

**T.C.
İSTANBUL BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
FELSEFE VE TOPLUMSAL DÜŞÜNCE PROGRAMI**

**A RANCIERIAN IDEA OF THE REDISTRIBUTION OF
THE SENSIBLE ACTUALIZED IN SALT**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

Elif MET

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Ferda KESKİN

MAYIS 2016


A Rancierian Idea of the Redistribution of the Sensible Actualized in SALT

Ranciere'in Duyulanın Yeniden Dağılımı Fikrinin SALT'ta Gerçekleşmesi

Elif Met

112679012

Tez Danışmanı: Ferda Keskin 

Jüri Üyesi: Ali Akay 

Jüri Üyesi: Bülent Somay 

Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih : 24/06/2016

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 65

Anahtar Kelimeler

- 1) Jacques Ranciere
- 2) Dağıtım
- 3) Estetik
- 4) SALT
- 5) Politika

Key Words

- 1) Jacques Ranciere
- 2) Distribution
- 3) Aesthetics
- 4) SALT
- 5) Politics

İÇİNDEKİLER

ABSTRACT	iii
ÖZET	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS: ART AND POLITICS	3
3. JACQUES RANCIERE'S VIEW	10
4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RANCIERE AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM	19
5. DISTRIBUTION OF THE SENSIBLE WITH RESPECT TO SALT.....	41
6. CONCLUSION.....	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY	63

ABSTRACT

The form, implications, nature and meaning of the encounter between politics and art have been problematized throughout history, and discussed from various perspectives with no single definitive conclusion. Jacques Ranciere formulates this issue on a plane of commonality for politics and aesthetics, and the common point he offers is the “redistribution of the sensible”, the assigning and ordering of roles, meanings, and attitudes to people, which also determine who are to become political subjects that are capable of voicing their opinions in a meaningful and audible way. By combining this idea with an institution of culture in Turkey, namely SALT, this thesis aims to exemplify one of the ways of resistance to the authoritarian and unequal order of life through redistribution.

ÖZET

Sanat ve politika arasındaki karşılaşmanın şekli, doğası ve anlamı tarih boyunca sorunsallaştırılmış ve çeşitli açılardan belirli tek bir sonuca ulaşmadan tartışılmıştır. Jacques Ranciere, konuyu politika ve sanatın ortaklık alanında inceler. Önerdiği ortaklık noktası “duyulanın yeniden dağıtımı”, yani rollerin, anlamların ve davranış biçimlerinin insanlara dağıtımı ve düzenlenmesidir. Bu yeniden dağıtım, aynı zamanda kimlerin fikirlerini anlamlı ve duyulabilir bir şekilde ortaya koymaya muktedir olan politik özneler olacağını da belirler. Eldeki metin bu fikri Türkiye’deki bir kültür kurumu ile - SALT ile – birleştirerek, otoriter ve eşitlikçi olmayan hayat düzenine yeniden dağıtım yoluyla direnme yollarından birini örneklemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

INTRODUCTION

Art and politics are two facets of social signification. They ultimately share the same root: human. There is a world of difference in the ways they are organized by and function through people. These two realities converge at different times and levels of intensity in various instances. This is relevant to our lives because these confrontations lead to conflicts, and the conflicts might have unpredictable implications in areas such as human rights, education, family matters or social well-being. Art and politics may be defined as totally unrelated fields of activity, however, such a vision would be extremely limiting. Human condition demands flexibility and is infused with contingency. Ever-changing circumstances are influenced by art and politics among other things, and they have an impact on these notions in return. Therefore, concepts like art and politics do not stand alone. They signify the conditions of existing together as a community. This is the most basic need of humankind. From an evolutionary point of view, solitary life has been strongly unfavorable throughout the human history, for it meant danger and possible failure at survival. Our ancestors met the daily challenges of their environments by sharing food, caring for infants, and building social networks. Over time, humans began to gather at hearths and shelters to eat and socialize. Expanding social networks led, eventually, to the complex social lives of modern humans. There is also a psychological dimension to the fact that humans are social animals. Over the million years of the natural process, sociality has become such an internal part of our lives that it is beyond physicality. It is a part of our condition of existence, of what makes us human (although not exclusive to our species), and as fields of concentration that

in certain ways determine that, positioning politics and art as consequently constitutive of our existence is reasonable.

Jacques Ranciere, a French philosopher who has worked on these notions intensively for the last decade proposes an interesting way of conceptualizing them on a common ground. His method includes redefinitions of the concepts we are already familiar with so as to bring to the fore their actual meaning that he wishes to discuss. He establishes politics in opposition to what he calls the “police”, the latter indicating the given partition of roles, places and abilities that fit those places, and the former as the disruption of the police order through a redistribution of its elements. Politics occurs when those who are not counted by the police order go on to verify their equality with others. The usual and given roles are abandoned at this moment, and the rule of the police is disturbed. Aesthetics is also engaged in forming the same struggle to be seen, heard and acknowledged as equal partners. In the atmosphere that is characterized by this shared starting point, a number of threads are identified between aesthetics and politics. The redistributions that occur in dissensus with the order of the inegalitarian police are based on equality and offer alternative ways of dealing with and confronting the system.

This matter is relevant and meaningful today as the world turns with more relentless speed than ever under the police rule that Ranciere conceptualizes. The situation is revealed through the analysis of its effects on people, on how it stupefies them and limits their lives and potentials in the name of profit. Moreover, some people – laborers in Ranciere’s account – are discounted as political subjects and their equality is ignored. They are expected to live by the rules and responsibilities allocated to them and be content in their places.

Another key motivation to take up this topic is its applicability to the circumstance in Turkey, which can be summarized in the ongoing tension that has escalated considerably in the last few years between the government and the art world. Lawsuits, intimidations, budget cuts, and censorship have become commonplace. These are not only relevant in the scope of contemporary art in Turkey, they also speak volumes about the tendencies of the use of authority and the lack of coping mechanisms.

Bringing the idea of the aesthetic redistribution of the sensible together with SALT provides a plausible path (one among many) of engaging in the struggle for equality and recognition against the order of the police.

1. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS: ART AND POLITICS

In order to be able to discuss the interrelation between art and politics in any context or with any approach, it is first necessary to clarify what these terms are taken to be. Ascertaining what art is requires a review on the varied and manifold theories. The definition of art has always been problematic in terms of conceptual certainty; and even questions on the possibility or necessity of defining it have been posed. For the purposes of this text, art will be considered definable. Usually a transhistorical approach is adopted to uncover it, but it is impossible to include every theory in a sentence. The notion at hand can be analyzed with respect to the relations in its singular background, i.e. its meaning to people, the connections it produces between the spectator, the work and the artist etc., as well as the historical frameworks that allowed art to be what it is today (i.e. different art movements, historic events and their impact, changes in the understanding of life in general). Therefore, it is handled in a multi-dimensional and associational manner. Art cannot be properly examined without referring to the historical, social, intellectual, and political conditions that motivate it, nor can it be thoroughly understood unless relativity and change are acknowledged as prominent parameters.

What is considered to constitute art depends on the vantage point taken to approach the issue. Some judge art to be as old as humanity whereas others argue that art is a term coined in the Western atmosphere of the 18th century. For an elaboration on the former view, it is necessary to look at the history of humanity. In the process of evolution, our brain has come to bear such complexity that the sum of

social and creative behaviors transformed to result in producing the seeds of what is now referred to as “art”. It is well established that art in the broadest sense is acknowledged as a necessary means of providing social integration by maintaining a state of equilibrium between an individual and society (Megarry, 1995, s.289). An expansive amount of historical artifacts has accumulated from the time of Stone Age up until contemporary art. This process includes (respectively, but not in absolute comprehensiveness) Stone Age, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek and Hellenistic, Roman, Celtic, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese, Byzantine and Islamic, Early and High Renaissance, Baroque period, Neoclassical art, Romanticism, Realism, Impressionism, Fauvism and Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism, Dada, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Postmodernism and Deconstructivism, Video-art and New media art. It should also be noted that these are not definite distinctions of time and style, so that cross-definitions are largely possible.

Due to the fact that art is culturally bound – in addition to possessing a universal quality –the question of the essence of art understandably has differing answers. If art is deficiently acknowledged as aesthetic creation alone, it is inevitable to miss the reality and effects of the social and economic conditions of its production. As seen above, a great number of art movements exist which contribute to the notion today, and they have emerged because their environment caused them to rise as cultural responses, to the communicative necessities of the time, to conventional perceptions of the world, to artistic arrogance, to capitalist consumerism or for any other possible reason. Art can be recognized as a political statement, a cultural artifact, a reaction to current events, a disinterested outlet for emotions and thoughts, an intellectual indulgence; it could be regarded to be

symbolical, innovative, educational, pragmatic etc. The validity of one facet over the other is not a discussion in the scope of this paper, rather, an examination of an underlying principle is scrutinized.

This task might seem impossible, and over time, there have been opinions advocating this standpoint. One position defending it would suggest that in the context of such variety, multiplicity alone does not imply pluralism. Instead of viewing all the differing concepts of art as constituting an unsystematic patchwork, a single art concept with different facets that interlock in an ordered way could be envisaged; or a multiplicity of concepts that constitute a unity with one at the core, and the others depending on it, but not conversely, is a reasonable vision (Adajian, 2012). Still, the reference to “concepts” in Weitz's open concept argument suggests that art is indefinable since the extension or closure of the concepts is controversial (Weitz, 1956). However, change does not necessarily rule out the preservation of identity over time, and through an analytical and specified selection, the concept of art could be expanded to cover novelties.

It seems that there is not one common conception of art, singular traits such as expression or emotion do not provide a decent understanding of the notion and it remains ambiguous. Nonetheless, it certainly is connected to creative, aesthetic, religious, traditional, ceremonial, and propagandistic qualities. Institutions, tastes, genres, and schools are all included in its complex history. Furthermore, new genres or artforms emerge as time and technology evolve, and it is necessary that art embodies these changes instinctively. All these lead toward a conclusion that is comprehensive of all genres, artforms, and also the objections presented against them, but one definition that would suffice to satisfy all judgements is unlikely. As

remarked by Wollheim; art is "*one of the most elusive of the traditional problems of human culture*" (1956).

Just as the discussion on the definition and meaning of art is valuable in terms of the novel ideas it has given rise to, the debate on politics is worth pursuing because it exposes some of the deepest intellectual and ideological disagreements in the academic study of the subject. The term "politics" is both polemical and loaded on many levels. Above all, it is necessary to think about it in its social character. There can be no politics without a group of people to be engaged in or affected by it. The reason such a concept has emerged lies in the fact that there were a number of people who had to settle on some basic issues of life. It is therefore clear that politics in this comprehensive sense is immanent to life as we know it. In order to understand what it entails, certain notions such as power, conflict resolution, reconciliation, rules, allocation of resources, and public vs personal, have been used. Nonetheless, there is no absolute description when it comes to issues like this that are broad enough in scope. As a result, there are various stances taken to approach the same concept from different angles.

