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Investigation of high and low art from the perspective of pragmatism philosophy



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ABSTRACT

Categorization and groupings of concepts have always existed in history, and this has resulted in the emergence of binaries. In most categories of binaries, the first expressed case is more positive and more valuable than the second concept, e.g., day versus night. In this paper, high art versus low art and the philosophy of rationalism within the philosophy of pragmatism are studied. Society in general is composed of two elements: a majority and a minority. The minority group is considered educated and privileged. Fine art as well as rationalist approaches are deemed to belong to them. In contrast, the majority or the public does not benefit from such knowledge. Specifically, popular art and philosophy that is empiricist or pragmatic belongs to them. However, the question is whether this classification is based on social classes or humankind, irrespective of one's place in society. This is the question that this article attempts to answer.

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1. Introduction

The creation of major cities has caused aesthetic transformations in assessing the status and function of art. In fact, urbanization has created new kinds of art known as popular art.

From the perspective of sociology, there are two types of art in society: one is for the elite, and the other is popular art.

In terms of sociology, there are two different periods in the investigation of art. In the first period, attention to art and artistic issues were related to social issues. In fact, at the beginning of the creation of the science of sociology, the cultural and economic elites of society were separated. They were able to take advantage of both wants and basic necessities and could use their spare time producing artwork and other art, which were circulated among the small group of elites. This small group gave art standards, and if anyone wanted to join the elite, they would have to follow these standards in their artwork. The sociology of art defines the art of this period by the elite. Valuation entails the production and properties of art. In fact, it is true that only elites considered art, but other members of the art society were not deprived, because an

interest in art and beauty is innate in every human being. Therefore, people within their own culture produced artwork in their communities, and the issues were tied to their everyday life.

In the first period of society, community groups and public property were divided by boundaries. In contrast, in the contemporary era, the high level of well-being and economic development have caused a number of middle class and lower caste elite to reach the middle class. Public education has led to growth, and even lower middle-class families can benefit from the gift of literacy. Literacy has led to considerable progress. Those not named elites, lower middle classes and the producers and creators of works of art have joined this group. In the community, groups do not face boundaries because people are closer together in terms of social status, and most of the artists and public elites are located in the middle of these two extremes.

The argument in this article that fine art has always belonged to the elites and that low art has belonged to the group deemed to be of the commons will be examined from a pragmatic perspective.

2. High art and low art

In nineteenth century Europe, the economic problems caused a crisis in the arts, because artists had to sell their work on the market. However, in contrast to the direction of economic development, some created works that were more complex and

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incomprehensible to the public. Then, schools such as Impressionism and Cubism emerged. However, the formation of these schools was so rapid that it separated the arts from more people. Thus, the audience and artists had a severed relationship. The understanding of art was in crisis. However, people developed interests towards educational works, entertainment, newspaper stories, television programs, radio, photography and cinema. In contrast, those artists with Avant-Garde characteristics had little audience. They categorized the arts into two types, high and low, placing themselves at high status.

However, the fact is that fine art was so distant, and so much of people's lives could not play a role in it. In fact, art is considered by society to be a formative role in society. When society is not able to appreciate good art, it is certain that it will disappear, and the role of local developmental is to foster individual talents and insight.

Some scholars consider the idea of art as classified into two categories, high art and low art, due to enlightenment. This means that they consider only work that have aesthetic features as genuinely artistic. However, are there really structural differences between high art and low art? Is the distinction between high culture and low culture is revealed? Such distinctions call on more scheme-specific Marxist philosophers of the Frankfurt School, including Benjamin 2 and Adorno 3. Among the thinkers of the twentieth century, the mass art defenders are Susan Sontag 4 and Shusterman 5 and their opponents are Dwight McDonald 6, Greenberg 7 and Collingwood 8.

