

Harry, Meghan, and the Real Reason for Megxit

So farewell Prince Harry. Goodbye Meghan, Duchess of Sussex. Amid the glare of camera flash, the royal couple completed their final public engagements in the U.K. and, at the end of this month, will embark upon their new lives as private citizens. It was fun while it lasted.

The only charitable response to what has become widely known as “Megxit” is surely to wish the young couple well. Regardless of their glamour and wealth, Harry and Meghan have become parents and continue to deal with many of the same family conflicts as the rest of us. The one difference is that their every move is captured for public consumption.

There’s another reason to simply say a polite cheerio. No one should be compelled to lead a life that causes them distress just because of an accident of birth – or, in Meghan’s case, marriage. Harry did not ask to be born into the royal family. He should be free, like everyone else, to determine his own destiny.

Indeed, this reluctance to accept an inherited role has been a running theme of Harry’s. Back in 2017, before he married Meghan, he gave an interview in which he declared that [no one in the royal family wants to be king or queen](#). Megxit could provide an excellent opportunity for us Brits, newly freed from the shackles of the EU, to liberate the entire royal family and opt instead for an elected head of state. Such a move would only be around 200 years overdue, so not altogether bad by British standards.

We should wish the Duke and Duchess well and they should quietly depart, leaving their titles and security expenses behind them. Only this is not how it has worked out. Rather

than bowing out with dignity, Harry and Meghan chose to call out [press intrusion and racism](#) as the cause of their unhappiness, before proceeding to make a series of unprecedented demands from the monarch.

Harry has never been a fan of the press, which is understandable given the circumstances under which his mother, Princess Diana, died when he was still a young boy. However, some degree of media coverage is integral to the job description of being a senior royal. And even much-maligned British tabloid newspapers are, today, a very different beast from a quarter of a century ago. Following a parliamentary inquiry, the U.K. press has been well and truly muzzled.

There have been no paparazzi shots of baby Archie and no revelations about who his godparents are. There have been no scoops detailing how Harry and Meghan spend their time when not on public engagements. There has been relatively little coverage of Meghan's former marriage or her previous life as an actress.

Those claiming racism point to one [dodgy](#) pop culture reference and one ill-judged nod to Meghan's "[exotic DNA](#)." Other than that, left-wing commentators argue that racism is implicit in [the different ways the press treat Meghan and Kate](#), Duchess of Cambridge, wife to the future king, and mother to the one after that. But of course there have been differences. Whereas Kate is praised for "tenderly cradling" her pregnant belly, Meghan, in the same pose, was accused of pride and vanity. But whether these double standards are down to racism is highly debatable.

The more recent press coverage Harry and Meghan have attracted needs to be put firmly in the context in which their relationship, and their wedding, were initially greeted. The British public, already fond of Harry, took Meghan to their hearts. Millions tuned in to watch their wedding; at one point, [13.1 million watched on the BBC alone](#).

I was one of them. Believe me, we weren't all secretly outraged that a woman of color was marrying "our" prince. I'd say the opposite was the case: we loved Meghan and we loved the marriage in large part *because* Meghan is a woman of color. Suddenly the stuffy royal family felt contemporary, relevant, even – whisper it – woke.

After the wedding, the press and public did begin to look upon Meghan slightly more critically – which could be one explanation for the apparent double standards between coverage of her and Kate. But this had nothing to do with Meghan's skin color and everything to do with the royal couple's behavior. Harry and Meghan were criticized for preaching about environmentalism while flying around the world in private jets. They were criticized for extravagance: the dress Meghan wore to announce her engagement was reported to have cost £50,000, almost twice the average annual U.K. salary. They were criticized for traveling to some of the poorest countries on earth, only to make themselves, and their mental health, the focus of the story. They've been criticized for taking public money – £2.4 million for [home improvements](#) – while not permitting press coverage of baby Archie's christening.

It seems there are two things the British public really do not like. We do not like being lectured at and we do not appreciate hypocrisy. We rarely complain about funding royal trips abroad, but we don't expect dukes and duchesses to tell us how to spend our own hard-earned annual vacation. We'll pay for Harry's and Meghan's wedding and have our state broadcaster beam it into our homes, but we don't then expect them to complain about press intrusion.

The queen has been on the throne for almost 70 years and we have next to no idea of her views on any issue. And this, frankly, is exactly how we like it. In contrast, Harry and Meghan have been married for under two years and we know their views on climate change, feminism, press freedom, the role of men, the importance of mental health, the future of the

monarchy...I could go on.

This difference, between a silent elderly monarch and the loquacious young duke and duchess, shows the clash of values that lies at the heart of Megxit. Harry's and Megan's departure from the royal family has not been driven by racism or press intrusion but by the fact that the young couple's values and identity are fundamentally at odds with the institution of the monarchy.

At times, this clash of values has been made explicit. The queen, in the eyes of many, embodies stoicism and the wartime mantra of "keep calm and carry on." Harry, on the other hand, has been open about [the time he has spent in therapy](#). Meghan, meanwhile, has spoken about trying to adopt a "[stiff upper lip](#)" but finding this approach "damaging," saying she would rather "thrive" than merely "survive." If we know little about what the queen thinks, we know even less about how she feels. Yet Harry and Meghan seem determined to share their feelings with us at every available opportunity.

Above all else, the queen embodies a sense of duty. For seven decades, she has put service before self and the nation before her personal interest. Harry and Meghan are clearly unable or unwilling to do this. A key motivation for Megxit is the couple's desire to be financially independent. This is less a noble gesture than an indication that they can make a great deal more money as free agents than tied into the royal firm.

Making money as an independent couple doesn't mean shunning media attention; it just means having more control over your own image. Harry and Meghan want to play the glamorous celebrity without the hindrance of boring duties to fulfill. They want to lead a rootless, cosmopolitan, jet-set lifestyle, the complete antithesis of a monarchy that is, by definition, grounded within one nation, Britain, with its associated history, culture, and tradition. They feel more at home talking to investment bankers in California about their mental

health issues than they do opening a school library in a rainy British town. They prefer to discuss climate change, [barefoot](#), at a Google-backed retreat rather than attend a dull church service in honor of military veterans.

Harry and Meghan want to join the new wave of celebrities – that small select group who lead lives of immense privilege, fantastic wealth, and incredible glamour – while, at the very same time, preaching to the rest of us about how we should lead our lives. They want to be freed from all national responsibilities in order to virtue signal their moral superiority on the world stage. This clash of values, between young and old, between the U.K. and Hollywood, made Megxit inevitable.

Harry and Meghan are stepping down from royal duties and leaving the U.K. I, for one, wish them well. But they should be honest about their reasons for quitting. There's nothing wrong with aspiring to a different life than that determined by your birth. There's nothing wrong with wanting fame and fortune (though I'd rather they eased off the lectures). Only, please, don't blame us, the British citizens who rooted for you and paid for you, as you depart.

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