

Chapter 1

Transformation of Entertainment Culture throughout Society and History

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ABSTRACT

Since the Ancient Greek period when labor was underestimated and entertainment drew the line between slaves and masters, changes in society and entertainment have followed parallel routes. In 17th century, individual entertainment was freed from the rules of religion, art was materialized and gained a deceptive dimension for the audience. The mood of boredom, which is experienced by the individual whose basic needs are satisfied, is an important data for the culture industry. Needs that do not exist in reality are created by the professionals of different disciplines through extensive and complementary activities. The culture industry captures the individual who is trying to get rid of the effects of business in a freed and undefended conscious and guides him/her according to its own ideology. Thus, methods of entertainment play an important role in the creation of current relations of hegemony and a subtle camouflage of its logic of work. This is explored in this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

The transformations that the concept of entertainment faced throughout the history are also a significant indication of the changes in the community. In fact, the main problem is the way the reality is suppressed. The function of the art, sublimating the people, can be used as a material for the entertainment industry which is in service

of the continuation of the order, which is formed with a subtle game. A new sense of art, which looks as if it demonstrated a critical attitude within the emotional explosions that are jointed to the entertainment; but which rapidly blesses the condition of being un-mnemonic with the feature of being separated from its context, has been started to be adopted.

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Finally, the concept of entertainment began to be accepted as a mandatory activity and staying out of it came to be perceived as an oddity. In the late capitalism age, mixing work and play became the part of business relations. The important role of codes that constitute the collective unconscious in effectuating the basic operating principles of communication has been mentioned throughout history in the works of theorists and applications of practitioners. It is of vital importance to reconsider what these mechanisms are that guide the individual's quest for an identity, who strive to exist in life which encounters attempts of interpretation in an integrated universe of messages. The fact that the social function of medieval carnivals can be observed in virtualized entertainment practices of today's technological context is an example to this notion. Even though it changes forms upon reconsideration throughout history, the unchanged concepts must be detected in the changed phenomena and a discussion must be held on their function.

BACKGROUND

It is quite natural for individuals to need entertainment in order to get over the wearing and monotonous impacts of business life, and rejuvenate themselves. In fact, the implementation of mandatory vacations is secured by law (Mackenzie, 1987, p. 24). Considering entertainment as a necessity is accompanied by the notion that this need must be satisfied. In this context, is it possible to claim that the notion of 'leisure time' is based on a deception that rests on the pre-acceptance of society?

Concepts of leisure time and spare time are occasionally used in place of each other; but if an activity is not the individual's free choice, it cannot be defined as a spare time activity. An area that is open to manipulation cannot have an egalitarian and free quality (Aydoğan, 2000, pp. 20-21). It would be more accurate to approach leisure time in terms of providing continuity and

increasing the power of capitalist system rather than the individual alone (Aytaç, 1994, p. 344). Leisure time is a realm outside working hours in which the individual can distance himself from the responsibilities in real life. In this realm, the individual attempts to provide harmony and peace in his inner world and ensure integration with society.

The culture industry does not take the risk of leaving the time outside working hours to the free use of the individual. According to Horkheimer (2005, pp. 487-488), the time outside of working hours is an extension of working. The individual's position as dependent on power is reinforced by building the unconscious within leisure time (Oktay, 1987, p. 13). The fantasia created by entertainment industry acts as an illusion for the individual to endure real life (Oskay, 2000b, p. 97).

The fact that leisure time has become consumption-oriented and entered into the service of consumption economy is, without a doubt, likely to neutralize the efforts of optimistic leisure policymakers who wish to deploy leisure time as the rehabilitation base of individual and social pathologies. Because, leisure time which is approached by the individual to escape the pressure of real life causing stress, anxiety, depression, etc. will aggravate this anxiety altogether instead of eliminating it within this frame. In that context, leisure time and its style of designation incorporates a false consciousness and it serves for nothing but entrapping the individual and deceiving him for money, time, and attention/curiosity (Creekmore, 1994, p. 61; Aytaç, 2006, p. 48).

We consider the concept of entertainment subject to this study as a leisure time activity that is open to the control of power rather than free time created by the free will of the individual. Rather than the individual's awareness of being under the control of power at any moment, it is more important to expose how the system generates individuals who have learned to deceive themselves with invisible ropes through means of pleasure.

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