

**Literature, Culture and Media**  
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**Lecture – 28**

**1. Culture Industry and Mass Deception**

**2. Walter Benjamin**

Welcome dear participants to the third module of the sixth week. In the previous module we had discussed about Adorno and Horkheimer views on contemporary culture particularly on the culture industry. In this current module we would continue with this discussion and would also extend on these critical approaches.

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- Culture industry allows the “freedom to choose what is always the same.”
- “Every visit to the cinema leaves me, against all my vigilance, stupider and worse”. — Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*
- Adorno's views on the non-graphic elements of films, which have had history/-ies, and social roles outside films (eg., music) helps us to understand the ideological operations of culture
- *Composing for the Films*, Hanns Eisler and Theodor W. Adorno, 1947



Adorno and Horkheimer have been critical of the sameness of the products of culture industry which is against their idea of authentic art, they say that culture industry allows only the freedom to choose what is always the same, it is interesting to refer to one of the statements by Adorno when he says and I quote, “every visit to the cinema leaves me against all my vigilance stupider and worse”. So, we find that Adorno's criticism of film as a product of the culture industry is not only limited to the production of the sound systems in a film but it goes beyond that. The film as such had been a product of the contemporary technological innovation but at the same time, there had been certain non-graphic elements which have also been used and built on in the movies and these nongraphic elements of films have had societal histories as well as clearly discernible and

explainable social roles outside the films, for example, music. And Adorno's views on these nongraphic elements of the films helps us to understand the ideological operations of culture which ultimately result in the cultivation of a particular type of an individuality. These views can be seen in a book with the title of *Composing for the Films* which has been co-authored by Hanns Eisler and Theodor Adorno and it was published in 1947.

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#### Adorno (and Horkheimer) on music and films

- Marked by sameness and formulaic
- Films: verisimilitude to blur the divide between reality and artifice
- Use of the aura of film stars
- Jazz and popular music-- predictable notes and chords
- Consumer is lulled into a sense of security through this predictability
- Everything is expected, tastes are pre-defined
- Consumed uncritically; suppress thought and cognition



As we have already seen, Adorno has been critical of the sameness and the formulaic presentation and production of products of the culture industry. He has said that though the films are capable to present certain closeness to the reality but they also blur the divide between the reality and the artifice and they use different resources for that. The technological resources are there but at the same time, the aura of the film stars, this stars system is also used to blind the people towards the reality of life.

He also says that the element of music is also used to produce this type of sameness in the ultimate production of the movies. He refers to the jazz and the popular music which do possess predictable notes and chords. The predictability of music and its soothing and calming effect on man and effect which dulls the mind and therefore soothes the mind can also be seen in the portrayal of George Orwell's, famous book *1984* in which he has depicted the dumping effect of the songs which are being continually played by the big brother over there.

So, consumer is lulled into a sense of security through the predictability of these notes, the predictability of these sounds and it is exactly the same aspect which has been delineated very sensitively by George Orwell in his novel *1984*. So Adorno says that everything in the movies is expected and the tastes are predefined, so there is no appeal to the criticality of the audience as far as the products of the culture industry are concerned. They consumed uncritically and therefore they suppress the cognition, the thought patterns of the viewers also.

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How the cultural industries turn rationality against itself

- Rhetoric of the Industry: Nothing is at stake because the cultural industries are “only entertainment”
- But it frustrates people’s actual needs and desires by promising without delivering
- Impairs any effort at critical distance from immediate gratification
- Quashes the less saleable, more demanding logic that lie beneath authentic art
- Produces only that which can be mass consumed
- Stereotyping; all popular culture simplifies and caricatures, death of originality



The cultural industries are capable of turning rationality against itself. The rhetoric of the culture industry is very clear because they say that there is nothing which is at stake because these industries are ultimately ‘only entertainment’. But Adorno is able to show how these entertainments are not simply entertainments at the superficial levels and how deeper meanings are taste to them. According to him, the culture industry and the entertainment which is provided by them, frustrates the actual needs and desires of the people and promises them false hopes without actually delivering these promises to them at any moment. It impairs any effort at critical distance from immediate gratification. So, Adorno was one of the very first critics to point out the harm which immediate gratification of the desire through the medium of art is there. And according to his; this immediate gratification of the desire in the context of the products of culture industry stunts the inquisitive faculty of the people.

