1. In a curious bit of intellectual history, it is remarkable that the image of Rancière-the-Althusserian persists in the English-speaking world, in spite of the fact that his contribution to *Lire le Capital* did not make it into the English translation in 1970, or into later editions of *Reading Capital*. The first translation of the entire article into English appears to date from 1989 and is not widely available. The same is true of his major critical engagement with Althusser, *La leçon d’Althusser*. The book has not yet been translated in its entirety, and only the original critical essay, “Pour mémoire: Sur la théorie de l’idéologie,” is available to the Anglophone public (see the bibliography in Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*).

2. Some of the authors in this collection have used other terms to translate Rancière’s concept of *partage*, including “partition,” “division,” and “sharing.” Rather than systematizing these references to one of Rancière’s
key notions, we have decided to let them stand so that the authors can highlight various features of Rancière’s use of the terms *partage, partager, la part des sans-parts*, etc.


5. Ibid., 93.


---

**1. Historicizing Untimeliness**

A shorter version of “Historicizing Untimeliness” was published in the collection of papers from the Cérisy colloquium on Rancière’s work under the title “Rancière à contretemps” in Cornu and Vermeren, *La philosophie déplacée*.


2. For a discussion of “Perception Management” and its relation to contemporary U.S. policy, see chapter 4 of Grandin, *Empire’s Workshop*.

3. In France this offensive, which I discuss in chapter 3 of *May ’68 and Its Afterlives*, was part of an effort to sever the leftist activism of the May ’68 from its real content and to unlink that event from an immanent politics of equality.


8. Ibid., 93.


10. De Certeau writes, “I would simply like to present to you some work in progress on ‘ways of doing’ and ‘everyday practices’ to which I would like to give the name of ‘ordinary culture’ in order to avoid the accepted expression ‘popular culture,’ in which the word ‘popular’ carries too many ideological connotations.” “Pratiques quotidiennes,” 23. For an elaboration of this critique of de Certeau and Bourdieu, see my “The Sociologist and the Priest.”


12. See Foucault, “Pouvoirs et stratégies.”


17. Rifkin, “Il y a des mots qu’on ne souhaiterait plus lire,” 105. For Rifkin, the intellectual adventure implied by the title *Révoltes Logiques* (a title borrowed from Rimbaud) relocated revolt in this “setting aside,” this écarterment from and of the doctrinal concerns of disciplinary formations—even at the moment of their most radical self-consciousness. He makes the point that it would be an error to confuse this effect with that of Derridean différence, since the process of écarterment that characterizes Rancière’s most compelling work is highly specific and emerges in his working through of a particular set of arguments regarding a painting, a film, or a social formation. It is not, in other words, a theoretical procedure that can be generalized as with Derrida.


25. See, for example, Daniel Bensaïd’s critique of what he takes to be Rancière’s sophisticated avoidance of politics, which in his view risks, through its emphasis on politics’ rarity or intermittent temporality, an esthetic or philosophical posture in flight from contradiction. Bensaïd, *Eloge de la résistance à l’air du temps*, 45–46.


2. THE LESSONS OF JACQUES RANCIÈRE

1. “L’effet de colle” literally means the “sticking effect” which also has resonances with l’effet d’école, or the “effect of school” and faire école, which means “to acquire a following.” The term itself was used by Lacan in the development of independent study groups in L’École Freudienne de Paris, called “cartels.” The main point was that cartels are only truly productive if they do not continue beyond a certain period of existence. Members in different groups should split up and form other groups with other people. In this way there is no individual constantly in the “leadership position” or “the most diligent worker.” This form is discussed in his founding text of the school, “L’acte de foundation de L’École freudienne de Paris,” of June 21, 1964, as well as the more theoretical discussion in “D’écolage,” of March 11, 1980. These texts can be found on the Web site of L’École de la cause freudienne at http://www.causefreudienne.net/orientation-lacanienne/cartels/.

2. Rancière’s notorious use of the word partage, which means distribution or sharing, has many other idiomatic senses. I follow Gabriel Rockhill’s precedent in translating it as distribution. This follows in the path of establishing a technical sense of the word in English which can help avoid potential confusion. Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics.

3. Badiou’s term “surnuméraire” is translated as “supernumerary” following Norman Madaraz’s early translation of Alain Badiou’s Manifesto for Philosophy.

4. Rancière, Dis-agreement, 123.

5. Rancière includes a long discussion of Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg in the second section of The Philosopher and His Poor, 57–124.

3. SOPHISTICATED CONTINUITIES AND HISTORICAL DISCONTINUITIES

1. “La politique, en effet, ce n’est pas l’exercice du pouvoir et la lutte pour le pouvoir. C’est la configuration d’un espace spécifique, le découpage d’une sphère particulière d’expérience, d’objets posés comme communs et relevant d’une décision commune, de sujets reconnus capables de désigner ces objets et d’argumenter à leur sujet. . . . L’homme, dit Aristote, est politique parce qu’il possède la parole qui met en commun le juste et l’injuste alors que l’animal a seulement la voix qui signale plaisir et peine. Mais toute la question alors est de savoir qui possède la parole et qui possède seulement la voix. . . . La politique advient lorsque ceux qui ‘n’ont
pas’ le temps prennent ce temps nécessaire pour se poser en habitants d’un espace commun et pour démontrer que leur bouche émet bien une parole qui énonce du commun et non seulement une voix qui signale la douleur. Cette distribution et cette redistribution des places et des identités, ce découpage et ce redécoupage des espaces et des temps, du visible et de l’invisible, du bruit et de la parole constituent ce que j’appelle le partage du sensible.” Rancière, *Malaise dans l’esthétique*, 37–38, my translation.

5. Ibid., 123. “Le discours de l’historien est un discours mesure qui rapporte les mots de l’histoire à leur vérité. C’est ce que veut dire explicitement *interprétation*. Mais c’est aussi, d’une manière moins évidente, ce que veut dire *social*. *Social*, en effet, désigne à la fois un objet de savoir et une modalité de ce savoir. . . . le social devient ce *dessous* ou cet arrière-fond des événements et des mots qu’il faut toujours arracher au mensonge de leur apparence. *Social* désigne l’écart des mots et des événements à leur vérité non événementielle et non verbale.” Rancière, *Les mots de l’histoire*, 69.


8. “L’idée de modernité est une notion équivoque qui voudrait trancher dans la configuration complexe du régime esthétique des arts, retenir les formes de rupture, les gestes iconoclastes, etc., en les séparant du contexte qui les autorise: la reproduction généralisée, l’interprétation, l’histoire, le musée, le patrimoine . . .” Ibid., 37.

10. Plato *Protagoras* 325c–d.
12. Plato *Protagoras* 320c.
15. See Gernet, *Droit et institutions en Grèce antique*, 268.
17. Ibid., 91.

### 4. THE CLASSICS AND CRITICAL THEORY IN POSTMODERN FRANCE

1. My use of the terms *postmodernity* and *postmodern* in this essay is historical in nature, and it tries to unify the definition of the “postindustrial” and “postdemocratic” stage of consensus democracies described by Rancière himself in the chapter 5 of *Dis-agreement*. Rancière generally ties the term *postmodern* to the philosophical interpretation given to it by J. F. Lyotard, and as such he avoids it quite carefully, but this is not the definition of postmodernity that I invoke.

