

Analysis of Damien Hirst's work (Sinner) in demythologizing the world on the basis of Max Weber's theory

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ABSTRACT

The present study intends to analyze the present work based on Max Weber's theory and his interpretation of demythologization and makes it also clear that how and why this work demythologizes the world. The present writing seeks proposing the following cases.

- *The general spirit of Damien Hirst's works and his classic and method for his concepts and subjects*
- *The effect of science and technology on death in Damien Hirst's works*
- *Intellectuality theory and demythologization concept of Max Weber*
- *Quality of the present work's demythologization of the world*
- *The effect of the science and technology on the demythologization of the world*
- *The relationship between demythologization and religion from the perspective of Weber and its effect on the society (religion's secularization)*

In this study and in order to study Damien Hirst's works and the style and method of this artist as well as the theories of the great philosopher and sociologist, Max Weber, references were made to the books and articles in this regard so as to be able to analyze the present work based on these resources and references. The present study aims at studying Max Weber's works and summarizing the concept of demythologization and its analysis and generalization to Damien Hirst's work so as to be able to reach a better understanding of this concept and explore a famous theory in an artwork. The present study uses a descriptive-analytical method and tries gathering information based on library and internet search.

Keywords: Max Weber, Damien Hirst, demythologization, intellectuality theory, religion and technology, secular

Introduction

As an undeniable truth, thanatopsis is amongst the most essential concerns of the human beings in the course of history but its importance differs in various communities from a culture to another and from an individual to another. Nowadays, the progress in technology has overshadowed the realities and this has led to the expansion of science-based enlightenment in the communities and, having influenced the economic life, it has caused the paler manifestation of the death in the modern society. Resultantly, the modern society and the technological progress and, in parallel, the growth of intellectuality, have caused the demythologization of the world. And this eventually results in the reduction of the religion's power and influence and, as put by some, the religion is consequently secularized meaning that the religion's presence and its governance is decreased and it starts declining and vanishing. From the perspective of Weber, religion, as well, is a mysterious phenomenon and, of course, this theory has its own opponents.

Efforts have been made in the present study to deal with the aforementioned cases in a more extensive way so as to be able to explore and analyze the present work by relying on the concepts and interpretations and make it clear how this work demythologizes the world.

Reading the Work

Damien Hirst is an artist who has created works by challenging the concept of death with the goal of confrontation with and reminding it; presenting a different perspective and offering style, he has drawn the attentions of the world dwellers.

His works belong to the postmodern world and they bear concepts like acceptance of the death's being driven away to the margins of the general life in the contemporary communities as well as reaction to the capitalist world. Damien Hirst is the most well-known member of the Young British Artists (Samanipour, 2012, pp.52-61).

Using a metaphorical language in psychological subjects, he has created works that are intensively engaged with the meaning of death and it was his different perspective and offering style that drew everyone's attention. Most of his works include statues, paintings and arrangement of the glass bottles and containers.

It can be stated that Hirst's works are very much close to those of the postmodern world and they are at odd and in battle with the global system in its today's form as well as its created value and they are also opposed to humanism (Jonbesh, 2011, p.52).

Post modernistic art begins with the attack on the art's modernistic borders and this means the denial of the solely formal characteristics of art as something distinct from life hence being inclined towards taking possession of the life's ordinary objects and placing them under a general title of art. It can be shown that the borders imposed on art are going to be removed by modernism which overly simplifies the domain and complexity of the artistic activities (Gat and Lopus, 2012, p.123).

It can be stated according to the causal theory that almost all works by Damien Hirst are in contention with the society and this problem has been frequently seen in the course of history. However, producing a fresh setting, Hirst makes the artwork enter a postmodern world but keeps its cultural position and instigates the audience from all around the globe upon bearing witness to his works. Now, we would like to approach this work from the perspective of Max Weber and analyze the quality with which this work demythologizes the world.