One such point of view is related to root of the term "politics". Politics comes from the Ancient Greek word 'polis' which signified city-states among a number of other things. As it was the common civil order of the time, city-states were quite important to the life of the people. The body of citizens functioned as the decision-making mechanism. However, care should be taken with the word "citizen" because compared to the modern understanding of the concept, it is very different in that context, denoting not a society but a specific group of people in political unity – the *polis* – which did not include the majority: women, children, and slaves. The

Aristotelian *polis* is structured as a space of freedom and political life with a transgenerational permanence and a transfamilial identity, in opposition to *oikos* which means household, the space of necessity, also encompassing social and economic relations. The distinction between the two notions implies a fundamental structural, spatial and symbolic division of activities that prevailed fairly consistently for a period of centuries in Ancient Greek and Roman Republican urban life (Walsh, 2014, ss. 127-128). Its aftereffects can still be found today to a certain extent, especially in the problems regarding the presence and recognition of women. The meaning of the word transformed with time from 'city' to 'state', as a result of the changes in the governance towards centralization. If we undertake the resultant and more recent term 'politics', it indicates a relational category which concerns the affairs of the state. However, this understanding of politics suggests the state to be the only form of political organization. From a broader perspective, this might appear inadequate; there evidently are many forms of organization that can be examined in a political light. State is the most prevailing institution amongst the others such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, advocacy groups, lobbying organizations, interest organizations etc.

Another light under which politics can be discussed is the way in which the limited resources are distributed. This perspective is particularly significant in the context of this thesis because of the focus it gets in Ranciere's view of politics which will later be discussed. It is innate in the term itself to be communal, and at a certain point in the process, it is inevitable for the habitants of a land to fight over the resources or privileges. In order to regulate that, a form of conflict resolution has been put into practice. Politics is considered as that particular means of resolving

conflict by compromise, conciliation and negotiation, rather than through force and naked power (Heywood, 2013). Debate, discussion and consensus are key terms in this context. These are strategies to reach a more civilized society, and such an understanding of politics includes respect for “the other”. Instead of violence and coercion, people deal with the issues of governance in a less damaging manner, which might be disappointing and frustrating as it implies paying attention to other opinions and trying to understand them, and it does not truly fulfill the desires of any party. Concessions are made by all sides, and the result therefore is never fully satisfying, but acceptable.

Nevertheless, there is another façade of the same matter: the allocation of scarce resources can also be controlled by sheer violence or oppression, signifying a power play. Power is a noticeably substantial part of life and survival. And when it is interrelated with politics, it renders politics operative on many different levels – not just in relation to state or government, but from groups of family and friends to global partnerships and everything in between. The wideness of its scale makes it possible to examine it from different perspectives, with different purposes. In addition to the allocation of resources, and considering the organic connection between that allocation and power, politics may be considered from the vantage point of distribution of power. This might be on a governmental, communal, personal or a global level. The hierarchical atmosphere it brings is the same.

A way to understand power in the most basic sense is considering it as a means of achieving control over a group of people. Its different dimensions are infused in the layers of political existence: it could manifest itself as decision-making, agenda setting or as thought control. These aspects enable the performer to

influence or dominate the other. They might seem agreeable methods to be used in the management of the allocation of resources, but this matter is truly significant for the living conditions of people, and also is a central question in the discussion of politics and aesthetics.

The mode of existence of power in politics has been a topic for debate and Marxist thought. It inspects power in the light of economics and class domination. Marx believed that economic power led to political power and that this is the key to understanding societies (Trueman, 2007). Although Marxism has differing arguments inside that universal title, one pronounced conviction is that there is almost a direct connection between economic domination and political or ideological domination (Jessop, 2014). This view is suitable for analysis in relation to both the enabling and constraining qualities of politics. The former unfolds as the action through which the existing patterns of class domination could be overthrown, and the latter reflects the ongoing role politics (by the same token, the state) plays in reproducing and ratifying the structure that ensures society remains divided into and content with classes. However it happens (in bureaucratic, technical or despotic scheme), maintaining the control over the organization of labor-power is the key to the valorization of the capital.

All in all, although in a different form than today's, politics and art have been in our lives from the beginning. Throughout history, there have always been contacts between the two areas. The sovereign could sponsor or hamper the artist. Artists, in return, have made their art taking the current situations into consideration, which sometimes mean supporting the ruler, and sometimes opposing the governing party, even to this day. The relationship here is not only of financial nature, it is also a

complementary one, in the fact that they provide each other a level of content. And it is not only valid for distant past; looking at the 19th century, the relationship between nation-state and art apparently was essential. The modernization period started with nation building; and although there are many ways of realizing and maintaining that, art is used in all without exception (Kreft, 2008). If modern times are examined, it is clear that arts also responds to contemporaneous events and concordantly, sometimes become politically controversial, the examples of which are ample in the Turkish context with state interventions in the works, which will later be touched upon.

2. JACQUES RANCIERE'S VIEW

The points of intersection between these notions of politics and art might be analyzed from a variety of viewpoints. One such view, Jacques Ranciere's, investigates how they establish a sphere of social reality that seems rooted in and results in inequality, as well as the problematic perception of it. Ranciere has come to be distinguished in the scene of contemporary political and aesthetic thought for the last few decades, but his publications and ideas go back to 1968. His work concentrated first on the history of labor movement as seen from the books such as *Nights of Labor*, *Staging the People: The Proletarian and His Double*, and *The Philosopher and His Poor*, then on political philosophy with texts such as *On the Shores of Politics*, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, and *Hatred of Democracy*. Following his productions in these fields, his interest shifted towards visual culture, aesthetics and the interplay amongst them. In his understanding, politics and aesthetics are not two individual fields, rather, they inherently share fundamental qualities. From the aftermath of 1968 onward, Ranciere persisted in defending radical democratic equality and has built his system of thought on this path up to his latest book. He criticizes the logic of social hierarchy, established through the division of labour (namely the division between manual and intellectual professions). This logic is then translated into a symbolic hierarchy, which amounts to making the working classes passive masses whose words and acts are meaningless. Only the individuals belonging to classes that are able to afford leisure are deemed capable of expressing valuable thoughts and propose forms of collective action (economic, political, and cultural) with real relevance. Consequently, the focal

points are the transmission of knowledge and the position of power of those who can speak. Were Ranciere's approach to be practiced, the dichotomy and hierarchy between the powerful & powerless appear possible to handle. The topography of the configuration that commonly defines art, politics, and their interrelation is changed in this way. Instead of attempts to posit clear-cut definitions for these two areas, a new way of understanding them as overlapping frames of reference can be realized.

In order to have a holistic sense of what Ranciere's position on these issues is, a retrospect toward the notion of radical democracy is essential. This frame of thought contends that radical democracy is only possible through a space which is reserved for ever-occurring conflicts. Instead of designating the aim of democratic society as the creation of a consensus, the emphasis is on disagreement as a constitutive aspect of democracy. Prominent examples of this opinion can be found in Chantal Mouffe as well as in Ranciere. Ranciere's account of the political necessitates the contested nature of the common, because he differentiates between meanings that are generally referred to as politics. These include institutions, government practices, the representation of people, legitimization processes, distribution of roles and the act of assertion of rights by the ones who are in opposition to the previously listed aspects. This multiplicity of meanings exists because the term "politics" is open to various interpretations due to its roots and the way it has been used and understood through its history. Although a little impenetrable, Ranciere's take on this matter bears two particular definitions related to the same notion. On the one hand, he identifies politics proper as *antagonism*, and on the other, he posits the police as the regulation of assembly of well-defined parts, places, and functions. The latter establishes a structure that renders the thoughts and

voices of the dominated inaudible by way of a fixed distribution of the sensible which determines their way of being. His approach to “police”, linked with the original Greek content, denotes the partition of roles, rights, and meanings among people by the small ruling class. This is where the question of inequality becomes intimately linked with a question of perception. What people believe to be the reality depends on how they perceive what is presented to them. Ranciere’s goal in this undertaking is the re-evaluation of the hidden hierarchies in social structures so that a new understanding could be achieved. He argues that people are initially equal, and this equality is only maintained by constant claiming. Politics, understood as antagonism, centers on this act of claiming, but the assertion of equality should not be mistaken directly for politics. Politics occurs in the antagonism between this assertion and how the sensible has been distributed by the police. This view unveils how an opening can be created in the unequal fabric of social life, and a path for equality initiated.

Mouffe maintains that a group structure is intrinsically antagonistic and made up of a hegemonic structure which should always be challenged, and builds her notion of “agonistic pluralism” on this premise. This conception is compatible with the Rancierian idea of axiomatic equality: assuming the *initial* equality rather than trying to attain it. She states, “While we desire an end to conflict, if we want people to be free we must always allow for the possibility that conflict may appear and to provide an arena where differences can be confronted.” This means that when we reserve a space for it to be readjusted, the basic assumption of equality is attainable. Where there is a group of people, there is always a difference of thought processes

and actions; and antagonism in a group structure is the essential reminder of how equality can be achieved.

The notion of axiomatic equality has its roots in Ranciere's famous book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, which emphasizes equality as practice. The book is founded on the writings, thought and story of Joseph Jacotot, French revolutionary and educational philosopher; more specifically on his method of "intellectual emancipation". Explication, considered radically in this thesis, causes the reproduction of social inequality rather than eliminating it as it promotes chosen readings and normative mind-sets instead of engaging the imaginative thinking capacities of the student. If explication is practiced, individuals who are conscious of their intellectual subjectivity, capable of structuring their own relation to truth and therefore claiming their equality will never appear. Such a conditioning education can only produce people contemptuous of either others or themselves, because it establishes a structure of delay that provides a basis for the myth of progress. Pedagogically speaking, inequality is expressed through terms of velocity like slowness, backwardness, and delay. Never will the student catch up with the teacher, never will the developing countries catch up with the enlightened nations. Subsequently, the method of teaching according to Jacotot and Ranciere should consist in letting the students handle the problem on their own using their own intellectual capacities. In this manner, moreover, a hierarchy of knowledge is acknowledged. Beneath the pedagogical relation of ignorance to science, the more fundamental philosophical relation of stultification and emancipation must be recognized. In Jacotot's case (having students learn a language without teaching in class), Ranciere asserts, it wasn't the master's science that the student learned. His

mastery lay in the command in which he had enclosed the students in a closed circle from which they alone could break out. What stultifies the common people is not the lack of instruction, but the belief in the inferiority of their intelligence. This is the result of our education which restrains students by giving them their consciousness of superiority/inferiority in terms of quantity of knowledge. The 'uneducated' and 'illiterate' is now a shameful underclass. The general infantilization of society has been dressed up as "public" or "continuing" education and rationalized. Yet, true intellect is not a stock set of knowledges but rather liberty of thought. Equality, writes Jacotot, "is neither given nor claimed, it is practiced, it is *verified*." And this verification is only possible by seizing in every sentence, in every act, the *side of equality*. Equality is not an end to attain, but a point of departure, a supposition to maintain in every circumstance. Never will equality exist except in its verification and at the price of being verified always and everywhere. So, there is no one "true" equality that can universally be established; but instances of its constant authentication. The logic of this method also necessitates the recognition of all as equals. It is accentuated in the book that proletarians need to acknowledge their adversaries as equal with their champions, so that they can translate their art, maintain esteem for the power of intelligence and for the predicament of speaking for whoever renounces the pretension of being right and saying the truth at the price of the other's death. A verification of equality, says Ranciere, is 'an operation which grabs hold of the knot that ties equality to inequality'. It handles the knot so as to tip the balance, to enforce the presupposition of equality that is tied up with the presupposition of inequality and increase its power.

An example of this verification is discoverable in the story of the jobber who is a floor layer. Gabriel Gauny, a joiner himself, tells the story which Ranciere conveys from an ephemeral newspaper of 1848. The story tells of the floor layer who believes that he is in control of his movements due to his freeing working style as a jobber, compared to the day laborer when indeed he is the one who is less aware of exploitation. The old society makes him pay for his delusion; his excitement about his powers is used for the benefit of his adversary. Nevertheless, he draws secret pleasure out of it; which culminates in the subversion of the practice of subordination and inequality. The fact that what he experiences is not the reality is of little importance here, because as Ranciere points out through an elaborate reasoning, the balance of equality and inequality is intertwined with the matters of perception and belief, and the character at hand is in belief and resultant pleasure, which proves efficient.

