The Politics and Aesthetics of Creative Music:
A Rancièrian Encounter with the AACM

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Abstract

Jacques Rancière is a thinker whose work has, over the past half-century, exerted increasing influence on wide range of discourses, including those of pedagogy, politics, literature, cinema and curatorship. This thesis comprises the lengthiest and most thorough treatment of his thought to date in a growing body of musicological work following his thought. Despite the breadth of Rancière's oeuvre, music is a subject upon which he has rarely alighted, and his work in other fields provides no obviously applicable method for its study. In order to follow his work onto a novel territory, this thesis examines the model of equality at the centre of his thought, and his main conceptual frameworks and their relevance to the study of music. Principal among these are his 'distributions of the sensible' and their manifestations in the binary of politics and police logics and the regimes of the identification of art. In extrapolating the consequences of Rancière's equality and the specific polemical interventions to which he puts it, the implications for the musicological disciplinarity of his method is reflected upon. The methods and approaches developed by such study of Rancière's work are then turned to study of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians [AACM], a musicians' organisation formed in Chicago in 1965. The AACM's rooting in a politics of Blackness necessitates a critical appraisal of Rancière's formulations of politics, which have often been considered antagonistic to politics rooted in conceptions of identity. The AACM is studied through the interrelation of the aesthetics of its politics and the politics of its aesthetics, deploying Rancière's problematic to articulate the various registers on which they are linked. In so doing, this study renews and revises Rancière's conceptual apparatuses and evinces the complexity of aesthetico-political entanglements in the Black music-making of the AACM.

Dedications

To my dearly missed friends, Simon Christopher Morris and Gary Robert Kelly, with each of whom I shared many happy hours talking about music, about which both were incredibly knowledgeable and endlessly curious.

To my beautiful, bright and beloved children, Keir James Arnot and Rae Zazie Arnot, whose arrivals have so enriched the period of my studies.

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Introduction: Conceiving Rancièrian Musicologies

To those familiar with his oeuvre, Jacques Rancière might seem an odd choice of interlocutor for a study of music, and particularly of the music of an organisation such as the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), making jazz-identified music in a political context removed from those on which he has focused. The years since work was started on this project have seen a manifold increase in the volume of secondary literature dealing with music and Rancière's thought, principally the edited collection *Rancière and Music* and subsequent monographs from two contributors to that collection, Dan DiPiero's *Contingent Encounters* and Patrick Nickleson's *The Names of Minimalism*.[1] It remains, though, the case that Rancière is a thinker who, for the last fifty years, has written on topics across a broad range of disciplinary fields, including philosophy, politics, history, pedagogy, film, theatre, literature and the visual arts while only rarely alighting upon music for discussion. When it does so, it is most often in passing, when used by way of metaphor by one of his interlocutors, or to expand upon a point concerning film, literature or the visual arts. In one of his rare excursions into music, Rancière refers to "mystical oceans of sound, blessed in the name of Bachelard, Stockhausen or Sun Ra", beyond which there is no reference to any music comparable to that of the AACM.[2]

In order to effectively utilise his writings in musicological work, it is, then, necessary to consider several questions. Does the avoidance of music in a writer of such broad scope signal an incompatibility between the broadest scheme of his thought or method and music as an object of study? If not, which of his writings might be relevant to musicological study, and where and how can their transposition be effected? How does Rancière's thought in particular lend itself to a study of the 'creative music' of the AACM?

Prior to these questions, another presents itself. *Why* follow Rancière's thought to study the 'creative music' of the AACM? For a project in which object and method seem heterogeneous, some explanation of the inspirations behind it and the decisions made in shaping its form seems necessary. The genesis of this project was a reading of *The Emancipated Spectator*, in which the following paragraph stood out:

> 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. It begins when

[1] *Rancière and Music*, ed. by João Pedro Cachopo, Patrick Nickleson, Chris Stover (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); Dan DiPiero, *Contingent Encounters: Improvisation in Music and Everyday Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022); Patrick Nickleson, *The Names of Minimalism: Authorship, Art Music and Historiography in Dispute* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2023).

[2] Jacques Rancière, 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', in *Sonic Process*, ed. by Mela Dávila (Barcelona: Actar, 2002), pp. 17 – 30 (p. 29).

> we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions. The spectator also acts, like the pupil or scholar. She observes, selects, compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of place. She composes her own poem with the elements of the poem before her. She participates in the performance by refashioning it in her own way - by drawing back for example, from the vital energy that it is supposed to transmit in order to make it a pure image and associate this image with a story which she has read or dreamt, experienced or invented. They are thus both distant spectators and active interpreters of the spectacle offered to them.[3]

What *The Emancipated Spectator* as a whole, and this extract in particular, did, was to counteract an anxiety about engagement with improvised music, as both performer and listener, that had been growing in me. This anxiety concerned a feeling that, despite taking a great deal of pleasure and sustenance from performing and listening to improvised music, I was not doing either thing *correctly*, a feeling confirmed by my reading of material from a variety of discourses around a variety of musics, and improvised music in particular. *The Emancipated Spectator* directly contradicted a great deal of the discourse that I had read, and seemed, too, to offer a prompt to a counter-discourse that would celebrate the community of improvisation as one in which the freedom and equality that were often given primacy in those discourses exceeded the various circumscriptions of its theorists. It would state that improvised music's vitality was not a result of its immediate communication between players, and between players and audience, but of an equality in which all participants were free to make their own meaning from a musical object of which nobody could claim ownership.

This is not that project. As I sought to extend my knowledge of Rancière's work, in order to think of this conception of a community of equals in more nuanced terms, I did not find that which I had been anticipating. Firstly, on encountering his conception of 'regimes of the identification of art', I realised that I could not justify the universalisation of my understanding of this community of improvised music. Rather, my conception, while seeming to contradict the models in the literature in which I had been immersed, was itself dependent upon an understanding of music, and art, that was historically contingent.

Dan DiPiero's contribution to *Rancière and Music*, entitled 'Rancière and Improvisation', touches on this point.[4] He notes that "there can only be politics of specific improvised practices" and that "improvisation emerges in and through contingent social relations and material mediations", asserting that "understanding anything about the politics of an improvisation would involve tracing such interactions as constitutive elements of how the music emerges".[5] In his justly influential survey of improvising practices, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music*, Derek Bailey

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[3] Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. by Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009), p. 13.
[4] Dan DiPiero, 'Rancière and Improvisation' in *Rancière and Music*, pp. 207 – 229.
[5] Ibid, p. 209.

states that freely-improvised music "pre-dates any other music", that "mankind's first musical performance couldn't have been anything other than a free improvisation" and that "it is a reasonable speculation that at most times since then there will have been some music-making most aptly described as free improvisation".[6] What Rancière offered in response was that the understanding of what makes music is not transcendent, so the playing and listening of Bailey's pre-historical improvisers was in no way comparable to that conducted today. Any conception of a community of improvisation would have to be understood in its historical and geographical context.

As I delved further into Rancière's oeuvre, into the writing on politics that produced the 'distributions of the sensible' of which the regimes of art were an iteration, I further reconsidered my conception. It seemed that the bond between politics and aesthetics that emerged from the combination of Rancière's writing on politics and art could account for much more than the idea from which I had started. The discourses around improvisation were not reticent in providing a political context or political purpose for musical improvisation. What the texts, mostly written by practitioner-theorists, tended to do, however, was to extrapolate from their own scene of improvisation and their own experience of it a universal object of improvised music and a prescription for its correct assembly and interpretation.[7] Rather than offer and elaborate on yet another counter-conception of the community of improvisation, it seemed more in keeping with my developing appreciation of Rancière's conceptual apparatus to look at individual scenes of improvising practice, to examine the particular relationships between politics and aesthetics there.

To do so would be to follow the model most explicitly adopted by Rancière in *Aisthesis*, a survey of fourteen scenes of art of the aesthetic regime, each of which "presents a singular event, and explores the interpretive network that gives it meaning around an emblematic text".[8] It would also be to follow certain texts on improvisation, namely Bailey's aforementioned book and David Toop's *Into the Maelstrom*, each of which surveys a wide range of improvised musics and improvising musicians.[9] To do this in a Rancièrian mode, it seemed, would be a worthwhile endeavour, examining practices with respect to the specific relationship between aesthetics and politics that could characterise them, from the egalitarian position emblematised by the previously articulated conceptual model of improvisational community.

This approach encountered another problem, though. While it may be the case that, as Bailey attests, improvisation is "present in almost every area of music", I had little doubt that the

[6] Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music* (London: British Library National Sound Archive, 1992), p. 83.
[7] An early exemplar of this tendency is Cornelius Cardew's 'Towards an Ethic of Improvisation', first published in Cornelius Cardew, *Treatise Handbook* (London: Edition Peters, 1971), pp. xvii – xxi.
[8] Jacques Rancière, *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art*, trans. by Zakir Paul (London: Verso, 2013), p. xi.
[9] David Toop, *Into the Maelstrom: Music, Improvisation and the Dream of Freedom* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

practices of improvised music in which I was interested were those whose derivation could be attributed, at least in part, to the Bebop and free iterations of jazz-identified music.[10] Any investigation of the registers of politics present in these musics and their discourses could not, then, avoid discussion of the politics of race. This provoked unease for two principal reasons. The first of these concerned Rancière's attitude towards politics of identity. While he has written convincingly in opposition to racism and the institutional operations that provoke, sustain and disseminate it, his own writing on politics expressly addresses the politics of economic class in Europe, and he has taken a dismissive attitude toward politics of identity when asked to address the topic.[11] My own reading of his work on politics suggested that there was a place to consider such iterations of politics in his conceptual framework, a position confirmed by Samuel Chambers' queer reading of Rancière in *The Lessons of Rancière*.[12] The second issue with the discussion of Black politics in a Rancièrian framework was an anxiety about submitting African American music and discourse to the interpretation of a white European thinker: that the implication of effecting such an interpretation is that white European thought is required to explain African American thought and practice.

By this point in the construction of this thesis, I had decided that the music of the AACM was a strong candidate for examination, for numerous reasons. One was George Lewis's history of the organisation, *A Power Stronger than Itself*, one of the finest pieces of musicological writing I have read, and one giving ample material for the kind of analysis that would follow from the adoption of a Rancièrian method.[13]

Another reason was the prominence of the AACM in Jairo Moreno and Gavin Steingo's 'Rancière's Equal Music', among the earliest attempts to consider music in a Rancièrian framework.[14] In the article, Moreno and Steingo suggest a division of musical practices into three categories, ethical, poetic and political music, considering AACM practices within their discussion of 'ethical music'. If I ultimately disagree with the conclusions of Moreno and Steingo on the possibilities of Rancière's work for the study of music and on how his writing might relate to the practices of the AACM in particular, their article was no less thought-provoking for it, and I examine it in detail in Chapter Eight of the current study.

A third reason concerned the relation of AACM practices to other jazz-identified practices. While there is huge variation between AACM musicians in approaches to music, and the sounds they produce, they share a distance from contemporaneous practices that leaves them irreducible

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[10] Bailey, p. ix.
[11] See in particular Jacques Rancière, 'Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization', *October*, 61 (1992), 58 – 64.
[12] Samuel A. Chambers, *The Lessons of Rancière* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[13] George E. Lewis, *A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).
[14] Jairo Moreno and Gavin Steingo, 'Rancière's Equal Music', *Contemporary Music Review*, 31 (2012), 487 – 505.

to notions such as 'free jazz', 'free improvisation' or 'the New Thing'. The organisation's replacement for these terms, 'creative music', incorporates approaches to composition as well as improvisation and a novel understanding of the relationship between the two. The absence of a clearly defined place for improvisation within their practices would mean turning away from the community of improvisation as the definitive object of my thesis. But this, it seemed, was a necessary consequence of turning away from a conceptual ideal of improvisation and towards scenes in which improvisation takes place. The AACM, in its attachment to this idea of 'creative music', as well as in the particularities of its foundation and in the music produced by its membership seemed to constitute a 'historical singularity' of the type that Rancière selects for examination. His reasons for doing so reflect the emphasis on equality in his work and its possibilities in opposition to discourses that deny such equality:

> Historical singularities are never disciplines. They are always ways of breaking the order of discipline, the distribution of territories, the systems of authorization and interdiction weighing on objects of thought.[15]

This singularity also relates to my own experience of the AACM's music and, in particular, the impact of my first exposure to that music. This experience, it seemed to me, could be related to Rancière's distributions of the sensible. In *Art, Politics and Rancière*, Tina Chanter articulates how changes in distributions of the sensible amount to an aggregate of changes in patterns of thinking among a group of people, and can therefore be considered on an individual level:

> A flick of a switch is all it takes. After which, nothing will ever be quite the same again. And yet, even if it is not the same as before, it too will become habitual, it will come to constitute part of the commonsensical way of seeing things.[16]

Around two decades ago, as an undergraduate student with a voracious ear, I had chanced to purchase The Muhal Richard Abrams Orchestra's *Rejoicing with the Light* LP.[17] I was, by that time, somewhat familiar with 'free jazz', with a particular fondness for the work of Ornette Coleman. I had not, though, encountered anything like *Rejoicing with the Light.* Around a minute and a half into 'The Heart Is Love And "I Am"', the first piece on the record, the tension held by dramatic horns and a variety of percussion, already quite unlike anything I was expecting, falls away, and is replaced by an operatic soprano, whose largely unaccompanied vocal line somehow echoes and complicates that tension. This was not free jazz. It was not exactly reminiscent of the 20th century European

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[15] Jacques Rancière, 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination: An Interview with Frank Ruda & Jan Voelker', trans. by Jason E. Smith, in Jason E. Smith, Annette Weisser (eds.) *Everything is in Everything: Jacques Rancière Between Intellectual Emancipation and Aesthetic Education* (Pasadena: Art Center Graduate Press, 2011), pp. 10 – 33 (p. 23).
[16] Tina Chanter, *Art, Politics and Rancière* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), p. viii.
[17] The Muhal Richard Abrams Orchestra, *Rejoicing with the Light* LP (Black Saint BSR 0071, 1983).

classical music with which I was grappling via the university's music library either. I do not think that it would be an exaggeration to describe my first listening to *Rejoicing with the Light* as, in Chanter's words, a "flick of the switch … [a]fter which, nothing [was] ever quite the same again".[18] While Rancière reflects that his "personal tastes have no bearing on the choice of these episodes" that he studies in *Aisthesis*, the tenor of much of his work, particularly on cinema, demonstrates that personal regard for particular artists is no barrier to their study while following his example.[19]

Consideration of Rancière's texts and those written by members of the AACM eventually assured me that, with this European writer and this African American scene of music-making in particular, it would be possible to proceed, *carefully*, with an investigation. Not only that, but turning away from the project towards 'safer' terrain would constitute a denial of the importance of the AACM and a denegation of an important facet of Lewis' writing. In the preface to *A Power Stronger than Itself*, Lewis positions his writing practice in opposition to "chroniclers of an ethnically bound and ultimately limited tradition that appropriates freely, yet furtively, from other ethnic traditions, yet cannot recognize any histories as its own other than those based in whiteness".[20] A refusal to write about Black music, even due to qualms about propriety, would place me firmly on the side opposed by Lewis, and more especially so if I were to write about recent or contemporary improvised music without reference to Black practice.

The use of Black creativity by white Europeans and European Americans is written about in some detail by Anthony Braxton, a colleague of Lewis in the AACM. His position demonstrates the care that would need to be taken in undertaking the proposed endeavour:

> [W]estern culture has long utilized black creativity as a lever to invoke some aspect of its own desires – either with respect to spiritualism, sexuality, rebellion or to get individually or collectively rich. But, in every case, there has been no attempt by the western establishment to view black creativity, and/or its related information, on its own terms.[21]

It seemed to me that, despite the previously noted hostility to politics of identity locatable in some of his writings, Rancière's method is better placed than those of most European or European-American writers to approach such an investigation. I felt that the method in which the scene is "the 'object' that teaches us how to talk about it, how to deal with it", ought to prevent the music of the AACM being used as a 'lever', and ensure that its creativity is, indeed, viewed 'on its own terms'.[22] As James Swenson points out in an article on Rancière's style, the latter "almost

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[18] Chanter, p. viii.
[19] Jacques Rancière, 'A Distant Sound' in *Rancière and Music*, ed. by João Pedro Cachopo, Patrick Nickleson, Chris Stover (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 353 – 365 (p. 353).
[20] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. xiii.
[21] Anthony Braxton, *Tri-Axium Writings 3* ([n.p.]: Synthesis Music, 1985), pp. 289 – 290.
[22] Jacques Rancière, Laurent Jeanpierre, Dork Zabunyan, *The Method of Equality: Interviews with Laurent Jeanpierre and Dork Zabunyan*, trans. by Julie Rose (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), p. 67.

never says that such-and-such a statement is wrong, and that the truth is something else" and neither does he say "that if so-and-so says one thing, what he really means is something else".[23] Following Rancière's method then became a way to honour Lewis's intentions while looking at the organisation of which he is a member and to which his own book had been devoted, without arguing against his method or undermining the testimony of his interviewees.

In undertaking this investigation, it became apparent that the discourses around the AACM would provide ample material for the organisation to constitute the only case study of this project. Indeed, I realised that to curtail the exploration in order to accommodate other scenes of musical production would be to do a disservice to the complexities of the multitudinous relationships between politics and aesthetics running through it.

Prior to outlining why a Rancièrian method had been used to write about the AACM, several questions were raised as to *how* such an investigation might proceed. These concern issues of compatibility between a writer who has largely avoided discussing music and the study of music, and how methods might be developed to consider music, and the 'creative music' of the AACM in particular. These questions find some correspondence in Rancière's own analysis of the difficulty of following his thought to write about music. Despite his apparent avoidance of the topic, the body of literature utilising his thought to discuss musicological issues is growing, and is now much larger than at the inception of this project in 2016. In particular, the 2020 publication of *Rancière and Music* alters the landscape of Rancièrian discourse on music to such an extent that, had it occurred earlier in this research, the current study would surely have taken a different form. Rancière's analysis of using his thought to write about music appears in 'A Distant Sound', the afterword he provides for *Rancière and Music*. In acknowledging the challenge of following an author under such circumstances, he finds in that challenge two interlinked operations: "showing by example that their problematic finds in this domain a privileged application" and "analysing the reasons why the author has not proceeded on his own behalf in this application".[24] As well as commenting on contributors' responses to the former, Rancière responds directly to the second of these 'operations'. This response will be analysed in the third chapter, in investigating issues of compatibility between Rancière's thought and the study of music.

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[23] James Swenson, 'Style Indirect Libre' in Gabriel Rockhill, Philip Watts (eds.), *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics* (Durham, NH: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 258 - 272 (p. 264).
[24] 'A Distant Sound', p. 353. Translation modified. In Rancière's unpublished French manuscript, the text reads as follows: "…montrer par l'exemple que sa problématique trouve dans ce domaine une application privilégiée, analyser les raisons pour lesquelles l'auteur n'a pas procédé lui-même à cette application." Prior to the publication of the text in English, I had rendered "sa problématique" as 'their problematic', while the English translator has chosen 'its problematic'. While it is ambiguous, it remains my opinion, following consultation with an eminent Francophone scholar of Rancière, that 'his' or 'their' is more likely accurate here.

To fully answer the questions raised it is incumbent to consider the breadth of Rancière's published thought, examining most closely the areas that seem to pertain to the questions at hand, and reflecting particularly those few times when he does write about music. Constructing a method for utilising his thought along these lines ensures that the trajectory of thought across Rancière's oeuvre, including his own implicit and explicit corrections, refinements and clarifications, is taken into account.

Most important is to assert what underlies Rancière's work. He denies the normative grounding of ontology, preferring a language of maxims, axioms and attitudes.[25] In the end, he is able to reduce his practice as a researcher to a simple statement, "I'm betting on equality".[26] Rancière's equality exists on various registers, and takes different forms; his 'bet' on equality "means a lot of things at once".[27] To trace the threads of Rancière's thought is to trace the development of his thinking on and application of equality. To construct Rancièrian musicologies is to develop ways in which to write about music through these forms and applications of equality at different registers. This is the first task of the current project. The various contributions to *Rancière and Music*, as well as Dan DiPiero and Patrick Nickleson's monographs, provide a multitude of approaches to the development of Rancièrian musicologies, but the developmental approach of the current study, undertaken prior to their publication, maintains its relevance even in the changed discursive landscape in which it appears.

This task is conducted across its opening four chapters. The first of these deals with the development of Rancière's axiomatic equality, the attitudinal tenor that results in his work, and what this means for reading and following his work. The second and third chapters focus on Rancière's primary conceptual apparatus, 'distributions of the sensible', its iterations in his writing on politics and art, and music's places as and within such distributions. In the final chapter of this part, Rancière's attitude to academic discipline and his reflections on his own practice are studied to propose ways in which his thought can be followed to write about music, refining the method that is applied in the second part of the project.

In that second part, the specific investigation of the AACM is undertaken. The fifth chapter of the project gives an overview of the constitution and activities of the AACM and outlines its suitability for such investigation. In the sixth chapter, the intersection of politics of race and Rancière's political conceptions is explored, developing an understanding that is utilised in the seventh and eighth chapters, which deal with the politics and art of the AACM respectively.

[25] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, pp. 89-90.
[26] Ibid., p. 90.
[27] Ibid.

Chapter One: Equality from the Barricades to the Gallery

In this chapter, the beginnings of Rancière's project following his break from his mentor Louis Althusser will be traced, focussing on the figure of equality, and examining certain of its facets as they pertain to Rancière's archival work and his work on pedagogy and the spaces of contemporary art and theatre. From these explorations, maxims are drawn on how texts encountered might be appropriately dealt with while following Rancière's work, and the style he adopts is investigated with regard to both reading his work, and writing while following his thought. Possibilities for musicological enquiry following the texts encountered in this chapter are explored.

1.1 '68 and the Critique of Mastery

> Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice. We have repeated this sentence over and over again, thinking it might set our minds at ease. But now we must heed the lesson taught by the Cultural Revolution and the ideological revolt of the students: cut off from revolutionary practice, there is no revolutionary theory that is not transformed into its opposite.[1]

So concludes Jacques Rancière's 'On the Theory of Ideology: Althusser's Politics', with which he definitively announced his break with his former teacher and mentor, Louis Althusser. Written in 1969, the article has its roots in the events of May '68 in France, the revolt of students and workers against Gaullism, American imperialism and capitalism more broadly. Those events led Rancière to question the model of revolutionary theory and practice, and Althusser's position as official philosopher of the Parti Communiste Français [PCF]. In particular, Rancière turned against the distance between Althusser and the workers and students on the barricades necessitated by the process whereby his 'class struggle in theory' would be communicated to the PCF and approved (or not) by the party, who would then instruct their cadres on that struggle in practice. The events of May '68 led Rancière to realise "that Althusser stood for a certain power of the professor, the professor of Marxism who was so distant from what we had seen taking place in the student and other social movements that it was almost laughable".[2]

May '68 had many profound impacts on almost all aspects of French life, particularly in Paris. Its contested 'afterlives', following Rancièrian scholar Kristin Ross, continue to reverberate through French political and intellectual discourse.[3] Among its most immediate effects was the institution of the Université de Paris VIII/Vincennes on the first of January 1969. 'On the Theory

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[1] Jacques Rancière, *Althusser's Lesson*, trans. by Emiliano Battista (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 154.
[2] Jacques Rancière, Peter Hallward, 'Politics and Aesthetics: an Interview', trans. by Forbes Morlock, in Jacques Rancière, *Dissenting Words: Interviews with Jacques Rancière*, ed. and trans. by Emiliano Battista (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 115 – 140 (p. 117).
[3] See Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

of Ideology' was borne from a course Rancière taught there in the first semester of 1969. The course began as commentary on Marx's writing on ideology and developed into a reflection on the politics of Althusser and the split between Althusserians and anti-Althusserians within the university, and on the function of the university more broadly.[4]

Rancière developed and refined this critique into his first book, *La Leçon d'Althusser*, published in 1974 and ostensibly a response to Althusser's 1973 text 'Reply to John Lewis'. In it, he argues that Althusser's writings served to consolidate an order in which the latter held a privileged position, and that Althusser's arguments were those "of a 'communist philosopher' against that which threatens both the authority of his Party and of his philosophy: Cultural Revolution on a global scale; and students who contest the authority of knowledge on a local scale".[5] Through his attacks on Althusser, Rancière critiques two great distances: those between the authority of the master and the ignorance of his students and between revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice.

Critiques of such distances were to become a recurring theme of Rancière's oeuvre, and the attack on Althusser's presumption of authority is the first in a series of challenges to theorists whose writings place a distance between themselves and the people they write about or on whose behalf they presume to write. In *The Philosopher and his Poor* he critiques Plato, Marx, Sartre and Bourdieu for the distance that their theory explicitly or implicitly placed between themselves as thinkers and those that Rancière tends to refer to as 'the poor', but who are referred to variously as the plebs, the masses, the demos, the workers, common people or the proletariat in the works he addresses. Pivotal to his argument is the necessity of this distance in order for the writers' theories to function. This distance means they are not subject to the conditions experienced by the poor about whom or on whose behalf they presume to speak. He argues that this separation proposes an inequality, and that the proposition of the inequality serves to hide the real equality between people. This mode of critique is extended into contemporary debates about the 'end' of politics, the 'return' of political philosophy and the nature of democracy in *On the Shores of Politics* and *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*.[6] Underlying his interventions into these debates is his assertion that the necessary condition of politics is that "we are all equal",[7] and that the authors of 'political philosophy' invariably betray its contradiction: that to theorise political action is to prescribe political action, which is to undermine the equality that characterises 'politics' as opposed to other modes of societal organisation.

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[4] *Althusser's Lesson*, pp. 127 – 128.
[5] Ibid., p. 21.
[6] Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, trans. by Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1995); Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. by Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
[7] Gabriel Rockhill, 'Glossary of Technical Terms' in Jacques Rancière, Gabriel Rockhill (ed., trans.), *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp. 83 – 98 (p. 90).

His left critique of Bourdieu is renewed in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, wherein Rancière studies the writings of Joseph Jacotot, a 19th century French schoolteacher and pedagogical theorist.[8] *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* revives the thought of a neglected writer whose radical understanding of equality predicts and sharpens Rancière's own at a remove of a century and a half. It also functions as a critique of the Bourdieuian pedagogy influential in the policy-making of the Mitterrand government and as an allegory of the position of all writers who place themselves above their subjects and readership.

The singular position adopted by Rancière in relation to critical thought is not, itself, without critics. In summarising his difficulties with Rancière's thought, his peer Alain Badiou characterises Rancière's writing, his "doctrinal style", with a series of imperatives. Among these are: "Always situate yourself in the interval between discourses without opting for any of them"; and "deconstruct the postures of mastery without giving up the ironic mastery of whosoever catches the master out".[9] Badiou's performed misunderstanding of Rancière's position expresses his frustration with Rancière's project: that it can seem like a dead end, a closure of the possibilities of resisting hegemony through theory.

Without deferring to Badiou's critcisms, noting them can help to sharpen the focus on what it is that Rancière does, and thereafter how it might be possible to follow his work. Firstly, it must be accepted that Rancière rarely produces critical theory. A much larger proportion of his work is critical *of* theory. The theory that he does produce does not exist as a direct alternative to that which he criticises: it operates on an entirely different register. For example, in *Disagreement*, the book at which Badiou's critique is aimed, by dividing 'political philosophy' into archi-politics, para-politics and meta-politics Rancière produces a theoretical framework by which readers can understand the functioning of political theory. He does not 'opt for' a discourse because the purpose of his text is to understand the relationship between the discourses rather than to advocate for one or another. The second of Badiou's 'imperatives' mentioned above, to "deconstruct the postures of mastery without giving up the ironic mastery of whosoever catches the master out", while seemingly facetious, again provides an opportunity to clarify Rancière's position. Rancière does, indeed 'deconstruct the postures of mastery', insofar as those postures are reliant on the presumption of superiority over the people about whom the master-thinker is writing. Rancière's theory, where it exists, does not adopt the same posture, and so the 'ironic mastery' that Badiou attributes to him is not of the same type that Rancière deconstructs in others; it does not require his separation from anybody else in order to function. Indeed, Rancière rejects the position of mastery and is anxious that his work is not treated and applied as master-thought. The tone and register he adopts in the

[8] Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, trans. by Kristin Ross (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).
[9] Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. by Jason Barker (London: Verso, 2005), p. 107.

majority of his work is chosen, in part, to prevent this: "my mode of writing stops people from transforming it into another sort of mastery".[10] It is notable that the text Badiou is dealing with is *Disagreement*, which includes much more theorising than any of Rancière's other works. In addition to the three modes of 'political philosophy' mentioned above, it also introduces the *distribution of the sensible* and the binarism of *politics* and *police*, each of which are used in several of his following works: "When people only read *Disagreement*, it makes me anxious, because they're looking for a theory of politics they can apply".[11]

Rancière's rejection of the position of mastery presents something of a methodological problem. How should a writer's work be followed when they intentionally employ a mode of writing to prevent their thought being applied? Not only does Rancière fail to provide 'tools' for the use of anyone attempting to use his thought, he entirely denies the efficacy of any philosophical tool:

> A tool is supposed to serve anybody and everybody equally, and the tools of philosophy really only serve themselves: the perfect vacuity of so many writings that "use" "tools" left by Deleuze, Foucault, Althusser or Derrida teach us this every day.[12]

While Rancière is hostile to the use of his work as applicable theory, he is otherwise generously non-prescriptive as to the task of following his thought. Given the growing body of work on and influenced by his thought, it is unsurprising that he has been asked in interviews to address the issue of how one might follow him. When asked by Laurent Jeanpierre and Dork Zabunyan about "the question of constructing a set of practical maxims", Rancière summons the preface to his book *The Intervals of Cinema*, in which he discusses the Japanese film-maker Kenji Mizoguchi.[13] The preface ends with Rancière synopsizing Mizoguchi's *Sansho the Bailiff*, paying particular attention to the close of the film, and declaring that "all the gaps in cinema can be summed up by the film's closing panoramic shot".[14] The gaps, the 'intervals' of the book's title, are those between depiction and action and between art, life and politics. The 'duplicity' expected of cinema is "that it should raise awareness by the clarity of a disclosure and arouse energy by presenting an oddity, that it should reveal at the same time all the ambiguity of the world and how to deal with that ambiguity".[15] Rancière reads strategies for dealing with this duplicity in the films of a variety of directors, looking at how "[c]inema can illuminate action […] perhaps only by casting doubt on the obviousness of that relation [between vision and action]".[16] The concluding

[10] *The Method of Equality*, p. 102.
[11] Ibid.
[12] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 31.
[13] *The Method of Equality*, p. 89.
[14] Jacques Rancière, *The Intervals of Cinema*, trans. by John Howe (London: Verso, 2014), p. 15.
[15] Ibid., pp. 13 – 14.
[16] *The Intervals of Cinema*, p. 14.

panoramic shot in *Sansho the Bailiff* "signals a shift from the great battle for freedom we have been watching up to this point".[17] The shift, according to Rancière, carries a message for the viewer: "These are the limits of what I can do. The rest is up to you."[18]

If the analogy with Rancière's written practice is implicit in this preface, in *The Method of Equality* he wholeheartedly adopts it:

> I think that 'the rest is up to you' is an essential maxim in my work. That's just it – the description of a lived reality, a world, doesn't imply any consequences about what has to be done. All it implies is the question of what you would prefer to do based on the description offered.[19]

This attitude seems to both oppose and complement that of the writer anxious to not be taken as a master-thinker. Synthesis of these attitudes provides some more clarity as to how Rancière feels that his work can be followed. It is clear that Rancière has not conceived his work as applicable tools or formulae and that he believes that it ought not to be used as such, but that understanding every reader to be his equal, he does not presume any manner in which it might be followed.

Rather than tools, Rancière advocates a logic of concepts in following others' work. He demonstrates this by articulating the importance of concepts in the influence of Foucault's approach upon his own:

> Concepts are … ways to make a relief of a particular terrain, of tracing lines between this point and that one, of drawing a territory. They materialize, then, first of all the manner of 'going' to a terrain, of linking the work of words on words to the drawing of this 'exterior' of this other that words themselves convoke. The way Foucault had of penetrating into the heart of a certain distribution of sensible experience by cutting through the library and the archive … is a way of making concepts that I can use and appropriate. It corresponds to my own sensibility, to my taste for rupture, distance, my attention to the configuration of a landscape at once conceptual and lived in, the sense of what words without thickness do to things said to be concrete.[20]

It is clear that the task for the writer seeking to explicitly follow Rancière's thought to write about music, "showing by example that his problematic finds in this domain a privileged application", the relationship to Rancière's thought is not the same as Rancière's relationship to the thought of Foucault, to an influence among others.[21] It is necessary, primarily, to articulate this problematic and to determine how much and which parts of his conceptual framework can be

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[17] *The Intervals of Cinema*, p. 15.
[18] Ibid.
[19] *The Method of Equality*, p. 90.
[20] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 31.
[21] 'A Distant Sound', p. 353. Translation modified. See Introduction, fn. 24.

applied in one's new field. In the following chapters, the most pertinent parts of this conceptual framework are studied in detail. However, a broader perspective, closer to the "ways to make a relief of a particular terrain" that Rancière finds constitutive of 'concept', is also valuable. Taking on this broader perspective ensures that Rancière's problematic is considered in spirit as well as in letter and thereby that his conceptual apparatus does not become merely a 'philosophical tool'.[22]

To take on Rancière's broadest conceptual approach is to articulate the details that demonstrate the attitude with which he investigates the objects of his study, his "manner of 'going' to a terrain."[23] Firstly, Rancière insists, in his own work, on the specificity of each investigation to its object, employing "the method that first shows the thing and asks what constitutes its specificity and what makes that specificity possible and thinkable".[24] By extension, for those carrying Rancière's conceptual apparatus to a novel object, the specificities of that object should inform where and how that conceptual apparatus is deployed. It is also the case that, in following Rancière, his own corpus becomes a thing to be shown, and approaching it in such a way to identify that which constitutes its specificity is consistent with an approach that asks how it draws its territories.

Rancière is explicit in stating his attitude to others' writing. In his introduction to *The Philosopher and his Poor*, Rancière professes a "simple rule of morality" that he follows when dealing with others' thought, which summarises the implications for writing of his insistence on the equality between the author and the people about whom they write. He states that he has always tried "not to take for imbeciles those about whom [he] was talking, whether they happen to be floor layers or university professors".[25] While this rule seems simple to follow, this primary iteration of Rancière's radical equality has obvious and far-reaching implications for any musicological study conducted following a Rancièrian method, including the current project. Firstly, it means believing that the people who have written materials under consideration understand what they are writing. It means taking care of where and how materials can be interrogated. Where those materials are first-hand accounts of experiences, the authors' accounts of their motivations and feelings should not be challenged, although they may be compared with other accounts of the same or similar events. Exegesis should not be used to offer motivations beyond the authors' knowledge, but cultural or historical context may be employed to draw out the sense of their accounts. Theoretical frameworks should not be used to question these accounts, but these accounts may be used to challenge theoretical frameworks. Where the materials offer theoretically-grounded readings of events, that theory may be interrogated, with focus on the conditions of its functioning, and the

[22] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 31.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Jacques Rancière and Oliver Davis, 'On Aesthesis: An Interview' in Oliver Davis (ed.), *Rancière Now: Current Perspectives on Jacques Rancière* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), p. 203.
[25] Jacques Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, trans. by John Drury and Corinne Oster, ed. and trans. by Andrew Parker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. xxviii.

authors' position with regard to the theory and the events theorised. Experience should never be taken as subservient to theory. Theory, instead, operates as a framework through which experiences can be linked and compared.

1.2 Good Times in the Archive

Rancière's application of his 'simple rule of morality' is amply demonstrated by his work in the period following his break with Althusser. Rancière spent much of the 1970s researching workers' archives. He co-established, co-edited and contributed to a journal, *Les Révoltes Logiques*, between 1975 and 1981, and produced a book, *La Nuit des Prolétaires: Archives du Rêve Ouvrier*, which was published in 1981.[26] His work in *Les Révoltes Logiques* represents his first writing after breaking from his mentor Althusser that does not explicitly address Althusser's work, but its method demonstrates Rancière's reaction against his former mentor. Indeed, Rancière's work shrugs off not only Althusser's late, scientific Marx, but also the young humanist Marx, to focus on the writings and practices of Marx's worker contemporaries. Rancière explains this shift in an article from *Les Révoltes Logiques* entitled 'The Proletarian and His Double, Or, The Unknown Philosopher'.[27] On delving into the archives, his intention had been "to track down the initial identity of the specific thinking of the working class that the overlay of Marxist discourse had covered up".[28] In lieu of that identity, what he found were "two apparently distinct and separate realities".[29] While private accounts of various struggles showed those struggles as unalike, the pamphlets produced for public consumption expressed a working-class identity. This was a strategic class identity, distinct from that projected onto them by bourgeois discourses, and far from the barbarism and utopianism of a class that needed to be led by an avant-garde.

Rancière's earliest writing on music resides in *Les Revoltes Logiques*, in an article entitled 'Good Times, Or, Pleasure at the Barrière'.[30] In common with other writings in *Les Revoltes Logiques*, 'Good Times' explores a historical *scène* to "seek to know the reality of the practices, ideals and conflicts that made up working-class and revolutionary history".[31] In taking such a line of enquiry, Rancière and his co-editors positioned themselves in opposition to several factions of French

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[26] Rancière's contributions to *Les Revoltes Logiques* have been translated into English and published in two volumes: Jacques Rancière, *Staging the People: The Proletarian and his Double*, trans. by David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2011) and Jacques Rancière, *The Intellectual and his People: Staging the People Volume 2*, trans. by David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2012); *La Nuit des Prolétaires* first published in English as *Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth Century France* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), and more recently as Jacques Rancière, *Proletarian Nights: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth Century France*, trans. by John Drury (London: Verso, 2012).

[27] Jacques Rancière, 'The Proletarian and His Double, Or, The Unknown Philosopher' in *Staging the People*, pp. 21 – 33.

[28] Ibid., p. 21.

[29] Ibid., p. 22.

[30] Jacques Rancière, 'Good Times, Or, Pleasure at the Barrière' in *Staging the People*, pp. 175 – 232.

[31] *Staging the People*, p. 11.

thought, each of which, for varying reasons, wished to affirm a working-class identity: the Althusserian Marxist dogmatists, whose proletariat required (but had, in '68, refused) to be led by a political avant-garde; "the socialist intelligentsia" of Mitterrand et al, with their "imaginary correlate" of a "noisy and colourful people … that conformed well to its essence … ready to move from the heroic legend of the poor to the positivity of silent majorities";[32] the 'new philosophers' led by André Glucksmann, for whom "dreams of purity and social justice necessarily lead to the crimes of totalitarianism", and whose "plebs [is] endowed with a constitutive virtue of resistance" to totalitarianism.[33] In opposing both the Marxist milieu from which they had come and the reactionary anti-Marxists, those behind *Les Revoltes Logiques* sought "to prevent the liquidation of a certain way of thinking about revolution from dispensing with an understanding of the issues, complexities and contradictions of two centuries of struggle".[34] By examining the varied and sometimes contradictory discourses of the workers themselves, they would resist the simplifications and generalisations of the various interests that undermined the equality of the poor by requiring a stable way to identify them, their feelings and thoughts.

The writers of *Les Revoltes Logiques* also opposed themselves to the historians of the Annales school (studied in depth by Rancière in *The Names of History*), whose studies of "peasant microcosms" relied upon "a body of identification to assure the stable relationship of bodies to meanings".[35] The aggregate of all of these oppositions is an approach to historical scholarship that questions classifications and binarisms such as voices from below and discourse from above, individuals and collectivity, spontaneity and organisation, realities and representations.[36] It is an approach opposed "to old dogmatism and new scepticisms that reduced historical experience of domination and emancipation to an overly simple lesson".[37]

The *scène* investigated in 'Good Times' is that of theatrical and musical entertainments in 19th century France, with focus on *cafés-concerts,* "which mingled songs, dances, dramatic extracts and various exhibitions", and *goguettes*, singing societies.[38] Rancière interleaves description and explanation of the shifting politico-juridical context of 'popular' entertainments with descriptions of those entertainments' forms and contents, accounts of workers' engagement with those entertainments and analysis of the interaction between the governing and the governed in and around the crucibles of entertainment. In so doing, he challenges assumptions held by contemporaneous agents and historians examining the era.

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[32] *Staging the People*, p. 8.
[33] Ibid., p. 9.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., p. 12; Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*, trans. by Hassan Melehy (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).
[36] *Staging the People*, p. 13.
[37] Ibid., p. 15.
[38] 'Good Times', p. 185.

Even though this work is early in Rancière's oeuvre, these challenges are characteristic of techniques present in many of his writings. He challenges the location of accepted points of division and classification, suggesting other ways in which to see relationships between individuals, groups, and objects such as music or theatre. In later works he develops conceptual distinctions with which to challenge widely held classifications, such as the binarism of politics and police, and regimes of art. Nevertheless, prior to his development of these distinctions, he effects the same operation, "to put into question the received distribution of the relations between the distinct and the indistinct, the pure and the mixed, the ordinary and the exceptional, the same and the other".[39] In 'Good Times' this operation is applied to discourses about musical practices. Two of the sets of assumptions challenged are the relationship between work time and leisure time among workers and the opposition between employers and worker-activists.

Rancière demonstrates how, for workers in the mid-19th century, work time and leisure time infiltrated the other. It was in the workshop that the manual worker "made up verses and dreamed of the evening's success, taking advantage of breaks to learn singly or together the rudiments of music and versification".[40] Likewise, the cafés, bars and *goguettes*, in addition to being places of leisure, could become extensions of the workplace: "if you paid [at the local bar] to drink, it was often to pay for a job, or a job for a relative or friend, to curry favour with the foreman or more long-established workers – or conversely, to gain the goodwill of your workers".[41] The place of music is therefore a complex one; it is neither an integral part of working life nor is it separable from it.

These twin improprieties of workers' use of time are met by surveillance and policing of working-class leisure, both by the state on behalf of employers, and by worker-activists. In the febrile political atmosphere of the times Rancière examines, the state, both under the auspices of the Empire and the Republic, was concerned for the morality of the workers and for the possibility of rebellion, leading to widespread censorship of the works that could be performed:

> [T]he principle of state vigilance followed less from any strategic knowledge about disciplining the popular classes, than from a tremendous lack of knowledge as to what might provoke disorder, the impossibility of mastering chance and the unforeseen, which made any site of popular presence – and quite especially all places of performance – a possible place of disturbance.[42]

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[39] Jacques Rancière, 'The Use of Distinctions', in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. by Steven Corcoran (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 205 – 218 (p. 213).
[40] 'Good Times', p. 181.
[41] Ibid., p. 177.
[42] 'Good Times', p. 190.

Meanwhile, worker-activists, such as union-leaders, were concerned about the mixing of proletarians and bourgeoisie in sites of 'popular presence' for two principle reasons. One, alluded to above, was the possibility of workers foregoing their unions to casually negotiate work. The second was their desire, for their cause of working-class advancement, to have a diligent and sober working-class. The mixing of classes allowed workers to witness and reproduce the behaviours of the leisured bourgeoisie: the "'egoistic' debauchery of the worker was borrowed from the bourgeois, and offered in return a spectacle that the latter could use as an argument to justify his oppression".[43]

In this period, the fact of proletarians and bourgeoisie mixing was, in the end, more dangerous than any subversive content of theatrical or musical works. In addition to picking up bad habits from and displaying vulgarity to the bourgeoisie, working-class participation in the cultural life of the city distracted workers from their work, and even led them to dream of a life without its shackles:

> Disorder might well arise less from a distinct working-class culture than from these odd apprenticeships in the common culture: less from a spontaneous culture than from a spontaneous relationship to culture – or, if you like, from a culture in disorder.[44]

Eventually, the dangers of the mixing of classes in the cultural sphere is brought to an end not by the "tremendous lack of knowledge" applied by various forces attempting to directly curtail it, but by political and technological changes on a quite different register. Georges-Eugene Haussmann's renovation of Paris resulted in the migration of working class Parisians to the suburbs, and "[a]s working hours became more constraining, and the distance between work and home greater, the problem of coexistence between workers and bourgeois in the theatre would resolve itself automatically – by the simple disappearance of the workers".[45]

With the working class displaced, theatres could programme a wider spectrum of performances without fear of igniting revolution. Meanwhile, in the suburbs, so-called 'popular' theatre was established, to serve the needs of the proletariat. This would be eventually displaced by cinema, and the café-concerts by the gramophone, as technological advancement in the end supersedes the law of the entertainment police, instituting a "new culture of the people [that] comes to occupy, in the interstices of working life, a place whose own logic makes the function of surveillance superfluous".[46]

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[43] 'Good Times', p. 200.
[44] Ibid., p. 181.
[45] Ibid., p. 221.
[46] Ibid., p. 177.

Increased automation in workshops not only meant, through the new noise of industry, that singing at work was an impossibility, but also formed part of the ongoing processes of rationalisation and professionalisation that also involved "the deliberate constitution of popular pleasures as entertainment".[47] Where organised attempts were made to revive a singing culture, they were made in the name of quality, and thereby along the same lines of rationalisation and professionalisation; a better quality of singing providing a better entertainment. The café-concert was rehabilitated in the name of quality, birthing a system of celebrity singers, ever further removed from the workshop-poet.

Rancière's study concludes at the turn of the twentieth century, by which time the various musical and theatrical practices described have either disappeared or have been so transformed as to be unrecognisable. They have been changed or destroyed by the aggregate of intersecting and co-influencing social, cultural, technological and politico-juridical changes across the timeframe investigated.

In 'Good Times' Rancière writes about music, but not on music. He explores music's place in the socio-cultural milieu of nineteenth century Paris, but takes little regard of its features beyond songs' lyrical content. Little differentiation is made between musical and theatrical practices; while Rancière never conflates those practices, his interests lie in their points of intersection and in the similarities between the changing patterns of working class engagement with them. The various discursive narratives around musical and theatrical practices are not subsumed under the rubric of theory, but rather their relationships are described in their complexity. He draws from a wide range of archival materials, and the respect given by Rancière to his sources means that the materials are not hierarchised by the prominence of their source, and no one account is made subservient to any other.

In 'A Distant Sound', Rancière summarises 'Good Times' and comments on it and its place in his oeuvre. He emphasises the place of "popular song", which "is perceived by the police order as the carrier of a double peril".[48] The double peril is one of unification and separation, "uniting the people by collective entrainment to the rhythms that push them to disorder", and, conversely, "separating the people from itself through the mode of hedonistic consumption".[49] The combination of unification and separation, here present in the form of music's danger to the police order, is important to Rancière's understanding of music as it is outlined in 'A Distant Sound'. Indeed, he describes this dual role, "to unite and separate, separating in unifying" as "consubstantial with the idea of music".[50] Characteristically, to demonstrate music's functioning in European

[47] 'Good Times', p. 208.
[48] 'A Distant Sound', p. 355.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

culture and philosophical discourse, Rancière refers back to a Classical understanding, remembering that "before being the art of sounds, [music] is the art of the muses, the liberal art that says which forms of sensible performance and sensible pleasure are suitable to which category of individuals".[51] Rancière points out that this final function of music, of partition, the separation and unification of people, underlies the "question of the consonance between a sensible performance and a category of human beings", which "is at the heart of a body of texts that have apparently little to do with the musical art", referring to his early work in *Les Révoltes Logiques*, *Proletarian Nights* and *The Philosopher and his Poor*.[52] This question is also integral to the development of *le partage du sensible*, sometimes rendered in English as the 'partition of the sensible', but more usually as the 'distribution of the sensible', a way of examining and understanding relationships in both the political and aesthetic domains, which will be explored in the next chapter.

Where the method and mode of writing employed by Rancière in 'Good Times' is transferable to musicological enquiry, it is no more so than in his other work of the period. (The corollary, of course, is also true, that this article is no less helpful, as a model, than his other writings in this mode.) What emerges is a way of studying cultural practices, including music, that is comprised of examination of those practices in their socio-juridical context, in all of their complex specificity. The revelation of the musical underpinnings of this work, while suggesting that the pursuit of a musicology in this mode of Rancièrian writing is sound, offers little further insight into how Rancière's work might be employed in the investigation of music.

1.3 Proletarian Nights and the Style of Equality

Proletarian Nights stands as the culmination of Rancière's archival work. It comprises a history of pre-Marxist communist movements in nineteenth century France, including the Fourierists, the Saint-Simonians and the Icarians, told with reference to a large number of testimonies. The idiosyncratic manner in which Rancière brings together and interacts with these testimonies has implications for writers wishing to follow his work. Described as the *style indirect libre* in an article of the same name by James Swenson, this approach represents a further development from the manner in which Rancière deals with citation in his work in *Les Révoltes Logiques*, and constitutes an extension of his radical equality into the texture of his writing.[53] In his article, Swenson differentiates between direct, indirect and free indirect discourses as designations of relationships between discourses where one "cites, reports, or recounts the other".[54] In this nomenclature, the

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[51] 'A Distant Sound', p. 355.

[52] Ibid.

[53] James Swenson, 'Style Indirect Libre' in Gabriel Rockhill, Philip Watts (eds.), 'Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics' (Duke: Durham, NH, 2009), pp. 258 – 272.

[54] Ibid., p. 263.

style indirect libre is "a third-person narration of reported speech or thought, capable of a smooth melding with exterior narration of actions and description of scenes" and, as Swenson notes, the undertaking of such a mode of writing involves "the erasure of certain marking effects (quotation or other diacritical marks, 'he said that…' and so on)".[55] The inclusion of quotation would indicate direct discourse, while framing such as 'he said that…' (followed by a paraphrase of the other's discourse) would indicate indirect, but not free indirect, discourse. It is an approach that is present, to some extent, in many of his writings, although its application is perhaps most obvious in *Proletarian Nights*. Swenson points out that *Proletarian Nights* "resembles a modernist novel far more closely than anything else in the historiographical tradition", citing its "interlacing of the voices of an immense cast of characters, prismatically shifting focus, and complete lack of thetic statements", as well as Rancière's profession of the influence that Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* exerted on the conception of his book.[56] Rancière describes the territory of that influence as "on the decision to work by cutting up moments in time as the way to make those moments visible through a handful of gazes and some intersecting words, as if in a fake epistolary novel".[57] In *Proletarian Nights*, direct citation, indirect discourse and exegesis flow freely together. Where Rancière re-phrases his interlocutors, it is not to reveal something that they did not understand about their own writing, but to serve the flow of his own argument, without altering the thrust of theirs.

As Swenson points out, Rancière "almost never says that such-and-such a statement is wrong, and that the truth is something else" and neither does he say "that if so-and-so says one thing, what he really means is something else".[58] This factor, in combination with Rancière's avoidance of thetic statements, results in a difficulty, for his readers, in ascertaining Rancière's position from extracts of some of his texts. Swenson illustrates this point with the example of Rancière's lengthy treatment of the work of Jules Michelet in *The Names of History*, which "is so sympathetic – and so wonderfully exciting" that Swenson "can still remember [his] surprise when, in [his] first reading, [he] discovered that Rancière was arguing, at the end, that [Michelet's] historical poetics had become exhausted."[59] Rancière's position is often only revealed by taking a chapter, or even an entire work, as a whole. Even then, there may be very little material that can be cited to evidence his position. Often, the polemical force of Rancière's writing can only be understood by taking into account the context of its writing, the discourse into which a work intervenes. In all cases, where Rancière adopts the narrative mode, regardless of the extent to which he employs the *style indirect libre*, his choice of texts to interpolate, interleave or intersect is important

[55] Swenson, p. 263.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Jacques Rancière and Martin Jalbert, 'Losing Too Is Still Ours: an Interview about the Thwarted Politics of Literature' in Jacques Rancière, *Dissenting Words: Interviews with Jacques Rancière*, ed. and trans. by Emiliano Battista (Bloomsbury: London, 2017), pp. 191 – 203 (pp. 201 – 202).
[58] Swenson, p. 264.
[59] Ibid., p. 267.

in understanding the position that he adopts relative to the scene of his intervention. Indeed, across his works, regardless of the particular admixture of direct and indirect discourse, that which is most characteristic is the 'freeness' of combination of Rancière's voice with the voices of others.

This 'free' style is entirely consistent with Rancière's refusal of mastery and the radical equality of his oeuvre. However, it introduces a contradiction, for those who follow his work, between the manner in which he approaches others' work and the manner in which his work (or certain of his works, at least) must be approached. Swenson claims, as has already been noted, that Rancière never says "that if so-and-so says one thing, what he really means is something else", and Rancière seems to echo this sentiment in his opposition to disciplinarity, discussed more fully in Chapter Four, where he complains that "[t]he disciplines found their territory by establishing a dehiscence between what the phrases of the woodworker say and what they mean, between what the woodworker describes to us and the truth hidden behind the description".[60] Rancière's phrases, meanwhile, often do not say what he means, although each of his books and articles, taken in its entirety, does.

For the purposes of the current study, the implications of Rancière's style are twofold. In attempting to carry Rancière's conceptual apparatus to a musical object distant from anything on which he has significantly commented, it is necessary, first, to find a way to approach his work in order that this can be effected. It is clear that the freeness of Rancière's style is closely linked the "mode of writing" that "stops people from transforming it into another sort of mastery".[61] Therefore the difficulty in citing large areas of his work might be taken as a reminder that the spirit of the work that is to be followed is conceptual, and not rooted in utility. Where work from the main body of Rancière's work is cited, it often becomes necessary to investigate his examples in some depth, looking beyond the content of that work to that which is not stated: the relationship of the content to the method undertaken in its writing, the form his argument takes and its polemical intent. And, where clarification of or comparison with Rancière's thought is required, it is therefore, as has already been seen in this chapter, useful to refer to the large body of interviews that have been undertaken with Rancière. Under interview conditions, Rancière's voice is unambiguously his own, allowing his words to be drawn into a 'free' style of discourse without distortion of his meaning. A further benefit of this approach will be seen in Chapter Six of this study, wherein Rancière's evolving position on politics of identity will be examined, allowing for his own revisions and re-articulations to inform new considerations of his early texts on politics.

The second implication for the current study concerns its mode of writing. While Rancière does not employ the *style indirect libre* evenly across his oeuvre, tenets of this style are present in all

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[60] Swenson, p. 264.

[61] *The Method of Equality*, p. 102.

of his work from *Proletarian Nights* onwards. In his non-archival work, he is less likely to introduce the speech of an interlocutor without quotation marks, but the flow that is characteristic of his style and the ambiguous place of Rancière's own voice remain, regardless of whether his discourse is direct or indirect. It is clear that Rancière's decision to write in such a manner is not arbitrary, but is closely tied to his larger project. The importance to Rancière of writerly style can be seen in his studies of literature, in which the matter of style is studied in his analyses of the relationship between politics and aesthetics present in other authors' works. As Swenson notes, Rancière, in discussion of Flaubert, states that "style is entirely contained within the 'conception of the subject'".[62] He also notes Rancière's gloss of Plato's *lexis*, in *The Flesh of Words*, in which "[t]he method of utterance … is the way in which the poet relates to the subject of the poem, identifies with it, differentiates himself from it or hides himself behind it".[63] Swenson attests that it is the relationship between these two things, the conception of the subject and the mode of utterance, that Rancière "most fundamentally emphasizes" in discussion of "the style of an author or period".[64] If Rancière finds such a conception of style fundamental to the understanding of writing, the importance of his own style to his understanding of his own writing can be easily inferred. Understood as an extension of the previously mentioned "simple rule of morality", discussed above, "not to take for imbeciles those about whom I was talking, whether they happen to be floor layers or university professors", Rancière's preference for free discourse, whether direct or indirect, stands as a way of including himself in the de-hierarchisation of the voices present in his texts.[65]

And if Rancière's work is to be followed at a conceptual level, where, as under his understanding, concepts "materialize … the manner of 'going' to a terrain, of linking the work of words on words to the drawing of this 'exterior' of this other that words themselves convoke", it seems advisable, if not incumbent, to attempt to adopt something of his style.[66] Indeed, given its place in relation to the principle of equality that is central to Rancière's thought, its employment could be added to the list of maxims derived for following his work earlier in this chapter. Therefore, in the remainder of this study, while conforming to the normal canons of scholarship, an attempt at following tenets of Rancière's style is made. Swenson notes that Rancière "reduces logical marks of differentiation between his own discourse and that of the author he is discussing", and it is the case that this can be done, as it is in much of Rancière's oeuvre, without diverging

[62] Swenson, p. 263, referencing Jacques Rancière, *La parole muette: Essai sur les contradictions de la littérature.* (Paris: Hachette, 1998), p. 115. This book has since been translated as Jacques Rancière, James Swenson (trans.), *Mute Speech: Literature, Critical Theory, and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
[63] Jacques Rancière, Charlotte Mandell (trans.), *The Flesh of Words: The Politics of Writing* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 11. This is noted in Swenson, p. 263, the latter using 'mode of enunciation' in place of 'method of utterance', as appears in the English edition.
[64] Swenson, p. 263.
[65] *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. xxviii.
[66] Rancière, Ruda, and Voelker, p. 31.

from norms of properly attributed citation.[67] In following Rancière's style, it is the freeness with which he mixes his voice with those of his interlocutors that is considered most essential. The indirect manner of interlocution is not used exclusively, but neither does Rancière use it exclusively; as Swenson notes, "Rancière does use plenty of direct discourse".[68] It can also be seen that, at times, Rancière breaks from free discourse entirely. The conditions under which such breaks occur is discussed in Chapter Four of the current study, where the maxims derived in this chapter are developed to the specificities of the disciplinary approaches that musicological study is likely to encounter.

1.4 The Schoolmaster, the Spectator and the Grounds for Equality

In his early works, Rancière's equality is mostly negatively-defined, initially in opposition to Althusser, and later, with *The Philosopher and his Poor*, a range of philosophical thinkers from Plato to Bourdieu, discussed above in relation to Rancière's critique of mastery, particularly the proposition of inequality that is necessary for those philosophers' mastery to function. What Rancière proposes in that book is a thread of mastery-inequality that finds its source in Plato's 'myth of metals'.

In his *Republic*, Plato details a separation of people into those with gold (rulers, philosophers), silver (soldiers) and iron or brass (labourers, artisans) in their souls. The function of a person in the society of the Republic was dependent upon their nature. Plato did not require people to believe 'the myth of metals'; he required only that they act as though they did. Rancière argues that this separation proposes an inequality, and that the proposition of the inequality serves to hide the real equality between people.[69] Even to Plato, the truth of the inequality proposed is unimportant, but the order maintained by people acting as though it were true is not.

