

Theodor W. Adorno's Culture Industry: As A Domineering of Cultural Sphere

Theodor W. Adorno'nun Domine Edici Kültür Alanı Olarak:
Kültür Endüstrisi

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Özet

Adorno, Frankfurt Okulu'nun önde gelen düşünürlerinden biri olarak, kapitalist sistem içinde yer alan ve toplumu baskı altına alan, kendisinin de "kültür endüstrisi" olarak tanımladığı kültür alanını çözümlenmiştir. Kültür endüstrisi; baskı araçları aracılığıyla, bireyleri edilginleştiren, sisteme uyumlu hale getiren ve sistemin kendini yeniden üretmesine katkı sağlayan bireylere dönüştüren yapısıyla, insanları kuşatmaktadır. Adorno, kültürün bir endüstri alanına dönüştüğünü ve bütün yönleriyle devimsel olarak değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini, derinlemesine bir şekilde ilk kez iddia ederek, kültür endüstrisinin derinlemesine bir incelemesini yapmış ve kültür ürünlerinin, birer meta haline gelerek, kapitalizmin temel yasalarına bağımlı bir endüstri alanına dönüştüğünü saptamıştır. Adorno'ya göre kültür artık insanların kendilerini gerçekleştirebildikleri, geliştirebildikleri, yeteneklerini ve isteklerini dışı vurabildikleri bir özgürleşme alanı olarak kabul edilemez. O'na göre kültür artık bu noktada, kapitalizmin çıkarları doğrultusunda işlev gören ve hareket eden, bireyleri bu çıkarlar doğrultusunda yeniden tanımlayan ve biçimlendiren ve dönüştürdüğü bireyleri, sistemin devamlılığını sağlayan mekanizmaların birer parçası haline getiren bir baskı biçimidir. Bu çalışmada, literatür taraması yapılarak, yukarıda belirtilen açıklamalar doğrultusunda, "Kültür Endüstrisi" kavramı, başlıca süreçleri ve "Kültür endüstrisi" nin kendini yeniden üretmesi tartışılmış, kitle iletişimi araçlarının kültür endüstrisindeki işlevi irdelemiş ve Adorno'nun kültür endüstrisi eleştirisi ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Adorno, kültür, eleştiri.

Abstract

Adorno, one of the prominent thinkers of Frankfurt School, analyzes the cultural sphere as he calls "the culture industry" which has the function of dominating society in the capitalist system. The culture industry; de-subjectifying and making people conform to the system and contribute to the system's reproduction of itself, encloses people through means of repression and domination. Claiming for the first time that culture has transformed into an industrial sphere and should be evaluated all by itself and making an in-depth analysis of the culture industry, Adorno states that cultural products, through being commodified, has transformed into a sphere of industry that is subject to basic laws of capitalism. Culture is no more a sphere of liberation in which people can realize and improve themselves and express their abilities and desires. Culture is a form of domination which functions in accordance with interests of capitalism, shapes individuals in line with these interests and makes people parts of mechanisms that maintain the system. In this study, by using literature review method, the concept of "Culture Industry", its main processes, and the reproduction of "Culture Industry" by itself is discussed, the function of mass media in the culture industry is examined and Adorno's critique of the culture industry is put forward.

Keywords : Adorno, culture, criticism.

1. Introduction

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“Culture industry”, which was used by Frankfurt School members Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer for the first time and which has become an important concept in analyses of both society and culture, offers a ground which provides a better understanding of the cultural structure of our age through underpinning cultural studies. Adorno, one of the prominent thinkers of Frankfurt School, analyzes the cultural sphere as he calls “the culture industry” which has the function of dominating society in the capitalist system. Adorno states that cultural products, through being commodified, has transformed into a sphere of industry that is subject to basic laws of capitalism. Culture is a form of domination which functions in accordance with interests of capitalism, shapes individuals in line with these interests and makes people parts of mechanisms that maintain the system. The influence of the culture industry, which uses the mechanisms of repression and domination thanks to the prevalence and effectiveness of mass media, on societies and individuals is undeniable. The fact that the contents of the media are a part of business life has transformed into an ideology which confirms what it produces. Through his critical view and considerations about the culture industry, Adorno did not only stay within the scope of Frankfurt School but he also made important contributions to the intellectual production of the 20th century. Especially through the studies he made on critical theory and culture industry, Adorno broadens the horizon for the attempts to understand the course of the 20th century in which the capitalist system has gradually increased its hegemony and has made itself accepted through becoming global.

