

# The Re-evaluation of the Function of Television and the Example of Netflix in the Context of Culture Industry and Mass Media

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## Abstract

When the Culture Industry theory is formed, it is clear that the role of the mass media is extremely important and that television is accepted as the most effective and popular tool among the mass media. While the culture industry destroys the differences between people and integrates them with the existing order, television is the most effective mass communication tool. Frankfurt School thinkers introduced the concept of the culture industry in the 1950s, when they immigrated to America. Criticisms brought to television within the concept of the culture industry can only be evaluated in the conditions of that period. As a result of the long time that has passed, the function of television has also changed on the basis of technology. In this context, after evaluating the function of the Frankfurt School, the culture industry, mass media and television in their own periods, the transformation of television today will be explained through the example of Netflix, so it is aimed to update the function of television within the concept of the culture industry, in other words, to reveal it in today's conditions.

**Keywords:** Culture Industry, Mass Media, Television, Consumption, Capitalism

# Kültür Endüstrisi ve Kitle İletişim Araçlarının Etkisi Bağlamında Televizyonun İşlevinin Yeniden Değerlendirilmesi ve Netflix Örneği

## Özet

Kültür Endüstrisi yaklaşımı oluşturulduğunda kitle iletişim araçlarının rolünün son derece önemli olduğu ve televizyonun kitle iletişim araçları içinde en etkin ve popüler araç olarak kabul edildiği son derece açıktır. Kültür endüstrisi, kültür aracılığıyla insanlar arasındaki farklılıklarını yok ederek onları homojen hale getirirken ve mevcut düzenle bütünleştirirken televizyon en etkin kitle iletişim aracıdır. Frankfurt Okulu düşünürleri kültür endüstrisi kavramını 1950'li yıllarda zorunlu olarak göç ettikleri Amerika döneminde ortaya koymuşlardır. Kültür endüstrisi kavramı içinde televizyona getirilen eleştiriler ancak o dönemin koşulları içinde değerlendirilebilir. Aradan geçen uzun zamanın sonucunda teknoloji temelinde televizyonun işlevi de değişmiştir. Bu bağlamda Frankfurt Okulu, Kültür endüstrisi, kitle iletişim araçları ve televizyonun işlevi kendi dönemleri içinde değerlendirildikten sonra günümüzde televizyonun geçirdiği dönüşüm Netflix örneği üzerinden açıklanarak kültür endüstrisi kavramı içinde televizyonun işlevinin güncellenmesi başka bir deyişle günümüz koşullarında yeniden ortaya konması amaçlanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kültür Endüstrisi, Kitle İletişim Araçları, Televizyon, Tüketim, Kapitalizm

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### INTRODUCTION

While everything was transforming from the traditional to the modern after the Enlightenment, culture took its share from this situation. Culture has started to be created in a rational way like other products in the capitalist system. Thus, differences between people will be replaced by similarities and so mass production will be completed by mass consumption. This homogeneity will also make it easier to direct or manipulate the people by the power or elites. Culture should be standardized and blended with entertainment in order to include all segments of society. Mass media especially television, fulfills this task within the culture industry and transforms people intellectually and behaviorally. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, mass media not only entertain people with the content they offer, but also organize their daily lives and make them compatible with the capitalist system (Kellner, 2010, p. 235). Culture is produced in a plan and presented for consumption in line with the necessities of the system, people are misled in consciously (Kızılçelik, 2013, p. 447). People no longer think according to the theorists of culture industry (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996, p. 36). Thinking is extremely boring and tiring. Everyone is happy, but they do not know why they are happy. The system produces itself and mass media is the most central and television is the most effective part of it. Television was seen as the continuation of telegraph and photography shaping people's lives in harmony with the system in the cultural climate and technological conditions of mid 1950s. The speed of the images and the excessive abundancy in the flow of information prevent people from critical thinking and bring everything from the past and the future to the present. Integrity has lost its meaning and parts or sections are given as disconnected from its context. The programs are in magazine format and this understanding has spread to the whole life of the audience. Sensational subjects, short sentences that are easy to remember and the presentation of entertainment in the form of stories made it easier for people to be manipulated under the influence of television. On the other hand, we can say that the function of television has changed in today's conditions and that the television of the period in which the theorists of the culture industry formed their theories, transformed and became integrated with its audience. Developments in communication and internet technologies have changed the dimension of the relationship

between television and the audience. While digital platforms combine television and the internet, they have also transformed the daily lives of audiences. Digitalization, Big Data and IPTV and OTT technologies are important in terms of showing that the function of television has been transformed and completely different from the television of the culture industry theorists' period. Nothing has changed in the system. People forget to think and become more working for the system. The meaning of freedom and happiness is still constantly changing. Homogeneous people massively consume standardized products and they are manipulated and shaped in line with the system's interests. Television serves the system and transformation takes place rapidly under the name of progress. In this study, our aim is not to analyze the culture industry, but to show the transformation of the function of television as a mass communication tool in the culture industry.