It questions whatever is less saleable and therefore, the more demanding logic that lies behind authentic art is automatically frustrated. The culture industry produces only what can be consumed at a bigger level, at the level of the masses and therefore instead of the individual differences, it banks on a stereotyping things, a stereotyping products and therefore a stereotyping the desires for the mass production and the cultivation of false desires among the audience.

So, all popular culture according to Adorno simplifies and caricatures and therefore into a death of originality not only in the artistic products but also in the creative minds of the audience.

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### Culture Industry and Mass Deception

- The culture industry totalizes its audience.
- Exposes the audience to a permanently repetitive and yet unfulfilled promise: "The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises."
- The cycle of creating a desire and repeatedly frustrating this desire is at the core of the idea of culture industry as an instrument of mass deception.
- Culture industry is designed to deny or even prevent imagination, spontaneity and critical thinking.



It is because of these reasons that he has talked about culture as a way of deceiving the people, his idea of culture industry as a force of mass deception has had a significant impact on the Left wing understanding of political theories. According to him the culture industry totalises its audience and it exposes the audience to a permanently repetitive yet unfulfilled promise and I quote, "the culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers or what it perpetually promises".

So, it establishes a cycle of creating a desire in an artificial manner and also repeatedly frustrating this desire is at the core of the culture industry and therefore this industry is a tool of mass deception. So, culture industry is designed to deny or even prevent imagination is

spontaneity and critical thinking among the people and thereby it protects the interest of the capitalist.

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- Passive form of consumption and production.
- Culture industry methodically processes its audience: "Consumers appear as statistics on research organisation charts, and are divided by income groups into red, green, and blue areas; the technique is that used for any type of propaganda."
- Social subordination is the only imaginable mode of subjectivation, even on the side of production.
- Organized from above; no freedom.



Adorno has also written about the passive form of consumption and production and he says that the culture industry methodically processes its audience, consumers of the audience are not individual human beings to this industry but rather they are only numbers in a game of statistics, so they represent the consumers on the research organisation charts divided by various details according to their income groups into different areas. So, this is a technique which is used for any other type of propaganda. So by using this technique in a methodical manner, culture industry is able to process the audience and therefore it denies the benefit of any individuality to the audience. It results into a social subordination which is the only imaginable mode of subjectivation even on the side of production and this is organised from above.

So, since the capitalist forces are also organising the culture industry into a force of mass deception, Adorno feels that there is perhaps no freedom for the individual.

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- Unlike the theories of Benjamin or Brecht, no freedom in this striated model
- Apparatus of seduction
- Creates moods and emotions
- Both consumers and producers-- slaves of a totality and ideology.
- Shaped by an abstract system.
- As apparatuses they are cogs in a bigger apparatus; part of an institution called culture industry.
- Human subjects/employees beholden to institutions



Unlike the theories which have been presented in the same realm by Benjamin or Brecht, we find that in the model of Adorno, there is no freedom, rather this is a very striated model which has been presented by Adorno and Horkheimer. They have wanted the culture industry as an apparatus of seduction. According to them, it not only produces art products but it also creates moods and emotions among the audience by focusing on certain type of presentations through the art forms and also by creating artificial desires.

And it is not only the consumers, not only the audience who are the slaves of this totality or ideology but the producers themselves are like the cogs in a bigger apparatus, the producers also have been shaped by an abstract system, so the human subject or employees are beholden to institutions and they do not have any independence or freedom in any way.

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## Advertising and Culture Industry

- The assembly-line character of the culture industry: The synthetic, planned method of turning out its products (factory-like not only in the studio but, more or less, in the compilation of cheap biographies, pseudo-documentary novels, and hit songs) is very suited to advertising
- The important individual points, by becoming detachable, interchangeable, and even technically alienated from any connected meaning, lend themselves to ends external to the work. ("The Culture Industry")

Adorno has also talked about the advertising and has also said that the logic which he has presented for the culture industry is also applicable to the advertising field. And he particularly says that the assembly line character of the culture industry is also very most suited to advertising because of the synthetic and planned method of turning out a product. For example, it is a factory like production not only in the studio but also in the compilation of different types of pseudo-documentary novels, hit songs, the cheap biographies, the cheap serials, and the musicals etc., which are being designed by the culture industry at the level of mass production. The important individual points are made detachable, interchangeable and even technically alienated from any connected meaning which they perhaps had originally.

