

Civilization Industry: An Eastern Perspective on the Culture Industry

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Abstract: The concept of the culture industry, which was raised by the Frankfurt School, is based on the critique of consumer society. Many authors contributed to this critique, but almost all handled the subject from the Western perspective. Numerous amounts of works have dealt with the concept of the culture industry and related topics, like modernism, consumer society, capitalism, etc. by non-western authors, but few of those have studied the issue academically and comparatively. This paper aims to analyze the concept of the culture industry and its effects on the Eastern civilizations, from the Eastern perspective. The paper reveals that although both dwell on the concept from a critical perspective, the Eastern and the Western thinkers do not share the same concerns. While Western thinkers focus on individuals and consider the issue in the context of freedom, Eastern thinkers pay more attention to national and religious ties and highlight the importance of identity. The paper also conceptualizes the latter approach as the civilization industry.

Keywords: Civilization Industry, Culture Industry, Frankfurt School, Ali Shariati, Cultural Alienation, Capitalist Civilization.

Medeniyet Endüstrisi: Kültür Endüstrisine Doğulu Bir Bakış

Öz: Frankfurt Okulu tarafından geliştirilen kültür endüstrisi kavramı tüketim toplumunun eleştirisine dayanır. Bu eleştiriye katkı sağlayan hemen her yazar meseleyi Batılı bir bakış açısından ele almıştır. Kültür endüstrisi ve onunla ilişkili modernizm, tüketim toplumu, kapitalizm gibi konularda Batılı olmayan yazarlar tarafından sayısız eser üretilmesine rağmen, çok azı akademik hassasiyetleri gözetererek karşılaştırmalı çalışılmıştır. Bu makale, Doğulu bir bakış açısıyla, kültür endüstrisinin Doğu üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Analiz sonucunda-her ikisi de kültür endüstrisine eleştirel yaklaşmakla birlikte- Doğulu ve Batılı yazarların endişelerinin aynı olmadığı görülmüştür. Öyle ki, Batılı yazarlar bireye odaklanmakta ve konuyu bireyin özgürlüğü ekseninde ele almaktadırlar. Doğulu yazarlar ise dini ve milli bağlara daha fazla önem atfetmekte ve konuyu kimlik bağlamında değerlendirmektedirler. Bu makale, ikinci yaklaşımı medeniyet endüstrisi şeklinde kavramsallaştırmayı önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Medeniyet Endüstrisi, Kültür Endüstrisi, Frankfurt Okulu, Ali Şeriatı, Kültürel Yabancılaşma, Kapitalist Medeniyet.

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I. Introduction

The mass interaction of human activity over time leads to the emergence of culture. Within a space of social naturalness, environmental conditions, fused with the elements making up human spirituality (faith, philosophy, mythology, morality) contribute to the formation of culture. Despite being a human product, the beginning and perpetrators of culture remain unknown. Culture is born of its own accord; external intervention plays no role in its development. As Austrian composer Eduard Steuermann puts it, “the more that is done for culture, the worse it fares” (Adorno, 2001, p. 108). A point worth bringing up is that there exist no established criteria to measure and compare cultures. Inherently, not a single culture can be deemed superior, of greater value, or worth living than another, as Hanafi (2007, p. 44) states, there is no one culture with a capital C.

One of the most decisive transitions in human history is the violent divestment of culture from its social roots. Because, after this point, culture is no more a human production, but a human consumption. For instance, according to the thesis commonly advocated by Eurocentric writers, unfavorable conditions for development have existed within non-European societies, therefore justifying the perfect blend of capitalism and modern society facilitated by Europe’s opportunities and the character of the European man. The mentality enabling this culture industry to thrive is decidedly Eurocentric in character, thereby meriting the label of ‘Culture’ with a capital C. The works of Eurocentric writers such as Lynn White (1982), Michael Mann (2005), Eric Jones (2003), John Hall (1985), David Landes (1998), and Jared Diamond (1999) illustrate the inherent bias.

One of the Great Debate discussions revolves around delineating the exact ground upon which modern society stands, however, that is too broad a scope for this article. Nevertheless, a brief overview of the discussions would prove beneficial. Two key contentions are addressing the foundation of modern society are Weber’s arguments for rationality and Marx’s claims it is capitalism (Sayer 1971, p. 7 and 87). Yet, another point of issue presents itself: are modernity and capitalism different phenomena? And what is their precise relationship? Wagner (2001, p. 3-4) states that this relationship is established in four different ways: (1) capitalism as the engine of modernity, (2) the irreducibility of modernity as a dominant factor to just the economic sphere, (3) the extremely intricate nature of their relationship, (4) capitalism’s link to the economic sphere, and modernity’ to the cultural sphere.

For if capitalism was indeed established upon reason, then the existing Western culture would naturally result from it, and can, therefore, be written with a capital C. However, authors such as Goody, Braudel, Wallerstein, Febvre, and Blaut argue that capitalism was not built on rationality. This claim is also further bolstered by the works of Hamilton (1934) and Frank (1978). The year 1492, marked a distinct watershed moment for capitalism, evidenced by historical accounts of the rich reservoirs of precious metals the American continent had furnished for rapacious Europe. Precious metals and plantation products had acted as key ingredients fuelling the burgeoning mutual trade, its perpetuation further facilitated by the continued exploitation of people as labor (see, McAlister, 1987, p. 208-230).

