

rancière's poetics of knowledge: a critical exploration

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In recent years, there has been an increased focus on poetics in studies of knowledge production.¹ Here I want to discuss critically one influential perspective, which has been part of this renewed interest, namely Jacques Rancière's *poetics of knowledge*. Despite being rarely explicated and, hence, apparently playing a marginal role for Rancière, I will show how his conception of a poetics of knowledge unites diverse parts of his work such as history, aesthetics, politics, and pedagogics. Rancière's poetics of knowledge points in multiple directions that I will follow here to explore the potential of Rancière's thinking as well as critically reflect on its inherent tensions. While it may be tempting to unfold a critique based precisely on the inherent tensions, I will show how they play a productive role in his poetics of knowledge.

In my exploration, I focus on four important dimensions of Rancière's poetics of knowledge. First, I begin with Rancière's earliest formulation, explicated in *Les noms de l'histoire*, as a study of rules and literary procedures in historical writing. Second, I show more generally how his poetics of knowledge not only concerns writing, but also has implications for the *thinkable*, which, leads to a series of tensions between poetic regimes and singular voices. Third, his poetics of knowledge is marked by a duality between a descriptive account of poetic regimes and a polemical intervention and redistribution of the sensible which I discuss with reference to his politics of aesthetics. Fourth, I turn to the question of equality,

which features prominently in Rancière's later reformulation of the poetics of knowledge as a *method of equality*. The explication of these four dimensions will develop as a gradual broadening of the scope of Rancière's poetics of knowledge, from its initial context of historical writing to its relation to aesthetics, politics, and pedagogics.

However, before I begin my exploration, a brief proviso: There are (at least) two difficulties in explicating Rancière's poetics of knowledge. First, his texts function as a fluid space for thinking between concepts and empirical material.² Consequently, there is no ready-made theoretical framework that can be distilled and transposed to other contexts. Second, Rancière's style (at times) makes it difficult to separate his voice from the voices of his sources. Even though he cites his sources, what is particularly characteristic of his style is that he reduces the marks of differentiation between his own voice and the voices of his sources, as well as between literal and figurative levels.³ These difficulties—the particular context of his interlocutions, and the uncertainty of his voice—entail that Rancière's development of a poetics of knowledge cannot be taken as a static conceptual framework and that any generalizations are products of my reading, which is inherently a dislocation. Yet this dis-location presupposes a location, so let me begin by locating Rancière's poetics of knowledge in *Les noms de l'histoire* from 1992, where he describes it for the first time.

I. THE POETICS OF HISTORICAL WRITING: LITERARY PROCEDURES AND RULES IN THE DISCOURSE OF THE TRUTH

In *Les noms de l'histoire*, Rancière analyses the scientific revolution of historical writing taking place in France after the Second World War. For him, this revolution presupposed a poetic revolution, which he traces to the work of Jules Michelet, who neutralized the appearance of the past by minimizing the apparent distance between the historian and the historical subjects.⁴ Consequently, Michelet created a new poetics that redefined the conditions for historical writing.⁵ This new poetics corresponded to the birth of a new subject in history—the people.⁶ Yet, Rancière's *Les noms de l'histoire* is also a story about how the people appeared in history before disappearing again in the development of history as a science focusing on statistics and demographics. However, *history as a science* produces its difference from *history as narrative* in a narrative.⁷ History needs the homonymous ambivalence of *histoire*, which in French can designate both the narration of fiction and the academic discipline.⁸ Perhaps paradoxically, through literary means

history constitutes itself as something more than a story and distinguishes itself from literature: “literature makes history possible as a discourse of the truth.”⁹ Literature makes history possible as a discourse of truth by making an inventive framework of poetic possibilities available for historical writing that enables history to distinguish itself not merely from stories, but also from earlier historical writing.

Within this context of the poetic revolution of historical writing in France, Rancière describes his study as a poetics of knowledge:

Such a study falls under what I have chosen to call *a poetics of knowledge*, a study of the set of literary procedures by which a discourse escapes literature, gives itself the status of a science, and signifies this status. The poetics of knowledge has an interest in the rules according to which knowledge is written and read, is constituted as a specific genre of discourse.¹⁰

In this description, Rancière unfolds what he designates as a *poetics of knowledge* (*poétique du savoir*) in his study of the poetic dimensions of historical writing. Instead of focusing on the truth or falsity of texts, a poetics of knowledge concerns how knowledge is written (and read).¹¹ It investigates the literary procedures that enables a discourse to escape being categorized as literature and attain (and maintain) the status as knowledge. So similarly to Roland Barthes’ delimitation of poetics as not a science of contents, Rancière is focusing on the conditions for the content.¹² Indeed, as Rancière also expresses in a note, any reflection on the poetics of knowledge is indebted to the work of Barthes.¹³ Yet such an anti-hermeneutic suspension of the content also runs parallel with Jacques Derrida’s deconstructive bracketing of the transcendental reading.¹⁴ When Rancière later reflects on his poetics of knowledge, he also describes it as a kind of deconstructive practice that “tries to trace back an established knowledge ... to the poetic operations—description, narration, metaphorization, symbolization, and so on—that make its objects appear and give sense and relevance to its propositions.”¹⁵ The literary procedures Rancière particularly studies are the use of tense and person in the verb, the style of sentences and the play between the literal and the figurative.¹⁶ These procedures are at work in the demarcation of a discourse from being categorized as literature and in the constitution of its *scientificity*. As such, a poetics of knowledge is a study of rules and procedures of differentiation and legitimization involved in knowledge discourses, but at this point specifically tied to historical writing and its (attempted) escape from being categorized as litera-

ture.

While it seems straightforward that the poetics of knowledge is a study of literary procedures and rules involved in the constitution of knowledge discourses, at times Rancière's project suffers from conceptual vagueness. Even though Rancière explicitly defines his poetics of knowledge, his definition and analyses rely on a set of concepts that are used without definition or theoretical foundation. Yet as Badiou has pointed out, Rancière's style can be seen as "a conceptual unfolding of examples with the goal of creating certain zones of undecidability between actuality and concept."¹⁷ Such zones can ensure that a poetics of knowledge remains sensitive to the examples, instead of resting on a contextually detached theoretical viewpoint with predefined concepts. Consequently, it avoids a *philosophical autism* that isolates the thinker within an artificial world of concepts and theories.¹⁸ This is a strength, because it entails that Rancière's poetics of knowledge cannot function as a detached theoretical machine into which empirical material is inserted and predetermined results are generated.