So they have been de-contextualised and therefore they are also being used particularly for the purpose of advertisement. So the method of culture industry, the method which they had adopted from the assembly line production of the contemporary industry is also very clearly discernible in the field of advertisement.

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## Advertising: Creating desire in order to sell products for maximizing profit

- Tool of manipulation
- Instrumental form of logic
- Information is disseminated for specific ends
- Ulterior motive: profit
- All about product placement (movies, songs, magazines)
- Ownership of products seen as a way to achieve success and happiness
- Creation of passive consumers
- Advertising works by creating demand where none exists
- Self-perpetuating logic of commodity fetishism



He also says that advertisements create desires among the people in order to sell their products, in order to maximise their profit. So advertisements are also tool of manipulation, they do not advertise the merits but they somehow focus on the creation of artificial desire among the people and therefore it is an information which is being disseminated for a specific end but this specific end is always the profit.

And profit is the ulterior motive which lies behind different facets of the culture industry, it may be the musicals, it may be the advertisements and it may be the production of movie or the writing of a novel etc. But we find that it is about the placement of a particular product in a particular context to maximise the profits. So somehow the desires are created among the audience which suggest to them that the ownership of a product is a way to achieve success and happiness.

And that if one owns a particular product, it would enhance the success, the happiness or a sense of achievement. So the desire is created among those consumers who are already passive and therefore, the advertisements create a demand where none should have existed originally. So the artificiality in the creation of desire for the purpose of a capitalist motive of earning profit is deplorable in the ideas of Adorno as well as Horkheimer.



So, in a way we can say that the self-perpetuating logic of commodity fetishism is behind these particular designs of the culture industry which have been critiqued by Adorno.

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### Homogenization and pseudo-individuality

- Proliferation of homogeneous products
- Only minor changes
- Innovations--minuscule changes
- Offsets the quantity v/s quality debate
- Something for everyone
- Illusion of choice through the dissemination of standardized and homogeneous products with slight differences



Adorno has also talked about homogenisation and pseudo-individuality of the products, he says that basically the products are duplicatable. There is always something for everyone and therefore there cannot be any genuine creativity because things are being produced at a very big level, they are being automated and therefore we find that there is a basic homogeneity in the products of the culture industry.

The changes which are visible to us are only minor changes, cosmetic changes and the illusion of choice is being given through the dissemination of a standardised and homogenised product with slight variations and differences and therefore, this also is a part of the culture industry and mass deception.

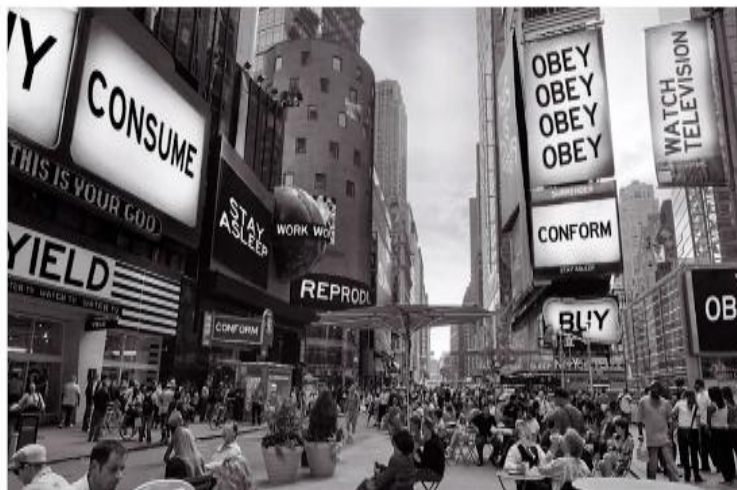
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- No real diversity--the monopoly market ensures that only big and powerful corporations survive
- Pseudo-individuality--each product is advertised as being unique; something that would appeal to an individual consumer
- Truth? A unique product that appeals to millions



There is no real diversity and the monopoly market ensures that only the big and the powerful corporations survive. An each product is advertised as being unique by them, however, we find that this is only a pseudo-individuality, something that would appeal to an individual consumer in the mass production means that a product is unique but it would also simultaneously appeal to millions.

