Interpreting the Situation of Political Disagreement

Rancière and Habermas

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Jacques Rancière and Jürgen Habermas share several important commitments.* They both strongly support democracy and equality, focus significant parts of their work on understanding the role of communication in politics, and reject pessimistic defeatism about political action.1 Their work arises from different traditions—Rancière's thought emerges from engagement with the work of French Marxists like Althusser, while Habermas's theories respond to and redirect the work of early Frankfurt School critical social theory. Each has a somewhat similar role in these traditions: championing democracy in the wake of thinkers who paid much less attention to that ideal.

Nonetheless, Rancière is a critic of Habermas, articulating his democratic vision in opposition to elements of Habermas's approach. They interpret various core concepts differently, apparently viewing politics, democracy, communication, and disagreement in conflicting ways. Because the nature and basis of their differences are not always clear, it is worth trying to sort out where they stand in relation to one another. While some have viewed Rancière as offering a trenchant challenge to Habermas, I will contend that Rancière's critique is less compelling than some have thought.

Rancière views democratic politics as emerging from contexts where excluded people are given orders, marginalized, or otherwise treated as subordinates. Democracy emerges when those who are excluded revolt against established social frameworks—what he calls the "police order"—that exclude them. Such social orders have a fundamentally aesthetic character that structures the sensibilities of those within them. On Rancière's conception, such social orderings determine how the world appears to people, as well as shaping how individuals understand themselves and others. In democratic politics, Rancière thinks that the excluded must challenge and reconfigure this

sensible ordering of things in order to establish themselves as equals. Political action is about resisting and contesting the status quo in order to appear as an equal in public life.

This understanding of politics is supposed to present a problem for Habermas's discourse theory of democracy. Critics contend that he cannot account for the dynamics of command, exclusion, resistance, and aesthetic transformation involved in Rancière's understanding of politics. In particular, the prominent roles Habermas affords to communicative rationality and consensus have led people to think that he cannot grasp the radical forms of political disagreement Rancière describes.

Habermas's views are subtler than many have appreciated, however. In this paper, I defend Habermas against the main objections Rancière presents against him in *Disagreement*. While there are genuine differences between their views, a Habermasian understanding of third-person speech and aesthetic expression is nuanced and adaptable enough to evade Rancière's criticisms. I conclude by suggesting that Habermasian theorists have also developed crucial forms of social and political critique that Rancière's theory systematically excludes.

Habermas on Disagreement and Democracy

In Rancière's now-classic text, *Disagreement*, the third chapter is dedicated to formulating a new conception of political disagreement—one that departs from the Habermasian view. Before looking at how Rancière expresses his critique of Habermas's position, we must consider Habermas's understandings of rationality, disagreement, and democratic politics.

In the very beginning of his *Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas notes that rationality has to do "with how speaking and acting subjects *acquire and use knowledge*."[2] Famously, Habermas distinguishes this acquisition and use of knowledge into the categories of communicative rationality and instrumental rationality. The instrumental sort is when an "actor satisfies the conditions necessary for realizing his intention to intervene successfully in the world."[3] In contrast to such non-communicative, goal-oriented activity, communicative rationality involves claims meant to achieve consensus through argument and justification. In delineating these varieties of rationality, he argues that communicative rationality is not reducible to instrumental rationality.

In this context, I will be most concerned with communicative rationality. When validity claims are put forward (explicitly or implicitly in action or speech), they must be grounded in reasons that can be offered to all others in a practice of argumentation. These validity claims are the knowledge at issue. Habermas thinks they are redeemed via intersubjective justification in three different ways: in relation to the objective world, the intersubjective world of norms, or the behavior and subjective experiences of the self. When I claim

someone is trustworthy, for instance, this speech act is only communicatively rational if, in making it, I am capable of acknowledging its fallibility and defending it in argument (i.e., she's never let me down, she is truthful, etc.). As Rancière will discuss, Habermas views the goal of such communicative speech acts as reaching mutual understanding. These speech acts' *telos* is having their meaning understood and their validity recognized by the hearer. To grasp the meaning of a sentence, according to Habermas, is to grasp the conditions under which "we know *what makes it acceptable*."4 When people disagree, then, they dispute whether a claim is valid or not, offering support for their contention that it ought to be accepted. The aim of this practice is to convince interlocuters to come to a mutual understanding about the validity of the speaker's claim.

This practice of communication implicitly relies on a counterfactual, ideal speech situation, one free of coercion, where the participants are symmetrical and properly motivated, and where any possible content offered may be questioned and criticized. These constraining aspects of the situation presupposed by communicative rationality arise out of the illocutionary goal of mutual understanding that Habermas finds in speech acts. Insofar as justification through argumentation aims at such understanding, certain conditions can undermine the communicative goal of speech. Under conditions of coercion or domination, those who communicate do not achieve mutual understanding, but one side's capitulation. Also, since this process is justificatory and hence evaluative, it occurs within the participant perspective, not the objectifying, third-person point of view, where the force of such reasons cannot be recognized.5 These constraints, which are deeply bound up with our everyday use of language, are what constitute communicative rationality. To ignore these criteria of intersubjective justification, Habermas thinks, is to be in a performative contradiction, which undermines the presuppositions of one's own speech acts. A speaker cannot—without contradiction—seek mutual understanding while undermining the conditions of possibility for such understanding.

For Habermas, these forms of communication rely on what he calls, following Husserl, the lifeworld. Behind the thematized justification of validity claims, there is "an unthematically concurrent, relatively *foregrounded knowledge* on which the participants rely in the form of pragmatic and semantic presuppositions."6 This knowledge does not get problematized in communication; some things are just assumed in communication as shared interpretations or milieus. For instance, when someone asks me for directions on the street, I will not, under normal circumstances, wonder whether the person speaking is actually an android replicant. I will also not interpret the noises they make as the recitation of lines from a play they believe themselves to be performing. If I were to constantly have such worries (and to demand justification accordingly), participating in everyday life would become difficult, if not impossible. We all rely on something like a lifeworld in order to get by.