2. The famous comic playwright Molière (1622–1673) nonetheless makes a witty and significant intrusion in the text, where he’s welcomed simply as a representative of “our theater” (*notre théâtre*). This “our” is so profoundly French that I think logically it must be subsumed under the category of the “French Classics.” Fénelon had infiltrated the argument of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* in a somewhat similar manner, where it is his *Télémaque*, a classic of seventeenth-century French literature, that is at the center of the pedagogical experiment leading to the discovery of absolute equality.


4. The term *difference* here has to be understood precisely in its multiple meanings, which are temporal, textual, and argumentative.


6. As Christopher Mackay says, “During the first secession, the plebs swore an oath that they would kill anyone who harmed their elected representatives, the tribunes. This marked the beginning of the corporate organization of the plebs as a kind of a ‘state within the state.’ Eventually, the organs of the corporate plebs were absorbed into the state, and to some extent the state assimilated itself to the organization of the plebs.” *Ancient Rome*, 35.


8. Ibid., 18.
5. Jacques Rancière and Metaphysics

Nancy’s essay was published in French as “Rancière et la métaphysique” in the same collection as Badiou’s essay (La philosophie déplacée). We would like to express our gratitude to Badiou, Nancy, and the editors of this collection for allowing us to publish the English translations of these essays.

4. Ibid., 12.

6. What is Political Philosophy?

This essay was originally published under the title “Qu’est-ce que la philosophie politique? Notes pour une topique,” *Actuel Marx* 28 (2000): 11–22. We thank Étienne Balibar for allowing us to print the English translation of the essay in this volume.

1. The notes that follow come from a talk given in 1998 at the École Normale Supérieure of Fontenay-Saint-Cloud in a doctoral seminar on the question “Political Philosophy or Science of Society?” The opening talk was given by Catherine Colliot-Thélène.
2. Catherine Colliot-Thélène writes, “What holds true for the opposition between universalism and cultural relativism also holds true for the opposition between order and conflict, or between individualism and ‘holism,’ and many others as well: they traverse the field of what passes for political philosophy as well as the field of the social sciences. If one sets aside the difference in ‘trade’ (interpretation of texts on the one hand, methodical analysis of collected empirical data on the other), the lines dividing philosophy from the science of society are often fluctuating, all the more so in that the ‘science of society’ is at least as heterogeneous as political philosophy. But to the extent that philosophy finds itself obliged to specify the differential nature of its discourse, it constantly falls back upon the question of the link between rationality and Western modernity. It is in this sense that it is always engaged with the philosophy of history, whether it acknowledges this or not. In its classic form, the philosophy of history had the noteworthy merit of directly confronting...
the question of the historicity of reason: how can one reconcile the fact that reason has a history with the claim of universality that it encompasses? If certain contemporary political philosophers believe they can finesse this question, they nevertheless attest to astonishing complicities between the criteria they propose for rational freedom and the political forms (‘Western democracy,’ or, in Popper’s terms, ‘open society’) that are characteristic of the modern West.” “Philosophie politique ou science de la société,” paper read at the École Normale Supérieure of Fontenay-Saint-Cloud, October 21, 1998; text not revised by the author.

5. See Amiel, *Hannah Arendt*.
6. Esposito’s *Communitas, origine e destino della comunità*, has been published in French translation as *Communitas, origine et destin de la communauté*. See also, among other works, *Categorie dell’impolitico*, *Nove pensieri sulla politica*, and *Oltre la politica*.
8. In English as *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*.
9. See especially Esposito’s commentary on Bataille’s unfinished work on sovereignty in *Nove pensieri sulla politica*, 87–111, where Esposito stresses the constitutive contradiction of the category of “subject,” a correlative of the representation of sovereign power.
10. Ibid., 13, 25.
11. Ibid., 42.
12. Ibid., 47.
13. Ibid., 37.
15. The original divergence of these two notions, *community* and *immunity*, starting from their common etymology (*munus*), along with their reciprocal contamination, is the guiding thread of Esposito’s most recent book, *Communitas, origine e destino della comunità*, following an itinerary that leads from Hobbes to Bataille.
16. Ibid., 58.
19. Ibid., 8–9.

296 Notes to What is Political Philosophy?
20. Ibid., 87.
23. Balibar, Les frontières de la démocratie; Masses, Classes, Ideas; and Droit de cité.

7. RANCÈRE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

1. Rancière, Dis-agreement, 17.
2. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 16.
8. Rancière denies that the accommodation politics leads to will lead to a consensus. “The political wrong . . . can be addressed. But addressed does not mean redressed. . . . The political wrong does not get righted. It is addressed as something irreconcilable within a community that is always unstable and heterogeneous.” Ibid., 103.
11. Rancière, Dis-agreement, 35.
12. Ibid., 11.
13. Ibid., 12.
14. Rancière, On the Shores of Politics, 49. On this issue, see also Rancière’s discussion of subjectification in his essay, “Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization,” where he writes that subjectification (translated in that essay as subjectivization) “is the formation of a one that is not a self but is the relation of a self to an other” (66).
16. Ibid., 86.
17. At the outset of Dis-agreement, Rancière recounts Aristotle’s view of human beings as capable of speech, in contrast to slaves and others who can make grunts and take orders, but cannot really engage in meaningful conversation. When I read this passage, it recalled the events of that evening vividly.
8. POLITICAL AGENCY AND THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE SENSIBLE

1. On these issues, see my articles “L’ordre économique de la mondialisation libérale,” and “ConcateNations.”
6. For more on these issues, see the chapter 4 of my book Lire, interpréter, actualiser.

9. STAGING EQUALITY

Earlier versions of this essay were presented at two conferences on Jacques Rancière’s work, one organized by Phil Watts at the University of Pittsburgh, March 2005, and one organized by and Laurence Cornu and Patrice Vermeren at Cerisy, May 2005; a slightly different version was published in New Left Review 37 (January 2006) 109–29.

2. Rancière, On the Shores of Politics, 32–33. For a more general survey of the anarchic orientation of Rancière’s work, see my “Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery.”
7. Rancière, Dis-agreement, 88. Translation has been modified by author.
10. Rancière, “The Thinking of Dissensus”; see also La haine de la démocratie, 41–47.
12. Plato, Laws 701a. As Samuel Weber notes, even by comparison with unruly democracy, what Plato finds “so frightening and fearful about the theatrocracy is that it appears to respect no such confines. And how, after all, can there be a polis, or anything political, without confinement?

