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**„THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION“
AFTER NINETY YEARS. AN ESSAY**

Abstract: The purpose of this essay is a reassessment of a problem posed almost 90 years ago, but which marked the modernism and postmodernism of the 20th and later the 21st centuries and which is still current. The aesthetic and historical research was carried out mainly through the prism of the art installation, the main element of my PhD thesis. This essay includes a critique of Walter Benjamin's Marxist approach – in the system versus outside the system and the attempt of finding explanations of sociological and cultural phenomena under an ideological paradigm. The approach through the prism of Marxist ideology I consider it narrows the perspective of the problem addressed in „The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”². The dissemination of art through mechanical reproduction actually follows a law of the market and which, applied in the cultural field, involves increasing the target group and decreasing the level of value. Its implementation had produced a cultural mutation. The exception is made by cinematography, which appeared and evolved precisely from the modality of mechanical reproduction. The avant-garde promotes a destructuring tendency by challenging old artistic forms. This tendency of exceeding the limits was consonant with the atmosphere of radicalism and intolerance present in the interwar society, it led to the emergence and antagonism of ideological systems, culminating in the outbreak of the Second World War. The idea of mechanical reproduction of the work of art began simultaneously with the culture of mass production. The mechanical reproduction of the work of art later turned into digital reproduction, with a much increased degree of accessibility, and the mutual mirroring between the mode of production and culture was to rise to another level, that of artificial intelligence.

Keywords: mechanical reproduction, Walter Benjamin, aesthetic analysis, cinematography, art installation

Introduction

At a distance of almost 90 years since the publication of Walter Benjamin's essay, to which we refer, we believe that we have a number of advantages in its assessment. First of all, the issues are no longer under debate, but history has validated their conformity or error. On the other hand, time has given them the historical opportunity for ideas to have produced effects, so that now we evaluate the ideas more soundly, in the terms of their effects. At the same time, they had the possibility (unlike the time in which they were issued) to relate historically to the natural laws, present everywhere, both in the tangible Nature and also in the conceptual area. Thus we consider that the present gives us the historical advantage of the position of a planet in the 'Goldilocks Zone' i.e. not too far from the star of the solar

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² *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility* de pe site-ul <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/pdf/europe/walter-benjamin/benjamin-1936.pdf>

system, from the truth, so that we are in a “cold of oblivion” and not too close, so that all ideas are in an “excessive temperature of debate”.

Walter Benjamin uses the patterns of ideology so he mentions: ‘Since, moreover, individuals are tempted to avoid such tasks, art will tackle the most difficult and most important ones where it is able to mobilize the masses. Today it does so in the film’. Walter Benjamin introduces the pattern of the social approach, at the level of the masses, when humanity itself became a mass and the individual became microscopic and insignificant. He poses the problem that art will mobilize the masses. History has proven that in any modern society, dictatorial (ideological) or not, art does not mobilize the masses, but only attracts a niche audience, knowledgeable or amateur. He sees film as art. Yes, there is art film. But the history of culture has proven that it is not art but entertainment that manages to attract a large number of people (at the concerts of a successful pop band, up to 70,000 people, etc.) In contemporaneity, art also managed similar performances, however for example, in 2010, Marina Abramović³ in her retrospective exhibition ‘The Artist is Present’, managed to attract 750,000 visitors⁴, during the three months (Mar 14 – May 31) especially through her experimental performance in which she was at table, face to face with some of them, one or two minutes, for eight hours, for the duration of the exhibition.

Calculated during one year, 2022–2023, MoMA had a number of 2,700,000 visitors. Museums also become tourist attractions, like the Louvre Museum with an average of 9,000,000 visitors⁵ every year, etc. Even in the presence of these spectacular figures, rather of tourist flow than of the attraction exerted by art, it does not mobilize the masses in the terms desired by Walter Benjamin.