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So, culture industry according to Adorno cultivates different types of mass deceptions and these contemporary pictorial presentation also conform a popular version of Adorno's statements.

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## Adorno—Culture Industry Reconsidered

- Discusses the concept of the culture industry and its applications in media
- According to Adorno, media content is adapted to mass consumption.
- Content is meant to appeal to the widest section of people
  - To achieve this, mass media combines forms of high and low culture, blurs boundaries
- Masses perceived as objects of calculation
  - Deludes the consumer into thinking that the media is adapted according to his needs. Produces this illusion to strengthen its influence and control over the masses
  - In actuality, masses simply receive the content that furthers the ruling ideology



So, Adorno in brief has discussed the concept of the culture industry and its applications in media also. Media according to him is also not independent anymore but then media content according to Adorno is adapted to mass consumption. Content is made to appeal to the widest section of the people and to achieve this, mass media has combined different forms of cultures. It is combined high and low culture and it is blurred the boundaries between the two.

So, masses are perceived as objects of calculation. The culture industry deludes the consumer into thinking that the media is adapted according to his needs and produces this illusion to strengthen its influence and control over the masses. In actuality, masses simply receive the content that furthers the ruling ideology, so culture industry also banks on the pliability of media as Adorno has commented.

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- Culture industry only interested in sustaining its affinity to capitalism-- source of its living.
- Media's power and impact, lack of neutrality and monopoly should not be taken lightly.
- Functions on the illusion of being informed and involved.
- Public dependent on media, thus effective criticism of the media is not easy. Source of pleasure, amusement, distraction and information
- Preserves its control by selling the illusion of "the good life" as reality. Culture industry propagates false values
- Demotes the value of culture. 'Happiness' and the dreams it sells are imaginary



Culture industry is interested only in sustaining its affinity to capitalism because the profit margins are the source of its living. So the impact and power of media has also been utilised by the culture industry and therefore the lack of neutrality in the media and the nexus with the capitalist monopoly should not be taken lightly. It functions on the illusion of being informed and involved but we find that people are dependent on the opinion of the media and therefore, the illusion of the freedom of the press or the freedom of the media does not allow the people normally to be critical of the people. On the other hand we find that the culture industry uses the media to disseminate a particular type of product either as a source of pleasure or as a source of amusement or it passes on a particular type of information to boost the sales.

In a way we find that culture industry propagates false values with the help of the media and preserves its control by selling the illusion of the good life as reality. These perceptions demote the value of authentic culture, happiness and the dreams of happiness which the culture industry sales through media are ultimately imaginary.

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American Dream—  
happiness, equality, prosperity  
This dream hides the actual relations  
of production in American society

"IF YOU WANT SOMETHIN', GO GET IT. PERIOD."  
— CHRIS GARDNER

"ONLY THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IS  
GUARANTEED. THE REST IS UP TO YOU."  
— DAVID F. FAGAN

www.DAVIDFAGAN.com

The American Dream which has been popularised in Adorno's time with the help of the media ultimately is void, it does not have any real foundation. Because it talks about happiness, equality and prosperity but this focus on American Dream hides the actual relations of production in American society and the disparity between the rich and the poor.

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What culture industry sells


This cartoon also suggests that the culture industry basically sells a particular dream. It prompts the people to work harder to earn money but to earn money in order to buy something the desire for which has been only artificially created and it pushes the people into a do loop in which the consumerism is directly linked with amusement, consumer is directly linked with one's definition of success also.

So, it is this type of a culture; the industrialisation of culture, the commodification of culture which has been critiqued by Adorno and Horkheimer.