15. Rancière, Partage du sensible, 14; see also 67–68.
16. Ibid., 15.
17. Plato, The Republic 604e.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. See, in particular, Rancière, “Biopolitique ou politique?”
25. Rancière, La haine de la démocratie, 56.
27. Rancière, “Eleven Theses on Politics.”
31. Rancière, La lécon d’Althusser, 144, 96, 121.
34. Rancière, Les scènes du people, 8; see also Rancière, The Names of History, 65, 73.
36. Ibid., 12.
37. Ibid., 236–39.
38. Ibid., 214.
39. Ibid., 243; see also Balandier, *Le pouvoir sur scènes*.
41. See, in particular, Rancière, *La haine de la démocratie*, 54; and *Aux bords du politique*, 229–31.
44. Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 80; see also *Malaise dans l’esthétique*, 42–45.
51. See also Rancière, “Politics and Aesthetics,” 196–97.
52. See also Hallward, “What’s the Point: First Notes Towards a Philosophy of Determination,” 148–58; Hallward, “Dialectical Voluntarism.”
53. Fox Piven and Cloward, *Poor People’s Movements*.
54. Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*, 338.
58. See, for example, Chomsky, “Deterring Democracy in Italy.”
60. Rancière, *Dis-agreement*, 137–38; see also Rancière, *The Names of History*, 93, 98.
62. See, for instance, Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 77. As Alain B-
Notes to Staging Equality

2. Rancière, “Politics and Aesthetics,” 194. With thanks to my friend Peter Hallward for giving me a copy of the original transcription of this interview, conducted in Paris, August 29, 2002.
4. Rancière, La leçon d’Althusser, 226. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from this text are my own.
5. Rancière, The Philosopher and His Poor, xxviii.
6. I am thinking not only of Althusser’s famous statement according to which Marx would have taught him that “nominalism is the royal road to materialism, in truth it is a road that leads only to itself, and I do not know of any more profound form of materialism than nominalism,” but also of the captivating analysis of Foucault’s nominalism by Étienne Balibar, “Foucault et Marx: L’enjeu du nominalisme.” For Althusser’s affirmation, see L’avenir dure longtemps, 243; and compare with Warren Montag’s analysis, “Althusser’s Nominalism.”
7. Rancière, La leçon d’Althusser, 26–27.
8. Ibid., 254n, 250.
10. Ibid., 11.
11. Rancière, Les scènes du peuple, 314. With regard to this recurrent gesture of nominalistic pluralization, I am tempted to quote the expression of...
doubt coming from Rancière himself: “One doesn’t change the nature of a concept by putting it in the plural. At best one masks it” (La leçon d’Althusser, 261).

12. Rancière, La leçon d’Althusser, 154.
15. Ibid., 11.
16. Ibid., 11.
17. Ibid., 13. Rancière plays with the echoes between torsion, here translated as “twist,” and tort, “wrong.”
18. Ibid., 16.
19. Ibid., 16
20. Rancière, Mésentente, 37; see also Dis-agreement, 17 (the English translation skips the first sentence in this quotation).
22. Ibid., 27.
23. Ibid., 39.
24. Ibid., 123.
25. Rancière, Mésentente, 24; Dis-agreement, 5 (translation modified to keep “politics” for la politique).
26. Rancière, Dis-agreement, 19
27. Ibid., 71.
29. Ibid., 1. The expression is actually quite common. See also “L’éthique de la sociologie,” in Les scènes du peuple: “Commençons par le commencement: la dissimulation de la politique que Durkheim aurait opérée pour faire accepter la sociologie à l’Université” (355). Or the beginning of Le philosophe et ses pauvres: “Au commencement il y aurait quatre personnes” (17) (In the beginning there would be four persons.) The Philosopher and His Poor, 3. Or, again, in Le destin des images: “Partons donc du commencement” (9).
30. Rancière writes: “The double Althusserian truth after May ’68 is shattered into two poles: the speculative leftism of the all-powerful ideological apparatuses and the speculative zdanovism of the class struggle in theory which interrogates each word to confess to its class” (La leçon d’Althusser, 146). The definition of the concept according to Badiou is as follows: “We can term speculative leftism any thought of being which bases itself upon the theme of an absolute commencement. Speculative leftism imagines
that intervention authorizes itself on the basis of itself alone; that it breaks with the situation without any other support than its own negative will. This imaginary wager upon an absolute novelty—‘to break in two the history of the world’—fails to recognize that the real of the conditions of possibility of intervention is always the circulation of an already-decided event. In other words, it is the presupposition, implicit or not, that there has already been an intervention. Speculative leftism is fascinated by the eventual ultra-one and it believes that in the latter’s name it can reject any immanence to the structured regime of the count-as-one. Given that the structure of the ultra-one is the Two, the imaginary of a radical beginning leads ineluctably, in all orders of thought, to a Manichean hypostasis. The violence of this false thought is anchored in its representation of an imaginary Two whose temporal manifestation is signed, via the excess of one, by the ultra-one of the event, Revolution or Apocalypse.” See Badiou, L’être et l’événement, 232; Being and Event, 210. For a more detailed commentary, see Bosteels, “The Speculative Left.”

34. Ibid., 329.
35. Ibid., 318.
36. Ibid., 319.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
40. Ibid., 32–33.
41. Ibid., 88.
42. Ibid., 28.
45. Badiou, Being and Event, 191 and 193.
47. Ibid., 25.
48. Badiou, La révolution culturelle; and Badiou, La Commune de Paris. Both conferences have now been translated as part 3, “Historicity of Politics:
Lessons of Two Revolutions,” in Badiou, *Polemics*. The second of these conferences is also thoroughly reworked and reprinted in *Logiques des mondes* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2006), 383–402. For my own translation of the first conference, as well as a wider bibliography on Badiou’s Maoist inflection of the relation between politics and history, see the special dossier which I helped put together on entitled for the special issue of *positions*, edited by Tani Barlow, entitled “Badiou and Cultural Revolution,” including my contribution, “Post-Maoism: Badiou and Politics” (576–634). See also Lazarus, “Singularité et modes historiques de la politique.” For a discussion of the thorny issue of the relation between historical modes of politics and the eternal nature of all truths as established in Badiou’s philosophy, see the long note at the end of *Logiques des mondes*, 544–47.


51. Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, xxvii. Rancière quickly adds, however: “I forgot that I had never known how to draw a straight line” (ibid., xxvii).

52. The figure who best sums up the stakes of this question, of course, is Michel Foucault. For a long time the very model of work for Rancière, Foucault is also mentioned in “La légende des philosophes” as one of the intellectuals responsible, perhaps unwittingly, for the “liquidation” of militant history in France. “If, among the thinkers of my generation, there was one I was quite close to at one point, it was Foucault. Something of Foucault’s archaeological project—the will to think the conditions of possibility of such and such a form of statement or such and such an object’s constitution—has stuck with me,” Rancière says in his interview with Peter Hallward (Rancière, “Politics and Aesthetics,” 209), but after the “New Philosophers,” this influence may seem suspicious: “Now, it is first of all Foucault’s discourse and intervention that serve as support today for the new magisterial and prophetic figures of the intellectual: it is as application of a general theory of knowledge/power that the analysis of the Soviet concentrationary system as accomplishment of the knowledge of master-thinkers presents itself. And it is similarly based on Foucault’s analyses that others prophetize the coming of the Angel, the cultural revolution freed by the vanishing of the old knowledge of Man or the barbarism of a power coextensive with the social order” (“La légende des philosophes,” 300–1).


3. The ironic wink reference to Freud’s *Malaise dans la Civilisation* (*Civilization and its Discontents*) was not lost on anyone, but it comes with a single difference: even if the aesthetic malaise were as impossible to eliminate as Freud’s civilizational malaise, in Rancière there is no sexual enigma to resolve or symptom to interpret, just an inherent contradiction in the aesthetic regime and a conceptual confusion to elucidate.