Enlightenment thinking has emphasized the autonomy of art and artists from external interests. That is, the original art cannot be derived from popular culture, because art is an original product of individual genius. Therefore, it is natural that artistic thinkers never consider satisfying the people, like the arts, educational or entertainment applications created under the names of low/mass/popular art. The inferiority of art depends on the social and not the individuality of the artist. Collingwood calls popular art an ironic mode of the "entertainment industry" that actually is not art but an illusion. More Marxist thinkers like Collingwood have denounced popular art. Dwight McDonald called it "mass art" instead of popular art, which implies the lowest amount of intelligence in the audience is needed to get the message of this artwork. The emergence of the masses in the higher social power is the reality of modern life, and the man who is in the masses does not constitute any criteria to distinguish himself from others. In contrast, people who carry large tasks and assignments on their shoulders feel they do not have any specific expectations and their life is the same (Ortega y Gasset, 2014, pp. 264–268).

Adorno treats art as an event that involves no confirmation and its value is breaking habits. Art in the treatment of Adorno does not reflect the confirmation of available faces; rather, it always speaks of forms of better understanding (Heidari, 2009, p. 78). Adorno's analysis uses criticisms and comments and philosophical works in the internal relations and relations between subjectivity and the social world to increase and expand the commodification of culture and art, which eventually leads to a culture industry. The main purpose of art for Adorno is to create a social-critical perspective; the goal of art should be free from social and political and economic ties (Fisher and Andrew, 2005, p. 533). In his view, the culture industry is the result of an alienated society. The involvement and transformation of cultural products are a step in the direction of bourgeois culture. The aim to promote political doctrines loses its authenticity. As one of the potential features, because art is a revolutionary product platform and entails social and cultural relations, it follows the passive stance of consumer awareness (Nozari and Ali, 2009, pp. 104–88).

However, in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the mechanical reproduction of art made it possible for

much larger audiences to enjoy works of art. In fact, mechanical reproduction in the form of photography and cinema changed the reaction of the masses to art. Walter Benjamin took a different view than Adorno. He knew that art has the power and value to take steps leading to the masses. Benjamin stated that new forms of mass art, such as photography and film, could lead to awareness, because there is independence in the actor camera, eliminating the halo cast and critical distance, which can be seen as liberation (Fisher and Andrew, 2005, pp. 532–533).

Many thinkers of the 1960s came to support popular art, and aesthetic values were insignificant. However, in the meantime, some of the public's compassion was to interpret works of art. In this case, it is true that public art is lower than high art, but for those in society who had been deprived of the education necessary to understand high art, it is enjoyable and has cultural satisfaction. This view was criticized by Shusterman, because in the underlying subtext, it endorses the criticism of modernist thinkers.

In the 1980s, thinkers in the social approach distinguished folk art and high and popular art, to meet the desires and prejudices of popular art with the power of the people, which gives a special vision to society and formulates and creates certain social attitudes. Some thinkers (Claus Carroll 9, Stanley Cowell 10 and David Naotis 11) argued about the distinction between high art and popular art based on a social approach. Undoubtedly, there is no intrinsic feature in high art that reveals the distinction between the two. Carroll considers the distinction between fine art and popular art as the difference between social classes. He considers popular and mass art as having the same meaning. Some criticize work that reaches the mass production of popular art, especially now that all art is reproducible.

Popular art is perceived based on its value to the public. Thus, most of the representation of the aesthetic is based on the concept of community. The best way to assess these arts is in the works. Whereas the formal aspects of art are used to assess the fine arts, practices and potential end result should also be studied.

Indeed, this view is a lower vision, where public art is considered as operational and high art is distinct from life. Throughout history, many high arts were unlike tradition and were consistent with common beliefs and social revolution against the status quo. Therefore, high art in absolute terms cannot be separated from community.

2.1. The introduction of pragmatism

American pragmatism is a philosophy that came to the public's notice in the 1950s. In general, the philosophy of pragmatism made philosophical thought simple and accessible to everyone.

