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Screen shot of 'The Class Sketch' with John Cleese & The Two Ronnies, courtesy of The BBC.

Class Issue?

Words by Colleen Considine

Middle-class teenagers dressing as chavs, has social media blurred the lines of the class issue and why has it never left us?

Posh snobs dressed in vintage Burberry, £5 naff t-shirts and baggy trousers, using slang terms while they act like they have a tenner left in their bank account each week. When in actual fact, they choose to wear naff clothing. A heck-load of dosh given to them by their rich parents, they just can't save money. Spending their days in Shoreditch drinking and smoking like the world will fall in on them.

They want to be working class.

Rich people want to be working class so they can pretend they have an excuse as to why their lives are so miserable. They haven't an excuse, they are just lazy.

Bit harsh?

Let's uncover the modern class issue.

Social media has blurred many lines. Lines between fashion and subcultures. Freedom of speech and journalism, politics and art and so on.

However, have we truly erased the class is-sue altogether?

Online life creates a face. What we see on individual pages capture one exact moment in time. There truly isn't an accurate way to know or understand a person until you meet them face-to-face.

Personally, I am a working-class girl from the UK's most loved, once voted crappiest town, Lu-ton. Yes, yes, I know, you haven't got past our terrible airport. We are so rough that we have tattoos on our foreheads for the number of killings we've committed. No joke, that's a fact. Seriously.

There is a face on Luton too. This idea like the face of social media, Luton and the people in Luton are scum. Lower than earth.

As soon as you hear Luton on the trains you duck and hide so no one will notice you live there. As if. Do me a favour and find another pot to piss in.

Like we're in Victorian England or something!? Because you go to work every day via horse drawn carriage? Or as soon as you wake-up your servant comes and washes your arse?

Now, from the looks and reactions I've had from colleagues, friends and just plain know it all's you'd think I'm Trump. You must still think working-class folk are down in pits all day long. Coal mining, nothing to eat, shouting and screaming at one another. We're terrified of walking out the door in-case we'll get taken into a van and murdered. Although, saying that, I did get hurdled into a van and I did get killed. Yes, I'm ghost writing this from the other side of the working-class pit of hell.

No.

Other people of richer wealth assume this. Now, Luton isn't the prettiest of towns, it isn't the wealthiest. But it has a superb community spirit, a fantastic music scene. And there are some of the loveliest people around. Now, it's not your fault, we all have assumptions of classes. It isn't just the working classes that have a modern-class issue.

I assume all the time that middle-class kids have it so easy because of their wealth. You're telling me middle-class teenagers don't have a servant named Jeeves who wakes them up to feed them via vodka and cigars?

And Jeeves doesn't give them a piggy-back ride to university whilst dressed as Queen Victoria?

And on the way back home they don't stop

off at Harrods for a supermarket sweep type activity whilst playing badminton from the food court to the Gucci stall?

Wow. I'm quite disappointed. Where do I get a refund?

(Apparently) this simply is not the case.

The point is, there's a modern-class issue on both sides. Pre-misconceptions on both sides of the fence. Class boundaries created a finger pointing type attitude. Separate to make it easier to identify who is better than the others based on money. Quite daft in all honesty.

Ever since, 'This Is England' was released, more and more films and TV shows took to glamourizing working-class life. Great for a while. Now, it's 'the norm'. The norm to see another photo of a fashion-shoot at a council estate. Or a 'grungy' East London café with an 'upcoming' designer. Who is in fact, yet another middle-class parent's son or daughter. Someone who got into university without the worry of tuition loans. A person with over 4,000 followers on Instagram. Not exactly up and coming. They are already there and waiting.

There is most definitely a modern-class issue, but social media has created a face which allows you to paint over important issues such as class. Glamorization makes working class life out to be easier than it is. Easier to have another person joke about a location without being there before.

Take university, I am in my final year at university and I have had four or five different lecturers turn their nose up as soon as I mention the fact I am from Luton.

Hello, to my lecturers who are reading this at the moment. Nothing personal to you lot I still think you are all superb. However, the

next time someone who isn't from Oxford or Cambridge turns up don't get scared, we won't shank you. That is unless you really piss me off and give me a shit grade. Then, I'll get all the gangs back home to hunt you down and well, take care of business.

Joke. (Obviously)

It's not just been them. Everyone does it. A joke to everyone else but it's not really. They are 'dead serious'. The funny thing is, they don't realise they are doing it. Of course, to you it means nothing, a little laugh here and there. A funny face or even and this is my favourite, 'I'm really sorry.' I'm really bloody sorry. Well, no Barbara I'm really sorry that people like you, a so-called liberal has an opinion on something you have no clue about. Next time you laugh about where I'm from, come to the town first and I'll show you something to laugh at.

Gosh, it's going to be really great to see what grade I get.

Now this does get quite tiring. Especially when you have to explain that if you are from that place and you are a kind-hearted human being then that most likely means everyone else is too. There of course is violence, but isn't that so every town you head to?

Working class kids such as myself are in this constant two and fro between where they from and where we want to be. There is a pressure surrounding all children from every class. But the paint that is spilled over class issues is ridiculous.

The obliviousness that is faced for young people such as me, cause issues in towns such as Luton. Some of which people are totally unaware of. Something as simple as a train station, that hasn't any access for disabled use. Luton station itself is practically falling apart. Homeless on streets is at a next

level high. Passing people every day on the streets without a care in the world that they exist. Working class folk constantly take the slack because there isn't a use in trying to raise the voice that no one wants to hear.

This isn't a sympathy article for you to feel sorry or anything. There's plenty more things you should feel sorry for. Needing a job after this degree being one. Yes, it is just another university student feeling sorry for themselves.

Speaking to the older crowd from Luton, I say older they are in their mid to late 50s plus. So I don't know if you can call them 'older crowd'. Anyway, when discussing this very issue Alan, a teddy boy from the 1960s told me this, 'when someone asks where I am from, I usually lie and say I'm from Stevenage, don't want the hassle around Luton.' It wasn't just him either, 80-90% of people said the same thing.

It's shocking that being from somewhere where the last time it was in the press was nearly ten years ago still has so much against it. Now, if you're from London where there is knife crime, Birmingham, Manchester and elsewhere, do you actually have to change where you are from, so you won't get judged?

Ridiculous.

Look at Labour. A number of years ago Labour were considered 'a party for the people'. Now, the same can't be said. The same people who vote Labour are those who have enough money to take time off work to go marching every couple of weeks for a cause getting them nowhere. Labour as Robert Shrimpsely put it, "has a major identity crisis." And because of this the working class turn to a group of people with little to no understanding of their background. Meaning, we go completely around in circles.

The point is, have we a modern-class issue?

Yes. There is a major class issue.

To the point where it is now 'cool' to be working-class. Actually, no let's rephrase that. It's 'cool' to be born into wealth, raised in wealth and re-appropriate someone else's class without going into what you are doing. Then, be completely oblivious to the society of that class and the issues faced each day.

So, it's not 'cool' to be working class. Other classes just think it's cool to act working class.

One final thing, it's not a 'modern-class issue'.

It never went away, can't call something modern when nothing has changed.

We have a class issue.



Art by Jasmine Miller-Sauchella