4. Racism is “*the* malady of consensus” because “except for the religious person, alterity can only be political, that is to say founded on an irreconcilable and treatable wrong.” Without this argumentative devise, the pseudo “appeasement of the people’s political passions” leaves room for “its necessary underside: the return of political animality, the pure rejection of the other.” See Rancière, “La démocratie corrigée.”


9. In the citations that follow, the page number is given for “The Ethical Turn of Aesthetics and Politics”; the original French edition of the chapter was entitled “Le tournant éthique de la politique et de l’esthétique.”


16. Ibid., 8.
17. Ibid., 104.
19. See Rancière, “Sens et figure de l’histoire,” where he already denounced the “retrospective link between unrepresentable horror of the camps and the anti-representative rigor of modern art” (21) and reminds us that “the age of antirepresentation is not the age of the unrepresentable” (23).
20. Rancière, “The Ethical Turn of Aesthetics and Politics,” 2
21. Ibid., 2
22. Ibid., 5.
23. Ibid., 2. This restrictive conception of “trauma” is nevertheless part of a larger contemporary discussion. See, among others, Fassin and Rechtman, La fin du soupçon; and Fassin and Rechtman, L’empire du traumatisme, which show the rapid development since the 1980s of humanitarian psychology, victim psychiatry, and the psychotraumatology of exile in France and elsewhere.
26. One can trace Rancière’s retroactive critique of Lyotard’s theory of the sublime in his rewriting of the first version of “S’il y a de l’irreprésentable,” first published in L’art et la Mémoire des Camps: Le Genre Humain, for its republication in Le destin des images, as well as the rewriting between these texts and Malaise dans l’esthétique, with its “Ethical Turn,” in 2004. The new post-9/11 master-words trauma and terror, the idea of an ethical turn, the link between the American wars and the aesthetic of the sublime, Bush and Lyotard, the law of Moses/law of McDonald’s—all are new historical and discursive symptoms of his thinking of discontents, or the Lévy-Milner effect on the “malaise of aesthetics.”
28. Fontenay, Une tout autre histoire, 190.
29. Ibid., 15.
30. Ibid., 185. See also “Exister ‘avant’ d’exister,” a program aired on France Culture, Les Cheims de la connaissance, May 1, 2007.
31. Fontenay, Une tout autre histoire, 231, 232.
33. Ibid., 15.
35. To my knowledge, no history of ideas gives such a role to Lyotard, includ-
ing that of François Cusset on *La décennie: Le grand cauchemar des années 1980*, which shows him resisting the “thought police” and only envisioning his “aesthetic of the sublime” as a retreat from the political and critical scene of the 1970s. Even if they agree on the principle actors of conservative ideology, Cusset establishes no link between this reactionary turn and the later work of Lyotard, nor between the new moralists and the dominant paradigm of the Shoah, as Rancière proposes.


37. Ibid., 171, 18, 19.

38. Martine Lebovici agrees, in “À plusieurs voix autour de Jacques Rancière,” in criticizing the excesses of Jean-Claude Milner’s theses, notably the direct link he establishes between modernity, democracy, and the genocide of the Jews. But, for her, that impedes neither recognizing the extermination of the Jews as a central event nor saying that the name “Jew” cannot give way to a political subjectivation.


42. See “S’il y de l’irreprésentable,” in *Le destin des images*.


44. Rancière, “Esthétique, inesthétique, anti-esthétique.”

45. On the subject of this polemic violence, see Campion, “Jacques Rancière et la démocratie.


47. Rancière, *La haine de la démocratie*, 98.

48. Ibid., 40–41.


51. Milner, “Théorie du nom juif.”

52. See Marty, *Une querelle avec Alain Badiou, philosophe.*

53. Badiou, *L’éthique*, is one of the explicit intertexts of Rancière’s book, but Badiou takes care to distinguish ethics as a “new name of thought” for Levinas from the contemporary ideology and catechism to which it gave birth, that of the “right of difference” (36–37). Rancière, who never names Levinas, treats only the transformation of Lyotard’s “ethical” thought into an antipolitical consensus or “new law of Moses.”
Sartre’s stance on commitment evolved very quickly through the course of the late 1940s and into the 1950s, as evidenced perhaps most notably by his discussion of the functional and committed aspects of “black poetry” in “Orphée noir,” originally published in 1948 and reprinted in *Situations III*.

Barthes, *Le degré zéro de l’écriture*, in *œuvres complètes*, 1:183 (also see 147). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.


Rancière provides at least three different definitions of politics: (i) the act of political subjectivization that breaks with the police order; (ii) the meeting ground between police procedures and the process of equality; and (iii) the overall distribution of the sensible. It is primarily this last meaning that is being discussed here.


See Rancière, *La parole muette*, 17–18, and Rancière, “Politics of Literature.” The essay “Politics of Literature” was reworked and published in French as the opening chapter in *Politique de la littérature*.


Ibid., 20.

Ibid., 11. Rancière writes on page 20 of the same article: “Sartre’s flawed argument about Flaubert is not a personal and casual mistake.”

According to Rancière, “The patterns of their critical explanation of ‘what literature says’ relied on the same system of meaning that underpinned the practice of literature itself. Not surprisingly, they very often came upon the same problem as Sartre. In the same way, they endorsed as new critical insights on literature the ‘social’ and ‘political’ interpretations of nineteenth-century conservatives. Further, the patterns they had to use to reveal the truth on literature are the patterns framed by literature itself. Explaining close-to-hand realities as phantasmagorias bearing witness to the hidden truth of a society, this pattern of intelligibility was the invention of literature itself. Telling the truth on the surface by travelling in the underground, spelling out the unconscious social text lying underneath—that also was a plot invented by literature itself” (ibid., 20).

13. Rancière has provided this genealogy most notably in *La parole muette* and, more recently, in *Le destin des images*.

14. As mentioned in footnote 5, there is an additional sense in which he uses the term.


18. Ibid., 30; *La mésentente*, 53.


21. Although Chantal Mouffe’s work is squarely situated in the logic of identity and difference, she nonetheless indicates one of the dangers inherent in this logic: “Despite its claim to be more democratic,” extreme pluralism “prevents us from recognizing how certain differences are constructed as relations of subordination and should therefore be challenged by a radical democratic politics.” *The Democratic Paradox*, 20. Nancy Fraser puts her finger on this problem in her critique of what she calls deconstructive antiessentialism: “Deconstructive antiessentialists appraise identity claims on ontological grounds alone. They do not ask, in contrast, how a given identity or difference is related to social structures of domination and to social relations of inequality.” *Justice Interruptus*, 183. She also rejects the pluralist version of multiculturalism, where “difference is viewed as intrinsically positive and inherently cultural”: “This perspective accordingly celebrates difference uncritically while failing to interrogate its relation to inequality.” Ibid., 185.

22. As we will see, *La haine de la démocratie* nonetheless remains largely within the logic of identity and difference.


26. Rancière himself seems to recognize this (see ibid., 37).


28. Ibid., 51.

29. It is likely that Rancière would reply to this criticism by reminding us that the “proper” of politics is to be “improper” by constantly stirring up the
sediments of the police order. However, we should not be distracted by what has become a common deconstructivist strategy: politics will never be so improper that it will throw off its proper harness of being improper.