#### **FRANKFURT SCHOOL AND CULTURE INDUSTRY**

The Frankfurt School is a social research institute formed by a group of left-leaning thinkers from different fields of social sciences. The socio-economic, political and cultural changes that took place after the First World War, the failure of the German Revolution (1918-21) and the success of the Russian Revolution (1917) shifted the center of socialist thought to Moscow. Rising of fascist movements in which the working class participated, increasing poverty and constant conflicts are other important problems facing Europe. In this context, Frankfurt School thinkers pondered why Marxist policies failed to solve these current problems and how they could give hope to people for the future (Jay, 1989, p. 21). Critical Theory is an important part of the theory-praxis movement that was born in the early twentieth century and shaped as "Western Marxism". Western Marxism has paradoxically reversed Marx's own path of development. Western Marxism is an anti-orthodox Marxist approach, formed against orthodox Marxism, which is ideological and rigidly authoritarian.

Critical theory is an approach in which philosophy and culture are at the center against economic determinism that Marxism attaches importance to. It has been emphasized that the problems that arise in the capitalist system cannot be solved only with the studies carried out in economy. The psychological and cultural developments of the individual are also important. The industrialization of culture and the emergence of the entertainment industry, developments in mass communication, the use of culture by the Nazi and fascist regimes have made it necessary for critical theorists to evaluate culture (Held, 1980, p.78). It is a theory that

focuses on the superstructure rather than the base, but at the same time it tries to constitute a relation to both the base and the superstructure. In the "Dialectic of Enlightenment", in the section "Cultural Industry: Enlightenment as the Deception of the Masses", we see the Frankfurt School's analysis of the culture industry. Here, the concepts of mass culture and culture industry were used interchangeably. However, later on, the school preferred to use the "culture industry" in the sense of renewing the existing in the society and presenting it to consumption in a planned way. Adorno and Horkheimer used the concept of culture industry to emphasize the commodification of the cultural forms in the entertainment industry that started to rise in America and Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. The rise of the entertainment industry resulted in the standardization and rationalization of cultural products. These cultural products are prepared for mass consumption in accordance with capitalist accumulation and profit making purposes (Çağan, 2003, p.183).

The culture industry has a top-down hierarchy and it is integrative. It tries to make people similar by eliminating differences in a planned way (Huhn, 2006, p.263). Thus, mass production will be completed with mass consumption and the system will be able to reproduce itself by shaping the people more easily. While culture contained many sub-cultural elements in the traditional social structures before industrialization, culture in industrialized modern societies was standardized and transformed into an industrial culture (Şan & Hira, 2013, p.5). The capitalist system has started to regulate and control the leisure time and the most private moments of people in the culture industry. High culture is ordinarized and low culture is developed under the name of progress, intertwined and homogenized through entertainment. Ordinary people are everywhere in the culture industry now. While ordinary people are heroized, people who make up high culture in science, art, literature or music become invisible. The difference between the high culture and the culture of the lower classes has been artificially destroyed and homogenized in the societies where the consumption culture is dominant. The culture industry shapes culture and destroys reality by attacking it. It creates an unreal, virtual culture and traps people. Music is an important example for this situation. According to Adorno, music has become a commodity determined by its exchange value rather than its use value under the influence of capitalist culture. The feature that determines the success of music is whether it is suitable for the market or not. Adorno points out the differences between serious and popular music. Serious music contributes to thinking on the contrary of standardized fictional popular music. It is difficult to understand the serious music

as a whole. The whole has an effect on the details. Details gain meaning in the whole. Most importantly, it requires effort and concentration to understand and pushes you to stop your daily life and to think. In popular music, parts are active instead of the whole. It is standardized and easily remembered music, so rhythm and style are important. The mind automatically absorbs music with little effort. What makes music valuable is the feeling of fun and happiness at that moment. Thus, daily life is continued more energetically, but consciousness is lost and the thinking process is excluded (Held, 1980, p.102-103). Music has been fetishized within the culture industry and the consciousness of the listeners has become the complement of music fetishism. This situation makes listening non-functional. Mass media circulates music as a part of production and this causes regression in listening. It can be said that popular music, which contains alienation and is literally a commodity, has been accepted as a genre of music that covers up the real problems in society. Popular music includes rationalization, fetishism and commodification. Adorno thinks that the system shapes the music and the music is independent of both the composer and the listener. This kind of music is stupid (Ayas, 2015, p.117-119). Music and movies transform as a part of the market, they also transform their buyers. In fact, it diverges from its essence and becomes artificial on both sides.

Critical theorists' lives in America played an important role in the development of the culture industry theory. In America, they focused on the effective mass media of the period such as radio and cinema and they analyzed how they were used in the interests of the dominant powers. The American sociologist C. Wright Mills has an important place in the development of the culture industry theory by critical theorists. According to Mills, mass media has an important role in directing people's attitudes and highlighting the values of the middle class, and individuals can be controlled with the contributions of the entertainment. While studying the culture industry, Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, and Löwenthal exchanged their views, working with important American sociologists like Mills or political scientists like Lazarsfeld (Kızılcılık, 2013, p.443). Frankfurt School thinkers criticized capitalist modernity on the basis of the culture industry. Culture is industrialized because it is a technological and rational production (Adorno, 2007, p.112-113). The culture industry emerges under the monopoly of the dominant powers and in the capitalist mode of production. While large cultural agencies produce the culture industry, the consumer is always in the position of being deceived (Kızılcılık, 2013, p.447). The system captures the consumer both spiritually and physically, so that the consumer can't show any resistance. The consumer thinks that he makes