Nonetheless, such knowledge must still be possible to question and criticize. It "easily gets drawn into the maelstrom of problematization," as Habermas reminds us.7 That is, if someone starts making beeping noises and their eyes glow red, or I notice they keep glancing down at a script, my prior presumptions about the background of our speech situation will be destabilized.

This picture of communicative rationality ultimately serves a broader conception of democratic politics in Habermas's theory—his procedural, discourse theory. This influential political philosophy forms one of the key theoretical foundations of the ideal of deliberative democracy. In order to overcome depoliticized administrative steering systems (e.g., bureaucracy, markets), Habermas attempts to envision a politics centered on autonomy, self-realization, and popular sovereignty. He thinks of public and private autonomy as co-original, as the human rights that constitute the basis of a procedure of popular will-formation. The reason Habermas thinks of popular sovereignty as a procedure is that it allows him to avoid undermining the validity of actual democratic deliberation with a metaphysical conception of reason. If popular sovereignty were given too substantive a theoretical grounding, it might be tempting to take a concrete concept of justice, the good, or whatever else, and institute it via administrative expertise. Instead, through democratic, discursive procedures, we might understand majority decisions "as the rationally motivated but *fallible* result of an attempt to determine what is right through a discussion that has been brought to a *provisional* close."8 Given a vibrant public sphere that permeates legislative institutions, there arises communicative power, backed by the communicative rationality Habermas describes, which is collectively binding. This power is operationalized in law, however, which provides "a stabilization of behavioral expectations." Both sides of the equation require each other, according to Habermas: "law requires a normative perspective [i.e., communication and procedural democracy], and power an instrumental one."9 Much more could be said about Habermas's quite detailed and complex view, but at its heart it attempts to connect democracy and law inextricably together, while theorizing a popular will free of the problems plaguing many classical viewpoints.

Rancière on Disagreement and Democracy

Rancière's own conceptions of communication, disagreement, and democratic politics differ from Habermas's. Although Rancière only directly cites or mentions Habermas a few times, his presence can be felt behind much of what Rancière discusses in "The Rationality of Disagreement," the third chapter of *Disagreement*. He presents his conception of the logic of politics in order to get around what he sees as a false alternative between "rational communication . . . [and] irreducible difference."10 For Rancière, politics is not those within a shared community deliberating about various decisions, nor is it reducible to straightforward struggles to control various forms of power.

Political rationality is about exposing and contesting the division and distribution of social roles constituted by what Rancière calls the "police." He describes the police as follows:

> an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of seeing, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise.[11]

This police order defines social roles and occupations and organizes them into a hierarchical structure that makes some actors perceptible and others not. It determines what roles and activities people are qualified to participate in and is inscribed in the public perception of social life.[12] Crucially, this ordering presents itself as complete, as excluding no one. It defines some as competent, particularly as competent to rule over others who are depicted as lacking qualification to rule and, as such, are unequal. This differentiation of individuals based on intelligence and competence is reflected in cases where, for instance, laborers are depicted as capable only of certain manual work but incompetent for taking part in important social decision-making.[13]

Politics opposes this logic, challenging the hierarchy of the police order, as well its claim to completeness. On Rancière's view, politics rejects the existence of some commonly understood world, corresponding to the one supposed by the *oligoï* who define some as less worthy or competent. Rejecting this false totality, political action exposes a partition between the world as defined by the police order and the world as understood by those not afforded a place in the police's ordering of occupations and social spaces. Politics manifests a conflict or disagreement in order to reconfigure "the partition of the perceptible," the sensible ordering of bodies that excludes some, rendering their competence and intelligence invisible.[14] While the police's depiction of the world make some imperceptible, politics contests the divisions that this order obscures by exposing a competing, egalitarian sense of the world. In situations of political disagreement, a partial community asserts itself and challenges the current setup of the whole, aiming to redefine the exclusionary situation. It asserts itself as an egalitarian order, a "singular, polemical universality of a demonstration," aimed at uprooting the inegalitarian police order that claims a false universality, one that excludes those who issue the polemical call for equality.[15] In these political moments, new, shared ways of sensing the world and new forms of subjectivity will emerge, rejecting the identifications of the police order. He points to cases of pedagogues whose approach to teaching is based on the assumption that all are equally intelligent, and women who present themselves as candidates for office despite being legally excluded from doing so.[16] For Rancière, these acts are aesthetic *and* argumentative, occurring largely outside the normalized situation of rational communication that he finds in Habermas.

Rancière's Critique of Habermas

In the process of developing this picture of political disagreement, Rancière raises several objections to Habermas. First, Rancière thinks that Habermas will attack genuine political action as a violation of the communicative rationality that should ideally shape democratic politics. Second, he thinks that Habermas mischaracterizes communication between unequal parties, in particular his discussion of performative contradictions. Finally, Rancière accuses Habermas's theory of rational communicative action of downplaying the importance of aesthetic, world-disclosing language in politics. I will take up and dispute each of these criticisms in the sections that follow.

Politics, Communication, and the Third-Person Standpoint

A central theme of Habermas's philosophy is the importance of the participant standpoint in the interpretation of intersubjective communication. Part of our ability to understand one another comes from taking first- and second-person standpoints with respect to validity claims expressed in communication. To identify something as a reason requires, Habermas thinks, taking a stance on its possible validity.

Rancière comprehends this aspect of Habermas's theory as in tension with central aspects of genuine politics. In Rancière's view, Habermas depicts politics as a "meeting of partners who hear an utterance, immediately understand the act that caused it to be uttered, and take on board the intersubjective relationship that supports this understanding."17 This last element of the picture Rancière attributes to Habermas is what raises a special concern, insofar as Rancière believes politics is specifically calling the police order underlying social life into question. To put this order's established relationships (boss/worker, man/woman, master/slave, etc.) into question, a third-person stance is called for, on his view. This stance presumes a universal equality and rejects the social partitions that make up the background of decision-making. This third-person attempt at challenging "the police" is the essence of politics, he thinks.

The question, in considering this challenge, is whether Habermas can make room for the political situation as Rancière describes it or whether his view is impoverished in this respect. Perhaps Habermas will view challenges to "the police" as strategic, instrumental action, rather than the kind of communicative, deliberative democracy he supports.

