

Emptiness of Freedom: An Analysis of Jacques Rancière's Understanding of Politics through Tocqueville

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Abstract

In this article, first, I introduce my account of Rancière's political thought. I argue that Rancière's description of politics through disagreement is a novel project due to its revelation of the paradox of politics as rational. Second, there is a general assumption about Rancière's dismissal of any kind of politics within the police order. I oppose this criticism because Rancière does not define police and egalitarian orders as static and individual identity and subjectification as singular. Third, I show that there is a crucial problem in Rancière's theory in terms of his understanding of the relationship between equality and freedom. I argue that the connection between equality and freedom may not be that strong as Rancière wants us to think and that the democratic ideal of equality may have adverse effects on politics by introducing Tocqueville's criticism of democratic equality. Finally, by an analysis of political events presented in *Disagreement*, I argue that Rancière's emancipatory politics demands a supposition of certain kind of human nature. Hence, the role of politics as the producer of knowledge and change, and the importance of third parties should be taken account for the manifestation of incommensurable wrong for Rancière's theory of politics to work.

Keywords: Rancière, Freedom, Tocqueville, Human Nature.

Özgürlüğün Boşluğu: Jacques Rancière'in Siyaset Anlayışının Tocqueville Üzerinden Bir Analizi

Öz

Bu makalede, önce Rancière'in siyasi düşüncesine ilişkin anlatımı sunulacaktır. Bu bağlamda, Rancière'in anlaşmazlık yoluyla siyaset tanımlamasının, siyasetin paradoksunu rasyonel olarak ortaya koymasından dolayı orijinal bir proje olduğu savunulacaktır. Rancière'in polis düzeninde siyasetin gerçekleşmesinin imkânsızlığına ilişkin genel bir varsayımı olduğuna dair genel bir eleştiri vardır. Bu makalede, ikinci olarak, bu eleştiriye karşı çıkılacak ve Rancière'in polis ve eşitlikçi düzenleri bireysel kimlik ve özneleştirme açısından statik ve tekil olarak tanımlamadığı iddia edilecektir. Üçüncü olarak, Rancière'in siyaset kuramında eşitlik ve özgürlük kavramları arasındaki ilişkiye dair anlayışı açısından çok önemli bir sorun olduğu gösterilmeye çalışılacaktır. Eşitlik ve özgürlük arasındaki bağlantının Rancière'in bizim düşünmemizi istediği kadar güçlü olmayabileceğini göstermek için Tocqueville'in demokratik eşitlik eleştirisinden referans verilerek eşitliğin siyaset üzerinde olumsuz etkileri olabileceği iddia edilecektir. Son olarak, Rancière'in ele aldığı siyasi olayların analizleri vasıtasıyla, Rancière'in özgürleştirici politikasının belirli bir tür insan doğası varsayımını gerektirdiği gösterilecektir. Bu nedenle, Rancière'in siyaset teorisinin merkezindeki ölçülemez yanlısın tezahürünü anlamak için üçüncü tarafların ve bilginin ve değişimin üreticisi olarak siyasetin rolü ve önemi dikkate alınmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rancière, Özgürlük, Tocqueville, İnsan Doğası.

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Introduction

Let's begin at the beginning. For political philosophy, everything begins with an agreement, an agreement to live together in human communities. The beginning of politics begins with the question, "for what reasons do human beings gather into political communities?"² rather than with the basic question, "what is politics?" In this sense, logical sequence dictates us to question the necessities that political life requires, which are association, security or well-being of societal order. All presuppositions about politics become justifications for the origin of a social order. Thus, the question of politics transforms into a question of management of social order, which is established as the foundation for the well-being of the community. This is why political philosophy is not about politics itself, but about the properties of the subjects and conditions of them coming together in a proper fashion.³ What is politics, then? Is it an empty space in which the social order can be accomplished by laws, institutions etc.? Rancière's account of politics is exemplary because of its emphasis on this very problematic of the political. Rancière introduces an account of why political thought always introduces something other than politics as the meaning of politics.