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### Criticism of Adorno and Horkheimer

- **Elitist:** A/H defend modernism against mass culture
- **Ignorance of actual popular culture:** Adorno hated Jazz (element of bias); their refusal to recognize the political elements of pop culture; existence of various subculture (not exactly homogeneous)
- **Ignoring reception:** A/H think of the audience as an "adjunct to the machinery"
- **Simplification of the production of culture:**
  - Wholly rely on the monopolization argument; conveyor belt production system as the totalizing metaphor to talk about the culture industry
- **Overdetermination Argument:**
  - Does culture shape mindsets and attitudes to the extent that A/H seem to suggest?



The works of Adorno and Horkheimer have also come into a lot of criticism. People say that it is an elitist view because they have defended modernism against mass culture. Critics also feel that Adorno and Horkheimer have exhibited an ignorance of actual popular culture, they hated Jazz and they refused to recognise the political elements of pop culture which was also being commented on in the contemporary critical world. And they have also refused to recognise the existence of various subcultures simultaneously in any given society.

They have overlooked the fact that the culture cannot be exactly homogeneous. So they have ignored this particular aspect as well as they have ignored the reception and think that the audience is only adjunct to the machinery. So they have simplified the production of culture and wholly rely on the argument of the monopolisation, the conveyor belt production system image, which does not represent the full picture.

So there has been an over determination in their argument and to say that the culture shapes our mind set and attitudes to that extent which has been presented by Adorno and Horkheimer,



sometimes seems far-fetched. So the criticism of Adorno and Horkheimer also suggest the limitations as well as the overemphasis which is present in their ideas.

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### Walter Benjamin (1892-1940)

- A contemporary of Adorno; Frankfurt School; structured by their world-view, though condemned it
- In his opinion, the totalitarian and genocidal state was not merely a German problem. Saw it as a Western problem, rooted in the Enlightenment urge to dominate nature.
- With its salvo of propaganda and of controlled entertainment, Nazi Germany was seen as an “archetypally modern society.” Anti-Semitism was not merely a manifestation of hatred but a means to an end—a driving force for societal control.
- Therefore, the outcome of WW II, fell short of a final defeat of Fascism: the totalitarian mind prowled everywhere, and America could hardly escape it.



And other critic whose work is important for us in this context is Walter Benjamin. Walter Benjamin was also a contemporary of Adorno and he was also associated by the Frankfurt School. All these critics who were associated by Frankfurt School condemned the contemporary world view as we have already seen. But at the same time, their worldview was also structured by the contemporary affairs.

So, we cannot dissociate the feelings and the thoughts and the critical arguments of either Adorno or Walter Benjamin from the contemporary worldview. So Benjamin thought that the totalitarian and genocidal state was not merely a problem in Germany. He saw it has a western problem and felt that it was rooted in the enlightenment urged to dominate nature. Benjamin was also associated with the Frankfurt School and he had also tried to escape Germany and unable to escape these forces Benjamin had committed suicide.

So we find that there is a strange mixture of ideas and arguments in Walter Benjamin which puts him sometimes very close to Adorno but at the same time, sometimes very dissimilar to his thinking. He feels that with its slave of propaganda and controlled entertainment, Nazi Germany could be seen as ‘an archetypally modern society’.

Because he feels that the Anti-Semitism which is being practised by the Nazi Germany was not merely a manifestation of hatred towards a particular set of people but rather it had to be viewed as a means to an end. As a means to obtain a particular type of a decisive and driving force for societal control. And therefore, he felt that totalitarianism is not only a particular issue with the Nazi Germany but it is a western problem which is rooted in the enlightenment urge to dominate nature and have a control over it. And therefore he felt that the outcome of the Second World War which resulted in the defeat of the Nazi Germany was never fully satisfactory. He according to him, it fell short of a final defeat of a Fascism and the totalitarian mind prowled everywhere and the American culture was also not able to escape it absolutely.

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### Walter Benjamin: The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction

- In "The Work of Art In The Age of Mechanical Reproduction"(1936), Walter Benjamin discusses a shift in perception with the rise and development of film and photography.
- He argues that mechanical reproduction brought about a major change within humanity's entire mode of existence; the way we look and receive works of art
- Is human perception tied to historical changes?
- Does it change? If so, why and how?
- Benjamin notes something specific about the modern age.