his choice freely but this is misleading. The products in the culture industry are similar and in a standard way, so the dominant powers actually realize their own interests through these products. As the environments become the same, the individual transforms beyond himself and becomes a part of the industry. Everyone has become a cogwheel of the interchangeable machine. The culture industry has objectified the individual. Horkheimer and Adorno agree with Tocqueville. "Despotism frees the body and directly targets the soul. The Sovereign no longer says that you must think like me or die, but rather says: You are free not to think like me, your life, your possessions belong to you, but from now on you are a stranger among us." (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996, p.451). The object position of the man in the culture industry is the result of advertising that creates an integrity of the man with the culture industry. Consumption and competition are inseparable parts of life in modern society and this situation oppresses people. While advertising surrounds people, it actually destroys the existing truth and reveals its own truth and allows people to build their daily lives on these truths.

Having an identity in the consumer society is the most important thing demanded. The identity must be constantly renewed and the old one replaced with a new one. This new identity can be realized by purchasing the latest consumed product and the attributes it represents. Identity re-establishes itself in thousands of other signs gathered and brought together to create a synthesis of individuality with the power of signs and multiplied differences, and in fact it is falling into the greatest anonymity since difference has lost its meaning (Baudrillard, 2017, p.103-104). However, while the consumer is trying to form his personality with the objects he consumes, he actually turns into an object of market. People think of themselves as free and independent individuals with the choices they make in the culture industry, but this is an illusion because the differences are planned in the industrial dimension. The person defines himself with the differences produced in a planned manner and builds his identity. The system offers people a status changing game where the differences are predetermined. This customization game is actually considered by people as a form of freedom (Baudrillard, 2020, p.204).

## **CULTURE INDUSTRY AND MASS MEDIA**

According to Adorno and Horkheimer, mass media such as radio, television, video and cinema shape the individual and society. Radio and cinema transform the worthless things into necessary things and reorganize people's life. Films and music provide the formation of cultural

monopolies in the culture industry under the control of large companies. The most effective element of the domination of the culture industry over individuals is the mass media, which acts as an ideological tool by propagating the "culture monopolies" (Kızılcelik, 2013, p.442-443). The mass media shapes people in a planned way by standardizing them through entertainment. The culture industry is a culture that is imposed and managed from top to down as a means of social control. Thus, the concept of culture in culture industries is now turning into an ideological domination (Kellner, 2010, p.235). The relationship between the subject and the object has deteriorated and the subject has become passive (Çam, 2008, p.52-53). The modern mass culture intertwined with the entertainment industry praised the world that exists, thus contributing to social reproduction by covering up the "falseness of ideological content" (Horkheimer, 2005, p.153). This is related to the ideological function of mass media. The boundaries between reality and actual reality are consciously blurred in the culture industry. People listen to the radio collectively and they became reified (Jay, 2014, p.304). The ideology given with the music provides the reproduction of the system. Music is a component of the culture industry. While radio that broadcasts in a planned way enable people to continue their daily lives happily, it also atomizes and standardizes them (Adorno, 2018, p.80). People are alienated to certain issues and their own existence. The individual loses the consciousness of time and space, break away from the society and is imprisoned in himself. People's happiness depends on their compatibility or complete obedience to the system. Obedience brings about adapting to the moral and cultural codes idealized by the system (Jay, 2014, p.377). Adorno disagrees with the idea that radio liberates people and contributes to democracy. Watching or listening to the same programs doesn't mean the freedom. Mass media gives the impression that there is democracy with the discourse of difference and freedom (Kejanlıoğlu, 2005, p.186). However, freedom has lost its mental quality and has turned into unlimited fun.

Adorno criticizes the cinema that alienates people from reality. Cinema, like radio, approaches people holistically and turns them into individuals who look alike. Consciousness is neutralized through entertainment and thinking is excluded. The culture industry defines mass-consumed cinema as a popular art (Adorno 2017, p.211). Cinema is a tool to manipulate the masses. Films transfer the cultural heritage to the next generations (Adorno 2018, p.227). In other words, cinema spreads the culture industry to the masses by sending the same messages to many people at the same time. The absolute speed and continuity of images make thinking impossible. Consciousness becomes disabled because the sequencing of the image allows only



the viewing of the image, just as the eyes follow the lines of a book. Watching the images presented on the television means only watching the screen by deactivating the meaning (Adorno 1954, p.213). People who are condemned to live only as species in the culture industry are kept under hegemony and kept away from thought. There is no longer a mysterious situation for the audience in watching the movie or listening to the music, the next frame in the movie and the next rhythm in the music is predictable (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1995, p.89).