Yet in order to study a poetics of knowledge it is important to know what to look for, but when Rancière, for example, uses *discourse* with at least four different meanings (two of which are well-defined technical uses),¹⁹ the scope of his poetics of knowledge becomes opaque. *Discourse* is a crucial part of his definition of the poetics of knowledge but when *discourse* is left undefined, it becomes uncertain what Rancière is studying. Thus, the potentiality and fluidity of his project must be balanced with a demarcation of its scope, which I will briefly attempt to do here by roughly specifying his use of the concept *discourse*. In the definition of the poetics of knowledge quoted above, *discourse* is used twice: firstly, to describe a discourse that escapes literature through a set of literary procedures and signifies itself as science, and secondly, to describe the constitution of knowledge as a specific genre of discourse. While the first instance demarcates a specific discourse (*un discours*) and its entrance into a group categorized as science; the second instance marks a broader meaning, namely a universe of discourse differentiated according to rules of genre. Consequently, his poetics of knowledge is a study of discourses (groups of words superior to the sentence)²⁰ within discourses (larger groups such as disciplines, institutions all the way to the universe of discourse). What Rancière sets out to study is the demarcation of specific discourses that through a set of literary procedures carves out a place characterized as knowledge within a larger universe of discourses that also includes, for example, literature. This is also indicated by Rancière's use of *savoir* instead of *connaissance* in his nam-

ing of his poetics as a *poétique du savoir*, which entails that it concerns the broader frameworks of knowledge production (*savoir*) that frames any body of knowledge (e.g. disciplines). So, parallel with Michel Foucault's work, discourses can be understood as both co-extensive with disciplines (e.g. historical discourse or medical discourse), and as conditions of possibilities for statements of knowledge.²¹ Indeed, what Rancière and Foucault seem to agree on is that a historically variable set of rules are operative in the constitution of a discourse as a genre of knowledge and a place for *being in the true*.

The idea of *being in the true* (*dans le vrai*) was originally expressed by Georges Canguilhem, who used the term to describe the predication of a universal and objective truth.²² However, Rancière and Foucault use the term with the opposite meaning. For Rancière, *being in the true* designates a place for truth constituted by a set of rules that may demarcate a specific discourse as a genre of knowledge.²³ Meanwhile, outside of *the true*, discourses cannot be assessed as true or false, because they lack a fundamental connection to the truth.²⁴ Foucault's discussion of Gregor Mendel provides a nice example of this difference between being inside or outside of the true: "Mendel spoke the truth, but he was not *dans le vrai* (within the true) of the biological discourse of the time."²⁵ The distinction, which grounds Foucault's claim, is between the predication of truth and acceptability.²⁶ To be within the true entails to conform to a set of historically variable rules of acceptability. Rancière's poetics of knowledge is precisely a study of such rules, especially pertaining to literary procedures and poetic norms that may constitute the scientificity of historical discourse.

Yet in their analyses of rules, both Rancière and Foucault seem to presuppose the regularities they are analyzing. Indeed, an important presupposition in Rancière's poetics of knowledge is that a set of rules exist that are operative in the writing of knowledge and its constitution as a genre. This focus on rules also brings the poetics of knowledge into proximity with Foucault's work on the regularities of discourses. For example, in *Les mots et les choses*, Foucault in a similar vein presupposes the existence of the regularity he is searching for.²⁷ However, to claim the existence of rules of writing in knowledge production is hardly controversial given the extensive masses of documents such as *authorial guidelines* and *manuals of style* bearing witness to an extensive (attempted) regulation of academic writing. Thus, the important question here is not whether rules exist, but how they are operative in the production of truth. As we will soon discover, the poetics of knowledge concerns more than writing, and the demarcation of *the true* has im-

portant implications for thinking.

II. THE *THINKABLE*: POETIC REGIMES AND THE UNEXPECTED

The poetic revolution Rancière describes as crucial for the transformation of historical writing is not merely about finding a more persuasive way of writing history. As he points out, poetics concerns more than rhetoric: “it is not a question of rhetorical turns of phrase, but of poetics of knowledge.”²⁸ This distinction between rhetoric and poetics resonates with Fernand Halryn’s distinction between a rhetorical analysis of ways of persuasion, and a poetical perspective (which Halryn designates as a *profound rhetoric*), which sets out to discover the processes of invention and the hidden literary traces.²⁹ Likewise, Hayden White has proposed a similar understanding of poetics as concerning a mode of language use transforming an object of study into a subject of a discourse.³⁰ Consequently, White, Halryn and Rancière share a sense of poetics as treating a deeper level of writing than stylistics, namely the literary procedures involved in the *making* of knowledge. Thus, more than merely considering writing as a secondary activity, poetics concerns the *thinkable*. As Rancière explains: “The question of the poetic form according to which history can be written is then strictly tied to that of the mode of historicity according to which its objects are thinkable.”³¹ Here Rancière’s poetics of knowledge runs parallel with Barthes’ analysis of how different modes of historical narration expose past events in different ways.³² Yet the connection between poetic form and the thinkable entails that different poetics not merely represent the past in different ways, but constitute what is visible and thinkable for the historian differently. As White has also described it, poetics *prefigures* the field in a specific way that constitutes the objects of study before any analysis.³³ Thus, the literary procedures Rancière studies literally produce effects in reality by providing models for speech and thought.³⁴

When the scope of a poetics of knowledge is related to the thinkable, it also resonates with Foucault’s crucial question, which features prominently in the beginning of *Les mots et les choses*: “But what is it impossible to think, and what kind of impossibility are we faced with here?”³⁵ Foucault’s way to answer these questions is to introduce the concept *episteme* as a historical a priori that demarcates a field of possible knowledge and defines the modes of being of objects that appear within this field.³⁶ For Foucault, thought is always situated within an *episteme* that regulates and organizes the production of knowledge.³⁷ As Rancière points out, similarly to Foucault he has attempted “to historicize the transcendental”.³⁸ In

Les noms de l'histoire, Rancière introduces the concept *regime* to articulate how the thinkable is potentially demarcated by historically variable poetic regimes in which specific objects are thinkable and truth can be produced.³⁹ Yet this conceptual affinity with Foucault's work imports a risk of overly generalizing poetic regimes.