According to the traditional discourse of ideology, says Ranciere, people are exploited and oppressed because they don't know the law of their exploitation. Where they are positioned prevents them from gaining an understanding of the structure that allocates them those places. And the positive conclusion follows: they could have stepped out of it with the true scientific knowledge and right artistic representations. He says "*This matter of incapacity must be stripped of its 'scientific' disguise.*" (Ranciere, 2009, s. 275). From there on, he is able to demonstrate the reality of the partition of the sensible clearly in the way he illustrates the truth of people's inability to see the structure. He achieves this by unearthing the relation between occupations and qualifications deemed exclusive to them within a specific space and time. The mechanism of this relation unfolds in the example of the floor

layer as the responsibility of the manual work only, not peripheral activities like thinking about the society at large. It endows people with the necessary capacities of seeing, saying, doing that fit the activities they are to do. Such inequality, however, is practiced only to the extent that one “believes” it. Inequality has to be performed by those who endure it as their life (proletarians themselves), and therefore the story above discloses the subversion of that mechanism. Such is the performance and verification of equality that is meant by the word “emancipation” in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. It is by being less mindful of the exploitation and thereby pushing aside its sensory grip that the jobber frees himself, not by knowing the scientific knowledge he is to obtain to break through the exploitation and oppression. The choice of the time and kind of the work the worker does is at his disposal and he relies on the strength of his arms. It provides a sense of command and freedom that one normally does not associate with laborers. This outlook renders the worker capable of positioning himself horizontally with those who distribute places and occupations, even if only in his perception of the world. He feels satisfied, and since equality is something that is not readily available but verified every time, this is counted by Ranciere as an instance of verification by undermining the given order. The source of this subversion lies in the “passions” that the worker has, which in this context, is the new awareness (that comes with the ignorance of the logic of inequality). The dynamics of the condition of the “aware” laborer who is capable of and willing to produce intellectually is discussed by Ranciere at length through the story of Gabriel Gauny, such a laborer, in *The Philosopher and His Poor* (1983). It is also present with the same example in *Nights of Labor: The Worker’s Dream in Nineteenth-Century France*, in his demonstration that the mere fact of writing, for its

worker-intellectuals, was radically democratizing, since it verified in practice that they were capable of producing not just noise but reasoned discourse (Parker, 2004). These works and many more by him complement the idea that Ranciere since then has consistently advocated: equality is an elemental axiom, not a goal to be attained. After such a state of mind, the laborer can reframe the predetermined ways of time, life, gaze, speech giving as he likes through his actions; and this does not require any intellectual instruction. The matter of “scientific” disguise is resolved in this way, and the political dimension comes to the fore. Emancipation as such is only possible if the dominated become conscious of their intellectual equality and verify it each time.

Discussion on discourse, which touches upon knowledge, social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations, is also connected to the verification of equality. All that is hindered and hidden by the dominant practice can be reached through a kind of knowledge that resists that dominance. Here, as occasionally elsewhere, Ranciere clearly draws and derives from Foucault, who put together his genealogy against the claim of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchize and order local and discontinuous knowledges in the name of some true knowledge. Science, for instance, is configured in this sense as a decisive discourse including elements of language, practice and institutions. Discursive objects have their own rules of ordering, Foucault says, as *'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'* (2002). By challenging prevalent discourses through formulations of dissenting discourses, Ranciere aims to set a space for new political subjects to emerge. After all, configuration of a discourse (and therefore reconfiguration as well) is itself a process of subjectification through which those

who have until then been the part with no part might adopt a newfound voice that is recognized in the public space. That process at the same time becomes a method of making sense of the world, which is in contrast with a totalizing manner that depends on an underlying absolute origin and cancels individuality and difference.

The current structure of the sensible is arranged in such a way that the hierarchy mentioned above does not count the dominated; it simply amounts to the denial of the subject whose voice has been made inaudible as a political subject. The idea of the partition and redistribution of the sensible might be the means to break through this order of the self-interest of the powerful. In the story of the floor layer, this is exactly how the crucial concept of emancipation materializes in his reaching beyond the boundaries by ignoring them. Since Ranciere formulates a view that considers art and politics to be consubstantial insofar as they organize a common world of sensory perception, a new way of resistance comes to the fore. With respect to art, two results stand out: inclusion becomes possible, and art is capable of contributing to the unearthing of people's voices. A desire to make sense of the world in the face of all the absurdities, and a reason for not conforming to everyday politics become consequently accessible to people. The redistribution created by the aesthetic experience spreads the folds of the sensible fabric open to propose new ways for bodies to fit their functions and destinations. In this way, a new aesthetic allocation of space, time, gaze, perception etc. (which has traditionally been available exclusively for certain people) becomes available to anyone, including the proletarian. The stultification that covers us is disrupted by the dissociation art provides. It is not a rhetoric on what is to be done; but a netting of relations culminating in a new atmosphere for the currently problematic perception, thoughts

and actions regarding people's way of being. As such, it allows for new modes of political construction of common objects and new possibilities of collective enunciation, other than the ones deemed fit by the distinguished.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RANCIERE AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

The emancipatory view of Ranciere's – redistribution of the sensible – is built on word 'sensible' which is comes from the materialist conception of history. Materialism asserts - on a very basic level - that cognitive process and thought as a general term is dependent on experiences of the species in this material world. Prioritizing the material reality does not mean diminishing thought processes. The source of thoughts, as Engels explained, goes back to the times where humankind was first able to stand upright and consequently have a larger field of vision to experience the world, as well as use their hands for tool-making. These traits enabled brains to develop and therefore we have come to bear the characteristic that sets us apart from other species; thinking beings that can cause major change in nature through their labor (Engels, 1972). Obviously this can't have occurred overnight; through a process of natural selection, as justified by Darwin and people of science that came after, humans progressively mastered nature. Fast forwarding to closer times of social life, because we are aware of our individual capacity of changing things through action, we can also recognize the necessity of proper social conditions for our actions to be productive and meaningful. According to historical materialism, we are never unrelated to our environment, and the past that make it what it is today. Under the influence of and with the knowledge of history and societal development, we act and create our own life and history. We both change nature through labor, and undergo change in return. Considering the fact that the human consciousness is determined by the condition of social existence, and social existence is formed by

production relations, the connection between these production relations and productive forces that cause change become more visible. Everything that seems ordinary and available today depends on social existence, in other words, how society functions to produce. As Marx puts it in the historic preface to his famous book, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in 1859,

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production ... Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed." (Marx, 1977).

Ranciere's take on materialism, however, is quite different from the original in that he does not take human production to be particularly governed by social and material reality. Instead, Ranciere's materialism relates to his continued insistence on the material embeddedness of discursive practices (Deranty, 2010, s. 187). He assumes a constant reciprocation between discursive or conceptual realities and material reality. Ideas materialize on the physical plane as in the example of the

media or social spaces. They inform, affect and therefore indirectly shape material reality while at the same time it determines them, and consequently, perspectives and attitudes. This is a reasonable position for Ranciere to take, because he favors fluidity of boundaries and continuous change in general, which, in this instance, informs his materialism not from one determined and set position, but from a way of reasoning that is in line with his general stance. If the genealogical structure of Ranciere's thought, mentioned above, is taken into consideration, it becomes clearer where his criticism towards Marxism originate from.

His earlier interest in the thought of Marx can be recognized first through his discipleship under Althusser, and his contribution to *Reading Capital*, then through his involvement in the 1968 student movements. In light of these, together with the concepts he uses in his later theorization (mostly focusing on class society, labor, and politics) the relationship Ranciere retains to Marxism becomes unmistakable. Although he parted ways with Marxism as early as 1970s, he did not reject absolutely everything the view had to offer in general. There are some major points of critique, however, that Ranciere puts forward which definitively establish his position in distance with this frame of reference. One of these points, about Althusser and orthodox Marxism, is the contemptuous manner they conceptualize the problems and solution concerning society, namely, their theoretical elitism. Ranciere asserts that politics occurs when the excluded (part which has no part) speak for themselves and struggle to render their voices audible and legitimate against the accepted social order. This view is based upon the real events that took place around May 1968. The shop-floor demands for workers' control, for example, escaped the existing forms for representation that were geared towards negotiation at the top, between party and

union structures (Ranciere, 2010, s. 8). Such instances clearly showed that the scientific attempts to know the truth of the masses were unfounded, and politics did not function via the workings of well-read people who are capable of deciphering the true condition of the culture, far away from the masses. Indeed, what makes up political movement is performed by their very acts and determinations. That is why the stance of orthodox Marxism which suggests that people are alienated and stultified by the capitalist system of production and the idea that the way to break through this slumber is to mind the words of philosophers and follow their advice is simply unacceptable.

Another aspect of the logic of this criticism is Ranciere's well-known notion of radical equality. Equality is a formative quality of the political subject, which entails active participation in the struggle to establish their voice as the voice of a legitimate partner: when the 'excluded' – from the Greek demos to Polish workers – protested against the ruling elite (aristocracy or nomenklatura), the true stakes were not only their explicit demands (for higher wages, work conditions, etc.), but their very right to be heard and recognized as an equal partner in the debate (Zizek, 1998). While explicating on the issue, Ranciere uses the ideas of philosophers such as Derrida and Foucault, building on their formulations and analyzing the political condition accordingly. What makes his analysis different is the emancipatory capacity and potential he finds in individuals and collectives to redistribute knowledge and presume a 'community of equals'. Underlying this, he assumes an 'equality of intelligence' as well (rather than a hierarchy that comes with an inequality of knowledge), which has been touched upon with reference to *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. This framework of an elemental equality raises important

points for further reexamination of our political condition, the roles and positions assigned by the ones who have the power. Surely, an assumption of equality does not mean its implementation in reality. As a matter of fact, for Ranciere, equality exists only in its verification, as mentioned above in relation to Jacotot. Assumption of equality is something that pertains to the space between equality and inequality, for it changes the presuppositions about them while doing so. Every instance of verification of equality, an unusual appropriation of a right by a “part with no part”, is another step in the direction of change.

The other perspective from which he criticizes Althusser and the Marxists who follow his line of thought is the distance they hold towards spontaneous social movements. This is the very reason that caused Ranciere to leave his mentor’s path in the first place. It has been established so far in the studies on Ranciere that his unique stance in terms of political philosophy assumes a robust defense of democracy which is redefined¹ in his context of the political versus the police. It comes from an examination of and a trust in democratic struggles themselves. Over the course of this research, his method always prioritized the innate and constitutive logic of the movements themselves, instead of adopting an external point of view which would single out some reasonings and contradictions. Therefore, the true intent, voice or acts of those studied are not shadowed by a theoretical vision, but their logic unravels as these are *reconstructed from within*. This is Ranciere’s

¹In contradistinction to the police, the essence of politics lies in democracy. In Ranciere’s account, political struggle insistently involves active equality, and democracy is fundamentally the rule of the demos who claim their right to be counted as equals in the political space. Ranciere claims in *Hatred of Democracy* that we do not live in democracies but in states of oligarchic rule and that democracy is not a regime, but an issue of politics, therefore it does not simply replace oligarchy but undermines its principle. In the same book, by referring to the right to rule, he explains at length what he calls the “scandal of democracy” – the wrong in asserting of the axiom of equality. His particular definition of politics in contrast to police unfolds here as his particular definition of democracy against oligarchy.

hermeneutics, with no external position to observe and evaluate, letting the sense of the movements come to the fore. The conceptual path Ranciere's method thus prepares towards a recovery of democratic agency, one however that does not overlook the pitfalls and difficulties of real democratic movements is well suited to account for the irreducible necessity yet tremendous difficulty of holding firm to the democratic ideal in contemporary challenges (Deranty, 2010, s.186). Yet, the exhibition of the points of opposition in Ranciere with respect to Marx and Marxist thought should not lead to the rejection of the fact that his thought remains interwoven with much of the political thought of his intellectual context and background. What Ranciere tries to do is extremely difficult, and his propositions intricate, but quick schematizations like binary oppositions between two people or parties might miss this crucial point.