By introducing the method of mechanical reproduction, the aesthetic level of the beauty-carrying object lowers. The dissemination of art through mechanical reproduction actually follows a law of the market and which, applied in the cultural field, involves increasing the target group and decreasing the level of artistic value, according to the Gauss Bell curve. The implementation of mechanical reproduction produced a cultural mutation. The exception is made by cinematography, which appeared and evolved precisely from the modality of mechanical reproduction. The Avant-garde promotes a destructuring tendency by challenging old artistic forms and the cinema penetrates and analyzes reality just as psychoanalysis goes beyond the limits of the conscious, analyzing the subconscious. The tendency of pushing the limits was consonant with the atmosphere of radicalism and intolerance present in the interwar society. This led to the emergence and antagonism of ideological systems, culminating in the outbreak of the Second World War. The idea of mechanical reproduction of the work of art began simultaneously with the culture of mass production. Mechanical reproduction later transformed into digital reproduction, with a much increased degree of accessibility, and the mutual mirroring between the mode of production and culture, was to rise to another level, that of the artificial intelligence.

In conclusion, let’s not forget that the phenomenon of reproduction has a natural form, that is when a plant reproduces through its seeds, with the rhythm of the seasons, and this process preserves its characteristic of sacredness and uniqueness because life itself is the one that reproduces itself continuously. The human invented the mass production that is the reproduction of objects, and applied at the cultural level, is, in principle, desacralizing.

About the perception of the work of art

We will begin the aesthetic reasoning by invoking a phenomenon that manifests itself in both the material and the spiritual dimension. Namely, that large cosmic masses, through the exerted gravity, deform the rectilinear trajectory of light. The phenomenon stated theoretically by Einstein in 1915, through the General Theory of Relativity and had been proven by measurements in 1919 by the astronomer and physicist Sir Arthur Eddington. Translated into the spiritual dimension, this phenomenon is manifested by

³ *Former lovers Meet for first time in over 20 years. Marina Abramovic and Ulay* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRMp7_xV9AY

⁴ <https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-72/7-2-review-essays/marina-abramovis-time-the-artist-is-present-at-the-museum-of-modern-art.html>

⁵ *Louvre Museum Tourism Statistics* <https://roadgenius.com/statistics/tourism/france/louvre-museum/>

the modification of the trajectory of a correct logic, assimilated with the rectilinear trajectory of light, by the ideological “masses” so that it corresponds to the associated ideological logic respectively. The phenomenon is otherwise typical of the human being and we can identify it starting from self-justifications in small situations, up to the religious faith that gave birth, for example in Christianity, to a multitude of churches, sects and religious organizations. The gravitational force of Marxism also deforms, along with other ideological gravitational forces, logic, reality, history. And also the Art, as Walter Benjamin argues, which is also part of the elements whose meaning can be distorted, depending on the historical period of perception. Thus, one of the fundamental landmarks of our orientation in the spatio-temporality and logic is removed, namely beauty - the aesthetic principle that governs sensory perception, logic, idea, principle and concept alike. The individuality of perception is subjected to an Avant-garde experiment that exceeds its limits and that deforms it beyond the limits of its own freedom of interpretation.

If we analyze the social ensemble from the point of view of an aesthetic, or better said, from the point of view of a harmony, we notice – just like in a work of art – that the modification of an element of the ensemble modifies the entire harmonic image of the whole. Thus, Benjamin argues, for example, that changing the mode of production, for example, changes artistic perception. Walter Benjamin launches “in the historical present” of his analysis the problem of art in the conditions of changing society, according to the criterion of the mode of production. Just as in the situation of any artistic composition, any element present modifies the image of the whole. It either harmonizes it or unbalances it. Changing the way of production will (somehow) change the image and existence of societies. On the other hand, the impact of the cultural paradigm change, which usually creates a shock wave in society, must also be taken into account. The impact would not be mitigated by the flow of the functioning of societies but would produce a cultural mutation, whose shape and subsequent impact no one could foresee.

The cultural mutation was implemented by adjusting the notions, by the disappearance of some of them, by introducing some false values, phenomena and disseminating some logics of contradiction in terms, which would block the flow of thought. Again, the Avant-garde introduced *exceeding the limits* as normality.

