

means a similarity as well. Nevertheless, when we talk about such practical general aspects concerning rather unproblematic and simple aspects of the question of the form, we should not forget Walter Benjamin and his intervention in the field of the aesthetic discourse.

Change in the Mode of Participation

“The mass is a matrix from which all traditional behaviour toward works of art issues today in a new form. Quantity has been transmuted into quality. The greatly increased mass of participants has produced a change in the mode of participation. The fact that the new mode of participation first appeared in a disreputable form must not confuse the spectator”. (Benjamin, 1969: p. 239). Now our simple examples do not look so simple. This much known text by Benjamin, no doubt quite apprehensible within the framework of its argumentation, brings a certain aspect, concerning a border between objects deemed aesthetic and objects we usually just call “things”. If, as Benjamin said, the very notion of art is thoroughly changed by the process of the mechanical reproduction, then we should presume that the world, being mirrored, expressed and articulated in such art, was somehow changed. Maybe we can risk an assumption that this meaning is understood with Benjamin’s insight. Before his discourse unfolds, Benjamin makes it clear that his starting point was Marx’s theory containing “prognostic value” concerning the abolition of capitalism. Although Benjamin himself held this starting point as a theoretical bases of his analysis of the changes of the cultural bias, brought by the development of the capitalist mode of production, it has been soon identified by his distinguished reader – namely Adorno – as the “undialectical side” of his approach. As it is precisely reported in Richard Wollin’s book on Benjamin, Adorno’s criticism has been aimed at all the weakest points in Benjamin’s text,² which is not to say that Adorno grasped the full meaning of the article which could be comprehended only a few decades later. Alternatively, in another words, Adorno was most probably concerned with the aesthetic problems, on which he shared a common interest with Benjamin. Moreover,

- 2 “Dialectical though your essay may be” – writes Adorno to Benjamin – “it is not so in the case of the autonomous work of art itself; it disregards an elementary experience which becomes more evident to me every day in my own musical experience – that precisely the uttermost consistency in the pursuit of the technical laws of autonomous art changes this art and instead of rendering it taboo or fetish, brings it close to the state of freedom, of something that can be consciously produced and made” Cf. cit., Wollin (1982: p. 191).