

**THE CRITIQUE OF THE CRITIQUE – RANCIERE’S
APPROACH TO ART AND POLITICS**

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THE CRITIQUE OF THE CRITIQUE – RANCIERE’S APPROACH TO ART AND POLITICS

ABSTRACT

This study tackles the problem of the relationship between politics and art from a critical perspective through re-reading of a series of texts by Rancière. Within this problem area, the thesis aims to bring a sound critique to the notion of political art which claim the role of opposition against the evils of present-day. The study addresses the issue, within the limits of its scope, only through the framework defined by the concepts of; equality, distribution of sensible and processes of emancipation. Initially, art and politics as two interconnected components of this relationship are deliberately examined separately for the analytical purposes of this thesis. Subsequently, their relationship is analyzed through Rancière’s approach to reveal the capacities of both entities in the processes of emancipation. Later on, the relationship between art and politics is analyzed through Debord’s critique of the spectacle, which exposes the role of power exercise in perpetuating the existing hierarchical order of the society that further amplifies the intrinsic inequality as Rancière points out as the major problem in political art. Along this path, the thesis adopts the strategies of discourse analysis in terms of its methodology. Hence, the study is organized in three consecutive parts; politics, aesthetics and critique of political art. It is concluded that politicization of art not only carries a false promise of emancipation, but also establishes hierarchies within society.

Keywords: Rancière, Debord, equality, politics, aesthetics, art, political art

ELEŞTİRİNİN ELEŞTİRİSİ – RANCIERE’İN SANAT VE POLİTİKAYA YAKLAŞIMI

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Rancière'in bir dizi metni aracılığıyla politika ve sanat arasındaki ilişkiyi eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla ele almaktadır. Bu sorun alanında, tez, günümüzün sorunlarına karşı muhalefet rolünü üstlenen politik sanat kavramına bir eleştiri getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, konu, eşitlik, duyulur olanın paylaşımı ve özgürleşme süreçleri kavramları dahilinde ele alınmaktadır. Başlangıçta, bu ilişkinin birbirine bağlı iki bileşeni olarak politika ve sanat, bu tezin analitik amaçları için ayrı ayrı incelenmiştir. Daha sonra, Rancière'in bu kavramları ele alışı temel alınarak, her iki kavramın özgürleşme süreçlerindeki etkileri analiz edilmiştir. Daha sonra, Debord'un gösteri eleştirisi üzerinden Rancière'in politik sanattaki ana sorun olarak işaret ettiği gibi, aslında içsel eşitsizliği daha da artıran, mevcut hiyerarşik düzeni sürdürmede güç egzersizi rolünü ortaya koymak için öne sürdüğü eleştiri analiz edilmiştir. Bu süreçte tez, metodolojisi açısından söylem analizi stratejilerini benimser. Dolayısıyla, çalışma birbirini izleyen üç bölüm halinde düzenlenmiştir; politika, sanat ve politik sanat eleştirisi. Sonuç olarak tez sanatın siyasallaşmasının sadece sahte bir özgürleşme vaadi taşımadığını, aynı zamanda toplumda hiyerarşiler yarattığını açığa çıkarır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Rancière, Debord, eşitlik, politika, estetik, sanat, politik sanat

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1. INTRODUCTION

The thesis problematizes the relation between politics and art. The study intends to re-read this problematic relationship over the discussions which are developed by Rancière. The text not only re-evaluates the views of Rancière in relation to various philosophers, but also tackles the issues of politics and art from a critical perspective. Having based upon Rancière's approach on art and politics, this thesis endeavors to question the accepted notions of both politics and art by revealing the inconsistencies within relevant theories and literature.

Along this purpose, this study accommodates the strategies of discourse analysis to reveal the cross-references among a variety of philosophers and scholars in regard to the politic nature of aesthetics and aesthetic nature of politics. In this manner, the established clichés about these relationships will be deciphered towards a clear understanding of aesthetic as a political act and that of politics as an aesthetic performance. In this way, as politics and aesthetics are not separate entities, the study is an effort to go beyond the unquestionably accepted conditions regarding the role of art in the current context of politics dominating our life and social order.

Along this path, the text is organized as such; initially, the two essential notions, that is to say politics and aesthetics, are tackled separately on the basis of Rancière's arguments for both topics. Then, their relation is critically discussed over Debord's notion of spectacle mainly for confirming Rancière's views on the problematic nature of political art. Although these two components are separately debated throughout the manuscript, the uniting theme is the viewpoint that society is organized on established hierarchies and that political art, like all other institutions, is also structured in order to perpetuate the existing hierarchies which the existing political system is imposing on all phenomena throughout the world and every aspect of our lives on it. The key argument here, however, is that even the critical theories are established to prevail the existing order in the name of critique. Therefore, this thesis is intended to be a critique of the critique in regard to the relation between politics and art.

Having seen from this perspective, the study claims that society is based on hierarchies, and therefore on inequality, despite the fact that politics, as the order which regulates our lives, is known to be a search for equality. This claim is extended to the level that every institution is in fact the realization of inequality in our society. Furthermore, it is claimed here that political art which is said to liberate our minds and souls is also institutionalized to enhance the currently established social order based on hierarchies as can be seen in Debord's comprehension of spectacle whereby spectator is put in a passive position in front of the art as a political performance.

The underlying theme throughout these claims as presented within the manuscript is that society is divided on the basis of power that is exerted in regard to the privileges. With various cross-references to former and peer philosophers, Rancière unveils the deeper roots of this mechanism while discussing the notion of politics and aesthetics. Intriguingly enough, political art is often based on cause effect relationship. Referring to Rancière again, this study will put forward the superiority-inferiority relationship respectively between the artist and the spectator which eventually serves to retain the established status-quo whereas political art is said to be a medium to extend beyond the limitations that society imposes on us. Rancière shows clearly no matter how much Debord re-interprets this relationship, he cannot fail to accept the hierarchical role of the artist who performs the spectacle in respect to the spectator which is given the role of passive receiver whereby the power relation cannot be re-organized through political art.

Aim of the Thesis

Under the light cast by the approach developed above, the aim of this thesis is to re-examine the relation between politics and art through Rancière's theorization. Along this purpose it is also aimed to bring Rancière's critical stance forward among other popular and mainstream philosophers who commented on the issue. It is intended to unveil the background of his thoughts and the development and transformation of his ideas towards the construction of his critical position. It is also aimed to establish the

links to the current status of art in regard to politics by following the traces of his ideological evolution.

The Problem Area of the Thesis

The main problem area of the thesis is taken as the relation between politics and art. More specifically, how art plays a role in establishing the ideals of democracy, in other words ‘equality’ in an intrinsically inequality society organized by social order. The key concepts in this problem area emerges as the politics and aesthetics are a matter of visibility and the ‘distribution of sensible’ as the main mechanism of social order. It is of interest to understand how visibility is controlled (in Rancière’s words policed) although the is the central issue of both aesthetics and politics. Moreover, it is of particular interest to decipher how political art is instrumentalized in distribution of the sensible in an unequal manner although the ultimate aim of the art is supposed to play a crucial role in the distribution of ‘sensible’ equally. In this context, the relation between political art and the spectacle (as Debord formulates) is the central problem area of this thesis.

Methodology of the Thesis

In order to achieve the goals of this thesis, discourse analysis in addition to literature review is appropriated as the methodology. In that context, Rancière’s various books and articles are reviewed and re-interpreted. The development of his ideas is traced back in relation to various thinkers ranging from Plato and Aristo to Marx and Althusser, from Jacotot, Shiller, Kant, Hegel, Benjamin, Hobbes, Bourdieu and to Foucault and even to Zizek. Although various studies of Rancière are analyzed, the main texts discussed here in these theses are; Althusser’s Lesson, The Nights of Labour, The Philosopher and the Poor, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, Hatred of Democracy and also Disagreement, and The Politics of Aesthetics, Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics, Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art, Mute Speech, The Future of the Image. And several articles and interviews published in several journals.

The Structure and Organization of the Thesis

For the purpose of tackling the aforementioned problem and in order to develop the critical arguments about the relationship between politics and art, the thesis is structured in three consecutive chapters. Which refer to different chapters. The first chapter addresses the concept of politics. The second chapter examines the concept of aesthetics and art as its manifestation on public realm. The third chapter focuses on the notion of 'spectacle' as a phenomenon where both components interact in the form of political art. The first chapter concentrates on the idea of politics and its relation to the concept of equality. It discusses the difference between politics and policing. This chapter argues the role of equality as the very essence of politics and distribution of sensible which constitutes the social order. Subsequently, the structural account of democracy is analyzed through the relation between philosophy and politics. The second chapter focuses on the established definitions of aesthetics and their misuse. Rancière's redefinition of aesthetics grounded on Kant and Schiller's theories is analyzed to reveal the role aesthetics play against the division, stratification and hierarchy in society. His redefinition of aesthetics through distribution of sensible allows him to make a direct correlation between politics, aesthetics and equality. This chapter also examines art and its conceptualization through distribution of sensible. It delves into the discussions on the aestheticization of politics and the politicization of art. Having moved from these discussions, the third part articulates the relation of politics and art over the critique of spectacle as the exercise of power. The conclusion part brings a final critique of the critique of political art.

2. RANCIERE'S APPROACH TO POLITICS

Rancière points out that from the beginning of human existence, humankind has been structured upon the hierarchies which are conditional to privileges such as age, gender, race, wealth, knowledge; legitimized and imposed by its power and control. As opposed to these hierarchies Rancière grounds his approach on politics through the notion of equality. Throughout his body of work, the main principle remains as everyone is equal in all aspects. He takes equality as a presupposition from the start rather than an outcome. Consequently, he distinguishes his understanding of equality from liberal theories, which considers equality as something distributed by the state. He claims that this distribution creates a hierarchy (inequality) in the first place by dividing people, who are politically active and who are politically passive. Liberal theories function from top to bottom in which people have nothing to do with equality other than to be an object of it. Contrary to these liberal theories, Rancière's politics addresses those who are at the bottom of the social hierarchies. In his understanding, equality comes from people, and it creates a chance for emancipation that is not a product of domination or moral authority but generated from the universal fact of the human condition.

Concisely, for Rancière, politics, and, more precisely truly democratic politics, is the process of emancipation, and it can only arise from the people based on the presupposition of equality. He claims no government, not even an institution could emancipate a single person. In other words, according to Rancière, every institution is the realization of inequality. With this claim and his conception of emancipation, he separates politics from the polity. In this conjecture, politics oppose the given order and reconfigures the roles and places that organize society by creating 'new ways of doing, being, and speaking.'

In order to analyze the way Rancière conceptualizes politics systematically, the rest of the chapter is separated into three parts: from archival work to equality, from equality to democracy and politics of philosophers. As far as this study will take the equality as Rancière conceptualized it, the first part aims to demonstrate the

development of his conceptualization of equality which emerged out of the critical reflection on the obedience to the social privilege of the intellectual and coercive conception of the nature of pedagogy. Rancière's re-thinking of emancipation begins with his rupture from Althusser (1968) to his encounter with Joseph Jacotot (1987) will be examined chronologically to show how he achieved his understanding of equality and how he formed his central concept 'distribution of sensible'. The second part of this chapter starts with the analysis of his re-definition of politics and continues with Rancière's structural account of democracy, which takes shape through four main notions: the miscount, 'part has no part,' the 'wrong' and political 'subjectivation.' In the third part the connection Rancière draws between politics and philosophy is examined mainly based on his readings of Plato, Aristotle and Marx. His understanding of democracy will be analyzed through his readings of these canonic philosophers.

2.1 From Archive Work to Equality

The events of May '68 had a significant impact on Rancière's understanding of equality. For him, the events that followed the riots exposed the historians and social scientist's inability to unravel the reasons behind the rebellion. Additionally, it revealed the connection between the theoretical paradigms and the authority they seek to critique. Rancière's refusal of the intellectual's insistence in speaking for the ideologically misinformed people, who are unable to speak for themselves, first appeared on his critique of Althusser, which became the departure of his discourse about politics. One of the most acclaimed teachings of Althusser was the radical separation between science and ideology. In this Althusserian construct, the working classes need to be led by the Party because he identifies them as victims of ideological confusion. He regards their spontaneous expressions as worthless and suggests that any kind of action should be guided by the Party's intellectuals in order to liberate the working class from oppression. Rancière's characterization of Althusser's school as a 'philosophy of order' made him condemn the effort to keep the unimpaired distinction between the worker and the intellectual. Rancière argued that the work of the intellectual should not sterilize the category of the political subject, in this case, the worker.

For Rancière, the Althusserian concept of science or more precisely the distinction between science and ideology justifies Althusser's self-position. In his 1969 book *'Althusser's Lesson'* he clearly states that: "The concept of science now appears in its true colors: The whole function of the science/ideology distinction, it turns out, was to justify the pure being of knowledge (savior) – or, more precisely, to justify the eminent dignity of the possessors of knowledge." (Rancière 2011a: 144,147) Following his rupture from Althusser, Rancière intends to provide an overall shape to the idea of radical equality which was visible in the May 68 events but overlooked by Althusser. In order to structuralize his understanding of equality, Rancière devoted himself to a series of archive-based projects, where he would remain and search for emancipation stories for a decade. After the events of May 68, Rancière enrolled in the faculty of philosophy of the Centre Universitaire Expérimental de Vincennes, where he established a research group called 'Revokes Logiques' (Logical Revolts). This group published a journal with the same name until 1981. This research project was aimed at demonstrating the lack of difference between the poetry of the intellectual genius and that of little-known proletarian writers. By rejecting the orthodoxy of science in opposition to ideology, the intent was to reveal workers' capability of self-expression which proves the fact that they can speak for themselves.