To explain this continuous game of changing notions we invoke the theory of simulation, and the notion of hyperreality by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007). The notion of reality, being more extensive than its social meaning – and also valid in the area of abstraction as in the world perceptible through the senses - can be substituted by an illusion. And not infrequently through a false, mystified notion, but socially accepted as such. Basically we are dealing with a simulation of the initial notion through a state of hyperreality. Perhaps the closest example is the comparison with the dream with an intense sensation of reality but which in the end it remains a dream. Thus, Jean Baudrillard introduces the phrase “copies without original”. And without benchmarks to rely on we can accept such a mystified reality. Mechanical reproductions of works of art lose the attribute of uniqueness, and are spread in society. The viewer does not have access to the work of art that generated the reproduction, and the copy remains the only link accessible between the viewer and the original, which for the viewer who does not have access to the original, it becomes a fiction. Thus the copy remains *without the original*.

The way in which Walter Benjamin distorts the meaning of art is that he proposes its desacralization and its transformation into a consumer product, accessible to a mass culture. We observe how through desacralization the reference points are removed, so that the copy, and its viewer, remain in a flow of relativity.

On the other hand, an ideology and implicitly, a dictatorship (a fact that Walter Benjamin probably did not know in the still idealized beginnings of communism), could not leave landmark elements in its system because they which would germinate logically and would lead to awareness of its illegitimacy. That is why a dictatorship fervently exercises censorship, prohibition, punishment for reasons of opinion, etc. Thus cultural regulation becomes a sensitive priority. And for the fact that normality always finds an outlet, to survive, the struggle of the dictatorship is continuous. And that’s why some leaders-dictators called themselves, quite rightly, „revolutionaries by profession”.

When Walter Benjamin states ‘brush aside a number of outmoded concepts, such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery’ it is a signal that he is giving up the very elements that confer *sacredness*. Manipulation, as always, also has a grain of truth, and a mystified notion is always conveyed with the paradigm in which to perceive it. Why is Benjamin against the notion of eternal value? What does it mean *the eternal value of art*? Where would the notion of eternal value take us, since Benjamin wants to remove it?... And what does the mystery mean? (it can also be read as miracle). By opening up to an apparent populism, art is judged with the criteria of democracy, where all opinions are valid. And genius, a notion difficult to explain by atheistic means, is also removed from our equation. On the other hand he wants to integrate art into the present conditions of production. Aesthetic principles cannot change, with each revolution and with the new value criteria the revolutions impose, often by coercion. In this case, the criterion in question is the mode of production. Continuing the reasoning in extremis, the works of Homer, Praxiteles, Aristophanes, Virgil, Ovidius, etc., will not have been valid because when the artists created them, the mode of production was that of slaves. And the works of new artists contemporary with mass industrial production are aesthetically valid because the factories were working. But it is well known the Avant-garde allows excesses.

Walter Benjamin says that „liberating” art from the realm of elites and distributing it to the masses has a cathartic effect. Which is by far a statement from the register of ideology. Aesthetics seems to be confused here, knowingly, with the euphoria of the success of a political action. As later, artistic emotion will be replaced by emotional shock. Moreover, this „democratization” of art is associated with the associated logic, through which we can perceive the statement, namely, „For the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual.”, It is not about emancipation but the desacralization.

About cinematography

Cu privire la film și fotografie, Walter Benjamin afirmă: ‘The criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total social function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it is based on another practice – politics.’ Ca mod de manifestare, filmul substituie comunicarea dintre opera de artă (poezie, roman, pictură, sculptură, etc.) printr-un discurs unidirecțional, de tip sectar, prin care creierul este bombardat cu imagini, la nivel elementar, întocmai ca un flux continuu de radiații și astfel, nu mai are timp să reacționeze interactiv. O poate face însă, prin îngăduința și ghidarea regizorului, care propune totodată ritmul și modalitatea de dialog. Creierul privitorului este bombardat vizual, este cucerit, și acceptă imaginile alături de punga de popcorn și paharul de coca-cola. Totuși, după cum bacteriile devin rezistente la antibiotice, faptul că la apariția fenomenului cinematografic, percepția a fost supusă unui șoc cultural, ea s-a adaptat acestei noi forme estetice. Aflate într-o triplă legătură simbiotică, cu creatorul a cărei formă de expresie devenise, cu forma estetică și cu tehnologia, capodoperele cinematografice stau alături celelate mari opere, în Panteonul culturii umanității.

