



The Trouble with Brunch: Work, Class and the Pursuit of Leisure (Exploded Views)

Shawn Micallef

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What do your Eggs Benedict say about your notions of class?

Every weekend, in cities around the world, bleary-eyed diners wait in line to be served overpriced, increasingly outré food by hungover waitstaff. For some, the ritual we call brunch is a beloved pastime; for others, a bedeviling waste of time. But what does its popularity say about shifting attitudes towards social status and leisure? In some ways, brunch and other forms of conspicuous consumption have blinded us to ever-more-precarious employment conditions. For award-winning writer and urbanist Shawn Micallef, brunch is a way to look more closely at the nature of work itself and a catalyst for solidarity among the so-called creative class.

Drawing on theories from Thorstein Veblen to Richard Florida, Micallef traces his own journey from the rust belt to a cosmopolitan city where the evolving middle class he joined was oblivious to its own instability and insularity.

The Trouble with Brunch is a provocative analysis of foodie obsession and status anxiety, but it's also a call to reset our class consciousness. The real trouble with brunch isn't so much bad service and outsized portions of bacon, it's that brunch could be so much more.

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