In his masterwork of that period, *'The Nights of Labour'* (1981), his intention to simply capture the unified consciousness of a collective proletarian voice evolved into capturing the isolated individual voices of workers who were a part of the July revolution. These individuals, including Louis Gabriel Gauny, Desiree Veret, Jeanne Deroin and Joseph Jocotot did not just resist the working conditions, but also the very system that limits them to the role of 'workers' by getting involved in literary pursuits as pastime endeavors. He explains as such: "I set out to find primitive revolutionary manifestoes, but what I found was texts which demanded in refined language that workers be considered as equals, and their arguments responded to with proper arguments." (Rancière 1989: XIII) In the *'The Nights of Labour'*, Rancière's use of the 'night', which is the only free time workers have, is not a metaphor but an attempt to put the focus on workers who are "secretly in love with useless things" (ibid.: 45), such as spending the night discussing on publishing a worker's journal. Rancière proceeds by

criticizing the dominant class' disdain of the proletariat by mentioning the gaze of the bourgeois gentleman and the stereotypes it imposes on the working class. He states that in the eyes of the bourgeois, workers lacked manners, and they represented nothing more than a productive force that must be driven and contained by the intelligent will of the educated classes. He criticizes it by asserting: “This view does not simply justify the authority of the dominant class; it constitutes the dominant class as such ... It is the judgment of the dominant class that condemns the working class to incessant work by denying it the attributes of a free human being capable of using its leisure for some activity other than the orgy of the slave.” (ibid.: 262)

Following this publication, which consists of archival works, his efforts were extended by the 1983 publication *The Philosopher and the Poor*, which contains detailed examinations of major texts of Western thought in which the poor take the lead. The main argument of this study meditates on how philosophy misuses the poor with a discourse on their nature. Rancière examines the similarity between the Platonic rule of 'one soul, one work' and Marx, Sartre, and Bourdieu's approaches to the 'poor'. For Rancière, philosophy reproduces a kind of intellectual mindset that reduces the poor to a class while placing philosopher on top of the poor who lack time to think. Absence of time excludes the poor from the 'agora,' keeps them away from making political decisions at the assembly, and taking part in the cultural life. He further claims: “Material wealth is justified on the basis of a class separation of intelligence and a profound dis-entitlement of the thinking capacity of working-class/poor people.” (ibid.: XIII)

While *The Nights of Labour* tracks the acts of many individuals who resist structuring their existence on being workers, the 'poor' examines the barriers set by Plato's identification of social hierarchy with a hierarchy of soul. According to Rancière, modern science tries to prove why people remain at their place. The correlation between occupation and mental capacity let Rancière form one of his central concepts; 'distribution of the sensible' which he explains as “a relation between occupations and equipment, between being in a specific space and time, performing

specific activities, and being endowed with capacities of seeing, saying, and doing that "fit" those activities.” (Rancière 2016: 136)

In Rancière's last research project of the period *'The Ignorant Schoolmaster'*, which was published in 1987, he returns to Joseph Jacotot, who is one of the intellectuals in *'The Nights of Labour'* and focuses on analyzing his 'method of intellectual emancipation'. His use of Jacotot's pedagogical analogy of master and student as a focal point gives him the ability to demonstrate that hierarchical logic in the education system leads to social order. For Jacotot (and so for Rancière as well as their voices usually get mixed in the book) the most obvious type of repression and subjection is embedded in the explanatory act, as he provocatively states: “Explication is the annihilation of one mind by another.” (Rancière 1991: 32) Jacotot puts his method 'Universal Teaching' (i.e., the pannecastic system) against pedagogical methods which has the act of explanation in their core. He illustrates his method with the example of the way we learn our mother tongue. He points out the infant's ability to comprehend and mimic their mother tongue by making mistakes and correcting them, without instructions regardless of social, biological, geographical differences. However, in his opinion, this 'primal act of self-instruction' is ignored in formal education, as a consequence of the presumption that knowledge can only be obtained through an expert. Thus, for him, formal education depends on two kinds of intelligence, those of the master and of the student. In Platonic terms, there are two types of souls, which are iron and gold. He claims “iron souls that move in the darkness unless they are guided by golden souls who know the right path from darkness to light.” (Rancière 2016: 136) While the master has the possession of a specific subject, he also occupies the position of the one who knows. Therefore, he is aware of the ignorance of the student while the student knows his knowledge is dependent on the master. According to Rancière: “Explication is not necessary to remedy an incapacity to understand. On the contrary, that very incapacity provides the structuring fiction of the explicative conception of the world. It is the explicator who needs the incapable and not the other way around; it is he who constitutes the incapable as such.” (Rancière 1991: 6) Hence, the gap between the student and the master repeatedly reproduces itself; as a result, the student can never bridge the gap. Even though as a promise, this logic pretends to move the student from

inequality to equality, it only generates inequality by its nature. Jacotot refers to this notion as the principle of 'stultification.' He defines it as such: "Stultification is not an inveterate superstition; it is fear in the face of liberty. Routine is not ignorant; it is the cowardice and pride of people who renounced their own power for the unique pleasure of affirming their neighbor's incapacity." (ibid.: 108)

According to Jacotot, there is no path from ignorance to knowledge or from inequality to equality. Thus, for him, all the intelligence should be taken as equals to begin with. Nonetheless, Rancière points out, "our problem isn't proving that all intelligence is equal. It's seeing what can be done under that supposition." (ibid.: 46) From this perspective, it could be suggested that there can either be a path from equality to equality or a path from inequality to inequality. Hence, he advocates that equality is not a given or a destination to reach; it is rather the starting point, a presumption that has to be carried out in every circumstance. Thus, he believes that "no party or government, no army, school, or institution, will ever emancipate a single person." (ibid.: 102) Furthermore he states that emancipation is not only "each man becoming conscious of his nature as an intellectual subject," (ibid.: 35) but also "learn how to be equal men in an unequal society." (ibid.: 133) It is the decision to oppose that there are two kind 'souls,' the decision to take equality as a presupposition.

Rancière re-thinks the emancipation and points out that what is presented to us as politics is just the managing of the social order which has been built upon unquestioned social hierarchies by making an extensive analysis of archival material from *'Logical Revolts'* to *'The Ignorant Schoolmaster'*. This comprehensive examination leads to an understanding of emancipation and equality that lie beneath the re-thinking of politics. From this point on his renowned distinction regarding 'police' and 'politics' arises from identifying politics as the verification of the presumption of intellectual equality.

2.2 From Equality to Democracy

Rancière redefines politics in a radical manner to make room for his understanding of politics by arguing that what is normally understood as politics is 'the police.' He explains his redefinition as such: "Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities are achieved, [it denotes] the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution. I propose to give this system of distribution and legitimization another name. I propose to call it the police." (Rancière 1999: 28) As it is seen, Rancière's concept of police is considerably different from the conventional perception of the police force. It refers to any hierarchical social order. His use of the term 'policing' does not only indicate policy making but also includes judicial, legislative, financial, and administrative decisions and orders. He proposes that what is considered as politics, in general, can be defined as 'the police,' from the exercise of power to the distribution of social roles to even the process of legitimizing the distribution.

In order to gain more insight into the concept of police, he peruses Michel Foucault's more comprehensive idea of 'police', which arose at the beginning of the 17th century in German and Italian discourse about the state, gaining momentum with the evolution of the political economy in Germany. According to Foucault, everything is included in the police and it intersects cultural, political, and financial fields to the degree that 'police order' defines social relations between human beings consequently producing a hierarchy while at the same time determining relationships between 'men and things.' (Foucault 1979: 248) However, the way Rancière approaches to the notion of police is not precisely identical to Foucault's since it does not only concern the practices of governmentality. Rancière elaborates his idea through Foucault's 1979 Stanford Tanner Lectures by claiming that: "In *Omnes et Singulatim*, Foucault conceives of the police as an institutional apparatus that participates in power's control over life and bodies; while, for me, the police designates not an institution of power but a distribution of the sensible within which it becomes possible to define strategies and techniques of power." (Rancière 2010: 103) However, Rancière emphasizes that

identifying a police order does not grant a critique of all police orders in general as he considers a police order to be inevitable. He maintains his critical position towards the 'police' without reducing all police orders to the same level. For him, while there is no absolute outside regarding the police order, this does not imply that the inside of all police orders are equal. Rancière expresses this argument as: “There is a worse and better police.” (Rancière 1999: 30-31) Thus, Rancière points out that his concept of police is 'nonpejorative' and 'neutral.' Similar to his disagreement with Foucault, he asserts that his notion of police order differs from Althusser's state apparatus. Rancière argues that 'state apparatus' works with state versus society mentality, a notion which confuses politics with police. Althusser uses an analogy of the hail of a police officer; “Hey, you there!..., the hailed individual will turn around ..., he becomes a subject.” (Althusser 2001: 118) Rancière takes Althusser's analogy further by stating that the primary objective of the police lies elsewhere; “Move along! There is nothing to see here!” (Rancière 1999: 24) From Rancière's perspective, in the case of a demonstration, the aim of the police is not arresting the participants but to define what should be visible, thinkable and possible.

Rancière considers 'police' as a form of distribution rather than a form of repression. 'Police' connects the divisions in society by governing and managing the subjects in that society on symbolic and physical aspects of life. Police is, therefore, in direct relation with the distribution of sensible which he describes as follows: “The police is thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task.” (ibid.) The 'police' creates a society of groups that are dedicated to particular tasks, assuming that people possess different capacities, and consequently determines that the people are meant to inhabit different hierarchical positions. Consequently, for Rancière, the many institutions and methods of the police, such as elections and congressional debates, are also considered to be part of the order that fills the places of the hierarchy. Moreover, he claims: “The police is, essentially, the law, generally implicit, that defines a party's share or lack of it.” (ibid.: 29) Thus, in his perspective, while 'police' defines both the parts and what those parts have in the society, it also determines their visibility. Furthermore, according to Rancière: “Politics

arises from a count of community 'parts,' which is always a false count, a double count, or a miscount.” (ibid.: 56)

Rancière visits Aristotle in order to introduce the understanding of miscount. In Book V of *The Nichomachean Ethics*, the idea of justice “consists of not taking more than one's share of advantageous things or less than one's share of disadvantageous things.” (ibid.: 55) Hence for the common good, the shares in the community are required to be proportional to the *axia* (title) of the parts in the community. In other words, the value generated by the part and the right this value provides to the part should be proportionate in sharing the collective power. According to Aristotle, there are three *axia* (titles); the wealth of the *oligoi* (the few), the virtue of the *arete* (the elite), and the freedom of the *demos* (the people). Regarded on their own, each of these properties produces a specific regime; the oligarchy of the wealthy, the aristocracy of the virtuous, and the democracy of the people. (ibid.: 6) He further devises three unfair regimes which are comprised of the corrupted versions of the ones mentioned above, through selfish interests; tyranny, oligarchy, anarchy.

According to Aristotle similar people cannot form a city, a city is composed of people who has different titles. Rancière claims: “In order for any community to be a political one there must be one more principle, one more entitlement, that grounds all of the others. But there is only one principle in excess of all the others: the democratic principle or entitlement, the qualification of those who have no qualification.” (Rancière 2009b: 10) The problem is that against the wealth of the oligarchs and virtue of the aristocrats, *demos* only have empty freedom, which oligarchs and aristocrats already have. Thus, in this logic, freedom of *demos* does not bring anything to the community, which means the *demos* is embodied by the community without any specificity. Rancière points out that Aristotle refers to the *demos* as those who 'had no part in anything, and for Rancière, this is the reason that miscount emerges. He explains it as such: “They (*demos*) are merely the reign of a lack of position, the effectivity of the initial disjunction that bears the empty name of freedom, the improper property, entitlement to dispute. They are themselves in advance the warped conjunction of what is proper to them that is not really proper to them and of the common that is not really

common. They are simply the constitutive wrong or torsion of politics as such. The party of the poor embodies nothing other than politics itself as the setting-up of a part of those who have no part.” (Rancière 1999: 14) The ‘part has no part’ is that class within the system, occupied by different groups during different times such as the demos of Athens, the plebs of ancient Rome, the proletariat during industrialization, the victims of colonialism, the refugees, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ people of the present era, exposing the community through their exclusion.

In Rancière’s terminology the police order ‘wrongs’ the ones who have no part by not recognizing their political existence and denying their share in the community. For Rancière, the ‘part has no part,’ or the demos or the ones who are wronged by the police order are the subjects of politics. The assertion of the equality of anyone with anyone, in other words, the part has no part’s assertion of their existence is the essence of politics. “Politics exists when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part.” (ibid.: 11) Politics exists when people who appear to be unequal claim their equality. Politics, thus, challenges the police order through the assumption of equality, which generates a conflict among the ones who acts for equality, and the police order presupposing their inferiority. Rancière calls this conflict a disagreement, while he defines it as: “We should take disagreement to mean a determined kind of speech situation: one in which one of the interlocutors at once understands and does not understand what the other is saying.” (ibid.: X) Therefore, politics is all about the one who can speak and whose voice is counted as speech.

In order to embody his conceptualization of disagreement, Rancière returns to Aristotle once again, where Aristotle states that the capacity of logos (speech) is the condition that transforms man into a political animal. He describes it as: “Logos (Speech) is something different from phone (voice), which is possessed by other animals also and used by them to express pain or pleasure, for their nature does indeed enable them not only to feel pleasure and pain but to communicate these feelings to each other. Speech, on the other hand, serves to indicate what is useful and what is harmful, and so also what is just and what is unjust.” (Aristotle 1981: 1253 a) According to Aristotle, slaves, same as animals, do not have the capacity of speech.

