the exporting of Western culture and the speed of change, millennials worldwide are more similar to one another than to older generations within their nations. Even in China, where family history is more important than any individual, the Internet, urbanization and the one-child policy have created a generation as overconfident and self-involved as the Western one. And these aren't just rich-kid problems: poor millennials have even higher rates of narcissism, materialism and technology addiction in their ghetto-fabulous lives.

They are the most threatening and exciting generation since the baby boomers brought about social revolution, not because they're trying to take over the Establishment but because they're growing up

without one. The Industrial Revolution made individuals far more powerful—they could move to a city, start a business, read and form organizations. The information revolution has further empowered individuals by handing them the technology to compete against huge organizations: hackers vs. corporations, bloggers vs. newspapers, terrorists vs. nation-states, YouTube directors vs. studios, app-makers vs. entire industries. Millennials don't need us. That's why we're scared of them.

In the U.S., millennials are the children of baby boomers, who are also known as the Me Generation, who then produced the Me Me Me Generation, whose selfishness technology has only exacerbated. [...]

Millennials are interacting all day but almost entirely through a screen. You've seen them at bars, sitting next to one another and texting. They might look calm, but they're deeply anxious about missing out on something better. Seventy percent of them check their phones every hour, and many experience phantom pocket-vibration syndrome. "They're doing a behavior to reduce their anxiety," says Larry Rosen, a psychology professor at California State University at Dominguez Hills and the author of *iDisorder*. That constant search for a hit of dopamine ("Someone liked my status update!") reduces creativity. From 1966, when the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking were first administered, through the mid-1980s, creativity scores in children increased. Then they dropped, falling sharply in 1998. Scores on tests of empathy similarly fell sharply, starting in 2000, likely because of both a lack of face-to-face time and higher degrees of narcissism. Not only do millennials lack the kind of empathy that allows them to feel concerned for others, but they also have trouble even intellectually understanding others' points of view.

What they do understand is how to turn themselves into brands, with "friend" and "follower" tallies that serve as sales figures. As with most sales, positivity and confidence work best. "People are inflating themselves like balloons on Facebook," says W. Keith Campbell, a psychology professor at the University of Georgia, who has written three books about generational increases in narcissism. When everyone is telling you about their vacations, parties and promotions, you start to embellish your own life to keep up. If you do this well enough on Instagram, YouTube and Twitter, you can become a microcelebrity. [...]

¹ Someone who loves looking at themselves in the mirror is narcissistic.

In his pop-psychology book *The Narcissist Next Door: Understanding the Monster in Your Family, in Your Office, in Your Bed—in Your World*, Jeffrey Kluger argues that the popularity of the “selfie” is just one way that our culture is becoming more narcissistic. In fact, he says, narcissistic behaviors today aren’t just more accepted; they’re celebrated. “We’ve become accustomed to posers who don’t have anything to offer except themselves and their need to be on the public stage,” he says. The egocentric attitude of figures like Donald Trump or Kim Kardashian, for example, make our own narcissistic tendencies seem more acceptable by comparison, and social media only instigates the desire for attention. Facebook, to a narcissist, can be like an open bar to a drunk.



But Kluger also devotes a chunk of his book to what’s become a tired argument: The idea that Millennials—the generation that came of age with selfies and Facebook and the Kardashians—are the most self-absorbed generation of all. “Plenty of people are narcissistic in our society,” Kluger says, “but Millennials are doing these things on a pandemic level.”

Of course they are. They’re young and full of themselves, like every other generation that’s come before them was at some point. But are Millennials any more narcissistic than, say, the Baby Boomers, who were once considered the most self-obsessed cohort of their time? Consider the 1976 cover story of *New York Magazine*, in which Tom Wolfe declared the ‘70s “The Me Decade.” One could argue that every generation seems a little more narcissistic than the last, puffing out its chest and going out into the world with an overabundance of self-confidence, swagger, even a bit of arrogance. These traits are simply signs of early adulthood—it’s often the first time people are putting themselves out there, applying for first jobs and meeting potential life partners. Overconfidence is how people muscle through the big changes.