In this article, first, I will give my account of Rancière's political thinking. This is not an easy task, but it is necessary for me to introduce the problems of his political thought. Second, I will state the general assumption about Rancière's dismissal of any kind of politics for the parts that have parts within the police order. I oppose this criticism because Rancière does not define either police and egalitarian orders as static or individual identity and subjectification as singular. In this sense, while one part of the individual at a certain time may have no part, the other part of the individual at that certain time may have a part in the societal order. In modern society, nobody is completely inside or outside of any orders of the community. Second, I will show that there is a crucial problem in Rancière's theory in terms of his understanding of the relationship between equality and freedom. I will claim that the connection between equality and freedom may not be as strong as Rancière wants us to think and that the democratic ideal of equality may have adverse effects on politics. Finally, by an analysis of political events presented in *Disagreement*, I will argue that Rancière's emancipatory politics demands a supposition of a certain kind of human nature. I will address the role of politics as a producer of knowledge and change, and finally the importance of third parties for understanding of politics as the manifestation of the "incommensurable wrong"⁴.

1. Rancière's *Disagreement*

Consensus democracy "as a determined regime of opinion and right" and recent discussions about the elimination or the resurrection of politics through communicative action can be the starting point for a discussion of Rancière's political thought.⁵ Consensus democracy contains a "simple rationality of dialogue of interests."⁶ This communicative rationality takes people being able to communicate with each other as a predetermined fact/possibility. "They assume people are talking in a context where they fully understand each other

2 TT, Jacques Rancière, "Ten theses of Politics," *Theory and Event* 5, sayı: 3 (2001): 4

3 TT, Rancière, "Ten theses of Politics," 4.

4 D, Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1995), 103.

5 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 102.

6 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 47.

and assume that they can communicate on the same wavelength.”⁷ Rancière opposes this kind of understanding of politics through agreement between each and every equal citizen in a social order. The presupposition of coming to an agreement neglects that there are multiple logoi just as there are multiple individual. For Rancière, politics is not about consensus, politics is about dissensus, that is, disagreement.

In *Politics and Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that “a state (polis) is a thing that exists by nature and man is by nature a political animal.”⁸ Accordingly, he holds that humans without society become the “the most savage of animals.”⁹ Traditional idea of the political nature of man comes from Aristotle’s famous paragraph: indeed, whereas other animals can use their “voice” to signify perceptions of pleasure and pain, humans alone possess the faculty of “speech” for signifying higher-order perceptions of good and bad, right and wrong, etc.. Nature gave humans- and nature never gives something in vain- the gift of speech so as to allow them to deliberate on the just and the unjust.¹⁰ The faculty of speech lays the natural foundation of the *Politics*. And, for Rancière, it is the speech that brings disagreement to an existence.¹¹

Unlike Aristotle, Rancière argues that speech different than voice is not about agreement on what is just or unjust; it is about the manifestation of the disagreement. However, the disagreement between speaking beings is not about misunderstanding due to the particular way of choosing proper words or the lack of necessary knowledge. Disagreement is an irresolvable misunderstanding between parties due to the gap between the word and the body the word refers to. “Disagreement is not the conflict between one who says white and another who says black. It is the conflict between one who says white and another who also says white but does not understand the same thing by it or does not understand that the other is saying the same thing in the name of whiteness.”¹² The disagreement between X and Y cannot be resolved by additional knowledge or refinement of the words. Thus, two understandings cannot understand each other. There is a mismatch between two speech accounts within the community. What becomes apparent with who is not the what. This inability of the word to have the object that it refers to makes disagreement the foundation of politics.

In the normal order of things, “human communities gather together under the rule of those qualified to rule.”¹³ “The exercise of power qua right and the exercise of power qua potency were one and the same.”¹⁴ In the *Gorgias*, Callicles argues with Socrates that life politics emanates from the idea of human nature based on superiority. Nature dictates that wise politicians should be the rulers since they are by nature stronger than others. Justice is all about the superior rule. Careful observation of the natural world, and the animal kingdom in particular, reveals this fact as the foundation of political life. From this perspective, “the logic of *arche* presupposes a determinate superiority exercised upon a determinate inferiority.”¹⁵ Thus, Rancière argues that the potency to rule as a proper quality determines the right to power in the normal order of things. In this normal

7 Nick Hewlett, *Balibar Badiou Rancière: Rethinking Emancipation* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 99.

8 Pol, Aristotle, *Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Chicago, 2003), 1253a1.

9 Pol, Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a35.

10 Pol, Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a10-15.

11 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 37.