Mass media plays the most important role both in the formation of the culture industry and in the homogenization of people. More importantly, mass media is extremely effective in shaping societies by fascism. The transformation of the radio into a propaganda tool in Hitler's Germany can be shown as the most significant example of the Frankfurt School thinkers' negative handling of the mass media. Mass media strengthens the pressure on the individual and destroys the possibility of resistance (Horkheimer, 1990, p.166). If the individual does not find a place in this system, the result he will face is to be excluded from the society (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1996, p.41). The culture industry reproduces the society with the entertainment it offers through mass media. The culture industry is the entertainment industry that consists of tools such as movies, television, music, radio, newspapers and magazines (Giddens, 2000, p.402). Entertainment makes people forget their pain, destroys critical approach and prevents thinking (Horkheimer ve Adorno, 1996, p.36). Entertainment in the culture industry is seemingly interruption of work, but actually it is an extended form of work under capitalist conditions. In this context, people are imprisoned in an illusion. "No one gets their share at all costs and is content to play with it" (Horkheimer ve Adorno, 1996, p.32). The culture industry is nothing but the essential element of the consumer society (Kızılcelik, 2013, p.460).

Entertainment makes people compatible with the system, it disconnects them from critical approach and questioning, and brings escape from thought. This hurts the workers the most. The consciousness of the working class has been corrupted. According to Frankfurt School thinkers, the working class, brainwashed by the mass media, forgot their identity and surrendered themselves to popular culture (Horkheimer ve Adorno, 1996, p.29). Mass culture has expanded the effects of advertising and strengthened the consumption. It sought to undermine working-class culture, emphasized instrumental reason, and manipulated sexuality (Held, 1980, p.108). The culture industry is an unnatural, anti-democratic culture shaped by the mass media in the interests of the big industrial monopolies and against the oppressed classes

and masses (Kızılcelik, 2013, p.464). In short, the culture industry enables people to accept the existing order and identify himself with it through mass media.

### **TELEVISION AS A MASS MEDIA TOOL**

The development of technology and the speed in the transmission of information have brought many important changes and abolished the traditional order in the nineteenth century. Telegraph and photography enabled technology to enter the field of communication. The telegraph has turned information into a commodity. "The fortunes of newspapers began to depend more on how much news they reported, from what distances and at what speed, rather than on the quality or usefulness of the news they conveyed." (Postman, 2020, p.89). With the establishment of news agencies, news that does not appeal to anyone in particular has started to become abundant. The telegraph had turned the country into a neighborhood, but this neighborhood was made up of foreigners who have the most superficial information about each other. The news that is obtained from a far and the fastest is mostly news that has been taken out of its context. In other words, such news has no effect on the continuation of daily life.

Information gains importance with the action it creates. While Postman was talking about the information-action table, the telegram completely changed it with the excessive amount of irrelevant information it created. With the activation of mass media, the information-action relationship has become abstract. People are fed up with information. In the past, the information-action ratio was close to each other and people could regulate and control their actions as a result of the information they had. However, the telegraph turned the whole world into a news space and showered people with information. The reason why the telegraph was such a popular and important tool was that the telegraph, in stark contrast to typography, left out reasoning while conveying information. The Telegraph used headline language, in other words, fragmented, easy-to-remember slogans. Messages were disconnected from each other and did not show continuity. So there was no need to track and associate the messages. "Knowing" no longer required knowing the background or extensions of that topic. For the telegraph, intelligence meant not having a thorough knowledge of things, but hearing things (Postman, 2020, p.92-93).

Photography speaks of singular situations. You can photograph a section from a certain perspective, at a certain moment in time, according to the angle of the light. Photography

excludes discussion or reflection. Photography means fact, and facts do not require thought or discussion. Being on the surface does not require depth. The photo requires no context. It fragments reality in its own way, decontextualizes moments, and juxtaposes facts in such a way that no logical relationship can be established. There is only the present time and the world is atomized. While the world of photography enriches the world of people who have begun to be aware of many subjects without experiencing a long process such as reason, logic, education and sequential thinking demanded by the world of typography, the basis of belief is not reading but seeing. The most important effect of the telegraph and photography is undoubtedly its capacity to produce false contexts. People used to need information to guide their own lives, but now people who are overwhelmed with information have to create the contexts in which information may be needed.

In television, we see the synthesis of the speed of the telegraph and the visuality of the photograph. How people say is more important rather than What they say. Postman sees television as a continuation of the tradition initiated by the telegraph and photography. Television influences all segments of society in many areas because storytelling and visuality of television are in a whole (Mete, 1999, p.1). None of the other tools of the media has made individuals witness the events so much. In this respect, television should be accepted as a tool that constantly makes individuals look regardless of purpose (Aziz, 1975, p.198). Postman attributes a normative power to television and considers the audience as passive receivers and sees this situation within television epistemology. Television is the command center of the new epistemology. We live in a period where the people's way of their perception and what is happening around them is completely determined by the tendencies of television (Postman, 2020, p.101). Most of the people spend their free time in front of the television, get information about the outside world and organize their lives accordingly (Esslin, 2001, p.13). Television directs not only our knowledge about the world, but also our knowledge about the ways of knowing. Television tells us how to use other technological devices, which movies we should watch and music we should listen to, books we should read. Television, which is an iconic medium, creates a context in which everything gains reality and meaning. Things are non-existent unless they appear on the television screen; they must be reproduced through television images in order to gain meaning and existence. Anything which interests public can't escape from television. Television is a vital tool in shaping human consciousness, identity, feelings and thoughts on different planes and dimensions. It is like a labyrinth that takes more

than what is given to it by the audience. While television supports and reproduces the dominant ideology and social order, it also undertakes the mission of producing a myth (Kaplan, 1991, p.135-139). Television has risen to "myth" status, as Roland Barthes said. To put it another way, we are not fully conscious of a non-problematic way of understanding the world or what seems natural. Myth is a way of thinking embedded in the invisible depths of our consciousness (Postman, 2020, p.102).

