

Crass news story of the day

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The Telegraph has posted the crass news story of the day in one of its morning emails, saying:

Graduates claiming benefits surge to 700,000

Hundreds of thousands of graduates are claiming benefits amid a post-pandemic surge in people who say they are too sick to work.

Analysis of official data by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) showed there were 707,000 people with a university degree at the end of last year who were out of work and claiming one or more benefits.

This is up 46pc compared with pre-lockdown levels in 2019 and has been driven by a doubling in the number of graduates who claim they cannot work because of a health condition.

Of course, [if you dig a little deeper](#), the story is about The Telegraph's hatred of graduates, all of whom it thinks exist to reinforce left-wing opinion. It is also about its support for Reform, who get the opportunity to comment in the piece, and its hatred of people with mental ill health, all of whom are skivers in the Telegraph's opinion, and of its loathing of benefits, which should very clearly not exist in the opinion of the Telegraph's economics editor, who authored this piece. In that case, the preamble should be seen as an exercise in turning up the heat for all the prejudice that follows.

But then, let me stand back from what was said and just consider how crass the claim is. After all, the underlying assumption is that if you are a graduate, you should not be ill. There is no argument as to why. There is no explanation for the thesis. It is either just taken that graduates are superior beings who should not be ill, or instead, the crassness of the assumption is ignored to let the prejudices flow.

What is also ignored is the fact that graduates may be more likely to be ill. They should be trained in critical thinking. They should be able to better understand the world around them. They should see through the hollowness of the claims made for the

neoliberal world we are asked to live in. If they can, why wouldn't they have increasing rates of mental ill health? After all, shouldn't that be the rational reaction to what they see and understand? This possibility is, of course, not considered, although the article does promote apprenticeships over university courses. To no one's surprise, the Telegraph would prefer that people not be taught to think.

This is crass journalism. It is unfettered prejudice. It is the sort of material that a dying economic system pumps out to perpetuate its claim that all is well, really, and any impression to the contrary is just the population's own fault. And this is also what happens before an edifice falls. It is the manic cry of a failing system wailing that about those who do not appreciate it.

But that does not stop it from also being crass, unintelligent and abusive of the intelligence of the Telegraph reader. I will avoid the obvious comments.