12 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, x.

13 TT, Rancière, “Ten theses of Politics,” 18.

14 SP, Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics* (London: Verso, 1992), 7.

15 TT, Rancière, “Ten theses of Politics,” §8-9.

order, there is no disagreement and no politics as such. The account of justice is determined by a simple arithmetic of parts that have parts in the social order.

Rancière argues that politics/disagreement originates from freedom given to equal demos. The normal order of things in which some rule and some obey is distorted by the equality of all who have freedom to rule their own life. Rancière claims that this is the quintessential “wrong” that politics is founded upon. Freedom is given to the demos— *everyone was given the right to rule or to govern based on an empty property*— whether due to the goodwill of the law-giver, or for the sake of political expediency due to perceived advantages in warmaking and commerce resulting from the inclusion of the demos in the social order. Freedom is an empty property because “it is not a determinable property but a full invention.”¹⁶ In addition, freedom is given to everyone. It does not differentiate anyone from anyone else. It cannot be counted as a sufficient quality to govern. In this sense, “it is the freedom as an empty property that came along and set a limit to commercial equality and the effects of simple law of owning and having.”¹⁷ Democracy/politics has its origin from the absence of quality of governing. The part that has no part is the part is counted as the productive member of the society just because she is there and being counted. These individuals who are not actually equally contributing to society can only be counted as equals arithmetically “in contrast to the geometric equality that requires some claim, some contribution by which one’s belonging could be measured. Thus, freedom produces parts that have no parts in the arithmetic order of society.”¹⁸

Rancière calls this the law of mixing, where can anyone do anything.¹⁹ The hierarchical order that is needed for the well-being of the societal order is lost by the law of mixing. Plato discusses that in democracies everyone is equal and free. For Plato, everyone doing whatever she wants creates an anarchical situation. In democracies, there is no hierarchical order possible because there is no a priori assigned proper place for anyone in the social order.²⁰ Justice means *sumpheron* without *blaberon*: gaining advantage without causing any injury (geometric order). To do justice is to count right but because of the initial wrong (having parts in the societal order that have no parts), there will be always miscounts and double counts of the parts of the community. In this sense, empty freedom creates a gap between geometric order and arithmetic order.

What is at stake in democratic community is not the oneness of community but the fact that there will always be two parts within the community. As opposed to the traditional claims of political philosophy, Rancière argues that community is not based upon a common idea which eliminates diversity²¹. It is exactly the opposite. Community is based upon the conflict emanating from the initial wrong, inclusion of parts that have no place in the societal order. In this sense, community is not one but two. There are parts in the community that have the proper quality to be counted in the social order and there are parts in the community that have no part, only an improper property of freedom in the outside of the social order. The sum of the parts in the social order never equals the whole of the community. There is always going to be a disagreement about the count-

16 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 7.

17 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 8.

18 Adriel M Trott, “Rancière and Aristotle: Parapolitics, Party Politics, and the Institution of Perpetual Politics,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, sayı: 4 (2012): 629.

19 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 19.

20 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 16.

21 Jean-Philippe Deranty, “Jacques Rancière and Contemporary Political Ontology,” *Theory and Event* 6, sayı: 4 (2003): 4.

ing of these parts of the community and politics is the manifestation of this disagreement. “Politics occurs by reason of a single universal that takes the specific shape of wrong. Wrong institutes a single universal by tying the presentation of equality as the part of those who have no part, to the conflict between parts of the society.”²²

Politics exists because there is no foundation; no social or divine order regulates human society. This creates two logics in the community: the police logic and the equalitarian logic. Politics occurs when these two logics coincide. Here, democracy is what differentiates “community” from the sum total of parts within the social body in which the part of the community that has no part in the social body stages its subjectification. Subjectification is an exposition of the name by the declaration of wrong. In this sense, community is a rupture.²³ This rupture of community for the sake of the coherence of the social body does not mean the sacrifice of the parts that has no parts within the police order for the sake of one’s community.²⁴ “A political subject is not a group that becomes aware of itself, finds its voice, imposes its weight upon society. It is an operator that connects and disconnects different areas, regions, identities, functions and capacities existing in the configuration of a given experience.”²⁵ For Rancière, identification means the reconfiguration of the field of experience. This gives multiple “counts” to society and thereby contradicts the police logic.