With regard to aesthetics, his frame of thought illustrates elaborate contemplation and a setting of interconnections. One of the main functions of art is to break the effortless communication and pause the given frame of reference. In those instances, it functions on the principle of disagreement rather than agreement. Considering that antagonism is fundamental in politics and social structures alike, and that Ranciere perceives these concepts as not separate from aesthetics, his take on art inevitably includes undecidability, multiplicity of meanings, and changeability of limits. Pluralism and variability (the contradictory character of which establishes art's specificity at the expense of losing it) might seem problematic but they cannot be disregarded in the "aesthetic regime of art".

Ranciere delineates regimes of art in his 2000 book *Politics of Aesthetics* to talk about how art and the distribution of the sensible operate. A regime of art is the

connection amongst ways of producing and forms of visibility that disclose them, and ways of conceptualizing between the two. In Western art, he names three regimes of identification: the ethical regime of images, the representative regime of art, and the aesthetic regime of art. These correspond to certain periods in history in which arts in general were perceived and situated in the state of affairs much differently than today. The first is based on utility, purposes, effects of images and their relations to education and morality in accord with the police; the second is known to liberate art from the social, religious, and moral criteria of the first one and determine principles of genre, subject matter, and appropriateness; and the third abolishes hierarchies in art by pointing out equality and the immanence of meaning in things themselves, and by working through heterogeneous temporalities, it also questions the very distinction between art and other activities. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ranciere indicates, an organized set of relations between the visible and the invisible, the perceptible and the imperceptible, knowledge and action, activity and passivity was transformed by a 'silent aesthetic revolution' which called into question the representative regime of art in the name of aesthetic regime of art. Yet, this revolution that favored the aesthetic regime of art did not lead to the abandonment of the representative one. All three regimes of art are valid. The ethical regime, for example, which evaluates artistic practices of censorship and artefacts according to their direct moral and political worth is surely exemplified in today's governmental practices with respect to artistic creations (a brief discussion of which can be found below). Elements of the other two more recent regimes exist in the sensible in contradiction, and that allows for a new analysis which could resolve some of the difficulties and recognize the potentialities in the modern paradigm.

As mentioned above, Ranciere's approach is included in the scope of historical materialism which is aligned with Marxism. In that case, how Ranciere's aesthetics (the complex of regimes he laid out) is in accord with Marxist theory of art becomes a reasonable question. Aesthetics in Marxism, however, rather than a unified body of thought, is a compilation of possible applications of the Marxist ideas to the broad notion of art; a definitive Marxist theory of art does not exist. Without a systematically developed "aesthetics", any description of his views of art and society must be a reconstruction of what are fragmentary and scattered passages whose implication Marx himself never fully worked out (Lunn, 1982, s. 9). Included in this scope are questions such as how art should reflect society, how it should constitute a critique of society, how should it predict an ideal society. They are necessarily aesthetic because the way art expresses the social is through genre, form, a matter of style; in Marxist terms, a mode of production. In spite of the lack of an initial model, Marx and Engels's varied remarks on the issue throughout their lives reveal the leading approach to the issue in the framework of historical materialism.

It is quite obvious that for Marx, the human relationships of production – intentions that create them, goals that direct them – give the groundwork and regulate the circumstances for all forms of social interaction, including cultural interaction. And these practices constantly affect and shape all consciousness whether it be culturally, intellectually or in any other way bound. Through a close reading of all the various instances where Marx talks about the relation of cultural artifacts and economic circumstances of their production, one underlying sense becomes visible. Artistic expression is not mechanically determined, conditioned or directly shaped by the material conditions, rather, it cannot help but embody the limits, pressures, and

collective desires inherent in the productive processes of any human society (Adams, 1991, s. 255). This also is in parallel with the notion of artwork as object, simply because some artworks exist in the material reality as tangible things, they should not be assumed equal to other products of the productive practices. Their undeniable materiality causes an overgeneralization, which has become a basic presupposition. Williams conceptualizes the subtle but radical distinction between these forms of products and also their reception through the term 'notation' (2005, p.45). He bases this thought on the fact that works without the material existence also receive the same treatment, and in such works, the topic of discussion is not objects but notations, as in the example of music, drama, and the whole set of performing arts. What is at hand is only accessible through active perception and interpretation, unlike the consumption of an ordinary object. What is more, this is a condition encompassing all kinds of art, not just the performative ones. The quality of notation has to be interpreted in an active way, according to particular conventions. Extending from here, Williams asserts that the relationship between the making of and the reception of a work of art, is always *active*, and subject to conventions, which in themselves are forms of social organization and relationship. This layered situation is absolutely different from the conventional understanding of the process of extremely rapid consumption that characterizes turbo-capitalism². Ultimately, the tendency to analyze by isolating the object and then discovering its components needs to be transformed into an examination of the nature of a practice and then its conditions. It is in this way that the method of extending active relationships becomes visible.

² Turbo-capitalism is accelerated capitalism without the brakes and the counterweights to make the system balanced. Edward Luttwak argued that this imbalance intensified economic insecurity and generated fears that could be transformed into social backlashes.

Analyses of artworks thusly depend on the principles of the relations of practices, and not on a type of a built-in procedure of the kind that is indicated by the fixed character of an ordinary object. This is a fruitful way of dealing with the recognition of the relation of a collective mode and an irreducible individuality of the artwork, and the consequent recognition of related practices that appear. Moreover, it is a viable answer to the idea that all art is commodified due to the system and mode of production they are in, which typically produce fetishes (objects that can be defined as having with abstract value).

Marx also critically analyzes the correlation of artistic forms and the development of the division of labor as well as the technical apparatus. And when there is high technological development, it means that society will get into a “disenchanted” cultural mentality. Instead of narratives of religious mythology, experiences are explained in rational and secular terms. In this way, change in technology equals to change in the means of collective interpretation and imagination. This shift on the societal level brings with it a new aesthetic sensibility, as well, through the forms of consciousness appropriate to these practices.

With all these ideas combined, Marx and Engels’s dialectics as it’s applied to art unfolds – in the most basic sense – as follows: from the thesis of primitive communism of the tribal societies vs the antithesis of private ownership and class society, arises the synthesis of advanced communism, which would follow various historical stages such as slavery, feudalism, mercantilism, and capitalism. In an attempt to understand of how art, culture, religion, family, media etc. (known as superstructure) are constituted and function in this atmosphere, a knowledge of the substructure - comprised of means and relations of production - is required. Marxist

cultural theory, however, although usually oversimplified into this, is certainly more than “the economic substructure determining the superstructure”. Lunn contends that this reductive conception was developed by the official parties in the Second International, and what needs to be seen as a matter of fact is how Marx developed a complex argumentation of social activity and consciousness (1982, s. 23). If substructure is read as the conscious human activity on the conditions of human life, and superstructure as the human consciousness that gives that activity reasons, justifications etc., then the intricateness of the issue can better be seen. When it comes to works of art as material productions, they can be analyzed both in terms of the conscious productive activity practiced on external world, and ideological false consciousness, pointing to their potentiality for both the base and the superstructure. In this context, the antithetical question of whether or to what extent the superstructure is determinative of substructure is a discussion that contains differing opinions. Marx and Engels themselves accentuated that in its application, this design (of structures) does not work in only one direction (from substructure to superstructure) and might be more complicated (Moran, 1999, ss. 45-46). It is overall better understood as a guide than a literal conservative plan to be applied. As a matter of fact, the very distinction can be challenged if the relations of production are considered to be far from being uniform or static, although they might be concretized and analyzed for certain periods of time. “The base” is a mode of production at a particular stage of the development of material productive forces. In Marx’s position concerning history, there are deep contradictions in the relationships of production and the consequent social relationships. Therefore there is the continual possibility of dynamic variation of these forces (Williams, 2005). The qualities of being active,

complicated, and contradictory are intrinsic in the real activities and relations of genuine people. The notion of “the base” is not therefore a primal and fixed state of production in terms of capitalist economy, but the primary production of society itself with all its social and economic qualities in their contradictions and variations – a dynamic process. It is then that certain vital productive social forces, which indeed have been elemental in the broad sense of the term, are freed from the framework of dependency, reproduction, reflection, and insignificance.

Following Marx and Engels, thinkers such as Plekhanov, Trotsky, Lunacharsky tried to expand on and systemize Marxist aesthetics. According to Plekhanov, the first thinker to undertake this task, the origin of art is based on work since the beginning, and therefore economy and social classes are decisive in its existence. Plekhanov tries to demonstrate that social conditions determine the perception of beauty and artworks, while at the same time he maintains genuine existence and the value of art. Moran states that this stance of Plekhanov’s, namely rejecting art as a means of propaganda, and state as a shepherd for art, recognizing art in its own peculiar world, and differentiating “too much” for the prevalent view of the time between the political and aesthetic aspects of art amounted to a general disapproval and disturbance in others, and a subsequent discredit for the proponents of the idea in Russia (1999).

Another critic that commented on the same issue is Walter Benjamin, whose analyses have been extremely influential. Facing the tendentious realism* as it pervaded the Soviet world in 1934, he proposed a participatory aesthetics that he relates back to the old times when work of art as historical artifact – as the foundation for cult – was received with a reverent attitude, as something mysterious

and eternal. He develops this argument in his well-known *Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* essay, illustrating the idea with the word “aura” which includes obscure meanings such as genius, religious, magical etc. and is meant to denote all that is historically transmissible through the artwork. Such works with aura seem to be independent of human intervention and ideological framing which is so familiar in our day. Technological developments that came with modernization, Benjamin argues, strips the aura off the artwork, leaving a reproduction of the original, lacking the full impact the original bears. It is not only an aesthetic, but a political matter because it is a critical remark on the mechanization that results from capitalism. The enlightenment reason that prioritized the notion of progress and therefore provided the atmosphere for the disintegration of culture into objects of possession is countered by a novel understanding of radically fragmented history by Benjamin in order to be able to stand against its commodification of time and evacuation of human labor of its significance. His understanding of history thus focuses on forms of interruption as well as its interconnectedness with discontinuity and modernism. The character of the connection between the worker and the machine is not what it is supposed to be: while the machines were supposed to be the means to get the work done, workers are instrumentalized. Nevertheless, the coming of modernity and the disappearance of the cult only partially signal the end of auratic art (Larsen 2010).

Benjamin reads the emphasis on the autonomy of art or the notion of “pure art” in nineteenth century as a continuation of the cult of the aura. There is a bidirectional ontological relationship between this loss of aura and the changing social conditions that cause what was once eternally valuable and sacred to become

ordinary. This "desacralizing" processes of modern civilization -- the development of industrial capitalism and the accompanying rise of the masses -- have, hand in hand with the purely technical fact of the increasing mechanical reproducibility of the artwork itself, diminished human beings' power to see and respond to the quality which Benjamin calls "cult-value" (Rosen, s.10). The fact that people accept these conditions points to a disinclination to participate in rituals. The type of reception and valuation of art shifts from cult value to exhibition value, which nonetheless means that a form of valuation with respect to art is still sustained.

“With the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its suitability for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature.” (Benjamin, 1968, s. 225).