Television builds itself on program structures that are established with the logic of "and now". Television proceeds in a continuity with context-free contexts. The events we watch on the screen flow in a continuity despite being disconnected from each other. The format in magazine programs is seen in news programs. The news presented on television is fragmented, devoid of context, inconclusive, not loaded with value, and therefore devoid of seriousness, it is a kind of news that is purely for entertainment (Postman, 2020, p.127). News programs provide an entertainment. Entertainment dominates not only on the screen but also outside the screen. Television is consumed by larger masses in which the level of education and culture is low. Autonomy, critical distance and personal judgment are necessary prerequisites to think. However, television constructs its own reality and the audience accepts what its screen presents as absolute reality (Laplanto, 1992, p.142). In front of the screen, people evolve as homogeneous and passive individuals. While television directs individuals with the messages it transmits, it also eliminates the values that classify them, ensures the formation of masses with common characteristics, and makes them uniform or homogeneous (Mutlu, 2018, p.23-24). Stacks across the same screen that are not directly connected to each other are well suited for mass redirection (Güneş, 2017, p.94).

Today, in culture industry, people do not talk to each other at school, workplaces, or meetings but have fun. Instead of exchanging ideas, people are exchanging images. It becomes difficult to distinguish the differences between what is a show and what is not, and the nature of the discourse of the culture is changing. "Our priests, presidents, surgeons, lawyers, educators, and television reporters are more concerned with the behaviors required by good showmanship than with meeting the requirements of their discipline." (Postman, 2020, p.124). Television produces a type of information that can be called disinformation. Disinformation means misleading information, not false information. It creates the illusion that one knows about something. Postman thinks that people fall into such an illusion when news and entertainment are mixed. Television informs people by entertaining them (Mutlu, 2005, p.91).

Thus, while television socializes people, it also pacifies them and makes them ready to be manipulated. Television, which even regulates people's leisure time, actually controls them (Mutlu, 2005, p. 88).

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF TELEVISION AND THE EXAMPLE OF NETFLIX

In the development of television broadcasting, it is seen that the programs were produced homogeneously until 1980s, after that time, programs were produced by targeting specific groups. Finally, nowadays programs are being produced according to the characteristics of individuals. People have been liberated in terms of space and devices with the development of technology and the emergence of digital platforms. The user is motivated by the satisfaction of his desires and so becomes the part of the consumer society. Television is beyond an electronic device because it plays an important role in the formation of the reality by creating meaning in social, cultural and economic fields. Until the 2000s, the relationship between the audience and television was one-sided. The audience used to only watch the images flowing from the screen and can be positioned passively but today the audience has a voice in the production of media content and has come to a position that interprets the content, makes sense and even directs it (Uluç, 2008, p.116). Technology has a decisive role in the television-audience relationship. In this context, television has transformed, but other technology-based communication tools also have an effect on this transformation. So we can say that television culture or attitudes towards the screen show significant changes compared to the past (Hassler-Forest, 2014, p.160).

We can divide television into four different periods. First Term 1950-1980, Second Term 1980-1990, Third Term 1990 and after (Jenner, 2014, p.2). The last period in which we live symbolizes the fourth period that catches up with the internet and continues its development with IPTV technology without slowing down. We can see the best examples of this development on online platforms or internet television. The adaptation to these online platforms in the mobilization, make it clear that the period has begun to change more sharply. Instead of making a direct distinction between the internet and television, there is new system in which internet shapes television (Gezgin, 2018, p.583). Developments in communication and internet technologies have changed the dimension of the relationship between television and the audience (Uluç, 2008, p.116). Digital platforms that combine television and the internet, has changed the consumption habits of the audience. The fact that Netflix broadcasts over the

internet as a digitalized platform has enabled its users to watch the content one after the other or to store the content in the memory. The audience is differentiated as a result of the content they watch. Visual applications and the culture of successive viewing, as well as the effectiveness of user data in structural formation, are among the prominent features of this difference. As Netflix is making many innovations in this context, it is accepted as a qualified, modern and cult television in the field of communication (Jenner, 2014, p.1). Production and distribution strategies through platforming and big data have transformed the television culture under the heading of progress and improved the existing structure. Netflix required the redefinition of the function of television in the regulation of cultural space and became an important turning point.