Police order decides on the tangible presentation of the object.²⁶ “A partition of the sensible refers to the manner in which a relation between shared common and the distribution of exclusive parts is determined through the sensible. The police is a partition of the sensible whose principle is the absence of a void and of a supplement.”²⁷ Police use the idea of equality to reach a kind of consensus in its way of doing and sayings things. It distributes the meaning and the significance of the objects within the societal order. It decides on what is visible and audible. From this perspective, politics is intervention upon the visible and audible. Politics is specifically opposed to the police.

Therefore, politics is the litigation of perceptible, a new change, creation, sensing. Politics is a space for appearance. Political paradox is about the partition of sensible which on the one hand separates and excludes; on the other hand, allows participation. The paradox stems from “the replacement of the arithmetical order (the order which regulates exchange of perishable goods) with the divine order of geometrical proportion (the order that regulates the real good).”²⁸ Politics is aesthetics, a staging of an event where individuals or groups can agree to disagree; an opening in the sensible.

Rancière opposes political philosophy because political philosophy sees the paradoxical action of politics as a scandal which must be abolished. He argues that political philosophy namely *archipolitics*, *parapolitics* and *metapolitics* interprets the gap between the police order and the egalitarian order as a problem. In this sense, it transfigures the paradox of politics to the practical paradox of governments.²⁹ For example, *parapolitics* tries

22 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 39.

23 TT, Rancière, “Ten theses of Politics,” §15.

24 TT, Rancière, “Ten theses of Politics,” §17.

25 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 40.

26 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, xii.

27 TT, Rancière, “Ten theses of Politics,” §20.

28 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 15.

29 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 73.

to overlap the gap between two contradictory logics by overlapping them with the elimination of the initial wrong, twoness of the community. According to Aristotle, there are three basic strata within the state: the rich, the poor and the middle. Those who are extremely fortunate, wealthy and noble do not know how to obey and those who are extremely poor are too degraded and do not know how to govern. The city which consists of these two extremes is not a city of freeman but a city of masters and slaves. There will not be any friendship or commonality between citizens who belong to these extreme poles. The conflict between these extreme poles contradicts the natural element of politics which necessitates fellowship between the citizens.³⁰ Thus, for Aristotle, the creation of an economic middle class neither rich nor poor in democracies is crucial for the well being of the community. They are the good citizens since they know “how to govern like a freeman and how to obey like a freeman.”³¹ Aristotelian middle class is a simple example of how philosophy eliminates politics for the management of the social sphere. In this sense, it transforms fiction of “politics” as a pacifying procedure to eliminate the tension between individual and collectivity by getting rid of the symbols of social division.”³²

2. Criticisms

The major criticism of Rancière is his oversimplification of parts that have parts in the police order. Politics does not exist because men, through the privilege of speech, place their interests in common. “Politics exists because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account, setting up a community by the fact of placing in common a “wrong” that is nothing more than this very confrontation, the contradictions of two worlds in a single world: the world where they are and the world where they are not, the world where there is something between them and those who do not acknowledge them as speaking beings who count and the world where there is nothing.”³³

One may argue that sometimes politics can occur between speaking parties who are recognized as having a part. From this perspective, it may seem like Rancière overstates the extent to which there is consensus about who counts, or about what is legitimate to speak about, etc. And there is an overidentification of *who* can speak/be heard with *what* can be said/heard. Rancière defines politics as the moment in which one can show that one can speak thus act or show that she is worthy of being a part. It may be argued that because of this, Rancière dismisses the possibility of politics between parts that have parts³⁴ within the police order. This brings about the question, what happens after politics? “How would the *demos* play an active role in a more

30 Pol, Aristotle, *Politics*, 1229b5-30.

31 Pol, Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b15.

32 SP, Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, 11.

33 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 27.

