

Generation Snowflake

By Julian Tomlinson, Cairns Post, 21 July 2016

Protected species no class act

"I get triggered every time someone mentions the Cowboys' 2005 NRL Grand Final. But I manage to cope without running to Mummy."

WARNING. The following comments may offend or cause people to be "triggered" into reliving past experiences - either real or imagined.

If this occurs, please retreat to your nearest "safe space" where you don't have to confront anything that does - or might - cause you to be upset.

Universities in Australia and around the world are far from the hotbeds of broad debate and confronting ideas they once were and were designed to be.

Now students are told they don't have to deal with anything that makes them uncomfortable, and the university will protect that right.

Many universities have "safe spaces" where only people with a shared bond such as race, sexuality, religion, made-up victimhood or beliefs can speak and study without having to endure the unimaginable torment of anything that doesn't conform to their blinkered world view.

There are trigger warnings that tell people material they're about to hear, read or see could upset them.

These are rampant in US and UK universities where lecturers have to interrupt classes to tell students they can leave if they don't want to be "triggered" by the learning material.

And now they're in some Australian unis. I get triggered every time someone mentions the Cowboys' 2005 NRL Grand Final, but I manage to cope without running to Mummy.

While trigger warnings were de- signed to protect post-traumatic stress sufferers, it has evolved to stop such things as Jews reliving the Holocaust their great-great grandparents experienced. And the situation now is truly farcical.

A recent news report described the regimen in place at Melbourne's La Trobe University which includes trigger warnings for: slimy things; colonialism; skulls; vomit; and eye contact.

One commentator recently labelled the products of this approach as "Generation Snowflake".

Rather than producing highly educated people capable of carrying society to new heights with their firm

grasp of sometimes-horrible history and theories born of considering many different - and yes, possibly uncomfortable points of view, we are throwing lambs into the lions' den.

Having been told for years that they don't have to endure the unimaginable torture of someone disagreeing with them, university students enter the real world ill-prepared for anything approaching reality.

All they've heard is opinions they agree with, or what the university, schools and society tell them they should agree with.

The extent to which "Generation Snowflake" seeks to perpetuate and justify its existence can be found all over the internet.

A lecture about men's issues at the University of Toronto by Warren Farrell was disrupted by feminists who had to be held back by police as they abused attendees and called them rapists. Chilling viewing.

Look up anything freedom of speech campaigner Milo Yiannopoulos does at universities and see how Generation Snowflake feels about opinions they don't like. Frightening.

Google videos about "microaggressions" for some mind-boggling "triggers" that require safe spaces. For instance, asking someone what their ethnic background is, isn't seen as simply an attempt to get to know them better, it's a microaggression that can be punished by universities.

At the Queensland University of Technology, a group of students is being sued by an Aboriginal lecturer because she became "incapacitated with fear" after they simply complained on social media about segregation when she asked them to leave the "indigenous only" computer room.

If students are being prepared for "real life" by institutions that punish free speech, open debate and free thought, what does the future hold for all of society?

These people are the future politicians, newspaper editors, journalists, judges, teachers and lecturers who will have a great deal of influence on how everyone lives their lives.

Rather than students being allowed to bolt for a safe space, they should be compelled to argue rationally and factually against points of view they find confronting.

By telling them that their feelings have no right to be hurt, we are propelled even further down the dark path of outlawing words, something that is already happening today.

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