Where the Minimalist Movement Fails

The minimalist movement is an anti-consumerism pro-simplicity campaign which encourages folks to downsize the number of things they own in order to live more happily and freely without the burden of excess material possessions. This movement is fucking trash and I’m going to tell you why.

**Part One: Aestheticism**

Though not a core tenet of the minimalist philosophy, the aesthetic of simplicity becomes for many the main attraction of the movement. This is a problem because it is merely consumerism in the false image of anti-consumerism. People will go out and purchase a more ‘minimal’ wardrobe, furniture with a simpler design, or different household items that better match their minimal aesthetic. This is nothing except more purchasing of goods, antithetical to the true good that lies within the movement. Overconsumption causes excess waste, vastly increased energy usage, and supports the production pipelines of the items we purchase, which are not only ecologically unsustainable but often engaging in highly unethical labor practices.

**Part Two: Unquestioned Privilege**

The argument for minimalism is that objects are a burden. Our time, energy, and money are wasted organizing and maintaining our possessions. Minimalism is the panacea to messy houses, and ultimately messy lives. These claims are not only untrue but also very privileged. Many poor and working-class people live under an involuntary minimalism, because unbeknownst to the minimalist, conspicuous consumption is a luxury for those who don’t live paycheck to paycheck. And for those who live under involuntary minimalism it is not all sunshine and rainbows, in fact under lower-class conditions it is nearly impossible not to lead a stressful, busy, and often messy life. It is only for the wealthy disorganized person that minimalism would even appeal to. Most folks don’t worry about the burden that their flatscreen tv bears upon them, or the chronic stress their clothes give them. They just put their clothes in the washer, watch Netflix, and move on. If minimalism was the source of its advocate’s happiness, then surely those under involuntary minimalism would also experience these benefits. They do not. It is just so that wealthy people can exert a feeling of power and control over their own life. It allows these people to look down upon their peers and feel enlightened. What a load of bullshit.

**Part Three: Unquestioned Selfishness**

The purveyors of this movement are morally lucky. Though they have come to the conclusion that consumption is bad, the justification is fallacious. It is analogous to a person who doesn’t murder only to avoid getting caught. His choice not to murder is the correct one, but the intentions are misplaced. Though transcending materialism may be a part of one’s personal development, the real cost of consumption does not lie on the consumer. The cost of consumption is the horror that the companies that market to us work so hard to cover up. Between fatally hazardous conditions, inhumane treatment of laborers, and acceleration of greenhouse gas emissions at every stage, the cost of consumption is brutal and horrible to millions who live in the affected towns, and the workers who have no choice but to accept their exploitation.

To frame the issue as a personal inconvenience is akin to beating an individual to a pulp and then complaining about the inconvenience of the blood getting dried up on your hands. I proclaim that this blood is an inconvenience, and I am tired of washing my hands, it’s time to stop the assaulting! What a pathetic society we live in where such a perspective is heroic.

**Part Four: The Purge**

A rite of passage for minimalism is the purge. Ridding one’s self of all their unnecessary belongings. Wasteful, useless, trash. This writing is a wase of my time. Fuck you, minimalists.