

functioning of the media importantly reflects a collective historical experience of which the media as agents and mediators of “truth” themselves play a part.

All culture of today is mass culture or, we may say, there is not one culture unaffected by mass culture. Probably the first author, who indicated this fact in a decisive, definite, clear and condensed manner, was Walter Benjamin, whose surprisingly short essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* made a serious and lasting impact more than twenty years after it was first published. “The name of Walter Benjamin, the omnipresent godfather, divided between the mysticism and technology (but very prudent not to mix the first with the other) is imposed by itself: *The Work of Art...* (1936) is one of our classics” (Debray, 1994: p. 130). In his dialectical mind Benjamin really only uncovers the ambiguous potential created by mass culture, and the question of whether or not the outcome will be social emancipation, points towards politics. The sentence at the end of the essay, that confronts fascism and communism in regard to mass culture, is more than just a slogan stating that fascism is rendering politics aesthetical and that “communism responds by politicising art”. The underlying assumptions, which help a bit to explain this programmatic exclamation, are presented in the endnote 12, where Benjamin claims that a change in the method of exhibition “applies to politics as well”. If we read this endnote in view of its anticipatory dimension, we should comprehend it as a description of the televised world, before there was any television. Yes, everybody sees that the print, photography, cinema and so-forth are the result of an intellectual (or the aesthetic) endeavour, but at the same time they are the products of machinery, the products of the process of mechanical reproduction, and everybody feels that the possibility to bring close to public many works of art from secluded places, means a change in a way. But in what way? This is the question, which “just anybody” could not feel important to answer. Copies of the portrait of Mona Lisa suddenly became accessible and could decorate a wall in any home, no matter how humble, great novels of French realism are accessible in cheap editions, etc., so what? This is the point, where Benjamin’s intervention proved to be fruitful. Simple as his discovery may seem (though in the final analysis it is not so simple at all), it happened as a finally uttered knowledge of the fact, which had been repressed by the dominant “class culture.” In addition, probably it is not just a coincidence that Benjamin named this “fact” vaguely the *aura*, which as a notion gets its meaning through the process of disappearing. The *aura* is,