In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière unearths the practice and theory of a 19th century schoolteacher, Joseph Jacotot, to construct an equality that functions as an inversion of this. *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* demonstrates how the philosophy and method devised by Jacotot, for what he called 'intellectual emancipation', is underwritten by his belief in intellectual equality, or at least his willingness to act on its supposition, true or not. Rancière argues that it is impossible to prove that humans are intellectually equal or unequal, by examining the inefficacy of the scientific method in dealing with human subjects and the impossibility and undesirability of doing so under controlled

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[67] Swenson, p. 264.
[68] Ibid.
[69] This is explored in a number of Rancière's texts, but particularly across the breath of *The Philosopher and his Poor*.

conditions: "[w]e can never say: take two equal minds and place them in such and such a condition."[70]

So this belief, or effective belief, is based in the absence of proof for its opposite, and, more importantly, the possibilities that it might present. In answer to critics who would posit that some minds are obviously superior to others, or more gifted for some task or other (the example given is mathematics), Rancière "will not say that the one's faculties are inferior to the other's … [he] will only suppose that the two faculties haven't been equally exercised".[71] In any case, for Rancière, the "problem isn't proving that all intelligence is equal [rather, it's] seeing what can be done under that supposition".[72]

In his pedagogical practice, Jacotot discovers that he is able to teach students things that he does not, himself, know. His students have been learning by observation and linking ideas for their entire lives (as has he). They, then, are eminently capable of learning from materials without his explication. Rancière's described Jacotot's "revelation" on the matter: "[e]xplication is not necessary to remedy an incapacity to understand", rather "[i]t is the explicator who needs the incapable" in order to explicate.[73] The 'pedagogical myth', that the world is complex and ordered, and that only the teacher can unveil its secrets to their students, serves to "divide intelligence into two".[74] These two parts are "an inferior intelligence" that "registers perceptions by chance, retains them, interprets and repeats them empirically, within the closed circuit of habit and need" and "a superior one" that "knows things by reason, proceeds by method, from the simple to the complex, from the part to the whole".[75] The former intelligence is that "of the young child and the common man", while the latter is that which "allows the master to transmit his knowledge by adapting it to the intellectual capacities of the student and allows him to verify that the student has satisfactorily understood what he learned".[76] This "principle of explication" is, for Jacotot, the principle of "*enforced stultification*".[77]

Jacotot's insights are borne from his own teaching practice. In exile in the Netherlands he found himself having to teach students that spoke no French, while he spoke no Flemish. He presented the students with bilingual editions of François Fénelon's *Télémaque* and instructed them, through a translator, to use the book to teach themselves the French language. The success with which the students completed this task, with no explication from Jacotot, led to his developing the principle of stultification. To this stultification is opposed emancipation: "that every common

[70] *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, p. 46.
[71] Ibid., p. 50.
[72] Ibid., p. 46.
[73] Ibid., p. 6.
[74] Ibid., p. 7.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

person might conceive his human dignity, take the measure of his intellectual capacity, and decide how to use it".[78] Intellectual equality is hidden in teaching by the stultification of explication. Emancipatory teaching practice has only to stage an environment in which the student can be convinced of her own faculty. Indeed, Jacotot argues for the abandonment of curricula altogether: "Whoever teaches without emancipating, stultifies. And whoever emancipates doesn't have to worry about what the emancipated person learns. He will learn what he wants, nothing maybe."[79] Like *The Philosopher and his Poor*, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* serves, in part, as an attack on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, which was highly influential on the educational policy of François Mitterrand's government. The implications for musicological work of Rancière's left-critique of Bourdieu, and sociology more generally, will be discussed in more depth in the third chapter. Rancière's investigation of Jacotot's pedagogical method can be read as a parable with implications far beyond the classroom; the radical equality proposed by Jacotot and Rancière can be transposed to any situation in which a hierarchy of people is presumed.

Indeed, implications found by readers of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* have surprised Rancière himself. In the opening paragraph of *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière professes to have experienced "bewilderment" at a proposal received in 2004 to address artists on the applications of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* for 'the spectator'. How, asks Rancière, "was the thought of a man [Jacotot] whose artistic universe can be emblematized by the names of Demosthenes, Racine and Poussin relevant to contemporary thinking about art?"[80]

The answer articulated by Rancière lies in the parallels between the master-student relationship and that between the artist and the spectator. Rancière addresses "theatrical spectacle, … all those forms of spectacle – drama, dance, performance art, mime and so on – that place bodies in action before an assembled audience". He summarises the 'paradox of theatre' that he claims to be central to critiques of theatre: that "there is no theatre without a spectator", but "being a spectator is a bad thing".[81] The spectator sees only the spectacle produced and therefore knows nothing of the process by which it is produced or "the reality it conceals". Also, the spectator cannot act; she "remains immobile in her seat, passive".[82] Therefore, "[t]o be a spectator is to be separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act".[83] These conditions are strikingly similar to those of the student in the explicatory model of pedagogy opposed by Jacotot, and Rancière's refutation follows Jacotot's logic of intellectual equality:

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[78] *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, p. 17.
[79] Ibid., p. 18.
[80] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 1.
[81] Ibid., p. 2.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

> The spectator also acts… She observes, selects, compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of place. She composes her own poem with the elements of the poem before her. She participates in the performance by refashioning it in her own way…[84]

While the stultification does not act directly upon the spectator in the same way that it acts upon the student, the prominence of the ideas of theatrical critique reach them indirectly. Where playwrights and directors believe that the spectator is passive, they may adopt a position where they "would like the spectators to see this and feel that, understand some particular thing and draw some particular conclusion."[85] Rancière compares the director to the stultifying schoolmaster, seeing in both a faith in the "identity between cause and effect", brought about by their own mastery, their own ability to bridge the distance between themselves and their student, or their spectator.

Rancière analyses attempts to bridge this distance by two of the foremost figures in 20th century theatre, Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud. Brecht's epic theatre presumes in the spectator a "stupefaction", from which he can be roused by being shown "a strange, unusual spectacle, a mystery whose meaning he must seek out" that compels him "to exchange the position of passive spectator for that of scientific investigator or experimenter".[86] The spectator "must refine his gaze".[87] In Artaud's theatre of cruelty "[t]he spectator must be removed from the position of observer calmly examining the spectacle offered to her".[88] She must be "drawn into the magic circle of theatrical action where she will exchange the privilege of rational observer for that of being in possession of all her vital energies".[89] Both the Brechtian and Artaudian positions presume, just as did their more traditional predecessors, the essential passivity of the spectator. But, while those predecessors would use that passivity to instruct their spectators, utilising an inequality to enrich the spectators with the benefits of their mastery, Brecht and Artaud, in their separate ways, wish to shake them from their passivity. Brecht and Artaud still presume an inequality, but instead of using it to employ their mastery in instruction, they will instead employ their mastery to overturn it.

Rancière accepts that contemporary theatre artists do not, for the most part, wish to instruct their spectators. Rather, they "wish to produce a form of consciousness, an intensity of feeling, an energy for action", a wish that still assumes "that what will be perceived, felt, understood is what they have put into their dramatic art or performance".[90] This, like the instruction of the

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[84] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 13.
[85] Ibid., pp. 13 – 14.
[86] Ibid., p. 4.
[87] Ibid., p. 5.
[88] Ibid., p. 4.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., p. 14.

master or of the traditional playwright, still supposes the identity between cause and effect, and the artist's ability to "abolish" the distance between themselves and their spectator.

In treating their students as equals, the ignorant schoolmaster always places something between themselves and those students, some writing for contemplation, alien to both of them. In this way, the schoolmaster and pupil can refer alike to a common object for discussion, about which the student can form an opinion on her own, without needing the correctly reasoned opinion of her master for comparison. "The same applies to performance", states Rancière.[91] The object between performer and spectator "is owned by no one"; its "meaning is owned by no one".[92] The object is open to the interpretation of the performer and the spectator, the meaning that they make from it is their own. A reversal takes place in the realms of knowledge and action from which the spectator was presumed to be excluded. Not one of the playwright, the director, the performer or the spectator knows the meaning of the spectacle that is the object between them. It is open to the free play of each, and each can know what it means to herself. Each of them *actively* constructs the meaning that they take from it: to be a spectator is not a passive state. In the realms of knowledge and action, the spectator is the equal of the playwright, the director and the performer.

The problematization of the theatre, and of the spectacle more generally, along the lines mentioned above, finds another iteration in Guy Debord's influential *The Society of the Spectacle*. In Rancière's reading of Debord, the essence of the spectacle is "exteriority".[93] The contemplation of a spectacle, of visible appearance, is contemplation of appearance separated from its truth. This contemplation is, then, for Debord, "the spectacle of the suffering produced by that separation".[94] The spectacle contrives to hide a reality from the spectator. The mediation of the object, the spectacle, "can be nothing but a fatal illusion of autonomy".[95] The prescribed role then, for the theatre artist, is to puncture the spectacle, to reveal the reality beneath it. In other words, the role of the theatre artist is to abolish the theatre. One way in which this is attempted is by spatial reorganisation, by removing the stage, placing the audience on the stage, or staging plays on other sites. Rancière concedes that these practices have "unquestionably produced many enrichments of theatrical performance".[96] Debord posits that the separation caused by the spectacle means that "all community and critical awareness have ceased to be".[97] So, in addition to its own abolition, the theatre must institute community, without separation, without the mediation of the spectacle, in its

[91] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 15.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., p. 6.
[94] Ibid., p. 7.
[95] Ibid., p. 15.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994), pp. 20 – 21.

place. This involves "a new form of allocating bodies to their rightful place, which, in the event, is their place of communion".[98]

The communitarian aspect of theatre is another aspect in which Rancière identifies the Platonism running through discourse. For Plato, "theatre is the place where ignoramuses are invited to see people suffering".[99] Rather than the theatrical community, the "democratic, ignorant community of theatre", Plato prescribes the "choreographic community, where no one remains a static spectator, where everyone must move in accordance with the community rhythm fixed by mathematical proportion".[100] Plato's anti-democratic thought regarding theatre and community, for Rancière, finds echoes in the attitudes of Brecht, Artaud and Debord. Rancière, indeed, is critical of the presumption that the theatre is a particularly privileged site of community at all. This presumption is based on the theatre's "living bodies onstage address[ing] bodies assembled in the same place" being "radically different from the situation of individuals seated in front of a television, or film spectators in front of projected shadows".[101] "What exactly", asks Rancière, "occurs among theatre spectators that cannot happen elsewhere?"[102] To the community of theatre, Rancière opposes another model of collectivity:

> 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. This shared power of the equality of intelligence links individuals, makes them exchange their intellectual adventures, in so far as it keeps them separate from one another, equally capable of using the power everyone has to plot her own path.[103]

Under this model of collectivity based upon the equality of participants in knowledge and action, the use of methods designed to close a divide between artist and spectator is not necessary. The spectators are separate from each other, and separate from the artists whose work they view. This is not to say that they are alienated, but is merely a restatement of each individual's power to contrive meaning from things that they see, an operation that each performs continuously, at all times and regardless of their presumed position in an arrangement of people. While seeming to sever the bond of community, this separation is, in fact, less radical than that presumed by Plato, Brecht, Artaud and Debord. It is a separation of equals engaged in comparable tasks, rather than

[98] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 15.
[99] Ibid., p. 3.
[100] Ibid., p. 5.
[101] Ibid., p. 16.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., pp. 16 – 17.

the much more radical separation of knowledge and ignorance, activity and passivity: "Distance is not an evil to be abolished, but the normal condition of any communication".[104]

Immediately, this model of artistic community, based upon the intellectual equality articulated in dialogue with Jacotot, seems applicable to consideration of musical performances, and the relationship between player, composer and auditor. Indeed, it could be simply stated that listening is an activity, auditors are not passive, and an audience member at a musical performance is as capable of making meaning from that performance as its composer or its performers. But Rancière's investigation into the implications of intellectual equality for communities of art is not reducible to a simple conclusion, and his method, "that first shows the thing and asks what constitutes its specificity and what makes that specificity possible and thinkable", guards against the simple translation of his argument to another field.[105] Indeed, Rancière himself did not, when asked to address the issue of the spectator with reference to *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, simply state that spectator and performer are equally capable of making meaning. Instead, he utilised the idea investigatively, with regard to various practices of visual and theatrical art and their discourses. To translate this facet of Rancière's work to the fields of musical practice and discourse is to consider his proposition with respect to particular scenes of musical practice and discourse, and how those practices and discourses conceptualise the relationship between composer, player and auditor. It is certainly possible to find parallels between Brecht's stance and the Ben Watson's Adornian reading of free improvisation in *Derek Bailey and the Story of Free Improvisation* and between Artaud's and Christopher Small's respective socio-spatial critiques of the theatre and the concert hall, the latter in the influential *Musicking*.[106] These and other texts are certainly worthy of detailed investigation from a Rancièrian position. The elements of Rancière's work studied in the remaining chapters of this part will lend further nuance and perspective to such investigations.

Given the imperative to 'show the thing' in its specificity, consideration must also be given to the sensible shift that occurs between the play or exhibition and the musical performance, between the visual or oratorical and the sonic. In considering Rancière's argument from a sonic perspective, a stratum of uncertainty is revealed in the construction of 'the spectacle'. As Rancière's argument progresses, the reader notices slips between theatre, spectacle, visuality and back, slips reflective of the writing on the spectacle that he critiques. The spectacle is conceived as an ocular concern, and so only the visual elements of the theatre's sensorium are considered. While the facet of Rancière's thought on equality that runs through *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* and *The Emancipated*

[104] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 10.
[105] Rancière and Davis, p. 203.
[106] Ben Watson, *Derek Bailey and the Story of Free Improvisation* (London: Verso, 2004); Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998).

Spectator seems to open possibilities beyond the classroom, the theatre and the gallery, sound is seldom present, and music (if we are to assume that the 'playing' mentioned is that of actors) is not present at all:

> What our performances – be they teaching or playing, speaking, writing, making art or looking at it – verify is not our participation in a power embodied in the community. It is the capacity of anonymous people, the capacity that makes everyone equal to everyone else. This capacity is exercised through irreducible distances; it is exercised by an unpredictable interplay of associations and dissociations.[107]

The difficulties in following Rancière's work on the visual and literary arts to consideration of music is discussed in greater depth in the following chapters, but the investigation of music following Rancière's critique of discourses of the spectacle raises a specific issue. Given that Rancière writes little on music or the sonorous, and certainly has developed no particular conceptual apparatus to do so, encounters with interlocutors of his who also avoid discussion of music or sound encounter a double difficulty in placing sound and music in relation to those discourses. This is the case with the discourses of the spectacle. It might be inferred that the focus on visuality in the writings critiqued by Rancière implies that the sonorous anyway transcends the dangerous exteriority of the spectacle. However, such an inference would stand in plain opposition to the spirit of Rancière's method articulated earlier in this chapter. As James Swenson points out, Rancière never states "that if so-and-so says one thing, what he really means is something else", and with this in consideration, it is, perhaps, best to conclude that if Brecht, Artaud and Debord have little to say about music or the sonorous in respect of the spectacle, their writings ought not be used to construct arguments about those objects.[108]

The place of Rancière's writing on the discourse of the spectacle within his oeuvre will be contextualised in the next chapter, wherein the development of his primary conceptual apparatuses is traced. Just as the transposition of Jacotot's intellectual equality to the theatres and galleries of the twentieth century, in *The Emancipated Spectator*, illuminates hitherto underexamined aspects of debates on the spectacle, the continued consideration of Rancière's writing on this facet of equality illuminates all aspects of his wider oeuvre, bringing clarity to their connections, and imploring the reader of Rancière, and those who attempt to write in his wake, to retain in their readings and writings the light of this simple assertion of equality.

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[107] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 17.
[108] Swenson, p. 264.

Chapter Two: Distributions of the Sensible

In this chapter, Rancière's principle conceptual framework for discussion of politics and art, 'distributions of the sensible', is introduced, its development in Rancière's writing on politics examined, and its use in dividing understandings of art and the arts into 'regimes of identification' articulated. This involves the beginning of an investigation of the relationship between politics and aesthetics that is central to the largest part of Rancière's work. This relationship and the framework of 'distributions of the sensible' are central to the discussions of the AACM conducted in the second half of the current study.

2.1 Rancière's Politics

In addition to Jacotot's intellectual equality at work in the classrooms of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* and the theatres and galleries of *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière's radical equality has a second facet, found most prominently in his writing on politics, referred to as 'the equality of speaking beings'. The equality of speaking beings is not altogether separate from intellectual equality; they are not discrete dimensions of a precise and distinct equality but different ways of looking at the same equality that allow that figure to participate in different discourses.

The equality of speaking beings is the equality that is constitutive of politics, and is what separates politics from other means of societal organisation. Rancière's work on politics is important to the task of constructing Rancièrian musicologies for two reasons.

Firstly, as will be seen, Rancière writes extensively on the intersection between politics and aesthetics. The politics of music has anyway been a concern of musicological study since the turn towards 'new musicology' since the 1980s, and has often been a focus of studies of improvised and jazz-identified musics (which were themselves afforded institutional legitimacy by that same turn). Secondly, it is in his works on politics and 'political philosophy', *Disagreement, On the Shores of Politics* and 'Ten Theses on Politics' that Rancière develops a vocabulary that is used in much of his later work on art. Prominent within this vocabulary is *le partage du sensible*, usually translated as 'the distribution of the sensible' and sometimes as 'the partition of the sensible' or 'the partition of the perceptible', which, in its application in regimes of art, is crucial to understanding Rancière's work on the arts, and which would be important to almost any method of studying music following Rancière.

To best understand this language and the range of possibilities for its deployment in musicological work, it is incumbent to trace its origins. Doing so should avert the danger of taking Rancière's vocabulary for a philosophical tool, even while acknowledging that this involves drawing

back to the work that Rancière is most anxious about being used as applicable theory. Tracing Rancière's terms from their roots in his political work *and* examining the ways in which they are used in his discussion of other arts practices will ensure the greatest degree of nuance in their use in musicological fields, avoiding both their application as political theory and their simplistic transferral from the fields of visual and literary arts.

To begin to examine Rancière's work on politics, to examine how the equality of speaking beings constitutes politics, especially when doing so to understand the vocabulary that Rancière develops around the issue, it is necessary to acknowledge the peculiarity of this vocabulary. While many political theorists and philosophers tend toward a complex vocabulary of neologism and technical nomenclature, Rancière generally moves in the opposite direction, putting both commonplace terms and his own rare coinages to a variety of uses. This process is not accidental, and in it can be found echoes of other aspects of Rancière's method discussed in the previous chapter, namely his refusal of mastery and his unwillingness to circumscribe the meanings of his work. If the equality of speaking beings is constitutive of politics, one of the ways in which it is exercised is through homonymy: for Rancière, "every politics works on homonyms and the indiscernable".[1] One example, already touched upon, and of particular interest to Rancière, is the use of collective terms such as 'man', 'the masses', 'the people', 'the proletariat', 'the plebs'. In *Althusser's Lesson*, Rancière defends homonymy against the proscriptions of his former mentor Althusser's policing of these terms in the name of orthodox Marxism-Leninism. In the latter's 'Reply to John Lewis', John Lewis's assertion that "it is man who makes history" leads Althusser to bemoan a 'comrade' (in the words of Rancière) "corrupted by bourgeois humanism": the 'proper' position being that it is the masses who make history. This particularly petty example of presumed mastery exercised through an orthodox Marxist-Leninist pedantry demonstrates by counter-example Rancière's position on homonymy and the policing of language.

The operative example of Rancière's homonymy for understanding his work on politics and 'political philosophy' is the term 'politics' itself. In the early phase of his writing on politics, in 'Ten Theses on Politics' and *Disagreement*, his novel understanding of the term, in a framework where "every politics works on homonyms", marks a politicisation of his own writing, making it active in a process of contestation over the meanings of words. In discussion of others' thought, as part of the 'free indirect style' discussed in the previous chapter, he frequently adopts the meanings ascribed by them to terms such as 'politics'. His position is therefore contestational but non-prescriptive, which is consistent with the broader Rancièrian project.

[1] *Disagreement*, p. 91.

An additional issue arises when reading Rancière's work in translation, complicating the reading of this term for anglophones in particular. In his French writing, Rancière sometimes differentiates between *la politique* and *le politique* and on other occasions, he uses *la politique* interchangeably. His translators have sometimes rendered *la politique* as 'politics' and *le politique* as 'the political' but have sometimes used 'politics' interchangeably.

In any case, the definitions of Rancière's registers of 'politics' are dependent upon understanding their places in his writing, particularly in relation to 'the distribution of the sensible', and it is through exploration of that term that those definitions will be found.

It is through 'the distribution of the sensible' that Rancière demonstrates that politics is always an aesthetic matter. It is important to note the inexactness of either 'distribution' or 'partition' as a translation of the French *partage*. *Partage* refers to both sharing and division, and so, as Gabriel Rockhill points out, 'distribution' "refers both to forms of inclusion and forms of exclusion".[2] A distribution of the sensible is therefore a set of divisions and sharings of, and inclusions in and exclusions from, the field of that which can be apprehended by the senses. Rancière's most thorough definition of the term appears in his 'Ten Theses on Politics', the most succinct and most untypically direct of his works on politics:

> I call 'distribution of the sensible' a generally implicit law that defines the forms of partaking by first defining the modes of perception in which they are inscribed. The partition of the sensible is the dividing-up of the world (*de monde*) and of people (*du monde*). […] This partition should be understood in the double sense of the word: on the one hand, as that which separates and excludes; on the other, as that which allows participation. A partition of the sensible refers to the manner in which a relation between a shared common (*un commun partagé*) and the distribution of exclusive parts is determined in sensory experience. This latter form of distribution, which, by its sensory self-evidence, anticipates the distribution of part and shares (*parties*), itself presupposes a distribution of what is visible and what not, of what can be heard and what cannot.[3]

While the distribution of the sensible demonstrates Rancière's conceptual inheritance from Michel Foucault, discussed in the previous chapter, it also demonstrates one of the limits on Foucault's influence on Rancière. Where Foucault identifies "the question of politics with the question of power", Rancière identifies it with equality.[4] This shift in emphasis, from power to equality, produces a more optimistic analysis of politics than seems possible under Foucault's thinking, as it concerns the political actions of those ordinarily restricted from full participation in

[2] 'Glossary of Technical Terms', p. 89.
[3] Jacques Rancière, 'Ten Theses on Politics', in *Dissensus*, pp. 27 - 44 (p. 44).
[4] Jacques Rancière and Nicolas Poirier, 'Politics is not Coextensive with Life or the State', in *Dissenting Words*, pp. 101 – 114 (p. 106).

the community, rather than "the relation of state power to modes of managing populations and producing individuals."[5]

In his political work, Rancière identifies two types of distribution of the sensible, which he generally refers to as 'police' and 'politics'. 'Police' does not simply refer to law enforcement officers, "the petty police, the truncheon blows of the forces of law and order and the inquisitions of the secret police", but something much broader. To illustrate the precedence of a wider definition of this term, Rancière turns to a rare direct citation of Foucault, quoting the latter's assertion that "the police described by writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries covered everything relating to 'man' and his 'happiness'".[6] The implication seems, at first, to be that 'police' is bad and 'politics' good, but right away Rancière states that he uses the word in a nonpejorative manner. There can be better and worse police orders, and this better or worse is defined by their openness to challenge and by how much they have been challenged; the better police is "the one that all the breaking and entering perpetrated by egalitarian logic has most often jolted out of its 'natural' logic".[7] Across his writings on politics, *police* and *politics* are set in a complex opposition.

Not only does the police not refer to the 'petty police' in particular, it does not refer directly to the machinations of the state more broadly: "the distribution of places and roles that defines a police regime stems as much from the assumed spontaneity of social relations as from the rigidity of state functions".[8] The police-principle is, however, "at the core of statist practices".[9] The police distribution of the sensible, maintained by all who observe its presumptions and assignations, "is characterized by the absence of void and of supplement: society here is made up of groups tied to specific modes of doing, to places in which these occupations are exercised, and to modes of being corresponding to these occupations and these places".[10] The police distribution presumes to account for everything, to the extent that in its "matching of functions, places and ways of being, there is no place for any void".[11]

It can be seen that what Rancière refers to as the police, which has politics as its opposite, is more usually called 'politics', "the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legimitizing this distribution".[12]

Politics challenges the police distribution of the sensible by presenting it with something that it has not accounted for. Rancière frequently refers to this unaccounted-for piece, this

[5] Rancière and Poirier, p. 105.
[6] *Disagreement*, p. 28.
[7] Ibid., p. 31.
[8] Ibid., p. 29.
[9] 'Ten Theses on Politics', p. 44.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] *Disagreement*, p. 28.

supplement, as the "part of those without part" or the "part of no-part". This challenge constitutes the first definition of politics, referred to by J. M. Bernstein as Rancière's "strong conception" and "strong sense" of politics.[13] It is comprised of a subjectivization (*la sujectivation*, sometimes translated as 'subjectification' or 'subjectivation'), an act that breaks with an identity occurring in the police distribution of the sensible: "Any subjectification is a disidentification".[14] In order to challenge the police order, a political subject is formed by contradicting its 'natural place' in that police order. It is therefore characterised not by shared characteristics, but by disagreement. In his book titled *Disagreement*, Rancière uses the example of the proletarian to demonstrate this:

> "Proletarian" political subjectification […] is in no way a form of "culture," of some collective ethos capable of finding a voice. It presupposes, on the contrary, a multiplicity of fractures separating worker bodies from their ethos and from the voice that is supposed to express the soul of this ethos: a multiplicity of speech events – that is, of one-off experiences of conflict over speech and voice, over the partition of the perceptible.[15]

Politics, in this denotation, is a rare occurrence, held in the moment of challenge.[16] The response of the police order, whatever it is, marks its end. Indeed, the police "causes it to disappear continually either by purely and simply denying it or by claiming political logic as its own".[17] The challenge is either denied (even ignored), or accepted, altering the arrangement of the police distribution of the sensible. It is worth noting here Rancière's divergence from the common claim that 'everything is political'. For Rancière, "nothing is political in itself merely because power relationships are at work in it"; rather, "anything may become political".[18]

While "there is no permanence to the forms of subjectivation as such", instances of Rancière's 'strong sense' of politics have, nevertheless, shared traits.[19] Primary among these is their being based upon the equality of speaking beings. The challenge to the police logic is always from egalitarian logic that "demonstrates the sheer contingency of the [police] order". The process of equality that meets the police order in the instance of politics is "the open set of practices driven by the assumption of equality between any and every speaking being and by the concern to test this equality".[20]

The equality of speaking beings is that which is claimed by every political act, and which in its verification disrupts the police distribution of the sensible. Rancière asserts that "[t]he essence

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[13] J. M. Bernstein, 'Movies as the Great Democratic Art Form of the Modern World (Notes on Rancière)' in *Jacques Rancière and the Contemporary Scene: the Philosophy of Radical Equality*, ed. by Jean-Philippe Deranty and Alison Ross (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 15 - 42 (p. 22).
[14] *Disagreement*, p. 36.
[15] Ibid., pp. 36 – 37.
[16] Ibid., p. 139.
[17] 'Ten Theses on Politics', p. 45.
[18] *Disagreement*, p. 32.
[19] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 26.
[20] *Disagreement*, p. 30.

of equality is … to declassify, to undo the supposed naturalness of orders".[21] The 'supplement', the 'part of no-part' challenging the police is identified with the people as a whole. Politics therefore comprises a claim to the common that is denied under the police distribution of the sensible on the grounds of the equality of all people.

Disagreement begins with a lengthy interpretation of the section of Aristotle's *Politics* in which the latter draws the power of speech, the separation between *logos* and *phōnē*, as that which separates humans from animals and which thereby constitutes the family and the city.[22] Rancière follows Aristotle's logic but problematizes it, shifting 'politics' back to dispute of the boundary between *logos* and *phōnē*:

> So the simple opposition between logical animals and phonic animals is in no way the given on which politics is then based. It is, on the contrary, one of the stakes of the very dispute that institutes politics.[23]

In addition to demonstrating that the division of sounds into speech/*logos* and 'mere' voice/*phōnē* is a separation characteristic of police ordering, challengeable by politics through the equality of speaking beings, Rancière demonstrates that even inequality is formulated on equality; for Rancière, "inequality itself is inconceivable" without the equality of speaking beings.[24] And the equality on which inequality relies is always the source of its undoing:

> There is order in society because some people command and others obey, but in order to obey an order at least two things are required: you must understand the order and you must understand that you must obey it. And to do that, you must already be the equal of the person who is ordering you. It is this equality that gnaws away at any natural order.[25]

To return this to the aesthetic terms of the distribution of the sensible, the police order asserts that some sounds are intelligible, and therefore logical, while others are not, and are therefore merely sonorous. The police order also determines *which* sounds are and which aren't intelligible. A political act challenges this order, insisting on the intelligibility of a sound or set of sounds that the police order had previously determined as merely sonorous, either because of the place in the police distribution of the sensible of those sounds, or the place of those producing them. The equality of speaking beings challenges the order that determines what does and does not 'count' as speech. More broadly, this challenge may assert the audibility of a sound, the visibility of

[21] *On the Shores of Politics*, pp. 32 – 33.
[22] It is advisable when reading the opening chapters of *Disagreement* in its English translation to note the issues raised about the translations of Rancière and Aristotle in Chambers, *The Lessons of Rancière*, pp. 91 – 98.
[23] *Disagreement*, p. 22.
[24] 'Ten Theses on Politics', p. 41.
[25] *Disagreement*, p. 16.

an action, the legibility of a written statement. In each case, the challenge is made to an assumed relationship between sensibility and intelligibility – the political challenge is always an aesthetic one.

The opposition between politics and police appears fairly authoritative in *Disagreement* and *Ten Theses on Politics*, even while Rancière takes care to not align the 'police' strictly with the state and 'politics' with any opposition to it. Synopsizing as above will tend to simplify the division, and so it seems pertinent to attend to later comments of Rancière's that clarify his position by complicating the opposition. That opposition is "blurred all the time", and "never clear-cut".[26] 'Police' and 'politics' are "two forms of the distribution of the sensible that are at once opposed in their principles and yet constantly mixed in their functioning".[27] This is well-illustrated by returning to an example proposed by Rancière. While proletarian political subjectivation presupposes "a multiplicity of fractures separating worker bodies from their ethos and from the voice that is supposed to express the soul of this ethos," disidentification in short, a 'good' police ordering of people and voices might be conceived and enacted in order to articulate that difference.[28]

Furthermore, in later works, Rancière broadens his use of 'politics' to encompass that which he had previously ascribed to the 'police'. As Gabriel Rockhill points out, "Rancière increasingly uses the term […] 'politics' […] to refer to both distributions *and* redistributions of the sensible order".[29] As evidence, he cites Rancière's definitions of the term from *Aesthetics and its Discontents* and *The Politics of Literature*. The latter, in particular, is in marked difference from his 'strong' sense of politics that is in opposition to the police: "What really deserves the name of politics is the cluster of perceptions and practices that shape this common world. Politics is first of all a way of framing, among sensory data, a specific sphere of experience. It is a partition of the sensible, of the visible and the sayable, which allows (or does not allow) some specific data to appear; which allows or does not allow some specific subjects to designate them and speak about them. It is a specific intertwining of ways of being, ways of doing and ways of speaking."[30] This second way in which Rancière uses the term 'politics' aligns more closely with what is usually called politics. J. M. Bernstein refers to this as Rancière's 'weak' sense of politics, that is "constituted through a partition of the sensible, of the visible and the sayable, into what is seen and unseen within the visible, and what is said and silenced within the sayable."[31]

This weaker sense of politics is also close to that which is sometimes referred to in anglophone discourses around Rancière's work as 'the political', the place in which 'politics', in its

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[26] *The Method of Equality*, p. 99.
[27] Jacques Rancière, 'Against an Ebbing Tide: An Interview with Jacques Rancière', trans. by Richard Stamp, in *Reading Rancière: Critical Dissensus*, ed. by Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), pp. 238 - 251 (p. 249).
[28] *Disagreement*, p. 36.
[29] Gabriel Rockhill, 'The Politics of Aesthetics: Political History and the Hermeneutics of Art', in *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics*, pp. 195 – 215 (p. 201).
[30] Jacques Rancière, 'The Politics of Literature', *SubStance*,103 (2004), 10 - 24 (p. 10).
[31] Bernstein, p. 22.

'strong' sense, meets the police. Samuel Chambers argues that *le politique* and 'the political' have gained currency in anglophone discourses around Rancière's work, despite their scarcity in his major political writings, through their use by anglophone interpreters of his work. In these discourses, 'the political' serves as a mediating third term, as a space in which 'politics' and the 'police' can meet. In *Disagreement* and 'Ten Theses on Politics', Chambers points out, "the phrase 'the political' does not really appear at all", and of the earlier essays that make up *On the Shores of Politics* he states, "Rancière draws no distinction in them between *le politique* and *la politique*".[32] Chambers locates the source of 'the political' as a part of Rancièrian thought on politics in an essay entitled 'Politique, Identification, Subjectivation' that appeared in the second French edition of *Aux Bords du Politique*, hitherto not published in English translation. This essay was originally written in English by Rancière, and based on a talk he gave, in English, in 1991, in response to the question 'What is the political?', "a question emerging from the American multiculturalism debate".[33] Rancière's adoption of the term in this article should not, then, be surprising, given the propensity of his writing to adopt the vocabulary of his interlocutors. But neither should it be read as defining of his thought on politics, particularly given that it pre-dates his major works on the topic. In voicing his opposition to the adoption of the term in anglophone discourses on Rancière's work, Chambers articulates an important point regarding the deployment of Rancière's thought. Chambers objects to 'the political' on the grounds that the three-term model created by its inclusion in Rancière's model of politics "cannot adequately capture Rancière's polemical approach to politics" and "runs the risks of either substantializing, ontologizing, or purifying Rancière's accounts of politics".[34] Such a move runs contrary to Rancière's intent, and renders his model of politics equivalent to other models, including those that his writing was intended as a polemic against, such as that of Hannah Arendt; Rancière asserts that he "wrote the 'Ten Theses on Politics' primarily as a critique of the Arendtian idea of a specific political sphere and a political way of life".[35]

The insistence on the use of a grounding third term in Rancière's model of politics is also a move in the opposite direction to the trajectory of Rancière's thought, from his brief and contingent use of the three-term model in 'Politique, Identification, Subjectivation', through the two-term model of his major writings on politics towards the single-term model identified by Rockhill in his more recent writing. This trajectory is one of a gradual shift of emphasis rather than any big change in Rancière's thought. For Rockhill, Rancière's more recent work is indicative of "a slightly more nuanced position" perhaps achieved "by foregrounding elements that remained

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[32] Samuel Chambers, 'Translating Politics', *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 49 (2016), 524 - 548 (p. 537)
[33] Ibid., p. 539.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Jacques Rancière, 'The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics' in Paul Bowman, Richard Stamp (eds.), *Reading Rancière* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), pp. 1 – 17 (p. 3).

somewhat peripheral in his earlier work".[36] Rockhill sees the strict opposition of politics and police as manifesting a logic of identity and difference that Rancière has critiqued in the work of other writers such as Gilles Deleuze and Jean-François Lyotard.[37] While Rancière's apparent discontinuation of the use of the term 'police' appears as a purification of his thought, the complexification of the opposition at its core serves to allow Rancière's model a greater dynamism, and to be less totalising in its account of politics, a shift that resonates with the spirit of his oeuvre as a whole and his thought on politics in particular.

None of this negates the possible efficacy of deploying the pair of politics and police in following Rancière's thought, but it serves as a reminder to those seeking to find "a privileged application" for "his problematic" in a new field, of the author's anxiety about those reading *Disagreement* who are "looking for a theory of politics they can apply".[38]

2.2 Regimes of Art

> The fact that there are always forms of power does not mean that there is always such a thing as politics, and the fact that there is music or sculpture in a society does not mean that art is constituted as an independent category.[39]

While Rancière developed the 'distribution of the sensible' in order to articulate his understanding of politics and the police, it is clear that there can be applications beyond that domain for "a generally implicit law that defines the forms of partaking by first defining the modes of perception in which they are inscribed".[40] Rancière subsequently uses the term in order to differentiate between three "regimes of identification" within the Western tradition of the arts. The possibilities for studies of music following Rancière are greatly broadened by investigation of his writing on these regimes and analysis of music's relationship to them. Rancière defines the distributions of the sensible particular to regimes of art as a set of relationships between factors that transcend any particular historical understanding of art:

> I call a general regime of art an articulation between three things: modes of production of objects or of the interrelation of actions; forms of visibility of these manners of making or doing; and manners of conceptualizing or problematizing these manners of making or doing and these forms of visibility. The modes of conceptualization are not simply added interpretation; they are conditions of possibility for what artistic practices can produce and for what aesthetic gazes can see.[41]

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[36] 'The Politics of Aesthetics: Political History and the Hermeneutics of Art', p. 201.
[37] Ibid., p. 200.
[38] 'A Distant Sound', p. 353; *The Method of Equality*, p. 102.
[39] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. by Gabriel Rockhill (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 47.
[40] 'Ten Theses on Politics', p. 44.
[41] Jacques Rancière, 'What Aesthetics Can Mean', trans. by Brian Holmes, in *From an Aesthetic Point of View*, ed. by Peter Osborne (London: Serpent's Tail, 2000), pp. 16 – 17.

The three regimes of identification articulated by Rancière are the ethical regime of images, the representative or poetic regime of the arts and the aesthetic regime of art. It should be emphasised that the differences between the regimes are also differences in the relationship between art or the arts and "other spheres of collective experience".[42] It is in this way that the regimes of the identification of the arts are understood, occasionally by Rancière himself and much more often in discourses around his thought, as distributions of the sensible pertaining to the politics of aesthetics. Given the homonymy already discussed with regard to the term 'politics' in Rancière's work, it should be noted that Rancière also uses the term 'aesthetics' in more than one sense, with strong or restricted and weak or broad senses operating in roughly equivalent ways to the two main senses of 'politics'. Aesthetics, in its restricted or strong sense, "refers to a specific regime for identifying and reflecting on the arts", which Rancière calls the 'aesthetic regime of art', discussed in detail below.[43] Rancière also uses 'aesthetics' in a broad or weak sense, referring to a relationship between the sensible and intelligible. It is in this way that politics is always an aesthetic concern, through the distributions of the sensible discussed in the preceding section.

The distribution of the sensible as it pertains to politics and the police is not only linked to the distributions of the sensible of arts practices by application of a common conceptual understanding. Art and politics are both "forms of presence of singular bodies in a specific space and time".[44] Beyond this, insofar as a distribution of the sensible accounts for a community, artworks and practices of art have places within it, and changes within them alter the distribution of the sensible in which they exist. The distributions of the sensible of 'art' and 'politics' each account for the other, but, as Rancière points out, "there is no criterion for establishing an appropriate correlation between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics."[45] This (in no means even or balanced) reciprocal influence of political and arts practices means that the two registers of the distribution of the sensible maintain a connection:

> [T]he relationship between aesthetics and politics consists in the relationship between this aesthetics of politics [the distribution of the sensible as it pertains to politics and the police] and the 'politics of aesthetics' – in other words in the way in which the practices and forms of visibility of art themselves intervene in the distribution of the sensible and its reconfiguration, in which they distribute spaces and times, subjects and objects, the common and the singular.[46]

[42] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 21.
[43] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 4.
[44] Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, trans. by Steven Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), p. 26.
[45] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 57 – 58.
[46] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 25.

The quotation marks around 'politics of aesthetics' in this definition reveal Rancière's discomfort with this phrase. Neither 'politics' nor 'aesthetics' in the phrase refers to Rancière's strong conception of those terms. This is not to say that art practices are necessarily apolitical. Rather, "a sensible politicity exists that is immediately attributed to the major forms of aesthetic distribution".[47] Rancière again uses quotation marks to assert that "[t]hese 'politics' obey their own proper logic, and they offer their services in very different contexts and time periods".[48] Rancière is very clear about the limits of what these 'services' can constitute: "The arts only ever lend to projects of domination or emancipation what they are able to lend them, that is to say, quite simply, what they have in common with them: bodily positions and movements, functions of speech, the parcelling out of the visible and the invisible."[49]

In a second formulation of this relationship Rancière considers art, rather than aesthetics, stating that it and politics are "two forms of distribution of the sensible, both of which are dependent on a specific regime of identification".[50] These formulations, of the relationship between politics and aesthetics and politics and art respectively, are both drawn from *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, identified by Gabriel Rockhill as one of those later works of Rancière in which he moves towards a broader, more dynamic, conception of politics. Indeed, taken together, they testify to an increased dynamism achieved by a shift from specific, named distributions of the sensible to a more elastic use of distributions of the sensible in general. In any case, it is clear that aesthetic and political practices exist within a shared, common world, and that their identification as art and politics is dependent upon the place of those terms in historically configured distributions of the sensible, even while aspects of each practice transcend historical categories.

Rancière has written most about these regimes in relation to the visual and, in particular, the literary arts. However, of the small amount that Rancière has written about music, most is to be found in his work on the regimes of identification of art, most significantly in 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', which appears in a book published to accompany an exhibition of multimedia art. In the article, Rancière articulates some facets of music's relationship to the regimes of identification of the arts, and reveals a second organising function of music, to add to the logic loaned to the Platonic project of partition via music's place as 'the art of the muses'. Rancière's writing on music in 'Metamorphosis of the Muses' will be discussed alongside broader descriptions of the regimes, below. However, as with the analysis of *The Emancipated Spectator*, it is important to note that the discussion of ideas centred on visuality in relation to music must take care to acknowledge music's specificities and avoid simple transposition. Critically, the placing of a music

[47] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 10.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., p. 14.
[50] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 26.

within the relative logics of Rancière's regimes is entirely dependent on the extent to which that music is considered 'art' or an art under those logics, 'art' itself being a "contingent notion".[51] The earliest regime to which Rancière refers he calls the 'ethical regime of images', reflecting the lack of an identified 'art' under its logic, and that 'arts', under that regime, encompassed methods of making and doing far removed from what are subsequently understood as 'the arts'.

Before describing Rancière's regimes, it is worth considering again the similarities and differences between Rancière's thought and that of Foucault, with whose *epistemes* Rancière's regimes share characteristics. The important divide between their conceptions regards their historicity; it is this difference that allows for the emergence of the aesthetic regime as Rancière describes, and opens up fields of possibility for Rancièrian musicologies as well as in studies of other arts practices. Interviewed by Gabriel Rockhill for the English edition of *Le Partage du Sensible*, Rancière articulates this difference:

> I differ from Foucault insofar as his archaeology seems to me to follow a schema of historical necessity according to which, beyond a certain chasm, something is no longer thinkable, can no longer be formulated. The visibility of a form of expression as an artistic form depends on a historically constituted regime of perception and intelligibility. This does not mean that it becomes invisible with the emergence of a new regime. I thus try at one and the same to historicize the transcendental and to de-historicize these systems of conditions of possibility. Statements or forms of expression undoubtedly depend on historically constituted systems of possibilities that determine forms of visibility or criteria of evaluation, but this does not mean that we jump from one system to another in such a way that the possibility of the new system coincides with the impossibility of the former system. In this way, the aesthetic regime of art, for example, is a system of possibilities that is historically constituted but that does not abolish the representative regime, which was previously dominant. At a given point in time, several regimes coexist and intermingle in the works themselves.[52]

The shift of emphasis found between Foucault and Rancière in their writing on politics produced a more optimistic tone, foregrounding the possibility of challenge over the inevitability of power. This finds a parallel in the shift between the unthinkability necessary between Foucault's *epistemes* and the dynamic contingency of Rancière's regimes of the identification of art. In each case, people, whoever they are, are credited with agency and ability; the radical equality central to Rancière's thought means that distributions of the sensible, in whichever sphere of collective experience, are subject to change through the actions of individuals.

[51] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 47.
[52] Ibid., pp. 46 – 47.

2.2.1 The Ethical Regime of Images

The ethical regime of images finds its "paradigmatic formulation" in Plato, for whom "art did not exist … but only arts, ways of doing and making".[53] It is *between arts* and not *through art* that Plato's divisions lie. The regime is ethical in that "it is a matter of knowing in what way images' mode of being affects the *ethos*, the mode of being of individuals and communities".[54] Plato differentiates 'true' arts from simulacra. The former are "forms of knowledge based on the imitation of a model with precise ends", such as "the straightforward tale, one without artifice", "free of doubt as to the identity of its teller" and "removed from the interplay of enhanced presence and diminished existence" that characterises "artistic simulacra that imitate simple appearances".[55] These two sets of art practices are distinguished "by the way in which the poem's images provide the spectators, both children and adult citizens, with a certain education and fit in with the distribution of the city's occupants".[56] What is made is virtuous or not depending upon its "intrinsic truth and of [its] impact on the ways of being of individuals and of the collectivity".[57] The relation of the arts to the wider community is consistent with Plato's ethical logic and proscription of politics:

> One and the same distribution of the sensible both excludes artisans from the political scene where they might do *something other* than their work *and* prohibits poets from getting on the artistic stage where they might assume a character *other* than their own. […] Plato simultaneously excludes both democracy and theatre so that he can construct an ethical community, a community without politics.[58]

Of course, in part, Plato's writings on music demonstrate an understanding of music consistent with other arts, wherein, famously, "the modes of music are never disturbed without unsettling of the most fundamental political and social conventions".[59] But in his two lengthiest discussions of music to date, 'Metamorphosis of the Muses' and 'A Distant Sound', Rancière situates music as prior to other arts in Plato's understanding. It is "the concern of the muses before being that of the instrumentalists", a science that for Plato, as for Pythagoras, is twinned with astronomy.[60] Music's priority, the divinity that is attributed to its mathematical harmony means that "before being an art, music is a form of sharing the sensitive, conferring space and meaning on the distribution of the bodies and images, voices and instruments in a given time and space."[61] This

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[53] 'Glossary of Technical Terms', p. 90; *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 16.
[54] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 16.
[55] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 16; Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, trans. by Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2007), p.110.
[56] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 16.
[57] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 28.
[58] Ibid., p. 26.
[59] Plato, *The Republic*, Book IV.
[60] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 23.
[61] Ibid.

positioning of music under Plato's ethical logic "makes music homologous of a certain disposition of the community," making music "at once an idea of sharing and a place within its distribution."[62] Rancière avoids the celebrated lines from *The Republic* that are quoted above. Instead, in 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', an essay in which music is discussed in its relation to the audiality of contemporary art, he draws from a section of *The Republic* in which Plato bemoans the "debasement of the mimetician" by focusing on the sounds of the theatre:[63]

> He will think nothing unworthy of himself, so that he will attempt, seriously and in the presence of many, to imitate all things – claps of thunder, and the noise of wind and hail and axles and pulleys, and the notes of trumpets and flutes and Panpipes, and the sounds of all instruments, and the cries of dogs, sheep and birds – and so his style will depend wholly on imitation in voice and gesture, or will contain but a little of pure narration.[64]

This 'pure narration' is that 'straightforward tale' of the 'true' arts, "monophonic speech which states only the content of actions and discourses"; "the speech of one who addresses citizens who have but one thing to imitate: to embody, that is, the virtue which puts them in their place and renders them apt for their task".[65] Music, the divine proportion of the muses, runs counter to the "anarchistic space of mimesis" and the multitudes, the "big noisy animal whose name is the people". It is through people's adherence to their place and their task that "the mathematical and ethical essence of music is achieved": that is, "the submission of the multiple to the law of unity".[66]

2.2.2 The Representative or Poetic Regime of the Arts

Rancière calls the second regime of the identification of art the representative or poetic regime of the arts. The discourse that provides its "manners of conceptualizing or problematizing [its] manners of making or doing and [its] forms of visibility" has a longer period of dominance, from Aristotle's critiques of Plato, through "all the poetics and treatises that were written in the Renaissance" to its eventual codification in the 'Classical Age' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[67] This regime "breaks away from the ethical regime of images" in two ways.[68] Firstly, it separates what become known as the 'fine arts' from ways of making and doing in general, and secondly, it liberates those arts "from questions of truth".[69] Rancière calls attention to the alignment

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[62] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 23.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Plato, *The Republic*, Book III, quoted in 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 19.
[65] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', pp. 19 – 20.
[66] Ibid., p. 20.
[67] 'What Aesthetics Can Mean', p. 17; Jacques Rancière and Peter Engelmann, *Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. by Wieland Hoban (Cambridge: Polity, 2019), p. 44.
[68] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 16.
[69] Jacques Rancière, Solange Guénoun and James H. Kavanagh, 'Jacques Rancière: Literature, Politics, Aesthetics: Approaches to Democratic Disagreement', trans. by Roxanne Lapidus, in *SubStance,* 29 (2000), 3 – 24 (p. 9).

of the separation of certain arts with a class separation relevant at the time of Aristotle's writing: among the arts, ways of making and doing, those arts separated are the "free [or liberal] arts, which are primarily activities fit for free people, people with free time – in contrast to all the artisanal activities, which are occupational activities".[70]

This regime's pair of names, which Rancière rarely uses as a double, instead emphasising one or the other aspect, reflects the regime's identification of "the substance of art [or the arts] in the couple *poiēsis/mimēsis*":[71]

> I call this regime *poetic* in the sense that it identifies the arts – what the Classical Age would later call the 'fine' arts – within a classification of ways of doing and making, and it consequently defines proper ways of doing and making as well as means of assessing imitations. I call it *representative* insofar as it is the notion of representation or *mimēsis* that organizes these ways of doing, making, seeing and judging.[72]

Under this regime, 'art' still "does not exist as an autonomous notion".[73] The 'fine' arts, though, are distinguished as "a specific class endowed with specific criteria" among the various ways of doing and making.[74] As well as being the arts practiced by those with free time, they are distinguished by the principle of imitation; they execute "imitations or arrangements of represented actions".[75] Imitation is considered here as "a principle of inner normativity specified by rules and criteria of recognition that allow one to judge whether an imitation really is art, whether it adheres to criteria of good imitations in general as well as to those of a specific art, or genre, of imitation in particular".[76]

Rancière stresses that the notion of representation or *mimēsis* that organises this regime of the identification of art is not that of resemblance and that this representation "is not an artistic process".[77] The *mimēsis* of the representative regime is not "a normative principle stating that art must make copies resembling their models".[78] It is, instead, "a hierarchical logic which states that we are allowed to depict one thing but not another, and that one should depict actions or figures in accordance with the forms that are suited to them".[79] It is *mimēsis* that "distinguished the artist's know-how […] from the artisan's [and] from the entertainer's", setting aside the fine arts by "defin[ing] them as a regulated relation between a way of doing – a *poiesis* - and a way of being

[70] Rancière and Engelmann, pp. 35 – 36.
[71] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 16.
[72] Ibid., p. 17.
[73] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 65.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 17.
[78] Ibid., p. 16.
[79] Rancière and Engelmann, p. 44.

which is affected by it – an *aisthesis*".[80] Across the period of this regime's operation, the axioms comprising the regime's mimetic principle multiply and complexify but remain tied to Aristotle's original hierarchy of the arts.

In 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', Rancière elaborates on music's complicated relationship with the mimetic order. While the inauguration of the representative regime of arts is identified with Aristotle's critique of Plato, music, for him, remains "the generic name for the education which shapes noble souls and bodies, subjected to divine proportion".[81] But Aristotle assigns music a second place, within "the hierarchy of elements in the tragic poem, which is at the same time the hierarchy of the arts".[82] The place it assumes is "after the construction of the fable and the elaboration of the discourse" and "before the 'spectacle' which is the least noble, most incidental element".[83]

The working through of the relationships within the hierarchy of the arts provides music with its complex place in the representative regime. The proximity of music to discourse through song provides the force that both draws music above the spectacle and attests to its irrelevance, pushing it below the spectacle and away: "the song separates its excellence from the ordinary nature of sound by linking up with discourse", but "[i]f music is song, and song is akin to speech, that also means that they are too close to music to serve as an *analogon*".[84] Painting, meanwhile, despite its apparent spectacularity, is elevated by its distance from speech, its "radical exteriority" allowing the "visible quality of painting" to be made into the *analogon* that music could not become. Rancière illustrates music's relegation within the mimetic order with reference to Kant, whose *Critique of Judgment* serves as both a final great totem of the period of dominance of the representative regime and originary text of the aesthetic regime to follow:[85]

> The matrix couple of the poem that depicts and the painting that recounts, which commands in the representative regime the correspondence of the arts, thus accuses music of 'mutism'. It deports 'pure' music that is, the mute music of instruments that are not subject to the meaning of speech and the rationality of history – toward the only charms of sound that accompanies the pleasures of the easy life – dinner-table music or background music – to the extreme point where the art of the Muses is finally subdued: the attraction of a sensation, according to Kant, rather than the beauty of free play; a pleasure rather than a culture.[86]

[80] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 7.
[81] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 23.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., pp. 23 – 24.

Whether music is considered an art under this regime is dependent upon its fulfilling the criteria by which the free (or liberal) arts or fine arts are separated from other modes of doing and making. While western art music of the Classical age can be seen to follow the mimetic principle that distinguishes it from the work of artisans or entertainers, popular song does not. It is that to which worker-poets are advised to "devote themselves" rather than the "pomp of great poetry".[87] Popular song is not among the fine arts, and it is therefore a proper pastime of those without the time required for the free or fine arts.

2.2.3 The Aesthetic Regime of Art

In *The Politics of Aesthetics* and *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, Rancière locates the beginning of a third regime, the aesthetic regime of art, around the turn of the nineteenth century. With *Aisthesis*, the date of the inception of the aesthetic regime recedes to the 1760s. It is on this regime that Rancière has written most, and in most depth, and it is in his writing on this regime that the connections of his writing on the arts to the other major parts of his oeuvre, particularly politics, become most clear. The arrangement of this regime, the 'articulation' between practices, modes of visibility and manners of conceptualisation, is revealed in considerably more complexity than with the ethical and poetic or representative regimes.

It is with this regime that 'art' is unified in the singular, through the breakdown of the complex of hierarchies and proscriptions of the representative regime. The aesthetic regime accomplishes this breakdown by "destroying the mimetic barrier that distinguished ways of doing and making affiliated with art from other ways of doing and making".[88] Art under the aesthetic regime of identification is thus characterised by a paradox: "The aesthetic regime asserts the absolute singularity of art and, at the same time, destroys any pragmatic criterion for isolating this singularity".[89] The defining characteristic of an identified art is not an aspect of a work's making, but rather its being apprehended:

> The property of being art refers back not to a distinction between modes of doing, but to a distinction between modes of being. This is what 'aesthetics' means: in the aesthetic regime of art, the property of being art is no longer given by the criteria of technical perfection but is ascribed to a specific form of sensory apprehension.[90]

In the aesthetic regime, *mimesis*, as a regulator of the relationship between *poiesis* and *aisthesis* is replaced by a gap. This gap is consubstantial with aesthetics, and traversed by the "specific gaze

[87] 'A Distant Sound', p. 355.
[88] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 19
[89] Ibid.
[90] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 29.

and form of thought" required to identify art in the singular.[91] To close the gap, to bring *poiesis* and *aisthesis* into agreement requires "a human nature that is either lost or [of] a humanity to come".[92] This "discordant relation" has been the object of all aesthetic discourse, "from Kant to Adorno, including Schiller, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche".[93] And, through its necessitating another humanity to close its gap, aesthetics is "the alliance between artistic radicality and political radicality".[94]

The possibilities of the aesthetic regime's gap have impacted arts practices and discourses in a wide variety of ways. These practices and discourses include, but are not limited to, those usually characterised by notions of the modern or postmodern. While Rancière's aesthetic regime shares characteristics with certain conceptualisations of modernity, it operates at a different register: it is the conditions of the aesthetic regime that allow for the discourses of modernity. Rancière is dismissive of such discourses, reflecting that "[t]he notion of modernity … seems to have been deliberately invented to prevent a clear understanding of the transformations of art and its relationships with the other spheres of collective experience".[95] Rather than modernist and postmodernist ruptures, Rancière sees continuation of the working through of the aesthetic regime's characteristic discord; he argues that "the notions of modernity and postmodernity misguidedly project, in the form of temporal succession, antagonistic elements whose tension infuses and animates the aesthetic regime of art in its entirety".[96]

The difference between Rancière's aesthetic regime and modernism is well illustrated by the place of art's autonomy: "aesthetic autonomy is not that autonomy of artistic 'making' celebrated by modernism. It is the autonomy of a form of sensory experience."[97] And this autonomy of sensory experience, articulated elsewhere as 'the aesthetic gaze', is at odds with the autonomy claimed by modernism: "The aesthetic regime of art institutes the relation between the forms of identification of art and the forms of political community in such a way as to challenge in advance every opposition between autonomous art and heteronomous art, art for art's sake and art in the service of politics, museum art and street art".[98] It is the autonomy of its sensorium, of its gaze, and not that of the practice of making artworks, on which is founded the 'politics' particular to the aesthetic regime, through an "apparent paradox, in which the politicity of art is tied to its very autonomy."[99]

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[91] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 6.
[92] Ibid., p. 8.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., p. 21-22
[95] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 21.
[96] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 42.
[97] Ibid., p. 32.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., p. 26.

Rancière illustrates the various aspects of this politicity through his writing on the emergence of the aesthetic regime from the period of the representative regime's dominance, an emergence concomitant with a project he has, at times, referred to as 'the aesthetic revolution'.

It is the coexistence of regimes, by which they are differentiated from Foucault's *epistemes*, that allows for the manner of the emergence of the aesthetic regime. The aesthetic regime is initiated slowly, in a manner far from the epistemes that Rancière posits would have people "jump from one system to another in such a way that the possibility of the new system coincides with the impossibility of the former system".[100] The aesthetic revolution is a project shared by writers and artists in different fields across the nineteenth century and beyond; it initiates the aesthetic regime of art through an accumulation of works and theories that undermine, without destroying, the representative regime. Rancière's conception of artistic regimes necessitates the examination of discourse alongside practice; the discourse evidences a regime's "modes of conceptualization" that serve as "conditions of possibility for what artistic practices can produce and for what aesthetic gazes can see".[101] The aesthetic regime's identification with a particular form of sensory experience, rather than any particular modes of artistic practice, means that its emergence is traced primarily through the writing that attests to the autonomy of art's sensorium.

Indeed, Rancière states that the aesthetic regime of the arts "began with decisions to reinterpret what makes art or what art makes" rather than "decisions to initiate an artistic rupture".[102] In his writing on literature, Rancière identifies these reinterpretations in texts as early as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* of the early seventeenth century and Giambattista Vico's re-reading of Homer in his *New Science* of 1725.[103] The existence of these early outliers demonstrates both the transhistorical possibility of arts being understood in a manner consistent with the aesthetic regime and the historical contingency of the transformation of that understanding into a regime wherein various arts practices, each with its own specific modes of visibility and intelligibility, are aggregated into a unified, identified 'art'.

The emergence of the aesthetic regime as a new paradigm for the relationship between ways of making, forms of visibility, and their conceptualisation, cannot be reduced to some unifying factor of historical necessity. The writers and artists whose work is investigated by Rancière have a variety of motivations for producing work that questions the necessity of the representative regime's conventions. Rancière does point to shared motivations, particularly related to the political upheaval of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but maintains a respectful specificity,

100 *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 47.
101 'What Aesthetics Can Mean', p. 17.
102 *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 20.
103 See Jacques Rancière, *Mute Speech: Literature, Critical Theory and Politics*, trans. by James Swenson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) and Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Literature*, trans. by Julie Rose (Cambridge: Polity, 2011).

consistent with his oeuvre as a whole, in dealing with individual thinkers. Indeed, he argues that any shared idea that could have borne the aesthetic regime would have to be dependent upon the changed relationships that the aesthetic regime inaugurated:

> The conditions of this emergence cannot be deduced from a general concept of art or beauty founded on a global theory of man or the world, of the subject or being. Such concepts themselves depend upon a transformation of the forms of sensible experience, of ways of perceiving and being affected. They formulate a mode of intelligibility out of these reconfigurations of experience.[104]

Consistent with the specificity found elsewhere in his work, Rancière's standard method for investigating art of the aesthetic regime is through specific 'scenes' that "show the way in which a given artistic appearances requires changes in the paradigms of art".[105] His *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art* represents the culmination of his writing on the aesthetic regime, and contains fourteen such scenes, the earliest of which is that which shifts the date of the inauguration of the regime back to the 1760s. This scene revolves around the publication, in 1764, of Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *The History of Ancient Art*.