In this environment, the viewer also changes, criticizing becomes common and easily exercised, and the role people must have once played in participatory rituals before the artworks transforms into one of a spectator's or critical commentator's, without experiencing any personal contact. In other words, in post-auratic art the change in the experience of the artwork introduces a change in the reaction of people. However, this overall change is welcomed by Benjamin since it might open up a space for new possibilities for the politicization of art. Through his statement *“...the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics.”* he reveals that political questions can now be asked regarding the reproducible image, value, masses and etc. (1968, s.218). Art is “emancipated” from its dependence on ritual. The act of addressing oneself to the work of art “as itself”, as though it had objective value apart from

being produced in a mode of production, means experiencing it as a commodity, due to the fact that the phenomenon of distance renders the artwork auratic again. The commodification of art can be counteracted with participatory aesthetic of the fragment, by reaching out to the work and engaging with it rather than contemplating on it. And this is done by preserving the perspective of the mode of production at all times, and therefore combining the process of production with the artwork through the insertion of labor function of the apparatus in the represented field. Benjamin sets out to balance the division between elites and the proletariat, and arrives at the idea of challenging those who hold power through a particular approach to technology.

Adorno is in somewhat similar vein of thought as Benjamin regarding the relation of the artwork and power, in the way he critically approaches the impact of certain time periods such as industrialization on art and ask relevant questions about the essence, purpose and role of art in society. The criticism of enlightenment is fundamental in Adorno's thought process, underlying his ideas on society, art, politics, power etc. He claims in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in collaboration with Horkheimer that instrumental reason causes the masses to be enslaved, their lives to be determined and organized in a world of certainty originating from the absolute authority of scientific knowledge and mathematical precision. Ranciere was criticizing the same order from a different angle in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* through Jacotot, emphasizing the stultification it brings. This system which is based on the clever manipulation of people's fears (of the unknown) accounts for and rationalizes everything and casts out anything unknown, along with possibilities for alternative ways of living. All that is left is repetitive estrangement and immobilization, and technology utilizes the functional character of objects in order

for people to fit in well with the places that they are assigned. For this reason, our understanding of time, manners, ways of life transform in time. Art in this atmosphere is consequently commodified and the value people attach to art changes. Culture industry annihilates autonomy, and this turns artworks into just other goods high in marketability. As Adorno puts it, *“Everything has value only in so far as it can be exchanged, not in so far as it is something in itself. For consumers the use value of art, its essence, is a fetish, and the fetish—the social valuation which they mistake for the merit of works of art— becomes its only use value, the only quality they enjoy”* (2002, s. 128). Purposiveness, however, is a quality of art unlike any other in its distinctiveness. Since the ancient times the quality of instrumentality – the usage – has been in the center of discussion when it comes to artworks. First, there were cups, bowls, sorts of ornaments and the like as specimens of the earliest art, associated with handicraft. Then through the Middle Ages, art would go under patronage by being commissioned mostly for religious purposes, examples of which included decoration or design of churches and portrait painting with the use of valuable materials. Moreover, together with illuminated manuscripts or mosaics, works in the so-called "minor arts" or decorative arts, such as ivory carving, enamel and embroidery, using precious metals or textiles, characterize the understanding of the era concerning art and the artist, recognition of them as skilled laborers, craftsmen, or artisans. In all these, an element of practicality is surely seen, one way or another. Much later, around 17th century, due to a number of sociohistorical reasons that have to do with trade and invasions on a global scale, the period called Enlightenment came into being³. Now, ideals quite different than before were

³Surely, there are no definitive time periods that begin and end in definite locations that we can call

praised, which all were based fundamentally on reason. From then on, art was not as valued as before in its mission to give meaning to the world. Adorno's view on purposiveness considers it to be "external" (1997) to the artwork that is used for various ends and with various mindsets, which allows extrinsic purposiveness to fit on it. He apparently takes art to be more about the import (Gehalt) which can be defined as the societally mediated and socially significant meaning of the artwork. Adorno openly states that the only social function artworks can be thought to have is their functionlessness (1997). Art generates its autonomy by this quality of functionlessness, and therefore stands apart from other goods. It need not openly serve or mention a societal end, because as a social fact it embodies that by definition, but it is through its form that it embodies the possibility of challenging or transforming the existing social conditions. It stands against societal values by making itself functionless. It's political insofar as it includes social contradictions without giving obvious messages; therefore its sheer existence becomes political, pointing to antinomies. As a collection of parts, achievement of pure form reveals its implicit politics, which works by modelling the achievement of a collective state. It may not seem applicable in the real world, but it is a very interesting turn of thought critically examining the totality of society - in the slumber of conformism and acquiescence, and the genuine wholeness of the work of art.

In conclusion, the thread of thought on how art is considered in terms of historical materialism has a considerably diverse history, only a small percentage of which is mentioned above. As Engels and Marx did not put forward formidable

Renaissance or Enlightenment. These periodizations are used relatively, for the purposes of convenience.

theory of art, their successors inevitably saw the gap and expanded on their sectional ideas. The diversity of these positions stems from the favorable conditions for different interpretations, influence of the preceding literature as well as the zeitgeist of the period they came about. Nonetheless, with its emphasis on economy and class society, the framework of historical materialism of Marx and Engels remains a vantage point for all the discussion concerning aesthetics.

Ranciere's aesthetic theory, although clearly distinguishable from it, is informed by Marxist thought. He uses many of its terms and notions to explain his arguments. It is evident from a look to his writings that Marx did not take what is encapsulated under the name of superstructure lightly, art included. While he demonstrated that social factors have great influence over it, he never claimed them to be the sole determiners of artistic practice; it is never a mechanical relation of impact. The fact that there are various factors that affect it strips the activity of art off of its idealistic perception as something spiritual and almost divine (the idea of which goes back to much earlier times). This is one important aspect of the background Ranciere reminds us of when establishing his position. He uncovers a certain history by embedding notions in the tone of that aspect into his more contemporary writings. That is why Ranciere's writings can be identified with the tradition that made up all the knowledge and thinking on the issue from the materialistic perspective. Two vital words in his main argument, "distribution" of the "sensible", realize this mission very well as they are the most obvious signifiers in his aesthetics. Intentional choice of such words is performed for people to associate the past and the present, and contextualize current positions in the continuum of intellectual history. There are, furthermore, a number of aesthetic references in

Marx's own analysis of production processes in economic dimension. These make the connection between the two thinkers considerably visible. He asserts that free conscious activity constitutes the species character of humans, and their creative capacities figure in all of their activities, including their labor. Through labor, they produce not only the basic goods of life, but also the intellectual and spiritual goods. However, when they somehow damage this creative genius as they employ it, which is the case for the most part of human history, a state of estrangement results. People become dependent on what they have created; creations rule the creators. This alienation does not only mean estrangement from things, but from work itself (in scope of which art – as an activity of production – can be discerned). Overcoming it surely entails both a redistribution of goods/resources and the transformation of productive process itself, with its goals and social relationships. What is more, Marx states that all the physical and intellectual senses are replaced by the simple estrangement of all these senses – the sense of having (Marx, 1975, s. 352). This situation can be resolved by abolishing private property, which would suggest an “emancipation of senses”, a reclaiming of the world as a labyrinthical site of rich and diverse sensual enjoyment. Marx's employment of such words as expression, individuality, contemplation, realization, and imagination in addition to a talk of senses to envision a nonalienated world is worthy of attention. These are images of artistic expression, and that world, it seems, would look very much like some combination of artistic craft and aesthetic contemplation. In a rightly ordered, fully human world, labor would be the realization of our innate, creative powers, just as the process of artistic creation realizes the artist's creative powers, and the world

itself would be an object of appreciation instead of exploitation, much as the works of art are enjoyed by the disinterested audience (Adams, 1999, s.270).

These points of connection and common ground that accommodate both Marx's and Ranciere's views encourage Ranciere's position on aesthetic from a different angle. As it should be clear by now, he investigates not the relation between art and politics as if they were two separate fields of conception but their existence as notions that affect and order a common field of experience. Therefore, this position provides new ways of interpreting the current turn of events and circumstances, and forming guidelines for thinking and acting. For this purpose, Ranciere designates some categories related to both terms and uses them to unwind forms of entanglements these terms carry and allow for their intelligibility. He says,

“As I conceive of them, concepts are neither Platonic ideas nor mere empirical designations. They are tools with which we can draw a new topography in order to account for what happens to us and with which we can try to weave a mode of investigation and action equally distant from the consent to things as they are and from the hyperboles of imaginary radicalism.” (2009, s. 288).

This is the point from which the idea of aesthetic regimes and the division of police-politics as well as the forms of political philosophy originates.

Ranciere renders politics intricately involved in the constitution and command of the figure of a specific subject, a supernumerary subject (part with no part) in relation to the calculated number of groups, places, and functions in a society (Ranciere, 2004, s. 51). Politics also implicates the tension between these subjects participating in equalizing themselves with all others and the police order

that appoints places that it deems appropriate for them. This active equalization is only achieved by performing it, and is formative of the subject. From the perspective that seeks essentials, rather than the contemplative interpretations of intellectuals who evaluate culture for signs of truth, political thought first emerges from the people involved in political action. When these people resist or protest against what is given by the system, they are forcefully repressed because their actions do not complement and serve the order created by the police. This order tells people to take part in the false, fabricated politics – casting a ballot, going to a town hall etc. – and tries to divest energy from what Ranciere calls politics. If the vital energy created in disagreement with the police order is drained through mild and moderate practices of false politics, it does not become productive and therefore threatening. Political philosophy in this respect seeks to restrain the contingency that results from the equalization efforts of the demos, and to do this, Ranciere suggests, a proper mode of political activity is identified in three different ways: archi-politics, para-politics, and meta-politics. Archi-politics stands for the project of a community based on the complete realization of the *arkhe* of community, on its integral sensibilization, replacing without any leftover the democratic configuration of politics. This neologism emerges from Plato's political philosophy in which the *arkhe* is positioned as a principle of rule, as that which identifies the rulers and the ruled, thus designates who will take up which of the two categories. In archi-politics there is no place for politics because there is no assertion of equality that creates a contradiction against the order of the police.

Para-politics is the result of the attempts of integration of the egalitarian anarchy of the demos into the constitutional order of the police, exemplified in

Aristotle. He suggests that if they are to remain in power, those who rule must do so for the benefit of the common good, taking “the part with no part” into consideration. While denoting a way of government that considers of political equality to be fundamental, it indeed masks the elimination of politics through integration inside the police order. Portraying the demos as having equal rights and share in the system results in pacifying their rightful attempts of establishing their equality and a legitimation of the ruling class. Para-politics, while recognizing equality in a more straightforward way than archi-politics, remains rooted in the idea of the police. If there is an equality here, it remains a passive equality that is distributed to rather than created by those who are its object.

For meta-politics, which emerges out of Marx’s critique of the distance separating pretenses of rights and representation from the hard truth of social reality, the very idea of politics is a gloss for injustices happening elsewhere and so, the truth of politics lies elsewhere, outside or beyond politics (thus *meta*-politics). Political antagonism is actually a displaced manifestation of socio-economic antagonism. The state, maintaining the system of exploitation, appears as the institution through which justice is preserved (protecting rights etc.). Recognizing its function and taking a step towards a solution is possible by focusing on economics instead of politics. Although they point to different directions, the aim of all of these forms of policing that Ranciere designates from political philosophy is to ensure that the ones who do not participate in the decisions that order their political lives – the demos – are prevented from active expression of equality and a decent position in political life (May, 2008, s. 44). Esthetics is bound up in this battle, because the battle takes place over the *image* of society - what it is permissible to say or to show. The fact that no clear

distinctions exist between politics and aesthetics leads to a reconsideration of both sides in flexible relation to one another under a new light.

