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Ewan Morrison: what I'm thinking about ... why capitalism wants us to stay single

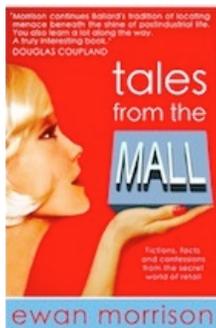
'Now that the market is cashing in on the buying power of single people, the radical choice is to get married'



Couples taking part in Tokyo divorce ceremonies jointly hold a mallet to smash a symbolic wedding ring. Photograph: Alamy

We like to think we're free in the free market; that we're beyond the forces of advertising and social manipulation by market forces. But there is a new social trend - the rise of 'the single person' as model consumer - that presents us with a paradox. What we once thought of as radical - staying single - may now be reactionary.

Tales from the Mall
by Ewan Morrison



The long-term relationship, like the job-for-life, is fast being deregulated into short term, temporary arrangements with no promise of commitment, as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has been warning us for over a decade. It's hard for two people to be self-employed, with no promise of a stable future, together. Capitalism now wants us to be single.

Being single, has since the 60s been seen as a radical choice, a form of rebellion against bourgeois capitalist conformism. As sociologist Jean-Claude Kaufmann says, the shift away from family life to solo lifestyles in the 20th century was part of the

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"irresistible momentum of individualism". But this "freedom" looks a lot less glamorous when viewed through the perspective of planned changes in consumerism.

It now makes economic sense to convince the populace to live alone. Singles consume 38% more produce, 42% more packaging, 55% more electricity and 61% more gas per capita than four-person households, according to a study by [Jianguo Liu](#) of Michigan State University. In the US, never-married single people in the 25-to-34 age bracket, now outnumber married people by 46%, according to the [Population Reference Bureau](#). And divorce is a growth market: one broken family means that two households have to buy two cars, two washing machines, two TVs. The days of the nuclear family as ideal consumption unit are over.

As capitalism sinks into stagnation, corporations have realised that there are two new growth strands – firstly, in the emerging singles market and secondly in encouraging divorce and the concept of individual freedom. This can be seen in changes in advertising, with products as diverse as burgers and holidays being targeted towards singles - in particular single women. New ads for [Honda](#) and Citibank expound solitary self-discovery and relationship postponement over coupledness.

As Catherine Jarvie says, "[top-pocket relationships](#)" where "neither party is looking for long-term commitment" are the new way - witness the meteoric rise of dating website [Match.com](#). In the US, Craigslist ads expose the subconscious connection between disposable consumerism and self-selling: one reads 'Buy my IKEA sofa and fuck me on it first, \$100'.

This equating of self with product has come about precisely because the cycles of planned and perceived obsolescence in product consumption are no longer delivering capitalist growth. In a period of market saturation, when we have already consumed all we can, we are encouraged to objectify ourselves as items 'on the market', consuming others. Exercises in the disposability of humans.

Consumerism now wants you to be single, so it sells this as sexy. The irony is that it's now more radical to attempt to be in a long-term relationship and a long-term job, to plan for the future, maybe even to attempt to have children, than it is to be single. Coupledness, and long-term connections with others in a community, now seem the only radical alternative to the forces that will reduce us to isolated, alienated nomads, seeking ever more temporary 'quick fix' connections with bodies who carry within them their own built-in perceived obsolescence.

The solution: Get radical, get hitched, demand commitment from partners and employers. Say no to the seductions of the disposable singles market.

Ewan Morrison talks about his book, [Tales from the Mall](#), today (11 August) and discusses the digital revolution with [Andrew Keen](#) tomorrow

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pinto00

11 August 2012 1:29PM

Craiglist ads expose the subconscious connection between disposable consumerism and self-selling: one reads 'Buy my IKEA sofa and fuck me on it first, \$100'.

That was the crassest part of a totally stupid piece. Ooh, single serve items make more profit. As if it was ever different. Ooh, lifestyle items promote self-discovery and enjoyment. As if that was ever different.

Terrible terrible analysis totally clouded by a childish political viewpoint.

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jallo

11 August 2012 1:34PM

This is a very good and controversial article. Marketers encouraging people to be single or markets capitalising in the need of people to relate to others during a period of increasing social atomisation?