The culture industry refers to the domination that has been established in the cultural sphere in the last few centuries in which the capital and commerce has increased and reinforced their hegemony on societies. In order to maintain its existence and continuity, capitalist system, like all systems, needs to maintain the interests of dominant classes and to carry out policies at the center of which those interests lie. Since capitalist system is obliged to maintain its continuity, it uses mechanisms of repression and domination. Capitalism, which is the hegemonic system in the majority of today’s world, provides its domination on societies through various means. Areas such as politics, culture and law are institutions which contain the contradictions of the economic structure within itself, which are used for the sake of the persistence of the system.

Culture has also transformed into a field of struggle through becoming one of the important means of domination of the hegemonic system in the 20th century in which mass media have become prevalent and more effective. Culture has gradually become an industrial sphere and through being com-

modified, it has returned into one of the mechanisms which maintain and reproduce the system.

Adorno is a fierce opponent of the commodification of the culture in capitalist countries in which commodity is glorified and has become one of the key elements of social life. Adorno, claiming that individuals are gradually objectified under the domination of culture industry, has lost his confidence in individuals and societies about their possible subversion of this domination. For, individuals has lost their subject position that can make the change since they have been captivated by the system and encircled by the culture industry so as to main the system.

2. The Concept of "Culture Industry" and Its Basic Processes

The concept of "Culture Industry" is first used in "*Dialectic of Enlightenment*" which was published by Horkheimer and Adorno in 1947 and is one of the masterpieces of the period of Frankfurt School. What Adorno and Horkheimer contribute to the literature of social sciences with their analyses in this work is a new description. In the first drafts of the text "*Culture Industry*", this concept is mentioned as mass culture. There are several reasons why Adorno and Horkheimer prefer culture industry instead of mass culture. Adorno explains these reasons as follows: Firstly, the concept of mass culture evokes a meaning that culture emerges from and is directed by the bottom, namely the masses. However, holding onto the basic claim that culture is produced and governed by the dominant/ruling powers, Adorno explains his preference for the concept of culture industry on this account. Adorno gives other reasons for another change-the emphasis on industry. Since the culture industry is in a strong relation with the commercialization of life, cultural products have been standardized and distribution monopolies have been rationalized. Therefore, Adorno and Horkheimer prefer to use this concept as a result of the claim that cultural products have become an industry through commodification (Adorno, 2008: 76).

With the critique of culture industry a criticism is put forward against the standardizing effect modernism -which emerged as a result of the Enlightenment- has on the culture. The emphasis begins to shift from the critique of capitalism to the general critique of Western civilization with "*Dialectic of Enlightenment*". In this study, it is claimed that modern idea and practice of enlightenment and development, which emphasize the liberation of reason from the nature, have turned the world, human being and nature into a series of objects and a field of instruments of its domination; and hence the culture industry which has deliberately created this transformation is criticized (Bağçe, 2006: 11).

2.1. The Basic Processes of Culture Industry

Culture industry is based on two main processes: processes of standardization of cultural products and rationalization of distribution techniques. While standardization of cultural products occurs through the government of dominant system, rationalization of distribution techniques is directly related with advertisement. These products infuse a life style, a world view to the consumer individual and they condition him/her; and advertising values created a life style once they are adopted by many people in different social classes. Consequently, a pattern of one dimensional thought and behavior emerges.