For Rancière, political events involve responding to "police logic" that divides society up, excluding some in the process. On the basis of such logic, various roles, presumably including forms of authority, get defined. Politics is when those who are excluded from this partitioning of social reality break with police logic, contradicting its definitions and orders on the basis of equality. A person can distance themselves from that logic and take a third-person, critical

stance rather than accepting this order. In politics, "the position of the enunciator [is made] explicit" in order to construct a new relationship within the given scene. "The utterance thereby completed then finds itself extracted from the speech situation in which it functioned naturally," Rancière explains, "It is placed in another situation in which it no longer works, in which it is the object of scrutiny, reduced to the status of an utterance in a common language."[18] This sort of demonstration seems to be how Rancière conceives political disagreement. It breaks out of a discourse that demands compliance and affirmation, objectifying the superior's speech acts and subjecting them to scrutiny through polemic. In a monological key, the hearer forces a "consideration of speaking beings as such" by commenting on the lack of a common stage for discourse.[19] This demonstration or formation of public opinion anticipates a forum for debate between equals that does not yet exist. Third-person speech objectifies the superior's police logic, meaning that it examines the police order from the outside as an object of critique, rather than as something to participate in. In many of the cases Rancière discusses, a kind of contempt is present in the use of third-person speech, indicating a situation that prevents direct discourse as equals.[20] Perhaps a worker sarcastically comments, "The boss calls the shots at the factory, but the workers might decide not to show up." Indirect commentary is a refusal to accept the police logic structuring the unequal terms of the disagreement. On Rancière's view, this commentary foregrounds a divided interpretation of the speech situation itself, contesting police logic by attempting to construct an alternative, egalitarian world where the marginalized count as equals.

Rancière thinks Habermas misconstrues third-person speech and that his criticisms of the third-person perspective lock "the rational argument of political debate into the same speech situation as the one it seeks to overcome: the simple rationality of a dialogue of interests."[21] Rancière worries that Habermas's insistence on taking the perspective of a participant forecloses the possibility of removing oneself from police logic by objectifying and attacking the situation it assumes. We are forced into discourse on unjust terms, assuming—without examination—a background police logic that dictates various roles and creates an exclusionary normative order.

Nothing Habermas says excludes the possibility of resisting the domination of such police logic, nor does his viewpoint constitute a rejection of the third-person commentaries Rancière references. Even if we take Rancière's view of politics for granted, he misunderstands Habermas's critique of the third-person standpoint, leading him to wrongly suggest Habermas cannot capture "the political," in Rancière's sense. In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, the sole text of Habermas's that Rancière cites in *Disagreement*, Habermas does not suggest the third-person perspective cannot be used or that it is an objectionable grammatical form. Instead, Habermas believes that we can only have discourse about "the structures of the lifeworld in general, and not [about] determinate lifeworlds in their

concrete historical configurations."22 That is, we cannot adopt a third-person perspective that removes us from the totality of our historical and social commitments and presuppositions.23 There is no getting completely outside of the lifeworld in one fell swoop, given that the perspective from which we criticize our lifeworld is constituted within it (in addition to constituting and reproducing that lifeworld). That, of course, should not prevent reflective critique of its structures and norms. In fact, a long tradition of critical theory— of which Habermas is a part—relies on just this method of immanent critique. Habermas makes this point clearly, arguing that reflective critique's "liberating force is directed toward *single* illuminations: It cannot make transparent the *totality* [...] of a collective way of life."24 Habermas's worry is that taking the third-person point of view should not delude us into thinking we have eschewed all the presuppositions we share with others, adopting an objective, detached singular standpoint. This hermeneutic approach suggests that social critique emerges within particular social orders, but can still reflect on an order while critiquing and opposing specific elements of it.

Nothing Habermas says suggests such critiques cannot be expressed in the third person in political practice, as it is in my example of the worker's comments or in the labor manifestos from which Rancière draws important aspects of his picture of politics. Using the third-person to comment on one's exclusion does not suggest that one shares no background agreement with one's audience. Nor does commenting in the third person mean claiming a perspective outside of shared social reality. Perhaps Rancière does not intend to claim that those engaged in politics take such a perspective. If so, then Habermas's picture of things can incorporate the political activity Rancière discusses, even if he may interpret its character differently. If, alternatively, Rancière views political speech as involving some sort of extra-social standpoint, then he will be adopting a highly implausible commitment into his understanding of politics.

Centrally, Rancière seems to want to indicate that the non-recognition of some individuals as capable of speech—as equal—means they are denied a form of status such that they are placed outside the police logic and discourse against which they opine. They are placed outside the world of communicative, equal beings. In light of that exclusion, Habermas would view objectifying, third-person commentary as reactive and corrective. The original communicative sin is on the side of bosses who ignore workers' communicative agency, for example. Putting forward such a manifesto—in the third person or not—also seems quite oriented toward mutual understanding. The workers make a claim against their oppressors in order to challenge and ultimately reshape the lifeworld. In doing so, they cannot reject it in its entirety. However, they must, in Habermas's view, concentrate their critique on specific elements of the police logic that excludes them.

Understanding and Equality

An additional objection Rancière lodges against the Habermasian view has to do with how exactly to interpret "understanding." Rancière challenges the idea that speech acts are oriented towards mutual understanding—a core aspect of Habermas's view. Rancière thinks that understanding can be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand as the understanding of a problem and on the other as the understanding of an order. Consider a superior delivering an order and then asking a subordinate, "Do you understand?" The question, Rancière suggests, implicitly requires the hearer either to affirm the interrogator's interpretation of the speech scene as one where they hold authority or to admit some kind of incomprehension. The question demands that the hearer obey, flouting and mocking any kind of possible questioning of its validity. Rancière suggests that attention must be paid to the contradictory, unjust nature of the demand for "understanding." The implication is that Habermas's interpretation of understanding as the goal of speech acts obscures cases like this one, where the imposition of control, rather than genuine mutual understanding and problem solving, is the point of a speech act.