Regarding film and photography, Walter Benjamin states: ‘The criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total social function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it is based on another practice – politics.’ As a way of manifestation, the film substitutes the communication between the work of art (poetry, novel, painting, sculpture, etc.) through a unidirectional discourse, whereby the brain is bombarded with images, at an elementary level, just like a continuous stream of radiation, and thus, it has no time to react interactively. He can do it, however, with the permission and guidance of the director, who also proposes the rhythm and manner of dialogue. The viewer’s brain is visually bombarded, conquered, and accepts the images alongside the bag of popcorn and the glass of coke. However, as bacteria become resistant to antibiotics, the fact that with the emergence of the cinema phenomenon, the perception of the viewer was subjected to a cultural shock, it adapted to this new aesthetic form. Being in a triple symbiotic relationship, with the creator whose form of expression it has become, with aesthetic form and with technology, cinematic masterpieces stand alongside the other great works in the Pantheon of human culture.

Let us not forget that the foundation of art, regardless of its form, is the inspiration, which is revelation and which implicitly *has a divine parentage*. By replacing it with politics, we damage the very *raison d'être* of art and turn it into a tool of propaganda, which indeed has a political lineage.

Walter Benjamin, intentionally or not, sees art as an object of a political puzzle and believes that it will undergo mutations depending on *the mode of production*. It is partly true, but it is not Art that undergoes mutations but the way in which we are socially educated to look at art. And then art will take the form of our paradigm. Following a political logic, and this fact of changing the basic notion with a simulation, according to Baudrillard's theory, after a few iterative steps the notion of art can even disappear. And one of the indications of this possible process was noticed by an artist, namely the Chilean poet and installation artist *Cecilia Vicuña*, who talks about the extermination of some *species of understanding*⁶ (along with the extermination of the species of the plants and animals). From a political point of view, Walter Benjamin proposes a precedent associated with an ideology, and a Revolution (which took place 18 years before)⁷.

Walter Benjamin admits that through mechanical reproduction, the work of art loses its aura, that uniqueness of the original, and of its ineffable connection with the other dimensions of Creation. However, the first scientific step towards dimensional perception was made with the transition from Newtonian to quantum physics. The two worlds, the two forms of Nature's manifestation, have extremely different appearances, and the aura is an element of connection between them and always makes us want to look beyond. All the more so because the natural form, in which reality appears to us, is the one which contains the aura. If that connection between dimensions disappears, we remain mentally, prisoners of the representation of the space of physical being.

The notion of ideology, in that ideology *addresses the masses*, is a cultural form derived from *the mass mode of production*. The paradigm of the beginning of the 20th century is the mass one. The industrial, technological almighty created a paradigm through which social problems were addressed at *the level of the masses*. Ideologies *address the masses*, the First World War involved large masses of people, on both belligerent sides. In its sequel, World War II. The very notion of socialism, as a social order, also comes from *the culture of mass production*.

Later, Marcel Duchamp and later, Joseph Beuys were two of the artists who deflected the impact of the desacralization of art, with statements like: 'Everyone is an artist' (Beuys) and 'Anything is art if an artist say it is' (Duchamp). Later, experiments were made in cinematography, with non-professional actors in the main roles (the classic example, 'Ladri di biciclette' ('Bicycle Thieves'), 1948, directed by Vittorio de Sica, with Lamberto Maggiorani in the main role) up to the advertising spots that sometimes feature people whose personality seems more erased than the product being advertised. When this happens (not making the difference between the actor / creator of art and the viewer / visitor of the exhibition) there is also an integration in a space, an experiment that continues to this day. And I am referring here to the experiment of immersive cities in that the boundaries of the space become undefined, from the adaptable space of the home (the open kitchen, etc. even toilets without privacy, the living room that could be transformed into any space that was needed) and that no longer had the sacredness of the room for guests, with its special status, etc. Moreover, communication can be done continuously through the existence of mobile phones and in a home there can be a television in each room, so that a news can be watched continuously with the movement through the rooms, or each member of the family can watch their favorite show and thus remain as much as possible connected to a media device, and this at the expense of interpersonal relations. If in 1953, when the novel written by Ray Bradbury, 'Fahrenheit 451' was really a dystopian science fiction episode, nowadays is a reality. And this can be extended in immersive cities when media messages continuously accompany the city man, continuing in the elevator, then in the street projections, in the subway, in the parks, in the car, etc. Images and sounds currently create an artificial space of immersion competing with the omnipresence and continuity of the space of Nature, in which we exist. Sir Roger Scruton uses the phrase 'The mass production of sound'⁸.