30. Rancière, *La haine de la démocratie*. 7. Rancière’s earlier article, “La démocratie criminelle?” remains far superior to the book that eventually grew out of it precisely because he focused on the reconfiguration of the French political imaginary since the dissolution of the Soviet Union rather than venturing into historical generalizations regarding the perpetual disdain for democracy (see *Chroniques des temps consensuels*).


33. See Williams, *Keywords*, 14; and Palmer “Notes on the Use of the Word ‘Democracy,’” 205: “It is rare, even among the philosophes of France before the Revolution, to find anyone using the word ‘democracy’ in a favorable sense in any practical connection.” To take a few poignant examples, Montesquieu and Rousseau both suggest that democracy is against the natural order (see *De l’esprit des lois* I, XI, vi; *Du contrat social* III, iv). Anthony H. Birch asserts that “the founders of the American constitution shared in the generally poor view of democratic government. . . . The Founding Fathers talked of creating a republic, based on representative institutions, not a democracy; the leaders of the French Revolution talked of a republic also; and in Britain people described their system as one of representative and responsible government.” *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Democracy*, 45–46. As an example thereof, see the critique of “pure democracy” in *The Federalist Papers* (most notably nos. 9 and 10). The writings of Alexis de Tocqueville, although far from being unequivocal, can be taken as signs of important conceptual and terminological changes, whereby “democracy” was partially revalo-

34. Moses Finley’s historical analysis clearly points to one of the fundamental
problems with Rancière’s schematic account of the perennial hatred of democracy: “In antiquity, intellectuals in the overwhelming majority disapproved of popular government, and they produced a variety of explanations for their attitude and a variety of alternative proposals. Today their counterparts, especially but not only in the west, are agreed, in probably the same overwhelming majority, that democracy is the best form of government, the best known and the best imaginable.” *Democracy Ancient and Modern*, 8–9; see also Palmer, “Notes on the Use of the Word ‘Democracy,’” 203; and Laniel, *Le mot ‘democracy’ aux États-Unis de 1780–1856*, 31.

35. To say that one is in favor of democracy today, at least within the Euro-American world, is a moral no-brainer structurally equivalent to statements like “I am for peace” or “I am against child abuse.” Such statements are generally devoid of any analytic content and primarily function as social signs, whose message can be literally translated as: “I am a good person like all other good people.” The relatively small group of conservatives attacked by Rancière is in fact playing off of this moralization of political categories and sardonically reversing the values by condemning democracy as a form of cultural corruption.

36. We could therefore say the same thing about democracy that Paul Valéry says about freedom: “It’s one of those detestable words that have more value than meaning, that sing more than they speak [C’est un de ces détestables mots qui ont plus de valeur que de sens; qui chantent plus qu’ils ne parlent].” Quoted in Kerbrat-Orecchioni, *La connotation*, 6.

37. “Subjectivization,” at the very least, allows Rancière to underscore the dynamic aspect of politics (see the three definitions of politics in note 5), and it emphasizes the role of subjects in the political process.

38. This confusion is exacerbated by Rancière’s tendency to claim that the commonsense use of the term is “confused” (Le haine de la démocratie, 101).


41. Ibid., 61.

42. Ibid., 62.

43. There is at least one important qualification to make: Rancière does provide a fascinating account of the ways in which art is reappropriated by
various regimes (see, most notably, *L'inconscient esthétique*). This might be interpreted as suggesting that the political being of art always depends on its regime. However, even if this is the case, Rancière nonetheless purports to have access to the “political being of art” within each regime rather than recognizing that the *politicité* of art is a concept in struggle, a crossroads of social negotiation.

44. Paraphrasing his own terminology, we might say that he suffers from a *meta-politics of art*.

45. It is interesting in this regard that the story of the film *Lili Marleen* is not significantly different from the story of the song. The project had its origins in the work of two representatives of Papa's Kino. The producer, Lugi Waldleitner, was known for being a conventional member of the establishment, and the screenwriter, Manfred Purzer, had a reputation as a conservative. In accepting to direct the film, R. W. Fassbinder appears to have concluded a devil’s pact. However, echoing the theme of the “right to survival” in *Lili Marleen* and many of his other films, he states in one of his interviews, “If someone objects, as some of my friends do, that you shouldn’t make films with the money of rightists, all I can say is that Visconti made almost all his films with money from rightists. And always justified it with similar arguments: that they gave him more leeway than the leftists.” *The Anarchy of the Imagination*, 61.

46. Some useful reference points in the elucidation of “logics of production” include the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his followers, H. R. Jauss’s aesthetics of reception, and Anthony Giddens’s theory of the duality of structure.

47. The same thing could be said about Robert. Although he is portrayed as a Jewish resistance fighter deserving of all of the obligatory social credit, he is also depicted as Mr. Mendelsson, the cowardly pawn and eventual perpetuator of patriarchal power. On this and other related issues, see the chapter on *Lili Marleen* in Elsaesser, *Fassbinder’s Germany: History Identity Subject*.

48. Since there are no transhistorical, objective criteria in hermeneutics, the distinction between better and worse arguments can only be based on various forms of legitimation through social negotiation. Although this is not the place to develop such an argument, it is important to note that the position I am taking on this issue should not be unduly identified with relativism.

50. In “Le tournant éthique,” the reference to Elephant is dropped, and the other two films are used as illustrations of the ethical turn in contemporary politics and aesthetics. Juxtaposed with the work of Brecht, Hitchcock, and Lang, these films are taken to be signs of a new “consensual” age in which facts and principles are rendered indistinct in a morass of unbridled wickedness: evil is used to battle evil in a world in which the difference between the innocent and the guilty has dissipated against the backdrop of an original trauma shared by all (the link between September 11, 2001, and the war parade against the “axis of evil” should be clear).

It is interesting that Rancière, in what is otherwise one of his most intriguing recent articles, insists on there being “two eras” of cinema, whereas he dedicated a large portion of *La fable cinématographique* to proving that Deleuze’s division of film history into two periods was a mistake. Although this is not the place to analyze the relationship between these two claims, it should be noted that his argument in *La fable* focuses on perceived changes in film between the early and the mid- to late twentieth century, whereas his claims in “Le tournant éthique”—which are also made in passing in “Les nouvelles fictions du mal”—concentrate on the differences between film in the latter part of the twentieth century and cinema in the early twenty-first century.

51. There are a number of interesting elements in this film that are situated at the limit of justifiable interpretation. For instance, the letters “DA” in the concrete immediately recall Freud’s analysis of a child’s “fort . . . da . . .” game in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and suggest that Dave’s childhood game with Jimmy and Sean, unlike the little boy’s game described by Freud, was marked by a “Da” that trapped him forever “there” at his last moment of happiness or innocence. Although it is difficult to know with certainty, it seems like this kind of reference, which was not present in Dennis Lehane’s novel, would be within the reach of a screenwriter like Brian Helgeland.

