

nomena that happens to be the object of it, is the environment within which we happen to live. Therefore, an “external” position, somehow similar to a position of an anthropologist researching a closed culture of a remote tribe, is practically impossible. “Value-free” judgements are then consequently almost unfeasible since most judgements are expressed in aesthetic, moral or ideological categories. Any attempt to “describe” the phenomena means taking a stand, whether we want it to or not. In addition, no matter how sophisticated it may be, such an attempt is a discursive investment into a vast context of culture, which is in most cases marked by signifiers in a culture’s representations. Therefore, all culture of today is mass culture or 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).

Contours of Benjamin’s Concept of Mass Culture

Walter Benjamin, in his presentation of mass culture, as we can decipher it from the above-mentioned essay, sought to reveal mass culture’s mechanisms. He pointed out its economic and historic profile from within the perception of already existing structural transformations, which had decisively modified aesthetic elements contained within it. Before Benjamin’s discourse unfolds, he states that his intention was based on Marx’s theory of interdependence between the economic substructure and the superstructure, which contains “prognostic requirements” concerning the abolition of capitalism. However, Benjamin’s Marxism was quite an unorthodox variance, which later on happened to be named “Gothic Marxism” (Cohen, 1993: p. 18). This is manifested in a nuance of Benjamin’s articulation of the interdependence of substructure and superstructure: “The transformation of the superstructure, which takes place far more slowly than that of substructure, has taken more than half a century to manifest in all areas of culture the change in the condition of production. Only today can it be indicated what form this has taken” (Benjamin, 1969: p. 218). Contrary to what an orthodox Marxist outlook of the time would have advocated, the epistemological turn (which becomes ever more apparent through his