

it is not congruent as well with, to say the least, Benjamin's style and approach in most of the rest of his writings on the aesthetic phenomena of his time. It clearly belongs to historical determinations, which instigated Benjamin's strong criticism of the idea of the so-called autonomous work of art. Such a posture could well be understood within the logic of the text itself, which seeks to define artistic production as a kind of "material force", hence as an agency of emancipation – not only as a product of a solitary intellectual effort (which an autonomous work of art is usually socially expected to be), but as a consciousness and the Freudian unconscious creating force.

### *Beyond Mechanical Reproduction*

Strictly speaking, the emancipation is at first the emancipation of "the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility" (Benjamin, 1969: p. 224). It is this "reproducibility" that makes masses able to participate in culture, and so bringing to them a kind of emancipation, no matter how much of philosophical indignation this "emancipation" provokes as in the case of Adorno. Later on the rapid development of technology transcended Benjamin's imagination at this point. We could say that instead of the "abolition of capitalism", new developments rather brought further expansion of the "reproducibility" still within the framework of capitalism, which ultimately prevailed over the few decades of some contorted attempts to establish communism in a number of countries. The "prognostic requirements" only vaguely project a changed and emancipated society, which has been far from being certain in the wake of fascism. Taking into account that Benjamin's essay is only a fragmentary text, we may not seek definite answers in it. Its huge importance emanates rather from the specific discursive position in which Benjamin stands almost alone against his philosophical foes and friends as well. Therefore, his essay remains a paradigmatic text for all of those who repudiate to succumb to an intellectual pessimism and desperation facing the "disreputable forms" of mass culture, which are as such recognised by Benjamin as well. His analysis actually does not suppose at all that mechanical reproduction brings an all-comprising emancipation automatically. 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 con-