Despite the North's late involvement in trade, the emerging of capitalism there raises questions regarding its nature. This is especially compelling as the South was ahead in the race to the Americas and the Cape of Good Hope, and had a significant stake in the Mediterranean and Asian trades as well. Looking at the studies in this area, the answers largely include stock-exchange profiteering, smuggling in the Southern Sea (Sombart, 1967, p. 6), money laundering, robbery, speculations (Weisskopf, 1971, p. 47), local trade, usury, venal administrative office (Braudel, 1979, p. 69), imitations of products from the South and fraudulently duplicating the original seal (p. 88), slavery, cheap labor (p. 92-93), lower wages, cheap transport (Braudel, 1983, p. 570), and of course, colonialism (Blaut, 1993).

Thus, our position regarding the discussion can be expressed as such: Capitalist civilizationⁱ is at the heart of Western civilization, and the reason was not its building block. Hence, it is modernization, rather than modernity that constitutes the main emphasis of this study, along with exploration of the consequences of capitalism on the non-Western World.

II. The Culture Industry: Consumer Society in the Eyes of Western Thinkers

The term culture industry was coined by Adorno and Horkheimer (1947, 2002). Adorno (2001, p. 98) describes it as “[the] manufacturing of products that are tailored for consumption by masses and which to a great extent determine the nature of that consumption, are manufactured more or less according to plan”. The Modus operandi of the culture industry is that it disconnects culture and people, and produces culture industrially. It also commodifies the core values and institutions of culture in a way that it reverts the natural and value-based essence to an artificial and consumption-based one.

Fromm (2008) argues that the culture industry preoccupies people with *having* rather than seeking the meaning of being human and fulfilling its requirements. For Debord (1970), who approves of this notion of the culture industry thesis, economic life has dominated humans, banalized them and directed them to just possess things. He states that in the present stage, people have moved beyond the possessing stage into “appearing as if” one, i.e. the spectacle stage, making the current society a society of the spectacle par excellence. Besides, Baudrillard (1981) analyzes the culture industry through the concept of sign value. According to him, in consumer societies, products are consumed to point out status by going beyond their use-value.

Lodziak is another key figure who highlights capitalism’s manufacturing of artificial needs. He (1995) mainly explicates that the capitalist system is most accurately understood within the context of the manipulation of needs. *The Dominant Ideology Thesis*ⁱⁱ states that the constant repurposing of the working class’ needs secures the longevity and success of the modern capitalist system to reproduce those artificial needs. This articulation of capitalism is hence the result of ideological manipulations.

Juxtaposing the Manipulation of Needs Thesis against the Dominant Ideology Thesis, Lodziak further argues that this manipulation is not driven by ideology, but by the deformation of needs. In short, facilitating the production of culture beyond the reach of the masses, marketing and repackaging it as something done on their behalf and out of their own volition constitutes the

backbone of the culture industry. The transition from the culture industry to the civilization industry requires a thorough comparison between the two and an identification of the mutual concerns they bring about. The authors who have a critical approach towards the culture industry have the following concerns:

1. The idea of creating subjective human beings has been failed since Enlightenment has become an ideology.
2. The end of individualism and personality. The emergence of an artificial identity centered on the question “Who am I” and being answered in terms of consumption patterns as it is in terms of an occupational role (Bocock, 1993, p. 109).
3. The self-alienation of man and the resultant loss of meaning.
4. The reification of man, the disruption of his involvement in the production of value and meaning, and the gross sabotage of his potential.
5. The loss of man’s freedom.
6. The mechanization of man and the fascistization of its nature and acts.

If we were to render these concerns down into a single word, that would be *alienation*. The aforementioned authors argue that alienation is a consequence of the culture industry and the opposite of being human. By looking at how the notion is defined, we will be able to establish the distinct ways in which the culture industry has influenced the perception of alienation in both the East and the West.

The concept of alienation has been explored by different authors throughout their respective disciplines. For example, Freud has an evaluative framework of instincts, impulses, and desires; Feuerbach, of religion; Hegel, of reason; and Durkheim, of society. The particular type that this study will explore is economy-based alienation. This is also separated into two: production-based and consumption-based alienation, with the latter being the starting point of this article.

There are many concepts related to alienation such as reification, commodification, objectification, and robotization. All are either interchangeable or complementary. Alienation is used to describe the human being uprooted from his essence, leading to dysmorphic perceptions of the self, and losing its potential.

Fromm (1986, p. 16) claims that an alienated person who prioritizes possessing instead of utilizing his innate abilities becomes a “thing”. According to Marcuse (2007, p. 20), as long as humans are condemned to necessities foreign to their being, they get alienated, and their freedom relies on the conquest of these necessities. In Weisskopf’s (1971, p. 25) understanding, “*being human is being alienated. Under no circumstances can man accomplish an existence in which he can actualize all of his potentialities*”.

As can be seen, the authors deal with alienation as that of a single individual and talk about his alienation to his potential, mind, and emotions. Such definitions of alienation could also encompass the loss of meaning and the death of the human self. This death is not physical but linked to a greater and more destructive chain of self-annihilation. The same process also presumably led to the death of God (Nietzsche) and the death of the author (Barthes). Industry, as the Frankfurt School boldly asserts, is akin to a God in the ways it

dictates the lives of its subjects. Accordingly, one might assert a new religion to be established.ⁱⁱⁱ Its credo is the free market, its chapels are companies and MNCs, and its worshippers are customers and preaching media. Consuming is worshipping, being excluded from society is the ex-communication, heaven is the upper class, and hell is the lower class. This new religion, like God, requires people to live a defined, structured life and standardize their aesthetic pursuits, feelings, relationships, and tastes.

III. How has the Culture Industry been perceived in Istanbul and Tehran? Or rather, do Frankfurt School and Shariati share the same concerns?

The purpose of this paper is to discover whether the effects of the culture industry pervade both the West and the non-West in the same manner, or whether thinkers from their respective domains assess it just as similarly.

