

that they fulfill their main function, driving national economies and their projected 4% annual growth on and on, ad infinitum. Some people might wonder how I can compete in this world with no cellphone and such a bad attitude. I can't.

I do hate it how all the ads for cellphones and cellular networks sell the ideas of "community, friendship and empathy" even more often than they do "convenience." Seems to me that the form of communication cellphones promote is the most bereft form of communication available. Oh perhaps this anti-achievement will be trumped by some gadget of the not too distant future, goody goody.

And I do hate it that the cellphone is likely to be a compulsory gadget for the next generation. As a father of two my cellphone free days may be numbered.

— *Dragged kicking and screaming
(muttering and sighing) of Wellington*



Gen txt:
I'd tell
them they
suck if
they'd
only
listen

Bloody kids. I watch them on the bus, wired to their ipods, having traded in last year's ostentatious DJ quality headphones (or is that last year's kids?) for those tiny white ibuds that go inside the ears. Soundtrack to their individuality leaking treble out into the isles. White knuckles of the other hand clutching a cellphone like it's a lifeline to their crew, the only people that matter. It's just so bloody insular. No time to think. No time to meditate. No time but the mediated here and now. No time.

What does it mean to take your friends and music with you everywhere you go? Seems to me it's a way of not having to deal with anybody else's existence. I make these grumblings often enough. I made these grumblings to someone the other day and they pointed out that one's teenage years are full of insecurity. I'm not sure if they were suggesting that the outlined phenomena supported a teenager during the difficult years prior to a more assured selfhood; or that this made the phenomena a doubly damaging avoidance of reality. I worry that it means the latter. I worry that it means Gen Y will be even more self-obsessed than I am, more self-obsessed than Gen X or the baby boomers.

I've asked kids about the nature of their txt message conversations and they've admitted to their inanity. So why do the kids I observe on buses seem to clutch their cellphones like life-support? Sending and receiving messages, or reviewing old messages if there's nothing going out/coming in. They seem to do it with such nervous intensity. And if there's nothing doing with the cellphone these kids shuffle through the ipod menu in search for the song of songs that'll make the moment right. My god, even when these kids do get to ride with their friends in physical proximity the conversation is often a listing of the days txting lowlights. It's as if the txt has more legitimacy than simply talking to someone because it involves technology and commodity. What's worth saying or

listening to if no one has had to pay for the privilege?

I must come out at this point in my diatribe. I don't own a cellphone, never have. When I tell Gen Y this they look at me like I've just revealed my Martian identity. When I tell Gen X this they say - almost without exception - "Good on you." That makes my generation more cynical than today's teens but beyond that? Yeah I'm taking the moral high ground, objectivity failed and became fence sitting. And post structuralism is often an excuse worn by impotent academics clipping the wings of others. But back to the gadgets...

So is it consumer demand or are these kids being sold cellpones and ipods by Gen X marketers working for baby boomer CEOs? Everyone's complicit.

I don't deny that cellphones may be useful but the occasional inconvenience caused by not owning one pales in comparison to the perceived expense and expense of having to buy one, upgrade one, two, three, pay for use, recharge, spend the time, remember it, remember to turn it off in lectures, and try not to drop it in the toilet. We all know by now that the labour-saving devices of our Jetsons future have saved us no time at all, quite the opposite. And we all know that our beloved gadgets have built-in obsolescence just to make sure