Walter Benjamin's particularly known for his essay with the title, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* which was published in 1936. Benjamin discusses a shift in perception with the rise in development of film and photography, he has talked about mechanical reproduction as having brought a major change in the contemporary culture and he also says that the way people look and receive works of art has completely changed with the intervention of the technological development in the areas of film and photography.

He also feels that the human perception is tied to the historical changes and it changes over the passage of time, it cannot remain static. And therefore he has made some very interesting comments about the modern age and about the way, the popular art forms have to be perceived.

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- Draws attention to the effects of modernity on the work of art in particular.
- Development of Film and photography point to this movement.
- Loss of the aura through the mechanical reproduction of art itself.
- Aura--originality and authenticity of a work of art . An original painting has an aura while a photograph does not.
- Benjamin states that the traditional function of art was rooted in ritual and hence, art was associated with a cult value that promulgated the notion of aura that derived from the authenticity of the work of art.



He has drawn our attention to the effects of modernity on the work of art in particular. We have already discussed how Adorno looks at two types of art products. He looks at what he calls the culture industry and he contrasted with the genuine or authentic art forms of the earlier years. According to Benjamin, we find that the development of film and photography are not necessarily evil forms but then they have resulted into a loss of an aura through the mechanical reproduction. He says that an authentic and original work of art but this is a certain aura and original painting has an aura and original sculpture has an aura but a photograph of the same painting does not have it because it is only a mechanical reproduction. And since it is a mechanical reproduction without the aura which was possessed by the original painting for example, it also has become closer to the common man.

Benjamin states that the traditional function of art was rooted in ritual and therefore it was associated with the cult value and promulgated the notion of aura that derived from the authenticity of the work of art. But the effects of modernity have taken away this aura, the films the medium of films and the photographic representation of the art form have taken away this aura.

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- This privileged notion of authenticity (premised on the presence of the original) was responsible for preventing the closer scrutiny and criticism of art by the masses.
  - He argues that mechanical reproduction of art destroys any notion of authenticity and the 'aura' of art, and thus, frees up art from its traditional function as cult objects.
  - In freeing art from the domain of tradition Benjamin opines that mechanical reproduction allows art to be based on the practise of politics rather than ritual.



But this taking away of the aura is not necessarily a poor influence on the contemporary people. According to Benjamin the privileged notion of authenticity was also responsible for preventing the masses from a closer scrutiny of the art form or the criticism of a particular art. The aura is stopped them from approaching a particular art form in a very close manner. However, the mechanical reproduction in the film or in the medium of a photograph enables them to scrutinise an art form in a clear manner.

So, he argues that the mechanical reproduction of art destroys this notion of authenticity and the related aura and thus frees up art from its traditional function as a cult object only. In freeing art from the domain of tradition. We find that Benjamin thinks that mechanical reproduction allows art to be based on the practice of politics rather than ritual. So we find that this accessibility of an art form with the help of modern day technology is a particular way of looking at the art product which is very different from the viewpoint of Adorno and Horkheimer.

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- Thus, the “democratization” of art forms—as they become available and accessible to a greater number of people—is at the heart of the revolutionary potential of an art forms like film.
  - Mass mobilization, as well as, therapeutic roles; Walt Disney’s early Mickey Mouse Cartoons
- Raise political questions in regards to the reproducible image which can be used in one way or another. Chaplin
- In this new age of mechanical reproduction, nature of film and contemplation of the screen is quite different
- The individual no longer contemplates the film per se; the film contemplates him.



According to Benjamin, we find that the democratisation of art forms as they become easily available to the greater number of people lies at the heart of the revolutionary potential of an art form, particularly, an art form like film which can also be viewed easily by the people. So it promotes the revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art and mass mobilisation as well as the democratisation of an art form also has certain therapeutic roles. It also has the capability to pass on a particular masses to the people in a revolutionary fashion. And he refers to the early Mickey Mouse cartoons or Walt Disney, he has also raised political questions in regard to the reproducible image which can be used in one way or other. He is also referred to some early Charlie Chaplin movies for their content and the capability of generating a particular sentiment among the people.