John Berger, in his book "*Ways of Seeing*", mentions the great role advertisements play in today's modern life and the effects of it on people/societies. Berger claims that images and messages, which reach individuals via advertisements, create habit in masses and are accepted as natural because of their repetitiveness and intensity (Berger, 2005: 129). According to Berger, people are used to advertisement images to the extent that they are unaware of the total effect those images create in them and thus they accept advertisement characteristics as natural as a climate characteristic. Berger emphasizes that the idea that advertisements, which is one of two main faces on which Adorno's culture industry is based, are mostly advantageous to society, advertisers and national economy on a general scale is accepted and promoted as general truth. While creating this perception, system highlights the links between advertisement and freedom. Dominant capitalist system considers advertisements as a system that provides buyer with freedom of choice and producer with freedom of enterprise. However, it is clear that there is a deception. The mechanism of advertisement, which John Berger talks about, sheds light on the production-consumption relations of societies we live in and it gives general information about the role of advertisement in this process. These arguments are pertinent also to Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of culture industry. According to them as well, the victory of advertisement in culture industry is visible in the persistence of consumer in buying and using cultural commodities with a desire hard to suppress although s/he sees they are fake. Consumers must orient themselves according to the unity of production even in their free time. The contribution Kantian schematism expects from subjects/individuals, namely attributing basic concepts to sensual variety, has been taken out of the hands of the subjects by the industry (Adorno, 2009: 23-53). Individuals, not feeling the necessity of contributing to the production, continue to consume cultural products presented to them and nourish culture industry. Accordingly, although individuals' right to criticize is reserved, they can not direct their critiques into creative and leading channels and thus remain passive.

Adorno criticizes also technology within the scope of culture industry

analyses. Adorno asserts that successes and developments achieved in technology have a stance against the social life as a whole. Considered from this point of view, Adorno claims that technology enables developments which surpass its goals, although he does not mean that technology is completely unnecessary or wrong. According to Adorno, in the 20th century, people have lost their ability to evaluate and interpret totality of social life from different perspectives and to think and dream about the possibility of struggling for the sake of change. Since individuals of the period have lost their ability to question and to dream about the change, they are in a passive state of embracing and affirming what their age has brought and the system they live in. Furthermore, individuals cling tightly to the existing system and are becoming insensitive to the criticism (Krogh, 2005: 245-246).

Hence, the individual stops being a genuine individual and returns to a pseudo-individual. Modern individual is a commodity which is constantly reproduced. In this process, both standardization of cultural products and rationalization of distribution techniques via advertisement play major role (Behrens, 2011: 135-136).

2.2. Reproduction of the Culture Industry by Itself

Adorno has a pessimistic approach, having the supposition that the power of culture industry will always be effective on people. Accordingly, products of culture industry will be vividly consumed although people may be poor. Each of these products is a part of the gigantic machine of economy which keeps everyone on their feet either in working hours or in leisure time. From any movie or radio program, culture industry can derive social effects that can be attributed not to one but to all of them. Each manifestation of culture industry inevitably reproduces people in the form to which the totality transforms them. Moreover, all actors of the culture industry which has a role in diverse areas of social life stay on alert so that the reproduced mind would not be widened (Adorno, 2009: 56).

According to Adorno, the genuine novelty culture industry has brought is the subjection of art and entertainment-which are two irreconcilable elements of culture- to the concept of goal, namely a single false formulation, the totality of culture industry (2009: 67). Art is no more a separate discipline which has a goal of its own, but has become a means for having enjoyable time.

Adorno and Horkheimer do not confine themselves to explanations on the political level in order to understand the tragic events and negativities of their time. They think that individuals who make up the society that creates those tragic events should also be addressed. Horkheimer confirms that children of bourgeois families who make up the dominant class of the

society do not learn anything about the possibility to change the world and they accept those experiences as natural and eternal through conforming to the existing situation. The similar situation is the case for the working class. Children of working class families accept the present situation as natural as well; and in order to go beyond this situation, as Horkheimer puts, they are required to “comprehend that social relations are not natural but constructed” (Spurk, 2008: 30-31).

The study of the theory is not enough by itself for this situation of awareness. The individuals need to get rid of impositions of existing social ties and chains of domination in order to liberate. However, here, reproduction mechanisms of the culture industry step in again. Since individuals are captured by mechanisms, which tell everyone what to do and how to do, it gets harder for them to gain consciousness.

Individuals under the influence of culture industry are being reproduced as parts of a whole. But this reproduction takes place at the expense of critical and opponent sides of individuals. Hence, Adorno goes against culture industry’s mechanism of reproduction of individuals as well. Adorno says: “The system no more says ‘Think alike me or die’ but says that ‘You are free not to think alike me. You can also save your life and all those things than belong to you’. However, from that moment on, you are a stranger among us”. Consequently, although the system claims that it offers a libertarian approach to individuals, it actually keeps the system intact by threatening individuals. Culture industry indoctrinates people with the idea that they should be individuals who are conforming to the system. While convincing people, it acts not with the argument that orientation to the system is an imposition or an imperative, but with a more libertarian discourse that it is necessary or there is no another alternative to it (Dellaloğlu, 2001: 104).