Max Weber is the great German sociologist whose works are still in the focal point of a lot of art-lovers' attentions after these many years. It can be possibly stated that Max Weber has been more persistent amongst all the sociological classics. One of the properties of Max's mindset is his pessimism towards the future of the mankind and what may happen to him.

His disputes about science is a part of a larger discussion called demythologization of the world by Weber. In practice and as a profession, Weber realizes intellectualization and enlightenment and, more importantly, demythologization of the world as the property of our time's destiny. Weber's idea about the demythologization is indicative of the depletion of the nature and the world of magic. Demythologization is commenced with the removal of magic from the ancient world. This subject starts from the idea that the human communities create techniques for controlling the nature and bringing about changes for making human beings more comfortable (Malley, 2004, p.64).

In this work, we see an arrangement of drugs in a particleboard. Considering the general spirit of Hirst's works that was mentioned in the beginning, it can be inferred that it is the reflection of his worries about the mankind's trend of life and an irony to the ordinary instruments of the mankind's life streams. In this artwork, exhibition of the drugs and an anatomic sculptures of the human body can be reflective of the death's persistence and continuation of an artificial life in the society as a sort of fight with diseases and victory over them. It is also a reference to the artificial preservation of the organism's vegetative functions that serve the postponement of death in the human communities and barring the live persons from attending and participating in affairs that occur non-reciprocally and this is the very limitation governing the modern domination over the nature obtained which has been obtained through science and technology.



Figure1. Damien Hirst, Sinner, 1988, Glass, Faced Particleboard, Ramin, plastic, Aluminum, anatomical model and scalpels

According to Max Weber's interpretations of demythologization, the work can be analyzed as stated in the following words: this artist challenges death and aims at confrontation with and reminding it as mentioned above; doing so, this artist has created many works. In the present artwork, the drug shelves have been applied as an instrument for fighting with disease; he wants to resist against diseases and destructions and fight with them by any possible means. These drugs are made by the today's modern making and they are completely in close relationship with science and technology; behind each of these boxes and drugs, there are completely clear-cut and scientific formulae and theories for fighting with the diseases of the today's mankind.

On the other hand, these drugs can be known as instruments for fighting with the rootless and traditional methods and/or magic and superstitions that were employed for treating the patients.

From the perspective of Weber, intellectuality is a fake source of intellect and meaning intellectuality and reasonability. There are various meanings for intellect and each of them include one dimension, rank or layer of intellect. Thus, intellectualism and intellectualization does not at all mean the increasing general recognition of the conditions wherein we live. It more means that we know and/or have come to believe that we can prove in case of willing so that there is essentially no mysterious and unpredictable power at any instant capable of intervening the course of life. In summary, we can control everything by prediction (Max Weber, 1991, p.78).

Intellectuality serves many functions. The followings are some of its applications:

- 1) **Typical Intellectuality:** by typical intellectuality, Aristotelian intellectuality is intended because Aristotle has defined human beings as wise animals (Gha'eminia, mind, 5).
- 2) **Normative intellectuality:** typical intellectuality is the broad meaning of the intellectuality which is deployed against anti-intellectuality, i.e. the things that are not capable of and do not deserve to be characterized by intellectuality and the description of the beliefs become the human behaviors (unlike the external objects and the behaviors of the nonhuman creatures). Normative intellectuality is posited inside the typical intellectuality 9Ibid, p.6).

- 3) **Theoretical Intellectuality:** considering the fact that the intellectuality can be the description of beliefs, behaviors and human values, philosophers have used such a term as “theoretical intellectuality” in their evaluation of the beliefs and even statements and decisions. The theoretical intellectuality pertains to what should we believe in (Ibid, p.4). Theoretical intellectuality is indeed the application of the theoretical intellect in the area of beliefs.
- 4) **Practical intellectuality:** in contrast to the theoretical intellectuality that is devoted to the beliefs, the practical intellectuality pertains to the domain of behaviors and it has things to do with the idea that what behaviors should we exhibit (Gha’eminia, mind, p.5). In other words, practical intellect discusses about the beings that evolve based on the human will.