Rancière's poetics of knowledge is in danger of overly generalizing when it abstracts from textual analysis to the level of poetic regimes. By moving from a level of textual analysis to a general level of poetics, Rancière relies on the synecdoche as a trope of thought that enables a move from specific instances of knowledge production to general descriptions of poetics. A similar problem is present in Foucault's elucidation of the *epistemes* guiding knowledge production at different times. This problem has also been pointed out by Oliver Davis, who criticizes Rancière's poetics of knowledge for elucidating a poetics from the textual analysis of a few selected, canonized works.⁴⁰ The problem is also related to a question posed by Eric Méchoulan in the context of Rancière's work on politics and aesthetics: "what happens if we step aside and choose other names and other ways of making historical intertwinings visible?"⁴¹ In other words, if a different choice of texts and names alters the picture, the poetic regime may not be generalizable beyond the concrete texts.

Yet a possible way out of this problem of generalization lies in Rancière's modification of the affinity between his and Foucault's work. While, as we have seen, Rancière similarly with Foucault attempts to historicize the transcendental, the former underscores that he has simultaneously attempted "to de-historicize these systems of conditions of possibility."⁴² This move of de-historicizing entails that poetic regimes are not exhaustive of the possibilities of knowledge production at a specific point in time.⁴³ In contrast, Foucault explicates that: "In any given culture and at any given moment there is always only one *episteme* that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge."⁴⁴ Despite of this apparently clear-cut statement, Foucault is, however, rather ambiguous about the scope of an *episteme*.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, such statements mark a difference between Foucault and Rancière's conceptions of the limits of the thinkable and their philosophies of history. While Rancière understands poetic regimes as conditions for writing and thinking, poetic regimes co-exist in varying ways and may overlap, and one regime does not delimit all options of expression and thought.⁴⁶ This way of thinking regimes has the advantage that it almost entirely sidesteps the tired old dispute between historic continuity and discontinuity.⁴⁷ Poetic regimes are potentially

contradictory, plural, non-exhaustive, and open. Hence, any exposition of poetic regimes is a finite sketch and there is always the possibility of different competing poetics. However, not only is there always the possibility of different competing poetic regimes, it is also always possible to escape poetic norms. Despite of his focus on poetic regimes, Rancière does not subscribe to the idea of a general system of knowledge, but emphasizes the force of that which is out of place.⁴⁸ Hence, his generalizations always occur in the context of the potentially unexpected and singular that may rupture every possible generalization.

While his emphasis on the possibility of the unexpected may save Rancière's poetics of knowledge from the charge of being overly generalizing, this emphasis in conjunction with the conception of poetic regimes as conditions for writing and thinking produces a series of tensions. For example, between poetic norms and singular voices; between being in the true and the force of that which is out of place; between regularity and the unexpected; and between historicity and revolutionary subjects. Another duality that nicely exemplifies the operation of these tensions is between *genre* and *style*. Just before formulating his general description of a poetics of knowledge, Rancière points out that "the question at stake is not that of the style of the historians, but of the signature of science."⁴⁹ While *style* here refers to the personal style of the historian, i.e., the individual and singular characteristics, the *signature of science* refers to a set of shared procedures that constitutes a discourse as scientific. Yet, later in his analysis of the revolution of the poetics of history, it is precisely Michelet's style that takes the center stage: "We will attempt to show, on the contrary, that Michelet's 'phantasms' and effects of style really define the conditions of the scientific speaking of the *Annales*."⁵⁰ This way of connecting Michelet's effects of style with the level of poetics runs parallel with Barthes' analysis of Michelet, where Barthes identifies the structure of a writer's imaginative world with his or her obsessions.⁵¹ But with the emphasis on the importance of Michelet's style in the poetic revolution of historical writing, a tension between genre and personal style appears. This tension marks a dual stream within *Les noms de l'histoire*, in which history is simultaneously described as constructed by poetic norms and formed by singular voices.⁵²

Although Rancière's poetics of knowledge concerns rules pertaining to literary procedures and poetic norms, it is important to realize that for Rancière people are freer than social sciences determine them to be, which means that the unexpected can always occur.⁵³ In other words, Rancière emphasizes the possibilities of thought, which can always escape regulation and strict historicity.⁵⁴ And yet

we began this exploration of the thinkable from precisely the opposite side, with Rancière's statement that poetic form is strictly tied to a mode of historicity according to which objects are thinkable. How can we make sense of this tension?

We can attempt to abolish the inherent tensions by following a one-dimensional interpretive path that focusses either on poetic norms or on the force of that which is out of place, but not both. Yet this is not a very attractive path. Alternatively, we can criticize Rancière for being inconsistent and self-contradictory. However, I find that the inherent tensions in the heart of Rancière's poetics of knowledge becomes a possible solution to a problem haunting Foucault's elucidation of the *episteme* as a historical a priori, namely the risk of assimilating empirical content to its conditions of possibility.⁵⁵ In Rancière's work, this problem is overturned, because he wants to leave a space open for the revolutionary subject to act. Consequently, the problem turns into a productive tension between the poetic regimes and the subjects out of place that yields a framework for intermingling philosophical and empirical analyses. Moreover, these tensions inherent in Rancière's poetics of knowledge provide a fruitful framework for thinking about poetic norms and singular voices. To speak the truth, one must likely comply with a set of poetic norms pertaining to ways of writing as well as suitable methods and objects of study. Meanwhile, the danger of speaking outside of the true is neither to be heard nor published, but such a dangerous path may also lead to radical change and redistributions of the thinkable. Rancière's poetics of knowledge renders it possible to think poetic regimes as constituting specific patterns for thought without constituting a totalitarian framework drawing absolute limits of the thinkable.