2.3. The Function of Mass Media in the Culture Industry

Mass communication is defined as fast, public and temporary. Messages are prepared to reach the audience at short notice and at the same time; for this reason it is fast. Messages are public since it is open to everyone. It is intended that messages will be consumed once it reaches to the audience. Messages which have no purpose of being recorded have temporary quality.

It is true that the development and proliferation of mass media have shortened the distance between societies and individuals. Thanks to rapidly developing technology of the 20th century and prevalence of the mass media, communication can be provided faster. The opportunities presented by the mass media, especially internet, television and telephone, provide people and societies with the chance to keep informed about each other no matter

how much the geographical distance between each other is. The speeches of those who express an opinion on a subject can instantly be reflected in the whole world press; tensions and discussions can be watched in front of the entire world thanks to mass media; and state of affairs is directed with news acquired thanks to the "mediator". Mass media's function as "mediator" is an indispensable component of the culture industry as Adorno underlines.

Mass media do not only mix together art, politics, religion, philosophy and commerce in a harmonious way and most of the time covertly, but also reduce these cultural fields into a common position, a commercial form. Nowadays, even music has acquired a commercial quality. Only the exchange values of elements of culture come into prominence whereas anything other than that loses its significance (Marcuse, 1975: 76).

According to Adorno, the emergence and proliferation of sound film is a crucial development in the 20th century in terms of mass media. Sound film provides its audience with an atmosphere in which s/he can wander without giving up the control, within the framework of the movie but without being controlled by certain facts suggested by the movie so that his/her imagination and thoughts can breathe. The aim is the direct associations the audience would make between real life and stories told via movies. Pointing to the deficiency that has emerged in the power of imagination and spontaneity of culture consumers, Adorno claims that there is no more need to search about the reasons of this situation in psychological terms. For, it is clear that sound films, the most characteristic product of mass media and culture industry for Adorno, paralyze people's faculties of imagination and criticism by their objective character. Since the 20th century, in which technology rapidly developed and penetrated into every sphere of our lives, cultural products have been designed in a way that comprehension of them requires swiftness, power of observation and ability, but at the same time (if one does not want to miss rapidly passing events in the movie) in a way that would not allow intellectual activity (Adorno, 2009: 55-56).

Mass media provide various opportunities to those powers holding the control in their hands. Mass media can attract the attention of receivers, namely people, to specific problems, solution or focal points. Hence, they can make the masses act in accordance with the interests of power holders through directing them thanks to its influence. Mass media do not only provide power to their owners, but they also help them have effective status in the society and give legitimacy to their deeds. Thanks to mass media, individuals can be mobilized or directed towards specific forms of behavior. Relaxing and entertaining qualities of mass media are also crucial. For, they pave the way for the domination of the culture industry over masses. In addition to the fast and flexible form of mass media, which generally get back what they have given to the society as means of communication, the fact

that they are easy in terms of planning and controlling contributes considerably to the power of those who hold mass media in their hands. The mission of mass media as part of a wide information industry is to reach the information to large masses in a ready and quick way. While doing this, they choose from informations existing in the society and transmit the information they choose after processing it. The right to make this choice is in the hands of social powers that hold the control in their hands. Denis McQuail assesses the function of mass media through dividing it into five categories: information function, that is providing information about the circumstances and events in the world and in the society, revealing power relations, paving the way for novelties, adaptation and development; the function of providing mutual attachment, that is making explanations and interpretations about the significance of information and events, providing support for established rules and sovereignty, socialization, arranging different activities, providing consensus, determining the order of priorities and pointing to the interdependent social condition; the function of ensuring continuity, that is expressing dominant culture and recognizing subcultures and new cultural developments, processing and holding commonality of values; the function of entertainment, consolation and having good time, that is providing opportunities of relaxation; the function of mobilization, that is campaigning for social goals in areas of politics, military, economic development, business and sometimes religion. The functions of mass media which are categorized by McQuail, because of their elements that set the ground for reproduction and provide the maintenance of the system, also play the role of an engine for the culture industry that is criticized by Adorno and Horkheimer. Because of its so many effects mentioned, mass media are considered as a social means of power; hence in whose hands they lie or by whom they are governed gain importance.