A closer look at Habermas's theory demonstrates that he would view the case Rancière describes as involving a speaker taking an unjustifiable stance. The superior's question, as presented, implies an interpretation of the lifeworld that is beyond criticism, or perhaps even a thematized claim about the shared situation that is beyond questioning. In particular, the interpretation of the speech situation the speaker presents depicts the hearer as excluded and incapable of participating in communication on an equal footing with others. The question is premised on the incapacity of the hearer to properly respond. Such an incorrigible, subordinating stance clashes with the fallibilism and equal standing that Habermas believes rational communication implicitly demands. In addition, he would view it as communicatively irrational insofar as the questioner refuses to be held accountable for his or her claims by avoiding giving reasons for those claims.

Note, in addition, that the speaker presumably makes some claim before asking whether the hearer understands (i.e., "You must press the button! Do you understand?"). On Habermas's view, any prior statement would involve an implicit claim to validity. Even if the hearer comprehends the conditions necessary for a speech act's validity, there is no reason to suppose the hearer must assume those conditions are fulfilled. The situation Rancière describes is clearly a violation of what Habermas understands to be the requirements of rationality on the part of the so-called superior. Habermas's conception of communication provides no space for demands for unquestioning obedience. In fact, his view aims to lay out why such a demand conflicts with communicative rationality.

A crucial part of Habermas's response will involve the idea of performative contradictions. A performative contradiction occurs when a speaker must presuppose a claim that they intend to argue against. On Habermas's view, the validity of any claim is dependent on willingness to submit that claim to challenges, to aim for mutual understanding, and so on. If someone makes a claim while unwilling to accept the conditions that their statement's validity depends upon, they are engaged in a performative contradiction. Their rejection of justification and mutual understanding means rejecting the underlying conditions necessary for making whatever claims they put forward. In Habermas's view, the speaker in Rancière's example is guilty of such a performative contradiction.

Rancière does not accept this argument. In his rendering, the question "Do you understand?" does not involve the presuppositions Habermas suggests, but instead presupposes a partition between those who give orders and those who follow them, but do not talk back.[25] The question assumes a police order where the questioner, who need not justify himself or herself, is placed above the questioned. Such an ordering of things is what politics contests; Rancière is not suggesting that the questioner is in any sense justified in presupposing this subordinating division of the social order. He is also not simply arguing that power undermines rational communication, given powerful actors' ability to impose constraints on rational discourse.

Instead, he emphasizes that the situation "forces us to see the scene as more complicated, and the response to 'Do you understand?' necessarily will become more complex."[26] That is, Rancière is pointing out that referencing a contradiction in the questioner's speech has no practical significance in this case. The questioner is toying with and aware of the ambiguity of asking the question they are posing. They precisely intend to violate and deny the kind of pragmatic presuppositions Habermas thinks they are rationally obliged to follow. The speaker denies these presuppositions not through a direct validity claim, but through an aesthetic partition of the perceptible. They rely on a background police logic that depicts the world as a justified hierarchy that fits people into certain occupations and activities—without any gaps or fissures.[27] Habermas's justifications and arguments cannot help the person being questioned, because the background police order does not support this person's very right to speak and offer any argumentative response in the first place. The person being questioned is depicted as lacking qualification to do so. As Russell and Montin suggest, "What is needed from the perspective of such disqualified speakers is not a demonstration of the right or requirement of access to discourse but a demonstration of how such a right or requirement might be made politically effective where its relevance is denied."[28] Habermas, Rancière is suggesting, can offer no such demonstration—a philosophical theory of communicative action cannot help the person being questioned and placed in a subordinate position.

It is indeed true that pointing out that someone is engaged in a performative contradiction is insufficient to undermine the background conditions that allow them to get away with such a contradiction in the first place. I am skeptical that this is a deep objection to Habermas's view, however. In outlining a theory of communicative action, Habermas offers a way to anchor normative claims in social practice — claims that support rational criticism of certain forms of communication. This part of his theory is not a manual for holding people accountable for their implicit rational commitments. Rancière is rightly indicating that simply pointing out performative contradictions falls short of addressing the problem with the questioner asking, "Do you understand?" Rancière explains, "the political rationality of argument can never be some simple clarification of what speaking means."[29] That is true enough, so Habermas's view will be lacking if it stops there. Rather than simple clarification, Rancière offers a picture of the way that the excluded must call elements of the lifeworld into question in order to resist a particular "police" logic. He explains the importance of challenging the contestable background of communication, and gives examples of how this process works, in his view.

Habermas's pragmatic analysis of communication may not cover these issues, although his discussion of problematizing elements of the lifeworld certainly gestures in that direction. More importantly, he does not stop with an analysis and clarification of communication, nor does he neglect practical considerations. In fact, his entire political philosophy offers his view of what it takes to move political decision making in the direction of deliberative, communicative goals. He theorizes the social conditions for democratic decision making, including recognizing the kind of conflicts over equal standing and recognition that Rancière alludes to. In one article, Habermas defends forms of civil disobedience like occupations, traffic disruptions, and blockades as crucial for challenging illegitimate state actions.[30] He points, in particular, to the importance of such political action from "the downtrodden and oppressed who first experience injustice on their own person."[31] Their acts of disobedience are especially significant, as they are often best placed to raise important issues that would otherwise be swept under the rug. Habermas explicitly notes the importance of "struggles for recognition" carried out by feminists, cultural minorities, and others.[32] In addition to acknowledging the significance of such oppositional, democratizing political action, Habermas outlines the kind of institutions that would support such a public sphere.[33] As such, Habermas cannot be plausibly accused of offering an empty, rationalistic analysis of political disagreement that ignores the kind of situations Rancière's work points to.

Rancière does provide a different picture of democratic politics than Habermas, which is important to recognize. Whatever we conclude about that divergence, Rancière's case of the person asking, "Do you understand?" does not significantly undermine Habermas's view, which I have shown is fully

capable of making sense of that case. Habermas can challenge the validity of the speaker's question, as well as outlining the sort of political system, social context, and oppositional politics that would enable a challenge to this illegitimate domination.