III. THE DESCRIPTIVE AND THE POLEMICAL: THE (RE)DISTRIBUTION OF THE THINKABLE

Now as we have seen, Rancière's poetics of knowledge concerns not merely writing but also has implications for the thinkable. Yet it is characteristically split by inherent tensions. Such tensions also bring to light another duality in Rancière's poetics of knowledge between a *descriptive* elucidation of poetic norms and a *polemical* emphasis on the possibilities for thought and action. This duality marks a difference between either understanding the poetics of knowledge as aiming at describing poetic regimes and limits of the thinkable or understanding it as a polemical intervention aiming at challenging established hierarchies (of discourses, disciplines, voices) and redistributing the sensible. In other words, between dis-

tribution and redistribution. To scrutinize this duality, let us begin by returning to Rancière's initial formulation.

In *Les noms de l'histoire*, Rancière continues his description of a poetics of knowledge by specifying that "it attempts to define the mode of truth to which such knowledge is devoted—not to provide norms for it, nor to validate or invalidate its scientific pretense."⁵⁶ Contrast this formulation with Aristotle's aim in the *Poetics*: "The subject I wish to discuss is poetry itself, its species with their respective capabilities, the correct way of constructing plots so that the work turns out well, the number and nature of the constituent elements."⁵⁷ Contrary to Aristotle's poetics, Rancière's poetics of knowledge is not intended to put forth rules of composition and provide norms for knowledge production. Furthermore, as the previous quotation shows, the poetics of knowledge is not an attempt to validate or invalidate the scientific pretense of a discourse. This formulation has led White to conclude that Rancière is not attempting to dissolve the boundaries between science and literature and assign the status of fiction to history.⁵⁸ In his major historiographical work, *Metahistory*, White expresses an abstention in judging validity very similar to Rancière's formulation: "I will not try to decide whether a given historian's work is a better, or more correct, account of a specific set of events or segment of the historical process than some other historian's account of them."⁵⁹ Rather, what White is aiming at is identifying the deep structural components of some major historical accounts of the nineteenth century. Perhaps likewise, Rancière's poetics of knowledge can be understood as a descriptive account of poetic regimes, yet distinguishes itself from White's formalism by its focus on singular voices and the unexpected beyond structural boundaries.

However, if Rancière's poetics of knowledge is merely a descriptive account, it risks becoming a parasite forever caught inside the discourses it analyses. As a descriptive project, it is tied to the production of knowledge as a second-order reflection that feasts upon the texts it analyses. This aspect of the poetics of knowledge resembles a central part of Derrida's deconstruction, which as a consequence of residing at the edge of metaphysics, needs the resources it deconstructs.⁶⁰ According to Richard Rorty, Derrida is forever trapped within the system he is trying to undermine.⁶¹ But for Derrida it would be naïve to think that it is possible to place oneself outside of metaphysics altogether in order to judge it.⁶² Likewise, a poetics of knowledge embodies this duality: it feeds on the texts it analyses, but also has a critical potential to challenge dominant hierarchies and support difference and multiplicity. For example, in a later reformulation of the

poetics of knowledge, Rancière describes how it crosses established boundaries between disciplines in order to challenge hierarchies of knowledge production.⁶³ This characteristic is also linked to Rancière's general conception of his philosophical practice: "what I always tried to do is to blur the boundaries that separate the genres and levels of discourse."⁶⁴ So in a way, a poetics of knowledge functions parallel with deconstruction as an immanent critique. While the polemical dimension needs the descriptive dimension in order to provide grounded critiques from inside the systems of thought, the descriptive dimension needs the critical dimension in order to be more than merely parasitical. This entails that the poetics of knowledge is not as innocently descriptive as it might appear in Rancière's early formulations.

Perhaps then, it might be tempting to ascribe a kind of polemical turn to Rancière's poetics of knowledge. However, while it is possible to contrast his early descriptions of a poetics of knowledge with later more explicitly polemical descriptions, I believe that Rancière's poetics of knowledge is from the very beginning polemical. It is, indeed, possible to read *Les noms de l'histoire* as an attack on the scientific approach to historical writing and the erasure of the people in its narrative. Similarly, Davis has argued that Rancière's analysis of the rhetoric of the *Annales school* functions as a critique of its claim to *scientificity*.⁶⁵ Likewise, Watts describes the main object of *Les noms de l'histoire* as challenging the scientific approach to historiography.⁶⁶ Thus, rather than being a merely descriptive enterprise that elucidates the poetics of a given discipline without judgment, the poetics of knowledge is from the very beginning critical and polemical. While the poetics of knowledge may not provide norms for knowledge production (at least explicitly), it is a polemical description of poetic norms operative in knowledge production and an (at least implicit) challenge of their validity.

Yet claiming that a set of literary procedures are operative in the constitution of a discourse as knowledge, and challenging the validity of poetic norms may entail assigning the status of fiction to history (or any other knowledge discourse for that matter). Indeed, seen from the outside, studying the poetics of knowledge in terms of literary procedures and rules of genre may *per se* appear as an invalidation of the scientificity of a discipline. However, in his early formulation of a poetics of knowledge, Rancière explicitly points out that the aim is not to invalidate the scientific pretense of disciplines. In line with this formulation, Rancière later restates that a poetics of knowledge is not about claiming that disciplines are false knowledge.⁶⁷ Rather, disciplines for Rancière are distributions of the thinkable.⁶⁸

While, the poetics of knowledge can be used to uncover norms and potentially challenge their validity, this does not entail that history is turned into fiction. Rather, when history is thought within the framework of poetic regimes constituting the objects of study and forming the narrativization of historical events, the dichotomy between fact and fiction seems to blur.⁶⁹ This, however, does not entail that history is false knowledge, but rather it shows how an unperceivable past is reimagined. In this reimagination, literary procedures constitute specific ways of narrativizing that simultaneously demarcate historical writing as a discourse of knowledge.