Two facets of Winckelmann's writing are particularly important for its part in the inauguration of the aesthetic regime of art. One concerns the very title of his book, which identifies art in the singular, and as such contrasts with the studies of artists' lives and of antiquities that preceded it. Providing such a history, though, does not merely synthesise these two forms of writing. Rather, it was necessary for Winckelmann "to break down the separation between the singularity of 'the life of the artist' and the anonymity of the development of the arts". This destruction was achieved "by revoking the social separation between the liberal and mechanical arts", a separation that, since Aristotle, had run through the representative or poetic regime of the arts.[106] It is Winckelmann's conception of history that achieves this, a "historicist concern" that is "surely shared by all those who want to break with the conventions of the representative order".[107]

Elsewhere, in *The Names of History* and *The Edges of Fiction*, Rancière describes a process by which history takes up a causal logic in place of descriptions of isolated events, as part of the same revolution in which, through the aesthetic regime's subordination of the representative regime, literature loses the necessity for such a logic.[108] Here, Winckelmann's history of art, in emerging "from the narrative of individual lives modelled on the exemplary lives of antiquity", must "involve a temporal and causal scheme, inscribing the description of works into a process of progress,

[104] *Aisthesis*, p. ix.
[105] Ibid., p. xi.
[106] Ibid., p. 13.
[107] Ibid., p. 14.
[108] Jacques Rancière, *The Edges of Fiction*, trans. by Steven Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity, 2019).

perfection and decline".[109] The 'temporal and causal scheme' of Winckelmann's history "implies that the history of art should be the history of a collective form of life, the story of a homogenous milieu of life and of the diverse forms it brings about".[110] The collective form of life is the "autonomous reality" of art, thereby and paradoxically instituted by a process of contextualisation.[111] Winckelmann conceives of 'art' "no longer as the skill of those who made paintings, statues or poems, but as the sensible milieu of the coexistence of their works",[112] making him "one of the first, if not the first, to invent the notion of art as we understand it".[113]

The second reason for the notability of Winckelmann's work to the initiation of the aesthetic regime is the manner of his description of Greek statues. Among these, Rancière focuses on his description of the *Belvedere Torso*, a mutilated statue believed to depict Hercules that has been reduced to "a seated body deprived of every limb capable of performing any action requiring force or skill".[114] For Winckelmann, in contrast to the artists that had attempted to fulfil the statue's promise by imagining its completion, "[t]he accidental lack of the statue manifests its essential virtue."[115] In his mutilation, Hercules "appears here purified from the dross of humanity, and after having attained immortality and a seat among the gods; for he is represented without need of human nourishment, of further use of his powers."[116] Among the attributes of the statue that Winckelmann admires is "the perpetual flowing of one form into another, and the undulating lines which rise and fall like waves, and become swallowed up in one another".[117] For Rancière, in Winckelmann's descriptions, "the greatest active hero [is] miscast in the total inactivity of pure thought", indeed a pure thought that "only stands out as its exact opposite: the radical impersonality of a material movement very similar to immobility: the perpetual oscillation of waves on a calm sea."[118]

The statue had not been without admirers in the age of the representative regime's dominance; no less a figure than Michelangelo had extolled its perfection. However, the statue's mutilation disqualified it from judgment against "two main criteria used by the representative order", namely "the harmony of proportions – that is to say, the congruence between parts and the whole" and "the expressivity – that is, the relation between a visible form and a character – an identity, a feeling, a thought – that this visible form makes recognizable in unequivocal traits".[119]

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[109] *Aisthesis*, p. 14.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., p. 12.
[113] Ibid.
[114] *Aisthesis*, p. 2.
[115] Ibid., p. 3.
[116] Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *The History of Ancient Art*, vol. II, trans. by G. Henry Lodge (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1880), pp. 264-265, quoted in *Aisthesis*, p. 1.
[117] Ibid.
[118] *Aisthesis*, p. 3.
[119] Ibid., pp. 3 – 4.

In his praise of the *Belvedere Torso*, Winckelmann is not merely elevating the purity of the line against a more complex regime of judgment; his depiction "signifies the revocation of the principle that linked the appearance of beauty to the realization of a science of proportion and expression".[120] In Winckelmann's writing, the mutilation of the *Belvedere Torso* "corresponds to the structural breakdown of a paradigm of artistic perfection", namely, the representative regime of the arts.[121]

2.2.4 The Metapolitics of Art in the Aesthetic Regime

Prior to *Aisthesis* and his investigation of Winckelmann, Rancière had tended to trace the founding of the aesthetic regime to the intertwining discourses of Romanticism and German Idealism around the turn of the nineteenth century. Indeed, toward the conclusion of his chapter on Winckelmann, he notes the parallel between the freedom Winckelmann found in Hercules' mutilated torso and that found by Friedrich von Schiller, thirty years later, in another Greek statue, known as the *Juno Ludovisi*. Schiller's account of aesthetic disinterest is central to Rancière's understanding of the aesthetic regime, a "manifesto" which "remains, in a sense, unsurpassable".[122]

It is between Schiller's analysis of the *Juno Ludovisi* in *Uber die aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen* and Kant's analysis of aesthetic experience that Rancière, in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, articulates the 'politicity' of art in the aesthetic regime. Schiller's *Juno Ludovisi* shares with Winckelmann's immortal Hercules "the specific attribute of divinity", that is "not to want anything, to be liberated from the concern to give oneself ends and to have to realize them".[123] Through its manifestation of "the essential characteristic of divinity, its 'idleness' or 'indifferency'", the *Juno Ludovisi* becomes a 'free appearance'.[124] The freedom of its appearance reproduces itself in the manner of its spectator; because "the artistic specificity of the statue inheres in that 'idleness', in this absence of volition", the spectator assumes a state defined by Schiller, following Kant, as 'free play'.[125]

Rancière is clear that the use of the word 'play' does not imply that Schiller takes this state lightly, because for Schiller: "Man is only fully a human being when he plays", and even further, this apparent paradox is "capable of bearing the whole edifice of the art of the beautiful and of the still more difficult art of living".[126] Schiller's 'play' is defined by Rancière in its "traditional sense"

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120 *Aisthesis*, p. 4.
121 Ibid.
122 *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 19.
123 *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 27.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 Friedrich von Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 107, quoted in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 28.

as "any activity that has no end other than itself, that does not intend to gain any effective power over things or persons".[127]

If the defining figure of the aesthetic regime is the gap opened up between *poeisis* and *mimesis*, the free play of Schiller's aesthetic state occurs in another gap opened by the first, a suspension of "the ordinary connections not only between appearance and reality, but also between form and matter, activity and passivity, understanding and sensibility".[128] It is in this suspension that the politicity of the aesthetic regime of art is found. This suspension introduced by the aesthetic state is a temporary suspension of a distribution of the sensible in which meanings are fixed, in which there is a predictable relationship between sensibility and intelligibility, between *poiesis* and *mimesis*. The suspension thereby "defines that which comes within the province of art through its adherence to a sensorium different to that of domination."[129]

Where Winckelmann's history of art requires the revocation of the separation between liberal and mechanical arts in order to constitute a unified art as aesthetic sensorium, Schiller's aesthetic state revokes the same separation through slightly different means. In *Critique of Judgment*, Kant's 'free play' and 'free appearance' "suspend the power of form over matter, of intelligence over sensibility".[130] Schiller transposes these "philosophical propositions into anthropological and political propositions", and thereby posits that "[t]he power of 'form' over 'matter' is the power of the class of intelligence over the class of sensation, of men of culture over men of nature".[131] For Schiller, this is not merely a metaphor through which to interpret works of art, and it is entirely consistent with Rancière's own project of understanding politics through distributions of the sensible. Indeed, his critique of political philosophy from Plato to Bourdieu serves as evidence for his assertion, in examining Schiller, that "the legitimacy of domination has always rested on the evidence of a sensory division between different humanities".[132] By way of demonstration, Rancière cites the example of Voltaire's "man of taste", who "has a different pair of eyes, a different pair of ears, a different sense of tact to that of the coarse man".[133]

The divisions of the ethical and representative regimes rely on this division of sense. Plato's myth of metals, which assigns the residents of his Republic a role from which they must not turn away, is grounded in a supposedly natural difference between people's 'sensibilities'. That this division concerns sensibility as well as occupation means that "the mimetician is as much deprived of 'free appearance' as the artisan is of the possibility to engage in free play".[134] As Rancière has

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[127] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 30.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., p. 31.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid, p. 12, citing Voltaire, 'Goût', in *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, Paris 1827, vol. III, p. 279.
[134] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 31.

made clear, the separation between and hierarchisation of the free, liberal or fine arts and the mechanical arts in the representative regime is originally a separation between arts practiced by "people with free time" and the artisanal or occupational activities of those without.[135] In their varying relationships across the regimes of the arts, work, play and appearance "are the proper categories of the distribution of the sensible", that "describe the forms of domination and of equality operative within the very tissue of ordinary sensory experience".[136]

The politicity of the aesthetic regime of art therefore lies in its establishing art as an autonomous form of experience in which the ordinary domination of form over matter and intelligence over sensibility do not apply. Importantly, it is the autonomy of aesthetic experience that means that "there is no conflict between the purity of art and its politicization"; it is, rather, "by dint of its purity that the materiality of art has been able to make of itself the anticipated materiality of a different configuration of the community."[137]

The politicity of art in the aesthetic regime, brought about by the aesthetic separation of art's sensorium from the sensorium of everyday life, is of a register particular to art. In its separation from everyday life, this sensorium "[does] not promise … to support the cause of political emancipation with forms of art".[138] Rather, aesthetics "opposes its own forms to those constructed by the dissensual interventions of political subjects".[139] Rancière proposes that the 'politics' of the aesthetic regime be called a 'metapolitics'.

In order to understand the politicity of art as a metapolitics, it is instructive to consider the latter term's history in Rancière's oeuvre. Rancière's use of 'metapolitics' begins with *Disagreement* in 1994, but the term describes something around which much of Rancière's earlier work can be seen, retrospectively, to cohere. In interview with Davide Panagia in 2000, Rancière states that it "has been a constant concern in [his] intellectual pursuits since the 1970s … to evince what [he] call[s] 'metapolitics'".[140] 'Metapolitics' becomes, in effect, the name for the specific separation, the distributing of the sensible, performed by and in the name of Marx, as examined or critiqued in *Les Révoltes Logiques*, *Proletarian Nights* and, in particular, *The Philosopher and his Poor*.

Disagreement indeed functions in part as a recapitulation of *The Philosopher and his Poor*, albeit with a change in central figure, from the masses, plebs or people (or their unruly synecdoche, the shoemaker), to Rancière's particular configuration of 'politics', discussed above and given its fullest exploration and most stringent definition in the book's early chapters. In *Disagreement*, Rancière demonstrates that 'political philosophy', in all of its antagonistic canon, shares a common aim;

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[135] Rancière and Engelmann, pp. 35 – 36.
[136] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 31.
[137] Ibid., p. 32.
[138] Ibid., p. 33.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Jacques Rancière and Davide Panagia, 'Dissenting Words: An Interview with Jacques Rancière', trans. by Davide Panagia and Emiliano Battista in *Dissenting Words*, pp. 81 – 99 (p. 87).

"what is called 'political philosophy' might well be the set of reflective operations whereby philosophy tries to rid itself of politics".[141] 'Politics', at this point of the development of Rancière's thought, should certainly be taken in its 'strong sense', as a disidentificatory challenge. Therefore, politics "is that activity which has the rationality of disagreement as its very own rationality".[142] This is, for philosophy, a 'scandal', manifested in an "operation, whereby philosophy automatically expels disagreement from itself".[143] The parallel with Rancière's examination of the legacy of Platonism, even among anti-Platonists, in *The Philosopher and His Poor*, is clear. But where, in the earlier work, writing such as Bourdieu's professedly anti-Platonist sociology is "only the confirmation, indeed the radicalization, of [Platonism's] interdictions", in *Disagreement*, the philosophers' separation from the people about whom they write is itself separated into three distinct modes, which Rancière names archipolitics, parapolitics and metapolitics.[144]

Platonist archipolitics "revoked false politics, that is, democracy" and "declared a radical gap between real justice, resembling divine proportion, and democratic stagings of wrong, assimilated to the reign of injustice".[145] Aristotlean parapolitics incorporated a designated space for democracy in a constitutional order, and was renewed in the social contract of Thomas Hobbes (and, according to Slavoj Žižek in his writing on Rancière, is present today in the writings of Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls).[146] The most recently inaugurated of the three archetypes, metapolitics "is situated symmetrically in relation to archipolitics" in that it "declares a radical surplus of injustice or inequality in relation to what politics puts forward as justice or equality".[147] Metapolitics declares that "[t]he truth of politics is the manifestation of its falseness"; its truth "is no longer above politics as its essence or idea … [i]t is located beneath and behind it, in what it conceals and exists only to conceal".[148] In short, for the metapolitical philosopher, "[p]olitics is the lie about a reality that is called society".[149]

In *Disagreement*, metapolitics is exemplified by Marx, "who provided [its] canonical formula".[150] Rancière finds that in Marx's *The Jewish Question*, the latter's processing of the "gap between Hobbesian man and Rousseauist citizen" produces two conclusions on that gap.[151] Firstly, that "the gap signifies the limits of politics, its powerlessness to achieve the properly human part of man" according to which "[m]an's emancipation is … the truth of free humanity outside the

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141 *Disagreement*, p. xii.
142 Ibid.
143 Ibid.
144 *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. 204.
145 *Disagreement*, p. 81.
146 Slavoj Žižek, 'The Lesson of Rancière', in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 65 – 73 (p. 67).
147 *Disagreement*, p. 81.
148 Ibid., p. 82.
149 Ibid., p. 83.
150 Ibid., p. 82.
151 Ibid., pp. 82 – 83.

limits of political citizenship."[152] Secondly, that 'man' "is the truth hidden beneath [political] representation" according to which "[t]he inability of citizenship to achieve man's true humanity becomes its capacity to serve, by masking them, the interests of man the property owner."[153] Rancière goes on to demonstrate that Marx's metapolitics produces and rotates about two poles, 'the social' and 'class', each of which collapses in the other, but which are, as a pair, able to carry the weight of his metapolitical thought.

Rancière conceives the 'meta-' of metapolitics in both senses of the prefix, as a 'beyond' of politics and as a 'complement' or 'accompaniment' to politics.[154] What the 'beyond' of politics is for Marx is clear: "The movement of production and that of the class struggle then become the true movement that should, through its achievement, dispel the appearances of political citizenship in favor of the reality of productive man".[155] For the latter sense of its prefix, metapolitics "becomes the scientific accompaniment to politics", the critique of politics that reveals "the truth of its falseness" for which Marx coins the term 'ideology'.[156]

In deploying metapolitics in *Aesthetics and its Discontents* Rancière provides a concise definition of the term that is absent from *Disagreement*. In its concision, this definition broadens Rancière's conception of metapolitics in a manner consistent with the overall trajectory of his thought, previously discussed in relation to the figures of 'politics' and 'police'. In following this trajectory away from totalisation and towards a more open and dynamic use of terminology, Rancière implies a more complicated relationship between politics and metapolitics than that described in his explanation of the two denotations of metapolitics' prefix in *Disagreement*:

> In general, metapolitics is the thinking which aims to overcome political dissensus by switching scene, by passing from the appearance of democracy and of the forms of the State to the infra-scene of underground movements and the concrete energies that comprise them. For more than a century, Marxism has represented the ultimate form of metapolitics, returning the appearances of politics to the truth of the productive forces and relations of production, and promising, instead of political revolutions that merely bring about a change in the form of State, a revolution in the very mode of production of material life. [157]

Just as Rancière's shift from the use of the binary of politics and police in his own work does not negate the effective use of those terms, his opening of metapolitics to more complicated relationships with politics does not negate the efficacy of returning to the two denotations of 'meta-' that he discusses in *Disagreement*. In so doing, it can be seen that the definition that Rancière

[152] *Disagreement*, pp. 82 – 83.
[153] Ibid.
[154] *Disagreement*, p. 85.
[155] Ibid., p. 83.
[156] Ibid., p. 85.
[157] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 33.

produces in *Aesthetics and its Discontents* emphasises the former denotation of its prefix, of metapolitics as a 'beyond' of politics. Following this definition, his use of the term as a descriptor of art's politicity tends toward the same line, with the metapolitics of art considered as a 'beyond' of rather than a 'complement' or 'accompaniment' to politics. Rancière does not divide aesthetic metapolitics by the denotations of its prefix, rather working through the contradictions of the aesthetic regime of art to identify other lines along which its metapolitics can be divided.

In his broadening of metapolitics to encompass practices of art in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, Rancière gives aesthetics two places within metapolitical practices. The first is found in the passage below, which follows the definition above, giving aesthetics a specific place in Marxist metapolitics:

> But in itself the revolution of producers is conceivable only after a revolution within the very idea of revolution, in the idea of a revolution of the forms of sensible existence as opposed to a revolution of state forms. The revolution of producers is a particular form of aesthetic metapolitics.[158]

In its place within a broader metapolitical project, art of the aesthetic regime may take its part in a 'revolution of the forms of sensible existence' that seeks to re-distribute the sensible in line with the desired outcomes of such a project. Of such works, Rancière examines most closely the early Soviet filmmakers. He writes extensively on *The General Line* by Sergei Eisenstein, for whom a communist art was "an ecstatic art that directly transformed the links between ideas into chains of image in order to bring about a new regime of sensibility".[159] He also writes on Djiga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* and *A Sixth Part of the World*, commenting that of the former film, "one can say on the one hand that communism is already there, and on the other hand, that it's there, but only as theatre".[160]

But if aesthetics' metapolitics can have a place in a wider metapolitical programme, Rancière finds it far more often elsewhere. Generally, "[t]he scenario depicted by aesthetic revolution is one that proposes to transform aesthetics' suspension of the relations of domination into the generative principle for a world without domination"; not just a part of revolution among others, but revolution's operator.[161] Indeed, Rancière finds in earlier texts of the aesthetic revolution ideas that presage Marx's. Of Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin's *The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism* Rancière comments that "not only did this programme define an idea of aesthetic revolution but also an idea of revolution *tout court*."[162] Reading Rancière's summary of its

[158] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, pp. 33 – 34.
[159] Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables*, trans. by Emiliano Battista (Oxford: Berg, 2006), p. 31.
[160] Rancière and Engelmann, p. 54.
[161] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 36.
[162] Ibid., p. 37

contents demonstrates the closeness of its idea to that of Marx, half a century later, albeit without the latter's centrality of economic production:

> In this programme a contrast is made between the dead mechanism of state and the living power of the community nourished by the sensible embodiment of its idea. This opposition between death and life is too simple and in fact enacts a twofold elimination. On the one hand, it causes the 'aesthetics' of politics to vanish, i.e. the practice of political dissensuality, promulgating in its stead the formation of a 'consensual' community, not a community in which everyone is in agreement, but one that is realized as a community of feeling. But for this to occur, 'free appearance' must be transformed into its contrary, that is the activity of a conquering human mind that eliminates the autonomy of aesthetic experience, transforming all sensible appearance into the manifestation of its own autonomy.[163]

In both Schiller's programme and that of Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin a connection between art's autonomous sensorium and aesthetic revolution is made through the figure of 'aesthetic education', which "as the compensation for political revolution, is the education received through the strangeness of free appearance, through the experience of non-possession and passivity that it imposes."[164] In making his case for the metapolitics of the aesthetic regime of art in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, Rancière repeatedly reiterates his point that "there is no conflict between the purity of art and its politicization", stating that: "[t]here is no conflict between purity and politicization"; "[t]here is no conflict between art's purity and this politics"; "there is no contradiction between art for art's sake and political art".[165] Of the latter iteration, he posits that "perhaps the contradiction is lodged more deeply, in the very core of aesthetic experience and its 'education'".[166]

Rancière explains 'aesthetic education' and its contradiction via Schiller's account of the *Juno Ludovisi*, which "carries political promise because it is the expression of a specific distribution of the sensible."[167] However, depending on interpretation, experience of the statue and this distribution "can be understood in two opposite ways."[168] In both cases, "the statue is a promise of community."[169] In the first interpretation it is so "because it is art, because it is the object of a specific experience and thereby institutes a specific, common space"; in the second it is "because it is not art, because all that it expresses is a way of inhabiting a common space, a way of life which has no experience of separation into specific realms of experience."[170] 'Aesthetic education' is the name of the process by which the aesthetic regime of art can fulfil its promise, or both of its

[163] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 37.
[164] Ibid., p. 35.
[165] Ibid., pp. 32 - 34
[166] Ibid., p. 34
[167] Ibid., p. 35
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.

promises: "the process that transforms the solitude of free appearance into lived reality and changes aesthetic idleness into the action of a living community."[171] This "founding paradox", both sides of which are present in Schiller's writing, produces the paradox by which Rancière understands the aesthetic regime as a whole, that "art is art insofar as it is also non-art, or is something other than art."[172]

The two sides of the paradox of aesthetic education also become the two dominant tendencies by which artists and writers of the aesthetic regime understand the autonomy of art's sensorium and its relationship to life as a whole. Although one seems to outlast the other, these tendencies do not exist in temporal succession, but in tension, and encompass many seemingly unalike practices, artists and thinkers.

The first of these tendencies is the project for aesthetic revolution, summed up by Rancière with the term 'art become life', the logic of which follows that which sees the statue as expressing "a way of life which has no experience of separation into specific realms of experience."[173] Rancière finds this tendency in the artists of the Soviet revolution, but also in those of the Arts and Craft movement and the Art Deco movement, in Bauhaus, in Mallarmé and even in the situationist *dérive*.[174] "In all these cases," Rancière states, "the politics of the free form demands that the work realize itself, that it eliminate itself in act, that it eliminate the sensible heterogeneity which founds aesthetic promise."[175]

The second tendency is 'life become art', in which "[e]galitarian promise is enclosed in the work's self-sufficiency, in its indifference to every particular political project and in its refusal to get involved in decorating the mundane world."[176] Rancière finds this tendency in the writing of the "aesthete" Flaubert, whose work "about nothing, … that desires nothing, … without any point of view, which conveys no message and has no care either for democracy or for anti-democracy" was attacked "as a manifestation of 'democracy'."[177] Flaubert's work is political, "on the proviso that it retains its purity, avoiding all forms of political intervention". This "form of politicity" is "encapsulated by Adorno's aesthetics."[178] For Adorno, in whose declaration that "the social function of Art is to not have one" Rancière finds an echo of the 'promise' Schiller finds in the idleness of the *Juno Ludovisi*, "[t]he work's political potential is associated with its radical separation from the forms of aestheticized commodities and of the administered world."[179] Under this logic, the price of retaining the promise of emancipation is the refusal "of every form of reconciliation,

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171 *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, pp. 35 – 36.
172 Ibid., p. 36.
173 Ibid., p. 35.
174 Ibid., pp. 38 – 39.
175 Ibid., p. 39.
176 Ibid., p. 40
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.

or maintaining the gap between the dissensual form of the work and the forms of ordinary experience."[180]

For Rancière, the revolutionary form of the first of these tendencies "is something that belongs, and overwhelmingly so, to the past", as a result of its being "crushed, first by police repression, and later by […] cultural counter-revolution."[181] However, the aesthetic regime that it initiated remains operative. As such, "aesthetics continues to designate a capacity on the part of artists to produce more than artworks: changes in perception, unknown emotions, new ways of looking and seeing, of being moved and feeling".[182]

While Rancière sets no definitive end date for the aesthetics' revolutionary period, he has made no studies of works of the aesthetic revolution beyond the publication of Clement Greenberg's 'Avant-garde and Kitsch' in 1939. The definition of modernism that Rancière attributes to Greenberg and his milieu constitutes the "cultural counter-revolution" mentioned above.

Without contradicting Rancière's assertion that he "do[es] not project new forms of art or critique", it is clear from his writing on art in the age of the aesthetic regime's dominance, and particularly on art after aesthetics' revolutionary period, that he finds certain approaches more conducive than others to the production of "changes in perception, unknown emotions, new ways of looking and seeing, of being moved and feeling."[183] His writing on notions and practices of 'committed art' or 'critical art' displays a clear antagonism that sometimes exceeds critique of the discourses of 'committed' or 'critical' art, evidencing a disapproval of practices themselves. 'Committed art', he has designated as "an in-between notion that is vacuous as an aesthetic notion and also as a political notion."[184] 'Committed' or 'critical' art fails to function because "[t]he very same thing that makes the aesthetic 'political' stands in the way of all strategies for 'politicizing art'."[185]

Examination of 'committed' or 'critical' art involves a return to the 'critique of the critique of the spectator', discussed in the previous chapter with regard to intellectual equality. Considering that critique in the context of the aesthetic regime of art enables a focus on the presence or absence of aesthetic metapolitics where art explicitly assumes a pedagogical, 'political' role. Rancière describes multiple examples from various arts wherein the aesthetic regime's freedom from domination prevents the instruction that artists attempt to convey. The "shattered reality" represented by Jon Dos Passos describes "the chaos of the capitalist world from the point of view

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[180] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 41.
[181] Jacques Rancière, Stéphane Delorme and Dork Zabunyan, 'It's up to You to Invent the Rest', in *Dissenting Words*, pp. 285 – 304 (p. 298).
[182] Ibid.
[183] Rancière and Davis, p. 218; Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, p. 298.
[184] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 56.
[185] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 74.

of class struggles," but can be read "from a nihilistic point of view" as describing "the chaos of a world where class struggle is itself but one element in the Dionysian chaos."[186] And Rancière's disapproval is palpable in *The Emancipated Spectator*, when he evokes the photo-collages of Martha Rosler, in particular an image from 'Bringing the War Home' in which a photograph of a Vietnamese man holding a dead child is superimposed upon another of a luxury apartment: "For the image to produce its political effect, the spectator must already be convinced that what it shows is American imperialism, not the madness of human beings in general."[187]

In *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, Rancière places critical art as part of a third tendency that synthesises the two tendencies described above. From the first metapolitical tendency, critical art borrows "the connections that foster political intelligibility from the zones of indistinction between art and the other spheres", and from the second "the sense of a sensible heterogeneity which feeds political energies of refusal."[188] This synthesis, or negotiation, "makes it possible to form combinations of elements capable of speaking twice over: on the basis of their legibility and on the basis of their illegibility."[189] In this tendency there is produced a third form of politicity of art, a "micro-politics", the principle of which is collage, which "combines the foreignness of aesthetic experience with the becoming-art of ordinary life."[190] Collage's arrangement of elements can either attest to their incompatibility, as in Surrealist works that "manifest… the absolute power of desire and dream", or can "present itself as that which brings to light the hidden link between two apparently foreign worlds", as in Rosler's work.[191] It can also balance these approaches to "play on the line of indiscernibility between the force of sense's legibility and the force of non-sense's strangeness."[192] Present within this 'micro-political' logic is an increased mobility of the commodity object that sets it apart from both tendencies of artistic metapolitics. Where the 'life into art' tendency of artistic metapolitics seeks to create new objects to furnish a new community, and the 'art into life' tendency insists on the strict separation of artworks from commodities, in this micropolitical tendency, capitalist commodities are actively appropriated, communicating the 'idleness' of the *Juno Ludovisi* "to any obsolete object of use or publicity icon".[193] This appropriation of the commodities of capitalism produces the "crossing over of borders and changes of status between art and non-art" that synthesises the two metapolitical tendencies, "the radical strangeness of the aesthetic object and the active appropriation of the common world", producing this "third way".[194]

[186] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 57.
[187] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 85.
[188] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 46
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid., pp. 47 – 50.
[191] Ibid., p. 47
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid., p. 50
[194] Ibid.

Under Rancière's understanding, Rosler's work fits in with this micro-political tendency, which, as indicated by the use of an alternative prefix to 'politics', does not fit as clearly as do the first two tendencies identified by Rancière into his broader definition of artistic metapolitics. However, by broadening artistic metapolitics to the two denotations of metapolitics in *Disagreement*, it is possible to see a metapolitics in this work, too. As stated above, it is as a 'beyond' of politics that Rancière has consistently understood the metapolitics of the aesthetic regime of art, but by reflecting on the second denotation given by Rancière in this earlier work, it is possible to understand the paradoxical 'committed art' as having a metapolitics of its own: a metapolitics the prefix of which denotes an 'accompaniment' or 'complement' to politics.[195] In *Disagreement*, it is as a critique of politics that Rancière understands this figuration of Marxist metapolitics, an understanding the repetition of which in the 'critical strategy' of committed art is easy to see. However, the previously noted broadening of Rancière's use of 'politics' in his later writing allows for a broader idea of this metapolitics, too. If 'politics' is considered in its 'weaker sense', this artistic metapolitics of the second denotation can be considered to 'complement' or 'accompaniment' a politics, in the more supportive senses of those terms, as well as being considered as 'critique'; the same method that critiques one idea of politics may complement another.

In these works, the instruction that is characteristic of the representative regime co-exists with methods dependent upon the aesthetic regime; in Rancière's understanding of "the critical strategy", it "includ[es] the aesthetic effect of sensory rupture within the continuity of the representative cause-effect schema."[196] Rancière articulates the example of Brecht's theatre, which "is built on an extremely complex and cunning equilibrium between forms of political pedagogy and forms of artistic modernism."[197]

This aspect of Rancière's critique of 'critical art' could also be aimed at works that he comments on in aesthetics' revolutionary period, and Rancière does reflect on the presence of a representative logic in those works that are created within an extant metapolitical framework, such as the early Soviet films of Eisenstein and Vertov, whose works share this "cause-effect schema" with those of Dos Passos, Brecht and Rosler. The synthesis of early and late Marx strives for a communism in which "one is no longer in a regime that separates means and ends", but that must be founded by "a representative logic" that can only see a route to that communism by "consistently following the right path."[198] This mixing of logics leads Vertov to a vision of "the symphony of the great city between its laborious early-morning awakening and the pleasures of the evening" that is "shared with the future Nazi [Walter] Ruttmann."[199]

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195 *Disagreement*, p. 85.
196 *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 74.
197 *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 58.
198 Rancière and Engelmann, p. 53.
199 *The Intervals of Cinema*, p. 34. The Ruttmann film to which Rancière refers is *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis* [1927].

It may be that the critical form of artistic metapolitics is rendered illegible as accompaniment, complement or critique by the aesthetic gaze, but Rancière does not judge other works of the aesthetic regime by their effectiveness. What interests him in the work of Stéphane Mallarmé is the poet's intent and the method by which he manifests this intent in his writing, not the success or failure of his poems to "prepar[e] the 'festivals of the future'."[200] The communism that was "already there" in *Man with a Movie Camera* would never arrive in the Soviet Union other than "as theatre," at least not in a form that Rancière, Vertov, or even Marx, would understand as communism.[201] On the work of Brecht, Rancière concedes a lack of evidence either for or against its effectiveness, because his plays were not staged in front of their intended audience at the time of their writing:

> [T]he encounter between this particular form of politics and its supposed audience (workers conscious of the capitalist system) never took place, which means that its suitability to its militant referent was never really tested.[202]

This 'critical strategy' wherein elements of representative logic are mixed with the logic of the aesthetic regime constitutes a demonstration of the co-existence of regimes, the factor by which Rancière's regimes are separated from Foucault's epistemes. This coexistence means that ethical and representative regimes continue to operate alongside and within the aesthetic regime, operating in different ways in different artistic practices:

> [T]he representative logic is preserved at the heart of the aesthetic regime; it penetrates the new arts like cinema while being invalidated among older arts like painting and writing. And the ethical logic of identification between artistic performances and collective forms of life ceaselessly chips away at it and presents itself as its ultimate end: art that surpasses its particularity in order to become a common, lived world.[203]

Specifically, the ethical regime is embedded in the metapolitics of the aesthetic regime, in the aesthetic revolution, but also in the infinite suspension of 'life become art'. In both cases, "[t]he work's solitude carries a promise of emancipation. But the fulfilment of that promise amounts to the elimination of art as a separate reality, its transformation into a form of life".[204] It is the way of life to come, or the way of life past, that bridges the gap opened up by the aesthetic gaze, the gap between *poiesis* and *aisthesis*. Perhaps it can also be said that the representative regime is embedded

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[200] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 33.
[201] Rancière and Engelmann, p. 54.
[202] *The Aesthetics of Politics*, p. 58.
[203] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 21.
[204] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 36.

in the aesthetic regime's critical metapolitics, in the art that seeks to instruct its spectators across that gap and in spite of that gap.

Chapter Three: Music and the Aesthetic Regime of Art

This chapter continues the exploration of Rancière's regimes of the identification of art and arts that began in Chapter Two. Here, Rancière's published thought on the relationship between music and the aesthetic regime of art is surveyed, emphasising its importance and function in the thought of the writers of 'the aesthetic revolution'. The implications for the study of contemporary and recent music of music's complex place in aesthetic discourses are articulated.

Rancière's relative lack of writing on music means that plotting the place or places of music in the aesthetic regime of art is not simple, and the aim of the current chapter is not to definitively find its place or places. Instead, what Rancière has said about music and the aesthetic regime is examined, and the implications for study of music following his method considered. A large part of Rancière's writing on music and the aesthetic regime concerns the emergence of the regime, and, in particular, the place of music in the thought of those with whose work's the regime emerged. The same 'mutism' of which the representative regime's hierarchical logic accused music in its subdual of 'the art of the Muses' reverses that subdual in the aesthetic regime. Rancière points out that Kant's "verdict" on music, of its manifesting "the attraction of a sensation […] rather than the beauty of free play" is accompanied by "its opposite" in his verdict on *Tonkunst*, the art of tone, which Kant places directly after poetry in ranking the arts by 'aesthetical worth', "that art which comes nearest to the art of speech and can very naturally be united with it".[1] Through the term *Tonkunst*, music assumes a place as "the superior art of mute interiority", as "the art best adapted to setting the intimate sense into motion".[2]

Rancière refers to another figure (alongside Kant, Schiller, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel) of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century German thought, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, as an early voice in the aesthetic revolution whose work further articulates this changed consideration of music. Music's 'mutism', its inability to carry an articulable message from composer or musician to auditor, gives it a privileged place in the aesthetic regime, and Wackenroder articulates two facets of this mutism. Music is "incomprehensible and exalted", and a "brilliant apparition", and yet "almost more wondrous", it is produced from "nothing but a wretched web of numerical proportions, represented concretely on perforated wood, on constructions of gut strings and brass wire".[3] The 'marvels' of the musical arts are then a direct result of "the gap, the indetermination even, of the relationship between cause and effect, between

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[1] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 24; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. by J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1951), p. 172.

[2] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 24.

[3] Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Confessions and Fantasies*, trans. by Mary Hurst Schubert (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1971), pp. 179 – 180.

the action of the workers' hand executing a combination of numbers and the 'movement of the mind'".[4] Here Rancière emphasises music's importance in the institution of the aesthetic regime:

> The overthrow of the representative order has its primary principle there, in this non-relation of means and ends that destroys the representative paradigm of the intelligent form given to inert material. What collapses at the same time is the principle of correspondence between the poetic art of time and the pictorial art of space. The unrelated relation of the vulgarity of the catgut cords that are made to sing by the hand and the interior vibration of the mind give new measure to the relationship between the arts, to the space of the arts. This measure is that of the identity of opposites – consciousness and unconsciousness, the voluntary and the involuntary. It is that of the fusion founded on non-correspondence itself.[5]

In *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, when touching again upon Wackenroder's writing, Rancière articulates this place of music in the aesthetic revolution as constitutive of the gap between *poiesis* and *aisthesis*, by which the singular 'art' of the aesthetic regime is identified. The end of *mimesis* means the ceding of the muses' place "to music, that is to a relation without mediation between the calculus of the work and the pure sensible affect, which is also an immediate relation between the technical device and the song of inner life".[6]

Elsewhere, Rancière writes about music's mutism and its concomitantly privileged place in the aesthetic regime in his monograph on the poet Stéphane Mallarmé. Mallarmé's writing is of a different register to that of the other thinkers studied thus far in this review of Rancière's aesthetic regime: as a practitioner, he is, precisely, making "decisions to initiate an artistic rupture" in the knowledge of those "decisions to reinterpret what makes art or what art makes" made by others.[7] Of interest to Rancière is how Mallarmé's conception of music informs the aesthetics of his poetry, taking 'aesthetics', in this case, to mean "the sensory configuration able to establish a community".[8]

For Mallarmé, as for Wackenroder, music's mutism is linked with divinity and with the communication of feelings deeper than can be expressed in discourse. But for Mallarmé, this divinity and communication is not the model by which art can come to be understood, but the model for a new kind of writing, the kind of writing to 'establish a community'. For Mallarmé, as for his contemporaries, "the bonds of the new community must be built out of the ruins of the old order".[9] Indeed, "[t]he idea of community is the idea of a bond", and because, "in the Latin of Romantic philosophy, bond is expressed as *religio*", it is necessary that, in order "to complete the

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[4] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 24.
[5] Ibid.
[6] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 7.
[7] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 20.
[8] Jacques Rancière, *Mallarmé: The Politics of the Siren*, trans. by Steven Corcoran (Continuum: London, 2011), p. 27.
[9] Ibid., pp. 27 – 28.

revolution, the community needs a new religion."[10] For Mallarmé, music is "the last plenary human religion", and so represents an ideal model for his new practice of writing.[11]

Of the two ideas that dominated nineteenth century thought on this new religion, it is, for Mallarmé, "the 'religion' of artifice" rather than that of "the nourishing earth or of industrial groups" that "must succeed Christianity".[12] The religion of artifice, through its "artifacts and rituals", "celebrates the real presence of absence, that is, the 'mystery'".[13] Rancière formulates the place of music in Mallarmé's religion of artifice as follows:

> [I]f the gods come from language and must return to it, then a purified language is best able to lay claim to being the last religion. Now, music presents itself as this language par excellence. And if the essential content of the Christian religion is the very gesture of elevation, which ranks presence alongside absence, the baton of the orchestra conductor represents the final purification of this ritual, which Christian sacrifice compromises with simulacra of the barbaric feast. Music presents the form of writing and ritual that is most abstracted from corporeality and figuration.[14]

Its abstraction is important. It is music's abstraction that, paradoxically, "makes its language the most immediately accessible", allowing the immediate transformation of "the abstract shivers that the writing of notes and intervals confides to the timbre of instruments" into "shivers of emotion".[15] Because "[m]usic explodes the screen of the image and representation" it is enabled "to establish, by the most direct paths, the most perceptible communion between men, in recognition of their chimerical greatness".[16] This abstraction, in its immediacy, has a "downside": as noted in Hegel's *Aesthetics*, "[m]usic is unable to control its effects, is unable to be reduced to its own principle."[17] It is, therefore, "doomed either to retain its instrumental purity, and therefore not to say anything bearing meaning; or else to borrow meanings from speech and drama to express, and thus to find itself, by the same token, the servant of another art."[18]

Rancière, of course, writes little about Wackenroder and Mallarmé's composer contemporaries. In writing on music's influence on Mallarmé's aesthetics, though, his thought is afforded the opportunity to alight upon the works and thought of Richard Wagner. This is a territory that Rancière had previously visited. Prior to his conceptualising the regimes of art, or even distributions of the sensible, Wagner found a place in Rancière's writing in *The Philosopher and*

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[10] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 28.
[11] Ibid., p. 35, citing Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Plaisir sacré', *Oeuvres Complètes*, p. 388. English translation in Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Sacred Pleasure', *Divagations*, trans. by Barbara E. Johnson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 239.
[12] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 30.
[13] Ibid., pp. 30 – 31.
[14] Ibid., p. 35.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., p. 38.
[18] Ibid.

his Poor. Rancière follows the figure of the shoemaker as exemplar of the artisan, a figure that problematises the task of ordering undertaken by generations of philosophers. The first chapter of the part of the book that deals with Marx is entitled 'The Shoemaker and the Knight' and deals, in part, with the actions of the shoemaker and mastersinger Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. In Hans' attempts to have the poet-knight Walther win the mastersingers' guild's song contest, "everything seems to get scrambled: weapons, tools and meters; trade, science and inspiration; gold, silver and iron."[19] Rancière reflects on the plot of *Die Meistersinger* alongside commentary on it by Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche to demonstrate the Platonism in the attitudes of those "two philosophers whose classical tastes find this sort of popular culture repugnant."[20] For Marx, the culture celebrated by Wagner in *Die Meistersinger* is "a hybrid … of two contradictory natures, industrial activity with artistic creation" found not only in 16th century Nuremburg, but also in his own time, "among social and industrial innovators, promoters of industrial art," and to which he opposes the revolution of industrialisation as means to a new community.[21]

While recourse taken to Wagner in *The Philosopher and his Poor* concentrates on the plot of the drama staged by Wagner, in his study of Mallarmé, Rancière considers Wagner's theory and practice according to their place in shaping Mallarmé's perspective, and as such has reason to broaden the scope of his encounter with Wagner beyond the details of the plots of the latter's dramas.

Wagner is encountered in Mallarmé's thought on the relationship between music and poetry and, specifically, the resolution of the Hegelian musical bind, wherein music must either absent itself from meaning in its purity or subordinate itself to servitude of literary art. Wagner subverts Hegel's equation, opposing 'pure music' not to "music as servant of the poem", but rather to music as poetry's successor, "queenly and commanding, relegating the 'poetic grimoire' to the scrapheap."[22] Wagner's vision of music, as such, "represents the very absorption of the poem and its 'politics' into music."[23] This absorption is effected by another hybridity, which is linked to but distinct from that denounced by Marx, a hybridity of "the abstraction of musical language – its 'volatile simplicity', proper to creating a site of communion – with its contrary: the theatre of representation, its fable and its substantial characters."[24]

This fusion is denounced by Mallarmé, avatar of the religion of artifice, as had the other fusion by Marx in the name of the religion of industry. And, as with Marx, the denunciation concerns a register of politics in Wagner's work and contrasting visions of the community to come;

[19] *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. 57.
[20] Ibid., p. 62.
[21] Ibid., p. 65.
[22] Rancière, *Mallarmé,* p. 38.
[23] Ibid., p. 39.
[24] Ibid.

here, the "fraudulent compromise between music and representation effects a redoubtable political confusion."[25] The 'representation' consists in an idea of fiction that Mallarmé was seeking to leave behind, manifested in the "fable and its substantial characters", an idea inaugurated by Aristotle, that defined fiction as "the imitation of acting men" and "a chain of actions bringing characters into play," which reduced the scope of fiction to "banal operations of recognition."[26] To this representative idea of fiction is contrasted a 'new fiction', immediately recognisable as belonging to the aesthetic regime:

> New fictions will no longer consist in the chains of actions used to establish characters. They will consist in tracings of schemas, or the virtuality of events and figures that define a play of correspondences. This is not, however, a mere matter of abstracting from fiction. The point is to give fiction a much more radical meaning. Fiction may well be a game. But this game is higher in essence. It is the 'very procedure of the human spirit'.[27]

In his fabular, representational dramas, Wagner "leav[es] the public alone with the hero … in whom it must recognize the secret of its origin and its community power."[28] The mystery that characterises the new fiction, the "abstraction" able to "encapsulate 'our dreams of places or paradises' without embodying them," is absent.[29] In its stead is the myth, which "offers the community its own living image."[30] The politics of this difference lies in the community addressed, and the presumed position of the artist in relation to it. Mallarmé's consideration of fiction as a game which is the 'very procedure of the human spirit' is reminiscent of Schiller's previously discussed declaration, with which he politicises Kant's aesthetics, that "Man is only fully a human being when he plays".[31] The representational logic of Wagner's drama leaves no space for play or games, despite its fusion with "the virginal, occult energy surging up from his scores".[32] Considered under a Mallarméan rationality wherein the abstraction of music serves as model for a fiction that "is the very method of the human spirit, by which it separates itself from myth to project its own light,"[33] the restoration of myth in Wagner's work amounts to perfidy. Far from restoring myth, music "ought to consecrate this separation."[34] Its failure to do so leaves Mallarmé to conclude that "[t]he revolution that music operates … is too serious a thing to be left to the blind impatience of musicians," and music must, instead be taken up by the poet:[35]

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[25] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 40.
[26] Ibid., p. 21.
[27] Ibid., pp. 21 – 22.
[28] Ibid., p. 40.
[29] Ibid., including citation of Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Richard Wagner: The Reverie of a French Poet', *Divagations*, pp. 111 - 112.
[30] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 40.
[31] Schiller, p. 107, quoted in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 28.
[32] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 39.
[33] Ibid., p. 41.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

> [I]t is not through the elementary sounds of brasses, strings or woods, but undeniably through the intellectual word at its height that there should result, with plenitude and obviousness, as the totality of relations existing in everything, the system otherwise known as Music.[36]

For Mallarmé, "the dilemma" of Hegel's musical bind means that "[m]usical language can be self-sufficient only at the price of substituting the banalities of theatrical recognition for the mystification of the Unutterable."[37] In his undermining of the power of music's abstraction and its ability to found a new community, Wagner is, for Mallarmé, "the artist who took fright at the novelty of his own art, who was unable to wait for the hour of the crowd and the celebrations of tomorrow."[38] By addressing the existing crowd, rather than that of the future, and in his desire that his art succeed poetry, Wagner inverts the formula of the aesthetic regime's emergence from the representational regime, and leads Mallarmé to propose a poetry to succeed music.

In his contribution to *Rancière and Music*, 'On Shoemakers and Related Matters', Erik M. Vogt proposes Wagner's practice as emblematic of Rancière's aesthetic regime with a series of questions that serve as a reminder that Mallarmé's is not the only voice of the aesthetic regime:

> Do not Wagner's music dramas, as impure genres that confound and blur modernist separations and oppositions, exemplify the kinds of redistributions that characterise Rancière's aesthetic regime? Are they not also expressions of the problematisation of the modernist separation between the arts, between art and non-art, between art and life? Do they not manifest the impure 'art of mixture in general, that which is made up of an admixture of other arts (the novel, music, painting, theatre)'? Therefore, as an aesthetic rupture, does the Wagnerian conception of the music drama not enact a break with the representative regime?[39]

It can be said that Wagner's work does enact a break, but that it is a break of a different character to those investigated by Rancière elsewhere in his writing on the aesthetic regime. Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, his *leitmotiv* identifying "colours and lines of a character with musical timbres and themes", evidently represents a gesture toward unification of arts practices, but his direction of travel is necessarily opposite to that of his peers working from origins in different traditions of arts practice.[40] To the extent that the aesthetic regime can be considered a musical regime, taking its understanding of the sensorium of art from that of music, as do Wackenroder

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[36] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 41. Citation from Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Crise de vers', *Oeuvres Complètes*, pp. 367 - 368 ('Crisis of Verse', *Divagations*, p. 210).
[37] Rancière, *Mallarmé,* p. 38
[38] Ibid., p. 39.
[39] Erik M. Vogt, 'On Shoemakers and Related Matters: Rancière and Badiou on Richard Wagner', in *Rancière and Music*, pp. 312 – 333 (p. 320), quoting *Aesthetics and its Discontents,* p. 83.
[40] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 39, citing Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Richard Wagner: The Reverie of a French Poet', *Divagations*, p. 210.

and Mallarmé, the incorporation of other arts constitutes a move away from that sensorium. Wagner's "absorption of the poem and its 'politics' into music", and thereby the representative, or poetic, regime recalls two quite distinct phenomena studied by Rancière.[41]

One is the 'critical strategy' of 'committed art', which "includ[es] the aesthetic effect of sensory rupture within the continuity of the representative cause-effect schema," in particular the theatre of Brecht.[42] Given the opposite direction from which Wagner approaches this mixing, in the case of his music drama, it can be considered an inclusion of the representative cause-effect schema within the continuity of the abstraction of music's aesthetic effect. While the politics to which Brecht and Wagner were committed are opposed, the combination of representative and aesthetic logics serves a similar purpose, of a pedagogical address that reconstitutes a specific arrangement of community. For Brecht, "reform of theatre meant the restoration of its character as assembly or ceremony of the community … in which ordinary people become aware of their situation and discuss their interests."[43] In Mallarmé's critique of Wagner, music is "the Eucharist of the real presence to self of a people defined as a community of origins, of a people called itself to become the total work of art."[44] The difference in the communities addressed by Brecht and Wagner, one based in social class, the other nation, impacts on how the metapolitics of their respective practices might be characterised. In the preceding chapter, a critical metapolitics was proposed, derived from the 'other' denotation of its prefix. This denotation, mentioned alongside metapolitics as a 'beyond' of politics by Rancière in *Disagreement*, considers metapolitics as an 'accompaniment' or 'complement' to politics. For Rancière, this includes Marxist science's critique of politics, and it was as critique that this figuration of metapolitics was considered with regard to the committed art of Brecht et al. Depending on the 'strength' of the sense of politics under consideration, Wagner's practice can be considered as critique of or complement to politics.

The change in the rationale of fiction noted in discussion of Mallarmé's 'new fiction', above, is investigated in detail by Rancière in *The Edges of Fiction*, in which the part taken by Wagner's work, opposed to Mallarmé's, in relation to 'fiction' is revealed as a parallel of the development of the humanities in the age of the dominance of metapolitics and the aesthetic regime of art. As mentioned above, Mallarmé's conception of fiction opposes that of Aristotle, which reduced the scope of fiction to "banal operations of recognition."[45] For Aristotle, the first great thinker of the representational regime, an opposition between history and poetry reveals the latter as the "more philosophical", because "history … says only how things happen, one after the other, in their

[41] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 39.
[42] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 74.
[43] Ibid., p. 6.
[44] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 40.
[45] Ibid., p. 21.

particularity, whereas poetic fiction says how things *can* happen in general."[46] In particular, poetic fiction follows a logic wherein "appearances – or expectations … - are inverted", where "one state leads to the inverse state and … something one was unaware of comes to be known."[47] These inversions, and thereby causal rationality, could only apply to "those who acted and expected something to come from their action", ruling out the majority of humanity as potential subjects of fiction, because "most humans … do not act: they make objects or children, execute orders or render services, and continue doing the next day what they had done the day before".[48]

In *The Edges of Fiction*, Rancière demonstrates how "social science adopted the Aristotelian principles of fiction for its own account," while literature, including that of Mallarmé, "destroyed the principles of this reason, abolishing the limits that circumscribed a real specific to fiction."[49] Each process is rooted in the same shift, the collapse of the division between two humanities separated by sensibility and mode of life, the humanities of those who could and could not be the subject of fiction. In this collapse, "[t]he world of things and people of whom nothing was known … becomes the true world."[50] Nevertheless, the logics of succession and causality respectively ascribed by Aristotle to history and fiction remain, leaving a humanity that remains divided, not by class, but by the rationality of the approaches that take humanity as their object: "The individual engaged in the global reality of a history in constant evolution and the random individual capable of the most intense and complex feelings do not comprise the same subject."[51] The former was "seize[d] upon" by the social sciences and the latter adopted by literature.[52]

The social sciences' adoption of the causal logic of Aristotelian fiction and the repercussions for the treatment of texts from its disciplines are further discussed in the following chapter. Wagner's attempt to take music away from an aesthetic figuration of art and towards a representative one does not make him a social scientist, but it does emphasise the register of politics immanent to his practice, a politics beyond that to which he was committed beyond his practice, in the same manner that a register of politics is attributed as immanent to the logic of the social sciences in Rancière's investigations. At a time when Wagner's contemporaries in the philosophy of art and in other fields of artistic production were looking toward the distribution of the sensible they found in music to articulate a new understanding of art and its politics, and to shape their artistic productions, his music drama adopted the representational logic of the Aristotelian conception of fiction. The is true not only of the plots staged, mythic plots of heroism and inverted

[46] *The Edges of Fiction*, p. 2.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., pp. 3 – 4.
[49] Ibid., pp. 5 – 6.
[50] Ibid., p. 5.
[51] Ibid., p. 7.
[52] Ibid.

expectations, but also of the presumed relationship between the artist and their audience and, therefore, the conception of community that is presumed by his practice.

Just as the upheavals that inaugurate and sustain the aesthetic regime of art also inaugurate and sustain the social sciences, despite the wholly different understandings of humanity operative in each, they were also able to produce Wagner's practice. While certain of his ideas are consistent with thinkers identified by Rancière with the aesthetic regime of art, the direction of travel he adopts seems opposed to them.

By considering Rancière's writing on Wackenroder, Mallarmé and Wagner, it is possible to generate some propositions on music's relationship to art in the aesthetic regime of identification. The importance of music to both the initiation of the aesthetic regime and to the aesthetic revolution has critical implications for both the place of music in Rancière's thought and for the possibilities of Rancièrian musicologies. It is clear that, at least for the writers surveyed by Rancière, music holds a curious place in the aesthetic regime of the arts. While the inauguration of the aesthetic regime serves to level the hierarchy of arts characteristic of the representative regime, it does so, at least in part, by separating and elevating music. This elevation, though, is not total. Mallarmé, like Hegel before him, articulates a bind whereby orchestral music's mutism produces a "beautiful interiority", but "an empty one", because it "is unable to control its effects."[53] Music provides a model for other practices, but a model whose emulation would condemn that practice to the same ineffectuality that blights music in this conception. The model is therefore one to be approached asymptotically, adopting as much as possible of its abstraction without sacrificing the modicum of legibility necessary for the founding of a new community.

In response to the proposal by Loïc Bertrand that, for Rancière, "music is … another name for the aesthetic regime of art" the latter asserts that he has "never said or thought this."[54] He does, though, concede that "music could be another name for the distribution of the sensible" and that "it is its capacity to symbolise this distribution that explains the role it has been given for thinking this regime and its immanent politics, from Schopenhauer to Wagner, or from Nietzsche to Adorno."[55] Under this understanding, music takes a place in the aesthetic regime of art comparable to that which it held under the logic of the ethical regime of images, as the "idea of sharing" that characterises the distribution that constitutes the regime.[56] And yet, it is a different idea of sharing to that elucidated by Plato, and the effects produced by the extrapolation of its logic are contrary to those espoused by him. What are taken to be music's operative characteristics in the ethical and aesthetic regimes, that mark its importance to those regimes, are different, but related. In the first

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[53] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 38.
[54] 'A Distant Sound', p. 357.
[55] Ibid.
[56] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 23.

case, the divine, mathematical harmony implies a similarly divine ordering, providing the logic of the ethical regime of images, and which corresponds with other aspects of the broader Platonic project, including the prohibition of politics in the ethical community characterised by his 'myth of metals'. In the second, the paradoxical combination of abstraction and directness is also linked with divinity, but provides a model of disorder, wherein the loquacity of its mutism is set against the "banal operations of recognition" of the representative regime.[57]

A more thorough examination of the place of music in the writing that constitutes the inauguration of the aesthetic regime of the identification of art is certainly warranted, as is examination of the writings of composers of the era. The undertaking of such a task within the bounds of Rancière's framework, that is, in opposition to the discourses of modernism and postmodernism, can test the propositions derived from the admittedly small sample of texts in which Rancière deals with the relation of music to the aesthetic regime. Key to such investigations will be the extent to which *mimesis* has historically been understood to regulate the relationship between *poiesis* and *aesthesis* within music, and thus, by inversion, the extent to which the understanding of music as an aesthetic phenomenon transcends the historical contingency of the aesthetic regime of art. Where the "overthrow of the representative order has its primary principle … in [the] non-relation of means and ends" that Wackenroder finds in music, and if it is that non-relation that "destroys the representative paradigm of the intelligent form given to inert material", the question of the transcendence of music's aesthetics can be re-framed. To what extent are the conceptions of music found in Wackenroder, Mallarmé and Hegel historically rooted in the inauguration of the aesthetic regime? In other words, is the sensorium of music that provides a model for a sensorium of a united art a novelty in itself?

Rancière does not entirely avoid examples of changes in musical practice in the era of the aesthetic regime's dominance in which he finds correspondence with developments in other art practices. In his introduction to *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, he draws attention to a compositional practice in alignment with one in literature, albeit at a century's remove:

> The raw noise of the water pump that, as a writer, [Stendhal] inserted in his autobiography … is also that of the air-raid sirens, introduced into a composition by Varèse in his *Ionisation*. It is this noise whose frontier with music has unceasingly blended in with music itself throughout the twentieth century, just as it blended in with the literary muses throughout the nineteenth.[58]

[57] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 21.
[58] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 5.

The alignment of Varèse's scoring of 'non-musical' sound with Stendhal's evocation of "the first – insignificant – noises that marked him as a child" more specifically aligns Varèse's work with a particular tendency within the aesthetic regime of art.[59] Rancière declares that "Stendhal's water pump testifies precisely to … the ruin of the old canons that set art objects apart from those of ordinary life", an exemplar of the 'art become life' tendency of artistic metapolitics in which "the politics of the free form demands that the work realize itself, that it eliminate itself in act, that it eliminate the sensible heterogeneity which founds aesthetic promise."[60]

There is a potential distinction to be acknowledged in the parallel drawn between Stendhal and Varèse, which concerns the register at which their respective 'noises' are introduced. This also involves acknowledgment of the varying registers at which 'musical language', to which Mallarmé, and Rancière in his study on him, refer sometimes in place of 'music', can be understood to operate. The 'noise' of Stendhal's water pump consists, simply, in the following reflection:

> The main characteristic of the first-floor ap[artmen]t as I saw it was that I could hear the rumble of the iron bar which they did the pumping with; I got much pleasure from its long drawn-out, not at all grating lament.[61]

It can be considered noise in that it interrupts the hierarchy of that which is proper to literature, that which is worthy of literary consideration. Stendhal does not employ ideophony in his noisy interruption, much less, in the manner of, for example, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, attempt to phonetically transcribe the sound of the water pump. Marinetti's 'SCRABrrRrraaNNG' is closer to Varèse's sirens, in the register on which the interruption occurs and in time. Varèse could have scored the siren sounds for, for example, flutes, but did not. What occurs in *Ionisation* is an interruption not on the register of the proper subject matter for art. Nor is it an interruption to the proper structures through which art is understood to be intelligible. It is, instead, an interruption of the very 'language' of music, of the tonal system by which music is separated from the sounds of everyday life. It may be that a closer equivalent to the interruption that Rancière locates in Stendhal's water pump is to be found earlier, in the erosion, post-Beethoven, of the primacy of the symphonic form.

In any case, it is possible to place *Ionisation* as part of the same 'art become life' tendency of the aesthetic regime of art that Rancière attributes to Henry Brulard's water pump. The second tendency of artistic metapolitics identified by Rancière, of 'life become art', is exemplified by the writing of Adorno, whose writing on music Rancière examines in his articulation of that tendency. In particular, Rancière's focus repeatedly, in 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', in 'Autonomy and

[59] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 4.
[60] Ibid., p. 5 and p. 39.
[61] Stendhal, *The Life of Henry Brulard*, trans. by John Sturrock (New York: New York Review of Books, 2002), p. 53. Parentheses present in published translation.

Historicism: The False Alternative', and in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, falls on Adorno's advocacy of the work of Arnold Schoenberg in his *Philosophy of New Music*:

> The autonomy of the Schoenbergian work, as conceptualized by Adorno, is in fact a twofold heteronomy: in order to denounce the capitalist division of work and the embellishments of commodities effectively, the work has to be even more mechanical, more 'inhuman' than the products of mass capitalist consumption. But, in its turn, this inhumanity causes the stain of the repressed to appear, thus disturbing the autonomous work's beautiful technical arrangement by recalling that which founds it: the capitalist separation of work and enjoyment.[62]

In each of the abovementioned texts, Rancière also remarks on the critique provided by Adorno, by way of comparison with Schoenberg, of other compositional approaches. In so doing, Rancière makes clear that the iteration of the 'life become art' tendency of artistic metapolitics in Adorno's theory involves a logic of proscription, wherein "[t]he diminished-seventh chords that enchanted the salons of the nineteenth century *can* no longer be heard … 'unless everything is deception.'"[63] Uncharacteristically, Rancière provides a direct rebuttal to this position, advising that "[o]ne day, however, we really must face up to the obvious fact that we can still hear them."[64] Rancière's rebuttal does not place him in opposition to the second tendency of artistic metapolitics, that which follows the idleness of the *Juno Ludovisi* in Schiller's account, as a whole, but specifically to the position of mastery necessarily adopted by Adorno to make his claim about what can and cannot be heard. Neither does it imply a position on whether Schoenberg's work, as well as Adorno's, can be seen to characterise this second tendency.

It is instructive to contrast the ways in which the works of Varèse and Schoenberg are accommodated into the framework of the aesthetic regime of art. The aesthetic regime is, first of all, characterised by its sensorium, by a manner of apprehending art that broke with the understanding of the arts that had characterised the representative regime. Secondary to this are the changes in art practice in response to the sensorium. *Ionisation* is accommodated directly, as an example of a practice of art in the aesthetic regime, while it is Adorno's conceptualisation of Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique rather than the works it produces that on which Rancière focuses to characterise the 'life become art' tendency of aesthetic metapolitics. The distribution of the sensible that characterises each of Rancière's regimes is, as previously stated, "an articulation between … modes of production of objects or of the interrelation of actions; forms of visibility of these manners of making or doing; and manners of conceptualizing or problematizing these

[62] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 41.
[63] Ibid., quoting Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
[64] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 41.

manners of making or doing and these forms of visibility".[65] And just as Rancière introduces *Ionisation* and Schoenberg's work through discrete parts of this formulation, other musics discussed following his method may be introduced through any of them. Rancière's choice does not imply that Schoenberg's work is not as worthy of direct consideration as was Varèse's; where *Ionisation* is raised as a point of comparison for art that Rancière considers part of aesthetic metapolitics' first tendency, Schoenberg's is raised by Adorno in the latter's particular conceptualisation that Rancière is investigating.