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JGordon21

11 August 2012 1:54PM

Difficult to know where to start on this one: capitalism in itself, wants for nothing, an informed and educated populous can (hopefully) defend itself against unfettered advertising and corporate manipulation.

What @ jallo, the marketers role in this, is much harder to decipher, but what with companies employing psychologists in conjunction with advertising firms, if there is a trend which suggests more money can be made from encouraging people to stay single, then it is incredibly likely that is the case.

On the other hand, if this a market response to increased

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individualisation in the modern era, then the idea that we should consume more now as single people is too insane to contemplate.

Interesting piece either way.



IgorBeaver

11 August 2012 2:01PM

I disagree; a completely shortsighted article. By staying single, without procreating, one is not contributing to constantly rising (over) population which spawns pollution, waste, and the depletion of natural resources of our already overused planet. Even in terms of economics this article is way off the mark. Consider the financial bondage of raising children ONLY up to college age. Then factor in the astronomical cost of tuition. Maybe the draconian Chinese policy of one child per family is actually quite sane. (Imagine the quality of life on earth with five hundred million fewer people around...)

The compulsive addiction that is consumerism should be addressed at by parents during a child's formative years. If a couple is brave enough to raise a child these days, eschewing materialism and peer pressure is something that should be an essential part of upbringing.

Ephemeral politics has nothing to do with it. "Less is more" and "money isn't everything" are truisms that are spot on.

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JGordon21

11 August 2012 2:05PM

Response to [IgorBeaver, 11 August 2012 2:01PM](#)

Bang on Igor, if you get a chance, you should have a look 'Free to be Human' by David Edwards-if I was going to raise a child this would be my Bible, (and hopefully theirs one day).

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jallo

11 August 2012 2:10PM

I do not really buy into the idea that long term social bonds would contribute to the demise of capitalism. Actually, it was the unpaid work of housewives, legitimised on discourses of family and marriage, what released men labour to be dedicated to productive purposes. The same can be said about families, which are providing free care to growing numbers of young unemployed, thus preventing discontent to kick off. In my view, family structures could be found at the core of capitalism as much as singleness and individualism are.

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baobab09

11 August 2012 2:19PM

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Response to [IgorBeaver](#), 11 August 2012 2:01PM

You are confusing two issues: 1. Capitalism benefits from excess population; 2. Capitalism benefits from more single people than married ones. Both can be true. The point is that market actors are rarely acting to achieve long-term change, which is why we arguably wouldn't see any firm trying to encourage more people to have children so that in 20years time it has more customers. The returns from single status are more immediately apparent and achievable.

As for

Consider the financial bondage of raising children ONLY up to college age. Then factor in the astronomical cost of tuition.

Why do you think there is a such a strong push to privatise public education? Lot of profit to be made there...

Finally, you also confuse an argument against overpopulation with one about marriage. Some of the arguments in the article apply whether you have children or not.

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FrankLittle

11 August 2012 2:25PM

The food industry is cashing in on the fact we're not cannibals, the radical choice is to become cannibals.

Being single, has since the 60s been seen as a radical choice, a form of rebellion against bourgeois capitalist conformism.

No it's was not getting married, which is a different thing entirely and this only lasted until the middle class 'radicals' got a proper job.

Being a working class radical that was born in the 50's, I never got a 'proper' job so I avoided the bourgeoisification process and stayed single

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FrankLittle

11 August 2012 2:35PM

as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has been warning us for over a decade. It's hard for two people to be self-employed, with no promise of a stable future, together. Capitalism now wants us to be single.

As sociologist Jean-Claude Kaufmann says, the shift away from family life to solo lifestyles in the 20th century was part of the "irresistible momentum of individualism". But this "freedom" looks a lot less glamorous when viewed through the perspective of planned changes in consumerism.

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The sociologists have only interpreted the free market, in various ways. The radical choice, however, is to change it.



Looped Edge
11 August 2012 3:10PM

the whole fucking planet disgusts me

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andreakkk
11 August 2012 3:59PM

Well, capitalism benefits when we buy food products. So we should all starve ourselves to death. That is just as logical as getting married simply to spite the capitalists.

