

Love in the Age of Txt Mss

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Faster. Faster. Quick. Quick. Click. Do it. We live in a high-speed click-on click-off culture where little time is dedicated to thinking things through and a great deal of time is spent making snap decisions and, as I suspect when flicking through the free to air TV channels mumbling 'Not that one. Not that one. Nup. Maybe. Nah', we also dedicate a lot of time to trivial indecision. It seems that we are often faced today with too much choice yet, paradoxically, too little of what we actually want.

Needless to say, romance, love and commitment are duly processed by the culture into a series of quick click decisions. There is speed dating, sex texting (or sexting), instant text dumping (Iz ova gdby) and one-click defriending on Facebook. It is a wonder that anyone can actually fit a wedding into such a quick turn-around dating schedule. Then again, a wedding does offer an option not available with most other outings namely a 5,000 pic photo opportunity. It's a pity when couples divorce that they can't simply photoshop the dub partner out of the wedding pics and insert the new one.

The demands made by the quick click decision-making process have in turn reduced the complexity of the information supplied. In the middle of an information revolution we find ourselves stuck in a minimalist feedback loop. If we're going to make snap decisions we don't want to be overloaded with information. This minimalist information supply chain can be seen at work in online dating biographies. All the complexity of humanity is whittled back to a list boasting a few physical details and some exaggerated claims based on self-reporting. Would you be interested in reading a biography of JFK, for instance, that began 42, 6ft, Gemini, athletic, degree, occasional smoker, likes sailing and golf, great personality and awesome in the sack.

We seem unwilling in this culture, or maybe it is just unfashionable, to get to know a member of the opposite (or same) sex slowly. Speed dating is not just a quick elimination process based on minimal information; it is the shortest possible distance between two points A and B as in Arrival and Bonkorama.

Listening to the endless radio playlist of cheesy love songs on Valentine's Day set me to wondering what a love song might look like in the time of snap decisions. Here are a few rewrites:

You Take My Breath Away by Berlin

Watching every motion in my high speed lover's game
On this endless ocean need a jet ski but no last name
Scrolling and rescrolling text me when you want to play
Pushing for fast motion moving right along you say
Take my pants away

Naturally, if texting were involved in the dating game then a love song would look more like this:

You are so Beautiful by Joe Cocker

U r so btifl/ 2 me
U r so btifl/ 2 me
Crnt u c
Ur evrting i hope 4
Ur evryting i nEd
U r so btifl/ 2 me

The day after Valentine's Day, however, came as a surprise. I was shocked to discover that media outlets around the world were publishing lists of Breaking Up songs. Is that it? You get one day of romance now and it's over. I suspect women around the world anticipate that a roses-and-candlelight romance would extend beyond one day. Or should we embrace the brutal reality of high-turnover relationships and call 15th February Bleeding Hearts Day for all the love victims, or something more cynical like POTS Day as in Piss Off The Sleazer Day. Rather than seek out a Breaking Up song, perhaps, jilted lovers could just re-engineer the love songs to fit their status. Here are a few suggestions:

I Honestly Love You by Olivia Newton John

Maybe I mope around here
A little more than I should
We both know I've got nowhere else to go
Because you took my credit card
Then jumped into my much loved car
And drove off in the after-glow.
I loathe you.
I honestly loathe you.

You Needed Me by Anne Murray

I cried a tear, you watched TV
I was confused, you drank a beer
I sold my soul, so I could pay the rent
When I complained you got all shirty
Somehow you shafted me

You gave me strength to stand alone
To take the world on my own again
You slept in my bed, but you're a tool
'Cos then you went and denied all paternity
You shafted me, you shafted me.

You are so Beautiful by Joe Cocker: Take 2

U r like such a btch/ 2 me
U r like such a btch/ 2 me
Crnt u c

Ur evrting i h8 nw
Ur evryting cyco
U r like such a btch/ 2 me

Or, perhaps the jilted lover could simply text: Iz ova? 4Q.

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