Frankfurt School members were interested in the issue of the culture industry in the aftermath of WWII. But, the non-Western world's interest sprung forth in tandem with modernization movements. The 17th century witnessed Peter the Great's attempts at modernizing Russia; structural modernization movements occurred throughout Egypt (Muhammad Ali), the Ottoman domains (Selim III, Mahmud II), Japan (Meiji Restoration Period), Iran (Abbas Mirza, Amir Kabir) in the 19th century and, in Africa's case, the latter half of the 20th century. In these countries, some intellectuals defended complete Westernization; some defended partial Westernization; some found different formulas by appropriating the technique of the West without integrating their culture and morality, and some tried to synthesize Western civilization with their cultures and religions. Ziya Gökalp (1968, p. 48), one of Ottoman positivism's key players, symbolized the dominant Eastern intellectual reaction towards modernization by striving to preserve culture, belief, and technique together, as declared in the formula: "I am of the Turkish nation, Islamic community (ummah), and Western civilization".

Such reactions were typically characterized by religion, nationalism, and socialism, with religion being the dominant force in some countries and a unique blend of two or all three in others. This paper analyses these movements around a central question: is the culture industry perceived the same in Istanbul, Cairo, Tokyo, Tehran, Beijing, Mogadishu, and Buenos Aires as it is in Paris, London, Berlin, and New York? This question will be discussed by looking at the works of Frankfurt School and Iranian sociologist Ali Shariati.

Here, the Frankfurt School and Shariati are considered as separate categories. Besides Frankfurt School, names such as Debord, Blaut, and Baudrillard also contributed to the conceptualization of the term culture industry, hence they are all included in the same category in this study. As a sociologist, Shariati critically ruminates over the non-Western effects of the culture industry, therefore representing a category in and of himself. We can put in the second category the Japanese intellectuals who organized the 1942 Overcoming Modernity symposium; Jalal Al-e-Ahmed from Iran; Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb from Egypt; Maududi from Pakistan; Gandhi from India; Frantz Fanon and Aime Cesaire from Martinique, Kateb Yacine from Algeria; Julius Nyerere from Tanzania; Jomo Kenyatta from Kenya, and many others.

First, we can say that the concerns regarding the rise of the culture industry are not the same for the Frankfurt School and Shariati. Even though they both argue that the culture industry alienates the human, their definitions of ‘human’ are different. Utilizing concepts first used by Heidegger, Shariati (2007, p. 24) pinpoints the precise meaning of a human:

“Heidegger says everybody has two existences. When one says “I”, what is understood is being alive within the society and the being that exists with it. All people are equal in this sense of existence. This is a human’s materialistic nature. The other one, as Heidegger puts it, is authentic existence. Existentialism is based on this “existence”, that is, the nobility of existence. Existence is hence not a given, for it is not for everyone and those who exist do so in different degrees. This secondary existence has been formed by the culture through history and was manifested in me throughout the culture-creation, civilization-creation, and art-making adventures of my history for several centuries. Or it is a real existence that when I stand in front of a Frenchman, an Englishman, an American, or a Chinese man who says “I”, I can also just as rightfully say “I”... This is what Sartre means when he says “God or nature has created the materialistic existence but we create the authentic existence.”

Since Shariati defines the ‘human’ through social and historical formation, he does not deal with alienation in its materialistic sense, but its more authentic one. Therefore, Shariati does not defend the notion that “human should not be limited, and he should be the perpetrator of his action”, a notion that many European thinkers, humanists, and liberal theorists defend. In his understanding, human existence is identical to one’s culture. For this reason, Shariati’s understanding of alienation refers to the estrangement of non-European societies remaining under the occupation of European modernity and civilization and thereby forced to forget their core. Shariati (2019a) states that what the non-European world has been suffering from is cultural alienation, and defines this concept as: “...*a condition in which one does not perceive himself as he is, but rather perceives something else in his place. Such a person is alienated.*”

Shariati (2019a), who delves into the concept of alienation, comes up with a network of relevant concepts. For instance, he describes assimilation as “*the conduct of an individual who, intentionally or unintentionally starts imitating the mannerisms of someone else*”. Apart from this, he (2019a, 1980, p. 26) defines non-European societies, relinquishing their identities to acquire Western social materials and joining their ‘civilized’ world as *mosaic* or *camel-tiger societies*.^{iv} *Camel-tiger societies* are ostensibly functional as a term to express the limbic nature of modernizing societies, whereby people perpetually waver between the civilization they feel they belong to and the Western civilization they espouse daily, yet feel alienated from.^v He (2019b) uses another notion to depict the mind which is removed away from the human and social consciousness: *estehmār*^{vi} (donkeyfication, stupification). Shariati’s term *estehmar* resembles Attila İlhan’s (1976, p. 93) butlerification metaphor, where he argues that non-Western societies become butler whilst thinking they are getting modernized. Just like a subservient butler, societies abandon their own identities in the name of modernization and become alienated altogether.

Thus, the concerns that the Culture Industry creates within and outside the West are not the same. Regardless of the common point of origin, the nature

of the concern in itself diverges as the West adopts an excessively individualistic perspective while the East aims for harmony between society, culture, civilization, history, belief, and the human being.

IV. “I fear the Greeks even bearing gifts”: The transfer of Culture Industry to the non-West World

When the Greeks brought a gift of a wooden horse, ominously perched by the gates of Troy, the Trojan priest Laocoön said “*I fear the Greeks even bearing gifts*”. The sage priest’s intuition proved to be true, as the soldiers hidden within the horse spelled the end of Troy. Like the Trojan incident three thousand years later, Capitalist civilization bore gifts of a technological nature to the world. The outwardly innocuous nature of these gifts notwithstanding, they ultimately proved to be more of Pandora’s box, unleashing unforeseen catastrophes upon opening. While the wooden horse was understood not to be a gift shortly, the modernized capitalist cultural goods are yet to be understood, and therefore cannot be defended against.