Whether it’s *Time*’s 2013 cover story “The Me, Me, Me Generation” or Kluger’s book, the same statistics are cited as proof of Millennial narcissism. In a 2008 study published in the *Journal of Personality*, San Diego State University psychology professor Jean Twenge found that narcissistic behaviors among college students studied over a 27-year period had increased significantly from the 1970s. A second study published in 2008 by the National Institutes of Health showed that 9.4 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds exhibit extreme narcissism, compared with 3.2 percent of those older than 65.

But there’s a problem with all of this evidence: The data is unreliable. “It’s incredibly unfair to call Millennials narcissistic, or to say they’re more so than previous generations,” says Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, a professor of psychology at Clark University and author of *Getting to 30: A Parent’s Guide to the Twentysomething Years*. Arnett has devoted a significant amount of time and research to disproving the statistics that San Diego State’s Twenge has built a career on. He says that her assertion that narcissistic behaviors among young people have risen 30 percent is debatable, since she’s basing it around data collected from the 40-question Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), the results of which leave quite a bit up for interpretation. For example, does agreement with statements like “I am assertive” or “I wish I were more assertive” measure narcissism, self-esteem, or leadership?

[...]

And for those uniquely self-centered, narcissistic Millennials, well, researchers say they’re actually a lot less selfish than popular reports make it seem. While Twenge alleges that the increase in narcissism has promoted a generational trend toward “more extrinsic values (money, image, and fame) and away from intrinsic values (community feeling, affiliation, and self-acceptance),” other researchers, including Arnett, have found the opposite. In a recent survey of 18- to 29-year olds, 80 percent agreed with the statement, “It is more important for me to enjoy my job than to make a lot of money,” while 86 percent agreed that “It is important to me to have a career that does some good in the world.” And a 2010 survey of high school seniors found that from 1976 to 2006, “there were no meaningful changes in egotism, self-enhancement, individualism, self-esteem.”

So they love the selfie? Let them. Says Arnett: “In many other ways, this is an exceptionally generous generation.”

The lost generation

Jonathan Reed², 2007

I am part of a lost generation.
And I refuse to believe that
I can change the world.
I realize this may be a shock, but
“Happiness comes from within”
Is a lie, and
“Money will make me happy”
So in thirty years, I will tell my children
They are not the most important thing in my life.
My employer will know that
I have my priorities straight because
Work
Is more important than
Family
I tell you this:
Once upon a time
Families stayed together
But this will not be true in my era.
This is a quick fix society
Experts tell me
Thirty years from now, I will be celebrating the
tenth anniversary of my divorce.
I do not concede that
I will live in a country of my own making.
In the future,
Environmental destruction will be the norm.
No longer can it be said that
My peers and I care about this Earth.
It will be evident that
My generation is apathetic and lethargic.
It is foolish to presume that
There is hope.
And all of this will come true unless we choose to
reverse it.

[Now read it Backwards:]

There is hope.
It is foolish to presume that
My generation is apathetic and lethargic.
It will be evident that
My peers and I care about this Earth.
No longer can it be said that
Environmental destruction will be the norm.
In the future,
I will live in a country of my own making.
I do not concede that
Thirty years from now, I will be celebrating the
tenth anniversary of my divorce.
Experts tell me
This is a quick fix society
But this will not be true in my era.
Families stayed together
Once upon a time
I'll tell you this:
Family
Is more important than
Work
I have my priorities straight because
My employer will know that
They are not the most important thing in my life.
So in thirty years, I will tell my children
“Money will make me happy”
Is a lie, and
“True Happiness comes from within”
I realize this may be a shock, but
I can change the world.
And I refuse to believe that
I am part of a lost generation.

² Jonathan Reed's poem "The lost generation" became viral upon winning second place in an Internet video contest, wherein contestants were told to create a two-minute video describing their vision of the future. The term Lost Generation originally refers to the post-World War I generation and its writers.