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FieFieFoe
11 August 2012 4:17PM

Response to [pinto00, 11 August 2012 1:29PM](#)

Indeed. This is just a silly pointless piece for publicity?

So poor people are having a harder and harder time keeping relationships afloat? Presto, that's because they don't want to because of the evil marketing monster (it lives! it breathes! it sucks the life-force out of your nostrils while you sleep!).

And the ruthless marketing monster is persuading single people (I suspect single women really, the growing segment of this demographic that saves and invests money) that only by being alone can they truly enjoy their possessions! (Cold, heartless monster, broadcasting evil ideas directly into the empty heads of these delicate, naive, innocents!)

Evil consumerism! Forcing single people to live marginally with a string of poorly paid jobs - just so they can use more packaging! Mind-boggling how much a poor, marginalized single person will spend on packaging! When they aren't occupying Wall Street.

OK, so I'm having a late morning rant here and I can't be bothered to really go at this properly. Where's the analysis of contradictory evidence Mr. Morrison? I'm going to tell all my friends what a terrible book you've written, without reading it, because I can't be bothered to do the work part when I'm forming my opinions either. And look for my review on Goodreads - coming soon!

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KrustytheKlown
11 August 2012 4:34PM

As others have said, this is a supremely silly 'article' which also

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follows the annoying Guardian trend of assuming that American fashions and statistics also apply in Britain.

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I'm single and consider myself pretty thrifty. I'm not sure if I've ever bought a single-serve ready meal in my life, and usually cook several days' worth of food in one go - this being the 21st century and there being such high-tech objects called fridges and freezers to keep food fresh. I currently live in university accommodation and so share a laundrette with several others. As for TVs etc, it seems to have passed the author by that it's becoming more common for each family member to have their own TV, and in any case computers are increasingly doing away with the need for individual tellies anyway.

I've never gone on a singles holiday either, and find the idea rather horrific. I do often travel alone, and yes, that does work out more expensive. But imho solo travel beats arguing over restaurants, itineraries and baggage allowance any day of the week. But maybe I'm just a sad singleton.



[Nolordsreform](#)

11 August 2012 4:38PM

Bah humbug

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[behindikindi](#)

11 August 2012 4:53PM

The free market is contradictory, cannibalistic, polarising and spatialises difference. "It" (merchant capital? finance capital? wedding planners?) does not want "us" married or single.

Besides, I don't think a succession of short-term arrangements instead of long-term arrangements makes you "single".

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[futurehuman](#)

11 August 2012 4:55PM

This is a timely and insightful article. This is a specific example of the more general Marxist position that at a certain epoch, the economic relations (with its particular mode of production) form the base on which the superstructure of social, cultural, legal, moral, philosophical etc. institutions are built in conformity with the economic base.

The Bourgeois Democratic revolution and capitalism in Europe not only replaced the feudal economic base of the old society, but also replaced (more or less) the whole superstructure with new ones. Now in its monopolistic stage, capitalism has turned parasitic, the same way as was feudalism in the past. This parasitic capitalism can only feed on the vitality of humanity much more efficiently than feudalism with its more

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sophisticated network of its superstructure.

Monopoly capitalism is history's most powerful alienation - a creation (like religion or the State) of man himself, but that has gone out of his hands and like a Frankenstein monster in turn is controlling man himself. For its own survival and growth this monster has to feed on the very core and the basis of humanity.



RudolfRocker

11 August 2012 4:59PM

Yes I'm not sure if the author has proved anything beyond expounding a theory. No real facts to support its thesis. Also - how far can one say that corporate marketing is responding to market trends, and how far are they actually manipulating consumers into choosing things they don't want - I mean it's the old chicken or the egg argument. A product would not exist unless it was consumed, and if it is being consumed, it is because people want it. They may be manipulated into choosing one brand over the other, but the essential product itself, regardless of how it is packaged, is desired, and profitable. Until that problem is solved, we will always have people consuming whatever garbage comes there way.

This is a cultural issue, as consumerism appeals to our short-term pleasure drives, rather than providing for our long term benefit - and I don't think human beings know how to deal with the age of plenty (at least in the first world) thus the soaring rates of obesity and other related dietary illnesses across the first world. This is not about corporations manipulating us, but about them satisfying our short-term greed, and we lash it up with pleasure.