The answer to the question, ‘why do the non-western nations adapt to the Western culture while they are in a struggle with the West?’, lies in Toynbee’s works. The historian asks the crucial question “Why was the West rejected when it presented itself as a religion but was accepted when it presented itself as technology?” He continues by stating that the clarity of the message borne by religion leads to the opposition, whereas the nature of technology veils it. He (1953, p. 59) conveys these thoughts in the following sentences:

“An aggressive foreign religion will, in fact, manifestly be a more serious immediate menace than an aggressive foreign technology will be to a society... While technology plays only upon the surface of life in the first instance, religion goes straight down to the roots; and, though a foreign technology, too, may eventually have a deeply disintegrating effect on the spiritual life of a society in which it has once gained a footing, this effect will take some time to make itself apparent. For this reason, an aggressive civilization that presents itself as a religion is likely to arouse stronger and swifter opposition than one that presents itself as a technology.”

As the historian lucidly points out, the cultural fragment detached from its larger whole, though singled out, is met with less resistance; this piece is understood to be technology in itself. The West was rejected when it presented itself as a religious messenger, but it succeeded when it presented itself as a technology spreader.

Technology or its products are often met innocently when transferred to another society. After all, it only consists of a mixture of iron, metals, cables, chemicals, plastics, wool, cotton, etc. No overtly Western cultural signs, such as the cross, can be seen. On the surface level, it has a function of liberating the consumer and raising the quality of life. The discerning nature of Toynbee’s insight reveals the false neutrality of technique/technology, in that the materialistic and the spiritual are amalgamated. Every produced material has the marks of the culture it was produced in. Indeed, McLuhan (1967) affirms the absence of the message in the manufactured product, its exterior form being the message in and of itself. It is as if the culture industry has erased any authenticity and replaced it with a full-blown capitalist spirit. The latter is not

only manifested within the used product but most dangerously, it also seeps into the consumer's brain. Sayer (1991, p. 59) describes the spirit that is inherent in the materials as "the ghost in the machine". Marcuse (1968, p. 168-9) claims that "technology is always a historical-social *project*" and emphasizes the synergy between material and the spirit as "congealed spirit" and says "*the machine is not neutral: technical reason is the social reason ruling a given society and can be changed in its very structure*".

This study propounds the change undergone by matter-spirit change as deliberate and is based on a ruling power moving according to a plan. The relationship between capitalism and power is emphasized by Braudel (1979, p. 64) as "*capitalism only triumphs when it becomes identified with a State when it is the State*". Marcuse (2007, p. 162) says "*Today, domination perpetuates and extends itself not only through technology but as technology, and latter provides the great legitimation of the expanding political power, which absorbs all spheres of culture*". Consequently, it is virtually impossible to conceive of a phenomenon such as the culture industry in a vacuum. On the contrary, it establishes itself as a neutral ideological value-free product. The matter of state also comes up in the writings of Foucault and Baudrillard. With the term "bio-power", Foucault refers to a power that is fragmented and spread to the capillaries of society instead of concrete, whole, hierarchical power. Baudrillard (2007, p. 61) accuses Foucault of concealing the power by breaking it down and rendering it invisible. While Foucault's point of view is not consumer society-centered, three theses arise when we discuss his theory of power in the context of the culture industry. First, capitalism consists of an upper and hierarchical power. Second, capitalism, as fragmentary as the numerous iterations of products it produces, is not in itself a unified, harmonious power at the top of a hierarchy. As such, another question is posed: can each product carry and encapsulate the power, or is the entire sum the totality of fragmented powers? The answer to this question exceeds the limits established by this study. Still, we advocate the third thesis as a potential response: power is paradoxically singular and dispersed/composite. The force driving the entire culture Industry is considered singular and whole due to the existence of a capitalist class and a mindset that perpetuates its production. Yet it is also dispersed in the sense of the reproduction of power being reliant on each consumed product, which acts as the Trojan horse of the culture industry.

The question "if the matter and the spirit are a whole, which was transferred earlier in the process of modernization?" puts forward two different approaches, which can be explained through two leaders (Peter the Great, Mustafa Kemal) and two intellectuals (Shariati, Fromm). The two intellectuals argue that the first thing that changes is value/concept/spirit/thought. Fromm (2008, p. 7) says "*it is necessary to make fundamental changes in people's basic value concepts and ways of thought in order to make necessary economic changes*". Shariati (2019a) states that "*they had to change the nation, and they had to transform a man in order to change his clothing, his consumption pattern, his adornment, his abode, and his city. What part of him to change first? His morale and his thinking*". So, does the intellectual conviction that "the idea is superior to the substance so it must change first" denotes an *illusion of the intellectual*. Intellectuals believe that if the mind and consciousness of a human change first, the change will be stronger. However, this *intellectual*

idealism is not quite compatible with the reality of capitalist civilization. Conversely, there is another approach: *leader realism*.

Upon his return to Russia from Europe, Peter the Great had made shaving beards obligatory. Similarly, Mustafa Kemal made wearing hats obligatory within what was only the second year of establishing the republic. Both intended to alter people's identity, personal tastes, feelings, sense of aesthetics, social relations, and ways of thinking. These changes were not initially applied at schools, but rather manifested in everyday life. As he believed that the *sarik* (a kind of Turkish turban) had a spiritual connotation and a bond with a religious spirit, Mustafa Kemal associated wearing it on the heads with a specific religious way of thinking. Hats, however, denoted a secular nature, and thus, symbolized a secular spirit. What Mustafa Kemal had tried to do, then, was to instill the secular spirit inside people's minds. Leaders with such intentions usually fail in the medium or long term. The reasons for their failures lie not in theory per se but within the methods employed. Leaders usually want the changes to happen so fast that they can most possibly witness the results during their own rule. However, slow and spontaneous are the changes that the culture industry creates, and strong and firm are the outcomes. Furthermore, while holding the razor blade or the hat in one hand, the leaders also hold a stick in the other. Hence, this minimizes the possibility of successful and permanent implementation of those changes.