To understand how Rancière's descriptions work as polemical interventions, it may be fruitful to think of poetic regimes in relation to his conception of the *distribution of the sensible* (*partage du sensible*). In *Le partage du sensible*, Rancière determines politics as concerning what is visible and sayable and develops a political aesthetics that investigates the distribution of the sensible, i.e. the conditions guiding what shows itself in experience.⁷⁰ In this way, politics and aesthetics are interrelated in the implicit double sense of *partager*, which can both mean *to share* and *to divide*.⁷¹ This means that visibility is also invisibility, possibility is also impossibility, inclusion is also exclusion. But with the *partage* not only politics and aesthetics are interrelated, they are connected to the production of knowledge, because aesthetics designates a specific regime of visibility and intelligibility. Knowledge always has an immanent aesthetic dimension.⁷² In this broad sense of aesthetics, *Les noms de l'histoire* is also precisely an aesthetics of knowledge that describes how poetic regimes demarcate what can be said of the past and how the historian perceives it.⁷³ This entails that poetic regimes are tied to particular distributions of the sensible that guide what shows itself in experience and distinguishes between rational speech and nonsense. In other words, *Les noms de l'histoire* is also about the aesthetic and political consequences of poetic regimes.

When Rancière describes how poetic regimes form historical writing at different times, he is not merely describing what is made sensible and thinkable, but precisely also what remains invisible and unthinkable (e.g. the people). But Rancière's poetics of knowledge is about more than just laying out the poetic regimes, it is also about stressing the possibilities for redistribution and revolt. Hence, his poetics of knowledge not merely concerns distributions of the sensible and thinkable but is explicitly polemical in its emphasis on the possibilities of redistribution. Rancière also conceives his own methodology as an intervention, which is not intended to produce theory, but critically reconsidering a given distribution

of the sensible within which we understand the world and act.⁷⁴ Thus, poetic regimes are uncovered not merely to show what and how they make knowledge possible through historically specific distributions of the sensible, but also how they are historically constituted and may be challenged by alternate poetics that redistribute the sensible and the thinkable. This intertwining of knowledge production with poetics, aesthetics and politics leads to a crucial challenging of hierarchies and borders between discourses, in a movement towards redistribution and equality.⁷⁵

IV. REDISTRIBUTING THE SENSIBLE: THE POETICS OF KNOWLEDGE AS A METHOD OF EQUALITY

Rancière's poetics of knowledge not only describes the distribution of the sensible within historically variable regimes, but polemically emphasizes the possibilities for redistributing the sensible and revolting against established hierarchies and borders. This emphasis on the possibilities for revolt marks the critical potential of Rancière's poetics of knowledge as a method that potentially redistributes the space for thoughts and actions.⁷⁶ Consequently, the poetics of knowledge also becomes a project of emancipation attempting to liberate discourses, which brings it in direction of the question of equality that features prominently in Rancière's work. Indeed, in a later formulation, Rancière reframes his poetics of knowledge as a *method of equality*:

A poetics of knowledge is not a simple way of saying that there is always literature in attempts at rigorous argumentation. Such a demonstration still belongs to the idle logic of demystification. The poetics of knowledges does not claim that the disciplines are false knowledges. It claims that they are disciplines, ways of intervening in the interminable war between ways of declaring what a body can do, in the interminable war between the reasons of equality and those of inequality. It does not claim that they are invalid because they tell stories. It claims that they must borrow their presentations of objects, their procedures for interaction and their forms of argument from language and common thought. A poetics of knowledge is first a discourse, which reinscribes the force of descriptions and arguments in the equality of common language and the common capacity to invent objects, stories and arguments. In this sense, it can be called a method of equality.⁷⁷

In “Thinking between disciplines: an aesthetics of knowledge” appearing in this journal in 2006, Rancière reformulates his poetics of knowledge as a method of equality that does not claim that disciplines are false knowledge or invalid because they tell stories. Rather, it returns disciplines and discourses to a state of war. In this way, Rancière’s poetics of knowledge becomes an instance of what he designates as *in-disciplinary thought*, which recalls the context of war and ignores imagined disciplinary boundaries.⁷⁸ In other words, a poetics of knowledge challenges the auto-legitimation on which a discourse of knowledge rests.⁷⁹ For Rancière philosophy becomes an in-disciplinary practice: instead of attempting to ground the order of discourse, it disrupts it.⁸⁰ A crucial premise for the possibility of such egalitarian disruptions lies in the shared capacity of common language. As Rancière describes it in the quotation above, a poetics of knowledge “reinscribes the force of descriptions and arguments in the equality of common language”. Thus, in the heart of Rancière’s poetics of knowledge, we find an operation of equality that brings the objects of knowledge and the modes of knowing back to the level of common language.⁸¹ Thereby, Rancière emphasizes the democratic potential of common language.

With his poetics of knowledge as a method of equality, Rancière aims at removing the force of descriptions and arguments from an unequal distribution by stressing the fundamental equality of the imaginative powers of language. Consequently, he presupposes the equality of common language as a condition for disrupting the orders of discourse. In Rancière’s understanding of language, equality is built-in as a potential. This means that, in principle, everybody can appropriate language, and it is precisely the excess of language, which makes redistributions of the sensible possible.⁸² In contrast to the *fear of writing* expressed by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, where writing is seen as circulating uncontrollably leading to misinterpretations and monstrosities, for Rancière it is precisely in the excess of language that we find its democratic potential.⁸³ So the possibilities for ruptures and redistributions of the sensible and thinkable depends on more than revolutionary subjects and the force of that which is out of place—the possibilities are also tied to the equality of common language. This presupposition is explicated nicely in the quotation above, but is already pronounced in *Les noms de l’histoire*, when Rancière describes the power of language, which is always susceptible to allow those excluded entry into its community.⁸⁴

However, the possibility of an egalitarian redistribution presupposes more than revolutionary subjects and language as a common resource. As Bram Ieven has

pointed out, the potential of a redistribution of the sensible in Rancière's thought rests on ontological indeterminacy.⁸⁵ Rancière does not elaborate his ontological position, on the contrary, the abstention from ontology is a main point for Rancière, who understands ontology as a practice of order, which reduces complexity and possibilities.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, as Ieven argues, Rancière's abstention from ontology is problematic because Rancière needs ontology to explain heterogeneity and complexity.⁸⁷ Ieven's point is that by abstaining from ontology, Rancière is unable to say anything about the real heterogeneous and multifarious nature of truth, and remains constrained to speak within the aesthetic regime. Nevertheless, by demanding an explicit ontological position, Ieven overlooks that he is presupposing an ontological schema in which it is possible to define reality without supplement. By choosing poetics over ontology, Rancière emphasizes that ontology also depends on poetic regimes and historically variable logics of order in its attempt to provide a foundation for politics, aesthetics, or ethics.⁸⁸ Indeed, ontology is intertwined with poetics because it is an insertion of order in the sensible and potentially an establishment of inequality through a logic of demystification.