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borris79

11 August 2012 5:05PM

i agree with most comments here, this piece is garbage
it reads to me like someone who has always desperately wanted to be 'radical', and who still wants to be 'radical' and who has had to shift the definitions of what 'radical' might be as his life has changed - presumably he is now in a long-term relationship / about to get married

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crazyjane

11 August 2012 5:12PM

Being single, has since the 60s been seen as a radical choice

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never-married single people in the 25-to-34 age

bracket, now outnumber married people by 46%

Radical is it? Really? Did any one else notice? I think this person naively assumes that "never married" equals living alone.

Sorry. Never has, doesn't now. It means just what it says. People who have never formally married. That doesn't mean the same as living alone. Large numbers of "never married" live with partners.

There are many people living alone. That statistic is a straightforward one. They are often elderly women. It is due to the simple fact that women, on average, outlive men.

It's hard for two people to be self-employed, with no promise of a stable future, together.

Well given that that was how most people lived for thousands of years - running a farm or a small business together - it can't be that hard. If anything it's easier. If one doesn't do so well, the other might.

discusses the digital revolution with Andrew Keen tomorrow

Does he know as much about that as he does demography?



bubmachine

11 August 2012 5:17PM

WTF?

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PaulBowes01

11 August 2012 5:24PM

As capitalism sinks into stagnation, corporations have realised that there are two new growth strands – firstly, in the emerging singles market and secondly in encouraging divorce and the concept of individual freedom.

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The idea that the promotion of single status is in any way a new thing is risible. It began in the 'Sixties, with the simultaneous improvement in living standards, easing of personal credit, change of attitude towards the merits of saving versus spending, and relaxation of moral standards around the issue of marriage and the legitimacy of children, and was in full spate by the end of the 'Seventies. Mr. Morrison's analysis is so historically uninformed that it barely merits consideration.

And divorce is a growth market: one broken family means that two households have to buy two cars, two

washing machines, two TVs.

The economic consequence of divorce is usually a catastrophic collapse in the living standards of both new households. Nuclear families that remain together typically save on spending on essentials, too, which frees up more income for discretionary spending. Women in stable two-parent households are also more likely to be able to work outside the home, which increases household income. It hardly needs to be said that divorce isn't a new phenomenon, either.

Consumerism now wants you to be single

"Consumerism" doesn't "want" anything; "it" has no consciousness, "it" isn't even a thing. "Capitalism" ditto. Unless you believe that reified abstractions are real: in which case you are yourself a victim of ideology.

It would be more accurate to say that the ideology of free-market capitalism has always seemed to require different, incompatible things depending on one's subject position. Thus, as an employee, it's better to be single - mobile, time-flexible, free of responsibilities for others: but as a consumer, it's better to be married - more varied opportunities for consumption, greater guilt at failure to provide, locked in to longer-term commitments. Since most people are both producers and consumers, who can't occupy all positions simultaneously - one of the internal contradictions of capitalism as a form of economic organisation - the result ultimately may be the collapse and supercession of capitalist economics. But the marital status of producer/consumers seems unlikely to have any bearing on that.



ColonelCallan

11 August 2012 5:36PM

Chinese policy of one child per family is actually quite sane

Very sane, like mass infanticide with the killing of baby girls because they wanted a baby boy, as are the social and economic consequences of having a massive imbalance of males to females with millions of males unable to find mates that will lead to heightened criminality and growing social unrest and violence, as has happened in other societies.

As reported recently in this paper, China is facing a population time bomb thanks to the one-child policy as birth rates slide alarmingly and Chinese people live longer. By mid century you will have a further imbalance in the working to non-working population with catastrophic consequences for economic growth.

The lesson is don't second guess mother nature, let her do its job and she will find way to slow down population growth or

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speed it up as needed.



Cynical007

11 August 2012 5:48PM

So people are choosing to be single because a gas board advert tells them to? Is this article intended as a parody of anti-capitalist groups?