⁶ **Cecilia Vicuña**. *Sonoran Quipu* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jC8cYMRbrU>

⁷ Benjamin's essay is written in 1935 and the October Revolution took place in 1917.

⁸ **Roger Scruton** – *The Tyranny of Pop Music* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYua80VEcBk>

Walter Benjamin introduces the notion of exposure value with which he characterizes 'new media art'. Gradually and dually he diverts the notion of aesthetics into social concepts starting from a method of exhibiting art. This integrates into the distortion offensive in which notions are altered and become components and build a reduced, two-dimensional cultural universe.

The fact that everyone participates - through the exposure value mentioned by Walter Benjamin – and synthetically expressed by Andy Warhol: „In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes.” it stirs up a vortex of egos, and let's not forget, the attitude that got man kicked out of Paradise. The reverse of this effort is the facilitation of general surveillance. Walter Benjamin talks about the role of art in mobilizing the masses – one of the wishes of the Marxist ideology because the social paradigm of Marxism is that of the collective and not of the individual. And inevitably, the role of art is transformed, as I mentioned, from *catharsis* to *propaganda*. In Romania, in the mid-1990s, an opinion poll was conducted asking whether the church should be involved in politics and, if so, what kind of politics should it be involved in? The answer was in an overwhelming percentage: „The Church must make its own policy.” Paraphrasing, „Art must do its own policy”. And yes, spiritual spaces must each of them make their own politics.

The laws imposed by ideology, compared to the natural laws, are faced with an asymmetrical confrontation. That is why ideologies resort to confiscation, which is a syndrome of insecurity, of fear of the effects of illegitimacy. And dictatorships confiscate everything, from material goods, to culture, art, to the way of thinking, interpersonal relations and finally they confiscate the past and the future. However, history has proven that out of the extreme desire to confiscate and create its own historical space from which to no longer raise questions, Marxism eliminated belief in divinity. Unable to integrate it, not even adapted or deformed, in his ideological system, he renounced it, through denial, concluding abruptly: *God does not exist!* However, the paradisiacal state resided in man and Marxism was supposed to offer a Paradise to the working classes.

In his Journal, Mircea Eliade noted, on November 6, 1959

“Last week, to the students at “Fireside” who asked me about the atomic bomb, I answered: a Christian should not be too afraid of the bomb. For him the end of the World would have a meaning. It would be the Last Judgment. No Hindu should worry: the Kali-Yuga will end in a regression into chaos; after which a new World will arise, etc. Only Marxists have reason to be terrorized by the possibility of an atomic end, for for them Paradise lies in the future. Paradise never existed on Earth. What roughly corresponds to it is the society of tomorrow, without social classes. A Marxist accepts - assumes - the countless hecatombs only because the future will be heavenly.

The whole history and the whole suffering of humanity would have no meaning if the World should disappear before the “communist” eschaton is known.

The foreword – the motto⁹ that Walter Benjamin chooses is from Paul Valery's essay¹⁰ written in 1928, where we see the reference to the notions of space and time, and which offers an opening beyond the theories about art. During the Second World War, the whole of Eurasia was under the empire of conflicting ideologies.

The psychological mechanism of *Avant-garde* dynamics seems to have been well studied and implemented through the social role of art. See the discussion between Brâncuși and Duchamp at the 1912 Paris Aviation Show about the beauty of the airplane propeller. Contrary, the space manifests paradoxically (like *Solaris*, Stanislaw Lem's 1961 novel). The avant-garde mentally implemented a deceptive record, a hyper-reality, which although intense and with an impactful image, was not true. We observe here some of the features of the phenomenon of the ideology.

Art itself, bearing beauty – which is the signature of God in Creation – is the „galaxy” that revolves around the dominant aesthetic, one of the fundamental principles of Nature. The beauty itself, does not undergo mutations. The changes are only in the form of art, not in its core. It crosses spatio-temporality („time”) with the value of an universal constant.

⁹For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial.’

¹⁰“Le Conquete de l'ubiquité,” Paris.

