

EVERYTHING
IS IN EVERYTHING

JACQUES RANCIÈRE
Between INTELLECTUAL
EMANCIPATION *and*
AESTHETIC EDUCATION

Edited by
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The essays collected in this volume represent versions of papers presented at the "Everything is in Everything: From Intellectual Emancipation to Aesthetic Education" symposium hosted by the Graduate Studies in Art program at Art Center College of Design on March 11-12, 2011. The lone exception is the interview that Jacques Rancière, not being able to attend this conference, has allowed us to translate and publish here.

Of the many people who contributed to the staging of the conference and the publication of this volume, the editors would like to single out Art Center's President, Lorne Buchman, and its Provost, Fred Fehlau, for their unflagging encouragement and support in making this event and the resulting publication possible. The Chair of the Graduate Studies in Art program, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, was enthusiastic about the conference and instrumental at every step of the way in seeing it, and this publication, into reality. Finally, we would like to thank our students in the Graduate Studies in Art program, and in particular the group of students who participated in our two-semester reading group on Jacques Rancière's work, for their energy, insight, and interest in the questions addressed in this volume.

The Editors

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PREFACE

Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe

Our conference began with our keynote speaker being moved to our building's roof because of the oversized crowd on what unfortunately turned out to be an unusually cold night in Southern California, and I took it as a good sign that no one left, choosing instead to shiver not so much appreciatively as involuntarily. I am pleased to be able to say that after that things got even better. By the end of the following day signs of intense disagreement between people who fundamentally agreed were visible everywhere. In my view, that is an indication that something was done by way of producing useful discourse.

It was very important to us that we were able to do this conference, which we hope will be the first of an ongoing series which will take place every two years, because it is important to us to have an active relationship with the world beyond and around our central concern with making art.¹ We started the Graduate Art Program in 1986 and from the beginning have tried to be a program in which artists are exposed to theory in a helpful way that is integrated with the work they do in the studio. At orientation I always tell the new candidates that we want to be a program from which our graduates leave feeling as comfortable with French philosophy as with American art dealers and, thinking that the way to achieve this is to have minimum contact with the latter and maximum contact with the former while in school, we have managed quite a good history with French intellectuals. In the last five years, Alain Badiou has spoken here more than once, as has Slavoj Žižek, and in past decades we held a sort of conference in a casino on the Nevada border with Jean Baudrillard, and Félix Guattari gave what may have been one of his last lectures here. But we felt this conference went beyond reminding people that we are a graduate program that was open to theory and where theory as well as practice take place—or where they are inseparable in practice. We thought it was specifically important, because that is what we try to do in our program, to have a conference in which artists and theorists sat on panels together, instead, as Annette Weisser

put it, of the theorists talking and the artists doing things during the breaks. In our Program artists and theorists teach together in the same room and our candidates engage equally with both and the conference reflected that approach. In a related regard it was of course similarly useful to us all that the conference was genuinely international in its composition, content, and scope.

It was also particularly important to us because it was about Rancière. His insistence on the irreversible importance of the aesthetic is of crucial importance to what goes on in our school. Our faculty is diverse, so here I'll put forward what is my own view. That is that Rancière provides a way into two dilemmas in contemporary art, one having to do with how much of it amounts to the suppression of the aesthetic in the name of the political, the other with another kind of historical problem. There are quite a lot of people who would not agree with my feeling that most art nowadays is anthropological rather than aesthetic in origin and intent, or would at least reject such a description of the distinction I discern. And as the contents of the present volume attest, the question of where the aesthetic is being located and what it's being allowed to do to and with the political tends to be presented in reverse or at least modified form, as a question of what the political may do if it uses the aesthetic as a negative example of how to think.

That is in my view an historical problem in the sense of being a problem that derives from where art's general episteme has been recently. It matters little whether the question be approached from one direction or the other, and if this conference did nothing else it will have brought home to its audience the proximity of a certain defining characteristic of both art and politics, which is that both require a working theory of action as a necessity. Before they can be either art or politics, they must be practices after but also before they are ideas. This I think is variously evident in the papers reprinted here, and is in my view inherent in Rancière's position on categories and competence, when he speaks of "a 'primary aesthetics' in the sense that even practices that are not 'artistic' such as politics presuppose the sensible configuration of a certain world: politics defines a common world, it defines objects as common, which is also to say that it also excludes certain objects from this community. It also defines the form of competence required to see these common objects, to discuss them and to act with regard to them: that is, it distinguishes between those who have this competence and those who do not."²

That also relates to the other kind of historical problem I mentioned, for which I personally look for answers anywhere the aesthetic is still permitted to exist, and which will I think be recognizable to all when presented in the following terms. It is still the case that some part of art education takes place between now quite elderly artists who worked their way through modernism to their present condition, and younger colleagues and particularly students who were born just after it. Soon the elderly ones will be gone and there will only be different states of the post-modern talking to one another in art schools. Rancière's contribution to thinking about the post-modern as something other than the not-modern, as part of the question of politics and its relation to the historical condition of Schiller's idea that the origin of the aesthetic object is not in nature but in the aesthetic object, will I think keep him somewhere near the center of pedagogy in graduate art education for the foreseeable future. I think that what was done here was and will be useful in that regard to both artists and scholars, and should like to end this brief preface to their work by personally thanking the participants whose papers are presented here for letting us publish them.

¹ We are tentatively proposing a conference on how art got from about 1970 to here for 2013; and on the differences between art and

design that may be exposed through a genealogical reading of both terms, and thence be the basis for a better theory of what they

might have in common, for the year 2015.

² See the interview with Rancière published in this volume, pp. 10–38.

COMMUNIST EDUCATION

Jan Voelker

I have to start with a deviation from our subject. Some months ago many of us were following as closely as we could the riots in the Arab countries. The events taking place in Tahrir square and elsewhere opened up a new possibility for politics. A feeling of sympathy, close to enthusiasm, arose in us for the strength and the simplicity of this "will of the people," as Peter Hallward would call it,¹ gathering itself there with the sole aim of emancipation. The absence of any radical Islamist ideology was so blatantly apparent that even Western politicians had to refrain at one point from their instant first reaction, which was to warn us about the danger of instability and the possibility of an Islamist takeover. Indeed, the opposite was happening: it was precisely the absence of any fundamentalist religious speech as well as the absence of any call for Western democracy that were among the decisive characteristics of the protests.

And then we had to admit: that this was never thought to be possible. Did we not all implicitly believe the common myth that the people in these countries were not really able to emancipate themselves, but rather could only fall prey to radical Islamism at some point? At least we allowed ourselves to be told by our media and our contemporaries that due to the lack of enlightenment, emancipatory movements would have no chance in the Middle East.

We have been taught the opposite. We have been taught that we have to mistrust our conception of the possible and that we should instead develop our concept of the impossible. What we should learn is that we know nothing about the impossible. We not only know nothing, but we take this lack of knowledge as a lack of existence. And we take it as a barrier for our thought: we literally try to think only within the constraints of our knowledge.

And if it were only for polemical reasons, to begin to learn, to be taught by the impossible, we should remind ourselves that the strongest barrier of impossibility is now on our side: it is in fact impossible to have political uprisings in our secure first world. So there are two faces of the impossible. On the one side it functions as

a prohibition, and on the other side it seems that what is new finds its starting point outside of the realm of our knowledge.

We can assert that it is a fact that for us today politics has become impossible. Politics in the precise sense of the embodying of a new process of emancipation that would be beyond our knowledge of the techniques of society. Without having the space to further elaborate this point, we can cite the name Alain Badiou, who has obviously worked on this knot with the utmost precision.²

What we should learn then is that, from the impossible, politics itself can take form. If one supposes that we could learn this from the events in the Middle East, then a fundamental question has to be answered: in what way and to what extent do these events relate to us, to our situation? To this question there is a first, quite common answer. A stupid answer: namely, another question about the continuation of the oil supplies from Libya or bringing up the threat of refugees heading towards European soil. A German newspaper put it the following way: if Saudi Arabia also has its riots, oil prices would be affected dramatically, and then the Arab Spring would finally arrive in Europe—at gas stations.

But the real question is indeed, how do we and how can we relate to the impossible events we witnessed? How can we learn more about the question of the impossible? To say it differently, and to put it as Alain Badiou has put it recently, we should be pupils of these movements. But how can we be pupils of foreign events?³

This whole question might be understood as a deviation away from the subject of aesthetic education. But my point will be, as you might guess, that on the contrary this is not a deviation at all, and that we can connect these problems if we look into Rancière's works on aesthetics, and try to elaborate and extend his argument as to what it means to follow an emancipatory lesson today.

So the first part of the question could be put the following way: is it possible to learn from emancipatory movements? Is something like an emancipatory education possible? To say the least, one would at first say that this is very problematic. We might end up placing the emancipatory movement in the position of some kind of master, and the emancipatory education would, in its educational part, not be emancipatory at all. We cannot be the pupils of these events in the sense that there is some sort of a master-image telling us how emancipation would work not only in this particular instance, but in general. A second argument might state that we simply cannot learn anything from any other moment of emancipation, because the situation is completely different, due to different cultures, etc. But clearly,

these arguments would not be universalist enough. The universalist stance would rather be that those events, as events of emancipation, in their truth address anybody, anybody who is willing to engage himself in the emancipatory process; they are neither a master plan for other situations nor is the conception of equality they propose different than any other situation. So, one has to stick to the question and even generalize it: is there any possibility of emancipatory education at all?