Netflix was founded in 1997 as a DVD rental and sales company, and later transformed into an internet company with the distribution and presentation of the media content it owns or creates. The development of television is not only about the production of a high resolution, quality image and sound, but also about the dynamics of production and distribution (Nelson, 2007, p. 26-43). Media companies such as Netflix, Amazon, and HBO, which operated through cable subscriptions until the end of the 1990s, became active in the production of media content such as TV series and movies with the development of the internet after the 2000s, and consolidated their power in the industry. What makes Netflix a leader in its category is that it tries to determine the views and likes of the audience through the tabs it prepares, and analyzes it with the information it obtains (Akova, 2020). In 2013, Netflix changed the traditional broadcasting principles by broadcasting the 13-episode first season of the House of Cards simultaneously (Akkuş, 2019, p.179). Netflix has different features as an OTT platform. The most important of these features is that besides being a platform with foresight, it is suitable for individualization and mobilization. More than one user can benefit from the opened account by creating a profile, and the platform can be accessed from different devices such as PC, tablet, mobile phone. But most importantly, the users can reach the content compatible with their own taste structures by means of artificial intelligence algorithms. This situation caused user to think that he is free but the user is limited with these options and comes under the hegemony of the platform. The user thinks that access to the content is under his control, but these contents are not determined by him. He constitutes himself from the limited options created in a planned way. This is the most important revolution that has taken place depending on the evolution of television after the 2000s.

Binge-watching is the concept that makes it possible to watch all episodes without interruption. Users are able to watch the series episodes prepared as a season in a single session. In other words, the images flowing from the screen or the prepared content will be consumed quickly and intensively. The most important change brought by Netflix is that it offers uninterrupted viewing, which is also its decisive strategy (Jenner, 2018). In short, Netflix broke away from the classical understanding by offering "freedom" and uninterrupted viewing options to the audience, and became one of the leading platforms that changed the concept of television. However, this transformation is not something Netflix does alone. It should be seen holistically as a process in which many components such as social networks and digital platforms come together and interact and progress. The transformation of television should be evaluated in other factors related to the development of technology. For example, the integration of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube with broadcasting technologies has transformed the audience into an active audience who can comment on social networks and influence and direct content producers. Thus, not only the content produced on television but also its presentation has gained importance. Youtube has started to be used by corporate members such as media companies as well as individual members, and the repetitions of international broadcasts on television channels have become watchable on the internet. In addition, televisions broadcast live on the Internet using Youtube. Accessing broadcasts on the internet with mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones, allowing people to watch these broadcasts without being tied to a point on the move, have been important factors that enable broadcasters to bring innovation in presenting their content to the audience. In this context, broadcasters have developed digital platforms as an extraordinary innovation by using technology. The barrier of time and place has been removed for users to access the content they want to watch. Freedom to choose content is one of the most important factors in the change of audience behavior. These digital platforms, especially Netflix, have revolutionized screen broadcasting for reasons such as suggesting similar content based on users' selections, offering multiple languages and subtitles, classifying content and excluding advertisements.

Netflix subscribers can access the content of the platform without advertisements, regardless of location and time, with all internet-connected devices. In addition, Netflix tries to get to know its users with its advanced algorithm system and recommends content for their liking. It also has a digital infrastructure that suggests new content for viewing habits by

categorizing and provides ease of access to content types. Netflix is a global platform with easy and fast access, standardized content production based on cultural conditions and a control mechanism through algorithms (Aydın, 2019). Qualitative analyzes have started to be made by Big Data. It is no longer important who the viewers are and what they watch, but what influences their choices. In this context; another key used by Big Data is the digital trace that television viewers leave as they move from one channel to another. This data is invaluable to both broadcasters and advertisers: it explains the likes and dislikes of viewers and helps broadcasters target their content more accurately (Murschetz & Schlütz, 2018, p.28). Replay is also an important source for Big Data. The purpose of Big Data applications; to be able to get feedback through the databases used to create contents, to create a target audience for the contents, to compare these contents with the right target audience, to gain profit from the situation and to direct this income to new productions.

The next stage in the use of Big Data; predicting content that viewers will enjoy. As the number of television viewers using computers increases, it becomes easier to evaluate their demands and adapt the content in line with the demands. Thus, Big Data increases customer engagement (Aktan, 2018, p.8). In this sense, the path followed is the continuous analysis of customers and their preferred productions. Analysis of previous content; it guides the preparation of new content by predicting the tastes of the audience. More television broadcasts are analyzed more quickly. It is aimed to produce content according to the satisfaction of the audience. The increase in internet-connected television broadcasting naturally brought competition. Competitive advantage appears to be the key to survival in intensive content production. In this sense, internet-connected broadcasting, mediated by Big Data captures the audience. Powerful platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix or YouTube are making their services data-driven by exploring unprecedented forms to enhance media production that reaches audiences (Murschetz & Schlütz, 2018, p.24). In this regard, Netflix is a remarkable company due to the speed of its spread in the world. It is observed that content provider platforms such as Netflix use Big Data effectively in terms of audience requests, audience-oriented broadcasting and recommendations of productions that the audience will like to.