Rancière sometimes seems to make an even stronger objection to Habermas, beyond suggesting that he cannot offer a way to effectively claim one's equal status through political action. At times, he seems to deny that communication involves the presuppositions that Habermas believes it to have, presuppositions that allow Habermas to utilize the charge of performative contradiction. That would open the possibility that there was nothing invalid or irrational about treating some speakers as lacking the capacity to communicate with others.34

Yet there is evidence against this reading of Rancière, whose arguments seem to depend on the idea that claims about speakers' incapacity are invalid. The most persuasive interpretation of Rancière's arguments in *Disagreement* is that politics is about using aesthetic demonstration to pressure dominating speakers to give up invalid, contradictory claims about who can speak. Dominating speakers' commitments do not become invalid through the demonstration, but are instead *revealed* as invalid and contradictory. Rancière talks in just this manner, speaking of establishing and demonstrating validity throughout the text.35 The question, then, is not whether the dominating speaker engages in a performative contradiction, but whether Habermas's work can capture the aesthetic demonstration necessary to make that contradiction manifest. In the remainder of this paper, I argue that his theory is capable of including such demonstrations.

Aesthetics

Before looking at what Habermas might say about such aesthetic demonstrations, it is important to note that many have been attracted to Rancière's work by his theorization of the intersection of politics and aesthetics. Habermas, by his own admission, has not afforded aesthetics a central place in his work, although he has regularly engaged with aesthetic theory and developed an approach to it over the years. Rancière, looking at the treatment of aesthetics in Habermas's thought, finds it wanting, particularly in political contexts.

This is no peripheral criticism, given that Rancière claims that "politics is aesthetic in principle."36 He conceives of political disagreement as fundamentally centered on whether speakers are being recognized as speakers or if there is agreement on the existence of "the visible object of the conflict."37 Politics, on his definition of it, has to do with what and who appear and are obscured in the space of debate, which enables speakers to make specific, discursive, and justificatory claims about their interests. Rancière argues "that the demonstration proper to politics is always both argument and opening up of the world where argument can be received and have an

impact."[38] For him, aesthetic expression is not opposed to everyday communicative discourse, but can be a demonstration of its necessity. Thus, political disagreement is always both aesthetic and rationally argumentative.

Habermas's Distinction Between Poetic and Everyday Language

Rancière points out that Habermas separates poetic language from "closed-world forms of arguing and validating."[39] That is, language has different functions in Habermas's view: poetically constructing or transforming the world of discourse in general or making validity claims within a world. What Rancière objects to in this separation is Habermas's attempt to delineate world-disclosing language, which brackets the constraints of everyday speech, from normal communicative rationality. His concern is that, in doing so, Habermas underplays the sort of political disagreement Rancière privileges, setting it off in its own self-referential corner, separated from the communicative activity of deliberative democratic politics. If aesthetically and rhetorically rich speech is separated from genuine communicative action, then the political action that Rancière highlights will not impact everyday speech situations. Rancière thinks such a separation cannot do justice to the task politics sets out to accomplish through aesthetic expression: challenging the logic of the police and its pseudo-consensual presuppositions.

Although it is right that Habermas argues for a distinction between poetic and everyday language, Rancière overestimates the distinction's importance in addition to the implications that Habermas draws from it. Delineating poetic and everyday language does not necessitate a denial of the situations Rancière discusses, where aesthetic demonstration opens up the space for discourse about political disputes. Habermas merely wants to point out that world disclosure and problem solving are two different roles that language can have. That is not the same thing as saying that a speech act cannot do both things at once. As Thomas McCarthy points out in his introduction to *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, "We are dealing here with a continuum, no doubt."[40] Still, something can be so poetic or metaphorical that it becomes a fiction; a speech act is capable of disengaging from the everyday and losing its illocutionary force. However, Habermas is pleased to admit that everyday discourses maintain rhetorical elements. He does think, however, that they "are tamed, as it were, and enlisted for special purposes of problem solving."[41] This kind of enlistment of the aesthetic, rhetorical, and poetic can be used to capture Rancière's examples of political disagreement, even if Habermas ultimately gestures at a different interpretation of them.

For Habermas, the rationality of these political interventions comes from the fact that the force of protest is not *merely* aesthetic. Rather than being "overdetermined" by some kind of autonomous aesthetic context, Rancière's examples depict "*deficient* solutions to problems and *invalid* answers."[42] In

these cases, agents are faced with a lifeworld that erases them and their problems, which they respond to with demonstrations that aim to challenge the police order. If these aesthetic demonstrations are to have communicative force, they relate to something we can say yes or no to, either an answer to or the positing of a problem or question. They thematize problems in the lifeworld (exclusions, undemocratic status relations, etc.) that can be recognized or ignored. The response to these expressions must be subject to validation, not mere arbitrary decision making. As a result, Habermas's understanding of politics can, when appropriate, view aesthetic concerns as integrated with everyday communication.

Can Habermas Plausibly Interpret Rancière's Central Cases?

Elsewhere, Habermas discusses aesthetic validity in terms that enable him to offer an interpretation of the cases that Rancière suggests undermine Habermas's view. In response to questions about his understanding of modern art, Habermas suggests that "[art] reaches into our cognitive interpretations and normative expectations and transforms the totality in which these moments are related to each other."[43] Habermas adds that aesthetic validity has the "singularly illuminating power to open our eyes to what is seemingly familiar, to disclose anew an apparently familiar reality."[44] Moreover, he doesn't believe that art makes a singular validity claim, as with discursive statements about the objective world, intersubjective moral obligation, or first-person, subjective statements. Instead, Habermas believes that art intermeshes these claims together. In considering the transformative aesthetic expression that Rancière depicts, which exposes and reshapes the background of everyday political discourse, Habermas can rely on the aesthetic theory sketched in these remarks. What Habermas says about art can apply to political action with aesthetic significance. Habermas conceives of aesthetic expression as a complex sort of validity claim, not merely strategic action or self-referential, fictionalized world-building. Instead, on his view, aesthetic activity has an impact on everyday communication and can be subject to the sort of intersubjective discursive evaluation his theory emphasizes.