And, if we consider Benjamin's Marxist (ideological) parentage, he may have been interested in the problem of art in capitalist (and post-capitalist) society both as a concern with art, but also from the point of view of implementation Marxist ideological ideology.

„During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence.” states the author.

Walter Benjamin claims (correctly, this time, from my point of view) that perception changes according to historical (temporal) evolution. The perception of the Amerindians before the discovery of America did not allow anything to come by water, from the direction of the ocean, and consequently they did not see the ships of the conquistadors. Benjamin makes a study of this phenomenon, from the point of view of the mode of production that influences perception in capitalist society. At that time, in 1935, the Revolution that had brought the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system to power, and that had already changed the face of the world, had been victorious for less than 100 years.

„We know that the earliest works of art were born to serve a ritual - first the magical and then the religious,” states Walter Benjamin, in his essay. The egocentric approach appears again, when our understanding (of the work of art) becomes the reference. And the author seems to ignore the fact that magical and religious are actually two facets of the phenomenon of faith. Yes, it is a reference, however, for our cultural context, and not for the absolute context, towards which we should strive, *every culture of every historical time*. The work of art does not serve a ritual but originates from that invoked ritual. It is not an accessory of the ritual (and this is because we, in the secularized contemporaneity, cannot easily penetrate the meanings of the ritual) but is an expression of it.

And yes, there is a difference between *the historical modification of perception* (which remains in harmony with society) and *the historical deformation of perception*, carried out by the ideologies of the 20th century, where harmony is also forced to „change its laws” according to those of the ideology. The ideological limitation (atheism) imposed *de facto* by ideologies cannot have the scope to transform the space where it dwells into an absolute enclave. And the disharmony implemented in that space (in a so-called closed system), sooner or later comes into conflict with its environment.

Walter Benjamin equates *the ideological distortion of perception* with *the natural modification of perception* by historical evolution. In my opinion, he builds his reasoning, logically otherwise, on a false premise. On the other hand, desacralization – removing the sacred from society and replacing it with idolatry – is usually a goal of the Western World Revolutions. After that, the responsibility is transferred to the masses. „The alignment of reality with the masses and the masses with reality is a process of enormous magnitude, both for thought and intuition.” (p. 112)

Mechanical reproduction appears to have arisen in support of desacralization. Walter Benjamin's logic fractures one of the logics of art that has a sacred parentage and explains art through the prism and, in ideological terms, antagonizing art with the transcendent source of its provenance, thus justifying its desacralization. The insistence with which Walter Benjamin offers explanations only from one point of view - the Marxist one, and the one considered in a certain historical time, makes his explanations distort both the aesthetic perception and - as he declares - the very nature of the work of art. Walter Benjamin seems to be a „revolutionary by profession” and the fact that he has this approach only disrupts both perception and aesthetic understanding, in the perspective of the past and the future alike. As in a Procrustean bed, Walter Benjamin forces the meanings of aesthetics so that they subscribe to Marxist logic.

Just like theater and opera, film is a synthetic art. Its shape, somewhat distanced from the viewer, gives it uniqueness. The form of the dialogue between the of the work of art at the time of the performance and the audience changes. The dialogue changes its shape. The audience must look for an interactive form of communication with the Author of the film, a form, which in films - works of art - is always there. And, as in any of the arts, these author-audience dialogues can cross historical times. And countless examples can be given from the history of cinema. Gradually, the art form overcomes unisensory patterns (visual art, music) and evolves into a multisensory address (theatre, opera, art installation). However, let's not forget the magical and religious rituals, which Walter Benjamin invokes, were (and are) multisensory addresses. Film – as an art of image succession – and simulating reality is a form of multisensory addressing. The elementary image - viewed as visual art – it is harmonized with the

non-verbal behavior of the actors' play, with the lines of the characters - which come from theatrical art and, last but not least, the narrative which turns into an address through a parable and which is addressed sense of understanding and as I said before, the Chilean poet and installation artist Cecilia Vicuña speaks of species of understanding¹¹.

In conclusion, the way we perceive a work of art, the film in this case, is not the event but the paradigm in which we analyze it. The Propaganda of the Revolutions (whatever they may be) have as a rule the implementation of some desacralizing paradigms, which challenge the traditions. And unfortunately, our contemporaneity has such paradigms. So whatever we look at, through the prism of desacralizing paradigms, we perceive as desacralized, whether it is or not. And whatever work of art we look at, in whatever form of reproduction it reaches us, the paradigm through which we look at it becomes decisive.

