

Commodification of human life in modern society assignment

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Examine the key areas of commodification that are discussed in the book and discuss them in terms of how society influence and/or determine our human behavior, and how in turn the “ individual” behavior influences society. This morning I woke up earlier than usual so that I could enjoy some peace and quiet before I started my day.

I made some coffee and watched the news thinking in the back of my mind that I needed to shower and figure out what I wanted to wear to school. Although I would love to stay in my sweatpants and tee shirt, I realized that I would feel much better about myself if I wore something more presentable. But really... why should I wear something nice? Why should I put make-up on? Who cares if I am in sweatpants or if I am wearing Jeans? All of those thoughts ran through my head and I came to a conclusion that I typically feel better about myself when I know that others are viewing me the way I want them to view me!

Subsequently, Hurst sums this up by saying that the worth of individuals is generally measured in terms of their social and economic success and the lifestyle they present to the rest of society. The influences of society determined my behavior and my personal outlook on how I wanted to be viewed by others. There are three main areas of focus that will give clarity to the understanding of how modern society influences and/or determines our human behavior. And in turn how we as individuals influence the society as well.

First area Hurst speaks of is the superficial self and how the image of the body in modern society has evolved into a physical and emotional roller

coaster! Creating a positive self-image is hard to maintain because the society has placed a vision of the ideal version of beauty. Today men and women are constantly focused on how to stay on beat with the latest fashion, behavioral trends, etc. During the 1980's women were sought to have this image that beauty included strength and thinness. Over time, the perception of being very thin has qualified as being beautiful.

Class and economic status also plays a role in how society influences our behaviors. Depending on the lifestyle you chose to live, you are expected to act and eact in a certain manor. Being sensitive on how to present oneself also involves controlling the other physical aspects of the behavior. Basically what is happening in this case, as Hochschild explains it, is that the emotions and feelings, rather than being ways to find out about oneself, become a commercial resource used to satisfy customers.

The superficial self is Hurst way of describing how society has influenced us to place certain expectations and behaviors on what the ideal image of beauty truly is. Society influences us first handedly through commodities, such as celebrities. The world of celebrities has greatly evolved the value of human life. The commercial sport industry seeks to organize events on strict market principles, mainly through the pursuit of capital accumulation, rather than the satisfaction of individual personal and social needs. In a broad sense, celebrities are a social creations.

World celebrities set many standards by which society feels they must follow. The physical and emotional attributes that celebrities pursue shape our daily social influences. This idea that celebrities live such a wonderful,
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successful, and plentiful lifestyle play such an empowering behavior and mindset to the U. S. society. We must try to live up to those standards in order to “fit in” as most of the U. S. population would feel. The “admiring identification” with celebrities not only makes them seem different or even better than us but it also reinforces celebrities as a “center of cultural capital” in our society.

Our influences and feedback towards the world of celebrities affects their behaviors as well. They will continue to climb the totem pole as long as we will show positive emotion towards their lifestyle. And the reverse is the same; in the sense that we as a society feel that it is necessary to mock the celebrities in order to fit in a certain crowd. Weber supports this by saying, “the task of the acting, willing person: he weighs and chooses from among the values involved according to his own conscience and his personal view of the world. Which is the act of choice itself is his own responsibility. Although society evolves through patterns of behavior, our minds will only allow us to follow those that we consciously agree with in the actions on hand. This shows us how the value of human life is not always as it seems. Weber was very clear in his view that the rational institutions of modern life cannot provide us with a set of ultimate values by which to organize our lives. The more absolute the values and the more determined the individuals wish to enact upon them, then more the individual will devote themselves to fulfilling that view.

Values are critical because they give direction and meaning to life, which provides worth to our lives. Weber believes that human life is a value in itself

is becoming less important. Since the early 1980's, the value of human life has been defined economically rather than socially, religiously and so forth. Simmel on the other hand, suggests that money becomes a universal standard in which qualitative differences between objects are erased. I agree with Simmel in this point of view because society has influenced individuals into believing what their own personal worth is.

Sadly enough, we can never be satisfied with just being able to enjoy the value of human life. As the population increases, the value of human life will continue to decrease based on the patterns of life. We are influenced daily by the demands and expectations of the world to act and dress a certain way in order to receive the benefits we desire. Even within the United States, the value placed on human life appears to depend on the social status of the victims involved.

That belief influences individuals to desire a level of gratitude that they wish to live for. There is an inner motivation that drives each behavior to respond in the way that it does. As I spoke before, I chose to wear nice clothes and put make-up on because I want to live up to the social status that I live in now and desire to be a part of in the future. I am motivated to make certain decisions in hopes to benefit from them later. The commodifications of human life are existing throughout every behavior performed.

Patterns evolve over time which give us meaning in how we will perceive things. Social status and economy will always influence society in how we chose to live. Those statements are broad but can be simplified easily; by knowing that society influences us to value our life accordingly to the

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perception of what is acceptable. OUTLINE Intro My application of how society influences me on a daily basis I ne superncial self Three key elements: the superficial self, the world of celebrities, the value of human life Maintaining a positive self- image

Modern societies view of beauty Influences of personal behaviors based on societal expectations The world of celebrities Basic understandings of how celebrities shape our societies view on “ the good life” More about social status rather than personal fulfillment We tend to live our lives in mockery of celebrities behaviors in order to stay on beat with the evolving world. “ center of cultural capital” The value of human life Weber’s view on rational institutions Diminishing importance of life throughout society My agreement with Simmel’s point of view Our dependency of living a life in monetary value