Connerton holds the credit for producing one of the most influential studies clarifying the change between mind and matter. He (2009) asserts that the ever-shifting urban and housing architecture parallels the anxiety of the human mind and heart. For instance, indigenous tribesmen need a place to commune with the spirits of their ancestors, which has to be constructed from natural materials. Being removed from their homes and settling in apartments would erode their belief over time, eventually leaving no traces behind.

We can conclude our discussion on material and spiritual life with a quote by the Turkish poet and writer İsmet Özel. He (2006, p. 17) points out that technical progress is not an *ipso facto* reality:

“Alienation is only brought into life through a civilized lifestyle; a civilization only stands on through its technology. Technology thus creates a civilization that can sustain its life. The act of being civilized cannot happen without alienation. The relations between these three issues are completely inextricable from one another.”

Özel's words can act as a summary of the whole discussion: by producing technology, the culture industry effectively perpetuates the continued reproduction of the capitalist civilization. Since the reproduced culture is dehumanized, the human who adopts the civilization is inevitably alienated.

V. How to name the process: modernization or civilization?

Before discussing the export of modernity, it is important to note that the culture industry is not only concerned by non-Western societies. Some European nations are also uncomfortable with the American-originated culture industry. For example, Richard Kuisel (1996, p. 3) states that the French cannot stay French if they accept American economic aid and guidance, borrow American technology and economic practice, buy American products, imitate American social policies, and even dress, speak and (perhaps worst of all) eat

like Americans. When we look at the movie sector, we see that all of Spain's top ten most popular movies in 1998 were American productions. In Great Britain, Germany, and Italy, nine came from Hollywood, and even in France, seven were U.S.-made (LaFeber, 1999, p. 155). These findings indicate that when Europe lost control of the culture industry to America, a considerable European cultural concern ensued despite their 'Culture' having more or less the same origins. Accordingly, carrying a heavier concern for non-Western societies of different origins is quite plausible.

The influence of the culture industry has trespassed Western boundaries and is now all over the world. This transfer/acquisition process has been perceived in different contexts. The first is a perspective from Europe and the second is from outside it. The third is Ali Shariati's perspective.

From the European perspective, especially in terms of modernization theories, modernity was asserted to be based on reason. As the latter is universal, so are its consequences. The structures that spread from Europe to the world are hence the result of 'reason'. This perspective is Eurocentric par excellence; Europe is at the center while non-Europeans are in the periphery; Europe is the producer; the rest of the world a consumer.^{vii}

The second perspective is the reaction of the non-European world to modernization. That was discussed above. As we briefly analyzed the reflections of the Ottoman Empire, it could be said that no Ottoman intellectual had rejected modernization. While some Ottoman thinkers suggested some ideas such as Pan-Islamism, Pan-Ottomanism, Westernism, and Pan-Turkism to revive the empire; Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (2010, p. 146) states that the first ideology of the Tanzimat Era was *civilizationism*. The Ottoman intellectual equated modernization to civilization in theory. But in the material sense, they used the word in a sense closer to refinement rather than becoming akin to the West (Baykara, 1992). It seems that the Ottoman intellectual used civilization not as an economic concept but as a social one.^{viii}

As a third perspective, Shariati underlined the transfer process in his speeches at *Hosseiniyeh Ershad*. Shariati thought that modernism was disguised as civilization. According to him, those who use the tools of modernity believe that they would simultaneously become more civilized. Shariati's (2019a) ideas on the topic can be summarized with the paragraph below:

"Modernized means modernized in consumption... The Europeans had to make non-Europeans equate modernization with civilization to impose the new consumption pattern upon them since everyone has a desire for civilization. Modernization was defined as civilization and thus people cooperated with the European plans to modernize. Since the non-Europeans could not produce the new products, they became automatically dependant upon the technology which produces for them and expects them to buy whatever it produces."

Shariati asserts that modernity has been presented as a civilization, and the possibility of such a presentation brings to mind the question of whether an object can carry a 'civilization' value. As is known, objects have four basic values: use, exchange, symbol, and sign. We think it is the sign value that allows modernity to be presented as civilization. Baudrillard's (1981, p. 66) assessment on these four values can be depicted as follows:

Use value → practical operations → the logic of utility → instrument
Exchange value → equivalence → the logic of the market → commodity
Symbolic value → ambivalence → the logic of the gift → symbol
Sign value → difference → the logic of signification → sign

Some modernization theories assert that modern consumer goods are signs of civilization. So, they imply that the Western industrial lifestyle epitomizes it. In our opinion, objects/goods cannot be linked to a particular level of civilization, but a specific civilization.

Shariati (2019c) believes that it is impossible to become civilized by consuming, for *consumption is related to one's religion, history, social standing, culture, and ethics*. The civilization industry disables all of these categories and structuralizes consumption. Fromm (1986, p. 35) also points to the same: *"the media involved in producing our false needs keep reassuring us that it is our level of consumption that demonstrates the high level of our culture"*. An entire economic and political structure, of which media is both a part and spokesperson, is behind the process of people's manipulation.