With Rancière, one has to think emancipation in terms of time and space, and therefore the relation between art and politics, which lies at the heart of Rancière's thought. And in relation to the question of how to learn from emancipatory moments, the question of art will come to be decisive. This would then be the second part of the question: can we frame a certain thought of emancipatory education within the constellation of politics and art that Rancière claims to be central for the aesthetic regime?

*The scene of emancipation, or:
How to pass from one to the other*

Let us start with the role of education in the process of emancipation. In a recent book, *The Emancipated Spectator*,⁴ Rancière has taken up the thread of education again, which he had opened at a very early point of his thought. He reminds us of the ignorant schoolmaster Jacotot, to whom Rancière dedicated a book,⁵ and he reminds us of the scene of emancipation that was to be found in Jacotot's system of education. The system that Jacotot developed was based on the interruption of the classical scene of education in which a knowing master and an unknowing pupil form the central constellation. In *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière transforms this constellation into the constellation we find in a theatre, namely the constellation of a group of spectators before a performance.

As in his book on Jacotot, where Rancière undermines the relation between the active and the passive, the knowing schoolmaster and the unknowing pupil or the *ignoramus*, Rancière's aim is to change our fundamental conception of the relation between the audience and the work of art. He does not attempt to turn the audience into an active, interacting audience that would be integrated in the performance. Rather one has to interrupt the relation of the master and the pupil at its very roots: Rancière's attempt is—as Jacotot showed—to understand the spectator as someone who

already has a certain knowledge. With the help of this knowledge which anybody already has at his or her disposal, this anybody is capable of working on his own sense of the spectacle, of creating his or her own sense out of it. Because this power of translation is the capacity of anyone, the community in play is the community of anybodies, unspecified, gathered together only in their commonly shared capacity to translate.

In turn, the artist, Rancière adds, is not a person transforming his knowledge or his ideas via the medium of the artwork, then placing it into the realm of the spectator: he or she is instead working on the transformation of something he or she does not know into an artwork. So the artist, too, is involved in a process of translation. He is transferring his knowledge into a scene where he is also a spectator and does not know what actually is taking place. The artist makes himself a spectator, while the spectator makes himself a translator, a narrator, or, in short: an artist.

Indeed, Rancière reproduces the scene of Jacotot here. In the book on Jacotot, the teacher becomes an ignorant teacher, and the pupil becomes someone who already has knowledge, and they both come together in a shared absence of a specific knowledge. In the exemplary case of Jacotot, both the teacher and pupil do not speak the language of the other, and so neither one can instruct the other. They cannot communicate. Jacotot had to go into exile, and now he does not know how to continue teaching, since he is not able to communicate with his pupils. But what he does have is a book. In Jacotot's case, it is a copy of Fénelon's *The Adventures of Telemachus*, a bilingual edition with the original text and a translation on facing pages. Not only there is a translation of the French into Flemish; this book is also a translation of a classical text into modernity, so it is really a translation machine. This changes the situation of education. Because now both sides find proof that translation is possible, and word-by-word they can start their own translation and learn the language of the other, without any instruction or explanation. With only a bit of knowledge at their disposal they are able to translate the book: because "everything is in everything"⁶ and "*all men have equal intelligence*"⁷—anybody is able to connect the knowledge he has to new knowledge.

Rancière calls the "normal" situation of education the situation of inequality because it rests on the distinction between the knowing and the unknowing. The situation of emancipation, however, is the situation of equality, because it is free of any determination and it is through learning that both persons will prove that their knowledge is

equally capable of learning the language of the other. They proceed from the knowledge they have and learn by themselves. Nevertheless one has to remember the fact that the emancipatory scene is still a scene of education, and the schoolmaster is an ignorant one, but still a schoolmaster. Rancière's (and Jacotot's) objection is directed against the transmission of knowledge from a knowing person to an unknowing. It is *this* hierarchy that is abolished in the emancipatory scene. But what is still transmitted, even and perhaps most necessarily in the emancipatory scene, is the will. The schoolmaster is able to encourage the will of the other, to make him want to translate. This will is transmitted via the book; this transmission between the two unknowing persons is only possible via the book as a medium.

If we come back to the scene of art, and its relation between an artist and an audience, there is obviously only one candidate left to take the role of the book: the work of art itself. The work of art becomes a kind of third, a mediation between the artist and the spectator. But this middle term does not mediate a specific content. It is an empty place, just as Jacotot's book is an empty third. Empty in the precise sense that the confrontation between two languages does not exhibit the process of translation; the bilingual book is only a material effect that proves the possibility of a process of translation retroactively.

The problem with this scene of emancipation, as Rancière has several times stated it in relation to Jacotot, is that it does not lead us to any political scene. For Jacotot, emancipation is always possible, but it is always the emancipation of the individual. Nothing leads from individual emancipation to an emancipated society, because the latter is necessarily always structured and hierarchical. In his book *Disagreement*, Rancière therefore shifts the argument: If Jacotot's claim was that emancipation will always be lost as soon as an attempt is made to integrate it into the social order of bodies and spaces, Rancière now starts from the axiom that the social order of bodies and spaces inscribes a "wrong" into society, that is, it mistreats equality. Emancipation can then be thought at the level of communities, because now society establishes scenes of inequality and produces an unspecified, uncounted remainder. This remainder is *per se* collective. Rancière thus shifts the problem of emancipation from an individual to a collective level.

So emancipatory education seems to encounter a problem, as soon as it translated into the context of a collective. Already in Jacotot's practice, we seem at some point to lose the idea of the collective or of the community. Clearly, the question of community is also part of the classical scene of education: for it is obvious that if a

teacher transmits knowledge to the brains of his pupils, he might be able to build up a sort of a perverted collective, in which everyone knows the same thing in the end. For as long as it has existed, the classical scene of education has been about the reproduction of the state.

In the scene of emancipation, then, this social link is lost. This is indeed not a side effect; the loss of the social link is rather one of the central moments of the emancipation. The emancipatory process consists primarily of a practice of dis-identification: don't be a knowing teacher anymore, don't be an unknowing pupil anymore. Emancipation is the loss of roles and places. Jacotot seems to leave us with a mass of emancipated individuals, and it is not clear how to make the way to a political collective from here. Jacotot simply escapes this question by claiming that emancipation cannot rise to the level of society. Impossible.

But even in the emancipatory scene, there are always two. In the scene of emancipation no knowledge will be transmitted, but there is a will to be passed on. You always need the ignorant schoolmaster to encourage the will of the other. To put it differently, looking from the other side, from the side of the one who is seeking knowledge: what you need is not a master, what you need is not only the will to translate and to learn, but also the courage for the new. It is the ignorant schoolmaster who encourages, but the book does as well, as a manifest example that the impossible already has been possible. The schoolmaster can transmit his will, and the book is a material proof of possible emancipation.

Courage, which we can add as a supplement to the Rancièrian framework, can be taken from a famous phrase of Kant that could perhaps serve as a motto for Jacotot's scene of emancipation. "Have courage to make use of your *own* understanding!" was Kant's well-known answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?⁸ In this sense, the needed courage is the courage for the new, supplementing the will for new knowledge. So will and courage, in a way, form the link between the emancipated schoolmaster, the pupil who is about to emancipate himself, and the book. But this will is still not a collective will. It is, if one may put it like this, the will of the two.

Now, if we think of a group of pupils, say, it is still unclear if this will also allows us to connect people in an emancipatory moment. We could say that at the heart of the question of education there persists the question of the translation of a dis-identifying and dis-sociating method into a political collective. Given that this is also the problem of the transition from Jacotot's emancipatory scene to

a scene of collectivization, I would propose to call it the problem of communist education.

To elaborate this problem, we can change our perspective. In a talk Rancière gave at the first conference on the *Idea of Communism* in May 2009 in London, he addressed this problem again. He asked: "The question is: how can the collectivization of the capacity of anybody coincide with the global organization of a society? How can the anarchical principle of emancipation become the principle of a social distribution of tasks, positions and powers?"⁹ In associating himself with the Badiou's *Communist Hypothesis*, Rancière claims that we need a sort of history of communist moments, which we can soon understand as moments of emancipation. This history would rather be a non-history of moments in which ordinary time is interrupted, a non-history of singular points of timelessness.¹⁰

Emancipation is always un-timely, being precisely a split within time and space. And if we want to think emancipation in a collective framework—what Rancière here, and I would say after a long time, calls Communism again—we would have to disentangle these communist moments from the narratives that try to join them to a story with a necessity and an inner goal. At the level of structure, we confront the same problem here: how to unite moments of dis-identification? Rancière's answer seems in part to be that the rethinking of communist moments as they have existed may encourage us or give us "confidence"¹¹ in the possibility of the impossible. They give us the confidence to think the impossible because they are themselves a collection of impossibilities that happened in space and time. Now, why does Rancière speak of Communism here? He gives three reasons, which I will briefly quote: the first is that the name communism "emphasizes the principle of the unity and equality of intelligences"; the second is that "it emphasizes the affirmative aspect of the process of collectivization of this principle"; and finally "it stresses the self-superseding capacity of the process, its boundlessness, which entails its ability to invent futures that are not yet imaginable."¹²

The aspects of affirmation and the superseding quality of the process are in a certain sense relatively new in Rancière's conception of the process of emancipation. One could relate them back to the scene of emancipation and to its notion of the encouragement needed for the process of emancipation to take place. "Communism" names the type of link that was earlier found between the will and courage, that is, a link of indetermination. But in this linking of different scenes of collective emancipation, in this linking of communist moments of the past to those of the future, it is also already collective structures

that are linked. If we speak of courage, if we speak of confidence, or the will, we can now speak about a collective courage or collective confidence. We are in the realm of what in a political sense we can call communist education, in the sense Rancière gives to the word: emphasizing the unity and equality of intelligences, the affirmative aspect of the process of collectivization, and the inner boundlessness of this process. Communist education turns the scene of emancipation into a collective one: but a collective scene of confidence and courage for emancipation, not a collective that would in any sense be determined.