52. Jimmy’s last name is Markum, and he bears the mark of his debt on his back in the form of a tattooed cross, which recalls the cross in Katie’s mother’s name: Marita, or Maria bearing a cross. The other names in the film are equally symbolic, as should be clear from the “good” cop who knows when divine law trumps the rules of the here-and-now (Sean
Devine) and the phantomlike wanderer who cannot keep his deep-seated rage from overflowing (Dave Boyle).

53. In uncritically accepting the auteur policy with all of its limitations, Rancière has placed undue emphasis on the role of the director. He doesn’t even mention the fact that the screenplay was based on a novel by Dennis Lehane that was published in 2001 and therefore written prior to the discourse on the axis of evil.

54. It is significant that Jimmy’s daughter was murdered in the old bear cage, just as Dave had been tortured as a boy in a wolf’s den.

55. Like Rancière, I refuse to condone this conception of “justice.” However, I think it’s important to clearly understand its inner logic and its mystical underpinnings.

56. The only time the dog is seen is at the very end of the film, when Grace decides to spare him his life, since he is justifiably angry at her for having stolen his bone. A vertical tracking shot receding into the heavens, which echoes the final shot in Breaking the Waves, reveals Moses barking toward the sky.

57. It is, of course, important that this was the first film in Lars Von Trier’s trilogy USA—Land of Opportunities, since followed by Manderlay (2005).

58. Grace mentions that (like Christ) she doesn’t have a family, only a father.

59. The end of Dogville recalls Augustine’s account of the earthly city: “But the earthly city will not be everlasting; for when it is condemned to that punishment which is its end, it will no longer be a city.” The City of God against the Pagans, 638. It would certainly be a mistake, however, to identify the life of the gangsters with the “City of God.”

60. In addition to its religious dimension, there are many other aspects to this film, as visible in the multiplication of references to the Greek world (Jason and the rest of his family), famous fairy tales (Snow White), theater (Brecht) and the “birth” of film (Thomas Edison). However, the spiritual themes developed in Dogville are clearly part of a larger project, which includes both Breaking the Waves (1996) and Dancer in the Dark (2000). In the former film, Von Trier weaves together a comparable story of perverted yet authentic spiritual devotion based on very similar themes: the divine gift, its acceptance, exile and excommunication, the proof of love, the logic of sacrifice, the battle between dogma and truth, and the struggle between the life of the flesh and the life of the spirit. Dancer in the Dark is also based on a story of misunderstood devotional sacrifice in which an outsider (Selma, a young Czech working in an
American factory) dedicates herself to saving her son from blindness with a level of commitment (including her devotion to protecting the police officer’s secret) that is scarcely understandable to those around her. She finds “salvation” in a parallel world of musicals that allows her to face hardship and eventually capital punishment. The final shot of the film is structurally equivalent to the final shots in *Breaking the Waves* and *Dogville*: a vertical tracking shot ascending into the heavens is doubled by the providential statement “it’s only the last song if we let it be.”


62. Rancière seems to have overlooked the important role played by the high school principal, who punishes John in the beginning and is gunned down by Eric toward the end of the film.


64. Diane Keaton, one of the executive producers of *Elephant*, responded to a question about her reaction to the shootings at Columbine with the following description: “My immediate reaction is, why? That’s it. Why why why why why why? I think this movie [*Elephant*], as well as *Bowling for Columbine*, actually tries to deal with the whys of it in its own way. What’s interesting to me about Gus’s movie is that he’s not trying to say, “It’s because of this!” He forces you to sit there and watch it unfold before you in this amazing way, and you have the responsibility of your own thoughts. You have to sit there with your own fucking thoughts and think about it. That was astonishing, because for me it was something, for Bill it was something else, for Gus it was something else. For me, it was about being a parent, because I’m a parent.” Gus Van Sant and Diane Keaton, “Elephant.”

65. A similar psychosocial pattern is to be found in the demonization of individual politicians: a single, external cause is isolated as the unique root of all evil. The belligerent and repetitive vilification of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the mainstream Western media—I’m writing this in the summer of 2008—is an excellent example of the extreme shortcomings of political monocausality: a president elected by universal suffrage for a four-year term who has no direct control over the armed forces, military intelligence, security operations, or foreign policy (these are all the prerogative of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei) has been transformed into an evil “dictator” anxious to use nuclear weapons to wage war (even though Iran is still at least five years away from having nuclear power, and the Iranian president does not even have the right to declare
war). It is clear that such political monocausality is directly linked to the drumbeat for more war in the Middle East and is part of the “perfect” exit strategy for the debacle in Iraq: it “explains” the failure of the American military in Iraq (it’s Iran’s fault); it is capable of distracting public opinion from Iraq, which is old news, in the same way that Iraq has thrown a blanket over almost all major media coverage of Afghanistan; it provides for a clearly identified diabolic enemy to fill the shoes of Saddam Hussein; it perpetuates a faulty image of Iran as unjustifiably hostile to the United States and contributes to American amnesia regarding the recent history of Iran (marked perhaps most notably by the 1953 coup organized by the CIA to replace a democratically elected regime with the autocratic Shah).

In the case of military action, such ideologically generated monocausality could serve to nourish America’s pluto-imperial military-industrial complex. It could also help prevent the emergence of any robust form of democracy in Iraq (which would allow for a Shia majority, most probably with leanings toward Iran), and it could further the cause of the fundamentalists in Iran by providing them a justification for repressive policies while fanning the nationalist fires of a people under attack.

66. “Rencontre avec Gus Van Sant.”

67. These aesthetic choices recall the work of another great portraitist of American life and social violence, who was equally fond of referencing Macbeth and avoiding facile, one-sided explanations: William Faulkner. The six different trailers for Elephant, which are guided by the name intertitles in the film, emphasize the connections to novels such as The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying.

68. See Van Sant’s answer to the question concerning kids’ reactions to his film in “Elephant: Interview with Gus Van Sant and Diane Keaton”: “I think that kids will probably be the best audience, because I think that they recognize the quote-unquote answers as scapegoats or red herrings. They know, since they live in this situation, that the answer is way more unpredictable. You can say, ‘Well, you know, these are the signs to look for. If you look for these signs, you will be safe. Or, if you look for these signs, you can fix it before it happens.’ They’re smarter than that, I think. They already know they have to do a little more thinking, and that it’s less curable than just [watching for] the warning signs. And they live with it. Since they’re in high school, they live with this day to day; they live inside of it. When you talk to them, they can play the part of the student who is
just playing up to the adult, pretending they know all the things they should be saying about school shootings, or they can be themselves, and they can just tell you that they’re sick of the whole thing—adults don’t get it, and it’s their own world, and leave them alone, basically.”

69. Interview with Gus Van Sant in Repérages 42, no. 9–10 (2003): 33. This reference is borrowed from Roï Amit’s forthcoming essay, “Trauma-Image: The Elephant Experience,” in Trauma and Memory. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to obtain the original interview.

70. It remains to be seen whether Rancière’s rejection of ontology and essentialism in his contribution to this collection constitutes a significant shift in his work or is simply an authoritative rejection of certain criticisms of his stance on politics. In assessing his interestingly pragmatic stance at the end of “The Method of Equality,” it is important to remember that claiming that something is the case does not necessarily make it so.