VI. Civilization Industry or end of civilizations?

Civilization is based on ethics, aesthetics, architecture, belief, politics, economy, and the accumulation of intellectual work and the tangible infrastructure that sustains it. As we argued up until now, civilizations, except for the West, have lost these foundations. The culture industry and globalization have mostly standardized all societies. One of our questions for discussion, then, is this: why do we interpret what the Frankfurt School described as the Culture Industry as Civilization Industry?

We first need to explain why we classify the world and societies as civilizations rather than cultures. We will not go into an in-depth discussion of culture versus civilization. Indeed, whether these two notions refer to the same or two different phenomena is still open to discussion. In this study, culture and civilization are considered as two different phenomena. Namely, we take the set of cultures that feed on the same sources as civilization. While culture evokes ethnicity, civilization transcends it. Culture becomes a civilization by interacting with different cultures. While culture is almost homogeneous by being based on a certain language, color, race, and ethnicity, civilization corresponds to heterogeneity. Civilizations span broader geographically than cultures as well. A civilization is a merging of different cultures, but the spirit that brings them to life is the same. When we look at world history, this spirit has been *faith*. Since faith transcends ethnic, linguistic, and geographical borders, it can feed greater groups of society. For instance, Turkishness, Kurdishness, Persianness, Arabianness, and Malayness all point to culture; whereas what gives them their essence is Islam. Islam is a religion; but when in contact with different cultures, it becomes a civilization and takes on the name Islamic Civilization.^{ix} It is due to all these reasons that we would like to classify the world's societies as cradles of civilizations rather than merged cultures.

As discussed in the study, Frankfurt School intellectuals do not share the same worries as Shariati. We understand and acknowledge Frankfurt School's worries and we share Shariati's concerns. A Westerner can interpret the culture industry as dialectic or an internal change since the mindset that

created it shares the same origin with that of the Renaissance: they are both products of the mind and character of Homo Occidentalis. The internal nature of the change can make it approvable and livable. Moreover, for most Europeans, the previous stage of civilization (ancient regime) is not favorable. Thus, they are not pining for the past.

Conversely, considering it as an important constituent of the present, the past is praiseworthy and longed for Homo Orientalis. When the Homo Orientalis has problems with today, he wishes to go back to a 'better' past and summon it to the present. Thus, even though the culture industry gives more or less the same tangible life, Homo Orientalis and Homo Occidentalis live in two different eras mentally because of disparate distinct characters. For some Eastern intellectuals, the societal change that is brought by the culture industry is external and threatening. Indeed, two civilizations cannot be experienced simultaneously, hence, appropriating to the Western civilization causes the decline and death of the 'native' one. In a nutshell, creating a *hybrid civilization* is not possible as one civilization is a complete system with its own particular tangible and intangible elements.

The culture industry does not only threatens cultures but also civilizations. It is for this reason that what is seen as a culture-producing industry by the Frankfurt school is seen by non-Western intellectuals as a civilization-producing one.

In the following part of the study, we will discuss (1) whether it is possible to have economic growth outside of culture industry, (2) the relationship between the culture industry and the local cultures with increased global visibility due to globalization, and (3) whether there is any hope for civilizations to survive.

VII. Civilization or Development: Time to choose for non-Western societies

There are four non-western countries in the top 10 largest economies of the world: China in the 2nd, Japan in the 3rd, India in the 6th, and Brazil in the 8th rank (Worldbank, 2019). Whether Brazil and even Latin America are non-Western is open to discussion. Latin America is being dominated by Western civilization, and its deculturization and reculturization processes have not started during the culture industry period but go back to 1492. Hence, we will keep Brazil out of this discussion. With regards to the other three countries, while Japan is in 25th place for income per capita, China and India are much further down with 75th and 147th place respectively (Worldbank, 2019). Thus, China and India are not well-sustained examples for the issue at hand since their being in the top 10 economies is because of their high population. When taking into account their very low income per capita, the high level of their Gini coefficient, and the highest 20% taking up an important portion of the GNP with regards to income sharing; one can see that consumption is not at a mass level. Thus, the best example of this study among these four countries is Japan. However, before looking at Japan; we would like to evaluate China, Gulf countries, and Turkey in this context.

The Chinese economy is expected to surpass the U.S. economy in the 2030s and would become the biggest economy of the world (Bloomberg, 2018). Nevertheless, this expanding wealth is not based on China's own cultural values,

but rather, on the values of the culture industry. In fact, just like the end of Soviet Russia, Chinese communism will probably be dissolved by Chinese billionaires (although whoever would become the Gorbachev of China is as of yet unknown, as storified by George Orwell in *Animal Farm*). Another point that needs to be illustrated here is that while the Japanese modernization still carries the Japanese spirit, the same cannot be said about Chinese modernism. This might be due to two reasons; first, China has lost its peculiar identity post-1949, and second it has only begun treading this path very recently. Henceforth, China does not need to infuse the Chinese spirit into the culture industry items yet. China focuses on two things: to be able to produce everything that is produced around the world and to be unrivaled in the market with its low-cost production. Ongoing political, economic, social, environmental, educational, and health-based problems, caused by fast growth, keep the country busy as well.

As for Gulf countries, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia have also managed to rank among the first 50 in the income per capita as 7th, 22nd, 32nd, 39th, and 42nd, respectively (Worldbank, 2019). It seems that those countries have just imported the advanced technologies but preserved their culture when one sees Arabic leaders join international meetings in their traditional garments. However, because the foreigner rate in Gulf countries is too high, we are far from showing these countries as examples as of yet. Besides, a sufficient period has not passed to be able to see the possible results of the culture industry.