Even though they can recognize language as much as following orders, they cannot engage in language. From this point of view, it is clear that logos is not only the physical ability but also the root of symbolic division, which assigns bodies to a certain position. In Aristotle's account, the possession of language allows the one to be counted as a man (political animal). Therefore, the demos (the part has no part) is muted. What comes out of their mouths is counted as voice (phone). However, 'disagreement' confronts Aristotle's idea of the political animal by claiming politics cannot be reduced to the capacity of speech. Thus, 'disagreement' is the objection about whose voice counts as speech, or in other words, who has the right to speak and make demands. In Rancière's words: "Politics exists because the logos is never simply speech, because it is always indissolubly the account that is made of this speech: the account by which a sonorous emission is understood as speech, capable of enunciating what is just, whereas some other emission is merely perceived as a noise signaling pleasure or pain, consent or revolt." (Rancière 1999: 22-23) Here, wrong exists in the act of dismissing the people's speech into the noise. Disagreement is associated with not only a specific claim of part has no part, but also the very existence of part has no part as a subject. Thus, politics is the 'part has no part's struggle for recognition as a political subject. Rancière calls this struggle, the process of political subjectivation. He explains it as: "By subjectification I mean the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience, whose identification is thus part of the reconfiguration of the field of experience." (ibid.: 35) According to Rancière, subjectification is not the power relations around people that turns them into subjects, it rather represents the course of action based on equality through which the people become a collective subject. It does not appear after a political movement; it is a part of it. While a political movement begins to form, a 'we' emerges that was previously not there. In that sense, the 'police' is reconfigured.

According to Rancière, all political movements share a common form, which is democracy. Thus, he considers democracy as the essence of politics. Rancière explains democracy as "not a political regime, in the sense of a constitutional form, nor is it a form of life or a culture of pluralism and tolerance. Democracy is, properly speaking, the symbolic institution of the political in the form of the power of those who are not

entitled to exercise power - a rupture in the order of legitimacy and domination. Democracy is the paradoxical power of those who do not count: the count of 'the unaccounted for.' (Rancière 2000: 96) Rancière visits Plato to put his understanding of democracy in a conceptual ground. Since in any political regime, there are those who rule and those who are ruled, the title (arkhe) names the principle that identifies the rulers and the ruled ones. In the third book of '*Laws*', Plato lists seven titles that authorize to rule. The first four are titles of birth: parents over children, old over young, masters over slaves, nobles over commoners. The next two titles, says Rancière, 'express nature if not birth': strong over weak, intelligent over ignorant (Rancière 2007a: 39-40). These six titles express six different principles of arkhe. All of them are, obviously, non-democratic. For Rancière, these are also the principles that still rule in social order today. Plato calls the seventh title 'the choice of God' and relates it to democracy, which he refers as "a regime that only a god could save." (Rancière 2010: 39) According to Plato, democracy has no arkhe. Thus, Plato identifies democracy as a game of chance, the total absence of any title, thus no right to rule. This is the title that matters most to Rancière, which he calls as 'a title that is not a title'. It represents the principle of randomness as the principle of rule. (Rancière 2007a: 40) It is not based on any natural principle and it is the only title that justifies democracy. Thus, the people (demos) are counted only with a break from arkhe logic, a break from police logic. Since the people have no title to rule, democracy can be referred as 'rule by anyone at all'. Rancière calls this 'scandal of democracy' and he states, "the scandal lies in the disjoining of entitlements to govern from an analogy to those that order social relations. ... It is the scandal of a superiority based on no other title than the very absence of superiority." (ibid.: 41)

2.3 Politics of Philosophers

According to Rancière, ever since Plato, political philosophy has been a response to the scandal of democracy. Therefore, it is the solution to the paradox of 'part has no part.' It is there to erase the heterogeneity between police and politics. Thus, for him political philosophy has always worked against politics, albeit in different ways. In Rancière's words: "Political philosophy, by its desire to give to the community a single

foundation, is fated to have to re-identify politics and police, to cancel out politics through the gesture of founding it.” (Rancière 2010: 41) Therefore, for Rancière, political philosophy establishes a community under the premise of a specific distribution of the sensible. It transforms into an assumption that equates itself with life itself. In his 1995 book, *Disagreement*, Rancière identifies political philosophy with three main forms; archipolitics, para-politics, and meta-politics, which are rooted in classical references: Plato, Aristotle, and Marx.

According to Rancière, archipolitics is Plato's response to the scandalous appearance of the demos on the scene of the Athenian city-state. Hence, it is a response to democracy, as an opposition to rule without an *arkhe*. Plato establishes a police order that gives the community a foundation through distribution of titles, and identifies this legitimate order with politics. Therefore, archipolitics is the total realization of the *arkhe*, both as the fundamental cause and also the guiding principle of order. In his words: “Archipolitics, whose model is supplied by Plato, reveals in all its radicality the project of a community founded on the integral realization, the integral sensibility of the *arkhe* of the community, ceaselessly replacing the democratic configuration of politics.” (Rancière 1999: 65) All has its place and no place for conflict, harmony prevails in archipolitics. Since everything has been distributed and fixed to a proper place, there is no room left for politics to emerge. Thus, 'police' replaces politics, and this substitution gives the paradox of those who have no part a viable solution. According to Rancière, when Plato invented archipolitics he also invented the psychology and sociology that allows him to internalize the bond of community. In his words: “The "republican" project, as it is elaborated in Plato's archipolitics, is the complete psychologizing and sociologizing of the elements of the political apparatus.” (ibid.: 69) Modern-day republicanism, totalitarianism, or extreme forms of contemporary communitarianism, follow this tendency.

Para-politics, which is based on Aristotle, is the second response that political philosophy put against to democracy. According to Aristotle the good regime is a mix of democracy and oligarchy. Thus, instead of replacing one regime with the other, he overlaps them, by proposing to achieve good governance through imitation of

democratic discord that prevents access of demos to good governance. The poor (democracy) and the rich (oligarchy) are employed on the same ground, which is the representational space of institutions. In contrast to the archipolitics, para-politics accepts conflicts, but it depoliticizes these conflicts by turning actors and modes of practice into parts and forms of distribution of the police order. Thus, the 'part have no part' becomes just one of the other many parts. The paradox of politics becomes the practical paradox of government, transforming the political conflict into the conflict between two parties trying to take possession of power. Para-politics formulates clear rules to be obeyed by stating the only (so-called) possible way in the achievement of the perfect nature of the community. According to Rancière modern para-politics begins through the birth of the individuality by breaking down the people (demos) into individuals. By doing so, para-politics expels the class war and replaces it with the war of against all. In Rancière's own words, para-politics represents the "problematization of the origins of power and the term in which it is framed- the social contract, alienation, and sovereignty- declare first that there is no part of those who have no part. There are only individuals and the power of the state." (Rancière 2007a: 77) Rancière refers to Thomas Hobbes as the principal proponent of modern para-politics. Hobbes sees the subversive potential hidden in the ancient form of para-politics. Based on the assumption that everyone is equal, he thinks the absolutism is a must. In Rancière's words: "For Hobbes, consequently, the human being must not be said to be political by nature; instead, politics comes in second place, as the outcome of a decision in the face of a prior state of nature. Modern para-politics thus serves as a response to the potential threat inherent in ancient para-politics, in so far as the latter, reclaimed by politics, always risks opening the door to a popular rebellious appropriation." (Rancière 1999: 76) However, in terms of the actual content of its premises, modern para-politics keeps following the path of its ancient version. Politics is still defined in terms of power, except the fundamental question, which tends to revolve around the problem of the origins of power, whether these are legitimate or illegitimate. One can see similarities between Neo-liberalism and para-politics.

The third and final figure of the politics of the philosophers is meta-politics, which Rancière analyzes through Marx. Meta-politics also recognizes the conflicts just

as parapolitics, but it claims they are external to the politics by limiting the cause and effects of politics to the economy. In other words, meta-politics states that the only true antagonism is the socio-economic antagonism. The political conflicts are nothing more than a shadow-theatre which hides (or falls short of the realization of) the truth of the class struggle. Thus, in meta-politics, the primary objective of politics is its abolishment, which leads to a shift from 'administration of people (government of persons)' into the 'administration of things.' Rancière defines meta-politics as: "... the concept in which all politics is canceled out, either through its proclaimed evanescence, or, on the contrary, through the assertion that everything is political, which comes down to saying that nothing is, that politics is only the parasitical mode of truth. Ideology is, finally, the term that allows the place of politics to shift endlessly, right to the dizzy limit: the declaration of its end." (ibid.: 86) According to Rancière, Marxism is not the only form of meta-politics. He also mentions European neoliberalism of the 1990s as a form of metapolitics, which seems the opposite of Marxism as they are both attached to the idea of 'the end of politics.' In his words the end of politics "is the ultimate phase of metapolitical interference, the final affirmation of the emptiness of its truth. The 'end of politics' is the completion of political philosophy." (ibid.: 86)

Zizek in the afterword of Rancière's 2004 book *'Politics of Aesthetics'* adds another form to these three main political philosophies; ultra-politics. It is the most radical version that attempts to depoliticize the politics. This approach can be viewed as a direct militarization of politics by polarizing the conflict as 'us' and 'them,' which leaves no common ground for a solution and turns conflict into a war.

What we see in all four cases, is an attempt to naturalize the anarchical being of democracy. From the appearance of demos in ancient Greece until today, political philosophy has sought to suppress the displacing ability of politics. Thus, political philosophy can be considered as a defense-formation, which regulates politics by fixing the places of subjects or fixing the rules of political competition or exposing the falsification of politics. According to Rancière apart from these types of political philosophy, present-day consensus democracy (post-politics in Zizek's terminology) negates the politics even stronger. It does not only repress, contain, or pacify politics,

but also forecloses it. In addition to restraining politics from policing, it also puts an end to politics. It is a police order, which assigns to its own pure and perpetual preservation by articulating a particular arrangement between itself and politics. Žižek in *The Ticklish Subject* states, “In post-politics the conflict of the global ideological vision embodied in different parties who compete for power is replaced by a collaboration of enlightened technocrats (economists, public opinion specialists..) and liberal multiculturalists; via the process of negotiation of interests, a compromise is reached in the guise of a more or less universal consensus.” (Žižek 2000: 198) In other words, post-politics reduces the demos to the population and transforms politics into the affairs of professional politicians or experts. It legitimizes itself, by establishing public opinion with elections and simulation. Therefore, the overall public perception becomes synonymous with the people in its entirety. For Rancière, this has nothing to do with democracy. Some can oppose Rancière since that representatives are democratically elected to represent the people. However, Rancière has a response to this classic narrative. In his opinion, representation did not emerge to democratize any regime. It emerged so the state can expand more and govern efficiently. For Rancière representation: “is, by all rights, an oligarchic form, a representation of minorities who are entitled to take charge of public affairs. Historically, it is always first, and foremost states, orders, possessions which are represented” (Rancière 2007a: 53), and voting is “originally the expression of a consent that a superior power requires and which is not really such unless it is unanimous.” (ibid.: 53) Thus for Rancière, neither representation nor voting is a device of democracy. Rancière sums this up as consensus and claims that consensus is actually opposed to democracy through “the reduction of the people to the sum of the parts of the social body and of the political community to the relations between the interests and aspirations of these different parts.” (Rancière 2010: 43) According to Rancière, consensus is not simply a compromise between the political or social parties on the common interests of society, it also establishes the visibility of the parts and covers the uneven distribution of power and function. In addition, the data of any collective situation is objectified in such a way that they can no longer lead to a conflict, all the differences melt away. Consequently, consensus is the identification between what is and what should be and it “consists in the reduction of democracy to

the way of life or *ethos* of a society - the dwelling and lifestyle of a specific group.” (Rancière 2010: 72)

Politics becomes possible by making the anonymous subjects visible, who consensus makes invisible. Thus, politics eliminates the so-called consensus, false homogeneity of the police regime and puts the logic of its natural functioning in a dead end. What constitutes politics is dissensus, which can be considered as a particular type of a political activity in the form of disagreement. Dissensus declares heterogeneity against false homogeneity of consensus, by putting two heterogeneous worlds in one. In Rancière’s words, “Dissensus is not a confrontation between interests or opinions. It is the demonstration (manifestation) of a gap in the sensible itself. Political demonstration makes visible that which had no reason to be seen; it places one world in another.” (ibid.: 38) Therefore, dissensus is an implication of democracy. It eliminates the reduction of democracy that is caused by consensus.

As mentioned before, democracy is neither a regime nor a form of society for Rancière. He claims that all representative regimes are oligarchic, because it is always ruled by a few. Rancière states that “we do not live in democracies ... we live in States of oligarchic law.” (Rancière 2007a: 73) According to him, we live in oligarchies because that is all we can live in. However, by showing that democracy is not a regime, and in this age, all regimes are oligarchies, he separates democracy from all bureaucratic and legal forms. Thus, as it was mentioned before he propounds the possibility of democracy as the essence of politics.

The final passage of ‘Hatred of Democracy’ (2007a) is the most fitting end to this chapter: “Democracy is as bare in its relation to the power of wealth as it is to the power of kinship that today comes to assist and to rival it. It is not based on any nature of things nor guaranteed by any institutional form. It is not borne along by any historical necessity and does not bear any. It is only entrusted to the constancy of its specific acts. This can provoke fear, and so hatred, among those who are used to exercising the magisterium of thought. But among those who know how to share with anybody and

everybody the equal power of intelligence, it can conversely inspire courage, and hence joy." (ibid.: 96,97)



3. RANCIERE'S APPROACH TO AESTHETICS

Aesthetics is defined as the philosophical study of beauty and taste in general. It is closely related to the philosophy of art, which centers around the nature of art and the interpretation as well as the evaluation of individual works of art. Rancière argues that this traditional definition legitimizes division and stratification in society by establishing hierarchies in the sensible world. As mentioned in previous chapter the distribution of sensible categorizes people's senses in relation to their positions. When considered from this point of view, the ruling class and the people who are ruled do not have the same sensory capacities. In order to establish a more egalitarian approach, Rancière redefines aesthetics. His redefinition of aesthetics neither regulates the social assignment of taste nor develops qualifications for the sense experiences. It rather designates the perceptual understanding of the sensible. Therefore, similar to politics, aesthetics, is fundamentally associated with a particular distribution of sensible that organizes a conclusive order of perception based on the methods which decide what will be seen and heard, in addition to what can be said and done.

Rancière claims that any social community, with its divisions and hierarchies, is organized on a Kantian a priori (will be discussed in detail in the next section) perception of space and time, which determines both inclusive and exclusive forms. This interpretation of aesthetics broadens its extent beyond the historical definition and incorporates the conceptual state of visibility as well as political nature of aesthetics.