13. CINEMA AND ITS DISCONTENTS

1. La fable cinématographique, 16; in English as Film Fables, 8. In the notes below the French edition will be signaled as FC and the English translation as FF. Now and again, for the ends of theory, I have slightly modified Emiliano Battista’s excellent translation.

2. As shown in Politique de la littérature, 52; or in the last chapter of Malaise dans l’esthétique. Sustained critical reading is found in Rockhill, “Jacques Rancière’s Politics of Perception” and “The Janus-Face of Politicized Art: Jacques Rancière in Interview with Gabriel Rockhill”; and in Rancière’s own “Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics.” A productive critical perspective on the aesthetic age, in which art bears witness to what cannot be represented, is found in Sanyal, The Violence of Modernity, 207n9. She believes that what Rancière, in Malaise dans l’esthétique, calls the “ethical turn” happens to be a highly “depoliticized version of modernism’s aesthetic economy.” In her eyes, Rancière’s criticism of the Frankfurt school’s rejection of any art that compromises with “cultural commerce and aestheticized life” when it becomes a mere witness to catastrophe—and not an agent—is a symptom of retraction from critical engagement.

3. It is “a multiplication of texts and readings upon a single surface. From this point of view an intimate relation exists between the image and the
landscape. A landscape is a stratification of texts that permits a multiplicity of readings. . . . I believe that no fundamental difference exists between an image and a text, a text having been for ages received as an image.” Michel de Certeau, “Entretien avec Alain Charbonnier et Joël Magny,” 19–20. The work is close to what he remarks of the construction of “spatial stories” in Michel de Certeau, *Arts de faire*, 172–74.


5. Specialists of cartography, such as Giorgio Mangano, have mobilized the theory in readings of maps that are similar to film criticism, especially in his *Cartografia morale*, 218–27 and *passim*.


9. *FC* 34; *FF* 25.

10. Ibid. The English version translates *déchaînement* as “explosion.” The term seems related to montage inasmuch as it is a concatenation that, contrary to its binding effects, “deconcatenates” or releases (in detonating) montage in its own process. Rancière’s contrary reading is visible in the style and choice of terms that run against the grain of the matter he studies.

11. *FC* 36; *FF* 27, emphasis added.

12. *FC* 37; *FF* 28, emphasis added. Eisenstein’s essay appears in *Film Form*, 122–49. Rancière grafts the unconscious onto the gloss where Eisenstein speaks of primitive thought. “Inner speech,” Eisenstein noted, “is precisely at the stage of image-sensual structure, not yet having attained that lyrical formulation with which speech clothes itself before stepping out in the open, in a dual process: an impetuous progressive rise along the lines of the highest explicit steps of consciousness and a simultaneous penetration by means of the structure of the form into the layers of profoundest sensual thinking. The polar separation of these two lines of flow creates that remarkable tension of unity and form characteristic of true artworks” (144–45).

13. *FC* 37; *FF* 28.

14. *FC* 40; *FF* 30.

15. Ibid.; *FC* 40; *FF* 41.
16. FC 12; FF 5.
17. This is what Deleuze does in “Qu’est-ce qu’un événement,” a pivotal chapter of Le pli: Leibniz et le Baroque.
18. FC 12; FF 6.
19. FC 13; FF 6. In “La mise à mort de Madame Bovary,” a chapter of Politique de la littérature, Rancière uses Deleuze’s concept of haecceity to discern the protagonist’s extreme aisthèsis. Emma bathes in “a pure flux of sensations” (72–73).
20. Deleuze, L’image-temps, 234. It would be worth pursuing the interstice in the context of what Jean-François Lyotard had described (roughly at the same time) as the effect of parataxis in the “postmodern” age, at least in Le post-moderne expliqué aux enfants.
21. FC 146; FF 108.
22. FC 141; FF 101.
23. FC 150; FF 111.
24. FC 155; FF 116.
25. FC 235; FF 185.
26. FF 236; FC 186, emphasis added.
27. FC 237; FF 186.

14. POLITICIZING ART IN RANCiÈRE AND DELEUZE

1. See Rancière, “Existe-t-il une esthétique deleuzienne?” in Gilles Deleuze: Une vie philosophique, ed. Alliez, 525–36; and Rancière, “Deleuze, Bar- tleby and the Literary Formula,” in The Flesh of Words, 146–64. See also the English translation of “Existe-t-il une esthétique deleuzienne?”: “Is There a Deleuzian Aesthetics?” However, the translation of this particular text in the present essay is mine.
2. For a detailed consideration of the above, see Rancière, Dis-agreement. See also Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics.
5. Ibid., 18.
6. Ibid., 19 and 23.
moderne liée à ce sensible pur, en excès par rapport aux schèmes de la doxa représentative. Elle s’établit dans les zones où la pitié—c’est-à-dire la sympathie avec la vie in-individuelle voisine avec la folie, avec la perte de tout monde. Deleuze a affaire avec l’œuvre moderne comme œuvre contradictoire où l’élément pathique, la pensée-arbre ou la pensée-caillou, vient défaire l’ordre de la doxa mais où cet élément pathique est lui-même inclus, racheté dans une organicité et un logos de type nouveau.”

12. Ibid., 163.
13. Ibid., 164.
17. Rancière, *Politique de la littérature*, 54, my translation. The original reads: “La scène des choses muettes qui sont là sans raison, sans signification, et entraînent les consciences dans leur aphasie et leur apathie, le monde des micro-individualités moins qu’humaines qui imposent une autre échelle de grandeur que celle des sujets politiques.”
20. See, for example, Maria-Benedita Basto’s article, “L’écriture dans la colonie.”
21. One of the men apprehended for Djaout’s murder was quoted as saying, “Il écrivait trop bien, il avait une plume intelligente, il arrivait à toucher les gens.” See Geesey, “Exhumation and History,” 272. And in the prophetic words of Djaout himself: “Le silence c’est la mort et toi, si tu te tais tu meurs et si tu parles tu meurs alors dis et meurs.” Quoted in Isabelle

22. Djaout, The Watchers, 90, 94. All subsequent references will be to this edition, and page numbers will be cited in the text.

23. Rancière, Dis-agreement, 57.

24. I am thinking here of Jakobson’s theory of metaphor. See “Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,” in Fundamentals of Language, ed. Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, 67–96; and “Closing Statements: Linguistics and Poetics,” in Style and Language, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok. As Michael Silk points out, Jakobson is one of the first to analyze metaphor at the systemic level of discourse rather than at the unitary level of the sentence. For more on Jakobson’s (largely tacit) debt to Saussurian linguistics, see Silk, “Metaphor and Metonymy.” To return to the question of Rancière’s engagement with Deleuze, Éric Alliez also notes that Rancière analyzes Deleuze’s thought almost exclusively through the dual prisms of signification and its attendant dissociation, ignoring its constructivist aspect and the notion of forces in particular. See “Existe-t-il une esthétique ranciérienne?”

25. Deleuze, “To Have Done with Judgement,” 134.


27. Rancière, Aux bords du politique, 117.

28. Deleuze, “Bartleby; or, the Formula,” 90.


30. Rancière, Aux bords du politique, 116–17. This is my translation. The original reads as follows: “Et cette égalité définit, dessine une communauté, à condition seulement de comprendre que cette communauté n’a pas de consistence. Elle est, à chaque fois, portée par quelqu’un pour quelque autre, une infinité virtuelle d’autres.”