So we gain confidence from past moments. But the problem of education also refers us to the question as to how we can be taught by events actually happening in the present? For the time being, we have only transferred the scene of emancipation from an individual level to a collective one, but we still do not see very clearly how the process of collectivization could arise.

I think that we can find in Rancière a very special proposition in which we are taught to be confident not only historically, but in the present. This proposition also concerns the question how this confidence can be built, and where it can stem from, in those times in which collective emancipation is absent. And, despite all the parallels, I think on this point the art object shows itself to be, for Rancière, a different kind of object than Jacotot's book was.

The Scene of Art

At the beginning I claimed that if we really want ask how we can learn from emancipatory moments in Rancière, then we would have to ask about art. And after this detour concerning the question of how the individual scene of emancipation can be turned into a collective one, determining the link without a link that courage is, and showing how this courage may be won historically, we can now finally turn to art. The first question is simple and obvious. If what I would like to call—for reasons that will soon be explained—the *scene of art* reproduces the scene of emancipation as witnessed in Jacotot, do we not encounter once again the problem that the scene of art is not a political scene and there is no path that leads from the scene of art to a political scene? As we have seen, Rancière draws parallels between the scene of art and Jacotot's scene of emancipation, and we actually do encounter the same problem here. But with a slight change indeed, because now the question is rather how to get from

the scene of an object (of art) to a subjective process. It is not about emancipation as a process between two individuals anymore, but about emancipation as a subjective process in relation to a specific object. Still, one could say that this closely resembles the scene of emancipation and the importance of the book in it. But the role of the book in Jacotot and the role of work of art function differently, and I will try to explain why.

In his book *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière asserts that "Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection,"¹³ and this definition is meant to define the disruptive effect of artworks, though we could also relate it to Jacotot.

In the book cited, Rancière is speaking about works of art, mostly theatrical performances. Such performances, like any other art work belonging to the realm of the aesthetic regime, can be characterized following Rancière as something producing sensory anomalies, disrupting the orders of time and space, dissociating the chain of cause and effect. In this way, art objects or scenes of art produce an effect of disruption. And with regard to the spectator they produce a dis-identification, and even a "community of dis-identified persons."¹⁴ Artworks neither represent emancipation nor do they immediately incorporate it. They are some kind of third; like Jacotot's book, and they can be a tool of emancipation.

Now it is here that one encounters several problems. First, it is clear that Rancière conceives of artworks as related to emancipation. But it is far from obvious how to understand this relation when we have to understand emancipation as something more than Jacotot did, as more than individual emancipation.

The first thing we can observe is that both the book in Jacotot's emancipatory scene and the work of art occupy the place of the object. There are individuals who emancipate themselves in relation to a certain object. Emancipation itself can never be objectified, it can never be caught in determinations and definitions, it is a purely subjective process, but it is a process in relation to objects or to objectivity. The object itself cannot be emancipatory: we cannot say that Jacotot's book in itself is emancipatory, or possesses some strange emancipatory energy. Neither can we say anything similar about the work of art. But it does have a certain political effect. It has, as Rancière puts it, "a political effect to the extent that the loss of destination it presupposes disrupts the way in which bodies fit

their functions and destinations."¹⁵ This is where the aesthetic and the political intersect, at the site of the disruptive effect.

But let us stay with the object for a moment. The work of art disrupts the normal order of the sensible, and the political procedure finds its starting point in such a rupture. This disrupting of the normal order of space and time is a negative effect of the work of art. It is its de-specification, its not-fitting-in, its withdrawing from the structure of distinction, its undecidability as an object that makes it a strange, alien object in time and space. As an object in time and space, the art object claims to be itself another, general order of space and time in the same moment it continues to remain an alien object within the normal order of space and time. This other space and time, which it is, even as it remains inside the same, normal space and time—because the work of art disrupts the order of the sensible as a sensible being itself—can therefore only be a split. It is a split in the order of space and time in the precise sense of being both: out of and in this world. It is in this world, made out of it, and outside of it.

What is the object that is called an art object, then? We are left with two possibilities: either we understand objects of art to be those objects that are singular ruptures in the sensible, or we assert that this split in the sensible can be encountered anywhere, and everything can possibly be a work of art. The second answer resembles the Deleuzian one, in the sense of an event that would be integrated into the univocity of being. Rancière's answer seems to be the first one, emphasizing that objects of art objectify ruptures of the sensible in the form of produced objects.

If we now move to the side of the spectator, we encounter the same question: either we conceive of the spectator as dependent on the concrete object in his process of emancipation, or we understand the spectator as fully independent of the object. If he or she were dependent on the object of art in the process of emancipation, we would have to assume that art objects are in the position of mastery in the process of emancipation. Only artworks would be able to initiate the process of emancipation in the spectator. If we strengthen this position a bit further, we could say that this position resembles the aesthetics of the sublime, insofar as only the art object would have the power to produce a disruptive shock. And, on the other side: if he or she were fully independent, we would completely lose the connection to the works of art. For Rancière, as I would like to put it, the spectator is not independent, for it is in the process of emancipation that he establishes a link of indetermination in relation to the work of art.

What the spectator has to do, then, is translate the process inherent in the work of art into his own emancipation. But this process is a process of dis-identification. It is a process of dis-identification and a process of learning that the impossible is possible, that it is possible to do what one cannot do. To speak another language in the case of Jacotot, or create different orders of the sensible in the case of works of art—both are scenes of emancipation. As in the scene of emancipation in Jacotot, we learn from the scene of art to deploy our own (non-teleological) will, and we learn that we have the capacity to learn and do what we will. As with Jacotot's book, the work of art does not teach us any knowledge, but rather teaches us a confidence in the impossible. This confidence has then to be turned into a knowledge again, because we do not speak any language based on confidence alone. What the object really teaches us is the confidence to turn the impossible into the possible.

The object of art, however, teaches in a different way than Jacotot's book. In contrast to the scene of emancipation, the scene of art contains a certain collective dimension, but in contrast to a political scene, the scene of art is not yet fully collectivized.

Take the way Rancière speaks about the process of emancipation in relation to the spectators:

The collective power shared by spectators does not stem from the fact that they are members of a collective body or from some specific form of interactivity. It is the power each of them has to translate what she perceives in her own way, to link it to the unique intellectual adventure that makes her similar to all the rest in as much as this adventure is not like any other.¹⁶

It is a shared effect of disruption that forms the aesthetic community, we could say. So here the aesthetic community is formed through the collective experience of a singular situation of dis-identification. But, as Rancière does not wait to add, from this kind of intellectual awareness there is no road that leads to a political community. Again, there is no path from an aesthetic emancipation to a political scene. But if we return to the moment of confidence which Rancière described in relation to the communist moments, could we not say that works of art can give us confidence that a different order of the sensible is possible? And could we not say that this confidence is in itself only possible as a collective effect, precisely because the art scene is not an individual scene, but a scene that we could call public? It is public

because it is in space and time, and because it directly refers to space and time. If the book is a translation machine, the scene of art is a direct intervention in space and time. And, publicly, it immanently addresses everyone. This is also why art objects actually form scenes of art, because they are always necessarily integrated in a space and a time, and as a split in space and time they depend on a public "audience." Otherwise the intervention in space and time through the art object would not be real.

The universal address via the medium of an object is what the spectators witness. A universal address, because it is a singular object in space and time, and as such it addresses potentially everyone. Ruptures in space and time are totalizing: they are perhaps minimal points, but they claim to be a totality. They are and they claim to be objective. So there is an address to everyone, but this address is only a negative one, because the art object is only a rupture in space and time that shows the spectator negatively that there is a distribution of space and time that does not relate to us all and that there are other possible distributions, and that therefore the possibility of other distributions will bring a founding equality to light. And therefore equality is always there and will always already have been there. But: what is this addressing of everyone in the singular distribution like? How can it touch us, if we are not able to see it, because this rupture is in itself nothing, being only a material effect in space and time?