The regimes of art as they are laid out by Ranciere might be seen as loosely corresponding to these three forms of political philosophy. Ethical regime of the arts is specified in the argumentation of the ideal city by Plato, whose political philosophy is the epitome of archi-politics. Aristotle's critique of Plato gives the conceptual apparatus to comprehend the representative regime of arts, while para-politics results from his project of pacifying the antagonistic character of the part with no part by way of incorporating it into the order of the police. Aesthetic regime does not harmonize with the meta-politics of Marx the same way as the previous regimes of art do with other types of political philosophy. Its very existence, however, is rooted in the attempts to establish an aesthetics of Marx, which amounted to a somewhat recent understanding of the "aesthetic" which crosses disciplinary boundaries and deals with a complex of interrelated issues, not solely art.

4. DISTRIBUTION OF THE SENSIBLE WITH RESPECT TO SALT

At the most basic level, Ranciere conceptualizes a way of understanding and responding to the current situation of authoritarian regimes as well as the compliance it is able to develop in its subjects. He proposes, as outlined above, an association, certain points of commonality between art and politics so that the way they work and similar effects they bring about are unearthed. To be sure, he identifies the police as a different point of reference compared to art, but politics and art amount to the same form of regulating life, which is the reallocation of what is perceptible, in other words, the capacity to change its balance. The way the police distributes roles, places, meanings etc. does not take equality into consideration due to the fact that it aims to preserve the privileges and welfare of those who rule. This overbearing system is also stupefying as it makes its order appear preferable or as the only possible way of life and pushes people into a slave-like condition of compliance. In addition growing into an alienation towards their work due to the given partition of time and space, people also become devoid of hope or vision. It is at this point that Ranciere makes his compelling argument against the background of his defense of radical equality: an opportunity to resist and change the unequal partition of everyday life might be possible through a redistribution of the sensible. One of the ways in which this redistribution can be achieved is aesthetics. The vitality of this issue lies in its social and political character. Unstable political conditions, which is the case in Turkey at this moment, have lasting impacts on people's lives both in the present and in various temporalities, possibly with dire results. Therefore, before

long, this needs to be addressed with a view to equality, opening up the space for the reception of aesthetics in a new sense. In recent years, there have been attempts around the world to establish or adjust contemporary cultural institutions, namely art spaces, predicated on the aforementioned approach towards present day. While placing 'contemporary' as a moving target par excellence in terms of the efforts for its definition since the turn of the millennium, Claire Bishop describes this new approach to present time in her own words as a dialectical contemporary, the ultimate aim of which is to disrupt the relativist pluralism of the current moment, which considers all styles and beliefs as equally valid, and to move towards a more sharply politicized understanding of where we can and should be heading (2013, s. 23). Such novel propositions cannot help but interconnect art and politics. There are other areas of study as well, including history, sociology, philosophy etc. which certainly would prove useful in helping create the targeted attitude. Therefore, interdisciplinary projects enhance an innovative outlook that is open to and ready to open new ways of analyzing and coming to terms with the social reality that accommodates them. SALT, in this sense, is an institution that covers a spectrum of possibilities that extends from a spatial to an integrative context. In the Turkish atmosphere, it stands as a prime and probably only example of how a redistribution can be accomplished that leads to a new understanding of what we are presented with in the cultural sphere of life. As an institution, SALT contributes to generating a potential for change, and this is carried out not just through what is available inside the institution, but also through the online sharing of countless publications in addition to the partnerships it forms and even the locations it holds.

A look back on the aesthetic regime of art will reveal that the kernel of the aesthetic redistribution of the sensible is contradiction. It relates to both the agonistic state that lies in practices that acknowledge equality as a constitutional principle in the face of oppressive regimes, and in the dissociation that comes with the aesthetic experience that disrupts the seamless appreciation process. SALT functions on similar principles, it does not aim to provoke, but it does not refrain from asking the difficult questions that cause conflict. Vasif Kortun, the institution's director of research and programs, explains this with a state of "unknowing" they assume in the beginning of each of their projects, which opens up a space that allows for the opportunity to ask those questions (that are rarely raised, but extremely important to discuss) without being incriminating or hostile (2016). Such a stance necessitates an unconventional constellation of properties for an institution of culture. First of all, although in some form-related respects, it has an artistic structure, and its content to a considerable extent includes art, the startling statement by the institution is that it is not an art space. The confidence in the fact that art possesses a genuine core is still intact despite especially the recent past in art history. This is in line with Ranciere's mission of showing that the assumed boundaries between aesthetics and politics are not that clear-cut. Exhibitions have always been held in its space, but the place does not possess an artwork collection. This is very freeing, evacuating the plane on which people in SALT focus their attention and energy on research and get closer to actualizing their capacity. They visualize the research carried out as a part of ongoing projects through series of operations one of which is exhibition, but adopt a post-curatorial approach, which means there are no curatorial positions in the institution. Every aspect of a project is discussed and arranged by the various individuals from

professional, academic or purely curious standpoints who assemble around that project.

In parallel with the procedure described above, SALT is not encyclopedically departmentalized and through its multi-layered strategy, the threat of one dimensionality is overcome. In order to allow different sets of knowledge to clash and benefit from one another, and create diverse frameworks, the staff are positioned in research programs in an open space, with access to others. Departmentalization would also suggest a need for management; which resonates with a different system that takes matters and institutions of culture to be treatable with the same tools used for industrial fairs or theme parks. Such a system is exactly what formations like SALT are opposed to. In terms of culture, a contemporary desire does not decently meet the needs created by this capitalist system, it only feeds them more. Ideas of public good greatly differ between historical public institutions and contemporary capitalism, from the tension of which result most art institutions of today, which do not offer innovative methods to handle current issues. Kortun contends that an institution which prioritizes survival in these times that change at an insurmountable speed, will fall prey to tribal interests, short-term efficiency, business leverage, and therefore such institutions become the servants of the moment in which they operate. Institutions that are in contradiction with the ones operating under the late capitalist institutional model, however, recognize that temporality stretches far beyond the present in both directions: the unresolved past and an imagination for possible futures are necessary components of thinking and producing at present. Different times host different publics, and SALT acknowledges that any decision made at the moment affect all aforementioned temporalities and publics. Indeed, running the

institution is about retaining an integrity in every decision made, every course of action adopted. Novel narratives and *multiple accounts* of art that develop there are a part and result of those decision processes. Here, multiplicity is key: of experiences, ideas, questions and answers alike. In discussions for the creation of programs, nobody is in an advisory position, rather, sessions proceed with the active participation of experts ranging from humanities to museum world or architecture, they become partners to the institution and a co-created program ensues. The flexibility embraced by the institution is infused in everything about the institution, from its logo (it changes from time to time) to its architectural design (created by various professionals for various spots). This dynamic diversity *coexists* with integrity, rather than causing a lack of stability or coherence. Fundamentally functioning as a kind of research facility, what they collect and build up, including archival work, is seen as discursive objects. There are not many artworks in the institution, but the organic connection SALT retains with art is nourished through the discursivity present in the atmosphere. This also provides, owing to the *flexible* nature of discursivity, the environment for the proposition of arguments to be explored, upgraded or refuted without reservations. There is an undeniable parallel between Ranciere's understanding and use of discursivity with the situation here. His intentions are materialized to a considerable extent in SALT.

Multiplicity, which is one of the essential values that make up the construction of the institution, entails different connections and frames of reference. One such association is present in the aim of contributing to the development of a culture that views things from the viewpoints of various disciplines, both academic and otherwise. This is actualized by welcoming contradictions and failures, as well

as successes. The concept of contradiction is manifest in Ranciere's line of thought as a central element that leads to a dissensus which is an interruption of the ways in which we establish the criteria of knowledge and also the separation of authoritative knowledge and political action. Novel ideas and new frameworks are necessary for any institution should they be capable of responding to the current events. Matching the wide array of interest it engages in (from social and economic history to visual practices of various kinds), the level of collaboration SALT is a part of is unprecedented in the Turkish context. Both by hosting and actively working together, the list of organizations it is in relation with progressively grows: disobedient working groups, NGOs, performance groups, documentary film festivals, human rights and LGBTI associations. There are varying levels of embeddedness with respect to all these collaborations, but the main goal served is the same. Unfortunately, most institutions in non-western environments choose to emulate Western models that do not employ such strategies. In this sense SALT might also be said to help lift the prevailing influence of West that permeates our knowledge, which is just another step towards the democratization of cultural institutions and the related development of collective intelligence in society in the last instance.

These aspirations innately correlate with the idea of multiplicity that in this context follows a non-hierarchical path. In terms of the institution at hand, one thing is clear: diversity is a significant component of culture, and museums (in the traditional sense, as Kortun puts it, existing in a network of relations that preclude the public) fall short of the relevance and suitability for acting in response to developments. The exhibitions that are organized and changed in accord with relentless speed of our times cannot harmonize with public time, which surely

transcends that limited and compressed amount of time. The course of action SALT maintains avoids that present-time based and consumptive ideology, it keeps the past relevant and inspects the memory shaped by it by bringing it to attention in a critical manner, therefore unveiling new possibilities of discussion and action. For an institution of culture - culture and civilization being inherently connected - if the focal point is the activation of the potential of helping shape a society, the aura of royalness around the institutions proves disturbing and harmful. SALT intends to denaturalize the presumed authority of the institution (any kind of authority is undesirable in a Rancierian sense, unavoidably producing excluded people) by renouncing that false nobility and the ensuing hubris, taking part in collaborations and not being location-specific. Moreover, the open sharing of numerous documents – which are forms of knowledge – both inside the institution and online strengthens these attempts at democratization. If the cultural institutions such as museums continue to be regarded as civilizing or educative (therefore causing the old institutional arrogance), the prospect of a new institution which is open to conversations of agonistic, complicated or convivial nature cannot be realized. It might become possible, however, by the actualization of the values of difference, antagonism, solidarity, commonality and horizontal exchange among a constellation of cultural agents that are locally rooted and globally connected.

L'Internationale, a confederation of modern and contemporary art institutions SALT is a part of, is of that character. Discussed on this plane is the critical imagination of art as a catalyst in times of crisis for concepts of the civic institution, citizenship, democracy and a renewed social contract. The online existence of the federation functions on the same principles as SALT embraces, therefore it provides

transnational access for participation in the global exchange of ideas from any given space (L'internationale, 2010).

The non-hierarchical conception of the togetherness of the institution and the people that are outside it is transformative in the context of the ephemeral market scene of turbo-capitalism. If a new attitude is adopted towards such outsiders to the institution, the conditions of living and matters that the mentality of the current political and economic scheme try to sell to the public can be viewed in a radically different light. One asset in this respect is the aforementioned awareness of different temporalities and publics, as it encourages multiplicity. What is more, for this new outlook to be actualized, the opposite of what ordinary museums connote (contemptuousness or even patronization) is practiced: a counter-empowerment of the people who are outside the institution. The lack of communication and interaction between the cultural institution and its outside is well illustrated in the usual museum profile, which flourishes with an audience of passive visitors that lack the tools, capacity, and agency to articulate its desires. In such a setting, there is no common ground on which the institution and its outside are able to come together and discuss their demands and express their opinions. Aspirations of the people are not acknowledged, they are not even given any visible opportunity to recognize their right to state their desires. How SALT deals with the issue is quite in line with its attempt to contribute to the process of democratization. In the bigger picture, democratization of production, mediation and dissemination of culture, art, knowledge etc. are included in the role of the institution in the society. On a smaller scale, this process starts with the inclusion of the people in the platform of what is

done in the institution, better still, equipping them with the necessary tools to claim their place.