The ways in which artistic practitioners have been able to interrupt that complex of hierarchies that characterises the representative regime of the arts, in the period following the inauguration of the aesthetic regime, are myriad. Where Varèse's *Ionisation* is understood as interrupting a hierarchy by the inclusion of 'non-musical' sound, Schoenberg's twelve tone technique re-imagines Western tonality, retaining the most basic units of that system while interrupting the syntax in which they had theretofore been utilised. The abstraction found by writers of the aesthetic revolution in music, that allows it to function as a model for a new sensorium of art, is manifested in the relative non-denotativity of the 'musical language' to which Mallarmé refers. This non-denotativity has given 'musical language' an essence that has tended toward flexibility and even friability, in terms both of the signification of tonality and its systems of tonality themselves. The status of signification in music is the subject of much philosophical writing, the findings of which it is unnecessary to examine here, but the very existence of which would seem to be dependent upon an understanding of music aligned with the distribution of the sensible of Rancière's aesthetic regime. In his exploration of audition, *Listening*, Jean-Luc Nancy asks, "[h]ow can we listen, in the West, when the great tonal system is undone…?"[66] There is no suggestion that Rancière's method could provide an answer; indeed, for reasons discussed in the next chapter any attempt to answer it would contradict the principle of equality from which his method stems. However, this question, which arises in the context of Nancy's delineation of hearing and listening, remains instructive for several reasons. Not only are the conditions that allow the question to be formulated interesting from a Rancièrian perspective, but the attestation to an undoing of a system of tonality and the location of the problem to 'the West' also bear consideration. At the intersection of Nancy's question and the abstraction found in music by Wackenroder, Mallarmé, et al., at the inauguration of the aesthetic regime, is a knot of terms the changing interrelation of which provides one idea of how music can lend itself to study under a Rancièrian method. Within a scene of music, an era or place of music, the understanding of terms such as 'music', 'musical language' and the 'tonal system' comprise a distribution of the sensible

[65] 'What Aesthetics Can Mean', pp. 16 – 17.

[66] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. by Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), p. 81, en. 21.

through which music functions, and is understood to function. One task for Rancièrian musicologies interested in distributions of the sensible is to trace the functioning of such terms, particularly regarding continuities and ruptures in the use of terms and their interrelation.

Despite the apparent importance of music to the aesthetic revolution, as articulated by Rancière in his writing on Wackenroder and Mallarmé, the continued presence of representative and ethical logics mean that music's place within the field of 'art' is still contested.[67] In discussing "ostensibly anti-aesthetic" attitudes to 'post-utopian' art, Rancière discusses the expression 'contemporary art' and points out that "[of] all the arguments put forward with respect to it, virtually no references are made to music, literature, cinema, dance or photography".[68] 'Contemporary art' is, instead, "a name for that *dispositif* which has taken the same place and function" as 'painting'.[69] Under the aesthetic regime, there is no objective qualification for consideration as art. Music, though, may be excluded from discourses around 'art', where that term is used to indicate specifically the various practices that have come to supplement or replace painting. In addition, particular musics may be included in or excluded from discourses around art wherein the mimetic function of the representative regime continues to dominate. Conversely, musicological discourses may understand their object as art, an art, or non-art, or may designate particular musics as any of those. The relatively recent designation of 'sound art', usually considered as part of the 'contemporary art' *dispositif*, introduces a further division.

Related to 'sound art' is 'multimedia art', a focus for Rancière in 'Metamorphosis of the Muses'. Indeed, his depiction of an unnamed installation, while focused particularly on its audio-visual and audio-spatial aspects, provides some insight into some ways in which the various tendencies of artistic metapolitics can be manifested in musical art. He draws attention to a pair of screens whereon "two stories face one another, as if revealing the truth of all the others", finding in them "[t]wo great metaphors of aesthetic *ultima ratio*".[70] On one side of the pair "is a cloud of immaterial matter, where light and sound dissolve into their primal unity", in which Rancière finds the first 'great metaphor', of "the immaterial luminous-sound material in movement, which, within its eternal desirelessness engenders all form and all melody".[71] The other side displays "images of DJ's at work or of spinning turntables", or "the activity of sovereign artistic will, which grabs hold of all matter, form or technique, which makes art with all the noises and silences of the world".[72]

[67] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 20; *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 5 and p. 40.
[68] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, pp. 22 – 23.
[69] Ibid., p. 23.
[70] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 17.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

These screens represent, then, the two metapolitical tendencies of the aesthetic regime, and their interplay is a manifestation of the micropolitical 'third way' of contemporary art.

By considering Rancière's writing on this multimedia configuration alongside his references to Varèse and Schoenberg, it is possible to begin a schematic, albeit limited, of the various (meta-)political tendencies within music of the era of the aesthetic regime's dominance. By using it as a point of comparison for Stendhal's water pump, Rancière implies that the incorporation of 'non-musical' sound by Varèse in his *Ionisation* is an example of the tendency of 'art become life', wherein the division between art and non-art is effaced. Loïc Bertrand, in his contribution to *Rancière and Music*, proposes musique concrète as another example of this tendency. Among other contemporary practices, ambient music and field recordings are further examples that clearly fall within this tendency of artistic metapolitics. Rancière's citation of turntablism, as depicted on one of the screens within the installation described in 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', presents an interesting case. Rancière appears to utilise it as an example of the 'art become life' tendency, referring to the "sovereign artistic will, which grabs hold of all matter, form or technique, which makes art with all the noises and silences of the world".[73] It is not clear, though, whether the "sovereign artistic will" to which Rancière refers is that of the turntablist or the artist who displays the turntablism on screen. In either case, such practice could also be considered typical of the 'third way' micro-politics identified by Rancière in *Aesthetics and its Discontents* with collage, "the pure encounter between heterogeneous elements" which "combines the foreignness of aesthetic experience with the becoming-art of ordinary life".[74] The undecidability of this case attests to the importance of considering the specifics of any given practice. Reading Rancière's account gives no indication of the heterogeneity of the elements manipulated by the turntablist, nor the ways in which those elements are manipulated, or the character of the sounds produced; turntablism is not, in itself, clearly indicative of one tendency or the other, although particular practices of it might be.

The screen opposite that on which turntablism is displayed is more clear in its embodiment of a metapolitical tendency, that of 'life become art'. The "eternal desirelessness" that Rancière finds in its "cloud of immaterial matter, where light and sound dissolve into their primal unity" is a clear echo of the idleness of the *Juno Ludovisi* through which "it is foreign to all volition, to every combination of means and ends".[75] And while it is to Adorno's conceptualisation of Schoenberg's work, rather than that work itself, that Rancière ascribes the 'life become art' tendency of artistic metapolitics, the characteristics of Schoenberg's work that find favour in Adorno's conceptualisation also allow it to be considered, itself, as part of this tendency. Where the incorporation of sirens in *Ionisation* and the treatment of recordings in Pierre Schaeffer's musique

[73] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 17.
[74] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 47.
[75] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 17; *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 34.

concrète considers music as sound, and thereby connect it to the auditory sensorium beyond music, the twelve tone technique draws focus precisely to that which has separated music from the sounds of the world, that is the manipulation of tonal intervals. In so doing while shedding the harmonic norms of the canon of Western art music, the twelve tone technique negates Wackenroder's formulation and inverts, although in a manner completely opposed to that of Wagner, the bind found in music by Hegel and Mallarmé.

In other words, the practices of Varèse and Schoenberg, while following different tendencies of artistic metapolitics, paradoxically allow Western art music to participate in the artistic metapolitics of the aesthetic regime of art by undermining the presumptions that allowed it to serve as a model for the sensorium of the aesthetic regime. In both cases, this is effected not by recourse to a representative logic, in the manner of Wagner, but by breaking with elements of representative logic that are unacknowledged but present alongside the aesthetic logic found by Wackenroder, Hegel and Mallarmé.

3.1 Deploying 'Distributions of the Sensible' to Write about Music and Aesthetics

By understanding the musical practices already raised by Rancière in his discussion of the aesthetic regime in this way, another territory for the privileged application of his problematic is staked out. This territory is supplementary to that suggested above around the place of music in the emergence of the aesthetic regime, and it is not dependent upon the findings of the latter for its investigation. Musical practices and discourses can be examined with regard to the presence of aesthetic, representational and ethical logics, and with regard to the particular metapolitical or micropolitical tendencies present in logics consistent with the aesthetic regime. One of the undertakings of Jairo Moreno and Gavin Steingo in 'Rancière's Equal Music', among the earliest texts to translate Rancière's thought to the study of music, is an argument for the presence of an ethical logic in the practices of the AACM, which is examined later in the current study.[76]

As is clear, given the example of the AACM, this line of investigation also broadens the possibilities for Rancièrian studies of music beyond the Western art music to which he has most commonly referred in discussion of music. This broadening evokes the question asked by Rancière at the beginning of *The Emancipated Spectator*, prompted by his "bafflement" at being asked to address contemporary thought on 'the spectator' with reference to *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, his work on the nineteenth century pedagogic thinker Joseph Jacotot: "how was the thought of a man whose artistic universe can be emblematized by the names of Demosthenes, Racine and Poussin

[76] Moreno and Steingo, pp. 487 – 506.

relevant to contemporary thinking about art?"[77] Unlike Jacotot, of course, Rancière has been able to predict and contribute to the discourses that have built up around his work in novel fields. Indeed, he seems to share a belief in the possibilities of his problematic within the fields of music beyond Western art music, as evidenced by an answer given in a 2003 interview:

> Interesting things start happening when art becomes indeterminate, when it loses boundaries. Take the example of music today. What counts as 'learned music' (*musique savant*), and what doesn't? A lot of people go to hear learned music without knowing it. Is electronic music *learned* or not? Is it 'youth culture', or is it in fact a form of *learned music*? We don't quite know. What is important, I think, are all these forms of blurring, all these displacements that ensure that there isn't art, here, and spectators, there, and show us that there are forms of experience that transform regimes of perception, affect and speech.[78]

The indistinction between learned and non-learned music is returned to in a 2015 interview, during which he is asked about the photographer and film-maker Larry Clark, and, by way of parallel, punk music. Somewhat ironically, given the hypothesis given above regarding 20th century musical practices removing themselves from the position of elevation found in the writers of the aesthetic regime's inauguration, Rancière ascribes to music a democratisation that elevates it again:

> [N]obody can say what is learned music and what isn't. Something has imposed itself in music, there has been a sort of democratization of the ear. If there is an art where that has been achieved, more or less, it is indeed music… Today, sensibility to the voice, timbre or accent crosses genre borders and mocks their hierarchy.[79]

These processes of elevation and de- and re- elevation, of separating, drawing together and separating again attest to two phenomena that bear consideration in following Rancière's work to discuss music. One regards the complexity and mutability of distributions of the sensible in general. It has been noted that it is by their coexistence that Rancière's regimes that they are primarily differentiated from Foucault's epistemes. It is this coexistence that means that "the representative logic is preserved at the heart of the aesthetic regime" and that "the ethical logic of identification between artistic performances and collective forms of life … presents itself as [the aesthetic regime's] ultimate end."[80] In its earliest usage, the distribution of the sensible was a framework through which Rancière was able to discuss his understanding of politics, and, in particular, the binary of 'politics' and 'police'. In his discussions thereof he emphasised that "[t]here is a worse and better police," the latter of which is "the one that all the breaking and entering perpetrated by

[77] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 1.
[78] Jacques Rancière and Jérôme Game, 'Critique of the Critique of the 'Spectacle'', in *Dissenting Words*, pp. 255 – 271 (pp. 261 – 262).
[79] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, pp. 297 – 298.
[80] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 21.

egalitarian logic has most often jolted out of its 'natural' logic".[81] It is possible to conceive of the hierarchies of the representative regime of arts in the same manner, and their relationship with the egalitarian logic of the aesthetic regime in parallel with the relationship between police and politics in its 'strong sense'. This is not to suggest a new paradigm for the relationship between politics and (the) art(s), only to broaden the possibilities of studying art following Rancière by considering distributions of the sensible in the most general terms. That which makes the 'better police' so, its having previously been disrupted and re-shaped by the egalitarian logic of politics, can be considered, in more general terms, as its mutability. Removed from the specific sense in which Rancière wrote about the police in *Disagreement*, it is possible to shift the temporality in which 'better' appears; this is to consider that, in general, prior disruption does not necessarily indicate future disruptibility, and that, in the moment of challenge, it is not the success of previous challenges that is important, but the success of the present one. The 'better' distribution of the sensible presents itself as that which is most susceptible to challenge by egalitarian logic, not that which has previously been challenged most successfully or most often. Similarly, it is worth considering that, just as the hierarchical logic of the representative regime and the egalitarian logic of the aesthetic regime commingle, politics and police are "opposed in their principles and yet constantly mixed in their functioning".[82] The "democratization of the ear" to which Rancière refers explicitly occurs in the presence of a representative logic, against which it "crosses genre borders and mocks their hierarchy".[83]

The second, not unrelated, phenomenon concerns music in particular, and the particularities of its operative sense, the particularities of a distribution of the sensible in which the sense related to sense is auditory. Rancière's attestation that music is the art in which democratisation has been achieved, "more or less", invites comparison with the thoughts on music of the writers of the aesthetic revolution studied above. For, if this democratisation has been achieved, it appears to be in echo of the politicity of its abstraction identified with varying degrees of ambiguity by Wackenroder, Hegel and Mallarmé. And the warnings of the latter two thinkers in particular prompt the question of whether this democratisation is, like the "beautiful interiority" identified by Mallarmé in orchestral music, "an empty one".[84]After all, this democratisation might well only attest to the continued problem of music, that it "is unable to control its effects."[85] Even if this is the case, the continuing repercussions of this abstraction continue to be 'interesting', and its lack of control over its effects does not deny that it has effects. To this end, it is worth considering Rancière's comment on the end of aesthetics' revolutionary period, that "aesthetics

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[81] *Disagreement*, pp. 30 – 31.
[82] 'Against an Ebbing Tide', p. 249.
[83] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, pp. 297 – 298.
[84] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 38.
[85] Ibid.

continues to designate a capacity on the part of artists to produce more than artworks: changes in perception, unknown emotions, new ways of looking and seeing, of being moved and feeling".[86] If this capacity inheres in music's abstraction, the question of following Rancière to write about music becomes one of how to articulate the changes in perception it produces, and the characteristics of a piece of music that produce those changes.

Indeed, if it is music's abstraction in which resides its ability to democratise the ear and in which resides the mutability that produces the 'betterness' of its distribution of the sensible, it is also that abstraction in which is found the central difficulty in following a Rancièrian method to pursue its study. One of the operations designated by Rancière in the challenge of following his work to write about music, and the one that he seeks himself to answer in 'A Distant Sound' is "analysing the reasons why the author has not proceeded on his own behalf in this application [of his problematic to the field of music]".[87] Rancière excuses himself on the grounds that he "do[es] not have the knowledge that would permit [him] to speak about it in [his] own language."[88] However, without breaking Rancière's 'simple rule of morality', "not to take for imbeciles those about whom [one] was talking", two facets of music's particularity can be noted that might stymie anyone's writing about music following his method.[89]

The first of these facets is its abstraction. Central to Rancière's conception of regimes of the identification of art is the upturning of an orthodoxy in discourses of modernity and postmodernity that finds a decisive break in non-figuration within painting, for example. Abstraction in visual art, in this understanding, is merely one iteration among many of the consequences of the removal of *mimesis* as the regulator of the relationship between *poiesis* and *aisthesis* that characterises understanding of the arts under the logic of the representative regime. And it is not an iteration to which Rancière has devoted much of his thought. In *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, he comments on the politicity of Soviet abstract painting, situating it within the tendency of 'art become life', noting that:

> [T]he non-figurative purity of the canvas … marked … the belonging of the new pictorial gesture to a surface/interface where pure art and applied art, functional art and symbolic art, merged, where the geometry of the ornament became the symbol of inner necessity and where the purity of the line became the constitutive instrument for a new décor of living.[90]

[86] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, p. 298.
[87] 'A Distant Sound', p. 353.
[88] Ibid., p. 360.
[89] *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. xxviii.
[90] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 33.

In his writing on figurative art, Rancière treats individual works, whether films, paintings or books, in their specificity. The "taste for rupture" that he identifies in his own sensibility is manifested in his "show[ing] the way in which a given artistic appearance requires changes in the paradigms of art".[91] In practice, this procedure involves identifying the mimetic rules of the representative regime broken by that "given artistic appearance", and the manner of their being broken. This means that his writing on art is largely concentrated on 'scenes' in which aesthetic and representative logics are in tension, while 'abstract art' is that in which representative logic is most notable by its absence. It is notable that of his writing on art of the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, a great deal has been devoted to cinema, an art that the representative regime "penetrates … while being invalidated among older arts like painting and writing."[92] In writing about the Soviet abstract painters, the relative lack of detail to analyse leads him to write about the method of the movement as a whole, without mention of individual works or even artists.

Of course, the abstraction by which music's relationship to the other arts is defined is linked to that which separates it from those arts, its invisibility. This facet also presents a specific difficulty in following Rancière to write about music, insofar as the invisible resembles the hidden, an antagonistic figure in Rancière's thought. Indeed, Rancière frames his method in terms of the absence of the hidden, in opposing "the vision that presupposes the necessity of finding or constructing the hidden":[93]

> I by no means think, for my part, that there is no science but of the hidden. I always try to think in terms of horizontal distributions, combinations between systems of possibilities, not in terms of surface and substratum. When one searches for the hidden beneath the apparent, a position of mastery is established. I have tried to conceive of a topography that does not presuppose this position of mastery.[94]

Insofar as sound's invisibility is equivalent to its being hidden, the particular sonic characteristics of a piece of music seem to resist incorporation into any such topography. The "shivers of emotion" that Wackenroder attests are produced by immediate transformation of "the abstract shivers that the writing of notes and intervals confides to the timbre of instruments" are private, and only universalisable by adoption of a position of mastery.[95]

The problem raised by music to this area would seem to be heightened by those musics that either make a challenge, or are reliant upon a previous challenge, to a representative structure

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[91] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 31; *Aisthesis*, p. xi.
[92] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 21.
[93] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 45.
[94] Ibid., p. 46.
[95] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 35.

that identifies music with a 'musical language' found in tonality. For unscored music and musics for which the score cannot serve as visible equivalent to the sound, including improvised music, much electronic music, field recording and sound art, even those popular musics wherein it is the timbre of the recording rather than its tonality in which a piece's character is presumed to reside, there might be no direct visible evidence from which to build a topography.

This problem, though, seems not to be insoluble. Rancière asserts that the distribution of the sensible in which the particular effects of a piece of music are produced can always be traced:

> It is possible, from any given point, to try to reconstruct the conceptual network that makes it possible to conceive of a statement, that causes a painting or a piece of music to make an impression, that causes reality to appear transformable or inalterable.[96]

The absence, in his method, of any apparatus that would allow close study of the abstract or the invisible means that to follow Rancière to write about these musics necessarily means taking recourse to material beyond the artworks themselves. In lieu of an authoritative score, it is the tangible evidence of discourses with which topographies of music must be drawn. The definition of a regime of art given by Rancière in 'What Aesthetics Can Mean' demonstrates that this approach is consistent with his conception of regimes of art; the factors given by Rancière as constitutive of a regime of art in the articulation of their relation can all be evidenced in such a way, assuming that the discourse in question provides that evidence:

> I call a general regime of art an articulation between three things: modes of production of objects or of the interrelation of actions; forms of visibility of these manners of making or doing; and manners of conceptualizing or problematizing these manners of making or doing and these forms of visibility. The modes of conceptualization are not simply added interpretation; they are conditions of possibility for what artistic practices can produce and for what aesthetic gazes can see.[97]

The study of music following Rancière, for unscored musics and those for which scoring or transcription fail to capture operative elements, must mean the study of music's discourses. It is in writing on music that will be found the evidence of modes of production and interrelation, forms of visibility (or audibility) and manners of conceptualisation from which topographies can be mapped. In order to do this, recourse will be taken to the maxims for the treatment of texts following Rancière's method that were derived from his statements on the position he adopts relative to those about whom and about whose work he writes. These maxims were rooted in Rancière's axiomatic equality, in particular his own maxim, "not to take for imbeciles those about

[96] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 46.
[97] 'What Aesthetics Can Mean', pp. 16 – 17.

whom [he] was talking, whether they happen to be floor layers or university professors".[98] In combination with his critique of mastery, this called for differentiation between first-hand accounts of events and theoretical writing and theoretically-grounded accounts. Rancière's contrasting attitudes, covered in this chapter, when writing about others' theoretical writing, amply demonstrate that the interrogation of theory following his method produces varying degrees of sympathy and antagonism with his project. By way of example, Rancière dissolves his voice into Mallarmé's in his writing on the latter, while he rebuts Adorno's vision of art as resistant form. The division between these attitudes does not follow any delineating line as simple as that between practitioner-theorist and theorist, or between adherents to the 'life become art' and 'art become life' tendencies of artistic metapolitics. As such, the investigation of theoretical writing and theoretically-grounded accounts requires further nuance than that provided by the maxims previously generated. The following chapter will investigate Rancière's attitude toward theories rooted in the disciplinary traditions that musicological enquiry is most likely to encounter.

[98] *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. xxviii.

Chapter Four: Discipline, In-discipline, and Meta-discipline

In the preceding chapters, key themes were drawn from Rancière's oeuvre, potentially fruitful territories for the deployment of his problematic identified, and a series of maxims constructed for following his work to deal with music. The problem of examining music itself while employing a topographical method led to the conclusion that for unscored music, including improvised music, the discourses around that music must be the primary object of investigation, rather than performances or recordings.

In Chapter One, Rancière's "simple rule of morality" when dealing with others' thought was introduced; that is, "not to take for imbeciles those about whom [he] was talking, whether they happen to be floor layers or university professors".[1] This maxim was extrapolated into a series of practical guidelines for the manner in which others' work ought to be taken while not subverting to the spirit of Rancière's thought. Some of these guidelines deal with the reading of first-hand accounts, while others deal with attitudes towards theoretical works and theoretically-grounded accounts.

In order to proceed with an investigation, the latter call for further consideration. Following Rancière's thought in the study of music, with discourse as the central object of investigation, will mean encounters with a broad range of theoretical perspectives and methodologies. The field of musicology is unlike the various disciplines of the humanities, in that it is its object, rather than its method, that defines it. And even its object is not stable. At the beginning of Chapter Two, it was noted that the politics of music had become a concern for musicological studies since the inception of 'new musicology' in the 1980s. This 'turn' broadened the object of musicology to include the persons, societies and cultures that make and listen to music, following the lead of ethnomusicology, the separation of which from musicology 'proper' is indicative of the contingency and mutability of the musicological disciplines. Without a proprietary method beyond musical analysis, musicology has absorbed methods from other disciplines in order to deal with this broader object. The investigation of musicological texts is therefore apt to encounter theoretical positions adopted from a broad range of disciplinary origins. As such, rather than examining afresh each method and theoretical position encountered under the terms of Rancière's equality, it seems incumbent to consider how the humanities and social sciences in particular, from which musicology has tended to adopt its methodologies, fare under Rancière's attitude to discipline, and to draw on extant critiques of particular disciplines from his oeuvre.

Consideration of discipline with regard to Rancière's oeuvre and to musicology also presents the opportunity to reflect on the disciplinary position of writing about music following

[1] *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. xxviii.

Rancière's work and thereby that of the current project. In order to do this, it is worth first considering Rancière's position on academic discipline in toto. This is a topic that is close to much of his work, but that he addresses most directly in an article of 2006 entitled 'Thinking Between Disciplines: An Aesthetics of Knowledge'. [2] The link between discipline and aesthetics in this title is important, and is explored later in this chapter. In the article, Rancière provides the following understanding of academic discipline:

> A discipline, in effect, is not first of all the definition of a set of methods appropriate to a certain domain or a certain type of object. It is first the very constitution of this object as an object of thought, the demonstration of a certain idea of knowledge – in other words, a certain idea of the rapport between knowledge and a distribution of positions.[3]

According to this description, musicology, like any other discipline, cannot be considered a stable or natural entity. The constitution of music as an object of thought is historically contingent, and its boundaries contested. Indeed, the description offered above marks its constitution as a discipline as remarkably unstable. Beyond this, music, in the wider understanding of the object common to ethno-musicology and 'new' musicology, can be and is taken as the object of study for writers working in the domains from which these musicological approaches take their methodologies. The history and status of music as an object of academic study and musicology as a constituted discipline are certainly worthy of fuller examination under a Rancièrian method, but such examination falls outside the remit of the current study. It is worth noting that musicology's unstable constitution is certainly not a problem for the current study; Rancière's conception of discipline assumes a contingency that means every discipline is susceptible to instability.

Indeed, Rancière's approach to discipline relies upon a susceptibility to challenge. He understands his work as an attack on the divisions of discipline, a position articulated in a 2008 interview. Asked whether his work "is not so much inter-disciplinary as a-disciplinary", Rancière characteristically avoids either option, instead offering that his work is 'indisciplinary'.[4] His rationale for doing so returns to the master-thinker discourse that is concentrated in his earlier work, finding echoes in the divisions of *academe* of the protective stultification of the schoolmaster's knowledge:

> It is not only a matter of going besides the disciplines but of breaking them. My problem has always been to escape the division between disciplines, because what interests me is the question of the distribution of territories, which is always a way of deciding who is qualified to speak about what. The apportionment of disciplines refers to the more fundamental

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[2] Jacques Rancière, 'Thinking Between Disciplines: An Aesthetics of Knowledge', trans. by Jon Roffe, *Parrhesia* 1 (2006), 1 – 12.
[3] Ibid., p. 2.
[4] Jacques Rancière, Mauri-Aude Baronian and Mireille Rosello, 'Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity', trans. by Gregory Elliot, *Art & Research*, 2 (2008), 1 – 10 (p. 2).

apportionment that separates those regarded as qualified to think from those regarded as unqualified; those who do the science and those who are regarded as its objects.[5]

The academic discipline with which Rancière allows his work to be most closely aligned is philosophy, his relationship to which he writes on in 'The Use of Distinctions'. While one notable critic of his work, Alain Badiou, calls Rancière's practice "anti-philosophy", in that it is axiomatically-rooted (in equality), rather than ontologically-rooted, Rancière describes an alternative figure of philosophy that can accommodate his work as well as that of peers such as Badiou.[6] For Rancière, philosophy is "an activity without justification and without any specific place, because its proper name is itself a problematic homonym, situated at the junction of different discourses and different types of reason."[7] Philosophy's accommodation of these various discourses and types of reason provides the space for Rancière's practice; it is a discipline without discipline that allows for indiscipline.

Rancière defines that practice as "an idea of philosophy not as an edifice to be built wherein all the various practices are assigned their domain and principles, nor as a historical tradition meditating on its closure, but as an accidental activity… a chance, supplementary activity which, like politics and art, could just as well not have existed."[8] The statement of this idea of philosophy is, of course, in part, another iteration of Rancière's typical repudiation of master-thought, but the comparison to politics and art is illuminating. In discussion of his distributions of the sensible regarding politics and art in the last chapter, the common contingency of the two was noted: "[t]he fact that there are always forms of power does not mean that there is always such a thing as politics, and the fact that there is music or sculpture in a society does not mean that art is constituted as an independent category."[9] Here, it is Rancière's practice of philosophy, rather than philosophy as a whole, that is aligned with this understanding of politics and art, of manifestations of power and material production respectively that operate on the assumption of the equality of people, and do so without scientific justification.

In 'The Use of Distinctions', Rancière defends the distinctions he draws between politics and police and between the representative and aesthetic regimes of art. His discussion of his own practice of philosophy in comparison with that of his peers implicitly posits another distinction, which may be described in several ways: between ontological and anti-ontological thought; between classifying and de-classifying philosophy; or, between disciplinary and in-disciplinary thought. And Rancière's alignment of his own practice with that of politics and art produces its correlate, that

5 'Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity', pp. 2 – 3.
6 Badiou, p. 115.
7 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.
8 Ibid., pp. 217 – 218.
9 *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 47.

other practices of philosophy, including the practices of his peers, might be aligned with police logics and logics consistent with the ethical or representational regimes of arts:

> [I]t is possible to define a certain dissensual practice of philosophy as an activity of de-classification that undermines all policing of domains and formulas. It does so not for the sole pleasure of deconstructing the master's discourse, but in order to think the lines according to which boundaries and passages are constructed, according to which they are conceivable and modifiable. This critical practice of philosophy is an inseparably egalitarian, or anarchistic, practice, since it considers arguments, narratives, testimonies, investigations and metaphors all as the equal inventions of a common capacity in a common language. Engaging in critique of the instituted divisions, then, paves the way for renewing our interrogations into what we are able to think and to do.[10]

While bearing in mind Rancière's horror at being considered a 'master-thinker', and the motto he borrows from Kenji Mizoguchi's *Sancho the Bailiff*, that 'the rest is up to you', it seems that the tasks that Rancière assigns to himself, and to the 'dissensual' and 'in-disciplinary' practice of philosophy, are the tasks that those wishing to apply his problematic in a new field must likewise assign to themselves. As such, in following his work to write about music, it seems incumbent to state that such writing must be understood as philosophy of music, with two interlinked operations: "[e]ngaging in critique of … instituted divisions" within music and its discourses and "interrogat[ing]," with regard to music, "what we are able to think and to do."[11]

4.1 The Human and Social Sciences

In making space for his version of philosophy in its homonymy, Rancière defines his practice in opposition not only to the assignors and classifiers with whose practice his shares the homonymic 'philosophy', but also in opposition to others whose practices revolve around classification. The homonymy of the term 'philosophy' is related, in Rancière's conception, to its objects, also homonymies: "man, politics, art, justice, science, language, freedom, love, work and so on."[12] In 'The Use of Distinctions', Rancière sets out two ways of dealings with these homonyms. The first, a practice he claims as his own, "considers that every homonymy arranges a space of thought and of action, and that the problem is […] to deploy the intervals which put the homonymy to work."[13] The second way of dealing with them is "to proceed to purify them, to identify the good name and the good sense and disperse the bad."[14] The latter way, while also belonging to others working in

[10] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

philosophy, "is often the practice of the so-called human and social sciences."[15] Indeed, in Rancière's writing, the synonymity of 'discipline' with this process of purification leads to its near-absolute identification with the humanities and social sciences.

Given that it is the humanities and social sciences from which musicology has most often borrowed methods, and to which it has most often loaned its object, Rancière's apparent interdiction of these disciplines necessitates close analysis.

Viewed through this lens, and taking his 'indisciplinary' method as always comprising an intervention into discourses that would claim the objects of his study as their own, Rancière's oeuvre can be taken as an extended critique of the humanities and social sciences. Beyond this, though, he occasionally makes specific claims that align the methods of the humanities and social sciences with a policing, not only of academic disciplinary proprieties, but also of the hierarchies between master and student, artist and spectator, and the 'political' philosopher and their poor.

In her introduction to the English edition of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Kristin Ross calls the book a "nonexplicit, unexplicated … intervention into the present".[16] The aspect of the present into which it particularly intervened was the sociological, in particular Bourdieuvian, influence on the pedagogic policy of François Mitterrand's government. Within this book-length intervention, Rancière makes a comparison between the social sciences and the physical sciences that succinctly articulates his objection to the method of the former. With this simple comparison, Rancière demonstrates that claims of science inevitably rely on an ontology that needs must be ideological, a thread that can be followed back to his critique of Althusser and, through him, Marx:

> Physicists and chemists isolate physical phenomena and relate them to other physical phenomena. They set themselves to reproducing the known effects by producing their supposed causes. Such a procedure is forbidden us. We can never say: take two equal minds and place them in such and such a condition.[17]

As previously discussed, in *Disagreement* Rancière sets out to demonstrate the contradiction of 'political philosophy', taking in Plato, Hobbes and Marx, among others. As the thread of Rancière's argument reaches the end of this continuum, he finds that social science is "the very form of existence political philosophy has taken in the age of democratic and social revolutions", with Marx's science followed by sociology "à la Durkheim" and "à la Weber".[18] This might be expected from the chronology of *The Philosopher and his Poor*, the book to which *Disagreement* serves as a de facto sequel, which concludes with an examination of the gap between the sociologist Bourdieu and *his* poor. In *Disagreement*, though, the post-'68 sociology of Bourdieu et al, is only the

[15] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.
[16] *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, pp. xxii – xxiii.
[17] Ibid., p. 46.
[18] *Disagreement*, p. 92.

latest iteration of a larger trend by which the social sciences, with their roots in the metapolitics of Marx's science, eventually inform and justify the metapolitics of postdemocratic 'consensus' government's logic of economic management and juridical rights: "the end of the 'myth' of class struggle is … the end of the visibility of the gap between politics and sociology".[19]

When the focus of Rancière's critique narrows from the social sciences as a whole, it is most often sociology onto which it closes. In addition to its influence in pedagogical practices and state metapolitics, Rancière finds an increasing influence of sociology within the university. In a 2015 interview, Rancière comments on an element of this influence that is most relevant to the current study, the way in which the university integrates new objects of study. Rancière's analysis of these developments is far-ranging, alluding to the roots of his critique of mastery in his writing on Althusser and attacking the direction of the majority of left-thinkers post-'68 through an opposition between the social and the aesthetic. This opposition is also linked to the conception of metapolitics that runs through Rancière's corpus: while the aesthetic is intrinsically linked to politics, in Rancière's strong sense of the term, the social he links to the metapolitics of political philosophy post-Marx. Indeed, just as Rancière's oeuvre can be viewed as an intervention in opposition to the human and social sciences, it can also be interpreted as advocacy of the democracy of aesthetics over the hierarchies of social theory. It is the latter that are affirmed by apparently displaced attacks against capitalism that are, in fact, misplaced attacks. The eventual target of these attacks is the aesthetics that is, for Rancière, not only the key component of the democracy of an autonomous sensorium of art, but also the line along which real politics is effected:

> Over the past fifty years or so, all sorts of cultural and artistic forms have been integrated into the university curriculum. And people tend to see that as a wonderful thing: we can teach cinema, hip-hop, street dance, etc. To my eyes, this supposed step forward is tantamount to a total de-aesthetization, and I mean that in a very specific sense: when things enter the university curriculum, they do so via the filter of sociology, via the fact that they are considered social, not aesthetic, phenomena. […] I think that the hatred of aesthetics is consubstantial with the university. 'Aesthetics' means the blurring of boundaries, and what professors see in this blurring of boundaries is the calling into question of their expertise. […] And there is a certain 'politics' in all that. This anti-aesthetic … anger is part and parcel of the left-wing resentment that has become so strong among all these people who are still mourning the great revolutionary hopes and who are all the more zealous in their attacks against substitutes of capitalism, like 'elitism', 'aestheticism', etc.[20]

Rancière's regret at the place of sociology in the university is clear, but the extent to which he is referring to French or francophone academia in particular, or to European or western academia more broadly is not. Even if it is best to assume that Rancière is addressing a French

[19] *Disagreement*, p. 118.
[20] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, pp. 292 – 293.

academic context specifically, it is nevertheless instructive to consider the opposition between the social and the aesthetic in the context of the study of music, which can exist in either mode.

There is certainly evidence for the entry into scholarly writing of the 'free jazz' with which the AACM is associated coming via the filter of the social. Referring to Frank Kofsky's *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* and Phillippe Carles and Jean-Louis Comolli's *Free Jazz / Black Power* as "productive" examples, Ekkehard Jost notes, in his 1974 book *Free Jazz*, the tendency toward sociological analysis over musical analysis in writing about free jazz.[21] The texts mentioned date from 1970 and 1971 respectively, examples of the 'nouvelle critique' in jazz that blurred the lines between music journalism and academic writing, distinct from ethnomusicology and predating the 'new musicology'.[22] Jost attributes the predominance of sociological analysis in writing about free jazz to several factors: the radicality of free jazz musicians, characterised by "[r]enunciation of the mere role of entertainer, activities of a political nature, and the proclamation of an openly anti-European (or anti-American) slant"; the hostility of many analytic jazz musicologists toward free jazz; and the backgrounds of those drawn to write about free jazz, "whose qualifications were scientific rather than musical".[23] This corroboration of Rancière's assertion regarding the incorporation of artistic practices into academic curricula extends that assertion, by describing a process by which a novel cultural or artistic form gains institutional legitimacy, wherein sociological indifference to aesthetics allows sociologists to take that form as its object without confronting the challenge it presents to artistic distributions of the sensible. This process also attests to the characterisation of musicology above, as a discipline that borrows its methods and shares its object.

Rancière subjects the sociological method, again via Bourdieu, to further attack as he articulates the division between disciplinary and in-disciplinary thought in 'Thinking Between Disciplines: An Aesthetics of Knowledge'. As in *The Philosopher and His Poor* and *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, this involves linking Bourdieu's thought back to that of Plato, and, in particular, the latter's 'myth of metals'. In the article, Rancière critiques the sociological method via various figures of knowledge, using this to tie together his most comprehensive statement on discipline. In so doing, Rancière re-entwines the facets of equality investigated in the preceding chapters, using aesthetics to draw the equality of schoolmaster and pupil into his broader conception of axiomatic equality.

Rancière achieves all of this through a novel concept, the titular 'aesthetics of knowledge'. Rancière's initial explanation of the term notes that an "[aesthetic] dimension does not have to be added as a supplementary ornament, that it is there in every sense as an immanent given of

[21] Ekkehard Jost, *Free Jazz* (Boston, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 1994), pp. 8 – 9.
[22] Frank Kofsky was a doctoral candidate in History when his *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* was published, while Philippe Carles and Jean-Louis Comolli were journalists.
[23] Jost, pp. 8 – 9.

knowledge", and that "to speak of an aesthetic dimension of knowledge is to speak of a dimension of ignorance which divides the idea and the practise of knowledge themselves."[24] The ignorance here invoked by Rancière is Kant's, the 'will to ignorance' of his *Critique of Judgement* that allows aesthetic judgement to ignore "whether the palace serves the vanity of the idle rich and for which the sweat of working people has been spent in order to build it".[25]

It is through Kant's example of the palace that Rancière critiques Bourdieu's position. He summarises the latter as one wherein "[t]he disinterested judgement on the formal beauty of the palace is in fact reserved for those who are neither the owners of the palace nor its builders" but rather "the petit-bourgeois intellectual who, free from worries about work or capital, indulges himself by adopting the position of universal thought and disinterested taste."[26] In Bourdieu's conception, "judgements of taste are in fact incorporated social judgements which translate a socially determined ethos".[27] Not only this, but belief in aesthetic disinterest is also socially determined, and the petit-bourgeois or philosophers with such a belief "do not want to see because they cannot see, because the place that they occupy in the determined system, for them as for everyone else, constitutes a mode of accommodation which determines a form of misrecognition."[28] Elsewhere, Rancière attests that, in Bourdieu's system, aesthetic judgement is "part of the mystification that hides the reality of social determinism and helps prevent victims of the system from gaining access to the knowledge that could liberate them".[29]

Misrecognition, mystification and illusion characterise Bourdieu's understanding of disinterested aesthetic judgement. It is this that sets apart Bourdieu's schema from that of Plato's 'myth of metals', detailed in the first chapter of the current study. Briefly, Plato posited that men were born with gold, silver or iron or brass in their soul, and that their position in society was dependent upon the metal in their soul. This system was maintained by belief, or effective belief, in it, which kept people to their allotted vocations and concerns. Transposed here to specific discussion of knowledge, Rancière notes that in the founding of Plato's schema upon belief there is "no illusion..., nor any misrecognition" only "a determined rapport of the two 'knowledges' and the two 'ignorances' which correspond to them".

In 'Thinking Between Disciplines', Rancière derives these two 'knowledges' and 'ignorances' from Bourdieu's analysis of knowledge, continuing the example of the palace through its builders. The builder is "supposed to possess a double knowledge: a knowledge relative to their

[24] 'Thinking Between Disciplines', p. 1.
[25] Ibid., p. 2
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Jacques Rancière, 'The Aesthetic Dimension: Aesthetics, Politics, Knowledge', *Critical Inquiry*, 36 (2009), 1 – 19 (p. 6).

technical comportment and a knowledge of the latter's conditions".[30] Each of these knowledges is complemented by a particular ignorance: "they who know how to work with their hands are supposed ignorant with regard to appreciating the adequation of their work to a superior end" and while they have a knowledge of their conditions, "it is not they who know what the system of roles must be".[31] It is this arrangement of knowledges and ignorances that Plato allows belief to support, that Bourdieu cloaks in illusion, mystification and misrecognition, and among which Rancière emphasises the transformativity of aesthetic experience, which "eludes the sensible distribution of roles and competences which structures the hierarchical order."[32]

As previously discussed, this aesthetic experience, for Rancière, following Kant, Schiller, et al., occurs in a sensorium in which the domination that characterises the distribution of the sensible outside that sensorium is absent. Here, it constitutes a further division of knowledge, a challenge to the distribution of the sensible articulated by Plato and upon which the social determination of Bourdieu's sociology functions:

> The aesthetic is, in effect, a division of knowledge, an interference in the order of sensible experience which brings social positions, tastes, attitudes, knowledges and illusions into correspondence.[33]

Rancière's position is not a matter of faith, and it exceeds his 'bet on equality'; it is a position for which he provides evidence. He does this by referring to the writing of Gabriel Gauny, a builder and writer, and one of the central figures in his *Proletarian Nights*:

> Believing himself at home, he loves the arrangement of a room so long as he has not finished laying the floor. If the window opens out onto a garden or commands a view of a picturesque horizon, he stops his arms a moment and glides in imagination towards the spacious view to enjoy it better than the possessors of the neighbouring residences.[34]

As Rancière observes, Gauny "seems … to be writing a personal paraphrase of the *Critique of Judgement*."[35] His testimony is enough to demonstrate the fallacy of social determination. Just one exception to a rule of social determination proves that it can be eluded; if it can be eluded by one, then, under the assumption of equality, it could be eluded by anyone. Rancière characterises this elusion as a doubling: "to the identity of the worker at home in a defined regime can be added a *proletarian* identity", understood as "the identity of a subject capable of escaping the assignment to

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[30] 'Thinking Between Disciplines', p. 3.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., p. 4
[33] Ibid., p. 6.
[34] Ibid., pp. 4 – 5, citing Gabriel Gauny, 'Le Travail à la tache', quoted in *The Nights of Labor*, p. 81.
[35] 'Thinking Between Disciplines', p. 4.

a private condition and of intervening in the affairs of the community."[36] This doubling of identity, which breaks the Platonic ethics of the myth of metals and eludes the social determination of the sociologist, must be refused by the latter, for whom the worker's pleasure in the aesthetic gaze "can only be an illusion".[37]

With Rancière's focus seemingly so closed on the work of Bourdieu, it is important to note that these criticisms apply more broadly. Rancière asserts that "Bourdieu's polemic against aesthetics is not the work of one particular sociologist on a particular aspect of social reality; it is structural."[38] The structural rejection of aesthetics by discipline comes about because the latter is always "the demonstration of a certain idea of knowledge – in other words, a certain idea of the rapport between knowledge and a distribution of positions."[39] Where elsewhere Rancière opposes aesthetics to the social, here it is discipline itself to which aesthetics is opposed. What emerges is an arrangement in which 'the social', 'discipline' and 'the human and social sciences' are actors in a distribution of the sensible that is opposed in its totality, just as its elements are opposed, by aesthetics.

Rancière frames this opposition in the strongest terms, by invoking war, explicitly referencing Foucault's 'distant roar of battle':[40]

> Sociology, before being a discipline taught in the university is first of all, in another sense, a war machine invented in the age of the aesthetic which is also the age of democratic revolutions, as a response to the troubles of the age.[41]

The troubles in question are aesthetics and democracy, manifestations of disorderliness and dissensus. Rancière uses the terms Bourdieu borrows from Plato, 'orthodoxy' and 'allodoxy', to designate conventional and 'other' knowledge respectively. By understanding 'other' knowledge as false, as misrecognition, or as illusion, sociology, while employing a method ostensibly "to study the phenomena of orthodoxy and allodoxy", is, itself, an orthodoxy, and "a war machine against allodoxy", that therefore "presupposes the result that it was supposed to establish."[42] The example taken by Rancière to illustrate this circularity is drawn from *Distinction*, in which Bourdieu utilises the following proposal in a questionnaire, with which respondents are to agree or disagree: "I love classical music, for example the waltzes of Strauss".[43] This opinion is "conceived as a snare", for

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[36] 'Thinking Between Disciplines', p. 6.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., p. 9.
[41] Ibid., p. 7.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

the good knowledge that workers' social standing prevents them from accessing does not consider the music of Strauss deserving of being called classical music.[44]

Sociology's 'war machine' is engaged in a fight against allodoxy, which "is in fact aesthetic dissensus". This war against allodoxy "continues the political war against 'anomie' of behaviour, the war against the aesthetic and democratic unrest of the division of the body politic within itself."[45] With disorder as its target, the war pursued by disciplinary thought is a "pacifying operation".[46] Rancière places the disciplinary war at a remove from other forces of consensus with which it is entangled, by making clear that it is not necessary for the human and social scientists to explicitly align their work with state post-democracy; instead, the alignment is caused by their common enemy:

> The disciplines found their territory by establishing a dehiscence between what the phrases of the woodworker say and what they mean, between what the woodworker describes to us and the truth hidden behind the description. They must therefore engage in a war against the claim that there is another knowledge and another ignorance than that which belongs to their condition. In other words, they must engage in a war against the war that the worker is himself fighting.[47]

Despite all of this, Rancière avers that "[t]o speak of war is not to disqualify the disciplines in question."[48] This is, perhaps, further evidence of the previously noted trajectory of Rancière's thought. Firstly, Rancière's reduced use of 'police' was taken to indicate a more nuanced and dynamic and less totalising account of politics, and secondly, increased concision of a more general concept of 'metapolitics' was taken to indicate a shift away from a totalising account. Each of these examples demonstrates a shift in Rancière's positioning of his own work with respect to homonymy. In *Disagreement*, Rancière asserts that "every politics works on homonyms and the indiscernable"; in Chapter Two, it was noted that Rancière's novel deployments of 'politics' and 'police' activate his own writing in a process of contestation over homonymies, while elsewhere, his use of his interlocutors' understandings of 'politics' demonstrates a non-prescription with regard to his own understanding of the term.[49] His near-discontinuation of 'police' and broadening of 'metapolitics' both demonstrate a shift away from the former position. This shift is emphasised by the position on homonymy articulated in 'The Use of Distinctions' wherein the task of the in-disciplinary method is not to re-classify or correct the use of terms, but "to deploy the intervals which put the homonymy to work."[50]

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[44] 'Thinking Between Disciplines', p. 7.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., p. 9.
[47] Ibid.,
[48] Ibid., p. 8.
[49] *Disagreement*, p. 91
[50] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.

It is this in-disciplinary, de-classificatory logic that explains the non-disqualification of the human and social sciences in 'Thinking Between Disciplines', evidence of the increasing reflexivity of Rancière's work, wherein opposition to the interdictory logic of the work he interrogates is turned on itself. While Rancière's attitude toward the human and social sciences remains hostile, it is certainly more measured than earlier in his oeuvre. (In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, he goes as far as comparing the methods of the human and social sciences to phrenology.[51]) In this later period, in a manner that is consistent with his overall attitude and with a position that is not ontologically-grounded, he more simply states the various positions in a dispute, including his own, without claiming his own formulations as more correct than those of others, but linking back his interlocutors' positions to the assumptions in which they are grounded, making implicit or explicit comparison with a position reached based on the axiomatic equality of people. This refinement to Rancière's method addresses Alain Badiou's critique noted in Chapter One, giving up entirely "the ironic mastery of whosoever catches the master out."[52]

If disciplinary thought is not disqualified, perhaps in-disciplinary thought can be regarded as meta-disciplinary, in both the senses of that prefix that Rancière raises in discussion of metapolitics. That is to say, as both a beyond of, and complement to or commentary on, disciplinary thought. These two senses of 'meta-' are aligned with the tasks set by Rancière to in-disciplinary philosophy in 'The Use of Distinctions', wherein "critique of the instituted divisions … paves the way for renewing our interrogations into what we are able to think and to do."[53] They are also reflected in the varying emphases that Rancière gives in his thought on the relation between his work and disciplinary thought; on one occasion, in-disciplinary philosophy "must ignore disciplinary boundaries to thereby restore their status as weapons in a dispute", while on another he attests that "[i]t is not only a matter of going besides the disciplines but of breaking them."[54] Consideration of Rancière's oeuvre in a meta-disciplinary framework finds him occasionally undertaking one or the other of these tasks, but more usually addressing both within a piece of work, engaging in a meta-disciplinarity that serves as both a critique and a beyond of disciplinary thought.

In-disciplinary writing on music, understood as meta-disciplinary philosophy, may act as a commentary on disciplinary writing on music, whether within or outside musicology, as a writing on music with no regard for disciplinarity, or a combination of both. To the extent that it comments on disciplinary writing on music, Rancière's analysis of the sociological method, and the humanities and social sciences more broadly, provides a model for the ways in which these methods can be

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[51] *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, pp. 47 – 48.
[52] Badiou, p. 107.
[53] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.
[54] 'Thinking Between Disciplines', p. 9; Rancière, Baronian and Rosello, pp. 2 - 3.

critiqued when music is taken as their object. Central to this model must be the position that the human or social scientist takes in relation to those who are the object of their work and the resultant position of each in relation to 'knowledge'; the Rancièrian musicologist may look for the imputation of motivation and the grounds on which that motivation is imputed, the presumptions inherent in the methods employed, and the extent to which, like Bourdieu's 'Richard Strauss trap', those methods produce a circularity that can only produce the result that was assumed.

4.2 Metaphysical Lacunae

While the humanities and social sciences comprise the disciplinary grouping from which musicology most often borrows its methods, and with which it most often shares its object, they are by no means the only providers of methodology for music's study. Philosophies of music, of course, predate not only sociological studies, but also the institution of 'musicology' as a distinct discipline, and the inception of musicology has not curtailed the writing of philosophy of music, either inside or outside its borders. Earlier in this chapter, a divide was traced between Rancière's in-discipline and the work of peers that performs the same classificatory function as the human and social sciences. In so doing, the ontological difference between Rancière's work and that of Badiou was highlighted. Similar comparisons could also be made with those other philosopher contemporaries of Rancière and Badiou concerned with politics, such as Giorgio Agamben, Antonio Negri and Slavoj Žižek.

There is a further division within contemporary philosophical discourse that separates Rancière from many of his peers, which concerns attitudes toward the metaphysical. In the last chapter, the limitations of what can be said about music following Rancière were discussed, and the hiddenness or invisibility of music's audiality that delimits those aspects of music in which Rancière's problematic can find an application could also be described as its immaterial aspects. But while Rancière does not write on the immaterial directly, he does write on work about the immaterial. In following a method that seeks to write about music by writing about its literature, this writing is important in figuring out how to analyse writing that approaches music through spiritual or otherwise metaphysical lenses. In order to do this, recourse will be taken to Rancière's encounters with two of his contemporaries, Jean-François Lyotard and Jean-Luc Nancy.

Rancière summarises the point of the social sciences' opposition to aesthetics as an 'ethical objection', wherein aesthetics' disruption of ethos also disrupts the science of society. Rancière notes a second, "opposite form of ethical criticism" of the aesthetic in Lyotard's writing on the sublime.[55] For Lyotard, as for Bourdieu, "disinterested judgment is a philosophical illusion," and

[55] 'The Aesthetic Dimension', p. 6.

"[s]ocially determined connoisseurs" are, again, the illusionists, but the reality concealed by their illusion is different.[56]

Lyotard's sublime is one among several forms of an immeasurable figure, elsewhere the Other or the Thing. In *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, Rancière devotes a chapter to Lyotard's writing on the sublime, focusing on the latter's derivation of it from Kant's in *Critique of Judgment*, and the differences between that reading and his own that allow for this supplementary figure.[57] In marking the differences between Rancière's and Lyotard's readings of Kant, it is possible to see the extent to which such figures of the Other contradict Rancière's understanding of aesthetic autonomy, and what this means for encounters with such figures in musicological discourses.

Rancière opens his account with a quote from *The Inhuman* that synopsises much of Lyotard's writing on aesthetics and the sublime: "For the last century, the arts have not had the beautiful as their main concern, but something which has to do with the sublime."[58] In all of Rancière's writing on Kant's aesthetics, the issue of the sublime and the beautiful is barely touched. What interests Rancière in Kant is that which is taken on by Schiller, namely "the category of play … insofar as it infers the existence of a category of sensible experience that's not subject to any hierarchical distribution but, on the contrary, refers to a capacity of humanity, a perspective of humanity that's no longer divided."[59] For Lyotard, however, it is Kant's sublime that is central. Kant's sublime is a feeling, rather than a category or quality of art, that "translates the incapacity of the imagination to grasp the monument as a totality."[60] For Rancière, "[i]magination's incapacity to present a totality to reason, analogous with its feeling of powerlessness before the wild forces of nature, takes us from the domain of aesthetics to that of morality."[61] This is a diagnosis with which Lyotard agrees, stating that "[t]he sublime is none other than the sacrificial announcement of the ethical in the aesthetic field."[62]

Lyotard's thought shares much with that of Adorno, discussed in Chapter Two, notably a prescription for the qualities that art must possess in order to be considered such. But the figure that Rancière calls dissensus, which is 'contradiction' in Adorno's work, is, for Lyotard, 'disaster'. In Adorno's conception, "[i]nternal contradiction is what generates the opposition between artistic productions and the eclecticism that governs commercial aesthetics", while Lyotard's 'disaster' "testifies to an alienation that no longer has anything to do with the capitalist separation of pleasure and enjoyment, but is the simple destiny of dependency proper to the human animal."[63] This

[56] 'The Aesthetic Dimension', p. 6.
[57] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, pp. 88 – 105.
[58] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 135, quoted in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 88.
[59] Rancière Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 76.
[60] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 89.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Lyotard, p. 137, quoted in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 89.
[63] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, pp. 96 – 97.

separation between Adorno and Lyotard is the difference between two heteronomies that delimit art's territory. For Adorno, it is capitalism against which heteronomous art must shape itself, an iteration of the 'life become art' tendency of the metapolitics of the aesthetic regime, as discussed in Chapter Two. In Lyotard's work it is the Other that provides the law of art's heteronomy; it is in witness to this unpresentable Other that art must serve.

For Rancière, Lyotard's reading of Kant "turns the Kantian sublime into the joint principle of the artistic avant-garde and the ethical law of heteronomy" and in so doing "effaces the inherent 'politics' of his work."[64] In fact, Lyotard, like Adorno, ascribes a different register of politicity to art than do Schiller and Rancière, in which "an art is only [political] if it produces objects that, both in texture and the way we experience them, have a radically different status to the objects of consumption."[65] This politicity denies an autonomous aesthetic realm its freedom from domination, allowing it only a different domination to that of life outside the aesthetic sensorium. This difference in politicity is articulated by Rancière as a contrast between 'ethical heteronomy' in Lyotard's model and 'aesthetic heterotopy' in his own.[66]

Further examination of the relationship between Rancière's work and the immaterial is illuminated by a pair of articles entitled 'Rancière and Metaphysics', the first of which comprises a reflection on Rancière's work by Jean-Luc Nancy, and the second a dialogue between Nancy and Rancière. The relevance of Nancy's appraisal of the relationship between Rancière's work and metaphysics to the current project becomes apparent in his framing of metaphysics. For Nancy, "[m]etaphysics is the discipline concerned with the excesses produced by rational civilization", and he produces a list of "versions of excess" that includes "*faith, other, matter, power, art*".[67] One of these 'versions' is something on which Rancière has written at length, while the others he has ignored, dismissed, or written on only via others' writing on them.

In an article entitled 'The Aesthetic Dimension', Rancière characterises the "conflict" of the aesthetic configuration as being "in excess of consensual distribution", differentiating this excess from that of the Other in Lyotard's writing on the sublime by noting that "[s]uch an excess cannot be counted according to the consensual rules of distribution but nevertheless does not obey the rule of an immeasurable otherness."[68] The implication of this way of framing the aesthetic distribution of the sensible is that Rancière's thought does not deny excess, but insists on its being non-hierarchical, or, as above, heterotopic. A key difference between Rancière's thought and the metaphysical thought of Nancy articulated in their dialogue resides in the relationship between the

[64] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 97.
[65] Ibid., p. 96
[66] 'The Aesthetic Dimension', p. 5.
[67] Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Jacques Rancière and Metaphysics', trans. by John Hulsey, in in *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics*, pp. 83 – 92 (p. 83).
[68] 'The Aesthetic Dimension', p. 5.

sensible and the intelligible central to Rancière's 'distributions of the sensible'. Rancière posits that Nancy's objection to his formulation is that it "excludes … the search for meaning as something primal existing prior to signification".[69]

The opposition of Rancière's in-disciplinary philosophy to *a priori* 'meaning' is a novel articulation of a theme previously discussed, which has an interesting implication for the place of the or an Other while following Rancière's thought. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in consideration of master-thought, Rancière responds to a phrase of Gaston Bachelard borrowed by Bourdieu, that "there is no science but of the hidden," by claiming that "[w]hen one searches for the hidden beneath the apparent, a position of mastery is established."[70] The echo in Rancière's paraphrase of Nancy is clear. And the implication seems also clear that Nancy's philosophical position is aligned with the master-thinkers against whose work Rancière opposes his own in-disciplinary philosophy. This is something that Nancy concedes when he attributes to Rancière a desire "to be anything but speculative or metaphysical" and "to do away with all forms of speculation …, in which he discerns a fatal attraction for consensus, identity, or harmonic resolution."[71] (For his part, Nancy claims to share Rancière's rejection of consensus.)

Given that Nancy states that "[m]etaphysics is the discipline concerned with the excesses produced by rational civilization", Rancière's description of aesthetics as an excess in 'The Aesthetic Dimension' implies that his defiantly non-metaphysical method might be the in-discipline that concerns itself with at least some of them.[72] In 'The Use of Distinctions', Rancière divides philosophy's study of homonymies into an approach that seeks "to purify them" and another that "deploy[s] the intervals which put the homonymy to work."[73] Rancière's non-metaphysical method in discussing aesthetics as an excess implies a similar division in approaches to excesses. Indeed, the excesses enumerated by Nancy, "*faith, other, matter, power, art … affect, technology, event, history … being … meaning … truth … logos*, or reason itself", bear comparison to the homonymies listed by Rancière in 'The Use of Distinctions': "man, politics, art, justice, science, language, freedom, love, work and so on."[74] A thoroughgoing comparison between Rancière's homonymy and Nancy's heterology demands more scrutiny than can be afforded in the current study; it is clear, though, that Nancy's metaphysics is also opposed to the process of purification against which Rancière opposes his own in-disciplinary philosophy. There remains, however, a division between Rancière's approach to philosophy and that of Nancy and his metaphysical peers, which can be considered in at least two ways. One of these ways regards Rancière's requirement for verification:

[69] Rancière in Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Rancière, 'Rancière and Metaphysics (Continued) – A Dialogue', in *Rancière Now*, pp. 187 - 201 (p. 196).
[70] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 46.
[71] Nancy, 'Jacques Rancière and Metaphysics', p. 85.
[72] Ibid., p. 83. Emphasis added.
[73] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.
[74] Ibid.