There is a famous passage in Kant's *Conflict of the Faculties* that is very similar to Rancière's claim about the spectator, although he himself does not mention it. Kant is writing about the French Revolution, and for him it is essentially the spectator of the event who is the important figure. Kant writes that

The revolution that we have seen taking place in our own times in a nation of gifted people may succeed, or it may fail. It may be so filled with misery and atrocities that no right-thinking man would ever decide to make the same experiment again at such price, even if he could hope to carry it out successfully at the second attempt. But I maintain that this revolution has aroused in the hearts and desires of all spectators who are not themselves caught up in it a sympathy that borders almost on enthusiasm, although the very utterance of this sympathy was fraught with danger. It cannot therefore have been caused by anything other than a moral disposition within the human race.¹⁷

Instead of reading here an indication of a tendency towards morality in mankind, one can also understand this differently. At this point we should take up an argument that Rado Riha develops in his reading of the Kantian critique.¹⁸ Riha shows how reason has to criticize itself, to make the constitution of objectivity through the faculty of understanding first of all possible. In the process of this self-criticism, reason also enables itself to appear in the empirical realm: namely as the present absence of a truth-fiction, the present absence of an absolute, or, in Kantian terms, the present absence of ideas of reason. This appearance of an idea in the empirical realm Riha calls a de-realization of the world, a de-realization of reality. The eyes of the spectators of the French Revolution, Riha concludes, de-realize the world in this sense. Now this de-realization is part of the constitution of objectivity, part of the work of reason. The objectivity based on this de-realization is the same objectivity as before, with the minimal change that it now appears in the light of the idea, a minimal change that changes everything.

With Riha, and modifying his argument for our purposes, we could say that in the eyes of the enthusiastic spectators the shimmer of the idea is mirrored, but this very idea is nothing less than a de-realization of reality. The de-realization of reality is not only the work of the idea, it also enables us to see that there is more in this world than we are able to see. There is something present as absent, and this is, in the scene of art, the universality of space and time as equally addressing one, not as a physical presence, but rather as the present absence of this universality. So this universality for all does not exist the way an empirical fact does; it emerges from the de-realization occurring before our eyes as inexistent (taking up another formulation of Riha's that refers back to Badiou) in the world.

Coming back to the spectator in Rancière, we have to shift this argument a bit. We could understand the Rancièrian spectator as someone who becomes a possible mirror of the idea of equality. Becoming a possible mirror of the idea of equality makes the spectator on the one hand part of an emancipatory process that is, on the other hand, not the direct, determined result of the work of art. The spectator does not experience a power in him as an individual, but he experiences the power of an idea that integrates him into a collective subjectivity. The point I want to make is: the work of art can be considered a de-realization of the order of the sensible, and this present absence integrates the individual spectator into a collective process of dis-identification. The de-realization has a universal address, it is embodied in the specific work of art, but it addresses everyone. The

world of things, the world of the object is not all, there is more to it than we can grasp with our senses. Or: what we grasp with our senses is not all, there is more in it than what we grasp with our senses.

The art object displays this absence of a totality negatively, it is in the world and out of this world. It unfolds its effects only in the sensible, because it is a sensible object and claims to be a totality. It claims to be another total reality of space and time, but in this way it shows that the sensible we know is not all. In this, its negative effect, the work of art integrates the spectators. It integrates them directly, because of their physical presence, which is directly connected to this split in the order of the sensible.

When Jacotot's book unfolds its emancipatory effect through the help of the will of the ignorant schoolmaster, the art object offers this universal address as a concrete being that realizes its de-realization in its concrete presence, and it therefore unfolds its emancipatory effect everywhere it is. So this scene is not the scene of the two, but the scene of the concrete presence of anyone.

The affirmation of this moment (or of the scene of art) would be the affirmation of a collectivizing moment of the idea of equality. This neither leads us to a political party, nor turns the artwork into some kind of master of emancipation. It still does not lead us to a political scene. But it is a mediator between the individual scene of emancipation and the political, collective subjectivation.

This, one could understand, is Rancière's claim: today we have to start from the split in the sensible and see that the normal order of the sensible is not all. The sensible is the realm of the objective, and art is its split, and this split in being is the only moment that allows us to become subjects, starting from an absence, a present absence in space and time. Which will then allow us to learn that objective reality is always constituted through a kernel of non-objective reality.

Art is, then, the most radical education in emancipation, because it is an objective education: the scene of art is concerned with a de-realizing object. We have historical confidence through communist moments, and we have individual confidence through intellectual emancipation. But what we also have to learn is that objectivity is incomplete, and that in this incompleteness we inexistent as subjects. It is through this objectivity that we can learn that we, not being objects, can become subjects. And it is from this breaking up of objectivity, which we can realize in events like those in Tahrir Square, that we can learn that we inexistent in that what is called the impossible. Because, as a real spectator, we always take part in what is happening without being part of it.¹⁹

Claire Fontaine

Carpenters, child workers, seamstresses and artisans are not the usual inhabitants of philosophy books, but we often encounter them in Rancière's writings. This opaque mass of proletarians that threatens every attempt to write about universal emancipation usually remains on the edge of the page, discretely consuming the writer's desire to speak for everyone. They silently embody writers' worst danger: it's easy to turn into a pitiful Don Quixote, writing letters to people that do not know they are these letters' addressees, any more than Alondza Lorenzo knows that she is called Dulcinea and who, anyway, cannot even read.

In the section of *The Flesh of Words* entitled "The Literature of Philosophers," Rancière delivers a merciless diagnosis: the exemplary hero of every epistemological revolution is a professional fighter of windmills. And the knowledge of this fact led Althusser directly to the eternal night of madness, which his writings were supposed to help him conjure away. All of Althusser's *oeuvre*—Rancière says—is entirely marked by the typical dread of the Marxist intellectual who has fallen prey to politics: the fear of making literature, sending letters with no recipients, or being the voice that cries in the desert. Speaking to the void, haranguing an imaginary crowd that never massed together or becoming oneself a crowd and performing all the different characters oneself are frightening risks that must be exorcized through the rigor of theory. Although Lenin is described by Althusser as the little man standing alone on the plain of history, his solitude takes place within history, where one is somehow protected by a tight fabric of questions and answers that will always seem to keep us warm. But will they really? Who are these answers and questions truly written for? For the proletarians that we cannot be but that we can write about, even if we then run the risk of drowning their voices when doing so? Because, as Althusser says in *For Marx*, writing is a way of paying a debt, precisely the debt of not being born a proletarian and not being born illiterate. But the silence of infamous men can be deafening, it can fill any speculation

¹ See Peter Hallward, "In Egypt and Tunisia the will of the people is not a hollow cliché," *The Guardian*, January 31, 2011; accessed <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jan/31/egypt-tunisia-will-of-the-people>

² In Badiou, this is of paramount importance and is developed through different texts. In *The Communist Hypothesis* he condenses the relation between the political event and the impossible in the following way: "[...] with respect to a situation or a world, an event paves the way for the possibility of what from the limited perspective of the make-up of this situation or the legality of this world — is strictly impossible." Cf. Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis* (London / New York: Verso 2009), 243. An excellent account of the relation between politics and the impossible in Badiou's philosophy is given by Bruno Bosteels, "Logics of Change. From Potentiality to Inexistence," in *Beyond Potentialities? Politics between the Possible and the Impossible*, ed. Mark Potocnik, Frank Ruda, Jan Voelker (Zürich: diaphanes, 2011), 79–101. The dissociation of this concept of politics from theories like that of Foucault is shown with exactness by Frank

Ruda: "Back to the Factory. A Plea for a Renewal of Concrete Analysis of Concrete Situations," *Beyond Potentialities?*, 39–54.

³ Cf. Alain Badiou, "Tunisie, Egypte : quand un vent d'est balaye l'arrogance de l'Occident," *Le Monde*, February 18, 2011; accessed http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2011/02/18/tunisie-egypte-quand-un-vent-d-est-balaye-l-arrogance-de-l-occident_1481712_3232.html

⁴ Jacques Rancière: *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London / New York: Verso, 2009).

⁵ Jacques Rancière: *The Ignorant Schoolmaster. Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

⁶ *ibid.*, 41.

⁷ *ibid.*, 18.

⁸ Immanuel Kant, "An answer to the question: What is enlightenment?," in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. by Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 11–22; here 17. Again, I can only allude to the Badiouian use of the term "courage." But the differences in the peculiar conception of courage Badiou develops would demand another article.

⁹ Jacques Rancière, "Communists without

Communism?," in *The Idea of Communism*, ed. Costas Douzinas and Slavoj Žižek (London / New York: Verso, 2010), 167–177; here 169.

¹⁰ For this, see also Jacques Rancière, "Communism: From Actuality to Inactuality," in *Jacques Rancière, Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London / New York: Continuum, 2010), 76–83.

¹¹ Jacques Rancière, "Communists without Communism?," 173.

¹² *ibid.*, 176f.

¹³ Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 13.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 73.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 72.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 16f.

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, "The Contest of the Faculties," in *Kant: Political Writings*, 2d ed., ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 176–191; here 182.

¹⁸ I am primarily referring to an unpublished paper Rado Riha gave at a workshop 2010 in Berlin, at the Free University. Parts as well as extensions of the argument can also be found in Rado Riha, "Kant et la subjectivation de la réalité," in *Filozofski vestnik*, vol. XXVII, no. 2 (2006), 103–119.