When it comes to Turkey, the country has been ruled by a mass party that defines itself as a conservative, nationalist, democrat, and neo-liberal since 2002. The goal of the party, which expresses their wish to raise a religious generation, is to preserve national culture and consciousness as well as becoming among the top 10 economies in the world. On realizing the second goal, the party has firm control and has taken structural steps. However, as the second goal becomes closer, the first one moves away. As the consumption rate of the country increases, the cultural structure dissolves. President Erdoğan (2017) admitted this in one of his speeches: *In the last 15 years, we have made great reforms in every field in Turkey. This is also a self-criticism; we failed to achieve the desired development in two fields. These are education and culture.* Turkey's case proves that economic growth and the spread of consumer society inevitably weakens the local culture.

As for the Japanese case, Japanese modernization can be divided into roughly two periods: The Meiji period and post-World War II. The modernization of the Meiji period attracted the attention of other great countries at the time and constituted a model. In particular, Japan's victory in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War evoked respect and caused envy. Despite the two atomic bombs dropped in 1945 and being on the losing end of the war, their continued modernization in the following period and their entry into the world's largest economies have increased the respect for the country. But, is the argument that the Japanese maintained their culture in this process reality or a myth? The following analysis will attempt to answer this question. In 1942, Japanese intellectuals had gathered to discuss how to overcome modernity, characterizing the ongoing wave as a war between Western intelligence and the blood of the Japanese rather than a militaristic one (Harootunian 2000, p. 44). However,

putting a tremendous effort in strengthening its technological weakness at the expense of the cultural aspects has led to Japan's defeat. Those endeavors have been supported by the West both materially and morally. Eventually, the ardent desire to overcome modernity was reversed, and Japan was indeed overcome by it (Harootunian 2000). The changes in the 'Japanese' are not only limited to the material and spiritual world. In fact, looking at the transformations of a simple physical feature like the eyelid crease, from a most common monolid to a double eyelid (thanks to the double eyelid glue or aesthetic surgeries) summons up the idea that the alterations are also anatomical. The cultural anthropologist and expert on contemporary Japanese society Anne Alison states that:

“Japan is a country fully ensconced in capitalism today. Its national goal, as structured by postwar policies, has been a material prosperity fueling (and fueled by) personal consumption. Yet cultural traditions and the nostalgia for these traditions have been grounded in an orientation toward the collective: groupism, interrelationality, communitarianism. It is the supposed erosion of these values in recent years that is often linked to Japan's current problems.”

As can be understood from the text and the above analysis, claiming that Japan managed to preserve its culture during the modernization process seems to be more of a myth. Yet, the Japanese culture industry items, such as *kawaii stream*, *lolita dresses*, *anime*, etc. helps the myth to survive. Thus, we can discuss the relationship between the local culture and culture industry through these three questions: 1. Is local culture raised by the culture industry? 2. Is the local culture an input material of the culture industry? 3. Is the globalization of the local (glocalization) success of the local culture or the culture industry?

To answer the first question, it is important to make the following determination: the culture industry is not only based on material consumption, but also on investing in emotions, fears, values, belongings, and faiths. The culture industry as such is not against any belief or emotion: it is just implicated in the material expression of these beliefs and emotions, regardless of being right or wrong, good or evil, rational or irrational. For instance, it can produce a phone to communicate with the souls of one's ancestors, bottled water from the Ganges, easy-setup totems for tribes, protective shields against supernatural powers, and so on. Let's look at what it has produced so far within the realm of Islam: clocks that recite the Adhan (prayer call), prayer mats that lead you in prayer, pens that recite the Qur'an, dhikr counters, praying dolls, glasses that say "Bismillah" when one lifts it, and "Alhamdulillah" when one puts it down, prayer gowns, wudu socks, faith tourism, etc. The increasing consumption of these products can be assertively interpreted as an increase in religiosity by some. However, we believe that what increases is secularism, or more specifically, the increase in faith consumerism. So, it is not the culture industry that raises local culture, on the contrary, it is the latter that fuels the culture industry.

The culture industry does not pay heed to where the local culture originated from; it could be religion, history, tradition, emotions. It just focuses on producing the material world that makes it easier for religiosity, nationalism, subculture belonging, societal relations, and web of values to come to be expressed. Thus, the second question to be answered is: Is local culture the input material of the culture industry?

Capitalism has been the driving force within both the industrial and the culture industry eras, dictating the usage of the same mechanisms, but with different types of goods. Within industrialism, the raw material has been in high demand in Europe and outside. The countries importing them from others have then exported their finished goods to the raw material providers. A similar trade has been executed within the culture industry. Raw material has yet again been needed, only this time being 'cultural.' The countries that imported cultural raw material then have marketed and exported them as 'finished culture' items. This sort of exchange is by no means 'fair trade' though since it has mostly been in favor of Euro-centricity. Additionally, the global outlook that can be allocated to local culture is quite deceptive for the following reasons. Firstly, the globalization of local culture is temporary, sometimes even momentary. Secondly, because the 'globalization' process distorts the native form of 'local culture' into an industrialized version, it mostly loses its authenticity. Thirdly, a globalized local culture does hardly invoke an emotional or an active change for the people it reaches; but rather, it turns into the consumption of goods, just for the spectacle. As for the third question of whether the globalization of local culture is a success or not, after all this analysis, we can claim the answer to be negative.