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SustainableFuture

11 August 2012 6:08PM

Response to [ColonelCallan, 11 August 2012 5:36PM](#)

Very sane, like mass infanticide with the killing of baby girls because they wanted a baby boy, as are the social and economic consequences of having a massive imbalance of males to females with millions of males unable to find mates that will lead to heightened criminality and growing social unrest and violence, as has happened in other societies.

The trigger might have been the one-child policy but those practices are rooted in backwards socially entrenched sexism. This causes problems whether there's a one-child policy or not - that's the root cause that needs addressing.

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stevepa

11 August 2012 6:08PM

Polygamy= Radical chic?

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Ted352

11 August 2012 6:16PM

I want a divorce from capitalism.

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Millach

11 August 2012 6:19PM

I think more specifically, advertisers/big brands would rather we be 'individuals' than 'single'. So long as we fight for our individuality then we fight to show this. The myriad ways we can do this are purchasable.

For those who have selected more inventive routes to self expression through bricolage - the recycling of another's trash into something useful and interesting for the new user - this too has unfortunately been cashed in on. Nefariously, it is now quite expensive to use old routes like thrift stores that know the value

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of used is greater than new to some. Curse the boho fashion chic of the mid 2000s.

In Canada, a great little place called Value Village used to exist and it was easy to find extraordinary items worn by sophisticated grandmothers before they became grandmothers, while they were young, for nigh more than a few dollars. And now, owned by Walmart, it sells tat for a fortune and presumable separates the 'good' stuff out to be sold at much higher rates in 'vintage' stores.

Ditto for all manner of used items - trash.

Still there remain ways to be ingenious and to escape the commodification of everything. But individuality, don't be confused, is a marketer's dream. For you, on your vaunted mission to state to the world who you are, will pay highly to have this established.



Puhplant

11 August 2012 6:29PM

Why would you ever write this?

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hansvogl

11 August 2012 6:44PM

i just drunk a few beers and my english might not be the best,but just because i am not married doesnt mean that im single and therefore spend more money.im not married neither single and i spend money according to my needs and possibilities.this article seems to be written by a child with very limited reasoning...or maybe its me and the booze....

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MentalKenny

11 August 2012 6:58PM

I think the whole data this article is based on is flawed. Families consume surely more than single people, children are the single biggest black hole sucking in resources, money and time. You can't tell me that my single guy lifestyle of beer and frozen pizzas amounts to more than my neighbours' 3 kids, clothing, toys, karate/piano classes, school gear, and so on.

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bill9651

11 August 2012 7:08PM

What a load of shite! I thought I had heard all the loony ideas about the market economy but this one takes the biscuit.

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wordswort

11 August 2012 7:30PM

Response to [IgorBeaver, 11 August 2012 2:01PM](#)

I hadn't noticed that singleness was suddenly the new married as far as marketing is concerned. But I'm certainly in favour of marriage coming back. If it ever went away.

Why would a single want a house anyway? Flats are far more fun when you're single. Buying a house (for getting married with, not for that awful crap 'getting onto the housing ladder') means putting away childish things and growing up.

Now : ready, aim, fire, kids.

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jallo

11 August 2012 7:35PM

Despite agreeing with most comentators that the article is flawed in many respects (specially in that it suggest a direct causality between the actions of marketers and the demise of traditional long-term relationships), I can't help thinking that the authors has indirectly hit some important issues. Just three random thoughts on this:

1- In markets characterised by product saturation and economic stagnation, the current post-fordist (symbolic) capitalism, requires going through crises which are highly symbolic in nature. Therefore, the decay of modern social structures, such as the nuclear family, emerges as a process of cultural "creative destruction", in which economic opportunities are created as a result of society having to reinvent itself. Marketers are certainly not "captains of consciousness", manipulating consumer desires at will, however they have become powerful cultural actors in postmodern consumer culture whose role should not be neglected.

2- There has been a marked trend of increasing individualisation of consumption, which has become particularly acute in the past 2 decades. Many consumption practices that used to be collective (such as watching TV in group) are becoming increasingly individualised (a TV in each bedroom). This individualisation of consumption certainly extends to the realm of family and personal relationships.

3- The growing commodification of personal relationships is a fact, with personal relationships being increasingly mediated by businesses and therefore, increasingly subject to the logic of profitability. This creates potential for new spaces of exclusion and marginalisation.