According to Kant, there are three ways to make sense of a sense given. Rancière claims these three ways are directly related to the three principles which establish the distribution of sensible. (Rancière 2009b: 1) First comes the order of knowledge in which the faculty of understanding, obtains the input of the faculty of imagination to subordinate the sense given. In contrast, the second way is the law of desire in which the faculty of imagination subjugates the faculty of understanding. In this configuration, sense itself is doubled, which includes a specific sense-sense relation. This results in two possible outcomes; conjunctive or disjunctive. It is conjunctive when it functions within established rules and disjunctive if there is no rule between faculty relations.

These two ways determine a hierarchical order, whereas the third way does not allow any hierarchies between faculties. In this particular instance, there is no subjugation in between faculties, instead there is a free play.

Kant calls this way of making sense ‘aesthetic judgment’, which differs from the ‘cognitive judgments’ and ‘practical judgments’ by escaping from “the hierarchical relationship between a high faculty and a low faculty, that is, escapes in the form of a positive neither/nor.” (ibid.: 2) Thus, the aesthetic experience is an augmentation of a priori (distribution of the sensible) “a third term that cannot be described as a part but as an activity of redistribution, an activity that takes the form of a neutralization.” (ibid.) Rancière defines this supplement that exposes and neutralizes the division as dissensus. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, dissensus cannot be considered as a pacification but rather as a neutralization. Thus, it differs from the disjunctive function of the faculties as an addition which introduces a more progressive approach of treating the conflict. It can only be considered as dissensus when the opposition itself is neutralized.

Rancière claims that there is another way of interpreting the matters of conflict, an ethical way in which he directly relates to consensus. In his words, “the ethical must be understood from the original sense of ethos. Ethos first meant abode before it meant the way of being that suits an abode. The ethical law first is the law that is predicated on a location.” (ibid.: 3) According to Rancière, there are two ways of understanding the ethical relation, determined by the consideration of the location’s inner perception or its relation to the outside. When the ethical law is considered as the law of the inside, it integrates the distribution of collective capacity with the alternative capacities in the distribution of the sensible. Thus, the ethical law ties a location, an occupation, and a capacity together by putting the faculty of cognition ahead of the faculty of sensation. Consequently, as previously discussed, this hierarchy between the faculties results in a hierarchy in the social life. The ethical law can also be considered as the law of the outside which correlates with the disjunctive law of desire. In this case, there is no rule between the faculties, the one on the outside (the other, the thing, the sublime) is both

inferior and superior to the one on the inside because the outsider is immeasurable and unsubstitutable according to the law of distribution.

The aesthetic dimension rejects both of the laws based on the location, which includes the law of inside and the outside. Ethical law is disassembled by the aesthetic dimension into three terms; "the ethical distribution of the same, the different, and the Other" (ibid.: 4). Aesthetic configuration opposes this distribution by defining it as "the redistribution of the same and the different, the division of the same and the dismissal of difference." (ibid.)

As previously mentioned, the object of aesthetic judgment that Kant formulated does not include the law of knowledge or the law of desire. Therefore, aesthetic experience can be defined as a supplement to the ethical distribution. As a result, aesthetics subordinates the ethical. In Rancière's words "The course of the shifts in the relation between aesthetic and ethical starts with the introduction of the excess as aesthetic, moves on to the precipitation of the ethical as an equal, alternative perspective to the aesthetic excess." (ibid.: 3)

In conclusion, while Rancière considers politics and aesthetics as inherently connected, he does not treat them as separate conceptual entities. He tries to demonstrate how they are entangled, which can be viewed as an interconnection between two internalized others. In order to understand this interconnection, what Rancière refers to the aesthetics of politics and the politics of aesthetics will be examined.

3.1 Aesthetics of Politics

In Rancière's discourse the aesthetic dimension of political experience first becomes visible in *'The Nights of Labor'* (1981). While he restages "the birth of the so-called 'worker's movement' as an aesthetic movement" (Rancière 2003: 203) in this work, he regards aesthetics as a matter of time and space in Platonic terms, which is thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter. In *'Disagreement'* (1995), he

conceptualizes the aesthetic dimension of politics on the grounds of experiencing a common-sensible world. Although he first uses the concept of aesthetics of politics in his *'The Politics of Aesthetics'* (2004), this concept takes center stage in *'Disagreement'* (1995).

As a start, it is necessary to understand the reason why Rancière sets his approach to aesthetics of politics apart from Walter Benjamin's aestheticization of politics. According to Benjamin, the aestheticization of politics supposes the utilization of beauty for the sake of politics, particularly in the era of the masses under fascist regimes. Benjamin says that communism's response to this was politicizing art (Benjamin 2006: 270) which was appointed to resist the ways art is abused by fascism and reveal art's revolutionary potential. Therefore, for Benjamin art and politics are different entities, as he separates the aestheticization of politics and politicizing art in a clear manner. He points out that Benjamin's disjunctive approach is fundamentally different from his model of bilateral overlap of these two entities, in which aesthetics of politics can counteract with politics of aesthetics (which will be discussed in detail in the next section). Moreover, Rancière states that in modern times politics has never been aestheticized since it has always inherently been aesthetic. In Rancière's words: "For me, politics is aesthetic in itself, and in a sense, it was constituted as such prior to art. It is in politics that the aesthetic question was raised for the first time under the form: what kind of sensible common world does politics constitute and who can take part in this world? ... who has the capacity to be a political subject, and what form of sensible experience produces or forbids that capacity?" (Rancière 2019: 10)

In order to answer these questions, it is essential to revisit the *'Critique of Pure Reason'*, and more specifically the *'Transcendental Aesthetic'*, where Kant states that our perception of the sensible world is formed by a priori concepts. Thus, our experiences are built upon both the cumulation of sensory data and processing this data by a priori forms of perception. Consequently, a priori assigns what can be considered as a sense experience.

In *'Disagreement'*, Rancière points out the correlation between the ethical implications of Kant's a priori and Aristotle's political community. As argued in the previous chapter, at the foundation of the Aristotelian political community, there are two possible approaches to the sensual experience (logos and phone), which divide society unequally based on their sensible properties. Therefore, aesthetic division as an a priori constitutes and legitimates the social division in regards to sensible properties. In Rancière's words, "the legitimacy of domination has always rested on the evidence of a sensory division between different humanities." (Rancière 2009a: 31) Thus, it can be said that every social order is, in essence, an aesthetic order, which defines "what is seen and what can be said about it, who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time." (Rancière 2004b: 13) According to Rancière, the aesthetics of politics in its essence, is defining politics as the struggle of who and what is heard and seen. In his opinion, politics "is an activity of reconfiguration of that which is given to the sensible." (Rancière 2000: 115) As indicated, this whole process is a matter of appearances that is fundamentally structured aesthetically; which puts, 'aesthetics' at the core of politics.

3.2 Politics of Aesthetics

Rancière's understanding of aesthetics is twofold. On the one hand, the fundamental context of aesthetic is not about art, but it is about what defines the sensible experience. He connects 'aesthetics' to human experience in general through how aesthetics designates the experience of the everyday world and who can share this experience as seen in the aesthetics of politics. On the other hand, aesthetics refers to a particular regime to identify art in a historically determined manner, which reconstructs the classifications of sensory experience, including its perception. According to Rancière, the aesthetic regime of art represents: "a mode of articulation between ways of doing and making, their corresponding forms of visibility, and possible ways of thinking about their relationships (which presupposes a certain idea of thought's effectivity)." (Rancière 2004b: 10) Thus, for Rancière aesthetics has the potential to alter the perspective of "the world of common experience as the world of shared impersonal experience". (Rancière 2010: 142) The indicated shift facilitates the creation

of the infrastructure of common experience which makes the development of new approaches to construct common objects and new prospects of personal articulations possible.

As discussed in the previous section, using the example of the workers revolution as an aesthetic revolution, Rancière identifies the aesthetic dimension of politics. However, Rancière emphasizes that the aesthetic revolution cannot be reduced to political disruption. The revolution embodies a deeper and more inclusive conceptualization, which changes the identity of art and aesthetic experience in a radical manner through an extensive cultural transformation. Rancière claims that before the aesthetic revolution that started around the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century following the French Revolution, art did not exist as a sphere of experience. As a result of the French Revolution and the opening of the Louvre Museum, art attained a new status, whereas before, art was subjected to a dual hierarchy. On the one hand, there was the academic hierarchy wherein the artwork was tied to the nobility of the subjects it depicts. On the other hand, there was the social hierarchy which tied the artwork to its function, such as; the deification of the monarchy, the illustration of religious doctrines, as well as decorating the backdrop for the elite. After the revolution, the public gained access to the artworks, for the first time. This liberated the artworks from being bound to the hierarchies and granted them the right to be seen as the expression of a collective heritage. The accessibility of art and the representation of the masses in artworks consigned the hierarchies to oblivion along with the principle of distinction that determines what is considered as art and what is not. As a consequence, any object, whether mundane or not, attains a place under the frame of aesthetic experience. Furthermore, when the borders that separate the objects of art from the other dimensions of experience lose their meaning, artworks become available to everyone in an equal manner.

In this regard, for Rancière the ‘aesthetic revolution’ went beyond a fresh understanding of art, and meant “a new idea of thought itself, an idea of the power of thought outside itself, a power of thought in its opposite.” (Rancière 2005: 17) From this point of view, based on Kant's aesthetic judgment, Rancière defines aesthetic as “an

idea of thought, a mode of thought that unfolds about works of art, taking them as witnesses to a question: a question that bears on the sensible and on the power that inhabits the sensible prior to thought, as the unthought in thought.” (Rancière 2004b: 1-2) Following the publication of the *‘The Critique of the Power of Judgment’*, Schiller translated this philosophical text into a political context influenced by the French Revolution, by applying the tension between faculties and placing it in between formal and sensible drives. The core of which is the idea that aesthetics does not just provide a critique for politics, it also is a supplement for its losses and mistakes. In his words, “only the aesthetic mode of communication unites society because it relates to that which is common to all.” (Schiller 2004: 27. Letter) According to Schiller, the French Revolution was a failure that transformed into terror because the revolution mirrored the state, which was grounded in the traditional partition of the faculties between knowledge and sense, in favor of the knowledge. On the contrary, for him, the main objective of a revolution should be eliminating inequality by putting an end to the power of ‘active’ knowledge subduing the ‘passive’ sensation through neutralizing it. This new approach to the partition of sensuousness (the redistribution of the sensible) creates coherence between the faculties and gives a new meaning to universality.

Following Kant and Schiller, Rancière signifies the link between aesthetic revolution and the human revolution by claiming that the “aesthetic revolution was the implementation of equal capacity.” (Rancière 2019: 11) Thus, for Rancière, aesthetics, as a kind of experience, has always presumed a collective life in which the common hierarchies are removed, modelled after Kant's *sensus communis* (common sense) that presumes the judgment of taste as both inherently individual and universal.

According to Kant, aside from the aesthetic judgment, there are two types of judgments, which are cognitive and practical that Kant also considers universal in a different sense. He refers to their universality as 'objective universality'. In this case, the universality does not stem from the human subject who casts the judgment but rather from the object of the judgment. Hence in comparison to cognitive and practical judgments, the universality of aesthetic judgments is subjective. In the first section of *The Critique of the Power of Judgment’*, Kant emphasizes the subjective nature of

judgement of taste through the experience of beauty. He claims: “In order to decide whether or not something is beautiful, we do not relate the representation by means of understanding to the object for cognition, but rather relate it by means of the imagination (perhaps combined with the understanding) to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The judgment of taste is therefore not a cognitive judgment, hence not a logical one, but is rather aesthetic, by which is understood one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective.” (Kant 2001: 89) According to Kant the subjective nature of the judgment of taste lies beneath its disinterested character, which he explains with the example of the palace in the same book. Wherein the beauty of the palace cannot be claimed either by the owners or its builders. Therefore, it should be acknowledged outside its social use and signification, because in Kant’s regard, “Taste is the faculty of judging an object or a kind of representation through a satisfaction or dissatisfaction without any interest.” (ibid.: 91) Thus, for Kant, “what matters is what I make of this representation in myself, not how I depend on the existence of the object.” (ibid., 91) When it comes to the universal nature of judgment of taste, he explains “For since it is not grounded in any inclination of the subject (nor in any other underlying interest), but rather the person making the judgment feels himself completely free with regard to the satisfaction that he devotes to the object, he cannot discover as grounds of the satisfaction any private conditions, pertaining to his subject alone, and must therefore regard it as grounded in those that he can also presuppose in everyone else; consequently he must believe himself to have grounds for expecting a similar pleasure of everyone.” (ibid.: 96) Nonetheless, the concepts do not transfer into the senses as pleasure or displeasure, the universal validity of experience of beauty does not emerge from concepts or relate to objects as in cognitive or practical judgements. Instead, it emerges from the transcendental principle of the common acceptability through the free play of understanding and imagination since everyone has the cognitive faculties. In Kant’s words: “In all judgments by which we declare something to be beautiful, we allow no one to be of a different opinion, without, however, grounding our judgment on concepts, but only on our feeling, which we therefore make our ground not as a private feeling, but as a common sense.” (ibid.: 123) Therefore “the idea of a communal sense, i.e., a faculty for judging that in its reflection takes account (a priori)

of everyone else's way of representing in thought, in order as it were to hold its judgment up to human reason as a whole." (ibid.: 173)

In these terms, Kantian common sense differs from the traditional meaning of the notion which Aristotle conceptualized. For Aristotle common sense involves both moral and cognitive judgments, thus it is a component of our social and moral being in which there is no free play between faculties. Kant claims that morality rather depends on cognitive faculties instead of feelings. Through combining free play of the faculties and the disinterested character of aesthetic judgment, Kant identifies *sensus communis* as the a priori feature of aesthetic judgments. Thus, the judgment of the beautiful relies upon presupposition of the presence of a common sense. Moreover, according to Kant, only aesthetic judgments form a common sense since it is a judgment based on feelings unifying the external senses in relation to a given object. Following Kant, Rancière claims that, the presupposition of common sense as a sense equally shared by everyone has the promise of a new, universal distribution of sensible, which constitutes a non-hierarchical mode of being. From that point, Rancière takes aesthetics as "the signifier of a form of sensory equality, a form of shared human capacity" (Rancière 2019: 11), which embodies a radical political essence. Thus, aesthetic experience for Rancière lies above from ordinary forms of experience because it establishes a space of equality.