Rancière, given his understanding of how fundamental aesthetics and perception are in these examples, may not accept the readings Habermas would offer of these sorts of cases. In the acts of resistance that Rancière analyzes, he believes different "regimes of expression" or "partition[s] of the perceptible" come into conflict.[45] These conflicts are not about normal rational validity claims, but a kind of prior community of sensation, which Rancière believes is opened up and challenged in the examples he describes. Specifically, the presuppositions about the situation of speech—especially which subjects are involved and what authority they enjoy—are being disputed. The dispute is over whether a common world of speech and communication must be presupposed in order to give orders and coordinate action. One aesthetic regime excludes some people as having no capacity to participate, while the one that emerges shows that the exclusionary police

regime can be contested and that a common stage of debate is possible. When someone is treated as though they cannot reasonably speak in a situation, they can ignore that, comment on it, and demonstrate their capacity for speech through speaking about the situation.

There are still questions here about how much of a challenge to Habermas these claims actually support, though. As I have suggested, the critique of Habermas cannot simply be that Rancière acknowledges the aesthetic character of presuppositions about the speech situation, while Habermas cannot recognize them or support related acts of political disagreement. Habermas does discuss aesthetic validity in his work, which allows him to deal with Rancière's examples of contestation over what is assumed in contexts of speech.

One reading of Rancière might suggest the concern is that Habermas's discussions of world disclosure do not capture how political disagreement involves two completely opposed distributions of the sensible. On this view, politics involves separate, irreconcilable worlds coming into conflict. There is some textual evidence for this reading of Rancière, such as his claim that "politics [...] is made up of relationships between worlds."[46] If a world is understood as a distinct, separate order of things, then Habermas's discussion of world disclosure may not be adequate for capturing the phenomenon Rancière is focused on. On this view, the world introduced in opposition to the dominant one would not just be the partial critique of a shared lifeworld, but a completely different regime of sense, another world entirely. Political disagreement would not just be about making something visible or sayable, but about aesthetically introducing a new, egalitarian world to replace the old police order being contested.

As Axel Honneth argues, however, if Rancière takes this position, he will be presenting worlds as overly "rigid" structures, immune to "new interpretations and appropriations."[47] Moreover, if worlds are interpreted so separately and rigidly, then Rancière will be depicting political actors as lacking shared background commitments. As I explained previously, this stance lacks plausibility. Critique cannot proceed by presenting alternative pictures of the world aimed at rejecting entire collective ways of life. Instead, it must take place within a shared lifeworld, focused on particular aspects of it.

In fact, Rancière does not describe different "worlds" as fully separate and unable to influence one another. He does not present people choosing between world A and world B, but often proceeds as though alternative visions of the world operate to reshape individuals' relationship to everyday life. Aesthetic transformations do not pull people out of the everyday order of things into a new one; such transformations change people's relationship to themselves and to everyday existence. In *Proletarian Nights*, for instance, Rancière presents the discourses of workers engaged in the Saint-Simonian movement, as well as in poetry, literature, and philosophy. In looking at the

ways the worlds of labor and cultural life intersect, Rancière does not depict two disconnected worlds, one of which wholly involves the rejection of the other. Instead, he alludes to experiences of the worlds of Saint-Simonianism and art outside the workshop as enabling workers' judgments, "revelation[s] of self," "passions," and "desires for another world."48 At times, his descriptions somewhat resemble Habermas's discussions of the illuminating power of aesthetic experience. Neither the aesthetic order of work nor the order of cultural experience operate in any sort of pure, separate way—as the kind of rigid thing that Honneth warns against. These aesthetic sensibilities intermix in messy ways in the lives of individuals, as well as within political movements.

In critiquing Habermas, then, Rancière should not be read as taking such a rigid position. Instead he might suggest that within a shared lifeworld, different, opposed ways of making sense of the speech situation, which have an aesthetic character, come into conflict in political disagreement. His use of the word "reconfiguring" gestures in this direction.49 Perhaps it is this dynamic within the lifeworld that Habermas cannot capture. As Steven Corcoran puts it, explaining Rancière's critique, Habermas wrongly "presupposes precisely that the existence of the interlocuters is pre-established, their identity and interests discerned."50 Rancière believes that the nature and existence of those engaged in disputes is precisely what is under dispute. Disagreement in politics, he thinks, is about the aesthetic presuppositions of the interlocuters. This implies that Rancière conceives two regimes of sense that come into conflict within a lifeworld, one that presupposes an egalitarian speech situation and one that denies it. The latter does not accept the competence and capability of some individuals or groups. Aesthetic demonstration is the key to contesting this state of affairs and reconfiguring the interests, identities, and context involved in the dispute. Perhaps appeals to communicative rationality make such discussions and demonstrations impossible by locking identities and interests in place.

If Rancière is making this criticism, though, then it is even less clear why Habermasians should abandon their approach. Habermas does not assume predefined identities and interests for those who communicate. These elements of social life are explicitly considered matters of political dispute; communicative discourse is supposed to enable reflection and critique about these matters, as well as radical changes to them. In Habermas's treatments of these issues, he speaks of the articulation, construction, reinterpretation, and transformation of identities and interests in politics. For instance, he describes feminism as aiming to change "the relationship between the sexes along with the collective identity of women, thereby directly affecting men's understanding of themselves as well."51 He suggests its success would mean transfiguring overall social, as well as personal, values. Habermas also says nothing to deny that these processes can involve aesthetic forms of expression.

In general, though, Habermas will reject against any contention that partitions of the perceptible, identities, interests, and reconfigurations of them cannot be subject to intersubjective validation in discourse. He will push back against suggestions that these ways of making sense are not subject to discursive legitimation and challenge, insofar as Rancière or his supporters take such a stance. When Rancière discusses these cases, though, he seems to be suggesting a fusion of discursive validity claims and aesthetic, rhetorical impacts that reconfigure how we see the world. He says, for instance, that "the 'poetic' is not opposed here to argument."[52] The force of argument cannot be left out of the treatment of these cases, then. While Rancière's view of the relation between aesthetics and discourse differs from Habermas's, his arguments and examples do not provide reasons for Habermasians to abandon discourse theoretic frameworks.