34 The terms “parts that have parts” and “parts that have no parts” in Rancière’s philosophy has a special reference to his understanding of society in relation to politics and aesthetics. Central to Rancière’s redefinition of aesthetics and politics is “the idea that the “sensible” imposes a hierarchy on the community and its members that also regulates their participation in political and artistic representation. The French noun “partage” along with its English (“distribution” and “partition”) and Spanish (“reparto”) translations denotes the importance of order and division as well as that of inclusion in or exclusion from the composition of the sensible. But underlying this logic is the idea that the sensible is also a shared space that is common to the members of the community. For Rancière, then, art and politics are both deeply concerned with governing which members of the community have access to the common along with what registers as visible and sayable there.” (Daniel Brant, “Distribution of the Sensible” in *Understanding Rancière, Understanding Modernism*, ed. Bray, Patrick M. (USA: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 236.)

democratic society if an upturn in the demos' political fortunes automatically disqualifies them from political influence?³⁵

However, I think that there are no permanent outsiders or insiders in Rancière's political thought. One can be a legitimate speaker in one capacity and not in another. Then one makes an argument about this gap between the two capacities she becomes a political subject because she disidentifies herself from her social identity by way of asserting her equality before everyone as a speaking subject. To illustrate, both women and workers have some part in the society. They are not completely outside according to Rancière. They have some part in the police order, yet the factor that turns them into political subjects is the fact that they do not have a part in another way. When they start making "logical arguments"³⁶ about their experience of not having a part they become political subjects. This is done, according to Rancière, through the subjectification of the *gap* between their having a part and not having a part.

Although I do not think that Rancière oversimplifies the realm of politics, I think that there are several underpinnings of his theory due to his description of wrong emanating from the situation of equality. The problem in Rancière's thought is his claim that for there to be politics equality must produce freedom. I do not think this assumption about equality always holds true. In this part, I will challenge this assumption by giving an account of Tocqueville's understanding of equality and posing the question of can equality produce something else than freedom?

First, Rancière presupposes struggle for equality is the underlying cause of politics. In my opinion, Rancière neglects some adverse effects of the equality on democratic individuals. McClure³⁷ in her response to Rancière's "Ten Thesis on Politics" wonders whether the return of the political philosophy in the image of consensus democracy is relevant to the American case where political philosophy did not have a chance to exist in the first place. While Rancière responds to this question by relating Arendt's and Strauss's studies of Greek tradition on American Constitutionalism, I think, Rancière's political thought and the American democratic tradition have deeper connections in terms of our understanding of democracy.

Rancière argues that not only political philosophy but also political sociology as an extension of it works towards invention of a "concrete description" of a community "on the basis of a univocal partition of the sensible."³⁸ Rancière understands de Tocqueville's analysis of democracy in America as a typical work of political sociology which identifies democracy with a concrete type of man or a mode of life. For Rancière, this is *archipolitics* which equates politics with the police order by reconstructing community in terms of its functions. It is true that de Tocqueville defines democracy with the birth of a new type of man namely mediocre man. However, what is new about this man is his equal standing with anyone else. For Tocqueville, equality is the invention of democracy; however equality has a paradoxical relationship with democratic politics. On the one hand, it is the chief desire of the so-called democratic citizen. Equality offers its pleasure to all for free. On the

35 Hewlett, *Balibar Badiou, Rancière: Rethinking Emancipation*, 111.

36 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 40.

37 See. Kristie M. McClure, "Disconnections, Connections, and Questions: Reflections on Jacques Rancière's 'Ten Theses on Politics,'" *Theory and Event* 6, (2003).

38 TT, Rancière, "Ten theses of Politics," § 30.

other hand, citizens' false judgement of equality diminishes the political life, mainly associational character of individuals.

Tocqueville argues that the fantasy of equality that has been created by the democracy needs a certain degree of blindness. One needs to be shortsighted enough to assume that all individuals are perfectly equal to one another. Thus, the democratic equality perforce consigns individuals to isolation. Tocqueville explains why people have this tendency to isolate themselves from their fellows. In aristocratic times, people knew their places, there was a hierarchy and order; a kind of superiority and inferiority between people. When everyone becomes equal after a sudden revolution, they simply want to ignore each other- they have a memory of those hierarchical times.³⁹ In democracies, Tocqueville speculates, individuals as atomistic entities within the society think that they are independent from all other individuals; they are self-sufficient and do not need help at all. This "calm feeling" finds its perfect expression in individualism. Individualism is tantamount to isolation. It means turning back to the self. Individuals in democratic societies are emancipated from the impacts of the society, in other words, they are free. Tocqueville claims that individualism brings a false sense of independence. Individuals lose the ability to take care of the common affairs and to interact with the community.