In the long term, for SALT, the process of the denaturalization of authority of the cultural institution is steered towards a state in which the institution would be directed with the active support of the people. How it positions itself in this vision is clear from the general attitude it embraces in all interdisciplinarity, collaboration, and openness, with its *“places with unremarkable thresholds where pretty much nothing is unanticipated”*; creating the opening for any possible formation of novelty or course of action (2016). Another positioning they offer is carried out by using new and unusual words to signify the elements of the relationships in the cultural scene: user instead of audience, communities of interest instead of customers, and professionalized audiences or constituencies instead of visitors. Redefinitions pave the way for new potentialities and emancipate those entities that are redefined from the traditional boundaries so that the public imaginary can flow into and eventually help transform the institution. This is not a quick and easy procedure, in order for its users to be an organic part of the institution, time, care and trust is needed, and SALT searches ways of establishing those conditions as the basis to build upon. When it eventually moves from a broadcast institution into one that develops collective intelligence with its users, to the point of co-ownership, ethical, non-hegemonic, and convivial agencies will result. In order to reach beyond the ordinary horizon of relations, engaging in discussions and opening up platforms for debates with the ones who remain outside is essential; only this might provide the chance even if only for parts of different segments of society to turn into constituencies, and consequently translators into their communities. For the production of new

subjectivities in this direction, the disagreement with the time-based and consumptive exhibitional paradigm proves effective.

SALT expands the usual frame, producing post-programs, releasing publications months or even years after the project (they do not publish exhibition catalogues), serializing exhibitions in the form of modern essays, handling issues from different angles again and again, hoping that after the formation of new subjectivities, the rest of the culture will develop it and carry it forward. Behind this bold endeavor for an institutional metamorphosis is the belief that people are remarkably capable of making collective decisions, provided that they are presented with the tools to do so. Without prejudice or arrogance, without a need for departmental divisions, institutions could well program for the people who will be comfortable with and appreciative of such an organizational choice. Underlying this is the reasoning that people are not simple-minded. As a matter of fact, it is the late capitalist approach to society and culture that would prefer them to be so in order to preserve the conservatism that comes with it. This kind of approach is also what causes exhibitions to pass in the blink of an eye, and create the confusion of contemporaneity, which seems to be about *being* present in the contemporary as opposed to being contemporary – an important quality for a cultural institution. Consumption process of short shelf life and fugitive art scene are reinforced in this manner. Ideas with probable merit are regarded outdated without being earnestly or sincerely examined first. SALT, by way of its unorthodox strategies and choices, including the decision to ignore what is popular, provides an alternative institutional model and attempts to cushion the impact of this fast and fleeting market. This

unorthodoxy distinguishes it as a reflective prototype apart from institutions that are embedded in the traditional representativity.

This profile of an innovative institution with its values of respect, multiplicity, collaboration, horizontality, the acknowledgement of various temporalities and the need to change responding to times unfolds on multiple levels. The groundwork for a future transformation of the institution is carried out, in addition to the visible practices, away from public attention and the gaze of the order, which is the case for most great contributions to the public thinking and imaginary. Transparency and opaqueness go hand in hand in adjusting the limits of public visibility. Their work is meant to form an interface with public, and the keen interest in anybody who is to establish a discursive relationship is inviting. That is the way to compose contemporary cultures which complement the fact that knowledge is not compartmentalized or does not belong to just one source (as in the West). Institutions of these cultures are required to be compatible with these characteristics, as well. Needs of today demand responsibilities other than the current ones from the cultural sector. Kortun says that a cultural institution of this character needs to be less neutral in present time, and more engaged with the political sphere, social sphere, and ask questions to the public. It should furthermore not only allow the context for people to make decisions but also to take the lead on certain matters (Kortun, 2015). Although it is not phrased in this exact manner, the attitude of the institution with respect to the turn of events of about the last thirty years is evidently anti-governmental, if extended from its stance against capitalism and its expansion. These ideals, together with the aspirations and ultimate aims, might seem unfamiliar and arduous to say the least. The point, nevertheless, is not to interpret the world, but to be in it, and accept

the consequences of a co-ownership, however unfamiliar or undesirable it may be to some. That is why SALT does not fit into the familiar institutional definitions such as a museum, although in it a lot of art is involved. With its unprejudicedness it is the embodiment, the spatialization of the ideas embraced by those who believe there is a need for the building of an equitable and democratic society.

All in all, in all that has been planned or done, SALT aims to provide tools for sophisticated thinking for its users and maximize the results of these new perceptions through the dissemination that constituencies mentioned above will hopefully realize. A certain amount of time is needed for such a project to be recognized and internalized on a wider scale, as the history of similar approaches to culture, the alliance of disciplines of philosophy, politics, and art dates back to the late 70's in France and to 90's in Turkey, which is not very old. Nonetheless, once it is internalized, the potential it indicates in terms of a change in the state of affairs and the distribution of sensible is revolutionary.

Having viewed all of the common threads and similarities between Ranciere's thought and the conceptual schematization and groundwork of SALT, it is crucial to note the undeniably fundamental relationship the institution has with one of the biggest financiers of Turkey, Garanti Bank. It obviously is a connection of financial nature, and it has to be binding as it entails the institution being funded by the bank. If the declarations made by SALT are taken into consideration, the financial character of the relation does not lead to coercion. However, the truth of this issue and the level of transparency adopted by the sponsor is not easily or wholly discoverable. It is difficult to base an analysis solely on what is suggested by SALT considering the embedded position of the institution in this relationship. How much

of a say the funders have in the production, organization, and visibility processes as well as the benefits they get on account of having a deep link to such an institution remains unexposed. As a matter of fact, it is not easily compatible to problematize the issue of inequality and at the same time be in a complementary relationship with a foremost capitalist establishment which has strong ties to the authoritative government. The government in effect is referred to in this thesis with regard to censorship, unfair accusations, and rough justice. The link Garanti Bank has with such an entity has been received with much attention and objection, because **f**In line with the Marxist point of view which has so far been mentioned, the atmosphere that creates the conditions for inequality is the result of the capitalist outlook on and arrangement of life. What seems possible in theory may not really be possible if the means of the system that causes the problem in the first place are used. Even if the ideas and methods employed by SALT are productive, their field of influence may find itself extremely limited because the bigger picture that produces inequality and ensures that it is maintained stays intact while the contributions and initiative of the institution towards a possible solution becomes a way of pacification.

If the qualities of openness to novelty, horizontal exchange, multiplicity, integrity, and democratization are objectives to be realized in the future, there seems to be a need for new alternatives in terms of financial support. Instead of receiving funds from a private capitalist institution with ambiguous ties to the oppressive government, novel ways of supporting SALT and its ideals could be envisioned. These new solutions need to be sustainable and self-sufficient in order for the institution to be entirely rightful in its claim to contribute to creating a potential for change. At present, the claim seems to be contingent given the framework of

material

reality.

CONCLUSION

The cultural scene in the last few decades is determined by financialization which is interwoven with ideologization, brandization for meaning construction, and exploitation by the regimes. The spectacle, vanity, popularity, celebration of kitsch make the art scene very much likely to be misused in these ways as well as exposing it to political targeting and appropriation of its autonomy, in short, to regulation. Since the struggle for power is also the struggle for the occupancy of symbols, symbols become more and more important at a time when the visual culture and brandization are so prevalent. Through the use of flags, icons, logos etc. art functions as a place of meaning construction. Therefore, those who want to rule reality would also want to rule art. It is nothing new, most authorities in the past insisted that their own particular evaluations of truth and morality be depicted by art. Involvement with financial arena whether in the shape of alliances between certain economic enterprises and cultural producers or as new forms of sponsorship is concerning because the lines drawn for artists by the private establishments are mostly in accordance with the sensibilities expressed by the state. It is an exchange of novelty, freedom of creativity, and spontaneity for utility. Such interrelationships may be problematic in terms of independence, but there may be exceptions, as affirmed by the discourse of SALT.

Nonetheless, putting aside those daring people who revitalize art, in general, a taste or a sense of aesthetic that is compatible with the government's outlook is organized in those manners. Politically driven targeting and especially censorship

have been quite visible in the Turkish context. This is because of the mentality of recent governments, which is based on monetary gain and dominance, and which uses intellectual stultification and reshaping for the purpose of rendering the masses more compliant and obedient. By putting divine and racist limits of indisputability before freedom, they are relieved of the need to refrain from making their distance and distrust towards art visible in the officials' remarks that touch upon the futility and inconvenience of artistic activity. Their interventions in art-related issues are in any event suggestive of the understanding by officials of what art is, as well as who an artist is. Reasonably for the government, the art that does not surrender to the way of understanding and shaping the world the state promotes will be prevented from getting near the people that do or inclined to do so. As art is often performed, exhibited or shown in the spaces provided by the government, private institutions, foundations or individual sponsors, if it not accepted in those places, its chances of reaching people will be considerably limited (although internet is now a good plane for exhibition and sharing in the current technological era). For example, if the "standing man" incident is considered in terms of politics of aesthetics, the reallocation and reconfiguration of art, spaces or people become obvious. In the aftermath of Gezi protests, following the police intervention and the closing of the park, a performance artist started to stand on Taksim square without doing or saying anything. This attracted considerable attention and aroused controversy as to the purpose of such an act. The police tried to seize him but he was not committing a crime; and in the period of eight hours that the protest lasted, around three hundred people joined the protest in support, which created further curiosity. The location,

timing, manner of the act focused the attention on a place where it was not welcomed.

Another notable example which also shows that humanitarian sensibilities and actions advocated by the government do not find their reflection in practice is the demolition of Mehmet Aksoy's work "İnsanlık Anıtı", which was going to stand as a thirty meter-tall sculpture weighing seven hundred tons, on a hill in Kars, one of the easternmost cities in Turkey. There is considerable controversy in the background of the location concerning the history with Armenia. The commission for this monument first of all, required it to be devoted to this delicate issue as a gesture of goodwill. During its construction, conservative voices were raised against it, and later, for a number of possible political reasons, then-prime minister Erdoğan declared the work that was in progress "freak" and wanted it demolished. A rule in favor was thereafter given, a counterclaim was made by the artist; and the final decision to assume the demolition ensued.

This intervention by the government caused considerable objections, and resulted in a heightened visibility which followed a discussion probably greater than the one that would have appeared had it been not destroyed. In that sense, the demolition was not an end, but the opening of an ongoing discussion that in addition to the heavy main issue, touched on another significant matter: the link between ideology and the concept of monument in Turkey (centering on the formation of modern state and identity). Even a dedicatory work was prepared in the 13rd İstanbul biennial.

The removal of even the residual pieces from the sculpture as well as the landscaping in the shape of a park to replace Aksoy's monument call to mind similar acts of different authorities, such as Taliban's dynamiting the Buddha in Pakistan, ISIS destroying ancient artefacts or Nazi Germany abolishing Jewish monuments. Such practices aim to create a collective memory loss in time, a shift in the recollection of our self-formation (against which SALT seems to stand). Other intervention practices might be encapsulated in the concept of censorship. It operates on the arbitrariness of a semi-visible domain of the unspeakable that delineates what is tolerable. Because of this arbitrariness, delegitimizing interventions are successful in two ways: they (a) create incentives for self-censorship, and (b) produce defenses of artistic freedom that highlight the autonomy of art and to some extent consolidate a conceptual separation of art from politics (Karaca, 2012, ss. 134-151), through which the critical and constructive qualities of art are undermined. The identifications of art and politics should be analyzed within the domain of the symbolic frame of reference that stems from social hierarchies. Traditional definitions, which have been guided by the same order that does not count the dominated and considers them unworthy, depict art incapable and cause its reception to be misguided.