Rancière takes Bourdieu's criticism of Kant in order to reveal "the paradoxical link between the 'separateness' of aesthetic experience and the framing of a political subjectification." (Rancière 2005: 15) With his contestatory reading of Bourdieu, Rancière demonstrates the interconnection between aesthetics of politics and politics of aesthetics. First of all, Bourdieu in his 1984 book '*Distinction*' claims that he wants to give "a scientific answer to the old questions of Kant's critique of judgement, by seeking in the structure of the social classes the basis of the systems of classification which structure perception of the social world and designate the objects of aesthetic enjoyment." (Bourdieu 1984: xii-xiv) Moreover, he states that aesthetic taste is driven by socio-economic structures instead of defining a universal meaning to aesthetic judgement. For him taste represents "the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices."

(ibid.: 173) Thus, he claims that the capability to comprehend art and assert judgments about artworks is determined by socio-economic positions. Moreover, he describes that the socio-cultural structure enables the ruling class to control the oppressed masses and validates their domination through their ability to comprehend art, express taste, and assign value. Accordingly, for Bourdieu aesthetic judgment as an independent and autonomous entity is no more than an illusion which masks and legitimizes the truth of inequality. Bourdieu develops his critique with the disinterested aesthetic judgment. He claims that there is an interest in disinterestedness, because for him the disinterested aesthetic judgment is available only to a few who can abstract themselves from material circumstances and impossible to those who cannot abstract. As he states “Intellectuals could be said to believe in the representation—literature, theatre, painting—more than in the things represented, whereas the people chiefly expect representations and the conventions which govern them to allow them to believe ‘naively’ in the things represented.” (ibid.: 5) Therefore, for Bourdieu, the source of taste is not the individual and an independent reflection of an object, it rather is the extension of material privilege which produces objectivity and it is “secured by consensus on the meaning (sens) of practices and the world.” (Bourdieu 1992: 80) Thus, as opposed to Kant, for Bourdieu judgments of taste derives from cognitive faculties and the cognitive character that he assigns to taste, makes arguing about the autonomy of aesthetic experience absurd. Because in Bourdieu's opinion taste assigns the social position through implementation of an identity. He claims that “the working-class ‘aesthetic’ is a dominated aesthetic, which is constantly obliged to define itself in terms of the dominant aesthetics of the ruling class.” (Bourdieu 1984: 41). However, he states that: “The pure aesthetic is rooted in an ethic, or rather, an ethos of elective distance from the necessities of the natural and social world” (ibid.: 5) which is a privilege of upper classes. Thus, for him, it signifies a distinction between classes and legitimizes the dominance in the name of who has no social or economic necessity.

According to Rancière, by exhibiting aesthetics as social distinction, Bourdieu legitimizes the social inequality. He argues that by dividing people based on their origins or their activity, Bourdieu unconsciously develops his discourse from the perspective of the police order in which class is an operator of oppression. Rancière

argues that Bourdieu reduces aesthetics to the social and calls it ‘demystification in the name of the social.’ For Rancière, with this reduction, Bourdieu leaves no room for emancipation. First of all, Bourdieu's sociological demystification affirms the hierarchal distribution by presupposing an inequality in the first place. As it is mentioned thoroughly in the first chapter through Jacotot, for Rancière there is no path from ignorance to knowledge or from inequality to equality. Therefore, Bourdieu's approach, which uses inequality as a starting point can only reproduce inequality by its nature. Apart from this, the distinction Bourdieu makes with those capable to see truth and those who only see appearances has metapolitical tendencies. For him, the emancipatory promise of Kant's aesthetic theory is an illusion, thus aesthetics is no more than “denegation of the social” (ibid.: 9), which hides the socio-economic truth of the working class. According to Rancière, similar to philosophy, sociology as “a science of rankings, setting individuals in their proper places and reproduced in judgments” (Rancière 2003, 167) depends on the division of labor. It manifests itself as a comprehensive science of the social order, by ensuring everyone to behave according to their position in the society, echoing the Platonic order. “The sociologist-king”, (Rancière 2004a: 189) Rancière writes “to ensure his kingship ... absolutized the arbitrary.” (ibid.: 179) Thus, for Rancière, Bourdieu's enthronement rests on justifying the ideal of equality as an illusion. Bourdieu, similar to Plato, illustrates social classes as static and self-reproducing, leaving no room for mixing or imitation, which Rancière articulates as: “The subjects of this science, like the warriors of the Republic, must be unable to ‘imitate’ anything else than their own dye.” (ibid.: 189) However, for Rancière the working class is not doomed to be a passive reflection of their social condition. Moreover, Bourdieu ignores the emancipatory promise within art, by excluding the worker class from making disinterested judgement. By distinguishing art on the ground of hierarchically organized divisions of genres and spectators by their social positions, he is in line with the logic of representative regime of art, which will be discussed later. For Rancière, the analytical formation of '*Distinction*' is aligned with the aesthetic traditions that Kant objected to, in which the connection between the aesthetic experience and the class division expands the array of experiences to simultaneously qualify and disqualify the individuals.

Rancière epitomizes his criticism of Bourdieu with his archival research on 19th century working class intellectuals by claiming his research provides “a much more dialectical relationship between the social, the aesthetic and the political” (Rancière 2005: 15) than Bourdieu's oversimplified engagement between politics and aesthetics. In this research Rancière argues, the workers, who identify as “poets or knights, priests or dandies” (Rancière 1983: 200), contradict Bourdieu’s hierarchal distribution. They simultaneously reconstruct “the partitions of time and space in which the practice of labour was framed, and that framed at the same time a whole set of relations” (Rancière 2005: 13) by using night time for occupations which are not assigned for them. According to Rancière, their engagement with poetry and literature invalidates Bourdieu's assumption about the working class. Their involvement in these endeavors was essential in their strive for emancipation, which Rancière explains: “The ‘politicization’ of the worker's experience went along with the sense of a common ownership of the powers of language as well as of the spectacles of nature or the decorum of the town, and with the capacity of appropriating for themselves the practice of poetic language and the ‘disinterested’ gaze on the visible.” (ibid.: 15) By abolishing the existing distribution, they prove “the possibility for anybody to appropriate for him- or herself another ethos than the ethos suited to their condition.” (ibid.: 16) Rancière refers to this as “process of dis-identification” (ibid.: 14), which is the essence of aesthetic of politics. Aside from exemplifying aesthetics of politics, the archival research demonstrates the emancipatory promise of politics of aesthetics, via Gabriel Gauny's assertion on the ‘acquisition of the aesthetic gaze.’ Rancière quotes Gauny: “Believing himself at home, he loves the arrangement of a room so long as he has not finished laying the floor. If the window opens out onto a garden or commands a view of a picturesque horizon, he stops his arms a moment and glides in imagination towards the spacious view to enjoy it better than the possessors of the neighboring residences.” (Rancière 1989: 81) For Rancière, this “disjunction between the activity of the hands and the activity of the eyes” (Rancière 2016: 142), a single experience through a disinterested look, is what emancipation initially means. He states that Bourdieu’s critique precisely legitimizes “the old hierarchical norm: people must have the senses that match their condition.” (Rancière 2019: 12) Moreover, he continues by claiming that “emancipation meant just the contrary: workers stop using their senses as workers

must do. This is the aesthetic aspect at the core of workers' emancipation. And this is basically what aesthetics means to me." (ibid.) Rancière refers to Gauny as an aesthete, stating that his gaze keeps "with the idea, spelled out by Kant and Schiller, according to which aesthetic experience is a specific sphere of experience which invalidates the ordinary hierarchies incorporated in everyday sensory experience." (Rancière 2005: 15) According to Rancière even Gauny's text interprets Bourdieu's definition of aesthetic illusion by talking about 'belief and imagination', he reminds that this text was not published accidentally in a revolutionary worker's newspaper. In the same manner, Rancière rejects Bourdieu's claim condemning Kant's notions for lacking historical context and reminds that Kant's third critique was released a year after the French Revolution. Rancière claims Kant's emphasis on the universality of aesthetic experience transcends the inequality of the social orders. He points out "In the formal universality of the judgment of taste (that is to say, in the exigency of communication inherent to it), he seeks the anticipation of the perceptible equality to come." (Rancière 2004a: 198) However, Rancière does not declare that the universality ingrained in aesthetic judgments directly affects the society in an egalitarian way. Instead, he states that aesthetic experience embodies a trait that resembles a promise or anticipation of equality. According to Rancière, when considered as an independent entity, art is essentially based on the same axiom of equality, which is the central discourse of political demonstration. As a matter of fact, his theory of politics of aesthetics is originally based on the presumption of equality. In order to illustrate the way axiom of equality is expressed within art, Rancière theorization of aesthetic regime of art must be examined.

3.3 Regimes of Art

According to Rancière, similar to politics, art can also be considered as dissensual. However, the form of dissensus in politics and art differs from each other. In politics, dissensus establishes a collective subject who challenges the police order by its emergence. Hence, the re-distribution of the sensible results in subjectivation. Contrarily in art, the form of dissensual activity does not establish a collective, rather it reconstructs the "forms of visibility and intelligibility of artistic practice and reception"

(Rancière 2010: 172). It reveals the conditional nature of aesthetic significance by offering fundamentally different experiences. Thus, art challenges what is sensible, thinkable, and therefore possible. Furthermore, when it comes to politics of aesthetics, Rancière defines it as “the way in which practices and forms of visibility of art themselves intervene in the distribution of the sensible and its reconfiguration, in which they distribute spaces and times, subjects and objects, the common and the singular.” (Rancière 2009a: 25)

As previously mentioned, he dates the birth of this regime back to ‘the aesthetic revolution’, which occurred between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. According to Rancière, “before this aesthetic moment, art did not exist as a sphere of experience. Art meant skill or know-how. In the old tradition, there was a distinction, separating from the mechanical arts, destined to utilitarian needs, the fine arts— the arts of imitation, destined for a privileged group of people, men of taste.” (Rancière 2019: 11) He states that aesthetic regime has the promise to alter priori perceptions by introducing new experiences. Founding its production and reception on equality, it promises a new distribution, a re-distribution of sensible while disturbing the hierarchal patterns of understanding and redefining the sensible.

According to Rancière, the aesthetic regime, as a counter-concept, questions and unites several twentieth-century art theories. Rancière seeks to draw attention to the historical nature and political foundation of art, and how it assigns a meaning to the sensible, by re-categorizing art through the distribution of the sensible. He devises three different ways of distribution of sensible: the ethical regime of images, the representative regime of art, and the aesthetic regime of art, taking their roots from Plato, Aristotle, and Schiller. He claims that his formation of regimes resembles Foucault's archaeological method, which uncovers what sort of structures are similar in historical discourses that Foucault refers as ‘episteme’. In ‘*The Archeology of Knowledge*’, he defines episteme as “the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems.” (Foucault 1972: 191) However, deviating from Foucault, Rancière argues that several regimes can exist at the same time and in the same place. In

short a regime is a set of principles that categorizes certain practices as art and this categorization allows “the politics of a particular practice and conception of art to come to light. It allows us to describe how art relates to and departs from the broader distribution of bodies, capacities, and practices.” (Tanke 2011: 77)

The first regime which Rancière calls the ethical regime of images, as its name indicates, cannot be considered as art but rather as a regime of visibility. According to Rancière, in this regime, art is not identified as such but is subsumed under the question of images. Rancière states that Platonian “imitations are modelled on the ‘truth’ whose final aim is to educate the citizenry in accordance with the distribution of occupations in the community.” (Rancière 2004b: 16) This prevents art from being a substantive form of creation, thus works of art have no autonomy in the ethical regime. Rancière claims that: “As a specific type of entity, images are the object of a twofold question: the question of their origin (and consequently their truth content) and the question of their end or purpose, the uses they are put to and the effects they result in.” (ibid.: 16) Thus, in the ethical regime, the primary concern is the cause and effect relation between the image and the moral of the community. The foundation of this regime is based on Plato's critique of mimesis, which Rancière reveals with the example of mimetician. As previously mentioned, for Plato to achieve a harmonious well-organized community, every individual should only do a specific thing, which is destined by their nature. However, the mimetician disrupts the harmony of distribution with his existence as a man of duplication, by doing two things at once. While the fiction created by the philosopher, the only one who has the right to compose fiction in the Platonian discourse, promises order of the city, the introduction of new images and narratives provided by the mimetician can potentially disengage the established community. Therefore, the introduction of new images as well as the mimetician should be banned from city to protect the order of the city. In order to define the integrity of an 'image', which represents an idea, Plato devises a distinction between true arts that maintains the cohesion of the community and the malignant simulacra that weakens the ties of the community. For Rancière, Plato not only bans the mimetician from the city, but he also puts art under the direct surveillance of police. Additionally, in Rancière's opinion, the ethical regime is still in motion regulating the modern art forms, whether it be the

debate about the effects of films on their audiences or the sacralization of the museum space.

While Rancière uses Plato's *'Republic'* to establish the conceptual structure of the ethical regime, he applies the classical rhetoric from Aristotle's *'Poetics'* to express the fundamental philosophy of the representative regime of art. It differs from the ethical regime by establishing art's essence through linking poesis, aisthesis and mimesis which devises an order for doing and making. In other words, there is a normative relationship between the way of doing and the mode of being affected, and together they form the laws of mimesis. The mimetic principle isolates specific forms of doing and making that generates imitations. However, mimesis does not reduce art to the creation of copies. Mimetic principle rather attempts to fit the imitation into the certain rules which evaluate if the imitation is art or not. It is a pragmatic principle that provides art visibility. Therefore, this regime replaces the image with art as well as the craftsman with the artist, thus generates its own field and autonomy. Rancière refers to this regime as fine arts where every artwork has a specific statement that embodies social, political, and moral virtues.