By stressing the democratic nature of language as a shared imaginative resource, Rancière's poetics of knowledge is an attempt to challenge the logic of demystification. For Rancière, the logic of demystification has functioned as a way for research to assume power and authority over people allegedly unable to perceive truth themselves.⁸⁹ The logic of demystification plays on the image of the *hidden* that is unveiled. Indeed, the ability to constitute and perceive the hidden is what fuels knowledge discourses with power and inserts a vertical difference between the knowing and the ignorant.⁹⁰ According to Rancière, it is precisely by following the logic of the hidden that the *Annales school* (as well as Louis Althusser and Pierre Bourdieu) establishes a position of mastery from where the intellectual knows best.⁹¹ In contrast, the poetics of knowledge functions as a counter movement that attempts to return knowledge discourses to their poetic moment, which entails a return to a fundamental equality of speaking beings.⁹² This is also an attack on what he calls "Plato's lie", where knowledge is distributed unequally through a distinction between those who know and those who do not know.⁹³ What it is worth noticing here is how the poetics of knowledge not only challenges borders and hierarchies between discourses and disciplines, but also social hierarchies. With his poetics of knowledge, Rancière wants to reinstate the silenced voices and thoughts, which have been oppressed in the hierarchy underlying social order.

The critique of the tendency of demystification connects the poetics of knowledge with Rancière's writings on emancipatory learning. In *Le maître ignorant*, Rancière rewrites Joseph Jacotot's controversial method of education, setting off from the basic presupposition of equality of all intelligences.⁹⁴ This, however, does not mean that every manifestation of intelligence is equal, but it means that "the same intelligence makes poetic fictions, political inventions or historical explanations, that the same intelligence makes and understands sentences in general."⁹⁵ In this presupposition of equality lies an understanding of all speaking beings as equal in the sense that every human being is capable of appropriating and using language.⁹⁶ However, as Hallward points out, Rancière does not explain how universal equality leads to concrete forms of empowerment.⁹⁷ In particular, Rancière does not differentiate between levels or kinds of knowledge. Hence, as Hallward argues, one must consider whether all fields of knowledge are equally accessible, and without such differentiations Rancière's egalitarianism remains within the domain of the imagination.⁹⁸ Yet a first step towards empowerment is the disruption of hierarchies of discourses, which Rancière challenges by arguing that there is "no language of the master, no language of the language whose words and sentences are able to speak the reason of the words and sentences of a text."⁹⁹ In other words, there is no higher language of reason accessible only to the knowing.

For Rancière there cannot be given a positive boundary between those who can and those who cannot think.¹⁰⁰ Thus, with his poetics of knowledge, Rancière wants to rewrite history "from below," not only by tracing back discursive competences to an egalitarian level of linguistic competence and poetic invention, but also by acknowledging the silenced voices and other forms of thought. By underscoring the possibilities of redistributing the sensible and thinkable, Rancière reinstates the force of those who are out of place. In this sense, his poetics of knowledge resonates with the central aim of his philosophical project, namely to overthrow the performance of inequality.¹⁰¹ With his poetics of knowledge, Rancière not merely challenges hierarchies and boundaries of discourses and disciplines, but also social hierarchies in the name of equality.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Rancière's poetics of knowledge is an egalitarian polemic not merely aiming at describing poetic regimes but also opening the possibilities for redistributions of discourses and social hierarchies. It is not about the truth or falsity of a given text, rather it concerns the conditions of possibilities for writing, thinking and action

and their potential redistribution. As such, it is far from innocently descriptive, not merely because every description is a selection that omits something else, but also because it directly aims at destabilizing borders and hierarchies. What is remarkable about Rancière's poetics of knowledge is that it provides a broad, multi-faceted, and open perspective on diverse fields of knowledge production. Indeed, Rancière's thinking is precisely aiming at openness and wide applicability, or as he remarks: "experience seemed to teach me that the power of a mode of thinking has to do above all with its capacity to be displaced, just as the power of a piece of music may derive from its capacity to be played on different instruments."¹⁰² More than this, however, Rancière establishes an in-disciplinary perspective that incorporates history, aesthetics, politics, and pedagogics in his study of poetics, which constitutes a space in-between from where to challenge hierarchies and borders between discourses, disciplines and social positions.

Yet this in-disciplinary space for thought is constituted by a series of inherent contradictions and tensions rendering it unstable. As we have seen, the poetics of knowledge oscillates between being a merely descriptive enterprise acting as a parasite inside the body of tradition and being explicitly polemical declaring war against borders and hierarchies. While the polemical dimension needs the descriptive account of poetic regimes as a foundation for the declaration of war, the descriptive dimension needs the polemical opening of the possibility of redistributions to become more than merely parasitic. Yet both the descriptive and polemical dimensions are based on an exploration of literary procedures and rules that demarcate a discourse as knowledge. Consequently, Rancière's poetics of knowledge relies on a generalization from textual instances of literary procedures and rules to poetic regimes. However, two inherent tensions let Rancière escape the charge of being overly generalizing. First, because one poetic regime does not limit all options of expression, action, and thought, it is always possible to find other regimes that intermingle with the picture he draws, which is consequently open and contradictory. This also entails that the poetics of knowledge can transgress the tired old historiographical continuity/discontinuity dichotomy. Second, the generalizations are always situated within the context of the unexpected, which entails that the generalizations are always finite and unstable.