A different consideration, however, is possible if the vantage point is the sensible fabric of experience that allows art to be. This includes the material conditions such as exhibition spaces, forms of circulation and reproduction, as well as modes of perception and emotion, categories that identify them, thought patterns that categorize and interpret them. The sensible consists of ways of being and saying and thus, of what is visible and sayable when it is considered in relation to politics.

For Ranciere, the dissensual reconfiguration of its distribution is what constitutes politics. The fact that these delineations are not fixed does not mean that they are unintelligible. The root of the connection between the two partitions lies in the fact that art is regarded in this context to be more than what is conventionally ascribed to it, and an active part of political configuration. As one of the main functions of art is to proceed through disagreement, and necessarily stir people's senses and consciousness, it is considered threatening when it touches the domain of the political. That is why, in the cultural arena, the activities of art have been especially marginalized as a framework that allows people to share what they think, contemplate on, but most importantly, what they feel: interventions of the government will deny people the experience they would get by facing that art. Those restraining practices are concerning for a number of reasons, one prominent one being the fact that people are led to believe that the reality that the artwork deals with is dangerous. Indeed, the questioning, imagination and creativity that provoke and is provoked by art becomes more of a threat for the dominant group since no specific limit exists for it in the Rancierian sense.

The same is true for freedom of expression as a broader horizon that includes the media and academia, dire examples of which Turkey has been experiencing. In the reign of a repressive mindset, freedom of expression and censorship are two sides of the same coin in the fight to organize the psyche of the people. Ambiguity about art as a practice which is not quite determinable or clearly defined renders it uncanny and requires its strict control. This state (of the governing party deeming arts threatening) is neither new nor country-specific, and seems to recur whenever the dominant group tries to suppress contrarian thoughts and actions. For example,

Badiou termed “restoration” to refer to the period after the enlightenment when people were no longer given the chance to build their lives on the basis of freeing enlightenment thoughts (such as equality, freedom, and fellowship). Instead, inviolable totality of the inegalitarian regime was positioned as the universal reality that encompasses humankind, and every revolutionary idea was considered utopian and ultimately criminal. As creativity and questioning were the threats for the dominant group, they defend their conservatism on the grounds that all alternatives are much worse than the current situation (Badiou, 2001). It has not in fact changed much to this day. In Turkey, the kind of art that has been noticeably on the rise on a large scale is the Ottoman and Islamic art, motivated by the desire to reinstate the conditions of those days. This adoration of the old necessitates the distance towards imagination and free inventiveness that could possibly criticize and search alternatives to the present system. With obedience positioned as the prerequisite for success, the only progress accepted by the government is in the field of technology, which explains the lack of intent and investment concerning fields of interest such as art or philosophy.

Through those inviolable limits, the government’s attacks on art from any angle are legitimized. What they do not realize is that when there is an enforcement on the arts, it always effects more than just that field, for the human condition is never black and white. Thus the government’s efforts to protect its power by drawing lines becomes futile. Going back to the example of the standing man, such marginalized practices might just be the opening that would give people a kind of “Rancierian catharsis” (the peace found in questioning yourself and your position in stepping forth and formulating a voice). The exchange offered there in the denied

experience enables people to look both into themselves and obtain insight into others in a way that may not always be encouraged as much and as freely outside the sphere of art, and which, as a mixture of intellectual and emotional positions, could be a powerful initiator to think and act anew. The ideas obtained and introduced there might well extend outside if the proper conditions ensue. Steps are taken by the government in the name of protecting and preserving the “integrity of values” or in the guise of standing up for cases of defamation, which boils down to same objective: self-protection of the government and the assertion of its lines. This also means the determination of the line between criticism and libel. The enforcements may take the form of penalization, targeting, accusations and attacks, preclusion, and banning – in short, censorship. Art’s political meaning and power to initiate change (and therefore disrupt the order placed by the authority) is what the causes these impositions. Sometimes these pressures are quite serious, threatening the jobs, freedom and even lives of the artists.

In recent years in Turkey, we have witnessed theatres closing down, its directors being forced to step down, filmmakers intimidated by committees or withdrawals of government support, sculptures demolished, preclusion of countless artworks from exhibitions and countless lawsuits and investigations against people of literature, caricature, music, film, media, etc. What matters is how to counter these intimidations. This comes to a point where the artists resort to self-censoring or they warn one another about the possible consequences of certain critical or controversial works, for most of them cannot afford to lose their jobs. Nevertheless, it is agreeable that this situation is problematic as creativity and courage to express it means trouble for the authority that lives off the illusion of freedom, but its ways of taming

shouldn't be a reason to give up. Even if from underground, new and more quick-witted ways of dealing with arbitrary treatments and maintaining creative action should be invented. Art cannot – by definition – get used to the conservatism which, among endless examples in this country, is epitomized in putting underpants on a cadaver.

The redistribution of the sensible that Ranciere points to is effective in this respect, as well. Creating new ways of working through the challenges, juxtaposing and intertwining various elements of life in an innovative way may bring about the desired opening on the part of people and organizations that are targeted by politically driven censorship. The acts carried through this opening, namely rising up acting in accord with the new circumstances and becoming subjects make voices presently inaudible audible through such unexpected combinations, in other words, through redistributions of the sensible. Such voices object to consensus which does not only mean agreement, but also that there is only one story possible about the world we live in, and so only one way of connecting images with meanings. Creating dissensus means creating a multiplicity of visual and meaningful perceptions, as well as unique perspectives and constructions of a common world. In this environment, which may be summarized as the global configuration of what is thinkable, the starting point of all is perhaps figuring out what the position of each of us is as an artist, as a teacher, as a student etc. What do we propose in the face of the attempts of subordination?

The ultimate point in all these undertakings of Ranciere's is the struggle against a singular and one sided understanding of the world. Politics becomes relevant here, in simple terms, by confronting the distribution of the sensible chosen

by the police. And aesthetic redistribution is proposed in the emancipation of those who are not counted. In this process, the main theoretical base, which is Ranciere's, has been handled in connection to its Marxist origin. His redefinitions and schematizations have been provided to make his ideas comprehensible. To succeed in the goal of multiplicity and diversification, it is surely necessary to seek methods of causing people to see differently what is to be seen, and art is used in this context from such an angle, as other objects or formations can be used. The peculiarity of this field comes from the assertion of the aesthetic dimension by Ranciere as inherent in any radical emancipatory politics. The possible will hopefully make people aware of the opportunity and possibility of stepping forth and through a questioning, reconfiguring themselves. In this sense, emancipation is the formulation of that questioning voice.

Positioning this liberating principle that rests on radical equality next to SALT serves to concretize and demonstrate how to withstand the overbearing system of inequality. Surely, it is not the only way of resistance, but it is a notable step in the SALT, as an institution that utilizes art, is involved in this endeavor from various directions, although it is prone to relatively valid reservations concerning its link to the finance world and the police order. If the fact that it is immersed in the actions and system of some people and institutions whom it criticizes is brought to the fore, the efficiency of its approach, despite its emancipatory theoretical groundwork, becomes questionable.

It should be noted that Ranciere recognizes the dominance and prevalence of the police order and the fact that it cannot be totally eliminated in the way he offers. However, through the intricate reasoning he elaborates on, it has been clear that

equality exists only in its verification. The possibility of being a part of the verification process through dissensus remains open, just as the possibility of extending the limits of the possible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, W. (n.d.). Aesthetics: Liberating the senses. (1991). In T. Carver (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Marx* (p. 255). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Adorno, T. W. (1997). *Aesthetic Theory* (p. 139, 227). London, UK: The Athlone Press.

Badiou, A. (2001, November 1). On evil: An interview with Alain Badiou. Retrieved April 16, 2015, from <http://www.lacan.com/badiou-on-evil.htm>

Benjamin, W. (1968). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In H. A. (Ed.), *Illuminations* (pp. 217-250). New York: Schocken Books.

Bishop, C. (2013). *Radical Museology*. London, UK: Koenig Books.

Deranty, J. P. (Ed.). (2010). *Jacques Ranciere: Key Concepts*. Durham (p. 186-187). UK: Acumen Publishing Limited.

Engels, F. (1972). *Dialectics of Nature*. Moscow, USSR: Progress.

Foucault, M. (2002). *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (p. 54). London and New York: Routledge.

Walsh, P. (2014). Hannah Arendt on The Social. In P. Hayden (Ed.), *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts* (pp. 127-128). New York, NY: Routledge.

Horkheimer, M., & Adorno, T. W. (2002). *Dialectic of enlightenment: Philosophical fragments* (p.128) (E. Jephcott, Trans.). California: Stanford University Press. (Original work published 1944)

Karaca, B. (2012). Türkiye'de Sansür Politikaları (Contemporary Artistic Production and Politics of Censorship in Turkey). *ToplumveBilim*, 125, 134-151.

Kortun, V. (Speaker). (2015, June 9). *VasifKortun. Director of research and programs at SALT, Istanbul* [Video file]. Retrieved March 31, 2016, from <https://vimeo.com/130229739> Interview by Radicate.eu

Kortun, V. (Speaker). (2016, March 11). *Unorthodox: On Museums Symposium at the Jewish Museum* [Video file]. Retrieved March 29, 2016, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOeP4ydQp8U>

Laplace, P. S. (1951). *A philosophical essay on probabilities*. (F. W. Truscott & F. L. Emory, Trans.). New York, NY: Dover. (Original work published 1814)

Larsen, E. (2010). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. Retrieved February 10, 2016, from https://modernism.research.yale.edu/wiki/index.php/The_Work_of_Art_in_the_Age_of_Mechanical_Reproduction

L'internationale. (2010). Confederation. Retrieved April 4, 2016, from <http://www.internationaleonline.org/confederation>

Lunn, E. (1982). *Marxism and Modernism* (p. 9, 23). London: University of California Press.

Marx, K. (1975). *Early Writings* (p. 352). London, UK: Penguin Books.

- Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1977). *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Selected Works* (Vol. 1). Moscow, USSR: Progress Publishers.
- May, T. (2008). *The Political Thought of Jacques Ranciere* (p. 44). Pennsylvania, USA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Megarry, T. (1995). *Society in Prehistory: The origins of Human Culture* (p. 289). London, UK: McMillan Press.
- Moran, B. (1999). *Edebiyat Kuramları ve Eleştirisi* (p.45-46). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Parker, A. (2004). Mimesis and the Division of Labor. In J. Ranciere (Author), *The Philosopher and His Poor*. Durham, UK: Duke University Press.
- Ranciere, J. (2010). *Dissensus: On politics and aesthetics* (p. 8). London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Ranciere, J. (1991). *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. California, USA: Stanford University Press.
- Ranciere, J. (2004). *Politics of Aesthetics* (p.51). London, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Ranciere, J. (2009). The Method of Equality: An Answer to Some Questions. In G. Rockhill & P. Watts (Eds.), *Jacques Ranciere: History, Politics, Aesthetics* (p. 275, 288). London, UK: Duke University Press.
- Rosen M. (2004). Benjamin, Adorno and the Decline of the Aura. In F. R. (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory* (pp. 40-57). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, R. (2005). Base and superstructure in Marxist cultural theory. In *Culture and Materialism* (p. 33-47). London: Verso

Zizek, S. (1998). For a Leftist Appropriation of the European Legacy. *Journal of Political Ideologies*. Retrieved September 20, 2015, from <http://www.lacan.com/zizek-leftist.htm>