

BECAUSE OPRAH SAID SO IS OBAMANIA EPHEMERAL?

In his undeniably inspirational speech after winning the race for the White House Tuesday night, Obama referred to us as “the young people who rejected the myth of their generation’s apathy.” At this, I, like every other member of Generation Y watching, felt a surge of pride at having voted and actively participated in

generation’s apathetic reputation hasn’t yet been won and we’ve hardly proven ourselves.

Our passionate support for a candidate whose musical tastes many of us know better than his political agenda is demonstrative of the superficiality of our alleged political awareness. I won’t name names, but I know plenty of people on Cornell’s supposedly

time soon, but my guess is that the posting of “Obama Fo’ Yo’ Mama” bumper stickers on each others’ Facebook walls will be over about as fast as it was for those featuring the aquatically-advanced Olympian. For us, our views on their talents or skill don’t affect their ability to maintain our interest. Who or what becomes the focus of our attention at any given moment, therefore, isn’t based on any real thought about their quality, since our opinions on that are often unchanging, and, in some cases, completely uninformed. Instead, the criteria on which we base our decisions on what is interest-worthy seems to be almost entirely set by the whimsical vagaries of the media, which doesn’t really represent a “change” at all.

There are much worse things we could be doing than taking the advice of the media to become politically active and to support a candidate who, incidentally, has a promising political platform. But, if we give ourselves too much credit for the outcome of this election and deny our dependence on the media, we may become unaware of its influence and ultimately find ourselves in the compromising position of being unable to resist it when our own beliefs would lead us to alternative decisions. The fact is that many of us voted because the media said voting,

and voting for Obama in particular, is cool, and we care a lot about what is cool. Unfortunately, many of us, even those of us who voted, remain apathetic about many of the real issues.

In this case, we were simply lucky that the media supported a candidate whose priorities coincided with our own. But, I have faith in my generation, especially its members on this campus. I’m confident that when we start caring and educating ourselves about the real issues instead of what our favorite television personalities tell us to care about, we’ll arrive on our own at the

conclusions that truly reflect our own views. Ultimately, that is what democracy is all about. And, in answer to the question of whether or not our generation is capable of making the right decisions about politics and everything else without the pervasive finger of the media pointing us in the right direction, to echo the now immortal words of our president-elect, I believe, “Yes, we can.”

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what was one of most important elections in our nation’s history — excluding the annual votes for American Idol, of course. After the initial victory-speech-buzz wore off, however, I realized that my generation may not be as actively involved in the political process as Obama’s uplifting remarks suggested.

In fact, the more I think about whether we actually care any more than we ever did about what’s going on in the world, the more I suspect that most of us are simply adopting the opinions we’ve been served on *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart. I’m thrilled that politics is being marketed as “cool,” and that we’re actually going to the polls and voting, but that’s just a start. In fact, the battle against our

intellectual campus who vehemently supported Obama and sported “I Voted” stickers on Election Day, yet know nothing of his policies or what he plans to do during his presidency. That is, nothing other than what they were able to infer based on the SNL skits they watched online the day after they aired and everyone was talking about them. And these people aren’t going to go searching for answers now, either. Now that the election is over, it’s time to find the next “cool cause” to fight for. Like Michael Phelps after the eighth medal ceremony, Obama may soon be replaced by some other character to cheer on.

This is not to say that our admiration of Obama, or of Michael Phelps, for that matter, will be waning any

A CALL TO STAY INVOLVED: KEY ISSUES DON’T DISAPPEAR AT ELECTION’S END

Thousands of people campaigned tirelessly for their respective candidate, and one campaign saw the product of its hard work materialize with Obama winning the presidency. But the grueling months of

omy is still unstable, the health care problem is still looming, the war is ongoing and a bevy of other pertinent issues are still lingering just below the surface. Now that we’ve voted and received an answer as to whom we believe can best tackle the issues facing our nation, we shouldn’t accept the answer passively.

when the world was in such an upheaval, the treaty was unable to build a lasting peace. Thus, Germany rearmed and as history goes, a second world war.

The question of climate change saw its answer in the Kyoto Protocol. It categorized countries into Annex 1, or industrialized countries, and Non-Annex 1 countries. These classifications determined how different countries would be responsible for tackling the problem.

While this answered the question of categorization and responsibility, questions of fairness remained.

In following current events, the mere act of observing facts and being cognizant of what is happening has the power to change the way we view the question. Current events aren’t limited to just international relations or election season, though.

Following the news used to be a daunting task for me — not because I was uninterested, but because I felt that I didn’t have the whole history of a story yet, and I couldn’t put what I just read into context and make it relevant. I’ve come to realize that I don’t have to know every intricate detail of oil and the history of the

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to understand that gas prices surged this summer. Knowing the history is important, but it is not imperative and shouldn’t discourage people from following the news.

The context doesn’t need to be built from point A of the timeline to point B. You can build your knowledge from somewhere in the middle and slowly fill in the gaps — your own little grassroots endeavor to be an informed citizen. You can begin to form context and make it relevant with the more you know.

Look at what is happening around you. Hopefully the initial immersion will spark a curiosity that leads you to explore the finer details of history. We cannot assume to derive answers merely through osmosis — it is an active process of inquiry and constant reevaluation. So the election is over. Know the answer, but keep reading and keep following, because the questions continually change. It’s never too late, because the question can never really be answered.

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campaigning are over. The political jargon from pundits is over. The passion and drive to get someone elected has reached its climax, and we are left in a state of complacency.

If you didn’t follow the presidential race, you may have missed one of the most exciting elections in America’s history, but that’s OK. It’s never too late to follow current events. In fact, today or tomorrow would be an opportune time. The issues haven’t disappeared: The econ-

The relationship between questions and answers is a difficult one. In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was the answer. It brought a formal end to World War I on the provision that Germany and its allies pay reparations, disarm and accept almost full responsibility for the start of the war.

The Treaty of Versailles may have been the answer, but it didn’t address the question: Who would keep Germany from rising again as a military power? Then again, maybe that wasn’t even the question. At a time