> Generally, I only get interested in things I have the means of knowing about, things I can make hypotheses about and then verify… I've never bothered doing a theory about excess that would work as a theory about being as including a supplement, a surplus, a plus, or any theory about infinity. I've looked into a certain number of processes and ways of thinking about those processes; and I've always tried to construct forms of rationality applied to sets of cases that foreground something like excess – excess not being an excess immanent to a being or in excess of that being.[75]

The second way to understand this division, a result of the requirement for verification, is implied in this same interview answer; as with the requirement for verification, it produces a registral implication of following Rancière's thought. It concerns ontology, to which Nancy counterposes heterology, and which Rancière, as has previously been discussed, refuses for his own work. Elsewhere in the answer extracted above, Rancière proclaims that he has "never concerned" himself with ontology, understood as "a theory of being as a being, or a theory of the being of being", because he has "no means of knowing what being is as being."[76] 'Being' is itself one of the heterologies listed by Nancy, something in which the metaphysician does take an interest. And so, the division between the in-disciplinary method and the metaphysical method returns to 'meaning'. It is not just the case that Rancière refuses the process of purification that would find the correct meaning of a homonymy, he does not take an interest even in the interplay of possible, pre-signification meanings. This serves to underline an important facet of Rancière's thought: that it does not aim towards total understanding; indeed, that it aims away from any totalising account. Allied to this is an aversion to universality, not only to the ahistorical, universal construction of a term such as 'art', but also to the ways in which people experience the world, articulated in the dialogue with Nancy: "What we cannot do – in any case, what I cannot do – is to presuppose a universality of the form of experience through which *we* feel [objects] as art".[77]

In Rancière's figuration, aesthetics is considered an excess because of a lack of *a priori* meaning, which is concomitant with the freedom of its sensorium from domination. Similarly, politics, in Rancière's strong sense of the term, is defined by its lack of grounding in an *arkhé*, contrasting it with the other titles for governance in Plato's *Laws*, those founded on birth, strength or knowledge.[78] Politics is also an excess on these terms, by virtue of its groundlessness; "[d]emocratic excess … is simply the dissolving of any standard by which nature could give its law to communitarian artifice via the relations of authority that structure the social body."[79] Politics exists where the structure of community does not rest on some principle, but where people declare

[75] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 62.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Rancière in Nancy and Rancière, p. 197.
[78] Jacques Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. by Steven Corcoran (London: Verso, 2006) pp. 39 – 41.
[79] Ibid., p. 41.

their equality in opposition to laws of birth, strength or knowledge that otherwise give meaning to the community's structure. A third excess to which Rancière refers, and on which he writes extensively, is language; "an excess of words in relation to the bodies they might designate, an excess by means of which bodies can appropriate words to do things in excess of what is expected of them."[80]

Consideration of excesses via their relationship with *a priori* meaning produces a method for delineating how they may be dealt with while following Rancière's in-disciplinarity. What interests Rancière in each of the excesses that he identifies in his own writing, aesthetics, politics and language, is the radical democracy that characterises them, which is produced by a lack of *a priori* meaning upon which hierarchy could be built. This lack of *a priori* meaning, though, could be said to characterise all of the excesses, homonymies and heterologies enumerated by Rancière and Nancy; they are, according to Nancy's formulation, excesses in that they exceed the rationality of rational civilisation, "irreducible to identification and conciliation according to a regime of reason-giving."[81] What Rancière's method refuses is to continue the tradition of metaphysical philosophy's dialectical attempts to extend the field of rationality towards the "asymptote" of "logical self-sufficiency."[82] His method does, though, introduce a rationality into the study of the irrational, by shifting the register of that study, considering processes "and ways of thinking about those processes" in order "to construct forms of rationality applied to sets of cases that foreground something like excess."[83] These 'forms of rationality' consist of Rancière's familiar conceptual frameworks: distributions of the sensible; regimes of the identification of art(s); archi-, para- and meta-politics. Rancière's method examines the contingencies at play that allow an excess to be formulated, thought and expressed, and engages with the possibilities of the excess, without presupposing or theorising the meaning of that excess. In other words, it is the rational framing of the irrational excess that is the object of study, rather than the excess itself. These frameworks are rational in that they are verifiable; it is the rational material of the excess's framework that is studied, providing evidence of, to take the example of aesthetics in the aesthetic regime of art, "modes of production of objects or of the interrelation of actions; forms of visibility of these manners of making or doing; and manners of conceptualizing or problematizing these manners of making or doing and these forms of visibility."[84]

It is instructive to consider how Rancière deals with an excess other than the three upon which he has largely concentrated his thought. *The Aesthetic Unconscious* is ostensibly a study of

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[80] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 62.
[81] Nancy, 'Jacques Rancière and Metaphysics', p. 84.
[82] Ibid., p. 83.
[83] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 62.
[84] 'What Aesthetics Can Mean', pp. 16 – 17.

psychoanalysis, in which the psyche might be taken to be the operative excess.[85] Rancière takes no interest in the truth of Freud's (or Jung's or Lacan's) construction, or in the meaning of the psyche, but restricts himself to an analysis of the conditions that allowed that construction to be produced in its extant form. What Rancière analyses is Freud's readings of his literary sources, demonstrating their dependency on the aesthetic regime of art, a configuration that operates on the excess of aesthetics. There is nothing within Rancière's conceptual apparatus that would allow him to deal with the psyche in the manner that he deals with aesthetics, but the conditions of the emergence of psychoanalysis allow him to shift the register of his study to familiar ground. Rancière's method can only operate around excesses in such a way that a topography can be drawn, and psychoanalysis, a practice assuredly concerned with the hidden, with rationalising the excess of the psyche, can only provide verifiable material in the literary models it chooses to use.

This has implications for dealing with studies of music that borrow their method from disciplines that centre an excess other than aesthetics or politics. To account for psychologies of music or psychologies of improvisation, for example, would be to trace the conditions under which the methods developed and that allowed music to become an object for those methods. The veracity of the findings of psychologists of music or improvisation is moot under a Rancièrian method, because there can be no verification of the truth of the psyche. The model of the psyche may be of interest insofar as it is theorised to disrupt the pair of aesthetics and politics, either as a mediator, as with the social, or as a supplementary, heteronomising Other, as in Lyotard's conception, but the Rancièrian method can have little to say on the question of the meaning of thought.

It is through a relationship with meaning that Rancière rejects Nancy's account of the emergence of a unified 'art'. Nancy's postulates that "[a]rt appeared very precisely in the hollow opened up by a problematic of 'ends', which itself emerged from the fading of given and fixed finalities" including "the death of God", wherein "the – relative – erasure of other forms of putting meaning into play, or of staging meaning … opened the possibility out of which came the name 'art' and the nexus of questions it indexes."[86] In refuting Nancy's causal chain, Rancière reflects on his own religious education to disassociate 'meaning' from the practice of religion:

> [R]eligion is not, according to the Marxist formula, the 'sigh of the oppressed creature', searching for a meaning to a life of meaninglessness in the heavens; but that it is, in the first place, a body of words (stories and rituals) that saturates without difficulty the space of belief (as it did when I came to know it, with things such as biblical history, learning catechisms by heart, and mass in Latin, all things that met no requirement for meaning but that rendered the very request for it superfluous).[87]

[85] Jacques Rancière, *The Aesthetic Unconscious*, trans. by Debra Keats and James Swenson (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).
[86] Nancy in Nancy and Rancière, p. 188.
[87] Rancière in Nancy and Rancière, p. 194.

By refusing an essential link between meaning and religion, Rancière disconnects spirituality from heteronomy, at least in the specific sense that would necessarily supplement the relationship between aesthetics and politics with an external law. What Rancière's response demonstrates is that the relationship between aesthetics and religion, and thus spirituality more generally, is not characterised by mutual exclusivity. The presence of spirituality does not inhibit the aesthetic gaze; it does not limit arts to their ethical or representative modes.

This is a particularly important point for the discussion of much improvised music of the era of the aesthetic regime's dominance. Many of the most prominent Free Jazz musicians have rooted their practice in spirituality, notably the 'holy trinity' of tenor saxophonists, John Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders and Albert Ayler, but also several members of the AACM. Where discourse foregrounds the spirituality of their music, it is not the case that it necessarily denies the freedom of art's sensorium.

It must be accepted that writing on the meaning of an excess is always, when understood via Rancière's method, speculative. However, following the example of Rancière's more recent attitude to the human and social science, the attitude to such speculation need not be disqualificatory.

The register on which the excess can be discussed is dependent upon the material traces it leaves. The excesses on which Rancière has written – politics, art, language - leave direct material traces as they alter distributions of the sensible, make enactable what was previously unenactable and thinkable what was previously unthinkable. In its relative lack of immediate visible traces, metaphysics' encounter with Rancière's method resembles that described for unscored music; the register on which evidence must be sought is removed by one degree. And if studies of musics that lack the authority of a comprehensive score are stymied by a topographical approach, where discourse on those musics foregrounds the spiritual, the metaphysical, the psychological, or another excess beyond the three on which Rancière has written closely, then such projects seem to be doubly stymied. That is not to say that they are intractably so; given the closeness of the homonymies listed by Rancière to the excesses listed by Nancy, it can be posited that any encounter in which music is encountered alongside another excess merely provides another set of intervals to deploy in investigation of the "space of thought and action" that is arranged. [88]

[88] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.

4.3 Musicology in the Intervals

Rancière's published thought on discipline and disciplines allows the maxims derived in Chapter One to be extrapolated via his thought on politics and aesthetics examined in Chapters Two and Three. Among those maxims introduced was the imperative to interrogate any theory used in texts examined, particularly the relationship that the use of such theory proposes between the writer and their object. Consideration of the distinction drawn by Rancière between disciplinary thought and his own in-discipline allows this maxim to be refined. That distinction is composed of several related distinctions: between ontological and non-ontological thought; between classifying and de-classifying thought; between hierarchical and democratic thought. And in so drawing the distinction, Rancière identifies disciplinarity with the human and social sciences, and with philosophical practices that are ontologically-rooted, classificatory, or both.

An alternative formulation of this distinction can be reached by considering the place of theory relative to excess. Rancière's understanding of politics and aesthetics rests on the directness of the relationship between them. In Rancière's understanding of the terms, they can both be considered excesses, characterised by their democracy, as spheres in which the equality of people, upon which Rancière's method axiomatically rests, is enacted. The theory introduced by disciplinary thought becomes a third figure in this relationship, either mediatory, such as 'the social' in the logic of the humanities and social sciences, or supplementary, in the form of a heteronomising Other. The introduction of either type of figure infringes upon and thereby nullifies the democracy of either excess, resulting in the destruction of Rancière's configuration. For those interested in following Rancière's thought to new domains while maintaining its connection to the equality that underwrites his oeuvre, the attitude taken to work encountered that utilises or proposes theory that is disciplinary under Rancière's understanding, such as sociological study, must therefore differ from that taken to work that does not.

This difference can be articulated through the understanding of Rancière's in-disciplinary approach as meta-disciplinary, as developed in this chapter. In so doing, it is possible to divide his writing into two tasks that are not necessarily discrete, but which more often appear in different admixtures across his oeuvre. The first of these tasks, in which the 'meta' of meta-disciplinarity is understood in its denotation as 'accompaniment' or 'complement', comprises a critique of discipline. Theoretical and theoretically-rooted works that perform a classificatory function, that, implicitly or explicitly, propose a hierarchy, that presume to interfere in the direct relationship between politics and aesthetics, must, following this model, be critiqued for the anti-democratic separation they propose. The second task, proper to the other denotation of 'meta', wherein meta-disciplinarity becomes a 'beyond' of discipline, comprises the "interrogations into what we are able

to think and to do" beyond disciplinarity.[89] In this task, the work critiqued in the other is ignored alongside disciplinary boundaries, with reference instead taken to accounts of events that do not perform the tasks of classification and hierarchisation that characterise disciplinarity. In Chapter One of the current study, Rancière's tendency towards use of a 'free indirect style' of discourse was noted, with the caveat that, as James Swenson states, "Rancière does use plenty of direct discourse".[90] This, of course, can still be, and is conducted in a 'free' manner, and where Rancière does use direct citation, it tends, like the paraphrasing of his indirect mode, to be combined with his voice, retaining the "smooth melding" that Swenson describes.[91] The furthest he gets from the free indirect style is in the "moments of polemical harshness" that "invariably concern the demystifiers", such as Althusser and Bourdieu.[92] While conceding that these examples refer to texts from early in Rancière's career, *Althusser's Lessons* and *The Philosopher and His Poor* respectively, Swenson also cites the treatment of Furet and Cobban in *The Names of History*, first published in French in 1992. It can be seen that what unites these writings is their placement on the spectrum of meta-disciplinarity; in each, Rancière is entirely concerned with a critique of discipline. Indeed, it is the abandonment of all aspects of his free indirect style in these texts that prevents them from engaging in the second task of meta-disciplinarity, of building a 'beyond' of discipline. Insofar as the 'freeness' of Rancière's style inheres within his broader approach, it inheres within the tendency in meta-discipline to a 'beyond' of discipline.

An alternative model of in-discipline can be inferred from the thought of Jean-Luc Nancy, whose dialogue with Rancière reveals a second distinction between discourses, and a concomitant distinction in the citational attitude appropriate to following Rancière's work to a novel territory. This distinction, which divides attitudes towards the meaning of an excess, can be illustrated by the thought each imputes to the other: Nancy finds in Rancière's work a desire "to do away with all forms of speculation", while Rancière considers that Nancy's objection to his formulation of the relationship between the sensible and intelligible is that it "excludes … the search for meaning as something primal existing prior to signification".[93] Rancière does take an interest in speculation, and in particular the distribution of the sensible in which the speculation is produced, but does not, himself, speculate. What differentiates Rancière's in-discipline from Nancy's is the former's requirement for verification, which is one way in which he separates his method from that of the master-thinker. This has implications for the register on which Rancièrian musicology may be written. While attestations of music's meaning are of interest following Rancière's method, choosing between them or offering an alternative meaning for a piece of music would contradict

[89] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.
[90] Swenson, p. 264.
[91] Ibid, p. 263.
[92] Ibid, p. 267.
[93] Nancy, 'Jacques Rancière and Metaphysics', p. 85; Rancière in Nancy and Rancière, p. 196.

the requirement for verification, because there can be no authoritative proof of a piece of music's meaning. Instead, the distributions of the sensible that allow such attestations of meaning to be offered provide an object of study on a register that fulfils Rancière's requirement for verification.

If writing about music that follows Rancière must be, for non-notated musics, writing about writings about music, it must also be, in many cases, writing about the relationship between those writings and their musics, the distance between them. To analyse a text while following a Rancièrian method to the study of music, it is necessary to understand what the writer understands the object is that is being written about to be. In 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', Rancière offers a 'double count' of music, wherein music "is at once an idea of sharing and a place within its distribution".[94] In Chapters Two and Three, the relevance of this statement to the ethical and aesthetic regimes was studied. The instability of music as an object of study, asserted earlier in this chapter, suggests a more general reading of this double-count, wherein music is both the network of actors and actions that make intelligible an arrangement of sounds, and the arrangements of sounds themselves.

These two counts of music align with two general approaches to the study of music. The narrower of the two definitions aligns with the music studied under musicology's analytic method, while the broader aligns with the expanded understanding of music studied under the sociological and anthropological methods of ethnomusicology and the 'new musicology'. Such a division is illustrated by Ekkehard Jost's analysis of the burgeoning discourse on Free Jazz in the early 1970s, in which he notes that a predominantly sociological form of writing has taken the place of the analytic techniques used in scholarship on jazz's earlier iterations.

Jost proposes, and undertakes, a return to musical analysis, but one which synthesises, in part, the sociological approach of extant analyses of free jazz:

> [Q]uestions of an extra-musical nature will have to be dealt with also, but these will be determined by the extent to which biographical data of free-jazz musicians and the social setting of the music itself can contribute to our understanding of it.[95]

This synthesis centralises both the social as a regulator between politics and aesthetics and an analytic approach that uncritically accepts tonality as music's operator, and so seems incongruous with the potential Rancièrian approaches to music that have been proposed. However, substitution of the approaches that Jost synthesises for the egalitarian Rancièrian notions of politics and aesthetics produces an approach to the "interrogations into what we are able to think and to do" that takes into account a broad swathe of Rancière's oeuvre.[96] That "there is no criterion for

[94] 'Metamorphosis of the Muses', p. 23.
[95] Jost, p. 9.
[96] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.

establishing an appropriate correlation between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics" does not inhibit the study of those factors together, where each can be identified within the thought and practice of an individual or group.[97] Indeed, a great deal of Rancière's writing on literature in particular considers this interaction, whether in the contrast between the democracy of Flaubert's approach to literature and the anti-democracy of the politics to which he was committed, the correlative metapolitics of Mallarmé's theory and practice, or the representational logic that Brecht uses to serve a specifically Marxist metapolitics. Rancièrian meta-discipline in its denotation as a 'beyond' of discipline finds its object here, in the particularities of the distributions of the sensible of music, challenges and changes to those distributions effected by its practitioners and theorists, and the relationship between those distributions of the sensible and those of the politics of those practitioners and theorists and their communities.

In so doing, Rancièrian studies of music must avoid the traditional analytic approach to musicology, the sociologised approach of the 'nouvelle critique' and 'new musicology', and the synthesis of these approaches performed by Jost. Instead, such studies must adopt a register consistent with Rancière's in-disciplinary, or meta-disciplinary, and verifiable philosophy, and thereby embrace the 'doctrine' facetiously imputed to Rancière by Badiou, to "[a]lways situate yourself in the interval between discourses without opting for any of them"[98]. By attending specifically to the political, rather than the social, context in which a music is produced and heard, the musicologist following Rancière's problematic to a new territory will avoid subordinating the agency and intelligence of those about whom they write to their own. They will engage in a study of the music produced in this context that does not subordinate the experience of the listener to a meaning that only the mastery of the writer can reveal.

[97] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 57 – 58.
[98] Badiou, p. 107.

Chapter Five: The AACM as Rancièrian Scene

One technique that Rancière has developed to discuss the politics of aesthetics is the study of specific 'scenes' that "show the way in which a given artistic appearance requires changes in the paradigms of art".[1] It is this technique that Rancière employs in *Aisthesis*, his most recent major work on art and aesthetics. It is a technique, though, for which antecedents can be found in earlier works, particularly the articles contributed to *Les Revoltes Logiques*, such as 'Good Times, Or, Pleasure at the Barrière', examined in Chapter One.

Considered through the lens of meta-disciplinarity, developed in Chapter Four, it is possible to characterise *Aisthesis* as the text of Rancière's that is able to be identified most closely with a 'beyond' of discipline, where *Aesthetics and its Discontents* can be seen as an accompaniment to (that is, a critique of) discipline. This difference is reflected in the marked contrast to be found between the ways in which Rancière treats artistic practices in the two books. In *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, practices are described with varying degrees of depth, linked and listed by way of evidence against the disciplinary constructions of Lyotard, Bourdieu and Badiou. In employing the technique of the scene in *Aisthesis*, Rancière takes care to examine each practice in its specificity, largely leaving it to the reader to make the connections between those practices. In the former mode, facets of practices are chosen to serve Rancière's critique (without, of course, any distortion that might subjugate a practitioner's knowledge to his own); in the latter, his aim is to allow the practitioners about whom he writes the greatest degree of autonomy:

> In the scene, the conditions are immanent to their being executed. That also means that the scene, as I see it, is fundamentally anti-hierarchical. It's the 'object' that teaches us how to talk about it, how to deal with it.[2]

Rancière's articulation of the scene as "fundamentally anti-hierarchical" demonstrates that the meta-disciplinarity of his writing maintains a politicity whether acting as accompaniment to or beyond of discipline. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Rancière notes an affinity between his practice and art and politics, referring to his philosophy as "a chance, supplementary activity which, like politics and art, could just as well not have existed."[3] Like politics and art of the aesthetic regime, Rancière's work presents challenges to hierarchised, exclusionary and interdictory distributions of the sensible, but, just as "there is no criterion for establishing an appropriate correlation between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics", there can be no particular criterion for isolating the correlation between in-disciplinary philosophy with either

[1] *Aisthesis*, p. xi.
[2] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 67.
[3] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 217 – 218.

politics or art.[4] The manner of these challenges and the particular character of their affinities with political and artistic challenges varies with the mode of meta-discipline that Rancière employs. The challenges to disciplinary distributions effected by the meta-discipline of 'accompaniment' employed in *The Philosopher and his Poor*, *Disagreement* and *Aesthetics and its Discontents* are, in their directness, easily grasped. In works such as *Proletarian Nights, The Ignorant Schoolmaster* and *Aisthesis*, the employment of methods such as the 'scene' and the *style indirect libre*, wherein Rancière blends his voice with those of his interlocutors, builds a 'beyond' of discipline that bypasses disciplinarity in a manner similar to that in which metapolitics "aims to overcome political dissensus by switching scene".[5] In this bypassing there remains an implicit challenge to disciplinarity, the character of which is captured by Kristin Ross's description of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* as a "nonexplicit, unexplicated … intervention into the present".[6] Rancière's understanding of his writing accords with Ross's, and his understanding finds in the 'historical singularities' that comprise the scenes of his investigations an 'intervention' that undermines the authority of discipline:

> What is primarily at stake is the contestation of the distributions that confine this or that question to politics, philosophy, sociology or aesthetics. Historical singularities are never disciplines. They are always ways of breaking the order of discipline, the distribution of territories, the systems of authorization and interdiction weighing on objects of thought.[7]

The remainder of the current project consists of the investigation of the AACM, understanding the organisation and its practices to constitute just such a scene, which, in its historical singularity, teaches us how to deal with it.

The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians was formed by a group of Black musicians in Chicago, in 1965. Not a musical ensemble, a promotions company, an educational institution, a charity, nor a trade union, its formation combined elements of all of these types of group, and it was chartered as a non-profit organisation by the State of Illinois on August 5, 1965.[8] Among the most notable musicians to have been members of the organisation are Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Braxton, George Lewis, Nicole Mitchell, Jeff Parker, Matana Roberts, Wadada Leo Smith and Henry Threadgill, as well as Lester Bowie, Roscoe Mitchell, Joseph Jarman, Malachi Favors and Don Moye of the Art Ensemble of Chicago. The organisation has been the subject of a thoroughgoing history entitled *A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*, written by Lewis, a trombonist, improviser and composer who joined the organisation in 1971.

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[4] *The Politics of Aeshetics*, pp. 57 – 58.
[5] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 33.
[6] *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, pp. xxii – xxiii.
[7] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 23.
[8] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 115.

In combining archival research and testimonies drawn from interviews with members with a commentary that explicitly aligns itself with the politics it finds in AACM practices, Lewis's book constitutes a complex primary resource of the discursive material that is necessary for the deployment of the topographical method developed in previous chapters of this thesis. The relationship between Lewis and his subject also provides an intriguing case to Rancière's methods. In articulating his in-discipline, Rancière asserts that "the distribution of territories … is always a way of deciding who is qualified to speak about what" and that "[t]he apportionment of disciplines refers to the more fundamental apportionment that separates those regarded as qualified to think from those regarded as unqualified; those who do the science and those who are regarded as its objects."[9] As both a longstanding member of the organisation and an esteemed academic who is Professor of American Music at Columbia University, Lewis holds a curious double-position. He makes up part of the object of his study, but also accounts for the practices of a large number of musicians over a period of several decades, and places those accounts within historical, political and philosophical contexts. The variety of registers on which Lewis writes to complete this task calls attention to another reading of Rancière's above comment on the 'apportionment of disciplines'; in the formula of separation between "those who do the science and those who are regarded as its objects," the latter group of people are not necessarily, in this context, the musicians.[10] Noting the advice given by Rancière in *The Emancipated Spectator*, that "[e]mancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting", it is also worth considering the place of the auditor.[11] Lewis's position as writer-practitioner also has precedent within the AACM; the "sources of inspiration and instruction" credited by Lewis for the research documented in *A Power Stronger than Itself* include the written works of fellow AACM members Wadada Leo Smith and Anthony Braxton, the latter of whom was Professor of Music at Wesleyan University until his retirement in 2013. These facets of the primary resource in discussion of the AACM mark it as constituting a novel challenge to a Rancièrian method, and therefore as an opportunity to test its suitability for investigating musical *scènes*.

The origin of the AACM can be traced to a series of meetings between pianists Muhal Richard Abrams and Jodie Christian, trumpeter Kelan Phil Cohran and drummer Steve McCall, following which postcards were sent to other musicians in Chicago, announcing a meeting with the aim of founding a new musicians' organisation.[12] These postcards contained a fourteen-point agenda, covering creative, structural, financial, logistical and legal matters, which, followed at the initial meeting, and expanded upon in subsequent meetings, would shape the organisation's

[9] Rancière, Baronian and Rosello, pp. 2 – 3.
[10] Ibid.
[11] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 13.
[12] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 96 – 98.

activities and aims.[13] The precise wording of the agenda is unknown, as none of the postcards is known to have survived, but Lewis has been able to ascertain its contents from the tapes of the meetings following its distribution.[14]

The first item on the agenda is one that demonstrates the place of improvisation within AACM practices, as well as tying together the other items and the organisation's broader purpose. It concerns 'original music' and 'creative music', the inclusion of which terms on the agenda, for Lewis, indicates that "among Chicago musicians, a notion as to what these terms might signify may already have been developing".[15] Lewis also notes that these terms seem to have been used in preference to those used elsewhere to describe the music created by AACM members: "terms such as 'new jazz,' 'the avant-garde,' or 'free jazz' were seldom, if ever used in the discussions. Even 'black music' was not directly mentioned".[16] Regardless of the popular currency of 'original music' and 'creative music' among Chicago musicians, their signification is discussed during the first meeting, the tape of which is transcribed by Lewis for *A Power Stronger than Itself*. At the beginning of that meeting, those that had been in the initial group emphasise the primacy of 'creative music' or 'original music' to their conception of the organisation. Cohran posits that the reason that 'original music' had been placed at the top of the agenda was that "of all of our purposes of being here, this is the primary one. Because why else would we form an association? Because we're all denied the privilege of expressing what is in us."[17] One point of discussion is whether the imperative of 'creative music' excludes those putative members who consider themselves only players, and not composers. Abrams effaces the differences when he responds that "musicians are performers, composers and all, at the same time. You write music when you stand up and practice your instrument".[18] Lewis emphasises that the model of music-making undertaken by these musicians was not one, as in Western classical music, characterised by strict division between composer and player: "to these musicians, being 'a musician' meant working out a hybridized model of creative practice that negotiated between individuality and collective membership, and which assumed primary creative agency for each artist."[19] 'Creative music' and 'original music' are not exactly defined in the meetings in which the AACM is formed; indeed, Abrams concedes that "[w]e're not going to agree on what exactly original music means to us".[20] The notion of 'creative music' or 'original music' is, rather, negatively-defined, in opposition to the standard repertory expected of the musicians in the circuit of bar and club gigs to which they were accustomed. In

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[13] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 97 – 98.
[14] Ibid., p. 544n59.
[15] Ibid., p. 97.
[16] Ibid., p. 98.
[17] Cohran in Ibid., p. 100.
[18] Abrams in Ibid., p. 103.
[19] Ibid., p. 103.
[20] Abrams in Ibid., p. 102.

(Wadada) Leo Smith's later conceptualisation of 'creative music', he understands the term as signifying an indeterminate combination of composition and improvisation, effacing the opposition between the two while privileging the latter; for Smith, "creative music is dedicated to developing a heightened awareness of improvisation as an art form".[21]

The difference between 'creative music' and that which the gathered musicians were accustomed to playing in gig settings is underlined by the understanding of those musicians of the necessity for concerts outside the usual bars and clubs in order to play such music, articulated by Jodie Christian: "The only jobs that we're gonna have where we can really perform original music are concerts that *we* promote, because the type of jobs that we're gonna get won't call for original music."[22] This understanding leads Lewis to point to a more surprising precedent for AACM in Arnold Schoenberg's *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* (Society for Private Music Performance), the purpose of which was "to present contemporary music in circumstances conducive to its proper appreciation", which is to say separate from the mainstream of Classical concert performances.[23] If the opportunity to play 'creative music' is, as articulated by Cohran, the primary purpose for the formation of the AACM, the primary way in which this is enacted is by taking control of the promotion of concerts outside the settings to which the musicians were accustomed. In the Association's second meeting, Abrams articulates this as a necessity in order for the members to function "as full artistic musicians", because they are "not afforded that liberty in taverns".[24]

The notion of 'creative music' represents a further iteration of the singularity of the AACM that marks its investigation as potentially fruitful under a Rancièrian method. This notion, perennially attached to the organisation in its name, serves to separate the AACM from general discourses on 'free jazz'. One demonstration of the manner of the AACM's singularity is its place in Ekkehard Jost's *Free Jazz*; the book is separated into ten chapters, each of which deals with a musician (with two chapters devoted to John Coltrane). By contrast, the AACM as a whole is covered in a chapter entitled 'The Chicagoans'. This difference in register might be attributed to AACM musicians' relative lack of fame in comparison with the other free jazz musicians whose work is analysed by Jost. However, George Lewis notes that, even in the late 1960s, "[t]he notion of a separate 'Chicago school' with significant methodological and sonic differences from the older New York free jazz had taken hold."[25] And, interviewed in 1969, members of the AACM then resident in Paris "moved to reject the notion that their music 'is associated [with] Free Jazz'".[26] This

[21] Leo Smith, *notes (8 pieces) source a new world music: creative music* (Chicago: Corbett vs. Dempsey and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 2015), pages unnumbered. [originally published 1973].
[22] Jodie Christian in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 100.
[23] Ibid., p. 99.
[24] Abrams in Ibid., p. 106.
[25] Ibid., p. 229.
[26] Ibid., p. 231, citing Daniel Caux, 'A.A.C.M. Chicago', *Jazz Hot*, 254 (1969), p. 18.

is not to argue that other practices of free jazz are or have been 'typical', or, indeed, that there are or have been 'typical' practices of free jazz. Rather, it is hoped that the discursive homogeneity of 'free jazz' as a genre descriptor is undermined by choosing an example in which some kind of separation from other practices of free jazz is already accepted in the surrounding discourse.

In deciding on a name for the nascent organisation during a further meeting in May 1965, a shift in nomenclature takes place that is coupled with a change in understanding of the organisation. During the conversation in question, pianist Ken Chaney reminds Cohran of the phraseology of the postcard invitations sent to prospective members, "a meeting for the advancement of creative music", in response to which Cohran suggests "Association for the Advancement of Creative Music" as a prospective name.[27] The refinement applied to this name, substituting 'musicians' for 'music', reflects, according to Lewis, "a keen awareness of [the] long history of exploitation" of Black American music.[28] As Jerol Donavon and McCall conclude, "[w]e've been advancing creative music all along … but nobody has been advancing us".[29]

The 'us' to be advanced by the Association was comprised of Black creative musicians. Lewis points to precedents for Black and interracial collectives that resemble, at least in part, the AACM: the Clef Club, founded in Harlem in 1910, an organisation that formed a symphony orchestra among other ensembles, which provided opportunities for Black performers to play and Black composers to have their compositions played; the theatre artists and composers Bob Cole, James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, "who sought to maintain both creative and financial control of their productions in the face of legal chicanery, boycotts and blacklisting" around the turn of the twentieth century; and, closest in conception to the AACM and both formed in the year prior to its constitution, the UGMA (Underground Musicians' Association/Union of God's Musicians and Artists Ascension) in Los Angeles and the Jazz Composers' Guild in New York.[30] Nevertheless, it is the singularity of the AACM that particularly marks its potential as an object of investigation following the Rancièrian methods articulated in previous chapters. While Lewis highlights precedents for its form of collectivity, anthropologist Georgina Born attests that the form taken by the AACM itself "became a model for later progressive, cooperative music organizations."[31]

However, while Lewis attests that the postcards of invitation were sent "to the cream of Chicago's African American musicians", among those in attendance during the early meetings was white pianist Bob Dogan, who had been "specifically invited to the meeting by the original call".[32]

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[27] Ken Chaney and Cohran, in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 110.
[28] Ibid., p. 111.
[29] Donavon and McCall in Ibid., p. 111.
[30] Ibid., pp. 88 – 95.
[31] Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (London and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 351, n. 29.
[32] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 97; p. 112.

At the general meeting of the organisation on 29 May 1965, during which its new name was approved and adopted, a question raised by Dogan regarding extending invitation to the organisation to his bandmates provoked discussion of the racial character of the AACM.[33] Abrams announces that "we are going to have to decide whether we will have an interracial group or not", and despite the invitation to Dogan, Abrams avers that "when we started we didn't intend to have an interracial group".[34] He draws comparison with the difficulties faced by New York's Jazz Composers' Guild, wherein, according to the testimony of the Guild's Bill Dixon, white members had been treated differently to Black members by the external institutions with which the organisation came into contact.[35] In making his case that the organisation ought to be a Black rather than a multiracial one, Abrams asserts that the institution of the AACM as a Black organisation "is not opposed to white musicians"; the basis for such an institution is that "we clearly have economic, social and other obligations to ourselves because of our position as black musicians. We've been lacking a lot of things, and we have to bring up ourselves. We know what is going on with ourselves personally, as musicians at large, as participants in this organization, and as participants in this country, period".[36] Under this understanding, Abrams thought it necessary that the AACM be instituted as a Black organisation, because "[w]e're promoting ourselves and helping ourselves up to the point where we can participate in the universal aspect of things, which includes all people".[37]

The AACM was launched to the public in August 1965. An open letter was printed in the Chicagoan African-American newspaper *The Chicago Defender*, announcing that "our ultimate goal is to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to serious music and performing new unrecorded compositions. We hope to create a spontaneous atmosphere that is unique to our heritage and to the performing artist. Our aim is universal in its appeal and is necessary for the advancement, development and understanding of new music."[38] In registering as a non-profit organisation, the AACM was required to produce a charter, which took the form of 'nine purposes', reproduced below. Lewis points out that "neither this press release [that published in *The Chicago Defender*] nor the nine purposes make any reference to race, or to the cultural nationalism that was burgeoning among African Americans".[39] The drafting of its charter for the purposes of registering as a non-profit organisation was a task undertaken with "utmost seriousness", producing the nine purposes which "reflected serious engagement with social, cultural, and spiritual issues affecting black musicians and their community":[40]

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[33] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 112.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Abrams in Ibid., p. 113.
[36] Abrams in Ibid., pp. 113 – 114.
[37] Abrams in Ibid., p. 114.
[38] Ibid., pp. 117 – 118, quoting 'Creative Musicians Sponsor Artists Concert Showcase', *Chicago* Defender, August 7, 1965, n.p.
[39] Ibid., p. 118.
[40] Ibid., p. 115.

The Nine Purposes of the AACM

- To cultivate young musicians and to create music of a high artistic level for the general public through the presentation of programs designed to magnify the importance of creative music.
- To create an atmosphere conducive to artistic endeavors for the artistically inclined by maintaining a workshop for the express purpose of bringing talented musicians together.
- To conduct a free training program for young aspirant musicians.
- To contribute financially to the programs of the Abraham Lincoln Center, 700 E. Oakwood Blvd., Chicago, Ill., and other charitable organizations.
- To provide a source of employment for worthy creative musicians.
- To set an example of high moral standards for musicians and to uplift the public image of creative musicians.
- To increase mutual respect between creative artists and musical tradesmen (booking agents, managers, promoters and instrument manufacturers, etc.).
- To uphold the tradition of cultured musicians handed down from the past.
- To stimulate spiritual growth in creative artists through recitals, concerts, etc., through participation in programs.[41]

The primary method for the implementation of the AACM's purposes was its concert programme, which began in August 1965 with concerts by the Joseph Jarman Quintet and Philip Cohran's Artistic Heritage Ensemble.[42] These concerts differed from the bar and club gigs at which the musicians were accustomed to playing in that the repertoire performed was composed by members of each ensemble, and in that the concerts began at eight p.m.[43] Lewis lists further differences, which aligned AACM performances with concert music, and which were designed to create the "atmosphere conducive to serious music" mentioned in the open letter printed in *The Chicago Defender*: "concert-style seating, the printing and distribution of advertising, attempts to obtain appearances on radio, securing venues for advance ticket sales, and overall stage and venue management".[44]

Classes in music theory for and among AACM members began soon after the organisation's inception, understood by Abrams as "collaborations between so-called teachers and so-called students", rather than following any hierarchical (or, in the terminology of Rancière and Jacotot, 'stultifying') pedagogical model. These classes were followed by the opening of the AACM School of Music in 1967, "an alternative institution operating in the black community, facing issues of creativity and innovation through the development of pedagogical methods that combined

[41] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 116.
[42] Ibid., p. 118.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

literature with orature".[45] The school began with a small studentship, "10 to 15 students", according the school's first dean, Roscoe Mitchell, which rapidly expanded through word of mouth, with students ranging from those already studying music in public schools to younger children without any prior musical training.[46]

In the years following its inception, the activities and influence of the AACM expanded in a number of ways. It established relationships with other Black Arts institutions, such as Chicago's Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC) and St. Louis' Black Artists Group, formed with the AACM as an explicit model. Anthony Braxton's trio, with Wadada Leo Smith and Leroy Jenkins, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago moved to Europe, and subsequently, along with other AACM musicians such as Abrams, to New York, where a second chapter of the organisation was formed.

In following a Rancièrian method to study the AACM as a 'scene', it is incumbent, first of all, to acknowledge that taught by the scene to its investigator, "how to talk about it, how to deal with it."[47] Firstly, the AACM's establishment as a Black organisation means confronting the intersection between Rancière's writing on politics and the politics of race. In the following chapters, both the politics and the aesthetics of the AACM are examined in a manner consistent with Rancière's methods. Their interaction is examined in such a way that Rancière's assertion that "there is no criterion for establishing an appropriate correlation between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics" serves not as an interdiction against investigating such interactions, but only against the derivation of 'an appropriate correlation' as a general rule from the particular interactions of a historical singularity.[48]

[45] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 177.
[46] Ibid., p. 178.
[47] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 67.
[48] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 57 – 58.

Chapter Six: Rancière's Politics and Racialised Police Distributions

To properly assess the politics of the AACM it is necessary, first of all, to conceptualise the struggle of Black people in America in Rancièrian terms. In this, there exist two operations: to articulate the form of the police orders that hold and have held Black people in America, and the members of the AACM specifically, in subjugation; and to articulate the forms of challenge to those orders that members of the AACM have effected. To reach this point, it is first necessary to make a case more broadly for the discussion of politics of identity in the terms of Rancière's formulation.

Rancière writes very little about the particular police orders operative in the identification and subjugation of Black people in the United States. Indeed, the disidentification that Rancière considers a necessary part of political action has proved problematic to some commentators, particularly in regard to the politics of race, as well as queer theory, feminisms, and postcolonial theory. Oliver Davis posits that "[i]f 'identity politics' is understood as the self-assertion of a minority group gathered under the banner of a relatively stable shared identity, then it looks as though it cannot qualify as politics in Rancière's radical alternative understanding of the term".[1] For Davis, Rancière's position constitutes the "wholesale relegation of identitarian self-assertion to the police order", an implication that, he argues, renders Rancière's formulation of politics "problematic".[2] As studied in Chapter Two, Rancière asserts that political acts always occur under a presupposition of equality, and are simultaneously acts of disidentification and subjectivation. In undertaking the political act, a person or group of people challenges a police distribution, and in so doing disidentifies themselves from the place allotted to them within that distribution. They also, by undertaking a political act, make of themselves a political subject.

The encounter between Rancière's disidentificatory conception of politics and politics of identity is nowhere more antagonistic than in 'Politics, Identification and Subjectivization', a paper delivered in the United States and included in the second French edition of *Aux Bords du Politique*, in which Rancière makes the claim that "identity is first about fear: the fear of the other, the fear of nothing, which finds on the body of the other its object".[3] In the paper, Rancière locates identity politics as the obverse face of the meta-politics of neoliberalism:

> Now for me the current dead end of political reflection and action is due to the identification of politics with the *self* of a community. This may occur in the big community or in smaller ones; it may be the identification of the process of governing with the principle of the community under the heading of universality, the reign of the law, liberal democracy,

[1] Oliver Davis, *Jacques Rancière* (Polity: Cambridge, 2010), p. 88.
[2] Ibid.
[3] 'Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization', p. 64.

and so on. Or it may be, on the contrary, the claim for identity on the part of so-called minorities against the hegemonic law of the ruling culture and identity.[4]

William Fourie and Carina Venter, referring to 'Politics, Identification and Subjectivization', argue that Rancière's critique of identity politics is connected to his criticisms of Plato and Bourdieu. They state that the theory, in each case "assigns to the subject an identity or subjectivity that ultimately amounts to the foreclosure of equality".[5]

Elsewhere, in his 'Ten Theses on Politics', Rancière specifically proscribes the identification of 'the people' with "the race of those who recognize each other as having the same beginning or birth".[6] That which appears as exclusionary in these early texts on politics can, in part at least, be attributed to the specific context in which they were produced. The scene of Rancière's early intervention on contemporary political issues was one in which the decline in revolutionary and social-democratic movements since the 1970s had produced, in France, a vision of consensus in which politics was understood as "a realistic response to a host of non-equivocal data concerning a community whose parts can be precisely numbered and whose problems can be objectively defined".[7] Among the phenomena accompanying this vision was "the spectacular rise of a racist and xenophobic far-right which reawakened forms of radical alterity that the consensual doctrine was supposed to have buried", constitutive of a situation that "demanded to think anew the figure of the people as a subject of politics, to think the gap between the political *dèmos* and the identitarian *ethnos*".[8] Rancière's conception of politics as necessarily disidentificatory functions, in these early texts, as a bulwark against the claims of the far-right to the inheritance of the workers' movements that are the subject of the greater part of his writing on politics.

It is also worth considering how Rancière's anti-Platonism bears upon this proscription of identity politics. In *Disagreement*, while discussing the work of both Plato and Aristotle, Rancière comments that "the Ancients, much more than the Moderns, acknowledged that the whole basis of politics is the struggle between the poor and the rich."[9] Indeed, it is "politics (that is, the interruption of the simple effects of domination by the rich)" that "causes the poor to exist as an entity."[10] The "domination by the rich" is then rearticulated as "the natural order of domination", the interruption of which "by the institution of a part of those who have no part" constitutes politics.[11] In *Hatred of Democracy*, a much later text than *Disagreement*, Rancière articulates this 'natural

[4] 'Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization', p. 59.
[5] William Fourie and Carina Venter, 'Coloured Opera and the Violence of Dis-identification', in *Rancière and Music,* pp. 156 – 173 (p. 161).
[6] 'Ten Theses on Politics', p. 41.
[7] Jacques Rancière, 'Work, Identity, Subject' in *Jacques Rancière and the Contemporary Scene*, pp. 205 – 216 (p. 212).
[8] Ibid.
[9] *Disagreement*, p. 11.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

order' in his discussion of the opposition between democracy and the remainder of the titles required to occupy a position of governance in Plato's *Laws*. These titles fall into two categories, four "presented as differences related to birth", namely "the power of parents over their children, the old over the young, masters over their slaves, and highborn people over men of no account" and two that "also express nature if not birth", in "the power of the strongest over the weakest" and "the authority of those who know over those who are ignorant".[12] Each of these titles "defines a hierarchy of positions", and does so "in continuity with nature".[13] The seventh title, the "title that is not a title", is "the title of that authority that has the 'favour of heaven and fortune'", extrapolated by Rancière as "the choice of the god of chance, the drawing of lots, i.e. the democratic procedure by which a people of equals decides the distribution of places" and which is "the scandal of a superiority based on no other title than the very absence of superiority".[14] While it is possible to understand all of the six titles that are undermined by democracy as part of the 'domination of the rich', it is worth considering that there are factors beyond those enumerated by Plato that have been, and continue to be, considered 'natural' orders of domination: the power of men over women, the power of white people over Black, the power of the 'indigenous' over the immigrant and of the colonialist over the indigenous. The extent to which Rancière derives his notion of politics from the trouble caused by the seventh of Plato's titles to the remaining six is also the extent to which his conception of politics relies on those six titles to be constituted as its opposite. This conception therefore does not account for any orders of domination not specified by Plato, the possible reasons for which must be deemed speculative, but which can, nevertheless, be suggested: because they were deemed so 'natural' that any accounting for them would be superfluous; that for his contemporaries such orders would be subsumed under those orders given, such as those of "masters over their slaves", "highborn people over people of no account", "the strongest over the weakest" or "those who know over those who are ignorant"; or, because the understanding of them as 'natural orders of domination' has developed since the epoch to which Plato's writings belong.[15] In any case, the reduction of the first six of Plato's titles to the master-order of rich over poor elides orders of domination excluded by Plato and those parts of the orders he does name that escape that binarism. These 'parts of no part' for which Rancière's anti-Platonism struggles to account are those parts that would be taken up elsewhere in the name of 'identity politics'.

The development of Rancière's thinking on politics has been accompanied by revisions to the position on identity he adopts in 'Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization'. Interviewed in

[12] *Hatred of Democracy*, pp. 39 – 40.
[13] Ibid., p. 40.
[14] Ibid., pp. 40 – 41.
[15] Ibid., pp. 39 – 40.

1999, Rancière reformulates his thought on American identity politics. In so doing, he attributes to the difference between political challenges in Europe and North America a difference in the relationship between people and the state:

> In crossing the Atlantic, we must of course try to translate the language of struggles. I feel that the struggle for equality in North America plays out in relation to hegemonic, dominant type known as 'wasp.' An assertion of identity is thus a demand to be able to exist in the face of this type. Marginal identities constitute poles of resistance. In Europe, the struggle for equality is not expressed in reference to a dominant model, but directly in relation to the state, which is the space in which the relationship between equality and inequality is negotiated.[16]

While these remarks constitute a softening of the position Rancière takes up in 'Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization', they do little to resolve the tension between Rancière's construction of politics and the 'identity politics' of marginalised or subaltern groups. Indeed, the introduction of a distinction between models of political struggle in North America and Europe introduces a further tension with his previous work on politics. In particular, it is worth considering these remarks with reference to the construction of 'police' in *Disagreement*:

> I do not, however, identify the police with what is termed the 'state apparatus.' The notion of a state apparatus is in fact bound up with the presupposition of an opposition between State and society in which the state is portrayed as a machine, a 'cold monster' imposing its rigid order on the life of society. […] The distribution of places and roles that defines a police regime stems as much from the assumed spontaneity of social relations as from the rigidity of state functions.[17]

From the position of *Disagreement*, the distinction introduced between North American and European models of political struggle emerges as a polarisation of the relationship between the social relations and the state functions of police regimes, wherein a political challenge in the United States must address the former and in France the latter. Such a prescription is at odds with Rancière's critique of the "opposition between State and society".[18]

The relationship between state and society in the production of racism is the focus of Rancière's writing on race outside the discourse of identity. His comments on this approach demonstrate that his focus here is again the rise of the far right as an accompanying phenomenon to French government's turn toward consensus. By emphasising the part of the state in producing the conditions for racism to prosper, Rancière distances the politics of the far-right from his strong

[16] Jacques Rancière, 'Politics and Identity' in *Moments Politiques*, trans. by Mary Foster (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2014), pp. 71 – 78 (p. 74).
[17] *Disagreement*, p. 29.
[18] Ibid.

conception of politics; as a product of consensus, their actions are deficient as a challenge to that consensus:

> If we take all the texts I've written about racism, the point is to look differently at what's going on in there. I don't hold a Marxist line that says that racism is a superficial symptom covering something more profound. I tackle things differently. There is an official – consensual – explanation of racism: poor little whites, overtaken by progress, have it in for immigrants. All I say is that we need to look a bit at the legislation, at laws, decrees and government measures. You are going to see a clear figure of racism emerge from all that, one that completely undercuts the ludicrous discourse that people who think they're on the left, on the extreme left, radicals, etc., repeat ad infinitum about racism as a kind of popular rage.[19]

If Rancière's outline of this approach again seems to over-emphasise the importance of the 'cold monster' of the state in the production and maintenance of police distributions of the sensible, it can, in this case, be attributed to the corrective function that Rancière attributes to his texts. Central among the texts to which Rancière seems to be referring is 'Seven Ways to Spread Racist Ideas in France', first published in 1997, in which it can be seen that he is actually more even-handed; blame for the spread of racist ideas is distributed among the racists who "are hard at it, which is the least that can be expected" as well as "politicians, journalists, and experts of all types" who "have discovered effective ways of using antiracism to serve an intense propagation of racist ideas".[20]

Consistent with the broader and more dynamic conception of politics that was found, in Chapter Two, to be in evidence in his later works, Rancière's more recent comment on matters of identity politics foregoes the division between state and society in the production and maintenance of police distributions of the sensible. In the context of a response to Axel Honneth's theory of recognition, he is able to describe a challenge to a police distribution by, and in the name of, a minority group, in such a way that his thinking of politics as disidentification is not contradicted:

> A minority claim is not only the claim to have one's culture and the like recognized; it's also a claim precisely to not be considered as a minority obeying special rules, having a special culture. It can be viewed as a claim to have the same rights and enjoy the same kind of respect or esteem as anybody, as all those who are not assigned any special identity.[21]

This form of dis-identification, in which the political subject's renunciation of the identity assigned to it within a police distribution of the sensible does not equate to a total renunciation of

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[19] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 95.
[20] Jacques Rancière, 'Seven Ways to Spread Racist Ideas in France' in *Moments Politiques*, pp. 55- 58 (p. 55).
[21] Jacques Rancière, 'Critical Questions on the Theory of Recognition' in Axel Honneth, Jacques Rancière, *Recognition or Disagreement: A Critical Encounter on the Politics of Freedom, Equality and Identity*, ed. by Katia Genel and Jean-Philippe Deranty (New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2016), pp. 83 – 95 (p. 90).

its identity, is consistent with Rancière's writing on the group that has been afforded the largest part of his focus, the workers, plebs or proletariat. While articulations of proletarian subjectivisation and disidentification appear throughout his oeuvre, the iteration of *The Method of Equality* presents a formulation that demonstrates a centrality of identity in Rancière's later thought on politics:

> Political subjectivization is a symbolic operation to do with an established identity. […] If you think of what used to be called the labour movement or proletariat, you can easily see that we have a single noun for two things: first, the existence of a mass of people belonging to the same social background which is already included in a symbolization of the collective order; second, dis-identification, which transforms the very sense of that symbolization, making it no longer the designation of a collective identity, but the designation of a collective capacity to construct a new common.[22]

The shift in Rancière's thinking on identities other than economic class that is indicated by his contribution to the dialogue with Honneth re-emphasises the contestability of 'class', given in *Disagreement* as "the perfect example of one of those homonyms over which the counts of the police order and those of the political demonstration are divided".[23] In *Disagreement*, this division lies between a police sense in which "a class is a grouping of people assigned a particular status and rank according to their origins or their activity", while, in the political sense, a class is "an operator of conflict, a name for counting the uncounted, a mode of subjectification superimposed on the reality of all social groups".[24] This understanding is, of course, consistent with Rancière's early conception of politics in which it is the proletariat that is understood to be *the* operator of politics, in its strongest sense. In Chapter Four of the current study, a transformation of Rancière's thought was summarised, wherein his writing casts off all pretensions to the prescription of correct understanding of homonyms, adopting instead an in-discipline the task of which is "to deploy the intervals which put the homonymy to work."[25] Where Rancière returns to the homonymy of 'class' following this transformation, responding, in 2016, to the proposition that "[i]f one uses the concept of class, one can't really understand a phenomenon like the global precariat", he demurs that "[o]ne has to take into account that there are many interpretations of the class concept".[26] He goes on to discuss the various ways in which the proletariat has been fragmented, commenting that, while the factory work around which Western European class politics had previously been organised has been exported to places where the "proletariat lacks all the means of organization and struggle that were available to the proletariats of Western countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries", the precarity of the domestic working classes has left them in a "fragmented

[22] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 120.
[23] *Disagreement*, p. 83.
[24] Ibid.
[25] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.
[26] Rancière and Engelmann, p. 93.

condition".[27] This arrangement leads Rancière to conclude that "there's a fierce class struggle today, with a well-placed class on one side, the ruling class, and on the other side, elements that don't succeed in coming together as a class".[28] While this diagnosis can be seen as a pessimistic recapitulation of earlier assertions of a dis-identified proletariat as the subject of politics, it introduces elements that problematise that formulation. Principal among these is the expansion of the police distribution of the sensible to a global scale. This expansion necessitates a more complicated set of relationships between the social relations and state functions that produce and maintain the police distribution. This complexity is manifested in Rancière's description of an aggressive ruling class apparently challenging and changing a police distribution. Rancière's depiction, in *Disagreement*, of a better police order being "the one that all the breaking and entering perpetrated by egalitarian logic has most often jolted out of its 'natural' logic" is thereby upended by a ruling class capable of reversing the effects of prior political challenges.[29] In another, approximately contemporaneous, discussion, Rancière's further reflection on changes in and challenges for the working class leads to the de-centralisation of work in his understanding of the grounds of political challenge.[30] He notes that "[w]ork is no longer the always-already-there form of a world to come", and that "it has not really been replaced in that function".[31]

Among the contemporary manifestations of struggle about which Rancière writes are those based on the occupation of public spaces, such as *Nuit debout* in France, "the Spanish Indignados, Gezi in Istanbul, Tahrir in Cairo, Occupy Wall Street, and so on".[32] This mode of political struggle, in its lack of foundation in a common relation to work is, according to Rancière "deprived of any symbolic and lived world to lean on" and "has difficulty finding forms through which to develop itself".[33] It is clear that Rancière does not mean, by this, that the form of action is misguided, and he professes no optimism nor pessimism about its success. However, his acceptance of the breaking of the link between politics and work demonstrates that the link was always contingent. This opens space within his conceptual framework for political subjectivations outside the identity of workers, not only in present and future political challenge, but also retrospectively.

In a 2011 interview, Rancière states that "there is no permanence to the forms of subjectivation as such". [34] Under this understanding, with the link between work and politics broken, and where dis-identification makes the symbolisation of identity "the designation of a collective capacity to construct a new common", the possibilities for reading political actions

[27] Rancière and Engelmann, p. 95.
[28] Ibid., p. 96.
[29] Disagreement, p. 31.
[30] Jacques Rancière, *What Times Are We Living In? A Conversation with Eric Hazan*, trans. by Steven Corcoran (London: Polity, 2021), pp. 16 – 21.
[31] Ibid., p. 19.
[32] Steven Corcoran in Ibid., p. 18, fn. 5.
[33] Ibid., pp. 20 – 21.
[34] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 26.

effected from identitarian positions through a Rancièrian lens are manifold.[35] In doing so in discussion of the politics of the AACM, it is worth considering that in which the 'new common' might consist. In the abovementioned 2011 interview, Rancière expands on this idea, enumerating "modifications of the common tissue" produced by political subjectivisation: "forms of organization, new spaces for the demonstration of dissensus, new possibilities of enunciation".[36]

Despite the distance Rancière places between his work and politics of identity, commentators, particularly in anglophone discourse on his thought, have sought to utilise his writing on politics in discussion of politics of race, sex/gender and sexuality. This is a theme in commentary on Rancière's work that goes back to Todd May's *The Political Thought of Jacques Rancière*, from 2008, the first monograph on Rancière to appear in any language. In discussing Rancière's conception of a police order, May emphasises the importance of the 'sensible', stating that "[t]he partitioning concerns an entire experience".[37] It is this 'entire experience' through which May's articulation of the possibilities of Rancière's aesthetic understanding of politics becomes one in which politics can be considered for subjectivations other than that of the working class:

> In a police order, there are many types of classifications that create many types of inequality. There are economic classifications, racial and gender classifications, psychological and sociological classifications. This approach is distinct from that of Marx, for whom the working class is the particular object of exploitation and therefore the subject of political action. For Rancière, the people, the demos, consists of those who, in a given classification, are unequal to others in that classification. They can be women, gays, African Americans, *sans papiers*, students, *mestizos*, Tibetans, workers, etc. The people are those who have no claim to contribute to the public discussion and debate, those who are, from the perspective of the police order – or some aspect of that order – invisible.[38]

May illustrates this broader conception of politics (relative to Marx) with an example drawn from the Civil Rights movement in the United States, a lunch counter sit-in by four students in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960.[39] In that the students "*presupposed* their own equality to whites and acted out of that presupposition", and that the students "did not want to be treated as white or to occupy the position allotted to whites", but rather opposed "the very division into whites and Negroes", May finds in this action "the precise nature of the presupposition of equality that Rancière finds at the source of any democratic politics".[40]

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[35] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 120.
[36] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 26.
[37] Todd May, *The Political Thought of Jacques Rancière* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2008), p. 48.
[38] Ibid., p. 50.
[39] Ibid., pp. 50 – 55.
[40] Ibid., p. 51.

In May's later *Contemporary Political Movements and the Thought of Jacques Rancière*, he asserts that actions taken in opposition to racism can only be considered political, in a Rancièrian understanding of the term, within particular limits. His reading of Rancière requires a more complete disidentification than has been read above, arguing that "[t]o take on the categories of blackness – like queerness, and other-*nesses* – is to ratify a part of the history of one's own oppression".[41] This assertion seems at odds, in particular, with Rancière's depiction of disidentification as that which transforms the sense of the symbolisation of the name of an identity, "making it no longer the designation of a collective identity, but the designation of a collective capacity to construct a new common".[42]

May's comments on identity reflect an aspect of his broader reading, whereby, according to Samuel Chambers, "the concept of 'police' takes on more prominence as it serves the role of an enemy to be defeated by politics".[43] There is, in May's work, as in the writing of several other commentators on Rancière, an inability or unwillingness to escape a negatively-denoted 'police', despite Rancière clearly stating, from his first use of the term, that he uses the word in a sense that is "neutral" and "nonpejorative".[44] By contrast, Chambers' reading reflects a more complex relationship between politics and police: one which reflects Rancière's understanding that there can be no 'pure politics', where politics and police are "two forms of the distribution of the sensible that are at once opposed in their principles and yet constantly mixed in their functioning".[45]

This difference in understanding of Rancière's politics and police produces, in Chambers' writing, a more optimistic and nuanced vision as to the possibilities of the intersection of Rancière's writing and politics of identity. While Chambers chiefly writes on queer politics rather than politics of race, his reading of Rancière serves to demonstrate the utility of even Rancière's most contentious writing on politics and identity to consideration of identity politics. By re-routing Rancière's thought to examine gender theory and queer theory, particularly that of Judith Butler, and submitting Rancière's thought to the inverse exercise, Chambers is able to contend that "the most salient and powerful vision of queer politics proves to be a Rancièrian *democratic* politics" and that "Rancière's miscount proves to be a *queer* miscount".[46] Performing this dual operation, and marshalling of Rancière's writings "in the service of ends other than his own", argues Chambers, "is not at all to violate the spirit of Rancière's writings, but exactly to work within it."[47]

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[41] Todd May, *Contemporary Political Movements and the Thought of Jacques Rancière: Equality in Action* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 12.
[42] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 120.
[43] *The Lessons of Rancière*, p. 67.
[44] *Disagreement*, p. 29.
[45] 'Against an Ebbing Tide', p. 249.
[46] *The Lessons of Rancière*, p. 158.
[47] Ibid.

One point of convergence between Rancière's and Butler's writing to which Chambers draws attention concerns the formation of the political subject and its relation to the police distribution of the sensible. In Butler's *Gender Trouble*, they attest that "[t]he distinction between sex and gender is constructed, and the binary of gender difference is maintained, through a series of regulatory norms and mechanisms".[48] In Rancièrian terms, this can be read as a police distribution of the sensible wherein the categories of sex and gender are partitioned, not only between sexes and genders, but in the very division between 'sex' and 'gender' present in that which Chambers articulates as "the typical if commonly tacit narrative that quietly attributed to sex the capacity to serve as a natural foundation from which contingent gender would then develop".[49] In *Gender Trouble*, Butler calls this police distribution "the heterosexual matrix", in that the production of this distribution is based on "a primary presumption of heterosexual desire that lies at the centre of the matrix".[50] It is this heteronormative distribution in which homophobia (and misogyny) are produced, but Butler's formulation demonstrates that "the problem of heteronormativity remains irreducible to the problem of homophobia".[51] A liberal version of identity politics, by identifying "a given and known subject of discrimination or oppression", might offer policy to mitigate misogyny or homophobia, "to avert or lessen acts of discrimination or violence against such a minority group".[52] But Chambers emphasises that "*none of this would necessarily challenge or offer resistance to heteronormativity*".[53]

While Butler's work demonstrates that "the category of 'woman' cannot be presumed in advance", and thereby critiques the heteronormativity of second-wave feminism, Chambers contends that 'queer' similarly critiques gay and lesbian identity politics.[54] For Chambers, "queer describes a particular, relative position in relation to norms of sexuality" in which "[t]here is therefore nothing fixed, nothing permanent about queerness; it is always context-dependent".[55] He refers to Rancière's statement in 'Politics, Identification and Subjectivization', that "a subject is an outsider or, more, an *in-between*", to argue that, contrary to the liberal identity politics of claims for rights, queer is exemplary of a political subject produced by the process of disidentification and subjectivisation.