Rancière's emphasis on the unexpected in his descriptions of the regulatory marks a crucial duality in the heart of his poetics of knowledge, which is embodied in the apparent contradiction between conceiving of poetic form as strictly tied to a mode of historicity according to which objects are thinkable, and the claim that

thought can always escape regulation. As I have shown, this duality leads to a series of tensions between poetic norms and singular voices, between being in the true and the force of that which is out of place, between regularity and the unexpected, and between historicity and revolutionary subjects. However, instead of attempting to abolish such tensions, we must realize that they become productive forces in Rancière's poetics of knowledge and render it possible to think the borders of thinking outside a totalitarian framework.

While it may appear tempting to dismiss Rancière's poetics of knowledge as simply too contradictory to be of any use today, it is crucial to note that the inherent contradictions become productive tensions that enable the poetics of knowledge to avoid a rigid philosophical autism and provide a powerful framework for thinking, writing, intermingling, revolting. In the space left open by the absence of a rigidly demarcated theoretical framework, a fertile soil for further research exists.

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NOTES

1. See for example, James J. Bono, "Making Knowledge: History, Literature, and the Poetics of Science," *Isis* 101, no. 3 (September 2010); Georg Braungart, "The Poetics of Nature: Literature and Constructive Imagination in the History of Geology," *Inventions of the Imagination*, eds Richard T. Gray et al. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011); Joseph Vogl, *Poetologien des Wissens um 1800*, (München: Fink, 1999); Fernand Hallyn, *Les structures rhétoriques de la science* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004).
2. Alain Badiou, "The Lessons of Jacques Rancière: Knowledge and Power after the Storm," in *Jacques Rancière. History, Politics, Aesthetics*, eds Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2009), 45.
3. See James Swenson, "Style Indirect Libre," in *Jacques Rancière. History, Politics, Aesthetics*, eds Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009) 264; for more on the uncertainty of Rancière's voice and, see Hayden White, for the claim that it is impossible to distinguish between literal and figurative levels in *Les noms de l'histoire* (White, "Foreword: Rancière's Revisionism," in *The Names of History – On the Poetics of Knowledge*, Jacques Rancière [University of Minnesota Press, 1994], xviii).
4. Jacques Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire. Essai de poétique du savoir* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992), 103. See also Philip Watts, "Heretical History and the Poetics of Knowledge," in *Jacques Rancière – Key Concepts*, ed. Jean-Phillippe Deranty (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2010), 107.
5. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 89–90.
6. Watts, "Heretical History and the Poetics of Knowledge," 108.
7. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 12.
8. *Ibid.*, 18.
9. Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History – On the Poetics of Knowledge* (University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 51; Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 107.
10. Rancière, *The Names of History*, 8; *Les noms de l'histoire*, 21.
11. Even though Rancière juxtaposes the dimensions of writing and reading, I have bracketed reading, because this dimension is missing in Rancière's analysis. Of course, it could be argued that reading is necessarily always already tied to writing. Yet at least this dimension remains explicitly unthematized in *Les noms de l'histoire*.
12. Roland Barthes, *Critique et vérité* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 57.
13. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 211n1.
14. Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967), 227.
15. Jacques Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics," in *Reading Rancière*, eds Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (London: Continuum, 2011), 14.
16. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 180.
17. Badiou, "The Lessons of Jacques Rancière: Knowledge and Power after the Storm," 45.
18. The conception of a *philosophical autism* is inspired by Sloterdijk's description of how thinking creates an artificial autism that isolates the thinker, (see Peter Sloterdijk, *Scheintod im Denken* [Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010], 50).
19. First, *discourse* as referring to the distinction between *living speech* (which is described as *discourse*) and *writing* in Plato's *Phaedrus* (see e.g., Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 27). This sense of *discourse* imports a normative difference between speech and writing that Rancière reverses. And second, *discourse* as a technical term that refers to Émile Benveniste's distinction between *discourse* (*discours*) and *narrative* (*récit*), where *discourse* designates a mode of enunciation in the

present tense that marks a speaking subject in contrast to *narrative* as an enunciation in the past tense relating to past events and supposing the absence of the speaking subject(s). See e.g., *Les noms de l'histoire*, 32,35,49,60; see also Watts, "Heretical history and the poetics of knowledge," 107).

20. See Ernesto Laclau, "Discourse," in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds Robert Godin and Philip Pettit (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 432.

21. "Discourse," in *Concept and Form: The Cahiers pour l'Analyse and Contemporary French Thought*, eds Peter Hallward, Christian Kerlake, Knox Peden et al., 2011. Accessed May 20, 2019, <http://cahiers.kingston.ac.uk/concepts/discourse.html>

22. Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project – Between the Transcendental and the Historical* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 82.

23. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 76.

24. *Ibid.*, 57.

25. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 224.

26. See Han, *Foucault's Critical Project*, 82.

27. See Laclau, "Discourse," 436; and Han, *Foucault's Critical Project*, 40.

28. Rancière, *The Names of History*, 14; *Les noms de l'histoire*, 34.

29. Hallyn, *Les structures rhétoriques de la science*, 12.

30. Hayden White, "An Old Question Raised Again: Is Historiography Art or Science? (Response to Iggers)," in *Rethinking History* 4, no. 3 (2000): 391–406, 397.

31. Rancière, *The Names of History*, 101; *Les noms de l'histoire*, 204.

32. Roland Barthes, "Le discours de l'histoire," *Le bruissement de la langue* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984), 153.

33. Hayden White, *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 30–31.

34. Jacques Rancière, *Le partage du sensible. Esthétique et politique*, (Paris: Le Fabrique-éditions, 2000), 60–61.

35. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things – An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005), xvi; Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses – Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 7.

36. Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, 171.

37. *Ibid.*, 13.

38. Jacques Rancière and Gabriel Rockhill, "The Janus-Face of Politicized Art: Jacques Rancière in Interview with Gabriel Rockhill," in *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2009), 50.

39. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 106 and 124.