The conception of 'representative regime' first appeared in *'La Parole Muette'*, published in 1998. In this book, a study on literature, Rancière gives a detailed description of the principles of representative regime. Over the years, he expands his findings to apply to other art forms such as visual arts and film. In *'La parole Muette'*, Rancière defines the representative regime using four principles, the first of which he calls 'the fictional principle'. The first feature of this principle considers the representation of actions as the essence of a poem, instead of the use of language. The second feature is the evaluation of fictional worlds in their time and space liberating art from the previous regime's ethical judgments and ontological perceptions. The second principle is the 'principle of genericity', a complex expression introducing the idea of the genre that separates one fiction from others, each having its own rules. According to Aristotle, the genre of fiction can be determined foremost by the object represented. Whether it can be considered epos or satire, tragedy or comedy depends on the subject of the story, the nobles represented by the noble genres such as tragedy, whereas the

poor are depicted in satires and comedies. The third principle is the ‘principle of convenance’, which classifies the work of art by deciding whether it is proper or improper in regards to four different aspects of the artwork. One regards the action the subjects portray in the artwork and compare them to the human conditions and passions they possess, and the second evaluates whether these conditions and passions correlate with the characters or the protagonist. The third one inspects the decency and taste and the final one oversees the logic. If the actions of specific characters follow a logical pattern. The last principle is the ‘principle of actuality’, which concerns the actuality of speech whether or not the expressions are in line with the hierarchies. Under these principles, the representative regime assumes that there is a certain relation between the meaning of the work and its effect on the audience. Since in this regime there is only one meaning and truth, it is presumed that the audience perceives the same meaning and reaches the same conclusion, which has already been determined by the dominant understanding of each period and reached as a result of political consensus. Thus, according to Rancière, these principles echo the oligarchic order of police.

Both the ethical regime of images and the representative regime of art ground on a relation between poesis and aisthesis. On the contrary, with the aesthetic regime of art, this relation between poesis and aisthesis is broken. As mentioned before, with the emergence of the aesthetic revolution, the subjects, which had no account before, became the main focus of some artists and writers. This ended all the hierarchies that representative regime imposed, through embracing equality of presented subjects, contents, and styles. The aesthetic regime disrupts the hierarchical distribution and gives art a singularity. Therefore, the aesthetic regime alters the priori forms through the creation of new experiences. Founding its production and reception on a form of equality, it promises a new distribution, a re-distribution of sensible while disturbing the conventional patterns of understanding and the sensible.

In the aesthetic regime of art, Rancière regards art as “an autonomous form of life” (Rancière 2004b: 26). Nevertheless, Rancière points out that the aesthetic regime of art involves an autonomy, which is paradoxical by its nature. The autonomy he refers to does not belong to art, but it rather belongs to the aesthetic experience, as this

experience depends on the rejection of art's autonomy as a singular form of making. Hence, it is determined by the heteronomy of art. In other words, the aesthetic regime demands two antithetical conditions: an autonomous one, which establishes art as a singular entity, and a heteronomous one, which eliminates the borders between life and art. He bases his conceptualization of the aesthetic regime of art, which arises from these interconnected two antithetical conditions, on a passage of Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*. In the fifteenth letter, Schiller states: "Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly Man when he is playing." (Schiller 2004: 80) He promises that this paradox "will support the whole fabric of aesthetic art, and the still more difficult art of living." (ibid.) For Rancière this passage articulates the political aspect of the aesthetic regime of art, which he considers as the first manifesto of the aesthetic regime of art. He states: "The entire question of the 'politics of aesthetics' - in other words, of the aesthetic regime of art - turns on this short conjunction. The aesthetic experience is effective inasmuch as it is the experience of that and. It grounds the autonomy of art, to the extent that it connects it to the hope of 'changing life'." (Rancière 2010: 116). From this point of view, Rancière suggests three major scenarios: "Art can become life. Life can become art. Art and life can exchange their properties" (ibid.: 119). He states that these scenarios have a threefold relation which can be understood in different combinations and are open to interplay. These three major scenarios are the three forms of politics of aesthetics which propose "re-arrangements of its space, re-configuring art as a political issue or asserting itself as true politics." (ibid.) Thus, Rancière states that art establishes its own politics, in other words, it's metapolitics.

At the end of the fifteenth letter, Schiller reveals the relation between autonomy and heteronomy by using the example of the marble head of the Roman goddess Juno Ludovisi. For the viewer, the statue is neither an imitation of a given reality, nor an active form given to a passive substance. The statue is considered as art because it inheres a specific sensorium in which the 'free appearance' of the statue demonstrates its idleness and indifference, which is the essential feature of its divinity. On the one hand, the statue owes its autonomy to its idleness and indifference and it deems itself as a whole separate form, an independent entity from the worries of daily life. The statue is

alien to the desires and thoughts of the subject looking at it, it is in an unreachable position. The political capacity of the statue derives from preserving the distance between itself and the audience. This approach establishes the concept of 'art for art's sake'. It is the first of two-opposing politics of aesthetics, in which life can become art. On the other hand, in front of the 'free appearance' of the statue, the audience embodies what Shiller refers as free play, which emerges from the neutral interaction between the sensual drive and the formal drive and has no purpose other than itself. The 'free play' suspends all relations of dominations such as; form over matter, state over people, mind over sense. As a result of this suspension, the new community is formed upon sensory freedom and equality. Experience in this free, autonomous community is not divided into separate categories and disciplines. There are no distinctions between daily life, art, politics and religion. The statue had social and political significance in Greek society. It was produced as a statement of a common belief, not for the sake of art. Therefore, the political capacity of the statue depends on its heteronomy, where art and life intertwine. This approach establishes the concept of 'art for life's sake.' It is the second of two-opposing politics of aesthetics, in which art can become life. Art is indifferent to other spheres of life and precisely because of this indifference, it intervenes with daily life by suspending the domination relations and loses its privilege. Therefore, two major politics of aesthetics, 'art for art's sake' and 'art for life's sake,' come into contact with each other, and this contact creates a tension.

The first two major scenarios generate two major movements in the modern age: modernism and postmodernism, which Rancière connects with autonomy and heteronomy. He claims that: "While 'free appearance' tends at first to evoke the autonomy dear to modernism, 'free play' is at first more flattering to postmodern ears." (Rancière 2009a: 27) In general modernism and postmodernism are often considered as two different stages. While modernism is regarded as a project of aesthetic purity, postmodernism is regarded as a goal of reuniting life with art. Moreover, when considered to be opposites, modernism is supposed to establish the institutional autonomy of art, and postmodernism is supposed to abolish this institutional autonomy. According to Rancière, they are unilateral understandings, which coincide with the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy.

As mentioned above, in modernism, art should not become a form of life, yet, on the contrary, life should find form in art. In this regard, by separating itself from the ordinary world, art does not recognize the hierarchical order of daily life. It is precisely the apolitical character of art that makes it political and egalitarian. Rancière refers this politics of aesthetics as a resistant form and epitomizes it with Adorno, who considered art as a 'refuge'. According to Adorno, both politics and art were directly governed by the capital. This meant that the boundary between art and politics became ambiguous and even disappeared. Culture was no longer a mass-born, but an industry that was offered to the masses by capital. Therefore, for Adorno art is only political when it is differentiated from the objects produced by mass culture. Thus, work of art renounces from the mundane world. He claims that "This renunciation places the pure image in a position opposed to bodily existence, and the image neutralizes the elements of existence within itself." (Horkheimer, Adorno 2002: 14) However, this approach defines each medium with sharp lines that distinguish it from other mediums. Thus, every field of art is autonomous in its purity, it has its own singularity. Such a distinction, however, also brings its own contradiction. Rancière explains this contradiction as: "Modernism is a conception of art which holds onto the aesthetic identification of art but refuses to accept the forms of disidentification in which it is carried out; it wants to hold onto art's autonomy but refuses to accept the heteronomy that is its other name." (Rancière 2009a: 68) He points out that modernism as purity of art, was first introduced by Marxists. He explains it as such: "even if the social revolution is abolished, a real break in art and the promise of emancipation can be sustained in its purity." (Rancière 2003: 206) Moreover, Rancière criticizes the common modernist ideology, which is based on a simplistic approach to anti-representational rupture. According to Rancière, this approach identifies anti-representational rupture just with restriction of figuration and imitation, which results in abstract painting. Instead, anti-representational rupture is the collapse of the system of rules that has lent the protection to the dominant conceptions of the culture. He states that: "mimesis is not resemblance but a certain regime of resemblance." (Rancière 2007b: 73) Modernism, therefore, cannot be considered as a representation of a specific period. It rather represents the awareness of history's aesthetic development. According to Rancière, leaving mimesis behind is not only the root of the autonomy of art, but also the origin of the heteronomy

of art. It makes the interactions between different fields of art possible and abolishes the separation between art and life.

Rancière rejects the historical transition from modernism to postmodernism as a radical change. He claims that it is instead a continuity in which postmodernism comes out of the failures of modernism. He further states that: “the notions of modernity and postmodernity misguidedly project, in the form of temporal succession, antagonistic elements whose tension infuses and animates the aesthetic regime of art in its entirety.” (Rancière 2009a: 42) As mentioned above in postmodernism the purpose of art is to eliminate its state of being art, thus, there is no distinction between art and everyday life, common experience becomes the main objective. In order to revolutionize life, postmodernism utilizes the daily life as artistic material. However, according to Rancière it is not a postmodern rupture that makes the boundaries vague between daily life and art, it is as old as modernity. He further claims that “true name for what is designated by the incoherent label modernity” (Rancière 2004b: 18) is aesthetic regime of art. Postmodernism coincides with the idea of ‘art for life’s sake,’ in which art becomes life, and it is in constant tension with the resistant form of politics of aesthetics. According to Rancière aesthetic regime of art’s existence depends on this tension. He states that: “The work’s solitude carries a promise of emancipation. But the fulfillment of that promise amounts to the elimination of art as a separate reality, its transformation into a form of life.” (Rancière 2009a: 36)

In this respect, the experience of art contains a promise to reconstruct the state of the human being. Based on both modernist and postmodernist approaches that Rancière incorporates into the aesthetic regime, the transforming power of art is expressed by the tension of two opposing politics of aesthetics.

4. THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ART

In a world crippled by a multitude of crises, art claims to be more political than ever. Art and activism now almost seem inseparable as many artists circulate their claims of being dissentient, by the formulas, which ultimately become “stereotypes that critique stereotypes”. (Rancière 2007c: 266) They try to raise awareness and evoke people for political action by drawing attention to countless issues, such as; wars, economic turmoil, environmental issues, xenophobia, racism, sexism, violence, and oppression throughout the world. Moreover, when the financial system passivates the revolutionary proletariat into the brink of absence, some artists adopt the role of the driving force behind the critical praxis. As a result, most self-proclaimed political artists have reintroduced the representative aesthetics that modernism surpassed.

Ironically, the global capitalist system seems to support these artists with all its means. Biennials, museums, and galleries spread around the world establish a consensus on contemporary art. Thus, in an implicit complicity with capital, so-called political artists and the capital are expanding their material and symbolic value every day. One of the ironic and cynical contradictions of contemporary art is that the artists who criticize or resist the problems of humanity caused directly or indirectly by the great capital, try to reach a broad audience through it. In this conjecture, Rancière problematizes the benefit of art to the ongoing collective resistance and opposition movements.

Initially, Rancière identifies politicized art as a form that tries to raise awareness about already known facts of commodity-driven society, underlying the obvious forms of domination to enlighten its audience. He sarcastically states that: “Nobody is unaware of these things.” (Rancière 2009c: 76) He further claims that comprehension of a problem does not grant a transformation. According to him, people do not abide by this systematized domination because they are unaware of it. Instead, they are stuck in their position inside the social order because they view themselves incapacitated and doubt their abilities for a transformation. Moreover, Rancière objects to this nominal resistance brought by the artwork for the reason that it creates an ouroboros, where representation of the problems within the social order, reproduces more of which it

attests in the first place. Thus, the explanatory reframing of everyday object as an artwork feeds and validates the commodity model of the capitalist system in which things transform into signs.

The second and more crucial problem about political art that Rancière points out regards art's efficacy. He claims that political art "compels us to revolt when it shows us revolting things, that it mobilizes when it itself is taken outside of the workshop or museum and that it incites us to oppose the system of domination by denouncing its own participation in that system." (Rancière 2010: 143) This presupposition embodies a particular relation of cause and effect, in which the awareness that the artwork imposes results in mobilization of the audience. According to Rancière the problem, however, is not in the moral or political validity of the transmitted message, but in the representation itself. The artwork that uses the representation mechanism produces itself as a mimetic and monolithic outcome, in which results are predetermined, the response and sensation patterns in each audience can be predicted. This approach reduces political art to a reactionary act that goes no further than the symbolic and ostentatious destruction of the system. In this respect, Rancière states that political art "is caught between two types of pedagogy: one that could be called representational mediation, and another that we might refer to as ethical immediacy." (ibid.: 137) According to Rancière, the logic of representation and the police order is inherently correlated, because they both limit the way we interpret the artwork, thus our positions and our experiences. Therefore, in his regard, the assumptions that hinder the freedom of the audience by establishing a harmony between the work and the audience is a direct reflection of the political consensus. In conclusion, for Rancière art cannot be political by being articulated into the predetermined ways of representation and sensation of the apparatus of representation. While representation itself is a problem of domination, the use of political art as a means of expression renders art ineffective.