The reason for creating digital data-generating platforms is to create a ground on which data is collected. It is important that meeting the large and diverse data with the right target audience. Digitally mediated social responses trigger the technological developments



(Neuman, 2018, p.297). The aim here is to better analyze the demands of consumers and experience of their interaction with media products. Today's television industry is undeniably dynamic and complex (Miribanguli, 2018). Big Data is increasingly consolidating media, internet and Telecom companies (Arsenault, 2017, p.14). Although the practical use of data is not yet sufficient, the ease of data processing and analysis shows that maximum benefit can be achieved in the very near future. Two concepts IPTV and OTT are important in terms of showing the transformation of television. IPTV is defined as a system that creates multilateral interaction for the audience with the controlled transfer of image and audio data from the Internet. OTT (Over-The-Top) provides the users to access the digital video stream via computers and smart devices using the internet instead of satellites, cable TV or DVD players. It is possible to access broadcasts from anywhere and anytime with just one device as a result of these opportunities offered (Yüncüoğlu, 2019, p.125-126). Netflix is the world's best-known OTT television platform that offers a wide variety of content (Söğüt, 2020, p.416). We can say that Netflix is the pioneer of the new generation media with its applications that radically changes the traditional understanding of television. While IPTV can be watched after accessing the internet with a receiver in the television or with a purchased set-top box, OTT TV can be watched from any screen with internet access. In addition to Netflix, Puhu TV, BluTV, Amazon Prime Video and Exxen are among the best-known OTT TV examples in Turkey.

Systems that provide personalized services collect and use information about the user. Algorithmic production and software performances anticipate and determine the potential future choices of the user based on data and transmit them back to the user in the form of recommendations in many services provided over the Internet. The demographic data of the consumer, his decision-making processes and past purchasing behavior are analyzed by means of recommender systems. New products are suggested according to the results of this analysis and a process is carried out to help the user decide what to buy (Schafer, Riedl & Konstan, 2000, p.3-4). Although this approach is seen useful, it is extremely hegemonic, oppressive and directive in terms of consumption culture. Users can define the possibilities and limits of customization, while content producers can see the consumption potential of users with software built on algorithms. In fact, the user, who feels individually special with what he consumes, becomes an anonymous member of a consumer society, which is built in line with homogenized and predetermined plans and by algorithmic processes. In the consumption

process, high-speed networks, interfaces, algorithms and software working behind the interfaces are the main determining factors.

Netflix uses a recommendation system based on watching profile, past viewing preferences and watching behaviors, it actually guides its users in line with their own planning. While doing this, it uses personalization and customization techniques. The concept of personalization refers to the acquisition of data from the past experiences of the user by new media systems and the adaptation of the interface to the user with this data (Sundar & Sampada, 2010, p.301-302). In other words, the personalization process is the process of recognizing and remembering the user and rearranging the contents according to the user's preference, based on his behavior or personal information. The system can predict different consumption behaviors of users. Software and algorithms match the meta-information of products with the personal data or user experience of each individual as a potential customer (Schubert & Koch, 2002, p.1953-1965). Thus, it can predict the consumption behaviors of individuals and recommend new content to be consumed. The platform adapts itself to each customer that take the form of recommending products is also an important part of personalization (Schafer, Riedl, & Konstan, 2000, p.3-4). The concept of customization refers to a process that takes place at the request of the customer, rather than the personalization model in which products or services are automatically adapted by the system based on the past experience or knowledge of the consumer (Montgomery & Smith, 2009, p.131). Customization is a user-initiated and guided process.

The fact that the user has the opportunity to interact, in which he can be active both in the production and consumption stages, shows that the dynamics of the consumption society are transformed. In this context, the preference of the 'user' is related to the expression of a voluntary action and the nature of consumption (Sundar & Limperos, 2013, p.505). The term audience is associated with traditional television and traditional television viewers do not have the opportunity to direct the program, while the term user includes a higher level of interaction practice. Applications of personalization and customization processes, such as filtering, recommendations or allowing the consumer to proactively identify products or services, can affect the purchasing behavior of the user by increasing the personal interest level of the user. However, the psychological appeal of buyers' ability to shape the nature and course of the content they consume forms the basis of the functional innovation of personalized and customized systems in the consumption network (Sundar & Sampada, 2010, p.299). Users can

freely customize the interfaces in the production/consumption processes they interact with. Although this process creates the impression that the person has complete control over the direction of the content he will consume, he is able to do this within a certain limitation. While users configure the content according to their needs through interfaces, they actually make a choice between certain options. Although the user feels autonomous, the limits on what and how to consume are determined by the system.

The practice of each Netflix user in line with their personal preferences is in constant relationship with Netflix's algorithms. Thus, whenever the attractiveness of the content or viewing preferences for the user changes, Netflix algorithms are re-adapted to ensure the sustainability of the viewer's attention (Özel & Özay, 2021, p.306). Interface designs, which act as a bridge in the interaction between the platform and the user, take into account the goals, habits and experience of the user in order to ensure the operation and control of the system (Baranseli, Kaya, & Şen, 2018, p.231). The user constantly focuses on the consumption of the content and consumes it continuously on a regular basis. The individual is drawn to a different world related with his own preferences. The transition from the current structure to a different structure takes place through the interface. The interfaces also open a communicative space for the system to direct the user experience and preferences. The user gets into a vicious circle. He is seemingly free, but he is directed in a limited and planned way. According to Todd Yellin, Netflix's vice president of product innovations, approximately eighty percent of what users watch on the site is not what people search for, but what Netflix recommends (Greene, 2016, p.5). Algorithmic processes actually have the potential to direct user preferences or tastes.