Habermas on Consensus

Habermas does, however, utilize consensus in his theory as the goal of communicative action, which leads some to think that oppositional, aesthetically-charged political action of the sort in Rancière's work has no place in Habermas's conception of politics. Rancière emphasizes cases where dissensus leads to a radical rejection of the status quo, while "consensus consists, then, in the reduction of politics to the police."[53] Consensus, on this view, would be a social order without remainder—a static, rigid framework constraining everyday life. Such a situation would eliminate the political resistance at the heart of Rancière's thought. As I have indicated, Habermas's conception of politics is far from such a stultified picture of things. He does defend democratic constitutionalism and public justification, but these commitments support a great deal of just the sort of political upheaval Rancière emphasizes. In his theory, discourse—including aesthetic expression in politics—gains its significance from being part of attempts to act and coordinate action in the world. For Habermas, these attempts may often fail, but raucous political action is understood as part of a process of democratic consensus formation. Aiming at consensus does not preclude disagreement—democratic discourse may often begin with clarifying disagreement and fighting against the exclusion of some from political life. Habermasian communicative rationality, even in its orientation toward consensus, is far more flexible than this critique suggests.

Nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether Habermas is offering an all-things-considered, workable theory of aesthetics. There is certainly room for debate about whether Habermas's approach to aesthetic theory constitutes an adequate treatment of these issues—and many have raised questions on that count.[54] Whether he can resolve difficult questions about art and aesthetic experience's relation to everyday life, rationality, and politics ought to be the subject of ongoing discussion. Theorists influenced by Habermas will continue to offer amendments to and extensions of his theory of communicative action in an attempt to adequately capture matters of aesthetics. While those issues

cannot be fully settled here, the question of whether Rancière's attack on Habermas's aesthetics succeeds can be. The distinctions and commitments in Habermas's theory to which Rancière points do not prevent Habermas from capturing the sort of cases Rancière explores in his work.

Conclusion

Even if Habermasians should not ignore Rancière's approach to political action, I have argued that his critique does not undermine Habermas's political philosophy, nor does it strike at the heart of Habermas's conception of democratic politics. Habermasians should not abandon discourse democracy in response to Rancière's objections related to third-person speech, understanding, and aesthetics. A closer reading of Habermas's views, which I have provided here, reveals that these objections fail.

In conclusion, I want to note some of the reasons why—despite the richness of Rancière's work and his strongly held democratic commitments— Habermasians and other Frankfurt School theorists have reason to resist the core of Rancière's approach. By sketching these concerns, I do not intend to deny that there are philosophical and methodological disputes worth having between these parties. I do, however, hope to gesture at some of the elements of Rancière's work Habermasians are likely to push back against or reject.

In particular, the abstract, negative approach to actually existing institutions in Rancière's thought stands fundamentally opposed to Habermasian commitments. Rancière's avoidance of exploring what sort of positive social and political order we ought to pursue is compounded by an evasion of systematic investigation of the normative grounds of critique, focusing instead on a description of politics.

The abstract orientation of Rancière's work resists making the kind of concrete judgments about normative orders that critical theorists have long strived to make. Rancière acknowledges the fact that the differences between various forms of what he calls the "police" matter, noting "the police can procure all sorts of good, and one police may be infinitely preferable to another."[55] Nonetheless, his conceptual framing considers decent and good social orders to still fall within the police category, meaning that he views them as fundamentally opposed to politics. This stance is part of what prompts Honneth's previously discussed critique that Rancière's depiction of social and political orders makes them appear overly fixed and closed off.[56] Even if Rancière acknowledges the importance of distinctions between police, he does not offer a full-fledged theoretical analysis of these distinctions. This focus is in response to what he sees as social and philosophical trends that ignore and undermine his conception of politics. Nonetheless, James Ingram, summarizing the critiques of Jodi Dean, Anita Chari, and Lois McNay, suggests that "by restricting politics to the disruption of other social spheres and logics while refusing to engage with their substance and specificity, Rancière is left with little critical purchase on society—or for that matter on politics."[57] The

lack of an analysis of the manifold possibilities for such police orders means that important aspects of political action, including its aims with respect to the social order, will elude Rancière's theoretical approach. Unlike Habermas, Rancière will offer no picture of or commitment to democratic political institutions, which are ruled out as a contradiction in terms from the start.

An element of this gap that will be especially concerning to Frankfurt School theorists like Habermas is Rancière's avoidance of social science and social theory in his work, dismissing reliance on it as metapolitics. He objects to Marx and others for viewing politics as a kind of falsity that obscures the genuine social reality "beneath or behind it."[58] In part to avoid the potential reductionism of such approaches, Rancière expresses a suspiciousness of social scientific analysis that threatens to usurp the voice of political actors. Engagement with and production of such social theory and knowledge has long been a feature of Frankfurt School theory, including Habermas's work. While the worries Rancière has about concealing genuine politics are well founded, those within the Frankfurt School tradition will view him as neglecting the generative, crucial role of social science in thinking about politics. Gaining a picture of "the political" in general does not offer the resources necessary to understand whether those who are subordinated are positioned to undertake political action. As Lois McNay argues:

> Political agency is not a capacity that is evenly distributed across all subordinated groups. In fact, by failing to take up the issue of power in a more nuanced way, Ranciere's all-or-nothing logic perpetuates the powerlessness of the disempowered by confining them to perpetual marginality.[59]

McNay is pointing out that social knowledge is crucial for getting a grip on various social positions, including marginalized ones, and asking what obstacles might restrict political action. As she rightly points out, Rancière's reticence about such social analysis is not just meant to resist reductionism, but comes from a cautiousness about replacing the voices of the dominated with the voices of the theorist or the social scientist. He does not want to speak on behalf of others, treating them as unequal. But McNay rightly emphasizes that it is possible to speak *about* someone else without claiming to condescendingly speak *for* them, even if one must be vigilant against sliding into the latter mode. Rancière ignores this distinction and denies himself resources Habermas and many others find crucial in their approach to politics and society. While Habermasians and others would do well to heed Rancière's caution in this regard, Rancière's overly zealous application of this caution undermines the overall power of his view.

