

elaboration in the essay) is visible in Benjamin's positioning of culture as an explanatory "representational" complex. The culture, which is marked by "mechanical reproduction", represents a society in which the scheme of dependence of the superstructure on the substructure loses its explanatory power – thus the scheme becomes blurred and implicitly obsolete within the subtext of Benjamin's essay. Benjamin did not assume transparent totality of mass culture; he rather determined its particular elements and made an effort to analyse the means of production and distribution, which he selected to demonstrate the emancipatory effect of mass culture on its participants. He makes mass culture legible by imbuing the concept with the notion of the "mass as a matrix" (Benjamin, 1969: p. 239).

If, as Benjamin had written, the very notion of art becomes thoroughly changed by the process of mechanical reproduction, then we should presume that the world, being mirrored, expressed, articulated... in such an art, has somehow been transmuted. Although the Berger and Luckman's notion of "the social construction of reality" (Berger, Luckman, 1991) had yet had to be conceived, we can take Benjamin's analysis as basically containing the same meaning. After all, we are talking about a relatively short piece of writing, an insightful glimpse of a genius, and yet, we are talking about quite a schematic hypothesis, which is truly rather open in its meaning. Benjamin has not stated a very clear idea on how the change in the modes of production of art has really affected "the world" of economy, law and politics; his intention seems to be more so the other way around. True, he does not omit the question and he alludes to some clues concerning changes in perception, which is indicated by the "distracted" manner in which mass audiences absorb art.

What Benjamin valued as a potential "emancipatory effect" of the mass culture, meant something quite opposite for Adorno (and Horkheimer): "The cult of celebrities has built-in social mechanisms to level down everyone who stands out in any way" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972: p. 236). As much as Adorno and Horkheimer especially at the time of *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* still adhered to Marxist ideas, they, in a final analysis, actually nevertheless advocated a position of "bourgeois subjectivity". Their ideal of an individual in a sense corresponded to a "highbrow" representation of a sensitive art lover who gets absorbed by the work of art.

Certainly, it can be proven that the essay *The work of art...* occupies a special place within the context of fragmented entirety of Benjamin's work. As much as the essay obviously is not in accordance with Adorno's views,