Netflix is able to control both the consumption style and consumption object of users who are lost in the narrative flow by clearly directed fictional series. The practice of 'binge watching' can be defined as the fast-paced consumption style in which users immerse themselves in the narrative for a long time (Zundel, 2019, p.196-218). The freedom provided by Netflix includes the intervention of algorithms and software processes, and users are shaped in this context. Netflix can be described as a technology that transforms traditional TV logic. We can say that algorithms and software processes have created an algorithmic culture that overcomes the barrier of time and place, classifies content and changes viewing practices and behaviors (Hallinan & Striphas, 2016, p.118-119). Algorithmic culture is a concept that rationalizes consumption culture. Studies on the transformative effect of Netflix on society show that Netflix produces a consumer cycle in terms of its features.

Technological developments created great changes in economic, political and cultural fields and has transformed the consumption culture. New areas of freedom and new markets have emerged, and a cultural space has been created where identities, values and habits are transformed (Guzel, 2007, p.177). Since the transfer of culture takes place through communication systems, the transformation experienced in communication systems also affected the culture (Castells, 2008, p.441). Daily life habits have transformed. Television develops the consumption society by motivating consumption with digital platforms. It does this by constantly changing cultural habits. Television is the most important mass media that motivates consumption. The fact that American and European TV series and films present their lifestyles to different societies through televisions is very effective (Hatipler, 2017, p.46).

After the 2000s, the boundaries between home and work life became blurred but with the opportunities provided by new screen-based platforms, home and work life have been completely intertwined and the distinction has disappeared. The most important result of this situation is that consumption completely takes over every moment of life culturally. Digital platforms such as Netflix have users consume the content they offer in line with predetermined plans, by providing the independence of time and place. Just like fast-food products, Netflix offers its users a content that is consumed quickly and gives a feeling of satiety (Aydın, 2019, p.1172). Digital platforms and new communication technologies create an environment where the individual can both socialize and perform cultural activities (Şaylan, 2002, p.153). Thus, the use of leisure time turns into a commodity. Netflix makes the user feel special by creating uniqueness in the consumption of the mass content it produces, and it does this through the game of models and personalization. But the feeling of individualization and freedom provided by Netflix is just an illusion, because mass production is complemented by mass consumption. While the concept of leisure time has left its place to fast free time with the development of communication technologies, "moment" has turned into the most precious commodity.

It can be said that Netflix is a digital consumption tool in the consumer society. As a matter of fact, it has a feature that is shaped by the strategy fed by the dynamics of the market. The target audience takes on a personalized form in micro markets and the contents are created according to this personalization. In this process, it is seen that the hierarchy between the classes has disappeared and the differences have faded. Netflix represents not only the disappearance of differences but also the unity of opposites as a whole that helps to rebuild reality on different representations with a surrealistic approach. The blending of the past,

present and future presents the notion of time in chronological ways. The concept of the subject, which the modern period values, is also decentralized. Production-consumption has been displaced, and production has been made to preserve its existence if there is consumption (Tanyeri & Mazıcı, 2021, p.852-853).

## CONCLUSION

Horkheimer and Adorno criticize modernity and capitalism in the culture industry. The culture industry ensures the reproduction of the system. It integrates people with the system in line with capitalism, thus it destroys the differences between people and makes them similar and open to remodeling. Mass media reproduce both culture and people in harmony with the system by constantly producing content. Television is the most effective mass communication tool in realizing this situation.

When the concept of Culture Industry emerged in the 1950s, television was seen as the continuation of the tradition started by telegraph and photography. The audience number was very high and television was an extremely effective in the conditions of that period. Television keeps people in front of the screen, presents the subjects it covers in an entertaining way and enjoys the people in this context. The broadcasting in the format of magazine programs becomes a leading strategy in the audience's life. The programs are formatted in such a way as to prioritize the entertainment that excludes thought and so people forget to think. Culture is integrated with entertainment rationally through the programs presented on television and the target audience as a consumer is also created.

After the 2000s, television has become different with the development of internet technologies and it has been functionally transformed and integrated with its user based on the developments in technology. The traditional television broadcasting mass has turned into a tool that targets the individual and realizes his/her desires. Production and distribution strategies through platforming and big data have transformed the television culture with the development of internet technologies, under the heading of progress. Netflix is an important example in terms of showing the transformation of television culture. Netflix provides individualization and mobility to its users as an OTT platform, as well as providing insight and uninterrupted viewing. The platform can be accessed from different devices such as PC, tablet, mobile phone with more than one account. But most importantly, it can present the contents compatible with its own taste structures by using artificial intelligence algorithms. The most

important reason for the separation of today's television understanding from the traditional television is the development of internet technologies. Big Data and the algorithms that make up the interfaces have integrated the TV and its user.

Television and its user of today got transformed and separated from the television and its audience of the 1950s. It has now become a much more dynamic and complex structure. The development of technology is the most important factor in this separation and transformation. Television of the 1950s has turned into an extremely complex structure with Internet technologies, Big Data, interfaces, algorithms and OTT platforms. Television shapes people's lives more and more implicitly. Today, it is not possible to think that television and its users are apart from each other. On the contrary, they are integrated to each other. What the technology brought us is the unification of television, message and its users. This unification is now at its peak when we compare the today's television with traditional television.

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