40. Oliver Davis, *Jacques Rancière* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 59–60.

41. Eric Méchoulan, "Sophisticated Continuities and Historical Discontinuities, or, Why Not Protagoras?" in *Jacques Rancière. History, Politics, Aesthetics*, eds Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 60.

42. Rancière and Rockhill, "The Janus-Face of Politicized Art," 50. A similar point is made elsewhere, when Rancière stresses the importance of simultaneously implementing historicization and untimeliness, (see Jacques Rancière, "Afterword/The Method of Equality: An Answer to Some Questions," in *Jacques Rancière. History, Politics, Aesthetics*, eds Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009], 282).

43. Gabriel Rockhill, *Radical History and the Politics of Art*, (New York: Columbia University Press,

- 2014), 149.
44. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 183; *Les mots et les choses*, 179.
45. For example, Foucault's descriptions of historical necessity appear ambiguous, because rather than solely describing historical change as radical breaks without any relation between different epistemological fields, Foucault also describes change as transformations and mutations. For example, see *Les mots et les choses*, 14, 150, 244, 323 and 347. Furthermore, despite the grandiose claim that at a given point in time there can be only one *episteme*, Foucault also claims that certain pre-critical lacunae exist in the modern *episteme*. For example, see *Les mots et les choses*, 309–10.
46. Méchoulan, "Sophisticated Continuities and Historical Discontinuities, or, Why Not Protagoras?" 56.
47. Rockhill, *Radical History and the Politics of Art*, 150.
48. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 64–66. See also Peter Hallward, "Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery," in *Paragraph* 28 (2005): 33.
49. Rancière, *The Names of History*, 8; *Les noms de l'histoire*, 21.
50. Rancière, *The Names of History*, 42; *Les noms de l'histoire*, 89–90.
51. Roland Barthes, *Michelet par lui-même*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1954), 5.
52. Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts, "Jacques Rancière: Thinker of Dissensus," in *Jacques Rancière. History, Politics, Aesthetics*, eds Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 4.
53. Deranty, "Afterword," in *Jacques Rancière – Key Concepts*, ed. Jean-Philippe Deranty (Durham: Acumen, 2010), 184.
54. Hallward, "Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery," 26.
55. Han, *Foucault's Critical Project*, 66, 196. This circularity has also been described by Dreyfus and Rabinow as the strange phenomenon of regularities regulating themselves (Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault, beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 84). This problem also concerns the question of whether people are acting according to rules or following them consciously (Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 81). However, as Gutting argues, this objection rests on a faulty formulation of the description/prescription dichotomy (Gary Gutting, "Foucault's Critical Project. Reviewed by Gary Gutting," 2003. Accessed May 20, 2019, <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23402-foucault-s-critical-project/>).
56. Rancière, *The Names of History*, 8; *Les noms de l'histoire*, 21.
57. Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Joe Sachs, (Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2006), 1447a.
58. White, "Foreword: Rancière's Revisionism," xii.
59. White, *Metahistory*, 3–4.
60. Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, 442–3.
61. Richard Rorty, "Two Meanings of 'Logocentrism': A Reply to Norris," in *Redrawing the Lines: Analytic Philosophy, Deconstruction, and Literary Theory*, ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 208.
62. Jacques Derrida, "La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines," in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), 411–3.
63. Jacques Rancière, "Thinking between disciplines: an aesthetics of knowledge," *Parrhesia* 1 (2006): 11.
64. Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus," 14.
65. Davis, *Jacques Rancière*, 58.
66. Watts, "Heretical History and the Poetics of Knowledge," 104.
67. Rancière, "Thinking between disciplines," 11–2.

68. Ibid., 8.
69. See also White, "An Old Question Raised Again: Is Historiography Art or Science? (Response to Iggers)," 397–8.
70. Rancière, *Le partage du sensible*, 13–14.
71. Eric Méchoulan, "Introduction: On the Edges of Jacques Rancière," *SubStance* 33.1, no. 103 (2004): 4.
72. Rancière, "Thinking between disciplines," 1.
73. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 34, 180, 193.
74. Jacques Rancière, "A Few Remarks on the Method of Jacques Rancière," *Parallax* 15, no. 3 (August 2009): 114–15.
75. Rancière and Rockhill, "The Janus-Face of Politicized Art," 65–66.
76. Rancière, "Thinking between disciplines," 10–11.
77. Ibid., 11–2.
78. Ibid., 9.
79. Jacques Rancière and Davide Panagia, "Dissenting Words: A Conversation with Jacques Rancière," *Diacritics* 30, no. 2 (2000): 116.
80. Rancière, "Thinking between disciplines," 10.
81. See also Rancière and Panagia, "Dissenting Words," 116.
82. Alison Ross, "Expressivity, Literarity, Mute Speech," in *Jacques Rancière – Key Concepts*, ed. Jean-Phillippe Deranty (Durham: Acumen, 2010), 136.
83. Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 275d–6a.
84. Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire*, 63–4.
85. Bram Ieven, "Heteroreductives – Rancière's Disagreement with Ontology," *Parallax* 15, no. 3 (August 2009): 61.
86. Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 132–33.
87. Ieven, "Heteroreductives – Rancière's Disagreement with Ontology," 61.
88. Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus," 14.
89. Watts, "Heretical History and the Poetics of Knowledge," 109.
90. See also Watts, "Heretical History and the Poetics of Knowledge," 109.
91. Rancière and Rockhill, "The Janus-Face of Politicized Art," 2.
92. Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus," 14.
93. See Jacques Rancière, *Le philosophe et ses pauvres* (Paris: Fayard, 1983); and Watts, "Heretical History and the Poetics of Knowledge," 109.
94. Jacques Rancière, *Le maître ignorant. Cinq leçons sur l'émancipation intellectuelle* (Paris: Fayard, 1987).
95. Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus," 14.
96. Only the possibilities and the will to use the intelligence varies (Hallward, "Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery," 28).
97. Hallward, "Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery," 40.
98. Ibid., 41.
99. Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 9.
100. Rancière, "Afterword/The Method of Equality," 282.
101. See Rancière, "Afterword/The Method of Equality," 276.
102. Jacques Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), xxviii; *Le philosophe et ses pauvres*, 13.