The term pragmatism is derived from the Greek word *pragma*, meaning action. The term was first introduced to philosophy in 1878 by Pierce, who stated that our beliefs are rules for action and to developed a concept that it is necessary only to determine that this concept is to create, how to work. This means that the behaviour is unique to us (James, 2012, p. 41). Pierce's aesthetic contribution is clearly through his semiotics, which had a considerable impact on the theories of the twentieth century (Shusterman, 2011, p. 347). In fact, Pierce established the principle of pragmatism. The principle of pragmatism is that all facts influence our actions. The pragmatism ahead of any conflict should consider the question of which is correct for any of the parties in any particular empirical reality. In this way, difference is created. In addition, if conflict makes no difference to this debate, it is unrealistic, and disputes of practice testing many conflicts in the history of philosophy become meaningless. The same approach can be called pragmatism, or empiricism, which is also radical, pragmatism with the abstract to the concrete and practice,

in fact, having the power. To a rational mind, the philosophy of pragmatism about the truth being beneficial and satisfactory in practice is intolerable. Pragmatists pay attention to facts and truth and objectivity when they are acting. However, for rationalists, it is actually quite abstract. The most satisfying feature of pragmatism is its proximity to the facts. Pragmatism is fascinated with facts, so empiricism-oriented material prejudice occurs due to it (James, 2012, pp. 56–57).

According to William James, pragmatism is intermediate between rationalism and empiricism. Because it has no prejudice or dogma inhibitors and the solid law of reason and welcomes any new hypothesis or theory, we will consider it from the point of privilege to religious rationalism and empiricism. Rationalism considers the planet, heaven and empiricism in external senses, whereas pragmatism wants to preserve everything, including logic and senses, and take into account the most personal experiences.

2.2. Comparison of pragmatism and rationalism

Currently, in all aspects of life and in the philosophy of rationalists and empiricist, there are dipoles. In general, for the position of these two intellectual professions, it can be said that empiricist prefers experience facts and the rationalist prefers abstract facts. However, the truth is that rationalism and empiricism are both dual, which means that they will never spend time only on attaining a correct understanding. This method cannot be used to emphasize that one school of thought suggests a method of their own.

In the course of history, describing these two orientations, words using reasoning are obvious and there are more positive things for the rational. Rationalists are single-winged and empiricism is pluralist, because their understanding starts from the components and the components are tuned. Rationalists are always closer to religion and empiricists are called materialists. Rationalists are idealist and graceful, whereas empiricists are skeptics and rationalists are dogmatic.

Over the last two centuries, progress in science has reduced the spread of materials as a result of the growing importance of the human sense of naturalism. In fact, nature is established, which means it is the man who should adapt themselves to it. In this age of idealist philosophers, adherents of the theory of evolution have emerged. Non-radical pragmatism philosophy is simple and natural. This philosophy accepts the theory of evolution and confirms that aesthetic pleasure is based on evolutionary heritage, through the interaction with the physical and social, cultural and human experiences are shaped (Shousterman, 2011, p. 353). However, it lacks action and a triumphant tone and therefore lacks prestige and credibility (James, 2012, pp. 25–23).

Pragmatists argue that humans are social creatures. Every human being is an image of himself as a result of his social environment. They are pluralists and believe that the future is also in a fragmented landscape of every human being. No one can see the entire universe, but each perspective adds something to the overall picture. Pragmatists consider the possibility of error, as well as their beliefs.

Absolutisms relies only on abstraction and does not have any experience. However, mere intellectual abstractions cannot be concluded if even to understand God, the absolute need of creatures.

Its philosophy is that what people need today is a philosophy not just to think. The relationship with the real world and human life is finite (James, 2012, p. 26).

In fact, both empiricist and rationalist philosophies have drawbacks. The philosophy of empiricism in many audiences is inhuman and a kind of pagan and rationalist philosophy. The religious calling

cannot establish contact with real life. Rationalism is a professional tool system and the system must be closed, whereas the world we live in today is wide open.

The philosophy of pragmatism is for professionals who can subject the human mind to religion (not in the case of absolute idealists) and reality (not in the sense of skepticism and cynicism materialists). In other words, this philosophy can be regarded as a rationalist philosophy and at the same time as an empiricist philosophy, rich for maintaining contact with reality (James, 2012, p. 34).

In fact, a pragmatic approach is the best way to solve the never-ending conflicts of metaphysics, because, each concept is interpreted by its practical consequences and only if there is a difference between the two sides do they quarrel. We find it practical for considering serious conflict.