The owner of mass media which play also a crucial role with respect to the culture industry as well are the dominants of today's capitalist society. The big capital which is the monopolies of communication and media sectors is now dominating this power of mass media. As Miliband puts, mass media is both the expression of a system of domination and the means for supporting this expression (Erdoğan ve Alemdar, 1990: 96-194).

Cultural products have been returned into commodities that are bought and sold and transformed into a sector through being commodified. Cultural products which are elements of the culture industry are now commodities which have exchange value in the market. Cultural products which are bought, sold, and which find a place in the society in accordance with their exchange value are produced just like other commodities and are presented to consumption. Commodified cultural products are not produced in a free and independent way. We are talking about the existence of a cultural sphere which is developed in line with the specific goals and strategies and which

continues its existence within the scope of interests of a specific class which owns means of production. The rules of capitalism reigns also in the cultural sphere as they do in other spheres. A profit-oriented cultural market is dominant today and this market, again in line with the rules of the system, is being governed by the classes which are the owner of capital.

2.4. Adorno's Critique of Culture Industry

According to Adorno, the dominant cultural system that they conceptualize as culture industry has a character that provides the continuity of the current and dominant capitalist system, that makes individuals subjected to the system through its inner mechanisms, and that dispossesses the individual of his free will. The industrialization of culture leads to the perception of human being in the industrial society as a product of industry, thus, his objectification, viz. his reification. Adorno began thinking that culture industry keeps human under its sovereignty through much more subtle and effective ways and practices in comparison to old-fashioned traditional ways and practices (Dellaloğlu, 2008: 25). Adorno emphasizes that the state of consciousness in which humanity lives today tends to easily forget about great disasters experienced in the history of humanity. This consciousness perceives those disasters as tragic accidents that take place on the road to the economical and technical development. Adorno, asking "What would a culture, in the heart of which millions of people has been murdered in gas chambers and involved this in its agenda, wait for, in order to confess its own destruction?", explicitly opposes culture industry containing all elements of repression and dominance, within itself, that prevent people from realizing this situation (2006: 59). Adorno, who criticizes culture industry that de-subjectifies people and makes them unable to realize this, lost his faith in people to become subjects and change their own destiny. It is a known fact that Adorno, who explains his lost of faith in change with inner dynamics of culture industry, has a pessimistic point of view stemming from the effects of his era. In spite of this, he never gives up with searching for ways out of culture industry of which he makes analyses.

In the preface of their co-written work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer, states that their real aim is "nothing more than understanding why humanity falls into a new kind of barbarism instead of developing to a humanistic level." Adorno and Horkheimer, who perceive culture as a product rather than a process, make some points that culture has become a sector now, that this area has some products to consume which are supposed to be kept under control and supervision in order to be consumed (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1995: 11).

Main thesis in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is that enlightenment destroys itself. In its first chapter in which positivism is being criticized, science and

technology, known as ideologies that enable and help the construction of new forms of sovereignty, are criticized under the title of '*Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Culture*'. In this book, they put a distance from Marx's thesis that "dominant ideas in each era are the ideas pertaining to the dominant class, and those ideas can be viewed as effective in their establishment". Instead, the idea that "technology and technologic consciousness itself produced a new phenomenon as a well-formed and disoriented 'mass culture' that makes critique speechless and ineffective" is the main thesis suggested in the book (Bottomore, 1997: 19).

The technology of culture industry is the success of standardization and mass production, which is reached through the operations of economy, not by development of technology. The strongest radio broadcasting company is dependent on electric industry; so is film industry on banks. Different sectors interpenetrate through each other, and capital groups now control different branches of economy together even if they are unrelated to each other (Kejanlıoğlu, 2005: 185).

Today, the power that retains culture industry is obviously the dominant element of capitalist system, i.e. capitalists. The phenomenon of "globalization" that has emerged particularly after 1980s also leads to the production of culture industry and its prevalent assimilation. The idea that globalization will abolish the borders among all countries, create an incorporation between societies in social, political, economic and cultural areas, leads to the commodification of culture and destruction of its '*essential*' function, as Adorno points out.