Intellectuality is the mindset in the focal point of Max Weber’s cultural theory. In fact, the general theme of Weber’s works is pertinent to the nature, the causes and the effects of intellectualism in the modern western communities. In analyzing the reason and quality of the modern society’s formation he points to intellectuality as one of the most important index of the modern and secular society’s culture: “one of the fundamental elements of the novel capitalism spirit or, better said, the spirit of the whole new culture, i.e. intellectual wayfaring based on idea of obligation, was born out of Christian mortification” (Max Weber, 2005, p.144).

Such contemporary sociologists as Stephen Kohlberg have recognized four primary kinds of intellectuality in Weber’s works. Weber uses these types as exploratory means required for precise investigation of the historical realities in the western and non-western communities.

Theoretical Intellectuality

This kind of intellectuality includes increasing domination over the reality in the area of theory through resort to the abstract concepts the accuracy of which is increased day after day (Max Weber, 1905, p.232). Theoretical intellectuality guarantees the conscious harnessing of the reality but not through action rather via constructing abstract concepts possessing daily increasing accuracy.

Theoretical intellectuality ensures a recognition for the precise perception of reality through abstract instruments like logical reasoning, deduction and causal substantiation quite opposite to the practical intellectuality which is based on practice. This sort of intellectuality enables an individual to go beyond the routine realities in search for achieving a perception of cases like life meaning (Tim Delaney, 1971, p.208).

Essential Intellectuality

In regard of the idea that essential intellectuality guides the action directly towards the pattern, it is similar to the practical intellectuality hence not resembling the theoretical intellectuality. However, this guidance is carried out based on the investigation of the creature’s present and potential. Essential intellectuality determines a method which is based on a value system wherein the individuals’ behaviors are limited. Such a kind of intellectuality is not unique to the western communities rather it is transcultural and Trans historical and it exists in every community possessing robust and valuable principles (Tim Delaney, 1971, p.209).

This kind of intellectuality signals the inherent capability of the human beings for a valuable-related and intellectual action. Inherent intellectuality might be limited meaning that it may organize a small realm of life and leave all the other territories intact. Wherever truthfulness entails adherence to values like loyalty, sympathy and collaboration, inherent (essential) intellectuality is constructed such as in communism, Calvinism, socialism, Budhism, Hinduism and any other human perspective towards life. These cases are examples of inherent intellectuality no matter how different are their capabilities for regulating their actions or value contents (Tim Delaney, 1971, p.209).

Formal Intellectuality

Unlike theoretical, practical and inherent intellectualities that have intercivilizational and Tran’s temporal characteristics, formal intellectuality essentially belongs to the western civilization and it is

accompanied by the modern life's domains, especially economy, law and science, and its domination structure, particularly its bureaucratic form. In formal intellectuality, methods are determined by the rules and regulations and world-inclusive instructions.

Formal intellectuality is necessary for capitalism system in line with the enforcement of the formal regulations, administration of the bureaucratic affairs and others of the like. Put it another way, the general regulations and instructions are reagents of the formal intellectuality (Tim Delaney, 1971, p.209). Like practical intellectuality, formal intellectuality eventually legitimizes the very calculation based on mean-goal due to its consideration of the personal interests against action though such a consideration is carried out by reference to the rules, regulations and instructions that serve general functions.

Weber realizes the intellectuality governing the modern society as being the formal intellectuality because the other three kinds of the intellectuality have been existent in these civilizations. This intellectuality is manifested in three areas of action, culture and social structure. The manifestation of the instrumental intellectuality in these areas renders the modern society and the culture governing it secular.

The other analysis that can be conducted based on Weber's theory of intellectuality in regard of this work is that these drugs can be realized as a power against the supernatural forces, metaphysics and, in general, spirituality and religion for relieving the human beings from disease and destruction.

