

"Burger Pope Ad"



Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of "pathological rationalism" is one that looks at the way in which institutions can sometimes make efficiency-based design decisions to progress their goals with hapless regard to the way that the efficiency is achieved, and that this comes at the loss the value of their product. In this piece, entitled "Burger Pope Ad," you can see that the Papacy and a worldwide fast food chain not unlike McDonald's have merged together to take advantage of each of their respective existing target demographics for the sake of more efficient and far-reaching profit influx. In this way, fans of the fast food chain and followers of Christianity have together become the herd of the new merged entity and thus it is easy to see that both the ideas of pathological rationalism and the Nietzsche's classification of society into herdsmen, priests, and nobles, are closely related. In regards to the imagery and symbolism of both the fast food chain and the Papacy, there has been a compromise labeled as rationality by each party. Each has sacrificed their individual symbols' connotations for the creation of a unified brand which can be recognized by far more people than they could alone, ultimately resulting in greater revenue.

The cross, which was once a sacred symbol representing a vital tenet to the architecture of the

Christian brand, is now transformed into a commodity easily reproduced on the packaging of the new unified brand. There are seven instances of the cross in this image: in the main logo, two on the box of fries, one on the cup, the straw in the cup is cross-shaped, and finally there are 2 crosses literally branded into the tops of the sesame seed buns. The cross-shaped branding-iron is a key enough part of the business model that it has been included in their advertising in order to ingrain the idea of a burger with "the Pope's stamp of approval" into their customers. To further drive this idea of approval by the papacy, the box of fries is actually shaped in the design of the Pope's hat. It is clear to see that in this case the pathological part of the merger for a Catholic Christian is the devaluation of the core defining features of their religion, including the Pope himself.

The fast food chain's contributions to the brand are equal in their compromise. They lend their recognizable colors of red, white, and yellow to the design aesthetic. The golden arches which were once recognizable by so many is now replaced with a golden cross. This substitution is to ensure that an even larger demographic of customers/congregation associate not only the satiation of their physical appetites but the satiation of their spiritual appetites with this new omni-brand. If you look closer at the cup, you can see that this idea of the fusion of nutritional and spiritual satiation is further illustrated by the content indicator which gives the options for the server to check holy water, holy soda, or holy shake. McDonald's once highly touted the tagline "1 one billion served," but here it has been fused with a reference to the song "Amazing Grace" by John Newton which is about his reflections on a passage from the Old Testament regarding divine grace. Like Nietzsche classifies Hitler's Final Solution as pathological rationalism, most would agree that increasing membership to one's religion or brand through spiritual commodification such as this is also not a direction taken from healthy choice-making, or more specifically, it is not a direction that abides with the principles of the faith that is being marketed.

In conclusion, for both parties involved, what seemed like a purely logical step toward institutional progress turned out to be detrimental in reality and can be seen as a pathological move by their Nietzsche-herds because of the devaluation of both of their products. The Papacy has opted to devalue their spiritual worth through commodification and the fast food chain has seceded their brand prowess to a stronger and much older and globally recognizable brand offering spiritual satiation on top of the appetite appeasement service that they already provided. In a way, all

faiths have already made pathological decisions to devalue themselves by selling mass-produced trinkets and souvenir-quality manufactured junk to mass audiences in strip-malls, airports, and convenient stores across the globe for the sake of membership through brand loyalty. Global fast food chains have simultaneously shown the monetary and spatial advantage to brand loyalty through their expanding footprint across the earth. How much is worth it? That's where the pathological rationalism comes in.

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