4- Perhaps singleness is neither good nor bad for capitalism. What is certain is that there are strong connections between contemporary capitalism and the different shapes that social

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relationships take in postmodern societies (what determines what is open to debate).. Critics interested in questioning the capitalist order will certainly profit from reflecting on the ongoing restructuring of personal relationships and its connection with emergent consumption practices.



Bliad

11 August 2012 7:41PM

The writer of this article is flogging a book.

Bliad

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jallo

11 August 2012 7:56PM

Paradoxically enough, one finds an advertisement for a dating website on the right side of the page. The producer/consumer contradictions of capitalism (which were mentioned by a couple of comentators below) are so evident in this entire piece.

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BleakAcreBite

11 August 2012 8:41PM

But there is a new social trend - the rise of 'the single person' as model consumer - that presents us with a paradox. What we one though of as radical - staying single - may now be reactionary.

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Two things. Once again being single and having a lot of disposable income is at present a very upper middle class problem and is such irrelevant to most people. Secondly what kind of person gets married so they can be radical? How would the proposal go?



NottinghamFlorist

11 August 2012 9:07PM

If people can't see that our neoliberal consumer culture does not constantly emphasises and encourages short-termism and atomisation, they're either blinkered or stupid.

The likes of Zygmunt Bauman and Robert Putnam, write in that dry, turgid way academics are (willingly or unwillingly) made to express their theories, but they both really do offer extremely insightful ideas into our modern social lives.

However, as a poster says above, paraphrasing Karl Marx, the point is not to understand the world, but to try to change it.

Unfortunately, what changes the world is technology - and what the internet does, combined with the economic system, futher

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divorces us from each other.

The other thing that drives change is collapse/revolution. When/if the shit ever does hit the pan, Western society, and the Anglo-Saxon societies, in particular, are going to be hell. The 'very best' places to live... New York, London, etc, will soon become the 'very worst', essentially a buoyant economy masks underlying social problems. Places like Greece, Spain and Italy may be more ecologically fucked than England and America, but they're less socially fucked.

The truth is that economics is based on abstracted quantities whereas society is based on real qualities. We seem to constantly forget that, and that is all reflected in our current atomised, individualised, 'I'm independent' mess.

These days nobody joins anything except the gym. Joining things is considered 'sad', or a weakness.

That's all going to change, we're going to be forced to realise some uncomfortable home truths, especially the lower middle-class (of which I am a part), who are the most deluded of all.



oommph

11 August 2012 9:33PM

Response to [MentalKenny](#), 11 August 2012 6:58PM

Families consume surely more than single people, children are the single biggest black hole sucking in resources, money and time.

Indeed. It's the pairers up and reproducers that are the slaves to consumption and marketing.

Anyone who chooses to believe otherwise is simply kidding themselves.

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iruka

11 August 2012 10:11PM

The fact that the Ewan Morrison has put their finger on something is clear from the way that he's rubbed so many people he wrong way.

No halfway intelligent person would deny that capitalism has transformed society over the last 200 years. It's the engine of modern history, innit – and this includes every sort of cultural change. I reckon that the general affront on this thread is a reaction to the suggestion that this change is taking place on a subjective level as well – that we aren't all autarkic, self-determining, conscious masters and mistresses of our own state of being... that our values and beliefs and motivations aren't 1) timeless, natural and self-evidently sensible and rewarding and 2) ours .

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Sorry – for virtually everyone who will read this thread, including me, our primary role in the global economy is as consumers. And this role is also, increasingly, the primary purpose, logic and context of our socialisation – a process in which the market is taking a larger, earlier, more intimate part . A more ongoing one as well: we are who we're made to be, and one aspect of our modern socialisation is exactly how easy it is to change who we are without our even noticing. We're very different creatures from the respectable working and middle classes of the middle of the last century - the discipline of work and thrift beaten (often quite literally!) into every corners of their lives and beings.