In his *Minima Moralia*, Adorno argues that culture creates a delusion that it is a human society in which humans live. Through this delusion, the existence of material conditions underlying all human products is made invisible. It serves to the persistence of evil economic determination of existence thereby relaxing and narcotizing people (Adorno, 2007: 45). Therefore, people continue their existence within the wheels of the system as they are ignorant of the economic conflicts comprising the problems of humanity. Culture itself functions as an ideology that creates and infuses into people the illusion that life works smoothly.

One of Adorno's criticisms of culture industry is also that the industry undertakes the mission of mystification of realities. This criticism is based on Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism. According to Adorno, the products presented to society by culture industry are not the art works transformed into commodities, but they are already designed to be marketed as commodities. Cultural products are produced for consumption instead of satisfying real needs of people. As all other commodities to be bought and sold, cultural products produced for the same purpose also leads to the empowerment of false consciousness, since the needs of people are now to be

determined by the entertainment industry; people make their decisions under the impression of powers external to them. Culture industry has created people who consume the same things, listen to the same things, think about the same things, make the same comments and even feel the same things in the face of similar events. In this circle in which people more and more become similar and the same, they eventually have lost their state of being a social subject (Jay, 2001: 167).

Accordingly, societies composed of a body of individuals are unable to determine and control the culture industry. Societies divided into classes are doomed to be subjected to the culture industry that is determined and imposed by the dominant powers in command in different areas of social life. While one of the main claims of the dominant capitalist system is the importance of individual freedom, it is observed that this does not work for social preferences.

According to Adorno, human being who tries to escape from a mechanic world (business domain) falls back into another mechanic world (the entertainment industry); hence, the individuality and personality of human being become under threat; a sort of so-called individuality and personality come on the agenda, since freedom of the individual is nothing more than the product of the social and economical 'means' anymore (Bozkurt, 1995: 176).

Accordingly, people long for pulling out of the mechanical and monotonous work process of capitalist life in which they live and to which they are subjected to its rules; they pursue amusement in order to cope with this work process as they are aware that they have to return to the work process. However, these 'amusement' areas where people escape from the work process are not the areas determined by their own independent preferences, either. The system also conducts and controls these amusement areas where people gather strength so that they can re-involve in the work process and realize themselves. The entertainment products, even though they seem to be so ever multifarious, are not determined in line with the needs and demands of individuals. They are diversified, and their contents are determined, to the extent that they make people productive when they return to their working life. People's reactions to and their pleasure of the entertainment tools with such basic qualities as being generally simple, plain and foreseeable are also anticipated. The power that people who are directed to the entertainment products within this state of being conditioned need for struggling in the system is provided back again by the system itself. Apart from this, intellectual labor and independent thought are being marginalized by the system because they are accepted as exhausting.

Adorno asserts that culture makes everything similar. It builds a system that uses mass media such as cinema, radio, journal; each area catches a harmony in itself and with each other. Adorno and Horkheimer expounds that

the aesthetical explanations of the current political antagonisms gush over the steel-like rhythm:

The decorative industrial management buildings and exhibition centers in authoritarian countries are much the same as anywhere else. The huge gleaming towers that shoot up everywhere are outward signs of the ingenious planning of international concerns, toward which the unleashed entrepreneurial system (whose monuments are a mass of gloomy houses and business premises in grimy, spiritless cities) was already hastening. Even now the older houses just outside the concrete city centres look like slums, and the new bungalows on the outskirts are at one with the flimsy structures of world fairs in their praise of technical progress and their built-in demand to be discarded after a short while like empty food cans (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1995: 7).