In Weber's mind, due to its emphasis on asceticism and devaluing the life in this world, religion cannot stand purposive intellectuality. This is while instrumental intellectuality emphasizes on certain achievable objective goals. Thus, the conflict between the religion and intellectuality shows a more vivid visage of itself in all the life domains like sustenance, politics and aesthetics than all the areas of the intellectual knowledge. The conflict is more highlighted where the intellectual knowledge engages in unraveling the world's mysteries within the format of science and depicts them as having been brought about in a cause-and-effect mechanism instead of in an ethical system because it is in this case that the science contradicts the fundamental principle holding that the world is controlled by the will of God and is ethically oriented towards a special destination (Max Weber, 2003, p.403). It is in the industrial society that the education system is vastly expanded and becomes completely distinct from the family institution. The result of the science expansion and ideas' amalgamation is the pluralism in the beliefs because the expansion in science and intellectuality puts everything and everybody constantly under question. In order to be expanded, intellectuality needs a margin of free thinking and contemplation. Freedom of thinking per se sets the ground for the expansion of the diverse thoughts (Guy Rocher, 1988, p.97).

Demythologization of the world through intellectuality and science leads to the fundamental transformation of the ethical life's pillars; it is a change that is called corporatization. Corporatization is specified in two forms: the first is that fundamental and specific distinctions are made in the minds and institutions between holy and non-holy. The space of non-holy life and work is completely away and distant from saying prayers and entreaties to the God and relationship with supernatural order. This distance is manifested in the institutions, as well, and causes them to lose their religious implicit implications (and the government, schools and other institutions become consequently nonreligious); the second is that the interest in corporeal affairs takes religious and ethical pluralism in the modern society. In technological society, no trace will be found of the religious and ethical unity as a common feature of the traditional society. The criticism spirit and freedom of thinking are accompanied by diversity of the personal choices, sectarianization of the religious belongings and the numerously of diverse and, occasionally paradoxical ethical standpoints in religious level as in ethical level; this is what causes the modern society's culture to lack the unity and coherence of the traditional society's culture (Ibid, p.100).

Following secularization of the culture, the individual domain also undergoes metamorphosis. The religious life takes a very individual and internalized characteristic in the individuals' daily activities. Thought, affections, tendencies and behaviors of the individuals will be freed of any sort of dependency and adherence to the supernatural matters and the supernatural and transcendental elements and factors would exert a little effect on the choice and method of actions.

In technological communities, human beings are compelled to take actions to a lesser degree by motivations and punishments of the supernatural type like tendency towards deliverance and submission to the divine rules. Human beings and the corporeal life are the goals and favorites of the individuals.

Conclusion

Damien Hirst's art stimulates the concept of love and fear in the human beings with an approach to death, disease and physical decay. His goal is showcasing the inevitable closeness of death which is the most real thing in the human life. He conjectures fear of death as a feeling stronger than love and lust. In a nutshell, his works aim at the audience's confrontation with death and he conveys this message in every of his works and with his own specific method that it is the fear of death that keeps us alive.

The important point is the common aspect of Damien Hirst and Max Weber regarding their attitudes towards modern life and demythologization and scientism. The primary reason for this confrontation and such an approach towards disease and death, especially in the present work, is the technological progress and modern life. The today's human beings are endeavoring to render everything scientific and intellectual and accepting all the things with proofs and documents. As it was mentioned, the result of Max Weber's demythologization in the present era can be summarized in this point that the human beings are paying attention to the drugs as the products of the science in the today's world for getting rid of the diseases and death the result of which is staying away from the superstitions and magic's that are occasionally applied for the curing of the diseases and this is the very demythologization and removal of the superstitions. This same viewpoint also has another outcome, i.e. corporatization, which eventually ends in the distancing away from spirituality and paling of the religion's role in life, i.e. the very secularization of the religion. In sum, one of the most subtle effects of demythologization is that the more the technology becomes complicated, the lesser we will be capable of perceiving the way it works (Max Weber, 1905, p.228) and this same issue renders it necessary for us to store more knowledge in today's world.

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