Our ongoing atomisation isn't a plot - it's the logical outcome of millions of tactical decisions and responses trying to sell as many things as possible. The family as an institution, even more than the other defining institutions of a couple of generations ago, can only absorb so much product, as flogged by market actors for whom the ability to move product is literally an existential issue. They place their advertising, and design and frame their products, where it has most effect. Not *just* the atomised individual - but the 'individual qua'. We aren't just a person on a bike when we respond to Tour de France results and go buy a bike and a set of kit. We're a 'cyclist'. We aren't just a person on the phone when we pull out our icandy to take a (by implication terribly important) call....we have as many identities as marketers can entice us into embracing.

So, where Morrison makes a mistake is in imagining that this process is some sort of a strategic goal. It's not. Capitalist market actors tend to shy away from investing in strategic projects that will benefit their competitors as much as themselves. The capitalist market is like a new river created by an earthquake, headed downwards (ever downwards...) and sweeping us, and a vast load of filthy detritus, along with it, by whatever route presents itself as easiest, moment by moment and inch by inch.

Perhaps the affront is simply to the notion that consumerism isn't a thoroughly heroic enterprise -- which is really just the same affront, isn't it, but a step or two further from any scrap of self-awareness.



iamtherobotman

11 August 2012 10:19PM

capitalism wants us to read silly articles and buy books by the writer. i'm opting out

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Raspi80

11 August 2012 10:23PM

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I see what your saying. It's not that I disagree with the idea that selling to single households increases the volume of sales but I think the broad economic environment is not supportive of increasing numbers of single households. Think about it. Housing benefit now asks under 25s to live in shared accomodation. High rental costs and vanishing mortgage access pushes us back towards multi-generational households. Trends in demographics, net debt (both public and private), failing job security, financial repression, these are all forces supporting a cultural preference towards *lower* consumption. Doesn't matter if folks marry or not. What matters is the shrinking discretionary spend and a collapse of purchasing power.

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Chris Icarus

11 August 2012 10:52PM

Hey once you are born into this circus there is no being radical..the only radical is never to have lived at all. Crystal. Clear. Clarity. Eureka!

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vancouverite

11 August 2012 10:52PM

Response to [Millach, 11 August 2012 6:19PM](#)

Value Village used to exist and it was easy to find extraordinary items worn by sophisticated grandmothers before they became grandmothers, while they were young, for nigh more than a few dollars. And now, owned by Walmart

Wrong Millach - Value Village isn't owned by Walmart.

The reason it has less quality items these days and the price is higher is because we passed peak oil many years ago and cheap imports aren't so cheap anymore.

BTW I see lots of my single friends biking over to shop in Value Village. Never see any of my married-with-kids friends in there. Probably because there's nowhere to park the SUV they bought to take the kids from the 'exurbs to lacrosse/hockey/guitar/dance/art/Kumon directly outside.

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DT48

11 August 2012 10:54PM

Those of us on the right have been banging on for decades about the way government has undermined and destroyed the family, and we were called luddites and dinosaurs. Now you know why they did this - every child that leaves home is one more council tax, fridge, cooker, bed, utility and water bill, as well as money for child care and oap homes etc etc.

Foil the government - stay home with your parents and hoard

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your income, and feel the benefits of close family.



RedderMachine

11 August 2012 11:02PM

Is the author really claiming that my lack of boyfriend is because I'm a slave to capitalism? Perhaps he'd like to shack up with me so that we can smash the system.

Actually, I'd rather not.

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Pradana Nugraha Gilang

11 August 2012 11:45PM

capitalism stole your virg.

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[Responses](#) (1)

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elbowgrease

12 August 2012 1:28AM

"He lives in Glasgow and is learning how to make compost." - from the Guardian profile accompanying the Ewan Morrison article.

Yeah, but does the wee laddie really have to dump it on Guardian readers?

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thomasvladimir

12 August 2012 1:47AM

alvin toffler wrote "the family is the last line of resistance" in it there is the last strenght, hope.or words to the same effect. it suits our cascade into serfdom for us to be naked and helpless. the dismantling of the family unit seems almost deliberate.

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[Responses](#) (0)

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foggysteepbanks

12 August 2012 2:06AM

Couldn't it just be your getting old. It does happen. No need for a theory, a radical solution or even an article. it's just life.

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thomasvladimir

12 August 2012 2:41AM

Response to [Pradana Nugraha Gilang, 11 August 2012 11:45PM](#)

yours too.....

stole everything, denied everything, no remorse either.

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