Within the broadly Habermasian critical theoretic paradigm, there is a great deal of room for disagreement about what sort of positive political order we ought to pursue, as well as how we ought to normatively and theoretically ground such institutional claims. Discussions between Habermas and thinkers

like Axel Honneth, Nancy Fraser, Rainer Forst, and many others working within the Frankfurt School paradigm exemplify the ongoing debates about these matters. Amongst these thinkers, there have been many important objections, amendments, and reimaginings of the sort of approach that Habermas pioneered. Rancière's approach forecloses much of this discourse without offering an attractive alternative by the lights of most of those influenced by Habermas or working within the Frankfurt School tradition.

The differing starting points of Rancière and those in the Frankfurt School can make it hard to find common theoretical ground, despite sharing strong commitments to democracy and equality. If Rancière's objections were sufficient to undermine Habermas, then those working within the discourse theory of democracy would have reason to rethink their theoretical foundations and consider taking up a view like Rancière's. As I have argued, however, Rancière's criticisms miss the mark. Not only that, but Rancière constrains himself in ways that raise concerns about his approach. Nonetheless, his attention to aesthetic issues in politics, his devotion to equality, and his scrutiny of exclusionary social orders offer important examples for other theorists to draw on. Habermasians and others would do well to more carefully consider the kinds of cases that Rancière is most sensitive to. While these elements of his view and others are worthy of careful attention, he has failed to give Habermasians a reason to abandon the body of work they have developed and adopt his theories instead. To do so, I have suggested, would be a serious mistake.

1 "Both reject the pessimistic diagnosis that proclaims in the name of critical theory the ubiquity of domination and instead affirm the capacity of everyday speech and action to effect emancipatory social change. Both theorize a democratic politics that is grounded in the presupposition of the equality of humans as speaking beings and that consists in a procedure of argumentation and demonstration." Matheson Russell

and Andrew Montin, "The Rationality of Political Disagreement: Rancière's Critique of Habermas," *Constellations* 22 (2015): 543.

2 Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 8.

3 Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 11.

4 Jürgen Habermas, "Actions, Speech Acts, Linguistically Mediated Interactions, and the Lifeworld," in *On the Pragmatics of Communication* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 232.

5 Note that the force of this point is about *perspective*, not grammar, as Rancière seems to interpret it.

6 Habermas, "Actions, Speech Acts, Linguistically Mediated Interactions, and the Lifeworld," 240.

7 Habermas, "Actions, Speech Acts, Linguistically Mediated Interactions, and the Lifeworld," 241.

8 Jürgen Habermas, "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure," in *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 475.

9 Habermas, "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure," 482.

10 Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 43.

11 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 29.

12 Jacques Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics" in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 36.

13 Rancière challenges these conceptions of competence to rule in his historical theorizing, found in books like *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) and *Proletarian Nights* (New York: Verso, 2012). In these investigations of examples of radical pedagogy and labor organizing, Rancière finds cases from the past that challenge police logic and provide source material for his own conception of political action.

14 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 55.

15 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 42.

16 For the pedagogue, see *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* and for the female candidate, see *Disagreement*, 41. *Proletarian Nights* also presents various forms of political dis-identification and resistance.

17 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 44.

18 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 46–47.

19 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 50.

20 For a discussion of this element of disagreement, see Matheson Russell, "The Politics of the Third Person: Esposito's *Third Person* and Rancière's *Disagreement*," *Critical Horizons* 15 (2014): 226.

21 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 47.

22 Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 299.

23 Even Habermas's ideal speech situation is immanent in the sense that it is pragmatically presupposed within our communicative practices. This ideal is not external to the lifeworld and its historically situated commitments, but is a counterfactual assumption that is implicitly made by those engaged in everyday communication—a critical resource generated by our activity.

24 Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 300.

25 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 45.

26 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 45.

27 Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," 35–36.

28 Russell and Montin, "The Rationality of Political Disagreement," 546.

29 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 45.

30 See Jürgen Habermas, "Civil Disobedience: Litmus Test for the Democratic Constitutional State," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 30 (1985): 95–116. For further helpful commentary, see Steven Klein, "Against Civility, or Why Habermas Recommends a Wild Public Sphere," https://aeon.co/ideas/against-civility-or-why-habermas-recommends-a-wild-public-sphere.

31 Habermas, "Civil disobedience," 104.

32 See Jürgen Habermas, "Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State," in *The Inclusion of the Other* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 203–236.

33 For discussion of such institutions, see Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*; and "Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research," *Communication Theory* 16, no. 4 (2006): 411–426.

34 For an example of Rancière making such comments, see Davide Panagia and Jacques Rancière, "Dissenting Words: A Conversation with Jacques Rancière," *Diacritics* 30 (2000): 114–116.

35 Russell and Montin offer a reading that gestures in the direction I am suggesting, as well. See their "The Rationality of Political Disagreement," 550–551.

36 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 58.

37 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 50.

38 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 56.

39 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 55–56.

40 Thomas McCarthy, "Introduction," in Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), xiii.

41 Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 209.

42 Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 206.

43 Jürgen Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," in *Habermas and Modernity*, ed. by Richard Bernstein (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 202.

44 Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," 203.

45 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 57.

46 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 42.

47 Axel Honneth, "Comments on the Philosophical Approach of Jacques Rancière," in *Recognition or Disagreement*, eds. Katia Genel and Jean-Philippe Deranty (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 104.

48 Rancière, *Proletarian Nights*, 20.

49 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 55.

50 Steven Corcoran, "Editor's Introduction" in Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 8.

51 Habermas, "Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State," 211.

52 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 59.

53 Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," 42.

54 For a thorough, enlightening discussion of the development and validity of Habermas's discussions on aesthetics, see David Ingram, "Habermas on Aesthetics and Rationality: Completing the Project of Enlightenment," *New German Critique* 53 (1991): 67–103.

55 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 31.

56 Honneth, "Comments on the Philosophical Approach of Jacques Rancière," 104.

57 James Ingram, "The Point of the Lesson: On Samuel Chambers's *The Lessons of Rancière*," *Syndicate* 2016. https://syndicate.network/symposia/philosophy/lessons-of-ranciere/. See also Albrecht Wellmer, "On Critical Theory," *Social Research* 81 (2014): 714-717.

58 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 82.

59 Lois McNay, *The Misguided Search for the Political* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2014), 162.