It can be seen that the urban plannings observed in capitalist systems today are in accordance with Adorno's determination. To give an example from our country, when we look at the settlement tendencies in large cities of Turkey, city centers are being evacuated in the name of 'urban transformation'; and, buildings such as giant plazas and office towers are being constructed in those evacuated centers in order to satisfy the capital's needs. This is not only the case that those inhabitants, who are made debtors according to the needs of capital and pushed out of the city, are excluded geographically, but also that they are tried to be alienated from city culture and their living areas. Adorno, who says that the system of the culture industry was not born in liberal industrial countries for nothing, draws attention to the success of the typical means of mass media peculiar to those liberal countries, cinema, radio, jazz and journals in those countries. As the products of the culture industry exist in capitalist liberal systems where they were born and developed, they also undertake important roles in the persistence of those systems. While Adorno expresses that the dominant powers do not plainly say "think alike me, or die"; he also emphasizes quite the opposite that they send the message "you're free not to think alike me; your life, your possession and property belong to you; but from now on you are a stranger among us". Even if the system pretends like leaving the field clear for people's freedom of thought and production, in fact, it refers to how people are bound to the system in which they live with invisible links. On the one hand, people are told that they have freedom of choice and set free; and they are forced by the threat of being excluded, isolated from the system and of loss of what they possess. Furthermore, when we list consumers as worker, civil servants, farmers and petite bourgeois, how capitalist production absorbs this mass called as consumer with their bodies and souls is so obvious that those people are possessed by things presented to them without any resistance. As those who are ruled care about morality imposed by the rulers more than the rulers do, the deceived masses are amazed by the myth of success more than the successful. The masses internalize the rulers' wishes and persistently hold on the ideology leads them to become slaves. According to Adorno, one of

the differences of the culture industry period from the late liberal era is also that the new is excluded. Therefore, the culture industry evaluates the untested ones as risk and excludes them, in determining of consumption. It can be shown as an example that screenplays that are not based on a reliable best-seller are seen with doubts. It is a contradictory discourse that on one hand, the products should be of unheard, and they should be known by everyone, on the other. They create a perception as if consumers are given a right to choose among a broad range; but after this discourse, the products determined by the dominants under the labels of 'popular' or 'unique'. By strengthening its position, culture industry can respond totally to the needs of consumers, produces, directs, disciplines those needs, even puts them into entertainment. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, entertainment is to forget about pains, not to have to think about them. It is to escape from thinking and questioning meant by this understanding of entertainment which is based on desperateness, rather than escaping from reality. Culture always contributes to the discipline of revolutionary and barbaric instinct; the industrialized culture overdoes. The industrialized culture teaches people in a familiarizing way the conditions that let them making a difficult living in slashing life. The individual should evaluate his/her general dullness as a motive in order to submit himself/herself to the collective power that is disgusted by him/her.

While unnerving situations that fray out audience in everyday life are being reflected again and again, they somehow become promises that human being will exist. Realization of one's own insignificance and his resignation are sufficient conditions for a person to involve in this mass. Society is one of those hopeless, so it is a prize for sharks. To exist in late capitalism is a constant adoption ceremony. Everyone is obliged to prove his/her complete identification with self-subjugating power (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1995: 21-46).

The culture industry affects societies through the means of mass media and undertakes a function to determine and form lifestyles of societies. The structure of the culture industry in capitalist system that feeds up on the system and reproduces itself by its nature makes its hegemony on the masses persistent. Adorno's critique of the culture industry is in contradiction with traditional Marxism. They put the culture industry at the center of critical theory instead of the critique of political economy which is a ground for social theories of traditional Marxism. This replacement is the reason for them to no longer believe that the working class is the revolutionary subject. The criticism of the culture industry uses Marxist arguments for the steps of the control of the culture industry, its commodification and its ideological use (Kellner, 1992: 131-132).

In today's world, it draws attention that societies have similar con-

sumption habits. It is seen that there are dominant main currents in almost every area. In today's world in which a main cinema current centralized in Hollywood is commonly adopted, the cinema culture is being formed around this center. Within the frame of the understanding of the main current of fashion, there are similar clothes to wear; similar understandings of liking are conspicuous. It can be explained by the culture industry compassing societies through the means of mass media, that people who live in different countries and have kilometers of distance to each other are so close to each other in terms of culture.

As opposed to the discourse of difference of the means of mass media, when we look at the similarities between people and between societies, created by them, we see the existence of the dominant powers that control those means of mass media. This is because a political understanding centered at the capitalist system prevails in the world where the capitalist system is dominant, and it is seen that the reflection of this understanding on cultural domain is the culture industry as Adorno conceptualizes.