VIII. Conclusion

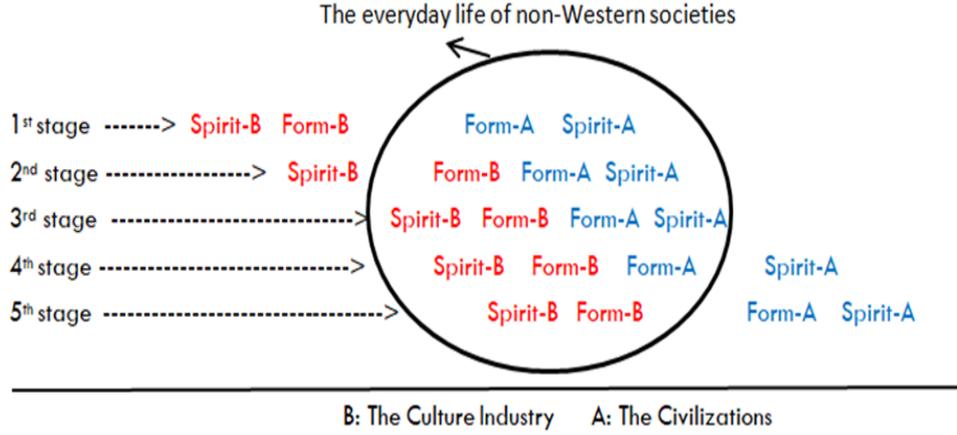
This work's tone/outlook seems rather despondent regarding the future of civilizations. Similar discussions were encountered after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Fukuyama's theory on liberal democracy winning at the end of history, or Huntington's thesis about the clash of civilizations is the most known among these studies. This research handled the issue from a sociological perspective and also argued that the predominant culture industry, which shapes social life industrially, is about eliminating other cultures.

The question of whether there is a light of hope for civilizations could be answered in two different ways. The first is to break the influence of Western civilization on others, which can be realized in two ways: 1. Reverting capitalism to its borders. 2. Preventing the infiltration of Western culture into other societies. Taking the first path does not appear achievable, because capitalism is intrinsically expansionist. As Huntington (1991) remarks, political changes in recent world history are possible, but an economic roll-back is unlikely. Rather, countries are working towards making their existing economies more structured and more sustainable. As for the second path, the possibility to selectively borrow and willingly espouse certain cultural elements. The philosopher Hassan Hanafi (1991) intended to study the issue scientifically. He argues that modernity is an actuality, so it is not completely rejectable. As adapting it completely causes the East to lose its identity, Hanafi suggests the selective adaption of appropriate cultural items.

The second answer could be reviving civilizations. We had noted that civilizations are based on faith: Islam, Christianity (may be divided into Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism), Shintoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, etc. Nevertheless, the culture industry makes people secularized. So, how can East's secularized people revive beliefs and civilizations? Reviving a civilization means the preservation of its form and the spirit together. When only the form is preserved, the interaction between the culture industry and

civilization produces two forms and one spirit (the spirit of the culture industry). We can put the stages of interaction between the culture industry and civilization as such:

Figure 1: Invasion of Civilizations by the Culture Industry



The second, third, and fourth stages are the periods of cultural schizophrenia. In the second stage, friction starts. In the third stage, the conflict further escalates. And in the fourth, it starts settling down. By reaching the fourth stage, there is likely no return to the 'original' civilization. So, the third stage needs to be elongated as much as possible on the off chance to prevent the fourth stage. The only thing to do at this stage is waiting for the culture industry to lose its power. An average Homo Orientalis is already waiting for the West to reach its imminent downfall due to history's internal dynamics. However, this expectant wait will not be helpful unless the East takes measures and does its share. The East's identity preservation relies on the reversing of secularism. As Berger has also pointed out, the religions that do not adapt to the liberal model and stand up to individualism will stand their ground, whereas the others will go into a decline (Payne, 2003, p. 139). If secularism is making it easy for the culture industry to seep into the Eastern civilizations and if the civilization is losing its statue without its faith, then in order to be revived, the reversing of secularism becomes vital.

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ⁱ Even though Braudel (1983, p. 578) was hesitant about Capitalist Civilization as a designation, Wallerstein (1996, p. 113 ff) unhesitatingly uses the term.

ⁱⁱ For an overview of these theses, see (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 2015, pp. 7-29).

ⁱⁱⁱ To illustrate, Benjamin (2015) wrote a passage with that title: "Capitalism As Religion".

^{iv} Despite the lack of explanation, Shariati most likely used this term to express the inherent conflict within alienated societies. The contrast engendered between the camel's association with the desert and the tiger with the forest facilitates the allegory meant for the reality of alienated societies being neither of themselves nor the West.

^v The same situation is defined by Daryush Shayegan (1997) as *cultural schizophrenia*.

^{vi} The concept of *estehmār* is derived from Arabic word "donkey", literally meaning "demand and urge for turning into a donkey". According to Moghaddam (2017, p. 69 and 91), Shariati intentionally coined a new term to be used as the third part of an overarching triumvirate, consisting of *estebdād*, *estehmār*, and *estehmār* (despotism, exploitation, brainwashing).

^{vii} Here we can compare 14th century Orientalist studies and 20th century modernization theories, both having originated from the 'Self-Other' dichotomy. The main difference between the two is how the *other* is characterized. Orientalism describes the other as irrational and barbarous. On the other hand, modernization theories emphasize more on the other's imitative and consumptive nature as a way of attaining to civilization. By adapting structures constituted by reason and consuming the products of the capitalist industry, they are expected to achieve modernization.

^{viii} This study considers civilization as comprising of technical and economic development, rather than refinement. As Özel (2006, p. 133) points out, material data suggests we must accept the inevitability of civilization, although no intellectual sees it as purely material development. Besides, intellectuals in different ideological segments, such as Adam Smith and Marx, states that there was a close connection between wealth, matter and civilization.

^{ix} Hodgson (1974, p. 57-60) distinguishes between religion and civilization through the concepts Islam and Islamdom. However, he does not equate the latter with civilization, but rather, with the culture most prevalent in the Islamic regions, including non-Islamic elements, thinkers and works, similar to Christendom.