¹⁹ I would like to thank Jason E. Smith for his very helpful, critical and friendly comments on this text.

THE MASTER IN HIS PLACE: JACQUES RANCIÈRE AND THE POLITICS OF THE WILL

Jason E. Smith

There is nothing the schoolmaster can hide from him, and nothing he can hide from the master's gaze. The circle forbids cheating, and above all that great cheat: *I can't, I don't understand*. There is nothing to understand. Everything is in the book.

Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*

1. There is a certain assumption made by even the most perspicuous readers of Rancière that, in the words of one of those readers, his work in all of its phases and fields of intervention (history, philosophy, literary and film theory, aesthetics) is motivated by a "subversion of mastery." I want to begin this essay by arguing that, for Rancière, it is in fact the presence of the master in the pedagogical scene that makes possible the unfolding of the emancipatory process. He or she is guided by the maxim that must orient any egalitarian sequence: you can, the master asserts, precisely because "there is nothing to understand." Far from being banished from the process of emancipation, the master plays a decisive role whose exact effects we must examine.

Let's begin with Rancière's explicit formulations concerning the place of the master in the community of equals. What we witness in these formulations is not a deposing of the master in the name of a libertarian pedagogy or a proposal for a popular "self"-education to be undertaken on the basis of the abolition of the pedagogical scene and its structural poles of teacher and student. Rancière does not mince words here. What he outlines is not the suppression of the master or the emergence of an "equality" between teacher and student that echoes the flexible organization of the contemporary production process and behind whose affirmations of egalitarianism lurk what was once called the "tyranny of structurelessness."² What Rancière proposes instead is a rearticulation of the place of the master in the scene of pedagogy. We find

Without wanting to give an answer to this question whose pertinence doesn't even need to be discussed, we will try to conclude with a hypothesis. If Rancière's theory remains exposed to the danger of its own paradoxes, it might all the same achieve some coherence on another level. But it does so only when it doesn't explicitly revolve around contemporary art. It finds a tone and a language that can coexist with the desire for freedom without showing the way to follow and without prescribing any ethical position—leaving us, indeed, alone in the deceptive company of words.

¹ Jacques Rancière, *The Flesh of Words: The Politics of Writing*, trans. Charlotte Mandell, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 139.

² Fernand Braudel, *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 4.

³ Jacques Rancière, *The Nights of Labor*, trans. John Drury (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989), 14.

⁴ Jacques Rancière, *The Name of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*, trans. Hassan Melehy (Minneapolis: The

University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 19.

⁵ Rancière, *The Flesh of Words*, 3.

⁶ Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 51.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

⁸ Jacques Rancière, *La parole muette: essai sur les contradictions de la littérature* (Paris: Hachette, 1998), 41.

⁹ Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Malden: Polity, 2009), 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹ U. Eco, "Il laboratorio in piazza," *L'Espresso*, April 10, 1977; our translation.

¹² "The language needed to bind the classes together is the language of the bond in general. What is missing between the poor and the educated is what makes for a bond in general, among the rich as among the poor: love." See Jacques Rancière, *Short Voyages to the Land of the People*, trans. James B. Swenson (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003), 78.

there a master who is not identified as the possessor of knowledge or as the measure of intelligence, but as a presence that “absolutely commands” the will of the student, who must in turn necessarily “obey” that of the master.³ The emancipatory scene is not founded on the deposing of the master, but on the splitting off of the place of mastery from the possession of knowledge. If an egalitarian pedagogy begins from the assumption that all intelligences are equal—that there is no distinction between the rational, methodical thought of the master and the groping experimentation of the student who compares facts and recounts stories—this equality can only be *enforced*, that is, be real, through the paradoxical submission of the student’s will to that of the teacher’s: “In the experimental situation Jacotot created, the student was linked to a will, Jacotot’s, and to an intelligence, the book’s—the two entirely distinct. We will call the known and maintained difference of the two relations—the act of an intelligence obeying only itself even while the will obeys another will—*emancipation*.”⁴

The schoolmaster is ignorant but he still exercises a will over the student, and this command is, as Rancière reiterates, “unconditional.” Because pedagogy cannot be institutionalized, the master who commands the scene of instruction is identified with the place or name of the Father. The ignorant schoolmaster’s “place” is

where the unconditional exigency of the will is incarnated. Unconditional exigency: the emancipatory father is not a simple, good-natured pedagogue; he is an intractable master. The emancipatory commandment knows no compromises. It absolutely commands of a subject what it supposes it is capable of commanding itself.⁵

There is an analogy, perhaps lazy or misleading, linking Rancière’s distinction between the person of the master and the “place” of mastery with Claude Lefort’s too-well known definition of the democratic form of politics as founded on the emptying out of the place of power, and the establishment of a contingent link between the place of power itself and whatever or whoever occupies that place. Rancière emphasizes this obliquely at certain moments in his account of Jacotot’s theory, when he stresses that in certain circumstances the position of the master could be occupied by another student (“each ignorant person could become for another ignorant person the master”⁶) in a kind of community of mutual masters (or slaves)⁷ or perhaps by the “constraint of the situation” whose

“urgency demands destroying the states of explicative progression.”⁸ You can even occupy the place of the master yourself, in a certain type of self-mastery, if you are “propelled by [your] own desire.”⁹ If “a person may need a master when his own will is not strong enough,” as Rancière qualifies it (“may”), what is absolutely necessary in the scene of emancipation is the presence of a force, a compulsion and an urgency applied to the will of the student in order that the student assume responsibility for his or her own intelligence, a will that compels the student to obey, paradoxically, his or her own intelligence alone.

What the master—whether teacher, fellow student, or the pressure of events—requires of the student is simply “attention.” The task of the master is to compel attention, which is to say to *verify* that the path taken by the student—a path that is not the *hodos* of a methodical procedure, but the rigorous straying of an intelligence attentive to facts and their combination—is chosen and followed with discipline. This discipline is defined first and foremost as a staying close to itself of the act of thought, a “reflection” in which the intelligence—before the production of any positive knowledge—is conscious of its own activity and “knows its own power.”¹⁰ This task of verification, in which the master merely observes and compels attention, is supplemented by a more hands-on application of the will: the master must “demand speech”¹¹ from an intelligence that will otherwise remain unaware of its own power or will have “given up [*se délaissait*],”¹² announcing “I cannot” before sinking into silence.

The name for the will’s renunciation of itself is *contempt*. Society, Rancière argues, is founded on just such a contempt for oneself and for others. To be social is to succumb to distraction. But distraction is not, as the term implies, a mere loss of tension or vigilance, a spacing out or dispersal of the will. To renounce one’s own power is an *act*: it is a “perversion” of the will. Just as for Kant so-called “radical” evil could not be attributed to the triumph of the pathological or sensible over reason and the will but was understood, to the contrary, as a manifestation of a positive wickedness that actively wills the worst, so here distraction is not a mere “torpor of the flesh,” but a veritable “*act* of the mind underestimating its own power.”¹³ In this sense, we can understand society and its distribution of capacities and qualifications to be founded on both contempt for oneself and one another and on a *passion* for inequality: not a succumbing to the dead weight of social division, but a furious will to implement it. It is a passion shot through with

fear, fear first of all of oneself and one's power, "fear in the face of what a reasonable being owes to itself."¹⁴ It is an anxiety before the infinite, before the "infinite task" the practice of equality requires and unleashes in the world. This task is infinite because the infinite exists only in act, that is, in the act of its verification. It cannot be achieved through the production or founding of an institution, but only through the resumption of its act of rupture with every institution. The infinite task of emancipation must be clearly distinguished, however, from its double or "ape" (the final chapter of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* goes by the title "The Emancipator and his Monkey [Singe]"), the infinite task implied by the idea of progress. For there are, in fact, two orders of the infinite: the infinity of emancipation, in its endless dialectic of presupposition and verification of equality, and the incremental acquisitions and accumulation of progress, whose every step restores the very distance it claims to bridge, and whose "reasoned progress" is tantamount to "an indefinitely reproduced mutilation."¹⁵ The claim to institute emancipation, which is say, to have done with it, can only ever give rise to a "ploy, a school or a military unit."¹⁶

2. What this conception of emancipation proposes is not a solution to the riddles of revolutionary politics, but a particularly dramatic separation between the logic of society and the immanent rationality of egalitarian practices. The very idea of society, in Rancière's account of Jacotot's theory, is founded on the "primal passion" of contempt as I have already laid it out: contempt for others, contempt for oneself. This contempt takes the specific form of a denial or foreclosure of the axiom whose positing triggers and orients the aleatory course of emancipation: the assertion, indemonstrable but eminently verifiable, that there is only one intelligence. This contempt is not something to which one merely falls prey. The denial of the equality of intelligence requires an effort of the will. Prostration before power is not only the effect of the forces of social gravity, the tug that pulls a body into its assigned place, role and task. Society is founded on an originary division of intelligences, a division between what gets called reason and the merely sensible knowledge produced by the comparison and translation between facts. This production of reason through a division of intelligence is irrational, because arbitrary. Rancière even speaks of the "fiction" of the social. If the order of society has a certain logic—what in *Disagreement* will be called the "logic" of the police—the foundation and reproduction of this order is, in turn, absolutely contingent, arbitrary,

and unjustifiable. The reproduction of this order requires coercion. Society is "war." But: "by the term 'war,' let us not think here of any fatal clash of material forces."¹⁷ The war that Rancière speaks of here, before and perhaps instead of being a confrontation between materially determined social forces—class struggle, to make things absolutely clear—is a mode of speech, a form of mastery that speaks not in order to "demand speech" (as the emancipatory "father" does), but in order to silence, that is, to explain [*expliquer*] why it is that you cannot speak: "It makes its goal the other's silence, the absence of reply, the plummeting of minds into the material aggregation of consent."¹⁸