So, in this new age of mechanical reproduction, nature of film and contemplation of the screen is very different and he says that it is not the individual who contemplates the film per se; rather the film contemplates the individual.

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- Film brings a change in the structure and mode of perception.
- The camera both replicates and departs from the function of human eye.
- Sudden scene changes, close-ups, camera movements, slow motion  
--widen perception.
- The film produces an experience of shock--bombardment of visual stimuli
- But filmic devices can also contain this initial moment of shock!
- Effect a mode of viewing that instills a sense of heightened attention.
- His assessment of the effects of mechanical reproduction is thus optimistic.



Film brings a change in the structure and in the mode of perception and the camera both replicates and departs from the function of human eye. So through this medium, sudden scene changes can be presented, close ups can be presented with the help of different camera movements, slow motions etc. A particular type of perception of a scenario of an emotion of an art form etc., can be presented before the people. And therefore, it is very different from the function of the human eye. So the film according to him produces an experience of shock. It is a bombardment of visual stimuli and filmic devices can therefore also contain this initial moment of shock. They also effect a mode of viewing that instils a sense of heightened attention and which can be used in different ways. So, we find that his assessment of the effects of mechanical reproduction of the art form is relatively optimistic.

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- Benjamin attempted to reconcile materialist and theological concerns; Marxist tradition of social critique and the Jewish mystic tradition that he was drawn to under the influence of his friend Gershom Scholem, a Jewish historian. It gave a sense of hope in his critique, which was foreign to Adorno and Horkheimer
- Benjamin's comment recalling the sumptuousness of his family, however, gives a clearer picture of his inclination, as recorded by Eiland and Jennings in their biography of Adorno and Benjamin:
  - "As I gazed at the long, long rows of coffee spoons and knife rests, fruit knives and oyster forks, my pleasure in this abundance was tinged with anxiety, lest the guests we had invited would turn out to be identical to one another, like our cutlery."



It is very different from the assessment of the culture industry as presented by Adorno. Benjamin has attempted to reconcile materialist and theological concerns. As I had said earlier; these critics associated with the Frankfurt School were not absolutely dissociated from their own worldview. So, in Benjamin's work we find that there is a strange mingling of the Marxist tradition of social critique and the Jewish mystic tradition that he was drawn to under the influence of his friend Gershom Scholem who was a Jewish historian.

And it is this mingling which has given a sense of hope in his criticism of the contemporary culture, a sense of hope which is very foreign to either Adorno or Horkheimer, however despite his sense of optimism, we find that his inclination is very close to that of Adorno. And his comment recalling the sumptuousness of his family which has been recorded by Eiland and Jennings is in the recent biography of Adorno and Benjamin several volumes proves.

Benjamin belong to a well to do family and this early recollection of his life suggests how closely he was looking at different issues. So we find that Benjamin used to critically look at these concepts of ideology and identity formation as closely as Adorno did.

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- Benjamin's reflections on film/technological reproduction as an emancipatory force alongside the masses/proletariat, collective nature of such transformation
- Adorno insists on the negotiation of collective experience by the individual
- Age of global and digital proliferation of images and sounds, but the issue of organization and politics of sensory perception is still important
- As the homogenization of culture progresses, and the control of technology mapping our movements enhances, such voices confirm that identity is formed by what surrounds us, in short, by our culture.




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Benjamin's reflections on film, technological reproduction as an emancipatory force alongside the proletariat collective nature of such transformation are different from the views of Adorno. Unlike Benjamin we find that Adorno insists on the negotiation of collective experience by the individual whereas Benjamin had focused on the collective nature of such transformation. However that we find that in our age of global and digital proliferation of images and sounds, the issue of organisation and politics of sensory perception is still important.

And therefore, the issues which have been put forward by these critics associated with the Frankfurt School related with ideology, the processing and formation of individuality and identity are still very valid, as a homogenisation of culture progresses in our day and the control of technology maps out our movements continuously incessantly, such voices confirm that identity is formed by what surrounds us.

In short our identity is formed by our culture, and it is this discussion which we would continue further in the rest of the modules of this week and we would look at certain literary productions to go deeper into this idea, thank you.