The understanding of the culture industry should be understood well in order to explain the reasons for the inter-societal similarities as opposed to the discourses of multiplism and difference. In addition to this, in examining today's cultural understanding, it would be useful as well to examine the relationship between the understanding of enlightenment and these discourses of multiplism and difference in which the individuality is at the forefront as one of the contradictions of the capitalist system.

Adorno argues that the dominance carried on through the culture industry causes individuals to lose their individuality. Thus, human beings who lost their individuality and were alienated from being a subject are alienated from the critique of the current system, and they are being de-subjected.

Adorno draws attention to the fact the dominance carried on through culture in this process has such qualities that individuals cannot notice easily. At this point, Adorno and Horkheimer who try to find out a kind of power somehow supposed to provide awareness state that individuals can realize the dominance imposed upon them through another power external to them, and that the critical social theory adopted by Frankfurt School as a general tendency can provide this.

There remains no objective measurement to determine whether the cultural products make sense on behalf of humanity. In the capitalist system, how the products of production would be is determined by its accordance with the interests of the dominant system rather than whether they make sense.

3. Conclusion

We are living in a period in which culture, thanks to mass media, brings societies and individuals closer to each other. Emerging developments now influence the whole world directly or indirectly and shape lives of people. People can reach cultural products more easily, and become also part of the process of shaping of culture thanks to the development of communication facilities. We see that cultural sphere, which has undertaken a more ideological mission and has become an industry through using the mechanisms in the benefit of the system together with the development of capitalism, has more to say about the social life of today's societies. This situation brings the necessity of a complete analysis of industrialized culture.

Adorno, as one of the members of Frankfurt School, is a thinker who challenges his age in a period in which major changes and turning points were taking place in the world in economic, social and cultural terms. The problems people encounter across the world in the mid 20th century, in which technology and science has constantly developed and the continuation of the historical advance without pausing was expected, became a driving force in Adorno's critical assessment of the society. It is not surprising that the Second World War, which broke out when the balances were expected to recover after the First World War, and problems that came together with this war were questioned in that period. Thus, many thinkers who were sensitive to the realities of their age were interested in the analysis of problems such as hunger, poverty and economic crisis.

Frankfurt School, as a school which used critical theory in analyses of society, made various researches. Frankfurt School theorists mention about the culture industry instead of the mass culture, because the term of mass culture implies that the capitalist organization of the culture serves the needs of masses, not the needs of the capital which is indeed the case. Masses are indeed an instrument of technology although it is impossible to deny the conscious and unconscious situations of societies under the effect of the culture industry. Adorno, underlining common goals in the School and analyzing the social issues, starts out from the claim that capitalism lies behind the problem. Existing capitalist system rules societies in line with the interests of the system by means of the mechanisms of repression and domination and amounts to contradictions both in economic and social life. The culture industry, which is the subject of this study, is considered as one of the basic problems created by the hegemonic system and is worth a thorough analysis due to the impact it has on the lives of societies and individuals.

According to Adorno, cultural products have become an industry through being commodified and hence created the phenomenon of the culture

industry. Adorno's analysis of the culture industry becomes effective at the point of controlling and ruling individuals. For, dominant powers manipulate cultural products in order to control individuals in the social life. Culture industry takes on a major task in the legitimation of capitalist societies and the integration of individuals to the mass culture and the society.

The culture industry, which inevitably contains basic mechanisms of the capitalist system, has a profit-oriented structure that grounds on the exchange-value of products and protects the interests of dominant powers. Through the means of repression and domination the culture industry encloses people, who are considered as consumers, de-subjectifies, manipulates and controls individuals.

Cultural sphere has been losing its character as a sphere in which people realize themselves and express their abilities and tastes; it has been gradually becoming part of the culture industry, thus of the mechanisms of reproduction which maintain the capitalist system. The culture industry imprisons individuals, who are objectified due to the processes of reproduction, in a vicious circle.

Adorno's analysis of the culture industry gives us the chance to link cultural products and works of art with ideology as well as to make evaluation through seeing the impact of ideology on individual and social behaviors. A reconsideration and revaluation of the culture industry will be illuminating in terms of increasing the awareness of today's individual in the face of current situation and reminding them of their subjectivity, especially considering that they are under the domination of the capitalist system not only economically but also culturally.

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