

of visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert. Such fusion is of great social significance (Ibid.: p. 234).

The semantic field, which is formed by the notion of “social significance” is a vast area, and cannot be easily described. The place of a certain degree of general literacy in Benjamin’s times is nowadays taken up by a comparatively high degree of general education, no matter whether this education is formal or informal. Reproduced aesthetic features have become attributes of daily life. The notion of “fine art” therefore lost its full meaning; it became mainly an expression of a certain view not so much upon art, but upon society. As the model of competitive economy in the prosperous Western world (which now culturally includes most of the former socialist world) continues to (re)produce class differences, the mass culture makes symbolic repressions and expressions of them much more a matter of social play, or as we could put it with David Chaney (1993), a matter of “public drama».

The Politics of Differences

There are no indications that Benjamin and Gramsci were very much aware of each other’s existence, yet some similar theoretical and political motives in the writings of both are easily discernible. Gramsci writes in his *Quaderni del carcere* about the “old intellectual and moral leaders,” who are increasingly discovering that their “preachments are only preachments”, which have nothing to do with reality, since “the special form of civilization, culture, morality which they have represented is now dissipating” (Gramsci, 1974: p. 255). Such observations could easily be compared to Benjamin’s criticism of Duhamel and of his views about film as a “diversion for uneducated”. What Gramsci added to this non-existent dialogue is the notion of *hegemony*, which acquires quite diverse meanings within his work, but basically his use of the notion functions as an articulation of the “fundamental displacements” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: p. 67). Laclau and Mouffe outlined the meaning of the notion, which originates in the Russian social democracy: “/.../ it became necessary to characterize the new type of relationship between the working class and the alien tasks it had to assume at a given moment. This anomalous relation was called ‘hegemony’” (p. 50). Gramsci’s displacements, which include the concept of the “materiality of ideology,” which “takes us away from the old base/superstructure distinction”, finally result in the concept of “political subjects”. For Gramsci they are “not – strictly speaking – classes, but complex ‘collective wills’;