There can be no struggle undertaken in the name of another, more egalitarian society. For, as we have seen, the name society is, for Rancière's Jacotot, by definition an order of inequality, founded on a division not of labor, first and foremost, but of intelligences. If the Marxist inflection of the worker's movement has always conceived of the real movement of emancipation as the production, through struggle, of another society—a society that would, once rationally constructed, spell the end of the political and give birth to the administration of things—the communism proposed by Jacotot is the formation of a community of emancipated individuals, not the abolition, by a determined class, of the society of classes:

There cannot be a class of the emancipated, an assembly or a society of the emancipated. But any individual can always, at any moment, be emancipated and emancipate someone else, announce to others the practice and add to the number of people who know themselves as such and who no longer play the comedy of inferior superiors. A society, a people, a state, will always be irrational. But one can multiply within these bodies the number of people who, as individuals, will make use of reason, and who, as citizens, will know how to seek the art of raving as reasonably as possible.¹⁹

Equality is refractory to the law. The practice of equality will never become the foundation of a new society. The power unleashed by the process of emancipation cannot, therefore, be understood as the constitutive power of a people, the force of whose actions alone posit and legitimate or guarantee the relative justness of a given social order. Insofar as the social order is arbitrary, and insofar as this arbitrariness is redoubled by the *dérison*—the raving of false

reason—that attempts to rationalize the radical contingency of this order, society can be pronounced a fiction, which is also to say, a “machine.” This active reason of equality, the intelligence that manifests itself through the attention of the will and is verified in the “material ideality”²⁰ of the book, cannot found another order, but must “circulate” within this machine, neither making it run nor shutting it down: “whoever forsakes the workings of the social machine has the opportunity to make the electrical energy of emancipation circulate.”²¹

To circulate within the social machine is to leave its gears without grit. The process of emancipation occurs through a movement of separation, the taking of a distance. Rancière insists that the practice of emancipation, because its own rationality necessarily breaks with, while remaining indifferent to, the social order, falls nowhere on the classical scale or continuum that measures the intensity of social transformation. Emancipation will never appear “on the program of reformist parties, nor should intellectual emancipation be inscribed on the banners of sedition.”²² Rancière even underlines that individuals—by which we should understand, the minimal cell of master-pupil-book—can pursue the infinite task of emancipation within society while “respecting” that society itself. But that respect, it should be made clear, signals less an identification with that order than a wary distance assumed from within; respect necessarily implies, in these terms, a refusal to “believe” in the social fiction.²³ Through this gap between respect and belief, the current of emancipation runs.

Jacotot’s and Rancière’s separation of the rational infinitization of emancipation and the irrationality of “reasoned progress” represents an impasse that Rancière’s work subsequent to *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* will attempt to breach. For if the logic of the social order is here identified with a perversion of the will Rancière already calls consensus,²⁴ there seems to be no corresponding moment of *dissensus* in this account, in which the configuration of the sensible—the contingency of a given “partition”—is suspended and, perhaps, displaced. *Disagreement* is entirely devoted to notching the site where the process of emancipation, politics [*la politique*], intersects with and interrupts the machine of the police order [*la police*]: the political [*le politique*], or in other iterations, the community or communism, is the name for these scenes or “moments.” But even with this novel account in the later work of the retroactive inscription of the “social effects” of politics, the propositions regarding the nature of the emancipatory process in Rancière’s account have

given rise to a series of objections, all of which we might file, to echo Rancière’s break after 1968 with the milieu of Althusserianism and the politics of the PCF as well as his subsequent polemics with the ex-Maoist “new philosophers” in the mid-to-late 1970s, under the charge of *leftism*. Let me quickly resume these objections: the political overdetermination of knowledge in his critique of scientism, the symbolic conception of social war as the production of an exclusion or silence rather than a confrontation between material forces or classes, a transhistorical concept of the social that is both dehistoricized and can account neither for transformations of power nor for the isolating of weak links, a refusal to locate any communist tendencies immanent to a given form of power and a corresponding bracketing of questions of strategy—which might locate where force is most effectively deployed in a given conjuncture—and class composition—which might locate which actors prefigure forms of struggle and organization that can produce a transition to a new society. In short, leftism in this particular configuration would amount to a *voluntarism*—a folding back of revolutionary initiative entirely on the will of the individual to be emancipated, without regard for the material conditions that determine the capacities of a given will. What is more, and perhaps worse: all subjection, in turn, is an affair of the will and perversion. All servitude is voluntary.

3. In a remarkable essay published more or less contemporaneously with his book on Jacotot, Rancière recounts the experiences and ambitions of the young workers who, fresh from the insurrectionary experiences of 1830—and in particular from the implementation of the modern strike as a tactic and figure of struggle that transforms material conflict into a “rational demonstration”—attempt to bridge the separation between the process of emancipation on the one hand and the social distribution of capacities on the other. Where Jacotot had insisted on the *dissociation* necessary to trigger a properly egalitarian sequence and the rising up of a common or community, this community must remain “inconsistent,” as Rancière puts it, voided of any substantial foundation, and contracted into the repeated *acts* of its instantiation. The act involved here is characterized by its discreteness: what is put into play in this punctual act, however long it lasts, is the articulation of two wills, that of the teacher who refuses to explain and a student who refuses to assume his or her “master” has anything to explain and so turns to the “thing in common”²⁵ standing between them, in which alone the singleness of the intellect can be verified.

Community is therefore founded on the assumption or axiom that intelligence is one, and the corresponding “proof” of this singleness of the intellect, its being shared universally and equally, in the materiality, the thingliness of the book, or more precisely, the “material ideality” of language itself. If intelligence is one, it is not collective: it is appropriated each time in a singular configuration between wills and the thing that measures the distance between them. Equality can be made actual, “realized,” but this effectivity can, as I have already underlined, never take the form of a social or public institution. This is why it “takes place, but has no place”²⁶; why it occurs, but is always missing from its place. Here, then, it is necessary to distinguish between the act and the actual. The *real* of emancipation can never take the form of what is actual, that is, the filling out of a sketched possible. The emancipatory act is defined by its capacity to break with the Aristotelian schema of actualization: not a potentiality to be made manifest, but a double movement of presupposition and verification. The act is suspended between its status as axiom and as fact. Its punctuality is, rather, its recursivity; its presence, the tension between an always-prior assumption and indefinite process of verification.

Now it is precisely this separation between emancipatory act and social effects that is questioned by those workers who passed through the crucible of the revolt of 1830, who undertake to realize—or at least to hypothesize and experiment with—the “social inscription” of the egalitarian prescription, despite or in defiance of Jacotot’s cautions. In his description of Jacotot’s own itinerary of emancipation, Rancière underlines that it is Jacotot’s experience of the French Revolution—and not just any moment of that sequence, but 1792–1793—that stands in the place of the “master,” with the force of events (“the peril of the country”) “engender[ing] ... unknown capacities,” whose “urgency demand[s] destroying the stages of explicative progression.”²⁷ This aspect of Rancière’s account of the relation between master and student has generally been overlooked; it puts a revolutionary sequence itself, a situation of “danger”—the arrayed counter-revolutionary forces besieging the revolutionary process—in the place of the master who conducts, leads and even enforces the emancipatory process in times of relative peace. The irruption of social war in 1830 may in fact play the same role here, of that pressure that, in the absence of a particular relation between will and will, demands of the workers as a collective force a type of speech, or to return to my own opening paragraphs, to the production of two statements: we can, because there is nothing to understand.

In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière stressed the importance of the fable of Menenius Agrippa in the discourse of the workers’ emancipation movement, citing in particular the version and reading proposed by Pierre-Simon Ballanche in order to underline the performative contradiction between the content of the fable itself—Agrippa comes to the plebeians to explain to them the “reasons” for social inequality—and the scene or staging of the fable itself: in order for the plebeians to understand their subordination, they must be capable of understanding to begin with, that is, to share the space of speech and reason with those who deny them this very capacity. The workers fresh from the insurrectionary experience of 1830 read the fable differently. Or, they placed the emphasis not so much on the content of the speech and its presuppositions as on the “event” the precedes it:

[They] shift the emphasis still again, the strong moment of the scene: no longer only from the content of the fable to the speaking situation which gave rise to it, but to that of the event that precedes this situation and imposes it. In order for Menenius Agrippa to compose his fable, it was necessary that the Plebeians withdraw to the Aventine, but also that they speak, give themselves a name, and make it understood [*fassent entendre*] that they are themselves speaking beings to whom one should speak [*il convient de venir parler*].²⁸

The plebeians do not simply secede from the city, they also begin to speak, speak by giving themselves a name, a name by which they can be called to appear before an other, and be addressed. The emphasis here, it seems to me, is on the question of a certain deployment of force. The secession of the plebeians is not simply the suspension of the material relations that constitute the social strata of Roman society; it is also just as importantly the constitution of a “polemical site” (or “polemical space”) where the root resonating in the adjective polemical—*polemos*—must be understood at once as an act of war and as space of litigiousness, a dispute between speaking beings that cannot be mediated by a given form of legality or settled by a third-party, by an arbitrator. The *polemos* produces a space common to the plebeians and the patricians in the very act of separation, and this space is to a certain extent *forced* on the patricians: they have no choice but to listen to *these people*, these people who only a moment before were capable only of signaling, through

cries and moans, the abjection of the most common pleasure and the suffering of martyrless pain.