15. IMPOSSIBLE SPEECH ACTS

1. At the very start of his writing career, Said translated (with Maire Said) Auerbach’s seminal essay “Philology and Weltliteratur.” Said’s Humanism and Democratic Criticism contains a slightly revised and expanded version of his introduction to Mimesis (85–118).


3. Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt cited this method—“the
isolation of a resonant textual fragment that is revealed, under the pressure of analysis, to represent the work from which it is drawn and the particular culture in which that work was produced and consumed—as the inspiration for the anecdote with which the classic new historicist essay began (Practicing New Historicism, 35).

4. Auerbach, Mimesis, 557.
5. On Auerbach’s transformation into “a legend of the writer in exile,” see Lerer, Error and the Academic Self, 221, 247, and 250. Emily Apter suggests that Auerbach “resisted Turkey” during his eleven-year residence there and that his “jaundiced depiction of his loneliness in the wilderness really appears to be a distorted picture of what it was like to live and work in Istanbul… Auerbach’s self-portrait as a lonely European scholar seems increasingly questionable the more one takes account of the sizeable professional, artistic, and political European community that was well established in Istanbul (and Ankara) by the time he arrived in Turkey in 1936” (Apter, The Translation Zone, 48, 50). See also Gumbrecht, “‘Pathos of the Earthly Progress’.”

8. See also Rancière, The Flesh of Words, 71–79.
12. Ibid., 31.
13. Ibid., 36.
18. Ibid., 25, 18.
20. See ibid., 27.
21. Ibid., 27.
22. Ibid., 28.
23. Ibid., 28.
26. Apter, “Saidian Humanism,” 43. See Damrosch, “Auerbach in Exile,” which finds Auerbach projecting himself repeatedly into the authors and characters of the texts through which he sought to write an objective history of the representation of reality. On identity politics, see Said, “Edward Said Talks to Jacqueline Rose,” 25: “I’ve become very, very impatient with the idea and the whole project of identity: the idea, which produced great interest in the United States in the sixties and which is also present in the return to Islam in the Arab world and elsewhere, that people should really focus on themselves and where they come from, their roots and find out about their ancestors—the book and television program Roots. That strikes me as colossally boring and totally off the mark. I think that’s the last thing that we should be thinking about in a way. What’s much more interesting is to try to reach out beyond identity to something else, whatever that is. It may be death. It may be an altered state of consciousness that puts you in touch with others more than one normally is. It may be just a state of forgetfulness which, at some point, I think we all need—to forget.”


28. Ibid., 87.


16. **STYLE INDIRECT LIBRE**


4. Rancière, Mallarmé, 10, 79.


7. In both The Names of History (54) and Short Voyages to the Land of the People (75), Rancière gives paradigmatic importance to the following passage from Michelet’s Origines du droit français (cited from œuvres complètes, 3:607): “And yet what were the mother’s laments? They alone could say. The very stones cried for them. Ocean himself was moved on hearing
Simonides’ Danaë.’’ Stone and calcification play an organizing role in the
discussion of Michelet in both these books; the figure of speaking stone is
equally important in *La parole muette*, notably 18–20 and 31–35.


9. For interviews concerning the place of this inaugural work in Rancière’s
trajectory, see Ewald, “Qu’est-ce que la classe ouvrière? Entretien avec
Jacques Rancière”; Rancière, “Histoire des mots, mots de l’histoire”; Pan-


11. Ibid., 88, 99; Panagia, “Dissenting Words,” 121; Guénoun and Kavanagh,
“Jacques Rancière,” 14–16. See also *Names of History*, 100, which predates
this set of interviews and where the reference is to *To the Lighthouse*
rather than *The Waves*. If this group of texts clearly poses a strong distinc-
tion between a “realism” that continues the romantic tradition and a
“modernism” that breaks with it, Rancière’s later discussions of the his-
tory of literary aesthetics will largely relativize the distinction.


14. A history of the emergence of the notion can be found in Philippe, *Sujet,
verbe, complément*, 66–84. An influential use in English can be found in
Ullmann’s *Style in the French Novel*, 94–120. To my mind, the most
rigorous (although highly controversial) delineation of the phenomenon
is to be found in Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences*. Banfield prefers “re-
ported speech or thought” to “free indirect discourse.” A consideration of
Banfield’s technically precise definition points out the extent to which my
use of the term here is fundamentally metaphorical; the tense-shifting
effect and the anomalous conservation of pronouns and other situation-
dependent elements of discourse are absent from the examples I will cite
from Rancière.


The translations have been revised by the author.

17. The inverted parenthetical (“dit . . . Périclès”) is, however, entirely com-
patible with the combination of tense and pronoun shift and retention of
expressive elements that characterizes the free indirect style.

18. The source Rancière refers to for the argument about the militaristic pur-
pose of the funeral oration is Loraux, *The Invention of Athens*. It is worth
noting that the close relation between the vocabulary and themes of the funeral oration (as a genre, including but not limited to this most famous example) and antidemocratic discourse is one of the major themes of Loraux’s book.

20. See Plato, *The Republic* 561c–e, p. 274: “And so he lives out his life from day to day, gratifying the desire of the moment. One day he drinks himself under the table to the sound of the pipes, the next day he is on a diet of plain water. Now he is taking exercise, but at other times he is lazing about and taking no interest in anything. And sometimes he passes the time in what he calls philosophy. Much of his time is spent in politics, where he leaps to his feet and says and does whatever comes into his head. Or if he comes to admire the military, then that is the way he goes. Or if it’s businessmen, then that way. There is no controlling order or necessity in his life. As far as he is concerned, it is pleasant, free, and blessed, and he sticks to it his whole life through.” Rancière paraphrases: “One day, Plato tells us, he will get drunk to the sound of flutes [s’enivrer au son de la flute], the next day he will diet [fera du régime]; one day he will do gymnastics and the next day he will be lazy; one day he will go in for politics and the next for philosophy; for a while he will think about war and for a while about business.”

21. Plato, *The Republic* 557d: “And I tell you, it’s a good place to look if you want a particular kind of constitution.—Why?—Because the liberty it allows its citizens means it has every type of constitution within it. So anyone wanting to found a city, as we have just been doing, will probably find he has to go to a city with a democratic regime, and there choose whatever political arrangements he fancies. Like shopping for constitutions in a bazaar. Then, when he has made his choice, he can found a city along those lines.”


**Afterword**

5. See, in this volume, “Historicizing Untimeliness.”
7. On this point, I would agree with Yves Citton. See, in this volume, “Political Agency and the Ambivalence of the Sensible.”
8. The politics of aesthetics would more accurately be named as a meta-politics: a politics without *démos,* an attempt to accomplish—better than politics, in the place of politics—the task of configuring a new community by leaving the superficial stage of democratic dissensus and reframing instead of the concrete forms of sensory experience and everyday life. But, for the sake of commodity, I shall use here the simple expression the “politics of aesthetics.”
10. See, in this volume, “Rancière’s Leftism.”