Equality diminishes the associational character of the individual. Actually, society loses its meaning, or its place in our political understanding. The only way to connect the atomistic individual to society is to show that societal values are not that different from individualistic values. Tocqueville claims that Americans with "the doctrine of self-interest rightly understood" exactly does this.⁴⁰ In this sense, the relationship between individual and society in democracies is aporetic. Society is something inherently to be avoided and to be actively participated. From this perspective, the perfect individual for democracy is in a void. On the one hand, she should be individualistic and strong. She should be self-sufficient and self-reliant. She should not need help from anybody. She should get away from society as fast as she can. These are the requirements of equality and individual liberty. On the other hand, she should realize that she is weak. She needs help from her fellows in order not to be dominated by a central government. One day she can be the individual, completely isolated, other day she should be a political actor, completely within the political sequence. In this sense, a nice balance between the necessities of individual and political liberty needs to be established. The balancing act, juggling per se, is the duty of the individual only.

Thus, the type of citizen who is suitable for democratic regime has been defined by contradictions. The ideal democratic citizen has a lot of burden. Citizen as the atomistic individual is responsible for making correct judgements by electing good rulers on merit. For Tocqueville, as well as Rancière, democracy is not possible without the condition of equality. However, de Tocqueville shows the problem of equality from a different perspective which is worth considering in order to see Rancière's overdetermination of the concept of equality in terms of possibility of politics. Tocqueville argues that in an equal society like this in which there is no hierarchical order that places every part in its proper place, there will be problems like individualization and centralization of government. This sense of equality can be misjudged by individuals; they may feel like that they do not need any kind of association within the society or no need to build upon the oneness of the community. Social order or the police order would be strengthened by the equal situation of anyone with anyone

³⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 509.

⁴⁰ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 525.

else. This is why individualism and the sense of equality lead individuals to give their political power to a centralized state. Government as an institution of the police order is allowed to be superior because it represents all equally. In this sense, democratic chaos is productive yet ends up distancing itself from politics. Therefore, the position of equality may actually hurt freedom. In this sense, equality instead of motivating the parts that have no part to appear in politics may distance the parts that have no parts from politics.

In addition to these, there are problems in Rancière's understanding of politics in terms of its definition with incommensurable wrong. To begin with politics, for Rancière, is an event which stages the process of the reconfiguration of the gap between the word and body by the parts of the community. First, Rancière gives an account of slave wars and argues that equality in the war was not enough for the Scythian slaves to gain political freedom.⁴¹ For an event to be political, the part (individual or group) needs to speak the same language with the part of the community to affirm its equality. In this sense, what is at stake for the interruption of the police order by politics is not having superior or equal physical power over the other, but having the faculty to speak. To illustrate, in *Disagreement*, Rancière introduces Deroin's announcement of her candidacy for a public office when women did not have the right to vote or Blanqui's struggle to make proletariat counted as a profession as political events. Deroin and Blanqui did not only question the part of woman or proletariat within the definition of the common of the community but also staged the very contradiction between the police and political logic by affirming the equality between parts and parts that have no parts.

In his study called *the Nights of Labour*, Rancière argues that the working class becomes a political subject when it seeks to imitate the other parts that have a part in the social order rather than being proud of its unique traditions and practices. Working class people tried to create a language which could be appropriated by others to affirm the assumption of equality.⁴² The commonality of formation between the parts of the community that avails political relations to take place is equality. "But equality has a peculiar messianic status and structure. It is an absent presence, material in its current effects but futural in its structure, since it is always to come."⁴³ In this sense, the affirmation of equality by political exercise is infinitely taking place since the wrong with which the assertion of equality takes its political shape is infinite.⁴⁴ The infinite movement of parts that have no parts through the logics of community constitutes the emancipatory thought in Rancière. This process can be identified as subjectification of parts that have no parts in the police order to become a part that has a name within the hierarchical order. I believe that in Rancière's theory, there is an a priori assumption about parts that have no parts wanting to be a part in the social order.