This is why Rancière suggests that the solution to the impasse posited by Jacotot requires reaching back for a moment prior to the fable, to what he calls in measured terms that nevertheless underline the conflictual dimension of the polemical moment of secession an “inaugural violence”:

The community of speaking beings finds its effectivity on a preliminary violence. The essence of this violence—foreign to every counting of the dead and wounded—is to render visible the invisible, to give a name to the anonymous, to make speech heard there where before only sound was perceived.²⁹

To speak of violence here is to speak of what could be called a “transcendental violence,” if by this we mean a violence that warps, deforms or reconfigures the conditions of phenomenality, “before” the occurrence of any empirical violence—including the violence of class warfare, whether in the form of the extortion of surplus-value in the hidden spaces of the factory or the very public forms of confrontation between classes in a material confrontation—in which the given actors and forms of activity are already identified, given. But we can also understand violence here to mean the manner in which the dominant forces in a given society are compelled to acknowledge the emergence of a new force in the space of social conflict, even if this acknowledgement takes the manifest form of a *Verneinung*. In the scene on the Aventine, the plebeians exercise a will; they impose their *collective* will on the dominant classes of Rome. Or, in Rancière’s terms, what happens in the passage from the emancipatory scene in Jacotot’s pedagogy to the exemplary scene of social “emancipation” is the transformation of a relation between two wills—“a will-to-say” on the part of the student, and a “will-to-hear” the speech of the student on the part of the master,³⁰ that is, to verify the student’s “attention” by referring it to the materiality of the book—to the “staging of an obligation to hear [*entendre*],” where obligation refers not to a moral or juridical prescription, but to the undeniability of the presence of the plebeians (or the proletarians of the workers movement in their most insurrectionary moments), of their having the initiative, of their having instituted a polemical front at the heart of society.

Such “moments” are exceptional. The space they produce cannot hold out; and yet they inscribe “social effects.” The form of effectivity manifested by the Aventine secession and all of the stagings of polemical moments since—it is a single history, unbroken yet discontinuous—cannot be the founding of an institution, but only the reconfiguration of the space of appearing. Such an account requires that the very concept of society be defined not as a system of needs, as the organization of production and the distribution of wealth that would be opposed to the “rationality” of the state, nor as the site of material forms of conflict, whether in the factory or in the streets; society is simply the name for the triage of social capacities, the splitting of the intelligence in two, the way the border between what appears and what stays muffled is policed by forces that range from agencies of the state to the “well-meaning” discourses of the Left and its proposed solutions to the social question.

The lingering question posed by Rancière’s account of the social effectivity of the egalitarian prescription, however, is the role of the *master*. We will recall that the core of Jacotot’s pedagogical theory was not the suppression or “subversion” of mastery, but the dissociation of the place of the master—and, specifically, his will, his exacting of speech from the student who otherwise has contempt for himself—from the presumed possession of knowledge. The master is a master because he does not know. A magisterial ignorance is, instead, a kind of meta-knowledge, that is, a decision: intelligence is one. But Rancière insists, in reading Jacotot, that this single intelligence is not a collective one (much less a “general intellect”). That intelligence be dispersed among individuals is the very condition of equality; equality is what must be appropriated, each time, over and over again. What is proposed in the displacement toward the “social effects” of emancipation is also a confrontation between two wills, and one intelligence: the will of the plebeians imposes a reconfiguration of the sensible, it makes it self-evident and undeniable that there is only one speech, one reason, polemically shared out between opposed social forces.

If we recall the specific situation of the emancipatory scene in Jacotot, the slumbering capacity of the student must be awakened by a type of vanguard, that is, a master or someone holding the place of the master who has *already* been emancipated. This emancipation, again, does not take the form of a prior possession of knowledge, but a prior demonstration of the capacity for anyone at all to verify, in a disciplined process, the sameness of the intellect.

The movement from individual emancipation to the constitution of a polemical space that is collective in nature effaces, then, the differences internal to the plebeian forces arrayed on the Aventine, or in the streets of Paris for that matter. What the difference between wills in the pedagogical scene made room for was the application of one will upon another. It left room, it left a place for the master. This place is swallowed up in the space of politics.

What would be the place of the master in politics? In other words, under the interrogation of what "intractable master" would the plebeians of ancient Rome have begun the disciplined process of demonstrating the oneness of intelligence, the axiom of equality? Clearly, the place of the master in the revolutionary tradition produced by the confluence of the workers' movement and Marxism was occupied by the problem of organization, by the need to bring together the strategic analysis of a theoretical knowledge or science with the already existing initiatives and struggles of the workers' movement. And if we were to separate, as does Jacotot, the place of the master from the possession of knowledge? What is projected in this thought experiment are perhaps the outlines of a new logic of organization, whose fundamental ambition and task is not the strategic guidance of the revolutionary forces latent in society and in the production process, but the cultivation of the *will* of the dominated, that is, a certain attention to their own powers and capacities, and a refusal to allow those powers to be forgotten, or this attention to be replaced with the self-contempt that is the condition of domination, the fertile soil of consensus.

THE MASTER IN HIS PLACE

¹ See, for example, Peter Hallward's excellent critical account of Rancière's oeuvre, "Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery," *Ranograph* 28:1 (2005): 26-45.

² I am referring, of course, to Jo Freeman's well-known 1974 essay by the same name, which is widely available online.

³ Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 38.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷ This is how Rancière describes the monastic community of brothers in "La communauté des égaux," in

Jacques Rancière, *Aux bords du politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), 141-48. All translations from this text are my own.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14, 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 57, 54.

¹¹ Whatever their superficial similarities, we should be wary of identifying this mode of demanding speech from the student from the form of power isolated by Foucault in his refutation of the "repressive hypothesis," where power is said to be exercised not by means an interdiction of speech, but through its extraction.

¹² *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶ *Aux bords du politique*, 84.

¹⁷ *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 82.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

²² *Ibid.*, 102.

²³ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁶ *Aux bords du politique*, 160.

²⁷ *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 12.

²⁸ *Aux bords du politique*, 164.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 166-67.

HOW IT IS WE REMAIN BARBARIAN

Evan Calder Williams

As those invested in Rancière's enterprise know, Schiller is at once a launching point and a sore spot, the conservative basis from which the attempt to make otherwise must depart. The success of such a recuperative operation is not the concern here. Rather, it is to offer a reading of Schiller that might bear on, or give different bearing to, the central problems of aesthetic education taken up by Rancière. For despite recognizing the specificity of Schiller's political stance and the material conditions against which such a stance was honed, neither establishing a more "faithful" reading of Schiller nor discarding whole hog the structure and terms of his thinking seems particularly useful in this regard. Instead, this is a historical updating of sorts, a dislocation, perhaps even a necessary one. After all, the general state of affairs Schiller discerned as a fresh wound to be closed, to be bridged by the playful zigzag stitches of the aesthetic, has become the bloodless and unhealed gash of the past two centuries. It simply is the case and nothing more. Such a shift cannot go unaccounted. To read him with a degree of generosity, then, or with a desire to have that reading mean more than curiosity, must be to read him against the letter of the text.

As a way to approach a Schiller who likely would not recognize himself (*shit, am I an anti-state communist?*), let's start with something right on the surface: Schiller the Catastrophist Pessimist, edging close to Schlegel's darker tint of gloom.

Thus do we see the spirit of the age wavering between perversity and brutality, between unnaturalness and mere nature, between superstition and moral unbelief; and it is only through an equilibrium of evils that is still sometimes kept within bounds.¹

Two things worry Schiller, to put it mildly. Broadly speaking, we can think of them as the Natural State (or State of Nature or simply "Nature") and the Constructed State (within which we

and Copenhagen, Denmark among other places, followed each time by a roundtable discussion about the very questions raised by Morin and Rouch that are documented in her ongoing film project. The question would be the answer to the question, "Are you happy?"

³⁰ Peio Aguirre, "Mass and the ideology of form in Asier Mendizabal's practice," in Asier Mendizabal, *Disjecta membra* (Barcelona: MACBA, 2008), 45.

³¹ This seems to be a general strategy in

Mendizabal's work that establishes a fragmentary archive of the militant image production of the European 1960s that the artist appropriates through a process of re-copying, reprinting or redrawing as in the case of the banner from *Classe de Lutte*, or, as in *No Time for Love* (2000), the manual reproduction of the film poster of Costa-Gavras's *Z* from 1969, another symbol of political film. Aguirre suggests that Mendizabal's work departs from the conviction (as does Jean-Luc Godard)

that politics is unrepresentable in the same way as reality itself. It is therefore only through this exact or mechanical reproduction of the symbolic images that the reference—reality—enters the field of discourse: the symbol, the image does not refer to anything beyond itself but only exists as such, as an image in an archive of images.