3. Reality from the perspective of pragmatism

Reality, in the philosophy of pragmatism, is what has guided us. In fact, it is the concept that could do the work in our lives. Rationalists constantly address theoretical truth, whereas pragmatism are against any idea of what the question asks and just imagine what impact this will have in practical life. Why does pragmatism seek to empirically assess the truth?

An image of pragmatism is based on a true event, process or event. In this line of intellectual truth and correctness, the direct relationship between utility is two way. Reality not only describe the philosophy of pragmatism but also indicates the means guiding the processes described in this quality are all united, following the experience made. In contrast, given that pre-existing radical thinking is fixed, any process does not accept. The absolute truth of the philosophy of pragmatism is something no other experience can change. It says that the very ideal can be almost impossible to achieve, because many facts that are considered eternal. We must be prepared one day to actually know what tomorrow is for us to prove that wrong. In fact, in today's world, everything is relative and absolute. Chiller argued that the truth is what is useful and Dewey considered satisfaction and benefit the truth.

3.1. Humanism, in pragmatism

The philosophy of pragmatism, the single truth and other matters such as language and law are not preset principles, but they give life to the process and in fact all the names of an abstract human product. This is why Schiller humanism is called, and the fact is that we are human products and what the world knows is known and ductile. The fact of human beliefs about reality and the first part of reality is a human emotion. Emotions cannot be true or false, because they are just senses. The second component is the relationship between feelings and facts. The third component is in minds. It is certain that people feel out of reach, but each person has felt more involved in the conclusion that it is in his hands. Human exposure at any moment with a new sensory reality without default (previous memories) can be affected by the sensory reality. In fact, there is no reality independent of human thought and belief in the reality that is only possible in the human concept (James, 2012, p. 162).

We help our ancestors and beliefs that have been made in the field of new experiences ahead. Certain ideas that we look at and what to pay attention to, we do so to determine the practical and feasible things, which in turn identify what we experience and the result of human creativity (James, 2012, p. 165). The world we understand and we experience is constant, independent and immutable, but it is also the product of human choice (Shousterman, 2011, p. 350). Pragmatic understanding suggests

that we change our life and the world is always waiting and is changed by man. Such a role for human dignity and responsibility is as a sentient being would do.

The rationalism reality is ready, eternal and perfect, whereas in terms of pragmatism, it is being built and is looking forward to the future realization (James, 2012, p. 167). In fact, we are faced with a world that is unfinished.

3.2. Aesthetics in pragmatism

Aesthetics pragmatism was established with the book “Art as Experience” by John Dewey, 15, who was born in 1859. From the perspective of pragmatism, the element of experience is important. Aesthetics pragmatism, on the margins of traditional arts and the people who have always been ignored, there is an emphasis on the high arts. The emphasis is on collective concept of art for the first time this century, with the attention of Bakhtin. Bakhtin conceptualizes everyday life and their margins, and the emphasis is philosophy. In Dewey’s terms, it fulfils the role art plays to humans. With regard to experience, energy and human mobility are in line with goals to increase. Dewey believed in the aesthetic experience (which is based on public social instincts) (Shousterman, 2011, p. 354) and its perception of human relations to reform and strengthen.

In fact, Dewey’s attempt to express his aesthetic theories had nothing to do with aesthetic analysis and a positive spirit and the aesthetics of modern analytics and insight because he knows and sought recovery from the romantic gibberish connection with the aesthetic experience in daily life. The interaction of organism and the environment is Dewey’s art (Shousterman et al., 2014, p. 75). Dewey believed that what human value are the human needs to meet growth and a life providing a consistent world. Dewey’s value of art, rather than a specific purpose, knows the satisfaction of living (Shousterman et al., 2014, p. 76).

The aesthetics of pragmatism is in the communication arts with the usual functions of life because they know the root cause of beauty in daily life functions. This view is in contrast to Kant’s theory of impartiality and the purposes of the work of art. Pragmatists argue that resorting to such theories associated with discrete and experimental artwork of human society is hollow, and they seek to establish continuity between the aesthetic experience of life and part of the effort to crush the notion of high arts (in the modern conception) (Shousterman et al., 2014, p. 77). In this thought, what matters is not the ultimate experience.