Chambers writes clearly and compellingly about queer politics and, particularly in his division between it and liberal identity politics of claims to rights, points towards a way of thinking about politics of identity in a Rancièrian framework that allows for political subjectivisation

[48] *The Lessons of Rancière*, p. 161.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., p. 162. Emphasis Chambers'.
[55] Ibid.

disentangled from relationships to work. It does not, however, address politics of race. It is possible to think of analogues for the queer political subject in discourses rooted in politics of race, such as in elements of the intersectionality of 'the undercommons' in Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's book of the same name.[56] However, Chambers' valorisation of queer (dis-)identity in opposition to relatively stable gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual identities is contradicted, like May's stigmatisation of self-identification with blackness or queerness, by the description given by Rancière's in *The Method of Equality* of a disidentification that transforms the sense of an identity, disidentification as re-symbolisation wherein an identity comes to mark "the designation of a collective capacity to construct a new common".[57]

While Chambers (correctly) identifies in May's explicitly anarchist reading of Rancière a tendency to consider police as an "enemy" that politics must destroy, his treatment of queer politics in opposition to the heteronormative police distribution courts a similar position.[58] Of course, seeking destruction of the heteronormative policing of sex, gender and sexuality is not the same as seeking the destruction of policing *tout court*, but in valorising queer in opposition to heteronormativity, Chambers risks discounting the possibilities for political subjectivisation in those relatively stable groups, subjectivisations that may also be of use in undermining the heteronormative police distribution of sex, gender and sexuality. In an interview with Eric Hazan first published in 2009, Rancière clarifies his thought on the 'rarity' of politics, stating that emancipation has "a history that isn't just made up of great striking deeds, but also of the ongoing effort to create forms of the common different from the ones on offer from the state, the democratic consensus, and so on".[59] Consideration of politics of sex, gender and sexuality in these terms makes space for both the subjectivisations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans identities and the in-between subject of queer in political challenges to the heteronormative police distribution of the sensible.

Also drawing from Rancière's early writing on politics and concerned with the in-between subject, but taking a less optimistic view of that work's possibilities for discussion of politics of identity than Chambers, are Fourie and Venter. In 'Coloured Opera and the Violence of Dis-identification' they explore the complexities of disidentification in the case of 'coloured' opera singers in Cape Town in the mid-20th century. To articulate the status of 'coloured' people in apartheid South Africa, Fourie and Venter cite South Africa's Population Registration Act 1950,

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[56] Stefano Harney, Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe, New York and Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013).
[57] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 120.
[58] *The Lessons of Rancière*, p. 67.
[59] Jacques Rancière, 'Democracies Against Democracy: an Interview with Eric Hazan' in Giorgio Agamben et al., *Democracy in What State?*, trans. by William McCuaig (New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 76 – 81 (p. 80).

which negatively defines a 'coloured' person as "not a white person nor a native".[60] They take for their object of study the Eoan group, a "cultural and welfare organisation for the so-called 'coloured' community" founded in 1933 that expanded to become "South Africa's first grassroots company to perform full-scale operas", staging operettas from 1949 and full operas from 1956 until 1975.[61]

Fourie and Venter highlight the parallel between this scene, in which "street sweepers, teachers, factory workers and domestic servants" take to the stage by evening, and the *proletarian nights* of leisure, art and thought of the 19th century European workers studied by Rancière. This parallel is emblematised by a shared politicity based on the group members' defiance of "the division of time predicated on the assumption that the worker is too exhausted by their daytime labour to partake in artistic pursuits at night".[62] But the actions of the members of the Eoan group, for Fourie and Venter, take on an additional politicity, in that "it was the coloured body that took the place of the Western operatic subject endowed with all the trappings of civilisation, thereby asserting itself as equal in the face of continued disenfranchisement".[63]

A second parallel, focusing on the 'in-between', is drawn between the actions of the Eoan group and a disidentificatory episode utilised as exemplary by Rancière in *Disagreement*. That episode concerns the revolutionary Auguste Blanqui, who, on trial in 1832, when asked by a magistrate to give his profession, answers 'proletarian', and explaining himself with the statement that "[i]t is the profession of thirty million Frenchmen who live off their labor and who are deprived of political rights".[64] Following this, the magistrate agrees to have 'proletarian' listed as a new profession. Fourie and Venter argue that the mode of disidentification enacted by Blanqui was not open to the members of the Eoan group. While, according to Fourie and Venter, those members manifested "[a]n identical condition of in-betweenness" to Blanqui, they were denied the disidentificatory possibilities of "white workers who can slip in between social strata, unencumbered by a racialised identity politics".[65]

In the example studied by Fourie and Venter, the denial was inevitable because the existence of 'coloured' as a category between white and Black meant that "this in-between space was encoded into the racial categories ordered and legalised by the apartheid regime".[66] Fourie and Venter take the "unavailability of an in-between space, a space of dis-identification" for the members of the Eoan group as evidence of a shortfall in Rancière's thinking about political

[60] Union of South Africa, 'Population Registration Act (Act No. 30 of 1950)', *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1950*, p. 277, quoted in Fourie and Venter, p. 163.
[61] Fourie and Venter, p. 161; p. 156.
[62] Ibid., p. 163; p. 164.
[63] Ibid., p. 163
[64] *Disagreement*, p. 37
[65] Fourie and Venter, p. 166; p. 169.
[66] Ibid., p. 168.

challenge; they argue that ”the tidy frame of staged dis-identification" ill-fits the “far more complicated nexus of identities and dis-identities than Rancière’s examples – overwhelmingly white and class-based – allow for”.[67] Without denying Rancière’s focus on European politics, nor the complexity of considering classification of race within his logic, it can be countered that the Eoan group simply did not challenge the place of ‘coloured’ people in the apartheid system. Not only was their taking to the stage explicitly allowed by the apartheid regime, they were funded by the state to do so, and performed to segregated audiences. As a result, “the Eoan members were disowned by the coloured community, and forced to assume the identity of the collaborator”.[68] To state as much is not to denigrate the members of the Eoan group; if the distance between the police distribution of the sensible and the state is maintained, then the legality of their actions and even their funding by the state do not prevent consideration of such action as challenging a racialised police distribution. Indeed, Fourie and Venter find that “[d]espite the charges of complicity, the Eoan group could be understood as a disruptive presence within apartheid’s distribution of the sensible, thus enacting a Rancièrean form of politics”.[69]

Fourie and Venter articulate something of utmost importance to consideration of politics of race under a Rancièrian logic: that the racialised body is physically, optically distinguishable, so in a society structured by racial classification to “slip in between [its] social strata” in order to undermine them is a markedly different procedure from any articulated by Rancière. Rancière’s conception of politics as always aesthetic, though, grants the possibility to consider this difference in his terms. The distribution of the sensible as it pertains to politics and police of race may include relationships of sense to sense in which the meaning of the colour of a person’s skin is a locus of dispute or disagreement. It is this facet that prevents consideration of politics of race in the terms of Rancière’s early thought on politics in the manner conducted so successfully by Chambers in relation to queer politics.

Also focusing on the racial politics of apartheid South Africa, Matthias Pauwels utilises Rancière’s later revisions and rearticulations to discuss the politics of South Africa’s Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Two facets of his discussion of the compatibility of Rancière’s thought on politics to consideration of his subject have implications for consideration of identity, particularly politics of race, within a Rancièrian framework. One is the combination of egalitarian and police logics in black opposition to apartheid. Pauwels raises this with regard to a practice, termed “therapeutic essentialism” by English sociologist Paul Gilroy, that involves the assertion of a coherent, positive black African identity, “human-centred” and wherein “solidarity and sharing” are important, and opposed to “individualistic, cold, materialistic and technology-driven” white,

[67] Fourie and Venter, pp. 168 – 169.
[68] Ibid., p. 167.
[69] Ibid., pp. 162 – 163.

Anglo-Boer culture.[70] Pauwels compares this practice to Rancière's comments on identitarian struggles in North America, where "the struggle for equality […] plays out in relation to hegemonic, dominant type known as 'wasp'", and "[a]n assertion of identity is thus a demand to be able to exist in the face of this type."[71] Pauwels points out that the BCM's struggle was against "an even more extreme, white-supremacist regime".[72] While the policing of black identity produces "its own, internal oppressions, exclusions and hierarchies", it does so in serving an emancipatory politics, and is therefore, in Pauwels' estimation, an example of a "good" police.[73]

The second facet of Pauwels' article of interest to wider discussion of politics of identity within a Rancièrian framework concerns the various ways in which the descriptor 'black' operates with regard to identification and disidentification in BCM actions and the writings of its founder, Stephen Bantu Biko. Pauwels asserts that the 'therapeutic' black identitarianism exists alongside BCM negotiation of "a complex, dialectical course between self and other, with self-identifications as 'black' also operating, importantly, in non-identitarian or even anti-identitarian ways"[74] This involves an "equivocal determination of blackness" in which "black" could correspond to the category at the "bottom rung" of South Africa's racial hierarchy, but could also refer to all non-whites, including 'coloured' (those of mixed heritage) and Indian populations.[75] In this manner, the identification of 'black' could serve to oppose various policies that sought to undermine anti-apartheid activism in different ways. Where the apartheid government was granting limited privileges to the coloured and Indian populations, it served as a marker of solidarity between non-white South Africans. In opposition to the "retribalisation" of the "pseudo-multiculturalist" Bantustan policy, "an attempt to isolate and confine each of the different black African ethnicities to tiny, usually barren areas in South Africa which would hence be their 'rightful' territory to be governed by themselves", it served to re-assert unity between those belonging to (or whose ancestors had belonged to) South Africa's various tribes.[76] In these uses, according to Pauwels, "the term 'black' can be seen to have functioned as a disidentifying operator, a complex, political 'name' in Rancière's sense of being a 'misnomer', resisting the police practice of 'right names'".[77]

At the nexus of these facets of Pauwels' article, it is possible to rearticulate the actions of the Eoan group studied by Fourie and Venter. Without denying the investment of its members in opposing white supremacy and racial hierarchisation in apartheid South Africa, it can be seen that their actions run counter to those advocated by Biko. Inasmuch as Biko's conception involves an

[70] Matthias Pauwels, 'Emancipatory Politics between Identity and Disidentification: Rancière and the Black Consciousness Movement', *Acta Academica*, 52 (2020) 14 – 36 (pp. 26 – 27).
[71] 'Politics and Identity', p. 74.
[72] Pauwels, p. 28.
[73] Ibid., p. 27.
[74] Ibid., p. 31.
[75] Ibid., p. 33.
[76] Ibid., pp. 32 – 34.
[77] Ibid., p. 34.

admixture of police and politics, it can be seen that the egalitarian logic of the disidentificatory actions attempted by the Eoan group act against the 'good' police logic of non-white solidarity as well as acting against the racist hierarchy of apartheid logic.

While these analyses concern the racialised police and politics of apartheid South Africa, rather than that of the United States, the commonality of a white supremacist hegemony means that Pauwels' and Fourie and Venter's insights can still be useful in considering the political activities of the AACM relative to a racialised police distribution of the sensible. The extension of their insights into such consideration need not imply identity or even equivalence between the racial politics of South Africa and the United States. Rather, their studies demonstrate some of the possibilities for translating Rancière's thought on politics to study of politics of race, and, in particular, in the complexities of the deployment of the operators 'politics' and 'police' in such a context.

While Pauwels' article plots the opening of Rancière's thought to struggles associated with politics of identity effected by the revisions and rearticulations of the latter's more recent comment on politics, there remain, for him, "shortcomings" in the ability of that thought to articulate the nationalist facets of BCM's liberatory practice.[78] Holloway Sparks, in her article, 'Quarreling with Rancière: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Democratic Disruption', finds Rancière's work more limited yet in its ability to articulate politics of identity.[79] While Sparks, following her encounter with Rancière's thought and Chambers' commentary upon it, attests that she "find[s] it difficult to think about democratic dissent and disruption without Rancière", she contends that his conception "can only make visible a particular, and a particularly narrow, range of inequalities and disruptive reconfigurations".[80] She therefore requires that his ideas be augmented with "the poststructuralist accounts of identity, performativity, and resignification offered by feminist, queer, postcolonial, and critical race theorists", a literature which "resonates critically with the account of identifications and subject positions that Rancière forwards".[81] Indeed, Sparks articulates a suspicion that "Rancière's work can only appear unprecedented from the perspective of those less acquainted with the scholarship of postcolonial, gender, queer, race, and other critical theorists".[82] Further, she argues that recourse to such literature allows a more "robust theorization" of Rancière's account.[83] One aspect of this theorisation is the insight offered into the practical methods of political challenge provided by writing on the citational character of challenges, through which "they acquire meaning and become intelligible through the repetition of previously articulated identities and

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[78] Pauwels, p. 35.
[79] Holloway Sparks, 'Quarreling with Rancière: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Democratic Disruption', *Philosophy & Rhetoric,* 49 (2016), 420 – 437.
[80] Ibid., p. 433; p. 429.
[81] Ibid., p. 429.
[82] Ibid., p. 434.
[83] Ibid., p. 429.

performances".[84] This pertains to "the ongoing effort to create forms of the common different" ceded by Rancière in his revision to politics' rarity.[85] Another aspect is the attention paid to the embodiedness of political challenges where the presence of "particular, intersectionally gendered bodies in specific spaces" has a "disruptive impact" prior to the vocal articulation of equality.[86] A third aspect concerns the impurity of intersectionality and the complexity of identification and dis-identification where individuals hold several positions within a racialised and gendered police distribution.

While Sparks' desire for a "robust theorization of democratic quarreling" is at odds with Rancière's anxiety about people "looking for a theory of politics they can apply" in his work, her advice on taking recourse to other literatures in following Rancière's thought to consider other forms of politics is sound.[87] As has been stated previously in this study, Rancière does not provide a totalising system of philosophy, whether writing on politics, art, history or literature. Regarding political subjectivisation and disidentification, the scope of his work has been linked to the context in which he has written and to the discourses into which he has intervened, which has meant that his "dealing with the question of the subject never was an attempt to address issues of identity politics or hybrid, postcolonial identities and so on".[88] In following Rancière's work to discuss subjectivation and disidentification in the context of politics of identity, even without wishing to contribute to a theorisation of democratic politics, it is, then, incumbent to follow Sparks' imperative to consider precedents to Rancière's writing. Of course, in dealing with literature, it is important that cognisance of the methods developed in Chapter Four of the current study, regarding the delineation of texts by the position taken by their author to the people who form their object, is retained.

For the current project, consideration of such precedents to Rancière's work not only allows for consideration of the politics of the AACM in their specificity as politics of race, but also avoids masking or devaluing work with which Rancière's shares characteristics. Given that any politics happens only in the context of, and in specific opposition to, a police distribution of the sensible, it seems necessary to locate an articulation of the characteristics of a racialised police distribution of the sensible. There can be few more eloquent descriptions of any police distribution of the sensible than W. E. B. Du Bois' elucidation of his experience as a Black person in America in *The Souls of Black Folk*. In particular, Du Bois' utilisation of the metaphorical device of 'the veil' appears as a clear precedent of Rancière's conception, wherein, as a Black child among white

[84] Sparks, p. 429.
[85] 'Democracies Against Democracy', p. 80.
[86] Sparks, p. 430.
[87] Ibid, p. 429; Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 102.
[88] Jacques Rancière and Sudeep Dasgupta, 'Art is Going Elsewhere. And Politics Has to Catch It' in *Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy*, 1 (2008), 70 – 76 (p. 75).

children he realised the difference between himself and his peers, that he was "like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil".[89] The veil is a partition that can be seen through, but which distributes the relationship between sense and sense differently on each side. Its opacity is sufficient to mask, for those on one side, the equality of those who exist on the other, yet it is not so opaque that it necessarily makes them invisible. It is, therefore, a remarkably exact metaphor for the distribution of the sensible, itself an inexact translation of *le partage du sensible*, where, as previously discussed, *le partage* refers to both sharing and division.

It is to be stressed that the cross-veil difference in relation of sense to sense is not a difference in sensibility; it is in no way analogous to the differentiation of Voltaire, for whom "the man of taste has a different pair of eyes, a different pair of ears, a different sense of tact to that of the coarse man".[90] Indeed, *The Souls of Black Folk* serves, in part, as an educational manifesto wherein Du Bois crosses 'the color line' "arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas".[91]

Du Bois' 'veil' is connected to that which he calls "double-consciousness" and describes as a "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others".[92] It is this quality that allows Du Bois to assert that "the Negro is … gifted with second-sight in this American world" and to attest to the complex effects of this partition of the sensible on the Black American, living in "a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world".[93] It is this double-consciousness that allows for the apparent omniscience through which Du Bois' is able to describe the relationships between sense and sense either side and through the veil. This ability, then, does not attest to a sociological separation from those about whom he speaks, but to the contingency of the police distribution; Du Bois' ability to "rais[e] [the veil] that you may view faintly its deeper recesses" demonstrates that racism's presumption of a difference in sensibility is misplaced.[94]

The political aim of Du Bois, opposed to the racialised police distribution he depicts, is an outcome in which the cross-veil differences in the relationship between sense and sense are broken, where the contradiction between being Black and being American, manifested in "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body" is overcome.[95] As he summarises, he wishes "to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face."[96]

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[89] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 4.
[90] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 12, citing Voltaire, 'Goût', in *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, Paris 1827, vol. III, p. 279.
[91] Du Bois, p. 90.
[92] Ibid., p. 5.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., p. 1.
[95] Ibid., p. 5.
[96] Ibid.

The helpfulness of Du Bois' veil as a precursor to, and translation of, Rancière's understanding of politics as necessarily aesthetic is emphasised by its consideration alongside Fourie and Venter's analysis of the 'coloured' musicians of South Africa's Eoan Group and Pauwels' Rancièrian reading of Biko. Fourie and Venter find an insufficiency in Rancière's work in their attempt to use it to articulate the politics of the actions of the Eoan group, a scene in which they find that there is a "far more complicated nexus of identities and dis-identities than Rancière's examples – overwhelmingly white and class-based – allow for".[97] While Pauwels finds Rancière's conceptual apparatus compatible with "articulating and conceptualising the complex course navigated by the BCM between the assertion of identity and strategies of disidentification", there remain, for him "shortcomings" in its ability to deal with all of the scene's complexities. By considering Du Bois' work alongside that of Rancière, utilising the parallel between the veil and distributions of the sensible, the most fundamental aspect of Rancière's writing on politics is centred. In turning the investigation away from analogy with the particularities of Rancière's writing on European politics of economic class, between which and the racial politics of South Africa the abovementioned difficulties arise, there is a renewed cognisance of his advice that there are "there is no permanence to the forms of subjectivation as such".[98] It should be noted, too, that Du Bois' writing on the politics of race of the United States, even at half a century's remove from the AACM's foundation, makes his thought more pertinent to this discussion than to the scenes studied in South Africa, notwithstanding the case made by Nahum Dimitri Chandler for the broader possibilities of Du Bois' work.[99] Reading Rancière's politics primarily through the distributions of the sensible, through which it can be linked to Du Bois, foregrounds the spirit of Rancière's thought, in particular the relationship to mastery investigated in Chapter One of this study. It does this by renewing engagement with Rancière's thought on a conceptual level, as a "way … to make a relief of a particular terrain, of tracing lines between this point and that one, of drawing a territory" and as a manner of focusing on "the configuration of a landscape at once conceptual and lived in".[100] It thereby also helps in avoiding the "perfect vacuity" of taking philosophical work as a tool, and of understanding Rancière's political writing as a theory of politics to be applied.[101]

The engagement with Rancière's work at a conceptual level does not preclude reference to specific investigations within his conceptual framework where these are pertinent. The aesthetic affinity between Du Bois' account of the politics of race and Rancière's account of the politics of

[97] Fourie and Venter, pp. 168 – 169.
[98] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 26.
[99] All of Chandler's work on Du Bois is illuminating, but see particularly Nahum Dimitri Chandler, *"Beyond This Narrow Now": Or, Delimitations, of W. E. B. Du Bois* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021).
[100] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 31.
[101] Ibid.; *The Method of Equality*, p. 102.

economic class affords a common ground across which to bend Rancière's conception to consideration of a politics on which he has written little. The utilisation of such parallels in thought echoes Chambers' use of parallels between Rancière's work and that of Butler in his building a queer notion of Rancièrian politics. It should be noted that the parallels between Rancière and Du Bois do not extend across their relative oeuvres. Across Du Bois' writing, even indeed in *The Souls of Black Folk*, he adopts a range of methodologies and writes in a variety of modes the sociologism of some of which render them anathema to a Rancièrian project.

There are, of course, any number of writers on the politics of race whose work avoids Du Bois' sociologism, and which may be examined as to its convergences with and divergences from Rancièrian understandings of politics. Indeed, his sociological writings have provoked criticism in contemporary scholarship; writing on Du Bois' attitude to sex in Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments, Saidiya Hartman notes that "[i]n a novel, he possessed the ability to transform a ruined girl who grew up in a brothel into a heroine, but achieving the same in a sociological study proved nearly impossible".[102] Du Bois' 'double-consciousness' and 'color line' find echoes in the accounts of many other writers on Black politics, and, as Robert Gooding-Williams notes, "Du Bois's early political thought and *Souls* in particular exert considerable influence on post-segregation African American political theory".[103] A fuller study of the intersections between Rancière's thought and African-American politics is surely warranted, taking into account precedents to Du Bois, those whose work he has influenced as well as alternative conceptions. For the current study, Du Bois' elucidation of the aesthetics of the racialised police distribution of the sensible suffices to consider his conception alongside Rancière's in investigation of the AACM.

In the introduction to this study, while working through some of the issues with following a white, European thinker to investigate Black American music and musicians, I noted Anthony Braxton's complaint that "there has been no attempt by the western establishment to view black creativity, and/or its related information, on its own terms".[104] I argued there that Rancière's method, in which the scene is "the 'object' that teaches us how to talk about it, how to deal with it", goes some way to alleviate anxiety about the appropriation of Black music as an object to be explained by European thought. By noting the similarity between, on one hand, Rancière's conception of politics as always aesthetic and the manifestation of this in his distributions of the sensible, and, on the other, the veil as an explicitly aesthetic articulation of Du Bois' double-consciousness, this anxiety is further alleviated. The adoption of such a manner of looking at Black politics allows, without assuming a homogeneous Black understanding of politics of race, an

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[102] Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women and Queer Radicals* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2021), p. 93.
[103] Robert Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 210.
[104] Anthony Braxton, *Tri-Axium Writings 3* ([n.p.]: Synthesis Music, 1985), pp. 289 – 290.

examination that acknowledges Black precedence to Rancière's thought without limiting the possibilities for investigation of such a politics within his conceptual framework.

Chapter Seven: Politics and its Aesthetics in the AACM

In accounting for the racial politics of the AACM within a Rancièrian framework, it is necessary to draw on the main corpus of Rancière's texts, his subsequent revisions and rearticulations, the models of Rancièrian study of politics of identity provided by other commentators, and precedents for Rancière's understanding of disidentification and subjectivation among writers on politics of race.

The element of the AACM's racial politics that must be given primary consideration is its very institution as a Black organisation. As previously noted, the presence of white pianist Bob Dogan as an invitee to initial meetings of the AACM demonstrates that the decision of its members to form the organisation as Black, rather than multiracial, was not inevitable. Indeed, even following that decision, a white member, vibraphonist Emanuel Cranshaw, joined the organisation, "at the recommendation of Fred Anderson and Abrams", in 1967.[1] Cranshaw had been brought up in a Black family, and "did not think of himself as 'white'".[2] In 1969, the members of the association voted to revoke his membership, a decision opposed by Abrams, who felt that, given his upbringing, an exception ought to have been made for Cranshaw.[3]

In discussing the decision to be a Black organisation, Lewis cites Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's assertion that "[t]he concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: *Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks*. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society."[4] A precedent of this sentiment is found in Abrams' declaration, two years prior to the publication of Carmichael and Hamilton's work, that "[w]e're not fighting a racial fight. We're promoting ourselves and helping ourselves up to the point where we can participate in the universal aspect of things, which includes all people."[5]

In this, the parallel with Pauwels' writing on the BCM in South Africa is clear. Just as the egalitarian political challenge of the BCM rested upon a police logic that, in Pauwels' estimation, is an example of a 'good' police, any challenge presented by the AACM to a white supremacist hegemony is determined to be more effective by a policing of its membership with regards to its race. In each case, there is consideration of this police logic as, at least in part, necessary in order to reach a stage of societal pluralism. Where Steve Biko of the BCM envisions "a non-racial, just and egalitarian society in which colour, creed and race shall form no point of reference", Abrams

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[1] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 197.
[2] Ibid., p. 198.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 40, cited in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 112 – 113.
[5] Abrams in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 114.

argues for the place of the AACM in "helping ourselves up to the point where we can participate in the universal aspect of things".[6] Consideration of each case under Rancière's understanding of politics relies on his clarification on the rarity of politics in 'Democracies against Democracy', in which he notes that emancipation has "a history that isn't just made up of great striking deeds, but also of the ongoing effort to create forms of the common different from the ones on offer from the state, the democratic consensus, and so on".[7] In both cases, in order to undertake political activity, that which "makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise" and "makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise", it is deemed necessary to co-ordinate voices that they might be heard.[8] And the AACM's decision to operate from a position rooted in a common identity as Black musicians recalls Rancière's comments on subjectivisation and identity in *The Method of Equality*, in particular his statement that "[p]olitical subjectivization is a symbolic operation to do with an established identity", wherein the sense of the symbolisation is transformed, "making it no longer the designation of a collective identity, but the designation of a collective capacity to construct a new common.[9]

Following this understanding, it can be posited that the disagreement on whether Cranshaw ought to have been admitted to and allowed to remain a member of the AACM is a disagreement about the character of the "established identity" to be transformed.[10] Given the ambiguity around Cranshaw's racial identity, to which Abrams and Cranshaw himself attest, the decision to exclude Cranshaw amounts to a marking of aesthetic difference, of marking the Blackness of the organisation as not (or not only) a cultural Blackness, but one marked by the shared relationship of sense to sense to which Du Bois testifies, a relationship of sense to sense that concerns not only what a person sees and the sense that is made of it, but how a person is seen, specifically the manner of visibility of that person to hegemonic whiteness. Abrams attests that those that opposed Cranshaw's membership "did not hate him, but they didn't want that mixed image", because, for them "[t]he image was just as important as a real fact".[11] Indeed, when making the case for the AACM being a Black organisation, Abrams makes reference to the unequal treatment of members of an interracial organisation by external agents in the case of the Jazz Composers' Guild, paraphrasing Bill Dixon's account in *Down Beat* magazine to state that "[p]eople are trying to contribute things to the white members and withhold it from the colored members – in the same group".[12]

[6] Biko in Pauwels, p. 29; Abrams in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 114.
[7] 'Democracies Against Democracy', p. 80.
[8] *Disagreement*, p. 30.
[9] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 120.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Abrams in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 199.
[12] Abrams in Ibid., p. 113.

The effects of the interraciality of the Jazz Composers' Guild on its dissolution are attested to in Benjamin Piekut's study of that organisation in *Experimentalism Otherwise*.[13] What Piekut also reveals is a series of divisions and disagreements that crossed the division between Black and white members of the Guild; the Guild constituted a "multipolar scene", which "was marked by breaks and conflicts of all kinds" wherein, nevertheless, "the salience of race in each … is noteworthy".[14] Regarding race, Piekut identifies two main factions within the Guild, between which "there was a fundamental disagreement about the value of examining racial issues".[15] One faction, comprising the white members, Carla and Paul Bley, Burton Greene, Michael Mantler, Roswell Rudd and Jon Winter, as well as Black members Alan Silva and John Tchicai, held positions related to that identified by Piekut as "color-blindness" and described as "part of an antiracist response to the discourse of biological essentialism" wherein "any explicit marking of race in public discourse is both impolite and evidence of racial 'prejudice'"; the other, comprising the remainder of the Guild's Black members - Bill Dixon, Sun Ra, Archie Shepp and Cecil Taylor - held a position that Piekut, following Ruth Frankenburg, terms "race cognizance", which "draws attention to racial difference and its cultural, social, and economic constitution as 'a fundamentally structuring feature of U.S. society'".[16] Within this second group there emerged a second division, in Piekut's account, centred on an opposition between the positions held by Dixon and Amiri Baraka, the writer and activist who, although not a member of the Guild, represented a paradigm of Black thought with which Ra, Taylor and Shepp were each to some extent aligned. Piekut characterises this division as one between idealisations of different ideas of purity. It was at Bill Dixon's behest that Guild members disengaged from the hegemonic structures of the music business that "restrictively channeled the creativity of black artists into a set of exploitative relationships".[17] Baraka, meanwhile, had accepted funding from institutional structures for his Black Arts Repertory Theatre and School.[18] While Dixon instituted the JCG as an interracial group and was content to perform before mixed audiences, Baraka opposed interracialism, among both performers and audience members.

The model followed by the AACM shares some traits with Dixon's and some with Baraka's conception. The members of the AACM sought to remove themselves from the circuit of bar and club performances in order to present 'original' or 'creative' music on their own terms, organising their own events in order "to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to serious music and

[13] Benjamin Piekut, *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits* (Berkley and Los Angeles, California and London, England: University of California Press, 2011), pp. 102 – 139.
[14] Ibid., p. 118; p. 139.
[15] Ibid, p. 133.
[16] Ibid., p. 119, quoting Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 14.
[17] Piekut, p. 136.
[18] Ibid., p. 120.

performing new unrecorded compositions."[19] Also, the AACM rejected external funding, both corporate and state, to avoid being "beholden to or dependent upon either the Caucasian interests or the despised black bourgeois."[20] As noted above, the AACM rejected an interracial membership but, unlike in Baraka's idea of purity, they had no such ideas regarding their audience. In the early years of the AACM, alongside performances at Black cultural spaces such as the Abraham Lincoln Center, members also performed in front of largely white audiences at the University of Chicago's Mandell Hall.[21]

In both the case of the JCG and the AACM, their formation and immediate actions relative to their members' work constitute a subjectivisation, given by Rancière in *Disagreement* as "the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience".[22] That the subject of each group, 'Jazz Composers' and 'Creative Musicians' respectively, is a novel categorisation, and thereby a novel body, is attested to by the process of discussion that was necessary for the members of each organisation to agree upon the terms that would represent them, and the debate upon who should and should not be admitted to that membership. In the case of the JCG, according to Piekut, "[e]ach of the three words in the final name represented the culmination of considerable debate".[23] He cites Alan Silva's thoughts on the group's naming by way of demonstration: "I didn't like the word 'jazz' – I always felt it was a bad word, like 'ghetto' – and I didn't like the word 'composers' either…. I joined the Guild because I thought these musicians were some of the most important *improvisers* – not composers."[24] By limiting its membership to 'composers', the JCG implicitly adopted a different position on the status of the musician than that previously discussed in relation to the AACM's effacement of the presumed differences between the categories of musician, composer, interpreter and improvisor. In choosing 'Creative Musicians' as the subject of their organisation, the political subjectivisation performed by members of the AACM produced a deliberately ambiguous subject, all the more so because it makes no mention of the race of the musicians of whom that subject is composed.

In altering the relationships between their members and external agencies upon whom they had been reliant for work, the formation of these organisations proposed them as new bodies, with new capacities for enunciation, participating in a new arrangement of industrial relations. These alterations were not accomplished by way of a negotiation, nor were they accomplished through

[19] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 117 – 118, citing 'Creative Musicians Sponsor Artists Concert Showcase', *Chicago Defender*, August 7, 1965, n.p.
[20] Leslie B. Rout, Jr., 'AACM: New Music (!) New Ideas (?)', *Journal of Popular Culture* 1 (1967), 128 – 140 (pp. 137 – 138), cited in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 181.
[21] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 180.
[22] *Disagreement*, p. 35.
[23] Piekut, p. 107.
[24] Ibid., p. 107, citing Dan Warburton, 'Interviews with Alan Silva, November 8 - 22, 2002', *Paris Transatlantic,* www.paristransatlantic.com/magazine/interviews/silva.html (accessed by Piekut August 2, 2006).

official union channels of industrial action. Indeed, in the accounts of Lewis and Piekut, the unions to which the members of the JCG and the AACM belonged appear as antagonistic figures, part of the industry of music that the formation of these organisations would oppose. Dixon found that the New York branch of the union held jazz musicians in "disregard", while in Chicago, "one of the musicians' primary concerns was to avoid coming into conflict with the bylaws of the musicians' union".[25] In the AACM's first meeting, Jodie Christian forwards a position of keeping the Chicago branch of the union as distanced as possible from AACM activities, stating that: "The only dealings I want to have with the union is, I make up my contract and pay my dues. That's the only way I want to become affiliated with them. If we would have wanted to make this a union thing, we would have gone down there and had their permission and formed right there. But we decided this was our own thing, so we handle it our own way."[26] The politicity of the types of reconfigurations of the relationships between the members of these organisations and their unions and employers is attested to by Rancière in *Disagreement*. In the process of delineating his strong sense of 'politics' from the more common sense of the term, he refers to industrial action to demonstrate that such actions may or may not be political:

> A strike is not political when it calls for reforms rather than a better deal or when it attacks the relationships of authority rather than the inadequacy of wages. It is political when it reconfigures the relationships that determine the workplace in its relation to the community.[27]

Indeed, the reconfiguring of "relationships that determine the workplace in its relation to the community", undertaken by each of the groups in their subjectivisation consisted, in part, of actions of withdrawal of labour comparable to strike action. But the terms of their withdrawals of labour and the ends sought through those withdrawals were not consistent between the organisations, nor, in the case of the JCG, within it. Dixon considered the withdrawal of labour by JCG members to be part of a process of "creating a counter-public" in order to reorient "the flawed but powerful network of jazz production toward new, more equitable arrangements", while for other musicians within the JCG, according to Piekut, this withdrawal formed part of "an effective marketing tool or collective promotional agreement" that "would simply increase demand and drive up the price", leading "to better opportunities for all the affiliated artists".[28] The AACM's withdrawal, by contrast, is understood by its members as a more permanent action. An organisation the "ultimate goal" of which "is to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to serious music and

[25] Piekut, p. 104; Bill Quinn, 'The AACM: A Promise', *Down Beat Music '68*, 1968, p. 46, quoted in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 104.
[26] Jodie Christian in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 104.
[27] *Disagreement*, p. 32.
[28] Piekut, p. 137.

performing new unrecorded compositions" is not one that seeks to return to the circuit of venues that had previously trammelled their practice, regardless of any reform of the relationship between those venues and the musicians.[29] This difference between the AACM and the JCG is one in which ends and means intermingle, and one in which the seemingly more ambitious project is the one that can be realised because it does not require external parties to shift positions. The open-endedness of the AACM project produces an iteration of this industrial action that is all the more concrete for the ambiguousness of its timescale and, finally, a project of much greater longevity.

A major difference between the JCG and the AACM, which perhaps also accounts, in part, for the marked difference in longevity between the two organisations, concerns a different register of politics from the subjectivation of the groups' formation and the politics of race in which they were involved. The difference lies in a politics internal to the organisations, related to that which Rancière refers to, in a later articulation of political subjectivisation, as a micropolitics:

> Forms of subjectivation produce modifications of the common tissue: forms of organization, new spaces for the demonstration of dissensus, new possibilities of enunciation; they determine new combinations of temporalities. Parties and political organizations make up part of this changing landscape but precisely only as possibilities for new forms of subjectivation in a modified common world, not as permanent subjects. What remains, but moving all the while, are spaces of possible subjectivation, where new forms of subjectivation are elaborated. This is the space of a micropolitics that neither complements nor substitutes for the politics of collectives: it is the element of their transformation.[30]

The micropolitics of the JCG and the AACM, then, are those possibilities of disagreement or dissensus that exist outside, beyond and beneath each organisation's stated politics. Indeed, if it is this register of politics that "is the element of [the politics of collectives'] transformation", it is also the register that generates those stated politics. In *Politics, Identity and Subjectivization*, Rancière uses the term 'policy' in the place that, in *Disagreement*, he uses 'police', and if the stated politics of an organisation can easily be understood as its policies, it can also, in the terms of Rancière's writing on politics, be understood as the police order of that organisation. This is the case even where, as in the politics/police of the JCG and the AACM, the policies serve an egalitarian logic, where they form part of what might be called the 'long politics' of emancipation that Rancière acknowledges in 'Democracies Against Democracy'.[31] And it remains the case even without the register of policing that Pauwels notes within the BCM, the "internal oppressions, exclusions and hierarchies" manifested in "repressive 'police' processes" such as "black activists policing the black community

[29] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 117 – 118, citing 'Creative Musicians Sponsor Artists Concert Showcase', *The Chicago Defender*, August 7, 1965, n.p.
[30] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 26.
[31] 'Democracies Against Democracy', p. 80.

to make sure that its members stay true to who they supposedly 'are'".[32] While Pauwels offers that the policing of identity conducted within and by the BCM can be seen as an example of 'good' policing, on the grounds of the emancipatory and egalitarian politics that it served, the 'goodness' of the police of organisational policy can also be considered along the lines developed earlier in the current project. To recap, Rancière posits that a 'better' police is "the one that all the breaking and entering perpetrated by egalitarian logic has most often jolted out of its 'natural' logic".[33] In broadening the conception of 'police' that is proposed by Rancière in *Disagreement*, this proposition was removed from the causal temporality of its logic, to re-frame the 'better' police as that which is more mutable. Under this understanding of a 'better' police, at the scale of organisations such as the JCG and the AACM, it is the mutability of the policy/police of an organisation's stated politics that determines the possibilities of the micropolitics that aim towards its transformation.

It is striking that, despite all of the diffuse forces within and without the JCG, there appears to have been a desire for consensus. Roswell Rudd attests that the writing of a constitution for the JCG "kind of arose out of the need for order, or direction, consensus", while Piekut notes that "the trust needed to build consensus would never be achieved in [the JCG's] atmosphere of competing interests".[34] Consensus and its opposite, 'dissensus', are utilised by Rancière as a conceptual pair, related to police and politics. For Rancière, "[c]onsensus … signifies that, whatever divergence there might be among our ideas and aspirations, we perceive the same things and accord them the same signification."[35] To be certain, this idea of consensus is not identical to that utilised by Rudd and Piekut. However, where Piekut attests, speaking of the jazz avant-garde in general, that "attempts at group formation based on particular models of racial or interracial understanding inevitably came into conflict", the register of dispute or dissensus implied is precisely that of perception and signification, of the relationship of sense to sense, of contrasting aesthetic understandings of the politics of race.[36] While the AACM's formation as a Black organisation was not, as has been demonstrated, free of dispute along these lines, the decision not to operate as an interracial organisation shifts the place of dissensus, relative to that which it occupies in the JCG, from being a barrier to subjectivisation to being a sanctioned micropolitics. Where dissensus within the interracial JCG prevents the development of a coherent police order with regard to race, the police order that marks the AACM as a Black organisation allows a productive dissensus to operate with regard to models of racial understanding. Anthony Braxton, who joined the AACM in 1966 asserts that "part of the significance of the AACM was that we were not tied to any one ideology…

[32] Pauwels, p. 27.
[33] *Disagreement*, p. 31.
[34] Rudd in Piekut, p. 112; Piekut, p. 135.
[35] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 30.
[36] Piekut, p. 106.

At no time during my involvement with the AACM did anyone ever try to tell someone else what to think."[37]

By taking into consideration these ideas of consensus, it is possible to propose a second facet of that which might constitute a 'better' police order: its scope. As with the consideration of mutability as defining a better police order, consideration of the police order's scope bears comparison with the 'better' police posited by Rancière in *Disagreement*, "the one that all the breaking and entering perpetrated by egalitarian logic has most often jolted out of its 'natural' logic".[38] In Rancière's digression on 'better' police, he reflects only on how that 'better' police is reached, leaving what the characteristics of that police might be to inference and deduction. As well as the previous inference of a 'better' police being more susceptible to concession in further confrontations with the egalitarian logic of politics, it could also be inferred that, having been challenged by egalitarian logics, the scope of the police logic has been limited, that elements that have been the subject of successful egalitarian challenge in the past have been nullified. It is important to note that the mono-raciality of the AACM does not mean that its police order has a greater scope than that of the JCG. In fact, the competing metapolitics of the JCG prevent the establishment of a coherent organisational politics/policy during its brief history beyond that which presented the 'jazz composers' as a novel subject. But the desire for consensus attested to by Rudd, a consensus that Piekut finds to have been impossible, indicates a need for a police order with greater scope precisely to quell the egalitarian logic of its micropolitics. In the iteration of his thought on subjectivisation in *The Method of Equality*, Rancière states that "[p]olitical subjectivization is a symbolic operation to do with an established identity". In order to compensate for the distance between its subject and any stable identification, the various elements of the JCG proposed policies or police orders of broad scope to make an effective organisation of the JCG, but also "chafed at the idea of having to 'conform' to a formal constitution".[39] By contrast, the AACM's ability to find common ground in a shared, but not homogenous, experience of Blackness allows for a greater degree of dissensus around its police order.

This understanding of the differing politics of the JCG and the AACM, in which the (inter)raciality of their respective memberships is the largest, but not only, part of politics of race and industry, not only demonstrates a manner of comparing police orders, but also gives an opportunity to think about a 'worse' politics, putatively a corollary of the 'better' police. The 'worse' politics is something that, despite Rancière's insistence of the neutrality of his pair of terms, is not even hinted at in his writing on politics and police, and indeed seems oxymoronic under his understanding. But it is this politics that is present where a police order that serves a political

[37] Braxton in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 214.
[38] *Disagreement*, p. 31.
[39] Piekut, p. 112.

subjectivisation is undermined by egalitarian challenge that renders that subjectivisation incoherent in its challenge to another police order. If there are to be 'better' police orders of the kind elaborated here, a 'worse' politics that inhibits the "all sorts of good" that a police order is able to "procure" is easily understood. To return to another articulation of politics in *Disagreement*, as reformulated above to take into account a 'long' politics of emancipation, where political activity is that which "makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise" and "makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise", and where a police is necessary to co-ordinate voices that they might be heard, the 'worse' politics is that which successfully challenges this co-ordination, leaves those voices still unheard and prevents that discourse from being heard and understood as anything but noise.[40] Thus, the dissensus of the JCG, occurring at a register that prevents the 'better' police from cohering, can be understood as a 'worse' politics than that of the dissensus of the AACM, which is, indeed, the operation through which its police is formed.

The AACM's separation from the structures in which its members had been accustomed to perform music has been discussed above as an example of an industrial action that is political, under Rancière's understanding, because "it reconfigures the relationships that determine the workplace in its relation to the community.[41] However, the AACM's policy of separation can also be understood as a metapolitics. Rancièrian metapolitics was discussed in some depth in Chapter Two, particularly with regard to its use in understanding the politics of aesthetics. It is a broader metapolitics referred to here, though, related to the mode of 'political philosophy' that Rancière identifies particularly with Marx, "the thinking which aims to overcome political dissensus by switching scene, by passing from the appearance of democracy and of the forms of the State to the infra-scene of underground movements and the concrete energies that comprise them". [42]

Prior to further consideration of the AACM's policy as a metapolitics, it is worth returning to Matthias Pauwels' writing on the politics of BCM. Pauwels finds, in Steve Biko's vision of the BCM "a tension between an ideological commitment to pluralism and nationalism".[43] In the mode of Biko's writing that manifests the commitment to pluralism, "the affirmation of a positive, common black identity … is not the BCM's only or ultimate goal", but part of a 'long politics' working towards "a non-racial, just and egalitarian society in which colour, creed and race shall form no point of reference".[44] In the other mode, which Pauwels refers to as "nationalist-identitarian", any continuing acceptance of white people living in South Africa will be "on the condition of 'their acceptance of whatever conditions blacks in this country shall lay at a certain

[40] *Disagreement*, p. 30.
[41] Ibid., p. 32.
[42] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 33.
[43] Pauwels, p. 30.
[44] Ibid., p. 29; Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like: A Selection from His Writings.* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1987), p. 139, cited in Pauwels, p. 29.

time"'.[45] While Pauwels treats this as a tension between the desired outcomes of struggle that render that struggle political or not, under Rancière's strong conception of the term, it can also be considered as a tension between a politics and a metapolitics.

Politics and police, which, for Rancière, are anyway "constantly mixed in their functioning", seem particularly co-reliant in instances of 'long politics' of emancipation.[46] It is in this aspect of this process, which is not thoroughly developed by Rancière, and is only acknowledged much later than the writing of *Disagreement*, that it resembles, in the period prior to the political challenge, a metapolitics. In the case of the BCM, the gaining of black consciousness exists in part as a turning away from the politics of race, of a turning away from direct challenge of the racialised distribution of the sensible. The parallel between the Black Consciousness of the BCM and Marx's worker consciousness is not exact, but some of the facets of the BCM emphasised by Pauwels attest to their comparability. Where Marx finds a lie of politics bound up in political citizenship, where, for "the non-property owner", their "rights as a citizen are only there to mask radical nonright", apartheid South Africa made no such claims of equal citizenship for Black South Africans. But much of Marx's writing on class that is highlighted by Rancière in his articulation of metapolitics does allow for a translation of the latter's thinking on the former from the social class of Europe to the racial class of South Africa. In particular, Marx's understanding of "the concept of class" as "the *truth* of the lie of politics" and his casting of the proletariat as "the social force driving [class struggle] to the point where its truth causes the illusion of politics to explode" find a definite echo in Biko's writing, with the operative class switched from the proletariat to Black people.[47] And where, in Marx's figuration, class therefore "becomes the central figure of a metapolitics conceived as a *beyond* of politics", in Biko's writing it is Blackness that is the central figure, and the metapolitics is conceived as a beyond of racial politics.[48]

The tension between the politics and metapolitics of the BCM is revealed in the understanding of its resolution, even in the pluralistic mode of Biko's writing. Pauwels attests that, for Biko, the end of apartheid does not mean the dissolution of black consciousness. The latter is not "merely … a strategy or to realise a new, non-racial, egalitarian post-apartheid society"; it is, rather the case that "'our adherence to values that we set for ourselves' … cannot be 'reversed' at the moment of 'synthesis'".[49] In Rancièrian terms, this prospective "moment of 'synthesis'" is that rare moment of successful political challenge, where the egalitarian logic is accepted into the police logic, altering its distribution of the sensible, the apportioned and differentiated relationships of sense to sense. As Pauwels articulates it, citing Biko, this "moment of 'synthesis'" is "the moment

[45] Pauwels, p. 30, citing Biko, p. 122.
[46] 'Against an Ebbing Tide', p. 249.
[47] *Disagreement*, pp. 84 – 85.
[48] Ibid., p. 85.
[49] Pauwels, p. 29, citing Biko, p. 51.

at which the building of a positive black identity has reached the point that it can "counterbalance" and "offer a strong counterpoint" to the hegemonic white culture, undoing its racist determinations of blackness and thereby opening the way to the envisioned, new post-apartheid society".[50]

Pauwels draws on Rancière's 1999 interview with Francis Dupuis-Déri, published as 'Politics and Identity' in his mapping of the South African struggle for emancipation to Rancière's conceptual framework. In his rendering of the pluralist mode of Biko's writing as a call to politics, in the strong sense, he cites Rancière's answer on a question about globalisation, wherein Rancière asserts that "[t]he global homogenization of culture must be deterred" and that "[i]t is primarily a question of defending cultural diversity rather than nationality and identity."[51] Pauwels utilises these responses to argue that the BCM's "assertions of black, African identity would thus be supported by Rancière insofar as there is a larger ideological commitment to cultural diversity and pluralism".[52] However, by citing the same interview, it is also possible to problematise this formulation. Biko's vision of the post-apartheid society as one in which Black people are expected to keep up their "adherence to values that [they] set for [them]selves" is contradicted by Rancière's assertion that "the political begins when one is no longer the representative of a particular … community", and "when one finally achieves an identification with anonymity".[53] One formulation provided by Pauwels manages to reconcile Rancière's opposition to identitarianism with Biko's writing, persuasively synthesising certain of the latter's pluralist texts, describing Biko's vision as one "of a pluralist, multiracial society where all cultures are equally valued and race is irrelevant to one's status, rights, privileges and opportunities".[54]

While this formulation satisfies the purposes of Pauwels' paper, demonstrating a mutual relevance between certain of Biko's writings and certain of Rancière's, despite their seemingly opposed positions on identification, and thus "pav[ing] the way for renewing our interrogations into what we are able to think and do", he admits that "nationalist articulation" of the BCM's vision "proved to be more challenging to translate into Rancière's terms".[55] To account for this mode of Biko's writing, and indeed certain statements within its pluralist mode, it is necessary to consider the division between that which Rancière could admit as political and that which he could not. This division provides the tension between the politics and the metapolitics of Biko and the BCM. Both 'long politics' and metapolitics are reliant on a police order that could serve either one. In the case of the BCM, this is exemplified by the "therapeutic essentialism" of its Black consciousness. In one sense, the ambiguity of this police order is a problem for adherents of either tendency, whose hopes

[50] Pauwels, p. 29, citing Biko, p. 51.
[51] 'Politics and Identity', p. 72.
[52] Pauwels, p. 30.
[53] Biko, p. 51, cited in Pauwels, p. 29; 'Politics and Identity', p. 73.
[54] Pauwels, p. 30.
[55] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218; Pauwels, p. 35.

for a society where race is irrelevant or one that follows a path of nationalist-identitarianism may be stymied. But in another, this ambiguity is an example of a productive dissensus, of a micropolitics that is allowed by a gap or shortfall in the scope of the police order.

There are echoes of this tension in the politics of the JCG and, in particular, the AACM. Piekut's characterisation of the division between the respective visions of Bill Dixon and Amiri Baraka as one between idealisations of different ideas of purity was noted above. It is possible, in Rancièrian terms, to consider these idealisations of purity as competing visions of metapolitics, with Dixon's conception involving a switching of scene regarding (racist) institutional and industrial politics and Baraka's involving the same with regard to (institutionalised) racial politics. Both instances involve a 'turning away' from the politics of their primary object of concern. In order to alter the position of musicians linked with jazz music in the music industry, Dixon advocates not making claims of equality with musicians linked with European traditions, but disengaging from that industry. In order to alter the position of Black people within society, Baraka advocates not making claims of equality with the "hegemonic, dominant type known as 'wasp'", but disengaging from interracial discourse. In the words of Baraka's colleague in the Black Arts Movement, Lawrence Neal, the Black artist "must decide that his art belongs primarily to his own people".[56]

The latter tendency shares with the BCM an essentialism with severely problematic aspects. Where Pauwels mentions "black activists policing the black community to make sure that its members stay true to who they supposedly 'are'", including "petty and ugly" iterations such as "shaming black people for using hair straighteners", Piekut explores the homophobia and misogyny of the iteration of Black nationalism espoused by Baraka at this time.[57] This aspect of separation from "bourgeois, white normativity" involved loading whiteness with "gendered and sexualized meanings", exemplified by the sentence with which Baraka opens his 1965 essay 'American Sexual Reference: Black Male': "Most American white men are trained to be fags."[58] In the context of the JCG, the "moral fundamentalism of Black Arts heterosexuality" met awkwardly with the nonnormative sexualities of Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra, two of the members closest to Baraka's Black nationalism in other respects.

As previously stated, Dixon was also cognisant of the importance of race to the subaltern position he and his peers found themselves in. But Dixon found that white musicians were treated "not much better" than Black musicians, and interracialism was not a barrier to his vision for the JCG.[59] Piekut's summation of Dixon's position does not elide the racism of the industry from

[56] 'Politics and Identity', p. 74; Piekut, p. 120, citing Laurence *[sic]* P. Neal, 'The Genius and the Prize', *Liberator*, October 1965, p. 11.
[57] Pauwels, p. 27.
[58] Piekut p. 123; Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones], 'American Sexual Reference: Black Male' in *Home: Social Essays* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1966), p. 216, cited in Piekut, p. 123.
[59] Piekut, p. 128, citing Dixon in Robert Levin, 'The Jazz Composers Guild: An Assertion of Dignity', *Down Beat*, May 6, 1965, p. 17.

which he had the JCG withdraw: "Dixon was not simply withdrawing his music from the market but also cultivating his own audience outside the preexisting channels afforded by a racial discourse that continued to frame jazz musicians as socially deviant, irresponsible, or purveyors of mere entertainment."[60] Dixon's "long term goals", enumerated by Piekut as "prestige, respect, and the freedom to pursue musical projects without the oppressive label 'jazz'", it was felt, "could only be reached by first seizing control of the means of production and distribution."[61]

In *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Jacques Attali credits Free Jazz with being "the first attempt to express in economic terms the refusal of the cultural alienation inherent in repetition, to use music to build a new culture".[62] (Repetition is, for Attali, a regime of political economy identifiable with the time period of broadcast and recorded music's dominance, and characterised by the ever-increasing concentration of political-economic power in a small number of institutions). Attali makes explicit reference to the JCG and the AACM, as well as the JCG's successor organisation, the Jazz Composers' Orchestra Association, describing these organisations' attempts at that refusal and that building as something "institutional politics … could not do".[63]

Piekut complexifies Attali's formulation of these organisations actions as the building of a "parallel industry to produce and promote new music", with regard to the JCG at least, by pointing out that "Dixon was also concerned with reorienting the flawed but powerful network of jazz production toward new, more equitable arrangements."[64] It is within the indeterminacy of Dixon's proposed withdrawal that the tension between politics and metapolitics detected in the BCM is again found, transposed from a politics and metapolitics of race to an industrial politics and metapolitics in which the racist hegemony serves to negate straightforward claims of equality.

The AACM's relative longevity and the scope of its police order, discussed above, illustrate this same tension more conclusively, and in a manner that synthesises some of Baraka and the Black Arts Movement's racial metapolitics with the industrial politics and metapolitics of Dixon. Its formation as a Black organisation, in tempering the scope of its police order and allowing the ambiguity in which its micropolitics function, also allows it to serve as both the basis of a long politics and the rule of a metapolitical turning away from the same object.

The long politics of the AACM is well illustrated by the previously noted comments of Abrams during the meetings in which the organisation was established. In defending the conception of the AACM as a Black rather than an interracial organisation, he avers that "[w]e're not fighting a racial fight", but rather "promoting ourselves and helping ourselves up to the point

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[60] Piekut, p. 137.
[61] Ibid., pp. 136 – 137.
[62] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985) p. 138.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.; Piekut, p. 137.

where we can participate in the universal aspect of things, which includes all people".[65] The ambiguous subject of the group, the 'Creative Musicians', whose race is left implicit in the name of the organisation, is understood as pertaining to a subject of politics not limited to the organisation's membership or even to Black musicians. The organisation's politics/policy rather concerns Black people in general: "When we speak of ourselves, we not only speak of the group as registered members, we speak of ourselves as a whole, as a people".[66] The (long) politics to which Abrams' conception of the AACM attests has, thus, a broader concern than that of Dixon's vision of the JCG, with its goals of "prestige, respect, and the freedom to pursue musical projects without the oppressive label 'jazz'".[67]

Abrams' attestations on his understanding of the place of race in the AACM points to a vision similar to that articulated in the pluralistic mode of Steve Biko's writing. And it is possible to understand this conception of racial politics as disidentificatory, in the manner described by Rancière in his dialogue with Axel Honneth:

> A minority claim is not only the claim to have one's culture and the like recognized; it's also a claim precisely to not be considered as a minority obeying special rules, having a special culture. It can be viewed as a claim to have the same rights and enjoy the same kind of respect or esteem as anybody, as all those who are not assigned any special identity.[68]

Pauwels refers to this extract in the exploration of Rancière's interactions with identity politics that introduces his article on the BCM. He notes that Rancière's formulation "point[s] to an inherent complexity, ambiguity and even self-contradictoriness to some or all recognition claims, with a group both demanding recognition and respect of their specificity *and not*, or perhaps, demanding *something more* than such recognition".[69] If Abrams' conception of the long racial politics of the AACM can be considered a claim for recognition, the complexity or ambiguity within that claim, between recognition of specificity and the accomplishment of an "identification with anonymity", is also that complexity or ambiguity in which varying political and metapolitical formulations can co-exist.[70] In the AACM, the police order of its long politics could also serve as the police order of a metapolitics associated with versions of the Black Nationalism discussed above with regard to Baraka and the Black Arts Movement.