Why does the part that has no part try to be a part in the social order by which they have been excluded on the basis of having no quality to rule? I think that the unidirectionality of emancipatory politics from the egalitarian logic to the police logic, subjectification per se, presupposes a certain kind of a human nature. With his construction of politics as disagreement, Rancière covertly inscribes universal characteristics to human beings. Parts that have no parts gravitate towards the hierarchical police order. There are several reasons for such a claim. First, the understanding of speech as the political action and politics as the conflict over recon-

41 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 13.

42 Hewlett, *Balibar Badiou, Rancière: Rethinking Emancipation*, 89.

43 Michael Dillon, "A Passion for the (Im)possible Jacques Rancière, Equality, Pedagogy and the Messianic," *European Journal of Political Theory* 4, sayı: 4 (2005): 444.

44 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 39.

figuration of names and identities through saying evoke the question of necessity of names, identities for the existence of the wrong.

Rancière's aesthetic approach to politics reveals the impossibility of a concrete concept by which the word and the body can overlap. This is why politics is disagreement and there is always going to be a conflict over naming and interpretation. However, what Rancière does not reveal is that the politics is occurred and acted on solely to become a part that has a name even though this name does not have a concrete concept. In this sense, why parts that have no parts strive for being a part is a very relevant question. The difference between the police and the egalitarian order within the community is the hierarchical order. Police provide the hierarchical order by naming each and every visible and audible part of the society. Aristotle defines secure order and harmony as the ruling principles of politics. In nature, every object follows its proper function and in the police order every part of the society has a proper place. In this sense, Aristotle justifies the police order by identifying it with the principles of an unwritten constitution of nature. One can assert that Rancière describes the political process towards order as a natural process as well. Against my supposition, one can argue that the police order is infinitely changing because there is an infinite political exercise towards messianic equality. Here, I am not arguing that, in Rancière's political thought, the police order or social order is something that is destined to stay static but proclaim that it is introduced as something that is desired by human nature.

Moreover, Rancière criticizes political philosophy because of its regulation of paradoxical rationality of politics. Political philosophy does this to define what belongs to philosophy, namely knowledge. I think that politics, in Rancière's account, is not only a manifestation of the disagreement between two equal parties. Political paradox is also a productive chaos. Politics of disagreement produces our knowledge about the world. Rancière argues that what is sensible, thus visible and audible belongs to the police order. What is important is how partition of the sensible has been determined. This determination constitutes our knowledge about the world. One cannot know what one cannot see. Is the police order a necessity for human understanding of the world? The knowledge configured with the political event has to be the part of the police order to find a representation in which everything has names and everybody knows what to do. This is why philosophy has its own proper place in the police in which we need the most appropriate knowledge about things.

Above I claim that the process of partition of the sensible reveals a certain universal human desire for order. This desire for order is explained by political philosophy through giving reference to the natural order. Here, I argue that Rancière, by establishing politics as a productive exercise, defines how knowledge about the societal order is produced by speech. Order, then, still stands out as an aim of the community. Hence, the police order is never perfect in its accounting of the community's part. For the perfection of the order, the police order needs to be changed. The change can only come from politics by speaking, thus acting/making things visible and audible. In other words, through the interlocution of the parties, the reality in the social order that we depend on will not only be reconfigured but also be changed.

This understanding of knowledge as an infinitely changing political configuration introduces societal order as an infinitely changing source of our knowledge. In natural order or divine one, everything has its place; the body knows its word and its name. It is like going out to nature and seeing a stone on which it is written that this is a stone. According to aesthetic, representation is accepted as the source of the knowledge. However,

the paradoxical situation is that to count a thing, one needs to name it. Since there is no single logos in the community, there are always going to be multiple names and words for one single body. This is why politics is not about natural order, ideas of foundations, but it is about parties and their disagreement about the partition of the sensible. For politics, we need two parties. This is why before freedom and equality, there was no politics. When freedom is given to demos, community is torn apart into two, namely parts and parts that have no parts. Twoness in the community begs the question about the role of the third party as the spectator in politics.