³² Peio Aguirre, "Mass and the ideology of form in Asier Mendizabal's practice," 46.

REALISM, DIS-IDENTIFICATION AND THE IMAGE

9

I HAVE A DREAM

Annette Weisser

While preparing to write this text I had a dream. A didactic constellation: one female teacher, one male teacher, and two schoolgirls. With some urgency I ask the two teachers the following question: "But what is the opposite of language?" The woman answers "performance," the man replies "text." I turn to my fellow pupil, whose German is not so strong, in order to explain their words. But my Japanese friend just smiles and presents me with a drawing she dashed off during the brief exchange. It demonstrates that she very well understood what has been said. For my part, I realize her drawing offers me a third possible answer to my question, and that my friend is now my teacher.

I see this dream as being linked in diverse ways to the basic theme of the conference "Everything is in Everything: From Aesthetic Education to Intellectual Emancipation," which I co-organized with my colleague Jason Smith in March 2011. How does the theory of art relate, in broad terms, to the practice of art? In an academic environment, how permeable, or reversible, are the power structures and the gender assignments? In what way are these structures and assignments subject to constant reproduction in language, and what would amount to the "opposite" of this language?

Let's switch to the classroom. Together with two tutors a small group of art students are working through a selection of texts by Jacques Rancière. This endeavor might be summed up as laborious groping marked by frustration and occasional boredom relieved by intermittent flashes of excitement and understanding, which are amplified by the act of sharing. Philosophy as a primal experience: as the social experience of reciprocal mindfulness, but also as an almost physical sensation of reluctance, the feeling of being an inadequate beginner in a place that by definition promises professionalization and intellectual sovereignty. The purported luxury of having two tutors at once turns out to be a necessary one because the posing of seemingly dumb questions has to be practiced as well. Among the texts that are being read together is Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, a highly complex illustration, and at the same time rupturing, of the classroom situation.

Why do artists subject themselves to this occasionally masochistic process? One common rejoinder is that the production of art, which is perceived as problematic because of its commodity character, undergoes "sublimation" in the course of the artmakers' intellectual endeavors. A rarely questioned art school dogma decrees that tackling philosophy and, more generally, theoretical texts makes artistic output more complex and interesting, thus enhances the quality of the product. (Another art school dogma, still prevalent at many German art academies, decrees of course exactly the opposite.) But as the analysis undertaken in recent years of "cognitive capitalism" has thoroughly demonstrated, knowledge and thinking are subject to the same market mechanisms as art objects and their production. (This is reflected by, among other things, the countless new Ph.D. programs for artists.) In my view, this actual process of sublimation receives too little attention. Teachers rely rather on theoretical meteorites striking with such impact that, somehow or another, the students' production will be propelled on the right orbit. Sticking with the metaphor, it is not necessarily the case that the material from the neighboring galaxy organically bonds with the existing structures of thought. And if no such bonding occurs, the theory just lies dormant, a foreign body in people's minds, or a hardcover fetish that lies about, unread, in artists' studios.

So how can creative, even subversive, energy be derived from this impact? One suggestion: by affirmatively occupying the gap between theory and artistic practice, by moving away from the academicisms of either field and towards confident and self-reflexive dilettantism. This minimal shift in valuations can be directly experienced as empowerment: just as a hybrid engine wins energy when accelerating and braking alike, so it is a question of making the inner reluctance felt when working through arduous texts part of the way the text is understood. This experience of reluctance, of being overwhelmed, amounts to negative intellectual energy, and as such it is a resource that can be put to productive use. If such a shift is negotiated successfully, authority is withdrawn from the text and restored to one's own mind, and intellectual emancipation occurs.

One might justifiably query whether the academy, of all places, is the right place to practice dilettantism. But for the sake of argument let us assume the current situation to be one in which the academies, having long lost their monopoly over the production of knowledge, are seeking to regain command by expanding the copyright, patenting, global standardization and certification of

knowledge, research, and the like. An institution that sees itself as progressive might respond to such a situation by renouncing precisely this function of control, and instead position itself as a node within a network of public schools, reading groups, biohackers and similar non-aligned temporary associations. Such an institution would not do so in a way that craves acceptance and strives for street credibility, but would make resources available and offer equal partners the possibility of exchange. By necessity, it would be a matter of rescinding the dichotomy of inside and outside within the institutional power structure, and of viewing dilettantism and professionalism as two poles within a continuous and fluid process. The day-to-day reality of most creative workers is characterized by such fluidity. The experience of how differently one and the same text "performs" depending on whether it is read inside or outside an institutional context would fall by the wayside, but there are more and more signs that the idea of "outside" is a romantic notion from the twentieth century, and whether one attends an academy or the public school in order to meet the demands of cognitive capitalism or to learn how to put up resistance to the latter, it comes down to much the same thing in the end.

(Note to self: Organize conference on dilettantism)

But what would a potential form for this affirmative occupation of the gap between two (or more) disciplines be? With the benefit of hindsight I would say we gave too little consideration to this question while preparing the conference. Hardly surprisingly, the choice of the conference format privileges exclusive academic discourse, and for that reason a certain ability to hold one's own in such an environment was among the criteria for selecting the artist speakers. In the wider conference setting it proved impossible to reproduce something achieved, over and over again, in the smaller groups, namely the collective attempts to grasp the concepts, the links forged between the theoretical reading matter and personal experience. The vast majority of the audience of art students and artists stayed silent. This silence was all the more grave because the conference was aimed at intellectual emancipation. The exploration of new formats in which the three communication modes of text, performance and drawing are placed as equals alongside each other, and every participant is at once teacher and pupil, actor and observer—that is, as becomes clear to me while writing, the stuff of my dream. The Graduate Studies in Art program at Art Center, with

its strong focus on philosophy, would be an ideal place for future experiments. I think, for instance, of the structure of an international soccer tournament: beginning with sixteen work groups, the main theses emerge in the course of two weeks and play against each other in the grand finale. In order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, the rulebook would best be borrowed from the UNO.

Let us return to the classroom. "Equality" is on today's agenda. Based on Joseph Jacotot's axiom of the equality of intelligences, Jacques Rancière develops the inconceivable idea that "equality" already exists. Not as a distant promise, as the reward to be redeemed at the end of a war successfully waged against global capitalism, but as a hypothesis requiring constant actualization. The sporadic rejection practiced on the micro-level of modes of behavior aimed at dominance and exploitation makes it possible to experience, situationally, in the here-and-now, the remote goal of social equality, and this experience, having actually taken place, functions as an agent of social change. So let's actualize, say the clever students: With professors' salaries including medical insurance, it's easy enough for you to talk about revolution. Whereas we pay a lot of money to gain access to a system you constantly discredit, although you participate in it just like all those who simply sell their art in galleries and are content to do so. And, clever students, you're absolutely right.

I HAVE A DREAM

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Arne De Boever teaches American Studies in the School of Critical Studies at the California Institute of the Arts. He also directs the School's MA Program in Aesthetics and Politics. He has published numerous articles on literature, film, and critical theory and is editor of *Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy*. His book *States of Exception in the Contemporary Novel* will be published by Continuum.

Claire Fontaine is a Paris-based collective artist, founded in 2004. After lifting her name from a popular brand of school notebooks, Claire Fontaine declared herself a "readymade artist" and began to elaborate a version of neo-conceptual art that often looks like other people's work. Working in neon, video, sculpture, painting and text, her practice can be described as an ongoing interrogation of the political impotence and the crisis of singularity that seem to define contemporary art today. Recent exhibitions include "After Marx April, After Mao June," Aspen Art Museum, Colorado;

"Future Tense," El Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico D.F.; "Economies," Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; "Closed for Prayers," Dvir Gallery, Hangar 2, Jaffa Port, Israel; "Etrangers Partout (QDM)," Nuit Blanche, Belleville, Paris; "Kultur ist ein Palast der aus Hundescheiße gebaut ist," MD72, Berlin; "Arando en el mar/Ploughing the sea," Gaga Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico D.F.; "Fighting Gravity," Regina Gallery London and Moscow. Claire Fontaine also participated in the May 18, 2006 colloquium, "Esthétique et politique, autour de la philosophie de Jacques Rancière," held in Stockholm and which featured Alexandre Costanzo and Jacques Rancière.

Peter Friedl is an artist based in Berlin. His artistic practice emphasizes the friction between aesthetic and political awareness, employing strategies such as permanent displacement, editing, or over-exposing. Recent solo exhibitions include "Magnificence," Guido Costa Projects, Turin (2011); Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2010);

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Maria Muhle studied philosophy and political science in Madrid and Paris. Since 2008, she has been Academic Assistant to the Chair for History and Theory of Artificial Worlds, Institute for Media Studies, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and held the Junior Professorship for Philosophy of Media and Techniques at the Institute for Media Studies at Ruhr-Universität Bochum in 2010. Her research focuses on

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