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[65] Abrams in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 114.
[66] Abrams in Ibid., p. 103.
[67] Piekut, pp. 136 – 137.
[68] 'Critical Questions on the Theory of Recognition', p. 90.
[69] Pauwels, p. 23.
[70] Biko, p. 51, cited in Pauwels, p. 29; 'Politics and Identity', p. 73

The positions of AACM members on Black nationalism were various. Ronald Radano, in his biography of Anthony Braxton contends that "[a]n African-inspired cultural nationalism became the official position of the AACM, whose membership – particularly those aligned with Abrams – envisioned an immutable, pan-African musical legacy transcending cultural and historical categories."[71] This contention is refuted by Lewis, who counters that within the AACM there was an "extreme divergence of views" on cultural nationalism.[72] Even within a single group, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, opinions diverged. Radano attests that bass player Malachi Favors "helped to introduce many members to nationalist conceptions of black history and culture" and cites Leslie Rout's assertion of Favors' "nationalist commitment to 'Egyptian philosophy' and the return of black peoples' control of the known world".[73] Art Ensemble saxophonist Joseph Jarman meanwhile professes as to having been "into the hippie culture" and having known "all the Beatles songs", noting that such cultural concerns are "not a part of the illusionary black history orientation that [some of his peers] want to be identified with".[74] And fellow Art Ensemble saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell posits that Black nationalism was just a part of members' wide reading, stating that his reading of the (Egyptologist) Dr. Ben occurred "along with Stockhausen, Richard Wright, Paul Robeson".[75]

While, in choosing the name of their organisation, the members of the AACM did not betray its raciality, a certain slogan utilised elsewhere in its phraseology made specific reference to its Blackness. 'Great Black Music', first associated with the Art Ensemble, was adopted as both an organisational slogan and descriptor of the music produced by the members of the AACM. The 'philosophy caucus' of the AACM's first 'national conference' in 1977 proposed the term's adoption as a descriptor for AACM music as a whole, with Art Ensemble percussionist Don Moye's reasoning for doing so suggesting that such a term was necessary in order for the organisation's members to be able to identify their practice: "one of the primary factors in the awareness of the self is to be able to identify what you're doing, for the person himself to be able to say what he's doing, not what everybody else has said".[76] This adoption was not without dissent. Anthony Braxton, who left and re-joined the organisation "several times", interviewed for *Melody Maker* in 1974, described the slogan as "racist".[77] Lewis reports that the proposal of the slogan met "considerable and very vocal resistance", among the reasons for which was that "the promulgation of a single label (whatever its provenance) seemed to many to be at variance with the ideals of

[71] Ronald M. Radano, *New Musical Figurations: Anthony Braxton's Cultural Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 99.
[72] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 212.
[73] Radano, p. 99, citing Rout, p. 139.
[74] Jarman in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 211.
[75] Mitchell in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 213.
[76] Moye in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 394.
[77] Braxton in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 506.

artistic and discursive mobility".[78] Abrams, whom Lewis suggests was "less than enthusiastic … about the label", implies a pragmatism to the adoption of the term, claiming that "[t]he only reason" for its adoption was "to distinguish it from all the musical horrors you have around here", which is to say the alternative formulations for the music being played by AACM members, such as the New Thing, avant-garde jazz or free jazz.[79] Radano's assertion that the term was a successor to 'Creative Music' is attested to by Abrams' conception, but his attendant claim that it denoted "a dialect of the mother tongue" and "a creation with African origins that had been spiritually preserved in the slave culture of the United States" is refuted by the variety of understandings of the term professed by AACM members.[80]

It is not necessary to claim, as does Radano, that Black Nationalism became the "official position of the AACM" to acknowledge its presence in the organisation's discourses.[81] It was this presence that doubtless led Braxton to attest that "[his] work and Leo [Smith]'s would be viewed as not as 'black' as some of the musics that were reaching into Africa", and that "controversy began to ensnarl [him], even in the AACM" because of a wider set of interests, "in Africa *and* in Europe *and* in Asia", than of those adhering to a Black Nationalist perspective.[82] By contrast, Philip Cohran, despite his role in the formation of the organisation, left within a year of the AACM's foundation, for reasons approximately opposite to those of Braxton, feeling that "the structure of the AACM" limited "the achievement of [his] longtime purposes".[83] Cohran's Black nationalism had led him to "studying the ancient music" and becoming "one who submits to his ancestors", which he found in contrast with his colleagues in the AACM in 1965, most of whom, according to Cohran, "wanted to play 'out' all the time because it didn't require any discipline".[84]

It is worth noting that Cohran's departure preceded Braxton's by several years, and that the situation that led to that departure was not one that he found to persist within the AACM, as he concedes that "later on [his erstwhile AACM colleagues] developed tremendous discipline".[85] Also later than Cohran's departure, and without implying a causal link (or not) with the increase in discipline imputed by Cohran, came a swell in Black consciousness among members of the group, physically manifested in changes of dress and hair, and the modification or replacement of

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[78] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 394.
[79] Ibid., quoting Abrams in Ekkehard Jost, *Jazzmusiker: Materialen zur Soziologie der afro-amerikanischen Musik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein Materialen, 1982), p. 192.
[80] Radano, p. 99.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Braxton in Graham Lock, 'Forces in Motion' (New York: Da Capo Press, 1988), p. 47.
[83] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 124, quoting Cohran in Bill Quinn, 'The AACM: A Promise', *Down Beat Music '*68, 1968, p. 48.
[84] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 124 – 125, quoting Cohran in Peter Shapiro, 'Blues and the Abstract Truth: Phil Cohran', *Wire*, May 2001, p. 30.
[85] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 125, quoting Cohran in Peter Shapiro, 'Blues and the Abstract Truth: Phil Cohran', *Wire*, May 2001, p. 30.

members' European names.[86] Lewis notes the development of "a complex network of forces operating around black cultural consciousness in Chicago" in the late 1960s, including the AACM, the Affro-Arts Theater, opened by Cohran in December 1967, and the Organization of Black American Culture, "a collective of African American artists and writers", formed in June of the same year.[87]

The more recent interviews conducted by Lewis suggest that attitudes to race and the place of Blackness in the AACM have continued to change. Pianist and vocalist Amina Claudine Myers, one of those who amended their name, admits a change in thinking on Emanuel Cranshaw's expulsion from the group: "I was one of the ones that was against having somebody white in the organization… Today I have a different feeling. Music is open, and that's what I look at now".[88] Leonard Jones, conversely, despite having voted against Cranshaw's expulsion, concedes that "in retrospect, with all the things that were happening at the time, it might have been the most beneficial thing to do, so that the organization could continue to prosper inside the black community".[89] Much later than Bob Dogan's rejection and Cranshaw's expulsion, white people again took up roles within the AACM, as board members, and as teachers and students within the AACM school.[90] While the majority of Lewis's interviewees that speculate on the future of the AACM attest to the continued exigency of the AACM as a Black organisation, founding member Joseph Jarman predicts that "[t]he fourth generation will revise the laws and there will be a rainbow organisation".[91]

The departure of members from the AACM due to the (real or imagined) positions of fellow members on specific understandings of Blackness on a register not present in the organisation's stated tenets or charter demonstrates that if an organisation is understood to have a police order, there is no reason that it should be reducible to its stated policy, which forms only part of that order. This understanding aligns the investigation of police order on this scale with Rancière's assertion in *Disagreement* that "the distribution of places and roles that defines a police regime stems as much from the assumed spontaneity of social relations as from the rigidity of state functions.[92] The continued flux of the AACM's police order, enabled by its mutability and driven by both the micropolitics of the organisation and its shifting membership, characterises it as delineating a shifting range of acceptable understandings of race and its relationships to music and the music industry. It is this range that has allowed the AACM to include members whose conceptions of elements of its police order have encapsulated both metapolitical and long political

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[86] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 164 – 165.
[87] Ibid., p. 166.
[88] Amina Claudine Myers in Ibid., p. 200.
[89] Leonard Jones in Ibid., p. 200.
[90] Ibid., p. 500.
[91] Jarman in Ibid., p. 503.
[92] *Disagreement*, p. 29.

ideas. This breadth of thought on Blackness and its politics is articulated by Lewis as "a mobile, heterophonic notion of the possibilities for unity", commenting on Abrams' assertion that "there are different kinds of black life, and therefore we know that there are different kinds of black music".[93] This heterophonic, or possibly dissensual, notion of Blackness is maintained by a kind of police order of micropolitics, wherein the limits of the scope of the police order is, to some extent, guaranteed by the distance maintained between the AACM and its membership and other organisations. Asked about their political affiliations in the French magazine *Jazz Hot*, Art Ensemble trumpeter Lester Bowie answered that "[w]e are in contact with all of the black organizations", while his colleague Jarman added that "[w]e are not affiliated with any political association; that would be contrary to the designs of the AACM".[94]

The afterword of *A Power Stronger than Itself* comprises "an unstable polyphony of quoted voices, a kind of virtual AACM meeting sampled from the many self-critical musings that [Lewis] heard in [his] interviews with [his] colleagues and friends in the collective."[95] This is divided into themed sections. In one of these, 'Regret', the voices brought together by Lewis include those of saxophonists Douglas Ewart, Ernest Dawkins, Roscoe Mitchell and Anthony Braxton. Their reflections attest to the heterophonic, or dissensual, elements of the AACM, even in the various understandings of the character of that heterophony or dissensus:

> 'One of the reasons why we haven't achieved more than we have is because of a lack of unity,' Douglas felt. 'The way our society has developed, this is a very difficult thing to obtain.' Ernest's observation turned on this point. 'Everybody comes in with their own concept of what the AACM is, which is cool,' said Ernest, 'but then, maybe the organization doesn't move in the direction it needs to move in because everybody has their own concept of what it is.'
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> 'Certainly there are a lot of valid concepts,' Roscoe responded. 'The problem comes when you get too fixated on one concept as being the only concept. You don't have to throw away one concept in order to try out another.' Anthony agreed. 'The AACM was transidiomatic. It was not about a style that everyone could hum and be a part of. It was a thought process. It was a recognition of transformal dynamics, of an emerging global platform, and all that would imply in terms of a challenge to definitions of identity.'[96]

Braxton provides a neat summation of the long political conception of the AACM's activities, articulating, in particular, an understanding of political challenge remarkably consistent with Rancière's, and with the formulation of long politics proposed in this project. And his description of the AACM as a 'thought process' can be understood in Rancièrian terms by returning

[93] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 214, quoting Abrams in Bert Vuisje, *De nieuwe jazz: Twintig interviews door Bert Vuisje* (Baarn: Bosch & Keuning, 1978), p. 199.
[94] Paul Steinbeck, *Message to our Folks: The Art Ensemble of Chicago* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 76, quoting Bowie and Jarman in Phillippe Gras, Daniel Caux, and Marc Bernard, 'A.A.C.M. Chicago', *Jazz Hot*, no. 254 (October 1969), p. 17.
[95] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 498.
[96] Ewart, Dawkins, Mitchell and Braxton in Ibid., p. 506.

to the formulations of police and politics as distributions of the sensible, as comprised of relationships between sense and sense, articulated with regard to a racialised police order in Du Bois' conception of 'the veil'. The relationship of sense to sense is, of course, intimately related to thought, and the process of that change is well understood in terms of transformation and emergence.

And the multitudinous concepts identified by Dawkins and Mitchell concern not only race, and not only music, but also the relationship of the organisation to other organisations and individuals. The metapolitics and politics of the AACM discussed heretofore with regard to their relation to a common policy or police order have concerned race. However, as was previously asserted, in the AACM, as in the JCG, politics and metapolitics of race are found alongside, and in combination with, industrial politics and metapolitics. In consideration of the withdrawal of labour enacted by the AACM as an industrial action as political, in that it aimed to "reconfigure the relationships that determine the workplace in its relation to the community", it was posited that, given the permanence of the separation proposed by the AACM, that the reconfiguration could also be considered, in Rancièrian terms, a metapolitics.[97] This consideration would seem to be justified by comments of Abrams in 1973, which demonstrate that the degree of the AACM's industrial separation had been greater than anticipated:

> The seventh item [in the AACM purposes] is 'to increase mutual respect between creative artists and musical tradesmen, booking agents, managers, promoters and instrument manufacturers.' In that department, we found that the only way to create mutual respect between artists and musical tradesmen was for us to become both the artists and the tradesmen.[98]

However, just as understandings of Blackness and their place in the AACM have been shown to have varied across time, this attitude of separation has not proven to be permanent, at least not uniformly so. The rejection of external funding in the AACM's early years, instigated in order to avoid dependence upon "Caucasian interests or the despised black bourgeois", was tempered across time.[99] As part of a process of "corporatization" to which Lewis attests, the organisation was awarded subsidy from the National Endowment for the Arts' 'Expansion Arts' program in 1980, then under the direction of Baraka and Neal's erstwhile Black Arts Movement colleague A.B. Spellman, receiving an NEA-funded administrator.[100] This is framed by Lewis as a

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[97] *Disagreement*, p. 32.
[98] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 499, quoting Abrams in Richard Abrams, David N. Baker, and Charles Ellison, 'The Social Role of Jazz', in Dominique-René De Lerma (ed.), *Reflections on Afro-American Music* (Kent State University Press, 1973), p. 105.
[99] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 181, quoting Leslie B. Rout, Jr., 'AACM: New Music (!) New Ideas (?)', *Journal of Popular Culture* 1 (1967), pp. 137 – 138.
[100] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 419; p. 403.

re-engagement with the item of the AACM purposes that Abrams had found to have been negated in 1973: "If creative musicians were shown to be not only capable of performing at a high level, but also equally facile with complex business matters, the organization's members would be less susceptible to industry rip-offs."[101] Individual members of the AACM had previously received grant from the NEA, including all five members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Leroy Jenkins, Leo Smith and trumpeter Frank Gordon, and Abrams served as a panellist in its peer-review programme.[102]

This engagement with state funding by the AACM and its members, and the engagement with corporate funding demonstrated by the record deals signed by the Art Ensemble of Chicago with Atlantic Records and Anthony Braxton with Arista Records (Columbia Pictures' record division), do not demonstrate the collapse of the AACM's police order, but attest to its mutability. The structure that supported the industrial metapolitics of the AACM from its beginnings into the 1970s was able also to support a long politics that began to manifest political challenges to the external police distribution that racially hierarchised musicians. Abrams' accession to the NEA preceded a "a heck of a war" with his colleagues there.[103] As Lewis summarises, "[t]he fact that jazz-identified composers and improvisors, as with other experimental musicians, were challenging fixed genre hierarchies, and asserting freedom of aesthetic, historical, cultural, and methodological reference, was also challenging the NEA's music panel, which was practically exclusively comprised of white male academic composers".[104] Abrams attests that, prior to his involvement, Black experimental music would be found not to meet the requirements of the classical music panel, and be sent to the jazz panel, which required that applicants "submit work samples comprising at least sixty-four bars of music, realized using common-practice European notation."[105] His presence "changed that", allowing the mutation of criteria by which applicants were judged, and leading to the awards to AACM members from 1973.

The "war" in which Abrams fought, of de-racialisation of state funding of arts institutions and de-hierarchisation of musical practices within the NEA, was preceded by another attestation of war by a member working on behalf of the AACM. In 1968, (Kalaparusha) Maurice McIntyre wrote a manifesto for the AACM's short-lived in-house publication that utilises the metaphor of war in articulating the politics of the organisation:

> The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians is an organization of staunch individuals, determined to further the art of being of service to themselves, their families and their communities…. We are like the stranded particle, the isolated island of the whole,

[101] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 419.
[102] Ibid., p. 332; p. 395.
[103] Abrams in Ibid., p. 402.
[104] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 402.
[105] Ibid.

> which refuses to expire in the midst of the normal confused plane which must exist – in order that we may, but with which we are constantly at war. We are trying to balance an unbalanced situation that is prevalent in this society.[106]

In McIntyre's manifesto, not only is the long racial politics of the AACM articulated, but also another register of political action, which, when taken into consideration, further complicates the arrangement of politics, police, metapolitics and micropolitics already discussed. In this idea, its police order serves what might be termed a 'politics of resistance'. Such a version of politics is not conceptualised by Rancière, although his comments on the translation of "the language of struggles" with regards to North America, wherein "[a]n assertion of identity is … a demand to be able to exist in the face of [the hegemonic] type" and "[m]arginal identities constitute poles of resistance," imply the possibility of such a conceptualisation.[107] In Chapter Two of the current study, it was stated that in Rancière's strong sense, politics is the rare occurrence of challenge to a police distribution of the sensible by egalitarian logic, which the police order "causes … to disappear continually either by purely and simply denying it or by claiming political logic as its own".[108] This claiming of political logic by the police order produces a 'better' police, "the one that all the breaking and entering perpetrated by egalitarian logic has most often jolted out of its 'natural' logic".[109] As Samuel Chambers asserts, Rancière's conception of the police is comparatively underdeveloped within the body of his writing on politics, which the proposals of mutability and scope as defining characteristics of 'betterness' in the current study seek to rectify to some extent.[110] In developing the criterion of mutability, it was noted that prior disruption does not necessarily indicate future disruptibility. A further lacuna in Rancière's conceptualisation of police orders is that no gesture is made towards regression, to the opposite of a challenge based on egalitarian logic, the strengthening of an order whether in increase of scope or reduction in mutability. It would be against this unnamed process that a politics of resistance would act, by continuing to articulate an egalitarian logic that had been claimed by the police distribution, to prevent its secession from the police order and the regaining in the latter of the hierarchical logic that is its 'natural' state.

In the case of the AACM, this politics of resistance, composed of a series of challenges, the "war" to which McIntyre attests, to maintain the limitations of the scope of an external police order, the "normal confused plane", serves to allow the organisation to continue functioning, to maintain its own police order for the purposes of a longer-term challenge to society's "unbalanced situation". This understanding of a politics of resistance in AACM practices recalls Sparks' 'quarrel' with Rancière, wherein she attests that "disruptive practices … acquire meaning and become

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[106] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 190, quoting Maurice McIntyre, 'The A.A.C.M.', *New Regime* 1, no. 1 (1968), p. 1.
[107] 'Politics and Identity', p. 74.
[108] 'Ten Theses on Politics', p. 45.
[109] *Disagreement*, p. 31.
[110] *The Lessons of Rancière*, p. 69.

intelligible through the repetition of previously articulated identities and performances".[111] It also demonstrates the politicity of the emancipatory acts that comprise "the ongoing effort to create forms of the common different" to which Rancière refers in his rearticulation of the rarity of politics.[112]

This conception of a politics of resistance also demonstrates the continued utility of the AACM beyond the institutional acceptance of its members' practices. If it is this "war", this politics of resistance, that allowed the AACM to maintain its activities as "a demand to be able to exist in the face of [hegemonic whiteness]", it is also as a result of this continued demand that Abrams was able to fight his war within the NEA.[113] It is this register of politics to which saxophonist Fred Anderson attests when, in reflecting on the AACM's longevity, he notes that "[t]he name of the game out here is survival, and any way that you can, you keep your music and keep everything going".[114] And if the gains made by Abrams and others in de-racialisation and de-hierarchisation within institutional funding bodies and thereby within a much broader police distribution of the sensible are to be maintained, it is by a politics of resistance that justifies the AACM's maintenance as a visibly Black organisation of experimental music.

This politics of resistance takes a place relative to the previously articulated politics, police, metapolitics and micropolitics active within the AACM. It is the politics of resistance that consolidates the gains made through the disidentificatory and subjectivating foundation of the AACM, and that allows for the maintenance of the internal police order around which its metapolitics circulates. It is these micropolitics that produce and sustain its members' varying conceptions of long politics and metapolitics, and the continued politics of resistance that protects the gains of successful challenges as the long politics are realised into concrete changes to the external police distribution of the sensible.

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[111] Sparks, p. 429.
[112] 'Democracies Against Democracy', p. 80.
[113] 'Politics and Identity', p. 74.
[114] Fred Anderson in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 507.

Chapter Eight: Aesthetics and its Politics in the AACM

It is in relation to the political context articulated in Chapter Seven that the music of the AACM must be considered, if the previously developed proposition for this study, of investigation of the relationship between the aesthetics of politics and the politics of aesthetics, is to be followed. This task also involves alighting on the territory staked out in Chapter Three, that of exploration of the presence and interrelation of aesthetic, representational and ethical logics in AACM practices and discourses.

In a 2012 article entitled 'Rancière's Equal Music', the first significant article to consider music with recourse to Rancière's thought, Jairo Moreno and Gavin Steingo examine "the position of music (and art more generally) in the thought of Jacques Rancière", taking the AACM as an object of their study.[1] It is under the heading of 'ethical music' that Moreno and Steingo consider the AACM and, in order to understand their treatment of the AACM under such a heading, it is necessary to examine the derivation of their conceptualisation of 'ethical music' from Rancière's ethical regime of images.

Moreno and Steingo's exploration of this regime begins with the statement that "[t]he weight of ethics' influence on the history of music is expressible in a single word: harmony".[2] Harmony's centrality to both the Platonic republic and the Pythagorean cult is explored, mostly not as the sonic phenomenon of mathematical ratios, but rather in the ethical and anti-political model of community examined in Chapter Two of the current study. That is, a harmony of persons with specified roles, destined to fulfil their part in a community in which the whole thrives through each member's acceptance of their part without the discord of democracy. The place of music itself within this police distribution of the sensible is, for Pythagoras and Plato, pedagogical, producing for the former "the most beneficial correction of human manners and lives", and retaining its centrality in the Platonic republic, taking an important role in the *paideia*, the pedagogy of virtuosity.[3]

Expanding the position of ethics from that held by Pythagoras and Plato, Moreno and Steingo reach beyond harmony to propose ethical tendencies prevalent in more contemporary musical practices. For Moreno and Steingo, these can be found in the dictation of appropriate places and times for music, of appropriate content for that music, and appropriate relationships between musicians and the communities to which they belong. These elements can, of course, be found outside a model of anti-democratic harmony. For Moreno and Steingo, they can be found

[1] Moreno and Steingo, p. 487.
[2] Ibid., p. 489.
[3] Ibid., p. 490, quoting Thomas Taylor, *Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras* (Inner Traditions International: Rochester, VT, 1986), p. 61.

anywhere that "the ways of doing and making that constitute 'artistic practice'" are delimited as "highly specific spatio-temporal distributions of the general distributions of doing and making".[4]

It is under this understanding of an ethical logic that Moreno and Steingo find "an ethical dimension to music making in the absence of harmony, too, even if that absence is marshaled in the name of emancipation".[5] Moreno and Steingo situate AACM practices within a history of 'ethical music' via a citation from *A Power Stronger than Itself* in which Lewis states that "African American artists of the current generation are free to assimilate sounds from all over the world, even as they situate their work in a complexly articulated African American intellectual, social, and sonic matrix."[6]

For Moreno and Steingo, it is this 'matrix' through which AACM practices can be tied to an ethical logic. It "serves as an avatar for both the ethos out of which musical creativity and social agency emanate … as well as the origin and foundation for that ethos".[7] The matrix is, for them, not only the ethos, but also the *principium/arche*, the "origin and guiding principle" of the musical practices "to which musicians of the Association must remain faithful and collectively return if the project is to continue to exert pressure on racial prejudices about black musical creativity in the USA and, by implication, abroad".[8] Whatever the form or content of the music made, the "particular distribution of music making" is defined by the identification of the artists creating it as African American. Despite (and because) the aim of the AACM is to refute "any particular rhythmic or formal aspects", its practices are, through the racial identification of its members "an *ethical* injunction affirming the creative openness of African-American musicians within a society", and therefore tied to 'ethical music'.[9]

In beginning to address Moreno and Steingo's argument, it should first be noted that the extract of Lewis' writing with which they tie AACM practices to an ethical logic does not refer to AACM practices, but rather the practices of any African American artists. Therefore, they do not address AACM practices through the filter of George Lewis's account, but rather George Lewis's thinking on African-American musical practices. In addition, the quotation above contains a paraphrase that significantly alters the meaning of Lewis's sentence. Lewis does not claim any special privilege for the current generation of African American artists. His prose reads: "As with the work of earlier generations of African American artists, the current generation is free to assimilate…"[10] So his writing refers not only to African American music-making contemporaneous with the AACM, but also to African American music-making preceding its inception.

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[4] Moreno and Steingo, p. 491.
[5] Ibid.
[6] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 447, and quoted in Moreno and Steingo, p. 491.
[7] Moreno and Steingo, p. 491.
[8] Ibid., pp. 491 – 492.
[9] Ibid., p. 492. Emphasis added.
[10] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 447.

Works produced under an ethical regime are not so because they emerge from an ethos. They are ethical through the identity presumed between their work and the mode of being, or way of life. Arts within the ethical regime are "forms of knowledge based on the imitation of a model with precise ends".[11] There is no suggestion of such a model within AACM practices – Moreno and Steingo concede that the AACM "is not characterized by content or form, but is instead ordered through a particular distribution of music making", the only facet of which that they attest to being its situation in the abovementioned 'complexly articulated African American intellectual, social and sonic matrix'. [12] This raises the question of how African American musicians in the United States might avoid situating their work in a racialised matrix, given the dominant, racialised police order operative in the United States. But Moreno and Steingo then claim that all music, in fact, fits this pattern: their argument "is not that music might otherwise and in a different context be universal, or without 'matrix'".[13] If all music is 'ethical music' only through its having arisen from some mode of being and its situation in some societal context, it must be concluded that, in Moreno and Steingo's conception, the 'ethical' is more of a historically-transcendent facet of musical and artistic production that a historically-contingent regime of the sort articulated by Rancière.

It is certainly possible to characterise AACM activities as an "injunction affirming the creative openness of African-American musicians within a society", as Moreno and Steingo do.[14] This injunction, though, is better described as political rather than ethical. Indeed, Moreno and Steingo's conclusions on the AACM and 'ethical music' gain greater utility in the understanding of the nexus of AACM practices and Rancièrian thought by substituting 'political' for 'ethical' in their terminology. Addressing an admittedly distinct case in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, Rancière attests that "[t]he reign of ethics … signifies the constitution of an indistinct sphere in which … the specificity of political and artistic practices [is] dissolved".[15] What can be seen in the elements of AACM practice studied thus far is not the dissolution of the specificity of political and artistic practices into an ethical sphere, but a series of interrelations between such practices in which their entanglement on various registers attests to complexity rather than indistinction.

Central to this entanglement of politics and aesthetics is 'creative music', which, as previously discussed, is a term that does not specify any particular style or approach to music. It rather designates a freedom to play, improvise and compose outside of the strictures of that which had been expected within the economy of gigs in which members had previously performed. In the first meeting of the AACM, saxophonist Gene Easton describes its potential members as

[11] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 16.
[12] Moreno and Steingo, p. 492.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 109.

"sound-conscious musicians", looking for "a completely new system that expresses *us*".[16] He also articulates a comparison between this desire and the situation in which the musicians had hitherto found themselves: "We're locked up in a system, and if you don't express in the system that is known, you're ostracized."[17] In Rancièrian terms, Easton is clearly describing a desire for an aesthetic break with the representative order to which the creative musicians that would form the AACM had been economically tied.

In Chapter Two, it was noted that the central figure of Rancière's conception of the representative regime is *mimēsis*, understood as the regulator of the "relation between a way of doing – a *poiesis* - and a way of being which is affected by it – an *aisthesis*".[18] He emphasises that, in this understanding of representative logic, *mimēsis* is not "a normative principle stating that art must make copies resembling their models".[19] Rather, it is "a hierarchical logic which states that we are allowed to depict one thing but not another, and that one should depict actions or figures in accordance with the forms that are suited to them".[20] The conceptualisation of 'creative music' provided by Easton is one that is essentially anti-representative; this 'creative music' is music that requires the autonomy of art's sensorium to liberate its creators from jazz's representative criteria of validity.

It is instructive to reflect on Rancière's writing on the aesthetic regime's break with representative logic in light of the aesthetic break perpetrated by AACM members. As was noted in the second chapter of the current study, the earliest *scène* in which Rancière perceives a shift from representative to aesthetic logic dates to the 1764 publication of Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *The History of Ancient Art*. Elsewhere, he notes that "the shift from the domination of the 'representative regime' to the domination of the 'aesthetic regime' is a process that was spread over a hundred years at least".[21] In the complex relationship between music and the aesthetic regime, the perfect mutism of music's language allowed it to serve as a model for thinkers of the aesthetic regime, including Wackenroder, Hegel and Mallarmé, while also excluding it from the revolutionary conceptualisations of the aesthetic sensorium of the latter two thinkers. This formula was upturned by the early twentieth century developments of European art music. In the practices of composers such as Varèse and Schoenberg, music's language, by which it had been both elevated and excluded by those earlier thinkers, was attacked in its syntax and vocabulary, thereby allowing music to belatedly join the aesthetic revolution as an equal of literature and the plastic arts.

[16] Gene Easton in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 102.
[17] Easton in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 102.
[18] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 7.
[19] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 16.
[20] Rancière and Engelmann, p. 44.
[21] Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 129.

A much later iteration of the same process can be found in AACM practices. To understand the commonalities and differences between the challenges perpetrated by Varèse and Schoenberg and those by the musicians of the AACM, it is worth considering Rancière's characterisation of the endurance of the representative regime in the era of the aesthetic regime's dominance. The particularities of the relationship between music and Rancière's regimes bears influence on how this endurance is understood. For, if the representative regime "penetrates the new arts like cinema while being invalidated among older arts like painting and writing," there can be seen to be a division within music, whereby a representative logic is invalidated in the discourses of pan-European art music but continues to govern understanding of other musics.[22] This line of division recalls an ethical division that penetrates the era of the representative regime's dominance, mentioned by Rancière in 'A Distant Sound', wherein "the worker poets" of nineteenth century France were "counselled to abandon the pomp of grand poetry" by "all well-intentioned souls of the time" and "to instead consecrate themselves to the more authentic rhythms of the popular song that rhymes and enchants the work and celebrations of the people".[23] The music to which the worker poets were to 'consecrate themselves' is assuredly not that to which Wackenroder, Hegel and Mallarmé ascribed the divine mutism that was central to their aesthetic understanding. But that music to which the workers were abandoned by an ethical logic active in nineteenth century France finds a parallel in the jazz or blues identified music of the United States in the twentieth century, the 'race music' that was the preserve of African Americans. And not only could this music be representatively ordered, with criteria of validity and hierarchies of content and form, but musicians playing it could also challenge both this representative ordering *and* the ethical logic that would separate it from pan-European art music.

An earlier example of challenge to the representative ordering of jazz is examined in Chris Stover's investigation of "dissensual acts in jazz", 'Rancière's Affective Impropriety'. Stover contends that "music – or, more specifically, certain singular *stagings* of musical utterances – provides illustrative, disidentificatory political-aesthetic moments that refigure, at least locally and contingently, dominant codes that determine right and wrong practices."[24] One of the 'stagings' that Stover interrogates is Thelonious Monk's pianistic technique, concentrating on a performance of 'I Should Care' from his 1957 album *Thelonious Himself*.[25] Stover attests that "[t]he way that Monk's pianistic touch disrupts agreed-upon notions of 'correct' or 'good' piano playing amounts to a practice that *transforms the representational into the aesthetic*."[26] Following the understanding of the

[22] 'A Politics of Aesthetic Indetermination', p. 21.
[23] 'A Distant Sound', p. 355.
[24] Chris Stover, 'Rancière's Affective Impropriety' in *Rancière and Music*, pp. 230 – 261 (p. 233.) [Emphasis present in Stover's text].
[25] The specific release referenced by Stover is Thelonious Monk, *Thelonious Himself* CD (Original Jazz Classics, OJC20 2542, 2001).
[26] Stover, p. 242. [Emphasis present in Stover's text].

complex relationship between representational and aesthetic logics in music developed in Chapter Three of the current study, it is possible to understand the transformation effected by Monk's touch as concerning, particularly, the ability of a representative mode of conceptualisation to accommodate it. That is, that Monk's music is evidence, first, of aesthetic audition, while his practice challenges the legitimacy of a particular representative order.

The dualism of the AACM's challenges, attacking both the representative ordering of jazz-identified music and its ethical separation from pan-European art music, is attested to by the previously discussed "war" fought by Abrams against the racialised hierarchies of funding criteria of the National Endowment for the Arts. At that time the composition panel for classical music was open to practices such as "intermedia, graphic notation, text-based scores, electronic music, sonograms, conceptual art, and other forms of performance and composition – as well as improvisation", while music from "the African-American tradition" was judged on "empirical notions concerning swing and tempo and chord changes".[27] The challenge here, enabled by Abram's accession to a position within the NEA's 'jazz' panel, was not directly against the racialised separation of the 'classical' and 'jazz' panels, but against the representative strictures of the criteria by which applications to the latter were assessed. The iteration of institutional racism attacked by Abrams is the NEA's failure to consider music from "the African-American tradition" as art, in its unified sense, rather than as *an* art, in the representative sense, subject to objective criteria of quality. But this attack on the presumption that African American music can be judged by such criteria is also an attack on the ethical hierarchisation of music produced by white musicians and Black musicians.

The character of Abrams' battles within the NEA recall comments of Rancière on contemporary music practice noted in Chapter Three, wherein he uses the example of contemporary music to demonstrate that "[i]nteresting things start happening when art becomes indeterminate, when it loses boundaries."[28] The questions he asks pertain to the problems facing those setting the criteria by which endowments were granted: "What counts as 'learned music' (*musique savant*), and what doesn't? […] Is electronic music *learned* or not? Is it 'youth culture', or is it in fact a form of *learned music*?"[29] The racialisation of the criteria for the award of endowments amounts to the ethical circumscription of aesthetics. It constitutes a policing of that which may be considered 'learned music' or, indeed, music of the aesthetic regime; it is a police order that seeks to enforce boundaries on that which has become indeterminate, and does so via the legitimising hierarchies of white supremacy. Abrams attests to the institutional use of the term 'jazz' in this regard, stating that "[i]t's still used for racial purposes, to say, this doesn't deserve what concert

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[27] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 402; Abrams in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 402
[28] Rancière and Game, p. 261.
[29] Ibid., p. 262.

music deserves".[30] The attempts by Black composers and improvisers to disassociate themselves from the term 'jazz' was institutionally irrelevant, because "they're going to use that word anyway to separate you from the white people".[31] In other words, the term 'jazz' was a euphemism utilised in order to maintain a racial differentiation in both the size of monetary endowments and the approaches to music that could receive institutional legitimacy.

In the second interview noted in Chapter Three in which Rancière addresses the indeterminacy of 'learned music', he attests to the destruction of the legitimacy of representative ordering in music:

> [N]obody can say what is learned music and what isn't. Something has imposed itself in music, there has been a sort of democratization of the ear. If there is an art where that has been achieved, more or less, it is indeed music… Today, sensibility to the voice, timbre or accent crosses genre borders and mocks their hierarchy.[32]

It is important to note that the "democratization of the ear" to which Rancière attests occurs precisely because practices of musicians such as the members of the AACM make the hierarchies of the representative regime increasingly untenable. And it is also important to note that the grounds on which Abrams could challenge the criteria by which the NEA awarded grants was precisely the existence of the AACM practices. As Lewis states, "that jazz-identified composers and improvisors … were challenging fixed genre hierarchies, and asserting freedom of aesthetic, historical, cultural and methodological reference, was also challenging the NEA's music panel".[33] These challenges to hierarchies of genre and representational relationships between form and content, which are also challenges to the ethics of white supremacy, precede the challenges to institutional funding structures. The latter are dependent on the former.

It is these challenges that must be the primary consideration in discussion of the intersection of regimes of identification in AACM practices and the discourses around them. The breaks with and challenges to representative orders in the music of AACM members, which, as articulated above, also constitute breaks with and challenges to the ethical ordering of white supremacy, are attested to throughout the discourse around the music of the AACM. It is through investigation of AACM practices as breaks with or challenges to representative orders that the character of those orders can be articulated and the actors upholding those orders identified.

That the AACM's challenges to representative orders and the ethical separation of white supremacy do not involve distinct practices, but rather tend toward developments that serve challenges on both fronts is well attested to by Ronald Radano's assertion, in his monograph on

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[30] Abrams in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 401.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, pp. 297 – 298.
[33] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 402.

Anthony Braxton, that "Braxton's voice would develop from its black roots not only as a critique of the categories of official culture but of jazz and 'black music' as well".[34] The particularities of Braxton's practice are his alone, but, according to his own attestation, it is the singularity of the practices of all AACM members and groups by which they are unified in what he calls, in the complex and highly idiosyncratic nomenclature of his writing, a 'composite vibrational attitude', defining 'vibrational attitude' as "the real attitude before the 'words', or before the particular focus that the attitude is directed on" and "the 'way' of a particular vibrational way of being":[35]

> It is important to understand that although the level of communication in the organization was high, I have not meant to imply that the AACM promoted a unified approach to the actual music, because this was not the case either. If anything, the opposite was true. My point is this: no musicians – or groups for that matter – employed the same approach to making the music. Instead, the diversity of its composite investigation has been the strength of the organization. The communication and exchanges of ideas that took place in the AACM produced a composite vibrational attitude that transcended any single style.[36]

One example of a practice that was part of this exchange of ideas, and which challenged representational orders is the deployment of so-called 'little instruments', brought to the AACM by the Art Ensemble bassist Malachi Favors, who traces their origin to his attendance at a performance by a Guinean ballet company in 1959.[37] Art Ensemble biographer Paul Steinbeck states that "[t]he percussionists of Les Ballets Africains were especially versatile, playing large drums like the djembe and dunun as well as smaller bells and rattles".[38] Favors recalls that "they started with a procession and [the] drums starting raining, and I thought 'Man, what is this here'", whereafter he "just felt that this music belonged in jazz, in so-called jazz".[39] Favors began supplementing his bass playing with percussion in the years prior to the AACM's establishment, but once he began to so expand his role in Roscoe Mitchell's pre-Art Ensemble group, the practice spread not only to his direct colleagues, but to the broader membership of the AACM. That this occurred without producing a unified AACM style is testament to the acuity of Braxton's analysis of communication within the organisation.

The deployment of the 'little instruments' introduced to the AACM by Malachi Favors exists as part of a larger tendency toward multi-instrumentalism. Lewis notes precedents to this practice among musicians associated with the free jazz of the years immediately prior to the

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[34] Radano, p. 120.
[35] Anthony Braxton, *Tri-Axium Writings 1* ([n.p.]: Synthesis Music, 1985), p. 531.
[36] Ibid., p. 420.
[37] Steinbeck, p. 45.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Favors in Ibid.; Favors in Ted Panken, 'Bowie and Favors: The Ensemble in Context', [http://www.jazzhouse.org/library/?read=panken8 (accessed 19 August 2022)], and quoted in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 160.

formation of the AACM, the flautist, saxophonist and clarinettist Eric Dolphy and the saxophonist, trumpeter and violinist Ornette Coleman, but also points to the prevalence of multi-instrumentalism in jazz of much earlier eras.[40] It could be posited that the examples provided by Lewis of this earlier multi-instrumentalism, such as the employment of a sarrusophone by Sidney Bechet in 1924 evidence an era of jazz music in which the representative apparatus of ordering had not yet developed the complexity that is found later in the century.[41]

The multi-instrumentalism of the AACM, in addition to the 'little instruments', encompassed the huge collection of drums and percussion employed by Art Ensemble drummer Don Moye, the broadening of many saxophonists' ranges to include the spectrum of woodwind instruments, the incorporation of electronics in the work of Abrams and Lewis and self-designed and homemade instruments such as the tuned dustbins employed by the Creative Construction Company and the individual percussion sets utilised in Mitchell's composition *The Maze*, from 1977.[42] Lewis states that the various and compound versions of multi-instrumentalism within the practices of AACM musicians provided those musicians with "a wider palette of potential orchestrations to explore".[43] The very articulation of this as a concern of the musicians attests to an aesthetic understanding of the music being created, and the work produced as anti-mimetic, in the Rancièrian sense of *mimesis* as a regulated, proper relation between doing and being. Lewis attests that the iteration of multi-instrumentalism in AACM practices contributes to a break with the predominant focus of preceding approaches to jazz-identified music, wherein "the focus of expressive articulation shifts from the commodificatory construction of the heroic individual instrumentalist to primordial forms of sound, rhythm and movement".[44] Lewis's analysis suggests a break with one representative ordering inherited from previous iterations of jazz, that of the structural focus on the soloist, with whose virtuosity the quality of the overall performance could be identified.

The challenge to the representative orders of jazz-identified music presented by this shift in improvisational emphasis, from individual to group improvisation, can be understood via a critique cited by Ekkehard Jost in his *Free Jazz*. He quotes Gudrun Endress's assertion that the collective approach to improvisation is a "retreat from soloistic virtuosity … which [the musicians of the AACM] do not yet possess".[45] To this journalist, the shift presented by AACM musicians can only be rationalised as evidence of an inability to fulfil the criteria of the representative order by which she judges jazz-identified music. Lewis describes the representative structures of jazz

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[40] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 362.
[41] Ibid.
[42] *Forces in Motion*, pp. 35 – 36; *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 362 – 364.
[43] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 362.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Jost, p. 168, quoting Gudrun Endress, 'AACM. Die dritte Generation des Free Jazz', in *Jazz Podium*, March 1970, pp. 96 – 99.

journalism as "commodificatory constructions of instrumental taxonomies", and as "remnants of the 'star system'" of jazz.[46] The "heroic categories" or "lineages" of prowess on an individual instrument are challenged, in Lewis's analysis, not only by practices of multi-instrumentalism and the shift toward group improvisation, but also the pedagogical imperative of the AACM's improvisatory practices to "listen to everyone" and of "listening to everything", a practice from which new approaches emerge, exemplified by Malachi Favors' experience of Les Ballets Africains.[47]

The wide range of approaches by AACM members and groups means that the challenge to the representative order of jazz-identified music presented by collective improvisation has an obverse face that makes a similar challenge to that order from the opposite direction. Anthony Braxton's *For Alto*, recorded in 1969 and released in 1970, the first ever LP of solo saxophone music, dispensed entirely not only with collective improvisation, but also with the collective.[48] Braxton's motivation for proceeding along such a course was the influence of a characteristically wide range of solo piano musics, those of Arnold Schoenberg, Fats Waller and Karlheinz Stockhausen; he was "in love with solo piano music", and "wanted to establish a piano music" but, by his own admission, "didn't play piano very well".[49] His solo LPs, beginning with *For Alto*, emerged from his decision to "create a vocabulary, a syntax, for solo saxophone".[50] He did so by study of the methods of development of Stockhausen and John Coltrane, not in order to emulate the music they created, but as a way of "developing a music and a music system and then, from that point, extending it".[51] In the music of Coltrane he noted "a very clear linear evolution", while in that of Stockhausen he noted an idea of discrete systems of language for separate pieces.[52] Braxton synthesised the approaches to adopt a methodology in which he would "start first at several different points and then try to generate from those points".[53] Such a methodology is hardly a prerequisite for music to be considered in aesthetic terms, but what it certainly does is produce a music that confounds the logic of the representative orders active in the conceptualisation of Black creative practice. Commenting on the reception of his work during his stay in Paris, Braxton notes that while he "could maybe [have] become successful as a saxophonist there … the area of notated music was closed to [him]".[54] The racialised representative logic not only limited the discursive field of what was written about him, but limited the opportunities for realisation of his extended

[46] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 362.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Anthony Braxton, *For Alto* 2xLP (Delmark Records, DS 420/421, 1971)
[49] Braxton in *Forces in Motion*, p. 50.
[50] *Forces in Motion,* p. 50.
[51] Braxton in Ibid., p. 51.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] *Forces in Motion*, p. 85.

composition practice, because his "work would only be considered with respect to the value systems and terminologies developed for what they called 'jazz', that is 'black exotica'".[55]

The sociologisation of the discourses around 'free jazz' relies on a logic that, in its reduction of Black music to only the fact of its Blackness, both reproduces an ethical separation of Black music from 'art music' and subjects it to a representative hierarchisation through which it can hear only its own conceptions of Blackness in Black expression. The parallel with the circularity of Bourdieu's reasoning identified in Rancière's critique is clear.

This is particularly well-illustrated by journalistic reactions to the Art Ensemble of Chicago during their sojourn in Paris between 1969 and 1971. In *L'Express*, Philippe Adler writes that "[t]he music of the '69 Chicagoans is a reflection of their ideas: violent and revolutionary," while, in *Jazz Magazine*, Paul Alessandrini, writing about a concert in which the Art Ensemble line-up was augmented with Anthony Braxton and Steve McCall, attests that "[t]o speak of the Chicago musicians is to always use the same expressions: *black music, black power, aggression, political and musical happening*."[56] The rhetoric adopted by European jazz journalists can easily be interrogated by a contemporary listener, because the music played by the Art Ensemble during their stay in Paris is remarkably well documented. In less than two years they recorded the albums *The Spiritual*, *Tutankhamun*, *People in Sorrow*, *Message to Our Folks*, *Reese and the Smooth Ones*, *Live in Paris* (double LP, with Fontella Bass), *Eda Wobu* (which has never received an official release), *Comme À La Radio* (with Brigitte Fontaine and Areski Belkacem), *Certain Blacks*, *Go Home* (with Bass and numerous French musicians), the soundtrack to *Les Stances À Sophie* (with Bass), *The Art Ensemble of Chicago with Fontella Bass*, *Chi-Congo* and *Phase One*.[57] Across these recordings, the Art Ensemble plays with a gamut of approaches, intensities and significations, often in the course of an individual piece. But only rarely might their music be described with any accuracy in terms of 'aggression' or as being 'violent'.

Graham Lock argues that this mode of writing about Black music is part of the phenomenon that Anthony Braxton calls 'Black Exotica'.[58] Braxton traces this phenomenon back

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[55] *Forces in Motion*, p. 85.

[56] Steinbeck, p. 71, quoting Philippe Adler, 'L'été torride du Lucernaire', *L'Express* no. 944 (11-17 August 1969), p. 30, and Paul Alessandrini, 'Jazz on the Grass', *Jazz Magazine*, no, 169-170 (September 1969), p. 9. The emphasis appears in both Steinbeck's translation and in Alessandrini's French text that he cites.

[57] Art Ensemble of Chicago, *The Spiritual* LP (Freedom, FLP 40.108, 1972); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Tutankhamun* LP (Freedom, FLP 40122, 1974); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *People in Sorrow* LP (Nessa, N-3, 1969); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Message to our Folks* LP (BYG Records, 529 328, 1969); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Reese and the Smooth Ones* LP (BYG Records, 529 329, 1969); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Live* 2xLP (Affinity, AFFD 46, 1980); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Eda Wobu* CD (Jazz Music Yesterday, JMY 1008-2, 1991); Brigitte Fontaine, Areski avec Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Comme À La Radio* LP (Saravah, SH 10006, 1969); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Certain Blacks* LP (America Records, 30 AM 6098, 1970); The Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Go Home* LP (Galloway Records, 600 502, 1970); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Bande Sonore Originale Du Film "Les Stances À Sophie"* LP (Pathé, 2C 062-11365, 1970); Art Ensemble of Chicago with Fontella Bass, *Art Ensemble of Chicago with Fontella Bass* LP (America Records, 30 AM 6117, 1971); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Chi-Congo* LP (Disques Decca, 258.054, 1972); Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Phase One* LP (America Records, 30 AM 6116, 1971).

[58] Graham Lock, *Blutopia* (London: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 178.

to Herodotus, whose perspective Braxton summarises as "a dynamic feeling of awe about Africa with emotional interpretations that sought to accent what he felt to be most unique about her culture and people".[59] Herodotus' writings include comment on African music, "a richly rhythmatic music that was also 'physical' when compared to his culture", which, Braxton argues, when translated through centuries of his being read, "would somehow come to be viewed as 'what is really happening' – as opposed to merely one individual's viewpoint and/or experience".[60] In this way, the writings of Herodotus and his followers "would establish the basis of an attitude that has moved to severely undermine the composite dictates (and dynamics) of black creativity in every sense".[61] The normative exoticising of Black people and Black music leads to a discourse that "has nothing to do with black creativity but instead gives insight into the values and 'things' of those who have felt it necessary to create those images."[62] Braxton finds one contemporary iteration of 'black exotica' in "the use of black creativity as a means to 'have a good time', while also suppressing the dynamic implications of the music to accomplish that 'good time'", a situation in which "black creativity is viewed as related to prostitution or the life of sensuality, and western culture is viewed as its opposite".[63] He finds another iteration in the adoption of Black music as a locus of rebellion for white people: "black creativity has long been the 'best place in town' for those who somehow believe they are either 'against the system' or heading for 'against the system'"[64] For Lock, the equation of free jazz with "black political rage" provides "another example of a similarly reductive stereotyping that fails to acknowledge the breadth and variety of both black experience and black expression".[65] In the reactions of French journalists and sociologists to the appearance of members of the AACM in Paris so soon after May '68, the last of Braxton's iterations seems to merge with that provided by Lock. Lewis notes as much in identifying as an "audacious assertion" sociologist Alfred Willener's claim that "May seemed, in turn, to explain Dada, Surrealism, Free Jazz, etc."[66] And Lewis's analysis of Willener's account of free jazz articulates it as both a reduction of it to racialised tropes and an appropriation of Black creativity as a locus of white rebellion: "Willener's ideas do not so much explain May 1968 as they take aspects of its behavior and graft them onto notions of jazz based in primitivism, exoticism, and immediate gratification".[67]

Lock points out that the 'reductive stereotyping' seen in the journalistic responses to the Art Ensemble, quoted above, is repeated in reactions to Braxton's music, but also that his music

[59] Braxton, *Tri-Axium Writings 3*, p. 286.
[60] Ibid., p. 287.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., p. 290.
[64] Ibid., p. 289.
[65] *Blutopia*, p. 178.
[66] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 238; Alfred Willener, *The Action-Image of Society: On Cultural Politicization*, trans. by A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), pp. xiii – xiv.
[67] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 239 – 240.

has been critiqued for failing to be exotic enough. He addresses an article by Hubert Saal in which the *Newsweek* reporter writes of Braxton's compositions that "[t]hey speak of ghettos, humiliation and pride – in a language as ham-fisted as a street brawl" and another in which *Financial Times* journalist Garry Booth finds Braxton's music "as evocative as a book of logarithms" and complains that it "had no heart and did not swing".[68] Taken together, these commentaries demonstrate two sets of representative orders operative in the discourses around Black creative music: one in which Black music is reduced to only the writer's idea of Blackness; the other in which Black music is understood through the lens of objective musical criteria, by which it passes or fails. Booth's critique, indeed, makes clear the ethical, racist component of Gudrun Endress's earlier critique of the AACM approach to collective improvisation.

That these tendencies extend to explicitly anti-racist or pro-Black ideas around Black creative music is well-illustrated by reference to Frank Kofsky's *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*, cited by Ekkehard Jost as an example of "productive" sociological writing on free jazz.[69] Kofsky exults "the democratic idea that art, to be meaningful, must maintain its organic roots in the masses, reflecting their joys and their travails, their aspirations and frustrations", finding this idea manifest in "jazz and the other manifestations of the 'Negro soul'".[70] This logic is not the sole preserve of white sociologists and musicologists; indeed, the extract of Kofsky's work quoted above finds him summarising and celebrating the writings of Amiri Baraka and other "black-nationalist-influenced Negro writers".[71] And the representative logic of jazz-identified practices is nowhere more explicitly present than in the essentialism employed in the metapolitics of race espoused by Amiri Baraka and other members of the Black Arts Movement. In articulating an understanding of the genderedness of Black nationalism and its influence on understandings of 'free jazz', Benjamin Piekut enumerates the "desirable aesthetic qualities based on gendered codes of musical meaning" as "volume, 'raw' and extreme emotion, dominating tone, and virtuosic displays of hand and breath control".[72] Piekut cites Baraka's description of Albert Ayler's sound as "[l]ike the thunder or the lightening [sic] or the ocean storming and mounting, crushing whatever was in its path".[73] He contrasts Baraka's veneration of Ayler's power with Spellman's dismissal of Dixon's often delicate approach that, as with Gudrun Endress's verdict on the collective improvisations of the AACM, can only conceive of an approach that does not attempt to fulfil the criteria employed by the writer as the result of an insufficiency. In this case Spellman attests that

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[68] *Blutopia*, pp. 176 – 178, quoting Hubert Saal, 'Two Free Spirits', *Newsweek* 8 Aug 1977, p. 41 and Garry Booth, 'The Gospel According to the Five Blind Boys', *Financial Times* 25 May 1993, p. 19d.
[69] Jost, p. 8.
[70] Frank Kofsky, *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* (New York and London: Pathfinder, 1970), p. 107.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Piekut, p. 122.
[73] Ibid., quoting Amiri Baraka, *Autobiography of LeRoi Jones* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1984), p. 286.

Dixon's "lips are too soft because of lack of practice".[74] This Black nationalist representative ordering, which dictates a *mimesis* that hierarchises the emotional content of jazz and the techniques employed to convey that content, thereby upholds both tendencies of representative ordering of Black creativity articulated above.

This is not to deny that there are distinguishable political differences between the 'black exoticism' identified by Anthony Braxton in white writings and practice around Black music and the racial essentialism of Black nationalist discourses. While the former serves to straightforwardly uphold the status quo of the racist, ethical separation of Black music and the racist hierarchisation of genres and musical content, for the latter this pattern forms part of the metapolitical turning away from racism discussed in the previous chapter. In each case, the insistence on subjecting Black music to the criteria of representative ordering is an anti-democratic action; but in the case of Black nationalism, the argument may be put forward that this anti-democracy forms part of a 'better' police order in service of emancipation, such as that offered by Pauwels in his analysis of the BCM.

However, just as the school of Black nationalism associated with Baraka and the Black Arts Movement proved incompatible with Bill Dixon's interracial, 'long-political' vision of the JCG, its essentialist representative ordering would eventually clash with music created from within the AACM's continuum of long-political and metapolitical conceptions of race. In 1987's *The Music: Reflections on Jazz and Blues*, Baraka coins the term 'Tail Europe', linking it to "Braxton, Leo Smith, etc., Anthony Davis, alas, even some of the Art Ensemble and their clones".[75] He accuses the adherents of the 'Tail Europe' tendency of "deliberately trying to *declass* the music, transforming it into a secondary appendage of European concert music, rather than the heroic expression of the folk and classical music of the African American majority as well as the spirit of a progressive and populist high art".[76] This conception allows Baraka to characterise an unnamed saxophonist (whom Lewis asserts is "almost certainly Anthony Braxton") as racially subservient, claiming that the saxophonist "wants to show us that he's heard Berg and Webern or Stockhausen" and that his "playing, for the most part, is showing white folks how intelligent he (they) is".[77] Beyond even this, Baraka attests that "[o]bjectively, the Tail Europe school trumpets white supremacy and legitimizes black national oppression."[78] It is worth noting that, prior to his mid-'60s turn toward Black Nationalism noted by Piekut, Baraka was not so dismissive of pan-European compositional practices, noting of the music of New York in the early part of that decade that "I especially liked

[74] Piekut, p. 123, quoting A.B. Spellman, 'Jazz at the Judson', *Nation*, February 8 1965, p. 150.
[75] Amiri Baraka and Amina Baraka, *The Music: Reflections on Jazz and Blues* (New York: William Morrow, 1987), p. 320.
[76] Baraka and Baraka, p. 260.
[77] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 366; Baraka and Baraka, p. 260.
[78] Baraka and Baraka, p. 268.

Morton Feldman's music, Cage's audacity and some of the other things. But we were mostly into the new black music."[79]

The tenor of Baraka's critique recalls Rancière's reference to the advice given to 19th century worker poets, to "consecrate themselves to the more authentic rhythms of the popular song that rhymes and enchants the work and celebrations of the people."[80] Lewis's rejoinder to Baraka's critique demonstrates that the sharing of a logic of ethical separation between apparently opposed parties can lead to the inadvertent support of those to whom one might consider oneself opposed: "those who import the bourgeois-versus-vernacular binary dialectic unblinkingly into the complex world of black musical expression run the risk of inadvertently serving as the ventriloquist's dummy for corporate megamedia".[81] This warning echoes again Rancière's writing on the leisure practices of 19th century France, specifically the parallels between the policing enacted by the state and that enacted by worker-activists, such as union-leaders, articulated in 'Good Times'.[82] Each policing party required the same of workers: that they act out the agreed role of 'worker' diligently. Thus, the state limited the repertoire of theatres in its desperation that rebellion not be provoked, while union leaders feared that the cause of working-class advancement would be stymied by the disorder caused by the mixing of proletarians with the bourgeoisie. Baraka here takes on the role of activist, with the class structure in question that of race rather than relation to capital. It is this dynamic that undoubtedly underlies the previously discussed tension between politics and metapolitics of race. In Baraka's critique of the 'Tail Europe' school, his stridency reflects the tenets of a strict metapolitics of race, wherein the avoidance of direct challenge to white hegemony in favour of the building of a parallel community necessitates a disengagement with practices that signify whiteness.

In defending AACM practices against Baraka's allegations, Lewis argues that "engagement with contemporary pan-European music became a form of boundary-blurring resistance to efforts to restrict the mobility of black musicians, rather than a capitulation to bourgeois values."[83] Lewis's position is paralleled by Rancière's conclusion on the scene investigated in 'Good Times', that "[d]isorder might well arise less from a distinct working-class culture than from … a culture in disorder.[84] The boundary-blurring to which Lewis attests can easily be understood as one of the "forms of blurring" to which Rancière refers in his comment on the loss of boundaries in practices and understandings of music, wherein what he finds "important" is "all these forms of blurring, all these displacements that ensure that there isn't art, here, and spectators, there, and show us that there are forms of experience that transform regimes of perception, affect and speech."[85]

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[79] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 42, quoting *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones*, p. 265.
[80] 'A Distant Sound', p. 355.
[81] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 368.
[82] 'Good Times', pp. 175 – 232.
[83] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 370.
[84] 'Good Times', p. 181.
[85] Rancière and Game, pp. 261 – 262.

If the music of the AACM's members is bound, with varying degrees of consent, to jazz, the blurring of boundaries between jazz-identified musics and pan-Europeans contemporary musics also points to a closedness of understanding of the constitution of 'art music' consistent with the racialised separation and hierarchy of esteem found by Abrams in the NEA.

The argument for considering this a separation chiefly occupied with the race of the performers and (particularly) composers on either side of the divide certainly has merit. The extension of music rooted in jazz to the incorporation of methods such as those enumerated by Lewis as having been considered legitimate for 'classical' music within the NEA – "intermedia, graphic notation, text-based scores, electronic music, sonograms, conceptual art" – does not only challenge the representative orders found to have been active in discourses around jazz-identified music. It can also be said to demonstrate the racism of essentialising the divide between music considered as part of a pan-European classical continuum and music developed from the 'African American sonic matrix'. This is something to which Lewis's writing attests, both in *A Power Stronger than Itself* and the earlier 'Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives'. In this article, Lewis draws on a section of Braxton's *Tri-Axium Writings* in which Braxton attests that "aleatory and indeterminism are words which have been coined from several important purposes", first among which is "to bypass the word improvisation and as such the influence of any non-white sensibility (because any association with black people and/or culture is not tolerated – on any level – by the contemporary western art music community)".[86] Furthermore, with regard to the adoption within pan-European composition of improvisatory practices and the claims to their conception, Braxton attests that "[e]very form – and time zone – of black creativity, Indian creativity, Asian creativity, etc. has utilized a more elastic relationship to form than western art music", and that the "use of extended functionalism is not new, only the claim to have invented it is".[87] Braxton's comments raise a question of transcendent and contingent aspects of improvisation that might problematise the presumption of a relationship to Rancière's distributions of the sensible, or any other such distributions that can be formulated in regards to spheres that are geographically and culturally distinct from those conceptualised by Rancière. But the manner in which Braxton and Lewis discuss improvisation, and music more generally, making comparisons and equivalences between geographically and historically distinct practices, relies upon an understanding of music consistent with the aesthetic regime of the identification of art, even as their writing can be utilised to critique certain inflections of Rancière's conception.

Lewis underlines Braxton's thesis by noting that John Cage, whose conception 'indeterminacy' is, would certainly have been aware of bebop, attesting that as "a native American

[86] *Tri-Axium Music 1*, p. 366.
[87] Ibid.

music with a strong base in New York City" it was "well known to what has come to be known as the 'New York School' of artists and musicians of which Cage [was] part", also noting the often remarked upon connections between jazz and many of the visual artists within the 'New York School'.[88] Lewis notes, too, that the "spontaneity" and "uniqueness" that he attests Cage held as central to his own challenge to pan-European compositional tradition, and which were "not generally found in either American or European music before Cage", were to be found in the bebop that he would doubtlessly have heard over the decade prior to his own 'spontaneous' and 'unique' turn of 1951.[89] Indeed, Cage's initial conception of indeterminism is broad enough to encompass improvisatory practices typical in jazz-identified musics. According to Cage in the second of his Darmstadt lectures of 1958, the possibilities of the "indeterminate aspects" of Bach's 'Art of the Fugue' for its performer include "feeling his way, following the dictates of his ego; … following, as in automatic writing, the dictates of his subconscious mind; … following his taste".[90]

In Sabine M. Feisst's 'John Cage and Improvisation: An Unresolved Relationship', she directly contradicts some of the assertions made in 'Improvised Music after 1950', stating that "Lewis does not take into account Cage's early interest in improvisation, his positive remarks on hot jazz in the 1940s and such experimental works as *Quest* of 1935 or *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* of 1939 which predated bebop."[91] Her objections, though, do not entirely undermine Lewis's position. The 'early interest in improvisation' to which Feisst attests, is demonstrated by a 1989 interview in which Cage describes his choice, in the early 1930s, of "an entirely different way of composing, which was through improvisation".[92] His comments on 'hot jazz', which date back to his transcript of a talk given in 1937 on 'The Future of Music' could be said to reveal more explicitly than the sources noted by Lewis a debt to jazz music, and wherein Cage also grants jazz music an esteem not found later in his writing:

> Methods of writing percussion music have as their goal the rhythmic structure of a composition. As soon as these methods are crystallized into one or several widely accepted methods, the means will exist for group improvisations of unwritten but culturally important music. This has already taken place in Oriental cultures and in hot jazz.[93]

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[88] George Lewis, 'Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives', *Black Music Research Journal*, 22 (2002), 215 – 246 (p. 223).
[89] Ibid.
[90] John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 35.
[91] Sabine M. Feisst, 'John Cage and Improvisation: An Unresolved Relationship' in *Musical Improvisation: Art, Education, and Society*, ed. by Gabriel Solis and Bruno Nettl (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), pp. 38 – 51 (p. 50, en. 7).
[92] Feisst, p. 38, quoting Cage in *John Cage at Seventy-Five*, Richard Fleming and William Duckworth (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1989), p. 16.
[93] *Silence*, p. 5.