As previously discussed, according to Rancière the relationship between art and politics is the relationship between the aesthetics of politics and the politics of aesthetics. In other words, it is all about how art practices and forms of visibility affect the sharing and reshaping the sensible. For Rancière, art and politics both have the

capacity of dissensus and thus the promise of redistribution of the sensible. Because, both work in the same space with the same principle, to the extent that they suspend the usual coordinates of sensory experience and reshape the network of relationships between times and spaces, subjects and objects, ordinary and unique. In Rancière's words: "art and politics do not constitute two permanent, separate realities whereby the issue is to know whether or not they ought to be set in relation. They are two forms of distribution of the sensible, both of which are dependent on a specific regime of identification. There are not always occurrences of politics, although there always exist forms of power. Similarly, there are not always occurrences of art, although there are always forms of poetry, painting, sculpture, music, theatre, and dance." (Rancière 2009b: 25-26) For that reason according to Rancière, what makes art political is not the messages and emotions art conveys about the order of the world, nor the way it represents the structures of society, the conflicts, and identities of social groups. On the contrary, art becomes political through its distance to these functions. In Rancière's words art becomes political when it provides "an organization of the sensible where there is neither a reality concealed behind appearances nor a single regime of presentation and interpretation of the given imposing its obviousness on all." (ibid.: 48–49) Therefore, for Rancière, instead of claiming to reveal a certain reality, art should provide freedom to interpret the work for the audience.

From this perspective, Rancière states that: "The problem is not what artists have to do to become political; the question has to be reversed: what do political subjects have to do with art?" (Rancière 2008: 74) This interchange of the object-subject relation allows him to interconnect dissensus with art, in which both the work of art and the audience are released from the cause and effect structure that limits them to a predetermined outcome. Rancière problematizes this cause and effect formulation, which puts its audience in a passive position in need to gain consciousness and become active. Rancière epitomizes this active-passive relation with Debord's critique of the spectacle by stating that "the idea that art has to give us more than a spectacle, more than something dedicated to the delight of passive spectators, because it has to act in favor of a society where everybody should be active. The 'critique of the spectacle' often remains the alpha and the omega of the 'politics of art'." (Rancière 2009b: 63)

Therefore, before Rancière's approach to the active-passive positioning of the spectator, it is crucial to analyze Guy Debord's critique of the spectacle.

4.1 Debord's Critique of Spectacle

Even though spectacle was formulated as a critical theory by Guy Debord, the idea of the spectacle had existed for centuries, which dates back to the beginning of recorded history. The concept of spectacle constitutes the very notion that encapsulates the identity of societies, as Bettina Bergmann suggests; "societies and people define themselves through spectacle." (Bergmann 1999: 10) The spectacle found its place in the formation of collective identity, with the rise of organized societies that were formed under a ruling body. Debord also considers the spectacle as a notion that predates capitalism. His theorization of the spectacle consists of two central elements. On the one hand, there is "the subjective alienation of consciousness that strives to go beyond the spectacular mediation" (Briziarelli, Armano 2017: 25) while on the other hand, there is "the objective alienation of productive activity and historical praxis." (ibid.) Accordingly, he utilizes the idea of the spectacle as a historical juncture which incapacitates individuals from shaping their history consciously. He formulates the spectacle as "the technological version of the exiling of human powers into a 'world beyond'; the culmination of humanity's internal separation." (Debord 2005: 12)

Debord starts his analysis of spectacle through the separation brought upon society by the mediation of illusions that creates a fabricated reality. He claims that the primary separation is the separation of society from the truth. According to Debord, society had been besieged and seized by the spectacle, which makes everything a part of it. Therefore, he considers the spectacle not just as a part of society but as its whole. Even though in Debord's theorization the spectacle predates capitalism, he puts capitalism as its main opposition to reveal capitalism's effects on contemporary society. In the first thesis of '*The Society of the Spectacle*', he claims that "The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail, presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was once directly lived, has

become mere representation.” (ibid.: 7) Moreover, for Debord, the spectacle does not represent the network of images, which is the product of modern technology, but the visual regimes contained in them. In which the reification of the commodity creates a period of integrative penetration into sensations and subjectivity. As a result, the sensationally indivisible power of capital is sensitized and naturalized as pleasure. He demonstrates the central antagonism between reality and representation, which reveals the essence of the spectacle throughout his book ‘*The Society of the Spectacle*’. At the same time, he also instrumentalizes the ubiquity of the term spectacle, which he uses to examine various themes organized in nine sections; including commodity, time, the proletariat, urbanism, and culture.

It is crucial to point out that Debord’s theorization of the spectacle is based on Hegelian Marxism. This suggests that in his opinion the reasons behind humanity’s incapability to create a conscious and dialectically free history are the notions of alienation, reification, and commodity fetishism. He reframes these canonic notions and proposes solutions and devises methods to diminish their effects from society. The first notion he reframes, 'alienation', was initially introduced as *Entfremdung* (estrangement) and *Entäußerung* (externalization), by Hegel in his book '*Phenomenology of Spirit*' (1807). For Hegel, alienation represents the estrangement between spirit and nature, a separation between the subject and object where the subject is incapable of recognizing the world he lives as his own. After Hegel's introduction, The Left Hegelians, which includes Feuerbach who is one of the philosophers that heavily influenced Debord, also recognize this fundamental separation. However, their conception of alienation is materialistic as opposed to the idealistic approach that Hegel implies. For them, the subject is not the spirit of an individual but their material existence. According to Feuerbach the basis of everything is nature and there is nothing outside of nature. Like everything else, the ideal is originated from the brain, thus it is a product of nature. He argues that human beings are alienated from themselves by the figure of god that they create by reflecting the essence within themselves. Their incapability lies in treating god as a separate being, by ignoring the fact that it is their own product. Marx takes Feuerbach’s concept of alienation and applies it differently. In his conception, the alienation of human beings is a result of the fetishization of machine, which is also their

own creation and they worship it as an entity separate from themselves. Debord incorporates this notion of alienation and in his rendition the subject gets alienated from his reality by the spectacle. Thus, the theoretical foundation of Debord's 'images' and 'representations', as mentioned in the paragraph above, derives from the Hegelian argument against the abstract systems of nondialectical thinking where there is a separation between the thought and its subject. As Hegel states, "Everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth, not as substance but as subject as well." (Hegel 1967: 80)

Debord links freedom to consciousness and states that in order to achieve self-determination to obtain freedom, the subject has to become conscious of himself, which resonates more with Feuerbach's theorization of self-consciousness. Feuerbach claims that: "Consciousness consists in a being becoming objective to itself; ... it is nothing apart, nothing distinct from the being which is conscious of itself." (Feuerbach 1989: 5) According to Feuerbach, the static identity between thought and reality can be replaced by the determination of identity through praxis. Debord applies Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's static thought, which Marx also adopted in his theorization, and claims that praxis is the only means to achieve freedom. From this point of view, Debord affirms that "there can be no freedom apart from activity, and within the spectacle, activity is nullified all real activity having been forcibly channeled into the global construction of the spectacle." (Debord 2005: 15) For Debord, when the production has been replaced by consumption, the producer has lost contact with the outcome of the product. Moreover, when the individual entered the stage of images with the one-way use of the mass media, which capitalist economic order utilized, "to be" first transformed into "to have" and then "to appear like". He states that as a result "individual reality is allowed to appear only if it is not actually real." (ibid.: 11) Thus, spectacle creates a false reality for the reason that the spectacle philosophizes reality rather than realizing philosophy. Hence it transforms people's lives, which are the sum of their concrete experiences, into a series of speculations. Spectacle produces this false reality by utilizing social relations, and as Debord states, "The root of the spectacle is that oldest of all social specializations, the specialization of power." (ibid.: 12) These powers in motion used to be found in religious nature, in which power camouflaged itself behind the 'mythical'

fabric of illusion until modern times. After industrialization, the spectacle became the successor of religion.

Contrary to Hegel's rationalism, Feuerbach regards the human being as sensuous. While the human being possesses reason and will, he claims that the essence of humanity is ultimately love. Feuerbach argues that the separation caused by alienation marks the loss of human nature. Debord's adaptation of separation caused by alienation, which he refers to as "the alpha and omega of the spectacle" (ibid.: 13) echoes Feuerbach's notion of losing human nature. Furthermore, Debord reframes it as a matter of living less due to too much contemplation, as he states, "the more he identifies with the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own life and his own desires." (ibid.: 16) In this sense, Debord connects the birth of the spectacle to 'the world's loss of the unity' which separates the alienated individuals from themselves and surrounds them with 'false reality'. Moreover, by means of the capitalist mode of production, "the spectacle appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of unification." (ibid.: 7) The unification, as Debord articulates, differs from its general interpretation insofar it depicts the 'false unity' of a 'lonely crowd' and reveals the conditions of the society composed by isolated individuals who are reunited 'only in their separateness'. (ibid.: 15,16)

In sum, Debord's insistence on proposing this correlation between unity and separation, emphasizes the capacity of late capitalism to combine all priori forms of separated powers through the means of hierarchy and specialization. While the spectacle seems to be universalized, this 'false unity' only represents reality in fragments while its prevalence transforms it into a physical environment. Thus, for Debord, the real power of the spectacle does not come from alienation but from its ability to 'appear like' reality, which he considers to be the most critical case of the reification of history.

Debord grounds his understanding of reification on Georg Lukács. Lukács states that: "The commodity can be understood in its undistorted essence only when it becomes the universal category of society as a whole. Only in this context does the reification produced by commodity relations assume decisive importance both for the

objective evolution of society and for the attitudes that people adopt toward it, as it subjugates their consciousness to the forms in which this reification finds expression.” (Lukács 1971: 86) He further claims: “As labour is increasingly rationalized and mechanized, this subjugation is reinforced by the fact that people’s activity becomes less and less active and more and more contemplative” (ibid.) In other words, for Lukács, the absence of unity in identification through action results in contemplation. Consequently, by supposing that contemplation derives from reification, the subjects are ultimately reduced to objects. Therefore, the unity of the subject and the object discussed earlier cannot be defined outside the capitalist mode of conduct, even though the spectacle in Debord’s theorization predates capitalism.

In a capitalist society, the commodity becomes the center of social life, and then it transcends the social and becomes ‘the world we see’. (Debord 2005: 21) Debord claims that after the production phase of the economic order in which the proletariat was only regarded as a worker by the political economy, the second industrial revolution’s ‘humanism of the commodity’ took charge of the worker’s ‘leisure and humanity’, which made ‘the alienated consumption’ as much a duty for the masses as ‘alienated production.’ (ibid.) However, the automation of production created a conundrum over its existence. Debord illustrates this situation over the notions of ‘exchange value’ and ‘use value.’ (ibid.: 22,23) Even though the exchange value can only exist as a representative of use-value, “by mobilizing all human use value and monopolizing its fulfilment, exchange value ultimately succeeded in controlling use.” (ibid.: 23) In other words, exchange value gains the power of directing use value, through directing individuals’ satisfaction. This constitutes a reality in which ‘the real consumer’ transforms into ‘consumer of illusions’. Debord suggests that if the working class realizes that the economy causing the class division, is depended on them, all divisions will be abolished.

However, according to Debord, alienation is universalized and presents a more extensive opposition between life and society. Thus, for Debord, the problematization of spectacle entails not only economic but also aesthetic and ethical aspects. In a fictionalized world, the individual who tries to ‘appear like’ tends to become an object

of desire, in which the need to differentiate is stronger than the need for commodity. Therefore, the individuals, whose existence is subject to the rules set by the spectacle, can only exist by consumption. The spectacle, simultaneously performed and watched by the spectators, forms a ground, where the objective and the subjective experiences are connected. Thus, for Debord, the spectacle encapsulates much more than just something we passively look at. It determines the way we perceive and communicate the world. Under the domination of the spectacle, the individual whose existence is tied to a narrative, gradually becomes estranged and tries to become a fetish object, consequently spectacle completes the reification cycle of the individual through commodity fetishism. Debord exposes the fact that outside its economic relevance, capitalism is inherently a social construct, which is visible in each aspect of everyday life. As a result, the spectacle produces 'habitual submission', through the commodity fetishism, which generates its own moment of exaltation. According to Debord, habitual submission, which is the driving force of mass culture, predetermines all aesthetic, ethical and political means of expression, while it pacifies the opposition by displaying them in its own stage. Therefore, the spectacle appropriates the opposition to itself and leaves no room for the masses to create a critical distance to this mass-produced all-absorbing culture. Furthermore, Debord reviews culture itself as a search for missing unity and argues that the only means for unification is through negation, and he further states that "this negation can no longer be a cultural negation. It may in a sense take place within culture, but it points beyond it." (ibid.: 114)

As one of the activists who pursued the avant-garde anti-art thinking, Debord proposes a combination of artistic expressions and political activism. Starting with the Letrist International and followed by the situationist movement which were founded by Debord and like-minded individuals, they proposed an 'actual movement that abolishes the present state of things'. They believed that "A revolutionary action within culture must aim to enlarge life, not merely to express or explain it." (Debord 1957: 37) Based on this approach, they have devised methods such as derive, detournement and situations. They conceived 'derive' as a psychogeographical concept for navigating the city in an experimental and spontaneous manner, by utilizing emotional disorientation in

order to resist and contest the monotony encoded within the society of the spectacle. On the other hand, détournement is a method to instrumentalize the means of the society of the spectacle against it, by hijacking and reappropriating the images and slogans that bombards the public through mass media. Last but not least they have created the concept of situations which embodies active creations of moments that they have described as “a sense of self-consciousness of existence within a particular environment or ambience.” (Ford 2004: 62) In sum, Debord’s main aim for cultural discourse can be described as creating radical actions “to wake up the spectator who has been drugged by spectacular images.” (ibid.: 61)