One of the characteristics of aesthetics pragmatism is naturalism. Dewey believes that it is important to understand the basic functions and vital aesthetics. According to him, there is no space between the artist, art and audience because they all live under the shadow of the living. The beauty of classical art is apart from its practical position and in an environment that puts it in relationship with human achievements. Artwork in the beauty of the classical domain is transferred, but expects pragmatism of thinkers, who are busy trying to communicate between works of art and human experiences, because every work that is created is experienced, whether individual or collectively. Dewey perceives a pleasant experience in everyday life in experiencing the beauty of knowledge, following the artist’s early experience, not a trace at a museum or exhibition.

3.3. Assessment of high art and low art from the perspective of the philosophy of pragmatism

The verisimilitude of the twentieth century (modern realism, pop art, hyper realism) does not represent reality, because the photograph was taken before this responsibility. What distinguishes realism from the realism of the nineteenth century is the

evolution of knowledge. In the twentieth century, dominant philosophical principles, knowledge, experience, knowledge can be obtained. This suggests that a pragmatic approach in philosophy and life is fruitful. Such an approach has always had its fans. Pragmatics interact with their environment. Their experiences are limited in terms of the sensory experience and include pleasure, pain, anger and trying. Pragmatism is not only a tool for addressing academic philosophy or abstract philosophical issues but also a means to address the problems of the people. According to some critics, pragmatism passes from philosophy to sociology because it eliminates the traditional boundaries between the strands.

William James’ pragmatism is believed to resolve contradictory philosophies. Its approach is a philosophical system, and in fact, a way of life, and it resists against anything that is transcendent.

The analytic aesthetics, the modern tradition and romance, defend the values and the autonomy of art through a one-off concept of art with the concept of high art (and great and its greatness). Dewey laments the elitist tradition and discusses the “concept Museum of art” and the “dumb concept of beautiful art” (Shousterman et al., 2014, p. 78).

With the categorization and placement of art in the high position, that no one can establish a relationship with it not only makes the art of human life unnoticed but also undermines the aesthetic quality of people’s lives. Indeed, according to Dewey, with elitism in contemporary fine art, art is separated from the body of its social and aesthetic chasm between life experience and the experience of art. Susan Sontag, in an article entitled “a new culture and sensitivity,” criticized any notion of the separation of the transition between life and art, life and scientific thinking and so forth (Shayganfar, 2009, p. 215). She insists on the inseparability of all aspects of modern life and understands art as life. In terms of the philosophy of pragmatism, an object is important in terms of its aesthetics, function and role in a dynamic experience. It is simply not pragmatic aesthetic curiosity in the past, but there is a promising future for any aesthetic experiences that one can imagine (Shousterman et al., 2014, p. 79).

4. Conclusion

The separation of art and public elites is the product of a socially, economically and politically bipolar society. The society that governs the minority uses all facilities, whereas the majority of impoverished oligarchs are unable to promote their own artistic expression.

The new sociology asserts that society recognizes the art and artist as one who accepts his work in the community as art. The gap between art and the public properties of the polarity of society can be reduced by strengthening the middle class of this gap. In contemporary art, there is no clear boundary between high and low art, and none of the works are owned by the people, culture or specific country; however, with art, in the global village, attempts to break boundaries and separation occur (whether discriminatory or based on geography). As such, the masses could perceive popular art as a fine, revolutionary and liberating awareness. In contrast, the so-called fine art exhibition is formed only in the economy, or vice versa. Finally, it can be stated that works of art have such boundaries in the current climate.

The pragmatic look to contemporary art seems very important, because the pragmatic aesthetics are not separate concepts; rather, philosophical and practical benefits of life can be found (Shousterman, 2011, pp. 357–358). Currently, arts are not assessed like Nietzsche, Heidegger, Schopenhauer, Kant and others. The philosophical evaluation and philosophical pragmatism simply look at the aspects of arts that can be explained. Pragmatism is a method in modern philosophy that acknowledges the impossibility of proving some aspects due to their use in human life.

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