Later writings and comments by Cage plot a trajectory for his conception of indeterminacy away from the possibilities of expressivity noted in his essay on 'Art of the Fugue', and thereby the possibility of connections with modes of improvisation common in 'hot jazz', Bebop and Free Jazz. Feisst locates the point of rupture with jazz-identified modes of improvisation in Cage's attitude to 'spontaneity'. Where Lewis emphasises spontaneity, alongside uniqueness, in characterising Cage's challenge to pan-European compositional practices, Feisst counters that "[w]hen Cage turned toward chance operations and indeterminacy, he not only rejected jazz, but also self-expressive European classical music including Beethoven" and that Cage "never embraced 'spontaneity'".[94] The opposition that Cage draws between spontaneity and uniqueness in his later conceptualisations of indeterminacy leads to the exclusion and repudiation of the former in his search for unpredictability: "It is at the point of spontaneity that the performer is most apt to have recourse to his memory. He is not apt to make a discovery spontaneously".[95] This statement in fact arrives as part of rapprochement with the notion of improvisation that Feisst notes in Cage's interviews and compositions from the 1970s that nevertheless falls short of embracing the mode of improvisation most common in jazz-identified music, as it comes attached with a caveat, that the improvisation deployed be free "from memory and feelings".[96] Cage's further pronouncements on his return to improvisation are clear in this regard, as he states that "[t]he reason I didn't want to improvise was that I would be expressing my feelings. I do want a music in which I don't do that. So when I use improvisation now, it must be in situations where I have a low degree of influence".[97] To this end, Cage's compositions following this shift that required the performer to improvise were scored for instrumentation in which expression would be impossible. He states, referring to the cacti that were among the possible instruments for realisation of his 1975 composition *Child of Tree* and his 1976 composition *Branches*, that "the instruments are so unknown that as you explore, say the spines of a cactus, you're not really dealing with your memory or your taste"[98]. Cage's trajectory here comprises a series of refinements through which a notion of improvisation is legitimated that contains all bar the elements most characteristic of its deployment in jazz musics, expression and technicality. Of the latter, Lewis finds in AACM practices, even those discussed above in which the challenge to its models is strongest, an embodiment of the "potential for sonic invention that could be fully realized through the familiarization process known as 'practicing'", part of a view in which "sustained and rigorous study is generally seen as the most likely way to 'discover something you don't know'".[99] And he opposes Cage's position of anti-

[94] Feisst, p. 50, en. 7.
[95] Ibid., citing Richard Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1987), p.222.
[96] Feisst, p. 44.
[97] Ibid., quoting Cage in David Cope, 'An Interview with John Cage', *The Composer Magazine*, 10/11 (1980), 16 - 22 (p. 21).
[98] Feisst, p. 45, quoting Cage in Thom Holmes, 'The Cage Interview', *Recording,* 3 (1981), pp. 2 – 5 (p. 3).
[99] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 364.

expressivity to "the importance of personal narrative" in improvisation in, or from, a jazz tradition, drawing an analogy between an improviser's development of 'sound' and conceptions of compositional 'style' found in pan-European art music.[100]

Lewis places this aspect of Cage's relationship with improvisation at the crux of a racialised division in improvisatory practice between 'Afrological' and 'Eurological' "systems of improvisative musicality", the latter of which, while in part derived from the former, effaces its connections to it, and derives its legitimacy from that effacement. Lewis is careful in his framing of this distinction, describing the systems as "historically emergent rather than ethnically essential", and stating that "African-American music … can be performed by a person of any 'race' without losing its character as historically Afrological".[101]

Particularly pertinent to understanding the politics of the aesthetics of AACM practices with regard to 'Western art music', 'classical music' or the pan-European compositional tradition is Lewis's understanding of the methods by which these practices maintain a separation from jazz-identified musics. He points to two related practices that serve this separation in the naming of and construction of discourses around music. The divisive function of 'naming' that is central here, although related, is not that to which Braxton attests with regard to improvisation, indeterminacy and aleatoricism. It rather concerns a manner of grouping certain practices, those identified by Lewis under the term 'Eurological', and referring to them with broad terms in such a way that it is implied that those practices constitute the totality of the music that can be legitimately understood using that term. This division is disseminated by a discourse that, by a process of citation and reiteration, continues to legitimate and reinforce it. Lewis refers to texts such as Michael Nyman's *Experimental Music*, Elliott Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey's *Music since 1945* and David Cope's *New Directions in Music* to demonstrate the manner in which such vocabulary is used in a process of privileging 'Eurological' practices and devaluing 'Afrological' practices:[102]

> Coded qualifiers to the word 'music' – such as 'experimental,' 'new,' 'art,' 'concert,' 'serious,' 'avant-garde,' and 'contemporary,'- are used in these texts to delineate a racialized location of this tradition within the space of whiteness; either erasure or (brief) inclusion of Afrological music can then be framed as responsible chronicling and "objective" taxonomy.[103]

One of the ways in which Lewis understands this process is as an 'exnomination' of whiteness, drawing on work by John Fiske. Fiske defines "the space of whiteness" as containing

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[100] 'Improvised Music after 1950', p. 241.
[101] Ibid., p. 217.
[102] Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1974); Elliott Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey, *Music Since 1945: Issues, Materials and Literature* (New York: Schirmer, 1993); David Cope, *New Directions in Music* (Madison, Wis.: Brown and Benchmark, 1993).
[103] 'Improvised Music after 1950', p. 226.

"a limited but varied set of normalizing positions from which that which is not white can be made into the abnormal; by such means whiteness constitutes itself as a universal set of norms by which to make sense of the world".[104] The place of the process of 'exnomination' within this 'space of whiteness' is as "the means by which whiteness avoids being named and thus keeps itself out of the field of interrogation and therefore off the agenda for change".[105] Lewis cites Cope's *New Directions in Music* as an example of this process in discourses around contemporary music and improvisation, attesting that Cope "rigorously avoids extended, serious treatment of major figures in postwar Afrological improvisation, while devoting considerable attention to something called 'contemporary' improvisation".[106] This process, in Rancièrian terms, can be considered a racist and paradoxical policing of art, and as a mirror of the previously discussed attempts by hierarchical orders to bind Black creative music to a representational logic that its practices elude. In this case, a police distribution of the sensible, eminently comparable to Du Bois's veil, is maintained in which practices are seen and heard differently from a position within a normalised whiteness dependent upon the raciality of their signification. And, more specifically, in which only raciality other than whiteness is understood to be signifiable. This understanding of this process in these terms is well attested to by Lewis's articulation, in *A Power Stronger than Itself*, of the process's result as "an ethnically bound and ultimately limited tradition that appropriates freely, yet furtively, yet cannot recognize any histories as its own other than those based in whiteness".[107]

Another way to understand this within Rancière's conceptual apparatus is to consider the parallels between the circumscription of practices of 'contemporary music' and the construction of the *dispositif* of 'contemporary art'. In *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, Rancière notes that in the discourses of "art's 'post-utopian' present", the expression 'contemporary art' does not refer to 'art' in its unified sense, but is, instead, "a name for that *dispositif* which has taken the same place and function" as 'painting'. [108] The 'painting' from which it has taken its place and function is, itself, "not merely the name of an art", but "the name of a system of presentation of a form of art's visibility".[109] While the attribution of a bounded set of practices as 'contemporary music' does not perform the same function with regard to the unified sense of art, its deployment (or the deployment of the many equivalent terms enumerated by Lewis) services the same kind of closure – the same denial of the universality of aesthetic experience – as does the construction of the *dispositif* of 'contemporary art'. But where 'contemporary art' forecloses the common aesthetic sensorium by severing links with other arts practices, the construction of 'contemporary music'

[104] 'Improvised Music after 1950', p. 224, quoting John Fiske, *Media Matters: Everyday Culture and Political Change* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 42.
[105] Ibid.
[106] 'Improvised Music after 1950', p. 227.
[107] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. xiii.
[108] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, pp. 19 – 23.
[109] Ibid., p. 23.

relies upon those links to enforce a division within music. Lewis, understanding this process as one of "social location", attests that "composers such as Cage and Feldman located their work as an integral part of a sociomusical art world that explicitly bonded with the intellectual and musical traditions of Europe."[110] He further states that "[t]he members of this art world, while critiquing aspects of contemporary European culture, were explicitly concerned with continuing to develop this 'Western' tradition on the American continent."[111]

Undoubtedly implicated in this process are exclusivist paradigms of modernity and postmodernity. In articulating the difference between Rancière's aesthetic regime and notions of modernism in the second chapter of this study, it was noted that he considers that "[t]he notion of modernity … seems to have been deliberately invented to prevent a clear understanding of the transformations of art and its relationships with the other spheres of collective experience".[112] Throughout his writing on discourses of modernity, Rancière comments on a model of artistic modernism in which it is "identified simply with the autonomy of art, an 'anti-mimetic' revolution in art identical with the conquest of the pure form of art finally laid bare".[113] Within this variant of the discourse of modernity, "[e]ach individual art would thus assert the pure potential of art by exploring the capabilities of its specific medium", within which "[m]usical modernity would be identified with the language of twelve sounds, set free from any analogy with expressive language".[114]

Rancière links this mode of modernity with Clement Greenberg's influential article, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', in which the emphasis of the 'self-containment' of Schiller's writing on the *Jnno Ludovisi* is shifted from "a sensible milieu, a particular sensorium, foreign to the ordinary forms of sensory experience" to "the work's material autonomy".[115] In the study of the writing of James Agee and Walt Whitman which appears as the final chapter of *Aisthesis*, Rancière concludes with a reflection that "Clement Greenberg and the 'serious' Marxist intellectuals and artists surrounding him wanted to turn the page on a certain America – the America of itinerant and politically committed art of the New Deal, and more profoundly, of cultural democracy stemming from Whitman".[116] In so doing, Rancière argues, "what they were declaring over was actually historical modernism in general, the idea of a new art attuned to all the vibrations of universal life: an art capable both of matching the accelerated rhythms of industry, society and urban life, and of giving

[110] 'Improvised Music after 1950', p. 222.
[111] Ibid., p. 222.
[112] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 21.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 27.
[116] *Aisthesis*, p. 262.

infinite resonance to the most ordinary minutes of everyday life."[117] In so doing, Greenberg's programme usurped the name of "what it was trying to destroy": modernism.[118]

The earlier iteration of modernism, that which Greenberg's version set out to destroy, is linked to that understood by Rancière as 'aesthetic revolution', and the scenes documented by Rancière in *Aisthetis* are drawn from this historical era of aesthetics' operation. Elsewhere, Rancière attests that the "historically strong programme" of aesthetic revolution "was crushed, first by police repression, and later by the sort of cultural counter-revolution that led to the definition of 'modernism' we find in Greenberg."[119] This conception of modernism, then, denies both 'art become life' and 'life become art' manifestations of artistic metapolitics, while appearing as a de-politicised facsimile of the latter, the promise for and by which art in the tendency of 'life become art' separates itself from the everyday "effaced in the simple dogma of modern art as the art of autonomy".[120] Rancière articulates this denial of artistic metapolitics in *Aesthetics and its Discontents* as he defines modernism as "a conception of art which holds onto the aesthetic identification of art but refuses to accept the forms of disidentification in which it is carried out".[121] This conception "wants to hold onto art's autonomy but refuses to accept the heteronomy that is its other name."[122] In his conceptualisation of the aesthetic regime, Rancière characterises the complexities of art's interaction with other spheres of human life with the paradox that "art is art insofar as it is also non-art, or is something other than art."[123] In place of this complexity, modernism's simplified autonomy, paired with the specificity of each art to its medium, claims that it "substantiates the global distinction between art and non-art."[124] His expansion on this point in interview with Peter Hallward demonstrates the relevance of this understanding of modernism to the issue of the exclusion of Black music from discourses of 'contemporary music':

> 'Modernists' are always trying to think Mallarmé and the pure poem, abstract painting, pure painting, or Schoenberg and a music that would no longer be expressive, etc. But if you look at how this came about, you realize that all the so-called movements to define a pure art were in fact completely mixed up with all sorts of other preoccupations – architectural, social, religious, political and so on. The whole paradox of an aesthetic regime of art is that art defines itself by its very identity with non-art. You cannot understand people like Malevich, Mondrian or Schoenberg if you don't remember that their 'pure' art is inscribed in the midst of questions regarding synaesthesia, the construction of an individual or collective setting for life, utopias of community, new forms of spirituality, etc. The

[117] *Aisthesis*, p. 262.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, p. 299.
[120] Rancière and Hallward, p. 134.
[121] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 68.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., p. 36.
[124] Ibid., p. 69.

> modernist doxa is constructed exactly at the point when the slightly confused mixture of political and artistic rationalities begins to come apart.[125]

Under this understanding, it is not, principally, the narrative of the development of John Cage's compositional practice, or even the characteristics of the music produced by him or any of his contemporaries or followers, through which a paradigm is established that excludes musics and musicians that are identifiable as Black from discourses of 'experimental' or 'contemporary' music. It is, rather, the disconnection of these musics from the thinking that produced them. In this understanding, the presence or lack of conscious or unconscious racism in Cage's intent is moot; it is the disconnection of the autonomy of sounds in his practice from its spiritual and political grounding in Zen Buddhism and anarchy that provides the boundary separating his music with that of the AACM.

The boundary, however, remains racialised. This shift in the understanding of the nature of the boundary separating pan-European or 'Eurological' practices from pan-African or 'Afrological' practices does not propose that Cage and his contemporaries have no role in the construction and maintenance of that boundary. Unlike Schoenberg's or Varèse's challenges to musical syntax and vocabulary, the developments in pan-European experimental music in post-war America occur in a context where modernism is already the dominant discursive paradigm of art. Cage's thought on music beyond his own practice reveals an attitude toward autonomy consistent with Rancière's characterisation of modernism. A pertinent example of this can be found in a comment of Cage's on free jazz, wherein he surmises that "what is called free jazz probably tries to free itself from time and rhythmic periodicity."[126] In this reading, while "[t]he bass doesn't play like a metronome anymore … you still get the feeling of a beat" and thus, apparently disappointingly, "[i]t remains 'music'."[127] Cage's interdiction of 'music', as opposed to sound, aligns not only his practice, but his conception of art, with a modernist paradigm in which the autonomy of art is idealised as a purification.

That which is removed in music's purification to sound has already been articulated in the discussion of 'Eurological' and 'Afrological' systems of improvisation, above: in order to autonomise art from life, it must be removed "from memory and feelings".[128] It is here that the veil of signification performs a double operation in which that which may signify music as white to listeners of colour is not acknowledged as binding art to life, but that which signifies Blackness or non-whiteness in the presumed scope of a white listener is generally forbidden through its relation to memory and feelings, and permitted only insofar as it is so exotically other as to be immune

[125] Rancière and Hallward, p. 134.
[126] John Cage, *For the Birds: In Conversation with Daniel Charles* (Salem and London: Marion Boyars, 1981), p. 171.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Feisst, p. 44.

from signifying memory or feelings to the same white listener. Hence, Cage can root his practice in principles derived from the I-Ching, while the modernist Herodotus, Steve Reich, can adopt Ghanaian drumming patterns in his minimalism without disturbing the modernist paradigm of autonomy. Inversely, where, as Lewis notes, "passing reference" is made to the Art Ensemble of Chicago in Schwartz and Godfrey's *Music since 1945*, it is justified by the authors "because their music was as much 'serious' or avant-garde music as jazz".[129] In other words, the Art Ensemble's music could be considered 'serious' or avant-garde to the extent that authors considered it not jazz, a formulation the absurdity of which is elucidated by considering the possibility of its application to Reich's 'Drumming' as 'as much serious or avant-garde music as Ewe music'.

In 'Improvised Music after 1950', Lewis posits that "[i]n some respects the distancing of personal narrative updates the concept of a post-Kantian 'autonomous significant structure'".[130] The latter term is drawn from Rose Rosengard Subotnik's critique of Kant's influence on 'Western' thinking about music. Subotnik's reading of Kant is, of course, markedly different from Rancière's Schillerian reading, and that difference is manifested in a conception of autonomy that, like the modernist discourse it critiques, can only understand that autonomy as entirely separate from the significations of life outside art. What Subotnik's work offers, in the name of "readmit[ting] social and political function as proper and central to the domain of music", is, in fact, an iteration of the "undoing" of "the alliance between artistic radicality and political radicality" that Rancière identifies as the "alliance whose proper name is today's incriminated term of aesthetics".[131] This is nowhere more clearly presented than in her prescription she offers to 'contemporary composers' on how they ought to alter their practice:

> Contemporary composers might also find it desirable, as popular music regularly does, to readmit social and political function as proper and central to the domain of music; likewise they might consider reinstating selfconscious moral reflection, on other issues besides compositional integrity, into that domain. Instead of assuming the impossibility of keeping communicative music honest, or denying the positive needs that created general as well as individual principles, or insisting on the ideological neutrality of semiotic structures, they might contemplate the relationship between purpose and effect. Redefining music as a kind of "purposiveness with purpose," they might move away from the Kantian aestheticism of structure, with its indirect moral implications, to an explicit concern with moral effect as a basis for justifying music. The assessment of such effect would not necessarily require the services of a philosopher-king. On the contrary, this tense and messy task, which eludes easy general dictums, and which demands the unending exercise of honest, self-critical judgment, is ideally suited to those susceptible to the values of individuality. Possibly, then, contemporary composers could direct some of their sense of responsibility toward trying to keep humane the purposes and uses that their music does and can serve. Even if such refunctionalization, at least initially, helps only to define and serve communal rather than

[129] 'Improvised Music after 1950', p. 226, including quotation of Schwartz and Godfrey, p. 202.
[130] 'Improvised Music after 1950', p. 242.
[131] Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 292; *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 22.

> global needs, the effort to intensify and expand the kinds of relationships their music might have with society could help composers establish a more powerful and promising sense of social need for imaginative music, and hence a social stake in such music, as clear evidence that human life is worth sustaining.[132]

By attacking aesthetics in the name of restoring an idea of art music removed from the autonomy of signification, Subotnik attacks the very thing that is subdued by this idea of modernism, effected through Clement Greenberg's elitist re-routing of Adorno that "brutally" rejects "the aesthetic capacity of any and every one": of a democratic sensorium free of the dominating hierarchies of everyday life.[133] Prior to being a challenge to the conception of modernism that allows for the racially-boundaried construction of 'contemporary music', it comprises an acceptance of the reasoning of that conception, of the aesthetic sensorium as the reserve of elites whose autonomy is only viable by the policing of the significations of life outside that sensorium. Subotnik's analysis is self-consciously ethical, and characteristics of her critique can be recognised in that which Rancière discusses in 'The Ethical Turn of Aesthetics and Politics', specifically the former mode of reflection he identifies in his articulation that "arts and aesthetic reflection tend to redistribute themselves between a vision of art whose purpose is to attend to the social bond and another of art as that which interminably bears witness to catastrophe."[134] In proposing that music adopt social or political functions while rejecting the autonomy of the aesthetic sensorium, Subotnik's 'refunctionalization' relies on the establishment of an identity "between an environment, a way of being and a principle of action."[135] This identity constitutes the "indistinct sphere in which … the specificity of political and artistic practices [is] dissolved" under "[t]he reign of ethics".[136] Other characteristics of 'the ethical turn', according to Rancière, include "the dissolution of norm into fact" and "the subsumption of all forms of discourse and practice beneath the same indistinct point of view".[137] The indistinction identified by Rancière is clearly evident in, for example, Subotnik's call to composers to "keep humane the purposes and uses that their music does and can serve" and to adopt a position of "purposiveness with purpose" that holds "an explicit concern with moral effect as a basis for justifying music".[138] Subotnik does not provide any clues as to what the adoption of such a position by composers would involve, nor what such music might sound like, how such sounds would serve a social purpose, nor the construction of the social body or the place of the composer in relation to it. It is clear, though,

[132] Subotnik, p. 292.
[133] Jacques Rancière, Andrea Allerkamp, Katia Genel, and Mariem Hazoume, 'What to Do with Adorno's Aesthetic Theory? An Interview with Jacques Rancière', *Journal of French and Franophone Philosophy*, 27 (2019), 127 – 141 (p. 130).
[134] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 120.
[135] Ibid., p. 110.
[136] Ibid., p. 109.
[137] Ibid., p. 110.
[138] Subotnik, p. 292.

that her conception rests upon that identity between environment, being and principle of action that Rancière holds as the central characteristic, rather than moral judgment of practices, of contemporary ethical thought.[139]

In characterising aesthetics, Subotnik performs multiple elisions that serve to identify aesthetics in music only with a scientistic self-contained structure. Thus, when referring to the structuralism by which certain theorists conceptualise the aesthetics of music and professing that "[t]his ideal of autonomy, I believe, is itself a fiction", it is all of the "Kantian tradition of aesthetic disinterestedness" to which she refers.[140]

While Lewis does not explicitly adopt Subotnik's thought, there is a danger to his conception of 'Afrological' and 'Eurological' systems of improvisation in aligning with ethical anti-aestheticism. Accepting Subotnik's position as a whole would overdetermine the divide between those systems in such a manner as to contribute to a racialisation of musical boundaries instead of challenging it. And doing so would be to deny or minimise builder-writer Gabriel Gauny's subaltern reflection that "[i]f the window opens out onto a garden or commands a view of a picturesque horizon, [the worker] stops his arms a moment and glides in imagination towards the spacious view to enjoy it better than the possessors of the neighbouring residences."[141] It would also undermine the agency of the emancipated spectator who "observes, selects, compares, interprets", "links what she sees to a host of other thing that she has seen on other stages, in other kind of place", and "composes her own poem with the elements of the poem before her."[142] It would be, precisely, to discursively delimit access to aesthetic disinterest to those with an interest in that delimitation of access.

In contrast, what is presented by the music of AACM members is a series of challenges to such delimitation. In its confounding of the modernist paradigm of material autonomy, AACM music attests to the aesthetic sensorium as free of domination without the necessity of autonomy from signification. And this challenge to the modernist paradigm is coextensive with the challenges to anti-aesthetic domination as manifested in the ethical and representative orders of jazz discourses and the sociological reductionism of Subotnik, Kofsky and Baraka.

This can be seen in the struggle of Schwartz and Godfrey to accommodate the music of the Art Ensemble of Chicago in their conception of "'serious' or avant-garde music", which does not demonstrate the exclusivity of aesthetics, but precisely modernism's subdual of the scope of aesthetics' political and artistic radicality in favour of a circumscribed autonomous materiality. And the very fact of their partial-admittance of the Art Ensemble demonstrates something of the

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[139] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, pp. 109 – 110.
[140] Subotnik, pp. 266 – 268.
[141] Gabriel Gauny, 'Le Travail à la Tache', quoted in *The Nights of Labor*, p. 81.
[142] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 13.

challenge to the dominant paradigm of modernity posed by the boundary-blurring music of AACM members. This occurs not by maintaining a strict alignment with the characteristics of Lewis's 'Afrological' system, but by a practice of music that undermines the validity of the boundary maintained around modernist conceptions of 'contemporary music' by playing through and across it.

The heterology of such musical practices, that freely combine elements of 'vernacular' music with the 'learned' experimentalism associated with pan-European practices and thereby act as a counterpoint to the purity of the latter, might easily be understood under the paradigm of postmodernism. Ronald Radano attests that "whereas most of his AACM colleagues remained committed to free-jazz practice in the mid-1960s, Braxton had already begun to express the liberties of the postmodern, ranging across genres and exploring high-modernist concert music and experimentalism."[143] Lewis disputes the exclusivity granted to Braxton by Radano in this regard, noting that "the foreshortening of historical perspective and the multiplicity of voices, emblematic of the 'liberties of the postmodern,' were being worked out by many AACM composers".[144]

In *A Power Stronger than Itself*, it is the Art Ensemble of Chicago regarding whom Lewis invokes postmodernism, in discussion of the eclecticism of their music and visual presentation. He characterises the Art Ensemble's Lester Bowie's declaration that he "like[s] all the styles and all the sounds, so [he's] completely free" as a description of "his incipient postmodernism".[145] He also reads postmodernism in contemporaneous descriptions of the Art Ensemble's practices. He understands a comparison made by *New York Times* writer Robert Palmer between the music of the Art Ensemble and visual art wherein "themes, variations, solos and ensemble passages alternate in a continuous flow that is comparable to a collage of apparently disparate objects and images" as "evoking a postmodern contextualization".[146] The programme note for the Art Ensemble of Chicago's residency at the Théâtre du Lucernaire, while foregrounding the music of the AACM as free jazz, also compares it to Xenakis, Stockhausen, pop music, klangfarbenmelodie, Boulez and Berio. Lewis notes that such a description "seems to support the notion that the work of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, where visual collage and historical montage combine, could exemplify Jacques Derrida's observation that collage/montage is the quintessential postmodern form of expression."[147]

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[143] Radano, p. 25.
[144] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. 194 – 195.
[145] Ibid., p. 301, quoting Bowie in Ray Townley, 'Lester … Who?', *Down Beat*, January 31, 1974, p. 11.
[146] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 329, quoting Robert Palmer, 'Pop: Newport Newcomers', *New York Times*, June 10, 1973, p. 30.
[147] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 223, citing David Nijinski, 'La musique à bout de bras: Program note, Concert of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Théâtre du Lucernaire', in Larayne Black Collection, Chicago Historical Society (1969), and quoting Derrida as quoted in David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1993), p. 51.

Given Rancière's opposition to the policing of language evidenced in Chapters Two and Four of the current thesis, there is no sense in arguing that either Radano or Lewis is incorrect in referring to postmodernism in discussion of Braxton and the Art Ensemble. It nevertheless remains the case that consideration of the aspects of those practices that Radano and Lewis identify with postmodernism might be considered otherwise, with reference to Rancière's thought. Indeed, it is through discussion of practices elsewhere considered as postmodern that Rancière articulates in most detail the various politicities of postwar art practice, and it is through such discussion that the politicities of the practices of Braxton and the Art Ensemble can be most precisely articulated.

As noted in Chapter Two, Rancière understands collage as "the principle of a 'third' political aesthetics" that "combines the foreignness of aesthetic experience with the becoming-art of ordinary life".[148] Collage is not a novelty identifiable only with a paradigm of postmodernism, but a practice that Rancière traces back to Lucien de Rubempré's discovery, in Balzac's *Illusions Perdues* of "a fantastical poetry born of the abolition of borders between the ordinariness of commodities and the extraordinariness of art."[149] What is attested to by Rubempré's epiphany, the Comte de Lautréamont's "chance juxtaposition of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table" and the literary, pictorial and sculptural works of the artists of the Dada and Surrealist movement, among many more, is the place of collage's logic of heterogeneity across a century of the era of the dominance of the aesthetic regime prior to the construction of postmodernity.[150] This means that, for Rancière, "[t]here is no need to imagine that a 'postmodern' rupture emerged, blurring the boundaries between great art and the forms of popular culture", because "this blurring of boundaries is as old as 'modernity' itself" and, more broadly, "phenomena considered to be part of a postmodern rupture (such as the mixture of the arts or the combination of mediums) actually fall within the possibilities inherent in the aesthetic regime of art".[151]

Rancière's summarises two dominant models of collage practice. The first he characterises as "the pure encounter between heterogeneous elements, attesting *en bloc* to the incompatibility of two worlds", giving, as an example, Surrealist practice that "manifests – in contrast to the reality of ordinary everyday life but in accord with its objects – the absolute power of desire and dream."[152] The second dominant model he characterises as "that which brings to light the hidden link between two apparently foreign worlds", which Rancière associates with 'critical art' in the photomontage practices of Martha Rosler and John Heartfield.[153] Rancière does not consider these models in a dichotomous relation, but instead asserts that "the politics of collage has a balancing-point in that

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[148] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 47.
[149] Ibid., p. 49.
[150] Ibid., pp. 46 – 50; Comte de Lautréamont, *Maldoror and Poems*, trans. by Paul Knight (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 217.
[151] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 49; *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 48
[152] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 47.
[153] Ibid.

it can combine the two relations and play on the line of indiscernibility between the force of sense's legibility and the force of non-sense's strangeness."[154] In illustrating this 'balancing point', Rancière refers to Brecht's play *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui*, "a parable on the rise of Hitler and the complacency of those who enabled it to happen" in which the titular Arturo "bid[s] to gain control of the Cauliflower Trust" in "the gangsterland of 1930s Chicago".[155] Brecht's play, according to Rancière, in "playing at the same time on sense and non-sense" operates on the presupposition that "one can play simultaneously on the radical separation between the art world and that of cauliflowers *and* on the permeability of the border that separates them", which itself "requires both that cauliflowers bear no relation to art or politics and that they are already linked to them, that the border is always there and nevertheless already crossed".[156]

It is in this double-play with the relationship between art and everyday life that the elements of the Art Ensemble's practice that Lewis associates with postmodernism are recalled. In articulating a postmodernist formulation of the Art Ensemble's music, Lewis cites a comment of Lester Bowie on the group's music, which the trumpeter describes as "free and improvised, but difficult … like your life."[157] For Lewis, this summary evinces an understanding of the Art Ensemble's practice as "foreshortening the distance between art and the everyday world".[158] This, of course, can be understood in terms of the third tendency of aesthetics' politicity as "play[ing] both on the union and the tension of aesthetic politics".[159] But where Brecht's theatre "is built on an extremely complex and cunning equilibrium between forms of political pedagogy and forms of artistic modernism" that "includ[es] the aesthetic effect of sensory rupture within the continuity of the representative cause-effect schema", the same interplay in the politics of collage present in the Art Ensemble's music occupies a decidedly more ambiguous zone.[160] The absence of representative cause-effect schemata in music is, after all, an important factor in providing its curious place in the thought of many of the writers associated by Rancière with the beginning of the aesthetic regime of art. And the Art Ensemble's mixing and juxtaposition of genres attests neither to the incompatibility of their heterogeneity nor any hidden links between them, and so brings the question of their similarity and difference into play without offering any concrete answers. In *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière articulates the pedagogy of Brecht's theatre in its seeking "to render palpable, through the incongruous encounter of heterogeneous elements, the violence of the class domination concealed beneath the appearances of quotidian ordinariness and democratic peace".[161]

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[154] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 47.
[155] Ibid., p. 48, fn. 16a.
[156] Ibid., p. 48.
[157] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 223, quoting Bowie in Program, Concert of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Association-Maison de la Culture d'Angers, France, 1970, Larayne Black Collection, Chicago Historical Society.
[158] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 223.
[159] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 49.
[160] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 74; *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 58.
[161] *The Emancipated Spectator*, pp. 26 – 27.

By contrast, the music of the Art Ensemble is able to put diverse elements into play without, contrary to the earlier noted assertion of Philippe Adler, connoting violence in their interaction. Paul Steinbeck, in his monograph on the Art Ensemble, describes the breadth of their concerts in such a way as to denote a carnivalesque performance:

> During their concerts, the five group members played hundreds of instruments, creating a vast array of sounds and musical forms. They also recited poetry and performed theatrical sketches, all while wearing face paint and masks, laboratory coats, and traditional dress from Africa and Asia. Their music could be alternately tranquil and raucous, mythic and political, humorous and intense.[162]

Notions of the 'carnival' in art appear a couple of times in Rancière's writing. In articulating the manner in which postmodernism serves as a "smokescreen" for the de-politicisation of aesthetics Rancière refers, in denigratory fashion, to "[t]he postmodern carnival".[163] Elsewhere, in his critique of the 'critical art' with which aesthetic metapolitics' collage tendency is linked, Rancière, referring to the writing of John Dos Passos and the paintings of Otto Dix and George Grosz, argues that the ambiguity of the carnivalesque hinders the efficacy of its utility in the transmission of a political message:

> Novelistic fragmentation or pictorial carnivalization lend themselves just as well to describing the chaos of the capitalist world from the point of view of class struggle as to describing, from a nihilistic point of view, the chaos of a world where class struggle is but one element of Dionysian chaos.[164]

The politicity, though, of the Art Ensemble's theatrico-sonic carnivalism differs from that of the collage logic of Dos Passos, Dix and Gross. The Art Ensemble's inclusion of popular music among their referents is not only constitutive of commodities' "crossing the border separating them from the world of art", but is a double-play on the boundary of popular and art musics, characteristic of an understanding wherein "the border is always there and nevertheless already crossed".[165] Given that the politicity of the AACM articulated in the previous chapter relates to a class division grounded in race rather than relation to capital (without, of course, denying the entanglement of those divisions), the operative boundary played upon in this carnivalism is that dividing presumptively Black music from white.

The programme note to the Art Ensemble's residency at the Théâtre du Lucernaire that compares their music to a variety of European composers does not do so in regard to in regard to

[162] Steinbeck, p. 2.
[163] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 129.
[164] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 57.
[165] *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, pp. 48 - 49.

shared methodologies or compositional concerns, but with regard to sound: "It sounds like Xenakis… Wait, there's Stockhausen, with a beat to boot".[166] The works of these composers, paragons of the post-war pan-European avant-garde, and included within the bounds of any modernist conception of 'contemporary music', are demonstrated as being subject to signification, to the play of feeling and memory. Something of their sound is identifiable even when removed from the 'autonomous significant structures' of their compositions. In describing the place of 'personality' in his conception of an Afrological system of improvised music, Lewis states that "[a]n Afrological notion of an improviser's 'sound' may be seen as analogous to the Eurological concept of compositional 'style'".[167] In the carnival of the Art Ensemble's heterogeneity, this opposition is inverted, with the compositional 'style' transformed into 'sound', and the improvisatory 'sound' assuming a 'style' under which their practice is identifiable with the manner of the interaction of sounds, and not only the characteristics of individual sounds used.

In all of this upturning of the hierarchies of genre and race, the heterogeneous practice of the Art Ensemble actively contributes to the process of the "democratization of the ear" to which Rancière attests, in which "sensibility to the voice, timbre or accent crosses genre borders and mocks their hierarchy".[168] This is achieved precisely by the ambiguity of whether the juxtaposition of diverse genre signifiers communicates their heterogeneity or their unity, communicating to their audience the maxim that Rancière derives from his analysis of Kenji Mizoguchi's *Sancho the Bailiff*: "the rest is up to you". This understanding of the Art Ensemble's practice is reflected in a comment that Jarman attributes to Favors in his book of poetry, *Black Case*: "We're preaching FREEDOM, whether we like it or not."[169]

In the practice of the Art Ensemble this ambiguity is also constitutive of a politicity of aesthetics that interacts with the complex politics of race articulated in the previous chapter. In *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Rancière states that "[t]he arts only ever lend to projects of domination or emancipation what they are able to lend them, that is to say, quite simply, what they have in common with them: bodily positions and movements, functions of speech, the parcelling out of the visible and the invisible."[170] That which the Art Ensemble's practice lends to the project of emancipation from the racialised police distribution of the sensible, as exemplified by Du Bois' veil, and articulated in the previous chapter, is clear. The combination of musics of high and low culture, from pan-African and pan-European traditions, associated with aesthetic and representative understandings of music as art or an art undermines those hierarchies, lends a vision

[166] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 223, quoting David Nijinski, 'La musique à bout de bras: Program note, Concert of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Théâtre du Lucernaire'.
[167] 'Improvised Music after 1950', p. 241.
[168] 'It's up to You to Invent the Rest', pp. 297 – 298.
[169] Joseph Jarman, *Black Case Volume I and II: Return From Exile* (Brooklyn, NY: Blank Forms Editions, 2019), p. 98.
[170] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 14.

of such categorisations and hierarchisations as contingent, and does so without positing an alternative order to replace them. In so doing, the Art Ensemble provides a music that is not only heterogenous, but heterological, in providing "a spectacle [that] does not fit within the sensible framework defined by a network of meanings, an expression [that] does not find its place in the system of visible coordinates where it appears".[171] This spectacle and expression, in its own heterological evasion of categorisation, asks of its listeners what they might do with the categories that the music signifies.

It is not in the collage-logic politicity of the Art Ensemble's practice that a parallel for the political pedagogy of Brecht's theatre is found, but in the racial meta-politicity of AACM founder Phil Cohran's practice.[172] After leaving the AACM in late 1965, Cohran continued to play with his Artistic Heritage Ensemble and founded the Affro-Arts Theater in 1967. In the previous chapter, it was noted that among the reasons given for Cohran's departure was his assertion that "the structure of the AACM" limited "the achievement of [his] longtime purposes", pertaining to his adherence to an idea of Black Nationalism that he found to be at odds with the practices of his AACM colleagues at the time.[173] Cohran's conception of his own practice describes an ethical understanding of Black Nationalism that shares in the 'natural' titles to governance of Plato's *Laws*, namely "the power of parents over their children, the old over the young" and "the authority of those who know over those who are ignorant":[174]

> My studies put me in the vein of studying the ancient music, and I became one who submits to his ancestors. In that way, I embrace their concepts of sound and thought, and I hope that someday I will be eligible to receive some of the knowledge they had and was lost.[175]

It is clear that, regarding those titles to power, Cohran does not understand himself as occupying only the subaltern position. The programme notes from the Artistic Heritage Ensemble's December 1965 concert, Cohran's final concert as a member of the AACM, attest to this:

> Having a knowledge of the strength and function of music in ancient cultures and tracing its development up to the present culture of which we are a part, it is unmistakably clear that the use of music has digressed rather than progressed. Our aim in presenting original music to the public is to restore that basic strength and function through adherence to natural laws and spiritual applications.[176]

[171] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 59.
[172] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 6.
[173] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 124, quoting Cohran in Bill Quinn, 'The AACM: A Promise', *Down Beat Music '68*, 1968, p. 48.
[174] *Hatred of Democracy*, pp. 39 – 40.
[175] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 124, quoting Cohran in Peter Shapiro, 'Blues and the Abstract Truth: Phil Cohran', *Wire*, May 2001, p. 30.
[176] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 164, quoting Phil Cohran, Concert Program, Artistic Heritage Ensemble.

That this pedagogical logic is expressly of a Black Nationalist character is evidenced by Lewis's attestation that "Cohran's work expressly sought to combat 'hair-straightening, poverty and violence' through the power of music", also noting Cohran's declaration that 'the musician has a great responsibility to elevate his people as he entertains'".[177] Between the Artistic Heritage Ensemble and the Affro-Arts Theater, Cohran's vision of an ethical Black Nationalism is served by a music that, like that of Wagner, combines its aesthetics with a pedagogical, representational logic, appealing to a mythic understanding of a national community. This is well attested to by historian Clovis E. Semmes' account of the launch event for the Affro-Arts Theater: "The colorful wall murals, Eastern/African garb, and unique musical sounds that drew heavily from the root tones and rhythms of Black music around the world portended a different mode of life for African Americans… One could find support for a new identity that extended unbroken from the present into a rich ancient past".[178] In the form of the ancestor, Cohran's vision presents his audience with "the hero in whom it must recognize the secret of its origin and its community power."[179] Beyond the representative logic of the political pedagogy of its theatre space, the classes provided by Affro-Arts Theater, included, in addition to classes in music and dance, "a womanhood and manhood class to teach the people health and to teach them order and civilization".[180] For Cohran, as for Brecht, "reform of theatre meant the restoration of its character as assembly or ceremony of the community … in which ordinary people become aware of their situation and discuss their interests".[181] Cohran's practice serves a meta-political vision of Black Nationalism in a manner similar to the service of Brecht toward Marxism, that of Wagner towards 19th century European nationalism and of the 'therapeutic essentialism' that Pauwels associates with the BCM in apartheid South Africa.

In contrast to Cohran's practice, but clearly sharing a "composite vibrational attitude" with the Art Ensemble, the music of Anthony Braxton, whether solo, in his regular ensemble with Leo Smith and Leroy Jenkins, or in his works for other ensembles, plays on the tension between heterogeneity and unity in various ways distinct from that described in the music of the Art Ensemble. His solo saxophone practice, discussed above in its challenge to representative orders of jazz-identified music, in its acknowledged debts to John Coltrane and Karlheinz Stockhausen, explicitly combines methodologies from pan-African and pan-European musical systems. Indeed,

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[177] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 163, quoting Terry Martin, 'The Chicago Avant-Garde', *Jazz Monthly* 157, March 1968, p. 18, and Cohran in J.B. Figi, 'Jazz: A Family for the New Music', *Chicagoland and FM Guide*, November 1968, p. 21.
[178] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 166, quoting Clovis E. Semmes, 'The Dialectics of Cultural Survival and the Community Artist: Phil Cohran and the Affro-Arts Theater', *Journal of Black Studies* 24, no. 4 (1994), p. 457.
[179] Rancière, *Mallarmé*, p. 40.
[180] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 166, quoting Cohran in Clovis E. Semmes, 'The Dialectics of Cultural Survival and the Community Artist: Phil Cohran and the Affro-Arts Theater', *Journal of Black Studies* 24, no. 4 (1994), p. 456.
[181] *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 6.

Braxton is happy to consider not only his own method, but also that of his AACM peers by analogy with European composers, remarking that the difference between the composition practice of Art Ensemble member Roscoe Mitchell and his own is "like the difference between Webern and Stockhausen".[182]

The parallels between Braxton's development of his practice of unaccompanied saxophone and the development of John Cage's compositional method are striking. Cage attests that, following his return to the United States in 1931, he "began an entirely different way of composing, which was through improvisation".[183] His break from improvisation and toward structure was followed by his studying with Arnold Schoenberg, who "convinced [Cage] that music required structure to differentiate parts of a whole."[184] These factors were synthesised, by the time of writing 'The Future of Music: Credo' in 1937, wherein Cage advocated composition for percussion as a "transition from keyboard-influenced music to the all-sound music of the future", emphasising "the rhythmic structure of a composition" that would allow "group improvisations of unwritten but culturally important music".[185] Braxton, a few decades later, having decided to attempt a music for solo saxophone began with a concert of entirely improvised music, which "did *not* work", and turned to structure to give himself "the possibility of defining the space in a way where it can be evolutionary".[186] This involved a differentiation analogous to that in which Schoenberg, study of whose works, for Braxton, "crystallized what [the world of composition] would mean", had instructed Cage: "Separation was the only thing I could figure out: focusing on particular areas, parameters, I could work within; separating elements as a basis for establishing a sound logic".[187]

While the parallels in the development of Braxton's and Cage's respective compositional practices are remarkable, the politicity of those practices is different. Ronald Radano contends that Braxton's solo saxophone repertory "brought together, on the one hand, the spontaneity of New York free jazz with, on the other, sound colors and textures of musical modernism and careful preperformance planning of formal composition".[188] For Radano, Braxton's solo saxophone music, "as fusions of the compositional and stylistic realms of concert music and jazz, epitomized the black experimental artwork".[189] These 'fusions' are marked not by the play of heterogeneity and unity as in the music of the Art Ensemble, but by the coherence of the apparently heterogeneous elements employed. This coherence does not mark the politicity of Braxton's solo oeuvre as more straightforward than the Art Ensemble's carnivalism.

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182 *Forces in Motion*, p. 52.
183 Richard Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage, Second Edition* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), p. 61.
184 Ibid., p. 43.
185 *Silence*, p. 5.
186 *Forces in Motion*, p. 51.
187 Ibid., p. 46; p. 51.
188 Radano, pp. 132 – 133.
189 Ibid., p. 133.

The construction of pianistic systems of music for improvised saxophone challenges not only the previously articulated "value systems and terminologies developed for what they called 'jazz'", but also the similarly racist, representative policing of the modernist 'contemporary music' paradigm of art or concert music.[190] This 'micro-politicity' that, in the timeline plotted by Rancière in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, becomes increasingly insular, increasingly concerned with practices of art rather than the world beyond, here has wider implications. Braxton's challenge to the racialised exclusion of signifiers of Black music beyond the colouration of an exoticised Other from the post-war modernist paradigm of art music serves also as part of a challenge to the white supremacist racist structuring of the United States. In *Disagreement*, Rancière declares that "nothing is political in itself merely because power relationships are at work in it" but "anything may become political".[191] Braxton's solo saxophone practice demonstrates just how the politicity of a practice of art may exceed the metapoliticity of its aesthetics to participate in a broader political challenge. The manner in which it does so is dependent upon the aesthetic characteristics of the police order that it challenges. As previously stated, this racialised police order, well-characterised by Du Bois' metaphor of the veil, upholds a differentiation in the relationships between sense and sense either side of and through 'the veil'. In its iteration within discourses of 'contemporary music', this differentiation is manifested in the double operation of partition and exclusion articulated above. Braxton's development of a pianistic music for saxophone that fulfils every requirement for consideration as 'contemporary music' by those interested its maintenance as modernist paradigm, barring the raciality of its signification, is thereby constitutive of a challenge focussed on the racism of the differentiated signification. It exceeds the particularity of the 'politics of aesthetics' in that its challenge is not merely a metaphor for a broader challenge or an arrangement to be loaned to that challenge, but is in itself a part of the larger challenge against the aesthetic divide of the racialised police distribution of the sensible.

This politicity that exceeds the modes of artistic metapolitics that Rancière identifies does not mean that Braxton's music is without characteristics of the latter. The Art Ensemble's theatrico-sonic collage, in its blurring of boundaries between art and non-art, while playing on a tension between them, might be considered closer to the metapolitical mode of 'art become life'. That is, insofar as the music that is "free and improvised, but difficult … like your life" promises the freedom of "a way of life which has no experience of separation into specific realms of experience."[192] Jarman attests that "[a]nyone hearing the music must come face to face with himself

[190] *Forces in Motion*, p. 85.
[191] *Disagreement*, p. 32.
[192] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 223, quoting Bowie in Program, Concert of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Association-Maison de la Culture d'Angers, France, 1970, Larayne Black Collection, Chicago Historical Society; *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 35.

and everything he does with his life."[193] By contrast, Braxton's solo saxophone music, the development of which, as has been seen, shares methodological characteristics with that of Cage's composition, differs from the latter in that its architecture is populated by tone, rather than sound. Thus, while Cage's music, in its self-conscious identity with environmental sound, can be considered to share more with the 'art become life' tendency of artistic metapolitics, Braxton's tends towards the 'life become art' mode, the two composers being divided roughly along the same line as the division between Varèse and Schoenberg discussed in the second chapter. This tendency toward the 'life become art' mode of artistic metapolitics, as defined by the autonomy of its sensorium, rather than any material particularities is well attested to by Braxton's comment that "[s]teps must be taken to show that all art is one."[194] The music of both the Art Ensemble and Braxton are complex manifestations of hybrid politicities, which operate together as part of a broad challenge to the police distribution of racialised, hierarchical signification, but separately attest to different understandings of the relationship between music, life and the community to come.

[193] Jarman, p. 98.
[194] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. 192, quoting Braxton, "24-70°", *New Regime*, 1 (1968).

Conclusion: The Politics of the Writing of Creative Music

In the interplay and productive tension between 'life become art' and 'art become life' tendencies of artistic metapolitics, articulated in the previous chapter through the practices of Anthony Braxton and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, there can be seen a parallel with the political practices discussed in the Chapter Seven. There, it was posited that the police order of the AACM's relationship to politics of race allows for the maintenance of a tension between 'long' political and metapolitical positions with regard to race. The pluralism and eclecticism of AACM musical practices, founded by and maintained by a combination of the free sharing of ideas and non-prescription as to others' practices, produces a set of musics that occupy a range of artistic metapolitical tendencies. These practices challenge representative orders present in the discourses around both jazz-identified music and 'classical' music.

By challenging hierarchies of genre and signification, these musics contribute to a process that Rancière calls the "democratization of the ear".[1] The manner of their contribution can be considered as an extension of, and via analogy with, the history of the aesthetic regime plotted by Rancière. The aesthetic regime is founded "with decisions to reinterpret what makes art or what art makes", found in the works of Winckelmann, Kant, Schiller and Hegel, rather than "decisions to initiate an artistic rupture".[2] Its inception is followed by a multitude of changes in art practice in literature, sculpture, painting, dance and music that reflect the possibilities presented by the acknowledgment of the sensorium inaugurated by the works of the aesthetic revolution. These changes in practice allow for a discursive turn from consideration of the autonomy of art as manifest in its sensorium to consideration of the autonomy of art's materiality, epitomised by Clement Greenberg's conception of modernism. This conception, in fact, at least within music, comprises a renewal of representational logic, as a discursive circumscription of the practices for which an aesthetic logic is considered proper. Practical challenges to this representational propriety, such as those enacted by the musicians of the AACM on the grounds of its racism, undermine modernist circumscription and thereby the fixity of genre boundaries. This undermining allows for a turn in the practice of listening, whereby "sensibility to the voice, timbre or accent crosses genre borders and mocks their hierarchy".[3]

Because that which is challenged by the music of AACM musicians in the representational logic of modernist circumscription is its racism, that challenge is able to form part of larger political challenges. As articulated in Chapter Six, the racial politics of the AACM, under an extended Rancièrian understanding, is comprised of a complex of several types and registers of politics and

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[1] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, p. 298.
[2] *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 20.
[3] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, pp. 297 – 298.

police logics. Central to this is a police logic that maintains the tension between a racial metapolitics and a long politics of challenge to the external racialised police order. This long politics, in part, resolves into material challenges, such as that presented to the racially hierarchised funding criteria of the NEA, a challenge grounded in those presented by the music of the AACM to the various representative and ethical logics articulated in the previous chapter. This relationship between the challenges conducted by AACM musicians and Abrams within the NEA constitutes a novel formulation of a correlation between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics.

A second novel formulation involves the particularity of the aesthetics of the politics of challenge to racialised police orders. In Chapter Six, a comparison was drawn between Rancière's conception of politics and police as 'distributions of the sensible' and W.E.B. Du Bois' 'veil'. Where a racialised police order is understood as a partition between relationships of sensibility to intelligibility, any redistribution that neutralises this partition, that rends the veil of racial separation, can be considered a successful political challenge. Described in the previous chapter with regard to Anthony Braxton's challenge to the differentiation of signification, this occurs in musical practice insofar as the representative exclusion of sounds identified as black (outside of a particular system of exoticisation) can be seen as part of a general racialised police order of differentiation of signification. The success of such a challenge is attested to precisely by the process of the "democratization of the ear" articulated by Rancière. Insofar that the hierarchies of genre that are mocked by such a process are those racialised hierarchies described in the previous chapter, the challenges to racialised signification can be seen as part of the larger political challenge, not simply analogous to it. In this sense, the 'politics of aesthetics' of creative music exceeds that role, and can be understood as political in a way that is neither stymied by the contradiction of a 'committed art' dependent upon an aesthetic distance that it must also close, nor answerable to an ethics into which its success would dissolve the specificity of its sensorium.

This register of politics is close to one arrived at by other means in 'Rancière's Equal Music'. By structuring their discussion of ethical, representative and political music in relation to the modes of political philosophy's rejection of politics, archi-politics, para-politics and meta-politics, Moreno and Steingo avoid the register of metapolitics through which Rancière discusses the 'politics' of art under the logic of the aesthetic regime. By so avoiding the metapolitics of art in the aesthetic reimg, though, they alight upon a register of politics of art that exceeds the politicity ascribed to it by Rancière. They do this in discussion of Puerto Rican saxophonist Miguel Zenón, rather than the musicians of the AACM. Moreno and Steingo ascribe to Zenón's music the title of 'political' because of its effect on his status in the United States. As a Puerto Rican, Zénon holds limited and conditional US citizenship, but his receipt of the MacArthur Fellowship in 2008 means, for Moreno and Steingo, that "by virtue of his creative acts, Zenón is verified in his equality" with full US citizens, despite remaining, in any other "encounter with the police order, … a democratically

unequal individual"[4]. In setting out this case for a 'political music', Moreno and Steingo affirm that "[m]usic is political only when it activates the presupposition of equality" and that "[p]olitical music is, therefore, radically equal to any other action."[5] While their conception of 'political music' is narrower than seems necessary, and does not concern any facet of Zenón's music beyond the institutional esteem in which it is held, this final formulation, of a register of politics of music that is "equal to any other action", captures something of the final register of politics of music articulated above with regard to the AACM. This is the register of politics through which music may qualify as the 'anything' in Rancière's assertion that "anything may become political".[6] Adjusting this assertion to account for the specific aesthetics of politics and police orders of race, any act that challenges the hierarchical police division in relationships between sense and sense across 'the veil' can be seen as a political challenge. The music of the AACM does this directly, but also indirectly via the challenges such music presents to the criteria of funding bodies such as the NEA.

Consideration of these excessive registers of aesthetics' politics in the Black creative music of the AACM invites reflection on the 'politics' of the writing of that music. As noted in Chapter Four, Rancière draws a comparison between his in-disciplined philosophy and the democratic excesses on which he writes, calling it "a chance, supplementary activity which, like politics and art, could just as well not have existed."[7] The detail of this parallel draws his writing closer to those democratic excesses, as, referring to his own work, he describes "a certain dissensual practice of philosophy" as "an activity of de-classification that undermines all policing of domains and formulas".[8] His writing, therefore, shares a dynamic with politics and art, but not necessarily a register of intervention with either.

Lewis, meanwhile, describes his own research as "undisciplined", albeit following Jacques Attali rather than Rancière in his use of the term.[9] He also explicitly takes up a position that aligns his work with the politics attributable to both the music of the AACM and the extra-musical intervention of Abrams within the NEA. That Lewis intends *A Power Stronger than Itself* to form part of the same challenge to the exclusively white notions of musical experimentalism associated with discourses of modernity is signposted by the book's subtitle, *The AACM and American Experimental Music*. Lewis dedicates the preface to his book to making the case for the inclusion of the practices of AACM members in the lineage of twentieth century musical experimentalism, asserting that "the musical influence of the AACM has extended across borders of genre, race, geography, and musical

[4] Moreno and Steingo, p. 495.
[5] Ibid., p. 502.
[6] *Disagreement*, p. 32.
[7] 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 217 – 218.
[8] Ibid., p. 218
[9] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. xxxiv, quoting Attali, p. 133.

practice, and must be confronted in any nonracialized account of experimental music."[10] He attests to both the challenge presented by AACM music to racially segregated conceptions of American experimentalism, and the challenge to the same presented by his book, each in a manner that resonates with the Rancièrian understanding articulated in the current project. Of the former, he states that its influence "overflowed the banks of the jazz river, confronting whiteness-based new music histories with their self-imposed, race-based conundrums".[11] He positions his own work "as an interventionist project" in opposition to that of "chroniclers of an ethnically bound and ultimately limited tradition that appropriates freely, yet furtively, from other ethnic traditions, yet cannot recognize any histories as its own other than those based in whiteness".[12]

Lewis advocates for others to follow his example in recognising "a multicultural, multiethnic base for experimentalism in music, with a variety of perspectives, histories, traditions, and methods".[13] It is possible to understand his project as part of a long politics in opposition to musicological white supremacy, reminiscent of the citational form of challenge to which Holloway Sparks attests, through which actions "acquire meaning and become intelligible through the repetition of previously articulated identities and performances".[14] In articulating his position, Lewis explicitly follows musicologist Eileen Southern, the author of *The Music of Black Americans*, who, in her 1973 description of the problems of racism in musicological practice, expressed concern that, without documentation, the names of prominent Black musicians "may mean nothing to readers in the 21st century".[15] This prognosis of erasure was coupled with an appeal to Black people to "take upon themselves the responsibility for developing an appropriate and exemplary literature", as she lamented of the extant Black musicological literature that "a half-dozen or so books hardly constitute a bibliography of respectable proportions".[16] Lewis's and Southern's exhortations, considered through the lens of Sparks' advocacy for citational forms of challenge, appear as calls for the aggregation of work that evades the racist normativity of musicology. This can be considered, in the terms of Rancièrian distributions of the sensible, as a challenge that grows legible or audible to the racialised police distribution of musicology as a threshold is crossed, whereafter its own legitimacy and normalcy become self-evident.

[10] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. x.
[11] Ibid., p. xiii.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Sparks, p. 429.
[15] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. xiii, quoting Eileen Southern, 'Music Research and the Black Aesthetic', *Black World*, November 1973, p. 6.
[16] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. xii – xiii, quoting Eileen Southern, 'Music Research and the Black Aesthetic', *Black World*, November 1973, pp. 5 – 6.

Of the extant white-written musicological work, Southern complains that many scholars have "little knowledge about the folkways and traditions of Black people".[17] Lewis makes a similar complaint in commenting on the dominance of forms of autobiography in which the questions asked by jazz journalists determine the content. He argues that the resultant focus on "straight biography, who played with whom, discographies – and anecdotes, anecdotes and more anecdotes" serves "to decontextualize the music, to frame it as outside the purview of both general social history and the history of music".[18] The tying of Black musical practice to race via the 'traditions of Black people' and 'general social history' need not constitute a form of the de-aestheticisation that Rancière contends occurs when previously absent artistic forms are integrated into the academy: "when things enter the university curriculum, they do so via the filter of sociology, via the fact that they are considered social, not aesthetic, phenomena".[19] Rather, it must be remembered that de-contextualisation is also the operator through which the post-war paradigm of modernism was able to de-politicise the art of modernism's earlier paradigm, and thereby discursively delimit a space for aesthetics. The position adopted by and advocated for by Lewis may be understood as an anti-modernist re-unification of politics and aesthetics, but also as the alignment of the writing of radical Black music with its politics that exceeds metapolitics, that challenges the racialised police distribution of the sensible that institutionally and discursively hierarchises creativity by race and operates through the veiling of signification.

Consideration of Lewis's positioning of *A Power Stronger than Itself* leads to reflection on the politics of a Rancièrian approach to the study of music, and, in particular, the politics of the current project. In its introduction, an anxiety was noted around the potential, in deploying the problematic of a European thinker in understanding Black creativity, of allowing the latter to serve the former, and thereby contributing to a discursive hierarchisation of knowledge. Anthony Braxton's reflection on the place of Black creativity in Western culture is worthy of note again here:

> [W]estern culture has long utilized black creativity as a lever to invoke some aspect of its own desires – either with respect to spiritualism, sexuality, rebellion or to get individually or collectively rich. But, in every case, there has been no attempt by the western establishment to view black creativity, and/or its related information, on its own terms.[20]

One of the reasons that the Rancièrian method for study of music developed and undertaken in the current project may prove valuable for further study of similar scenes of music

[17] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. xii, quoting Eileen Southern, 'Music Research and the Black Aesthetic', *Black World*, November 1973, pp. 5 – 6.
[18] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, pp. xxvi – xxvii, quoting Burton W. Peretti, 'Oral Histories of Jazz Musicians: The NEA Transcripts as Tests in Context' in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. by Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 117 – 133 (p. 122); Lewis, p. xxvii.
[19] Rancière, Delorme and Zabunyan, p. 292.
[20] *Tri-Axium Writings 3*, pp. 289 – 290.

is the imperative to take its object "on its own terms". Here, the "fundamentally anti-hierarchical" method, the 'object' of which "teaches [the writer] how to talk about it, how to deal with it", is able to deal with an artistic and political 'object' outside the scope of those dealt with by Rancière.[21] In so doing, the conceptual framework underlying the method does not subsume or seek to explain Black politics and Black creativity, but bends to their specificity, altering itself in their image.

It is through this dynamic that the current project is able to synthesise the relative politicities of Rancière's project and that articulated by George Lewis in his introduction to *A Power Stronger than Itself*. The manner in which it does so is dependent upon the particularity of the aesthetics of racialised police orders and Black politics, understood, following Du Bois, as related to a veiling of signification, of relationships between sense and sense that are partitioned by race. In Rancière's in-discipline, "critique of the instituted divisions … paves the way for renewing our interrogations into what we are able to think and to do".[22] Here, where those 'instituted divisions' form part of the racialised police distribution, in-discipline is, as well as retaining Rancière's politicity, a part of the same political challenge as that of Lewis and the musicians of the AACM.

In developing an approach to the Rancièrian study of music, and through the encounter of that approach with the AACM, the current project signposts several territories that might produce further interesting work. As noted in Chapter Three, the place of music in the thinking of the Romantics and German Idealists and its relationship to Rancière's aesthetic regime of art warrants further study, as do the compositional practices of European art music of the period. The understanding of racialised police and politics in the United States presented in Chapter Six could, and should, be expanded with reference to a broader range of scholars and theorists of Black politics and post-colonialism. Of immediate interest are the writings of Édouard Glissant and the implications of his "right to opacity" for the aesthetics of politics, and the intersectional meta-politics and anti-disciplinarism of Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's 'undercommons'.[23] Moten's work might also further enrich the discussion in Chapter Eight of the relationship between radical Black politics, Black creativity and conceptions of modernism, 'contemporary music', experimentalism and the avant-garde that privilege white voices and significations. This chapter also promises the possibility of further work on the relationship between the aesthetics of AACM music and the spiritual grounding of many of its musicians, and the examination of the practices of other AACM musicians, noting in particular the overlap in many practices between the representative, pedagogical logic of Phil Cohran and the radical aesthetics of Anthony Braxton.

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21 Rancière, Jeanpierre and Zabunyan, p. 67.
22 'The Use of Distinctions', p. 218.
23 Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 189 – 194; Harvey and Moten.

Of course, a method similar to that used to investigate the politics and aesthetics of the AACM here could be used to discuss collectives similar to the AACM, such as Los Angeles' UGMA and the Black Artists Group of St. Louis. But it is hoped that the current project demonstrates the efficacy of Rancièrian methods for investigation of any scenes of music about which conceptualisations rooted in representative and aesthetic logics compete, and those in which these logics meet a politics of commitment or a politics that exceeds the specificity of art. A list of other scenes that demonstrate similar tensions would tend toward a complete survey of popular, classical and vernacular avant-gardes and experimentalisms across the globe in the post-war era, encompassing wildly varied musics and politics. The method developed in the current project demonstrates how each can be examined in its specificity, but also grants as an apparatus a set of alignments and divisions through which this variation can be subject to comparison without hierarchisation. As such, it can make an important contribution to the challenge of building histories of new music that acknowledge, following Lewis's call, "a multicultural, multiethnic base for experimentalism in music, with a variety of perspectives, histories, traditions, and methods".[24]

[24] *A Power Stronger than Itself*, p. xiii.

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