Rancière's identification of the third party is very weak. Rancière criticizes Habermas for forgetting that "the third person is as much a person of direct and indirect speech as a person of observation and objectification."⁴⁵ Rancière puts emphasis on how one speaks to her partners in the language of third partners, "they". "They" in the interlocutory situations carries a triple role. First, it implies not only a part whose conflict of interests is under debate but also "the speakers as the speaking being". Second, it addresses the third person who is the other part of the interlocution. Third, it identifies the speaker as the representative of the community.⁴⁶ While Rancière assesses the third person from the point of "they", he neglects the role of third person as a spectator of the political event. This third person may be seen as an inactive observer, but the role she plays in the partition of sensible is crucial. To illustrate, Rancière gives reference to nineteenth century French thinker Ballanche's account of the tale of the secession of the Roman plebians to explain the gap between speech and the account of it. Ballanche's tale of emancipation of plebs ends when a secret council of wise old man determines that "plebs have become the creatures of speech and there is nothing left to do but to talk to them."⁴⁷ This secret council of wise old men is the spectator, the third person, which names the plebs as a speaking being, qualifies them as the part of the societal order. Here, I do not mean to argue that the third person is the sole political subject. What I rather argue is that the third person is the spectator who judges whether the particular political event is over or not. Rancière argues that politics is a rare happening. The parts that have no parts disappear as soon as they appear in the gap between societal and egalitarian order.

This brings us the question of how one can decide when the closure of the particular political stage takes place. Rancière in his account of politics emphasizes time rather than space as the protective device for the possibility of politics. In temporality of historical events, politics appears as a demonstration of a possible world.⁴⁸ For a specific time, certain things are possible. "Time is merely the accounting of what takes place."⁴⁹ Disagreement is an accounting of what takes place in the political stage. Rancière as the third person counts the political events in time. Rancière himself as the counter of these political events is the third party, the spectator of these particular events. Rancière names historical events as political events to show the scandal of politics. If we need two parties for politics to happen, do we need Rancière's counting of events to understand the political paradox? What is the role of the spectator in the political processing of partition of the sensible? How do parts that have no parts become aware of the transformation of "a part that has no part" into "a part that has a part" in the police order?

45 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 47.

46 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 48.

47 D, Rancière, *Disagreement*, 25-26.

48 TT, Rancière, "Ten theses of Politics," § 24.

49 Dillon, "A Passion for the (Im)possible Jacques Rancière, Equality, Pedagogy and the Messianic," 444.

Conclusion

In this article, first, I have offered a compressed account of Rancière's political thought. I argue that Rancière's description of politics through disagreement is a novel project because it reveals the paradox of politics as rational. Second, I opposed the major criticism of Rancière's account of politics. Critics argue that there is an overidentification of political subject, thus, Rancière cannot provide any argument about politics within the political order. I opposed these criticisms by claiming that for Rancière no part in the community is permanently inside or outside of the police order. Rancière's emphasis on time rather than space also gives us a clue about how he sees politics as historical happening. This is why conjecture is important to understand the disagreement within the society.

Third, I challenged Rancière's description of the relationship between equality and freedom by introducing Tocqueville's inscription of the problems of freedom emanated from equality. Rancière argues that for politics to happen there needs to be an equality of positions between "the parts" and "the parts that have no parts" in the social order. This equality needs to be complemented by an empty property like freedom. In this sense, without the conditions of equality and freedom, politics as disagreement cannot exist. On the other hand, Tocqueville argues that freedom and equality does not always go hand in hand. The position of equality may actually hurt freedom and political action because of its emphasis on isolated individuals. In this sense, I have argued that equality instead of motivating the parts that have no part to appear in politics may distance the parts that have no parts from politics.

Finally, I claim that Rancière's politics works on the basis of an assumption about human nature. The unidirectionality of emancipatory politics from the egalitarian logic to police logic presupposes a kind of a human nature namely a desire for hierarchical order. Last but not least, I have attempted to show Rancière's role as the third party in his understanding of politics. I insist that one needs to consider the role of the spectator in the political processing of partition of the sensible.

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Abbreviations

Citations of works by Rancière are given with the following abbreviations.

D Rancière, Jacques. *Disagreement*. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1995.

SP Rancière, Jacques. *On the Shores of Politics*. London: Verso, 1992.

TT Rancière, Jacques. "Ten theses of Politics," *Theory and Event* 5, sayı: 3 (2001).

Citations of works by Aristotle are given with the following abbreviations.

Pol Aristotle. *Politics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, Chicago, 2003.