The mechanical reproduction of works of art, by its very nature, meets the *objective of desacralization*. Although this fact is not a mandatory situation. Some art forms are adapted to mechanical reproduction: photography, film, poster, video art, book illustration, art albums, etching, etc.). There is an aesthetic symbiosis between works of art before mechanical reproduction and works of art after this historical moment. Just like the blade of grass that pierces the asphalt, aesthetic form finds a way to cut through the asphalt of reproductive technologies. Here we have a confrontation between two forces of different natures: the original and the copy. And, according to the market rules, the one with greater addressability wins, not the one with higher quality. And in order to preserve the „market”, the consumer paradigm changes. Why are there queues at all supermarkets and only a few art museums? The desacralizing paradigm once implemented produces its effects upon any object and work of art on which its focus rests.

The problems that Walter Benjamin invokes, regarding the condition of the film actor's play were those of the transition from playing on the stage, to playing imposed by the camera. Since they were signaled, from the first half of the last century, they have been overtaken by great actors who have adapted their game to the conditions of the cinema and created, through their game, memorable works of cinematographic art. Once more, film direction evolved, gradually separating itself from theater, starting even with the silent film through the actors and directors Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, etc. and through directors Eric von Stroheim, David Wark Griffith, not forgetting Sergei Eisenstein, Lev Kuleshov, Alexander Dovzhenko, Vsevolod Pudovkin, etc. Aesthetics and expressiveness also found their outlet through the newly-invented cinematographic art.

Being a declared Marxist, Walter Benjamin adopts the Marxist paradigm according to which the „truth” is that of the narrator and all other elements (and which are not part of the ideological narrative) are *a priori* positioned outside the system. Perhaps it would have been good for the narrative elements of analysis and criticism to construct a paradigm themselves, just as in a work of conceptual art, and not only that.

From the political point of view, mechanical reproduction provides access to the masses. Not infrequently, if not always, a political system influences (each in its own way) the artistic manifestations. And these influences does not have to be carried out by means of censorship (ban versus acceptance) but it can be done, for example, by altering the quality of the education system. The effects will be seen after decades, in the form of the art of a historical time, that will no longer use censorship.

The way the camera penetrates the layers of reality – close-ups, traveling, etc. the details, the post-editing, the music, the sound effects – are consistent with the penetration into the subconscious that surrealism proposes. Photography, prior to the cinema, proposes a fragmented reality, following that through interactivity, the viewer reconstructs it, just like a spider, its web. The shape of the world as we know it is under an onslaught of fragmentation and analysis, resulting the paradigm of deconstruction, of destructuring.

¹¹ Cecilia Vicuña: *Sonoran Quipu* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jC8cYMRbrU>

And at the same time, destructuring – viewed as a principle – leads to the penetration into another form of the composition of the world, as I mentioned, just like the difference between Newtonian physics and quantum physics. Always beyond we will find something so that our thirst for knowledge is continually satisfied.

Along with the Marxist systemic approach – by emphasizing a type of antagonism „in the system” – „outside the system” Walter Benjamin uses (what was perhaps less visible at the time of writing the essay) an emphasized touch on the component technology and art developed in the new technological environment. Let’s not forget that futurism idealized dynamism, speed, movement, reducing vision, structural perception and in general all features of scope and synthesis, for a glorious living of the moment. After almost a hundred years since the essay was written, let’s not fall into the same paradigm, to look at concepts and events from our own socio-historical and cultural point of view and ignore the spirit of the times that shook humanity, of the first half of the 20th century, and which spawned World War II.

Conclusion

Analyzing the phenomenon proposed by Walter Benjamin from the point of view of the history, it is well known that in the present time it cannot be identified an event that will change the course of the history of culture. For example, the printing press, invented by Gutenberg, was not a business commensurate with the cultural mutation it would produce in European civilization. Vincent Van Gogh never sold a painting to anyone other than his brother Theo. And so on.

In these conditions, Walter Benjamin, regardless of ideological interference, had the genius to capture in *the present historical moment* a phenomenon that would produce a cultural mutation, on a global scale.

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