4.2 Rancière’s Critique of Debord

According to Rancière, even though new applications in contemporary art through the critique of the spectacle is revered as a neoteric perspective on the discourse of critical theory and artistic practice, essentially it is a retake on one of the earliest. In its core, Debord’s condemnation of the commodity-driven society through Hegelian Marxism and Feuerbachian alienation designates the spectacle in a course that goes back to Plato. Rancière points out the concept of the spectacle is analogous with Plato’s cave allegory stating that both establish the gaze of the spectator as passive. Debord’s approach positions the people who live in today’s capitalist society “identical to that of the shackled prisoners in Plato’s cave” (Rancière 2009c: 44) wherein the “images are taken for realities, ignorance for knowledge, and poverty for wealth. Furthermore, the more the prisoners imagine themselves capable of constructing their individual and collective lives differently, the more they sink into the servitude of the cave.” (ibid.: 44) According to Rancière, Debord considers the spectator inferior to those who act, through making an absolute division between activity and passivity. Moreover, this division, which denounces ‘looking’ as a non-act thus passive, affirms a hierarchal distribution of sensible. In his 2009 book *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière epitomizes this active-passive dichotomy by problematizing the political implications of theatre, in which he includes “all those forms of spectacle - drama, dance, performance art, mime and so on - that place bodies in action before an assembled audience.” (ibid.: 2)

Rancière points out a paradox in this approach because theatre's existence depends on the presence of the spectator and being a spectator is a bad thing. He calls this the 'paradox of the spectator' and refers to it as the crux of the critique on theatre. He then emphasizes two arguments that denounces the inferiority of the spectator, through the notion of looking. First, looking, as the opposite of knowing, where "the spectator is held before an appearance in a state of ignorance about the process of production of this appearance and about the reality it conceals." (ibid.) Second, looking as the opposite of acting, "the spectator remains immobile in her seat, passive. To be a spectator is to be separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act." (ibid.) Through this analysis he draws two possible responses. The first of which, dooms the theatre as "a scene of illusion and passivity that must be abolished in favor of what it prohibits - knowledge and action; the action of knowing and action guided by knowledge." (ibid.) As it was mentioned before, this approach dates back to Plato, in which he refers theatre as a spectacle of pathos that infests the ethos of community. Therefore, for Plato, theatre always carries the risk of disrupting the harmony and the decided partition of identities, by embedding contradictions. Against "the democratic, ignorant community of theatre," (ibid.: 5) Plato proposes a choreographic community founded on celestial movements, "where no one remains a static spectator, where everyone must move in accordance with the community rhythm fixed by mathematical proportion." (ibid.) This choreographic model eliminates the political stage by dictating a harmonious collective movement, whereas the second solution offers a theatre without spectators, formulated by 20th-century avant-gardes. In Rancière's words, they "reformulated Plato's opposition between chorus and theatre as one between the truth of the theatre and the simulacrum of the spectacle. They have made theatre the place where the passive audience of spectators must be transformed into its opposite: the active body of a community enacting its living principle." (ibid.)

Rancière epitomizes the second solution with two different attempts to activate the spectator. The first one is Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre, which coincides with Debord's self-determination method. Both require a certain distance in which the spectator can reflect on the social realities represented on the stage. This required distance is an

attempt to invoke consciousness within the spectator without causing an emotional response. The second one is Antonin Artaud's theatre of cruelty that he conceived through criticizing the separation of culture and life. In his perspective, the cultural traditions of civilization transformed the people into oppressed individuals, and his interpretation of pure theatre eliminates these restraints by attacking people's senses in order to awaken their instincts. Thus, Artaud's method absorbs the spectator instinctively and physically into the performance. Regardless of their contrasts, both Brecht's Epic Theatre and Artaud's True Theatre intent to liberate the spectators from their passive position, by either distancing them from the spectacle in order to create a space for them to gain the ability to criticize the conditions as Brecht suggests or by eliminating the distance and urging them to participate in the action as in Artaud's proposition.

In conclusion, they both share Debord's assumption, which regards the spectator as passive, and the only possibility of emancipation is through becoming active. According to Rancière, this approach produces a hierarchical distribution of capacities by keeping the assumption of inequality and incapacity in motion. In sum, both Plato's opposition and the modern critique of theatre aim to demonstrate ways of terminating the positions of spectators and transforming them into active agents of collective praxis. In either respect, "theatre is presented as a mediation striving for its own abolition." (ibid.: 8) Rancière draws the similarity between this self-abolishing mediation and the pedagogical relationship between the schoolmaster and his pupils, which was the main argument of his 1991 book *'The Ignorant Schoolmaster'*.

As discussed in detail in the first chapter, the schoolmaster tries to eliminate the distance between the knowledge he possesses and ignorance of the pupils, yet the more he tries to diminish it, he continuously reestablishes it. Concurrently, the ignoramus does not only lack the knowledge of the schoolmaster, but they also do not know what they do not know and how to attain it. Rancière points out that in this logic, "ignorance is not a lesser form of knowledge, but the opposite of knowledge; that knowledge is not a collection of fragments of knowledge, but a position." (ibid.: 9) Nonetheless, in this point of view, similar to the spectator's position, the ignoramus is also unconscious of

their ignorance, which results in the assumption of separation between intelligences. The protocol of knowledge transmission first teaches the ignoramus their own incapacity, and through the transmission, it continually proves its assumption of unequal intelligence. As mentioned in the first chapter, Jacotot refers to this continuous affirmation as stultification and attempts to neutralize it by intellectual emancipation, which proves the equality of intelligence. However, Rancière points out that “This does not signify the equal value of all manifestations of intelligence, but the self-equality of intelligence in all its manifestations” (ibid.) In intellectual emancipation the poetic labor of translation is the core of learning, the ignoramus actively translate what they witness in comparison to their collection of experiences. Through these comparisons, they become conscious of the knowledge they do not possess and devise ways of acquiring them.

Rancière suggests that the same principle applies to the spectator as well. Thus, for him, the idea of the intellectual emancipation challenges the opposition between looking and acting, which establishes the essence of Debord’s theorization. In Rancière’s words: “Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection. It begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions. The spectator also acts like the pupil or scholar. She observes, selects, compares, interprets.” (ibid.: 13) Thus, it is not the transmission that emancipates the spectator; instead, it is the translation. The spectator disturbs the consensus, which dictates the way to make sense of the truth by translating what is visible into an individual understanding through their experience.

When it comes to contemporary art, Rancière points out that artists do not specifically aim to direct the spectator as before; especially nowadays they refuse to dictate an outcome or propagate a particular idea. They just intend to cause an awakening, which implies a unification between the cause and its effect, as mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. Rancière claims that the art world is still waging a war on the dominance of the spectacle and uses the method of detournement as its treasured

technique which is continuously re-furbished as “parodies of promotional films; reprocessed disco sounds; advertising icons or media stars modelled in wax; Disney animals turned into polymorphous perverts; montages of ‘vernacular’ photographs showing us standardized petty bourgeois living rooms, overloaded supermarket trolleys, standardized entertainment or the refuse of consumerist civilization, and so on and so forth.” (ibid.: 76) He emphasizes that these artifices are still in motion all over the place, in an attempt to make society realize the truth about “the power of the commodity, the reign of the spectacle or the pornography of power.” (ibid.) As previously mentioned, in Rancière’s opinion, these attempts of confrontation with the obvious truths cannot guarantee to raise an awareness that will provoke political action. Instead, with their predetermined cause-effect relationship, these attempts demonstrate the presupposition of the spectator’s inferiority over and over again.

Rancière suggests that there is another distance different from the distance between the artist and the spectator, which is ingrained in the performance. It is enacted as a spectacle, which is an autonomous entity lodged in-between the initial message the artist wanted to portray and the spectator’s understanding. This is where Rancière mentions a third thing, a written content that is alien to both the schoolmaster and the pupil (e.g. Jacotot’s *Télémaque*), “which they can refer to verify in common what the pupil has seen, what she says about it and what she thinks of it.” (ibid.: 15) In this regard, he claims that in art, just as Jacotot’s *Télémaque*, the presence of a mediating object is necessary, a spectacle between the artist’s idea and the spectator’s interpretation. This third thing prevents any direct transmission between the artwork and the spectator. Rancière refers to the third thing as aesthetic efficiency, which “means a paradoxical kind of efficiency that is produced by the very break of any determined link between cause and effect.” (ibid.: 63) According to Rancière, Debord refuses the mediation of a third thing by claiming that it is an illusion of autonomy. As mentioned before for Rancière the autonomy is not the autonomy of art but the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. Rancière states that: “Aesthetic experience has a political effect to the extent that the loss of destination that it presupposes disturbs the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations.” (ibid.: 72) The subjective and the universal

character of aesthetic experience which Kant formulated forms of a community brought together by Kantian common sense.

Rancière's quotation of Mallarmé's poem 'apart we are together' suggests that the collective power of the spectators is not generated by their communal participation in a specific activity or being members of a community. Instead, it is the power of their own translation of their perception and connecting it to all the rest.

The equality of intelligence is what connects the individual with a community through the exchange of individual experiences. Any type of performance, including theatre, contemporary art, and even looking, does not reveal the participation in a communal power but a capacity of the 'dis-identified persons.' He states that: "Collective understanding of emancipation is not the comprehension of a total process of subjection. It is the collectivization of capacities invested in scenes of dissensus. It is the employment of the capacity of anyone whatsoever, of the quality of human beings without qualities." (ibid.: 49) Thus, for Rancière aesthetic experience which regards everyone as equals creates an emancipated community, which consist of 'dis-identified' persons. As a conclusion, Rancière reminds that: "Breaking away with the phantasms of the Word made flesh and the spectator turned active, knowing that words are only words and spectacles only spectacles may help us better understand how words, stories and performances can help us change something in the world where we are living." (ibid.: 280)

5. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis tackled the 'relation between art and politics' through Rancière's arguments that he developed throughout his body of work. Within the triangular framework defined by his concepts of 'politics, aesthetics and distribution of sensible', the foundations of a 'critique of the political art' is laid down on the basis of Debord's critique of 'spectacle'.

The thesis is organized as follows; First of all, the two essential ingredients of the main argument, in other words art and politics, are deliberately examined separately over Rancière's discussions on both subjects. He encourages us to re-think about art and politics, by putting equality at the core of his discourse. Afterwards; their relation is examined through his concept of 'distribution of sensible', which allows him to approach both notions with the same methodology. His notion of 'distribution of sensible' provides a clear understanding of social inequalities by determining the ways they establish and maintain themselves at a sensory level. He questions the presuppositions that naturalize inequality in the philosophical discourses that have been going on since Plato. Then, he emphasizes the correlation between these discourses with today's consensus understanding, and reveals the underlying inequality inherent to them. He points out that consensus is actually against democracy and it removes the chance of politics. For him, politics occurs when heterogeneous processes have a place and way to meet. It takes its power not from consensus, but dissensus. By analyzing the effects of art and politics on emancipation processes, he manifests them as dissensual forms by their nature. The thesis, then problematizes the cause-and-effect model, inherent to political art. Finally, the relation between political art and Debord's critique of spectacle is revealed through active-passive positioning of the spectator.

Although these two components are discussed in a seemingly-fragmented manner throughout the thesis, the underlying theme is the viewpoint that society is currently organized on long-established hierarchies and that political art, similar to all other institutions, is also structured for perpetuating the existing hierarchies which the

dominant political system is dictating on all phenomena as well as all aspects of human life throughout the world. The crucial argument of this thesis, nevertheless, is that even the fiercest critical theories are established to retain the existing social and political order in the disguise of critique or opposition. Therefore, this thesis established a cross-referential analyses to formulate a critique of the critique in regard to the symbiotic relation between politics and art.

As discussed throughout the thesis, the study claims that humankind is based on hierarchies, and thus on inequality, in spite of the fact that politics (as the order which regulates our lives) is known to be chasing after equality as its central principle. This claim is extended to the level that every institution is, as a matter of fact, the realization of inequality in our society. Moreover, it is stated here that political art, which is said to free our minds and souls, is also institutionalized to ramify the currently established social order that leans on hierarchies as can be extracted from Debord's definition of spectacle whereby spectator is put in a passive position in front of the art as a political performance. The unifying theme throughout these claims is that society is polarized on the basis of power that is exerted in regard to the privileges such as master-student, artist-spectator etc. With various cross-references to various philosophers, Rancière reveals the sources of this mechanism while discussing the notion of politics and aesthetics. Referring to Rancière again, this study puts forward the superiority-inferiority relationship respectively between the former and the latter which eventually helps to sustain the established status-quo whereas political art is nominated to be a free medium to break the limitations that society imposes on humanity. No matter how much Debord puts his effort to criticize this problematic relationship, he cannot escape to fall into its trap by accepting the hierarchical (to be more precise; so-called superior) role of the artist who performs the spectacle in front of the spectator which is given the role of a passive receiver whereby the ill-power-relation cannot be fixed through political art.

In sum, it is seen that current order is evidently based on hierarchy, thus on inequality, where all institutions are organized to keep the status quo in which those who are capable of exercising power over the others happen to claim all the rights to determine the 'distribution of sensible' (in Rancière's terms) either by policing or by

mechanisms and products of political art. Unfortunately, what is defined as ‘political art’ also emerges as a disguise to perpetuate the inequality even though it aims the opposite. As discussed particularly in the third chapter, the inconsistencies of ‘political art’ become quite clear through Debord’s discussion of ‘spectacle’.

Thus, as Rancière advocates, the artificial and superficial separations of superior-inferior, active-passive, intellectual-worker, master-student do not really exist. The key point that this thesis emphasizes is, in fact, those who appear to oppose this power-based duality by instrumentalizing (in other words politicizing) political art often supports and enhances this false division rather than changing it. Although their intention is to reveal this inequality to the public, merely by putting themselves as political artists in a position to inform those who are less knowledgeable, they accentuate the existing inequality further instead of creating a political reaction against it. Spectator of the political art (which is a spectacle itself) inevitably appropriates a passive role in understanding the political content; therefore, they can see no difference between those who exercise power on them or those artists who exert aesthetic and intellectual superiority over them. Thus, political art fails to be political by falling into the trap of all other institutions that spread inequality.

In conclusion, it could be suggested that political art cannot be achieved simply by politicizing the art itself. A much more complex and multilayered approach is required to inject a political dimension into the art, which Rancière refers as aesthetic regime of art. Such a broader approach extends beyond the boundaries of the art as discussed throughout the thesis. This approach, if ever exists, must firstly and fully recognize the notion of equality as a given and absolute condition of human existence.

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