

Political relationship as politics and democracy in Ranciere's "Ten Theses on Politics"

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"If politics has a specificity that makes it other than a more capacious mode of grouping or a form of power characterized by its mode of legitimation, it is that it concerns a distinctive kind of subject, and that it concerns this subject in the form of a mode of relationship that is proper to it. This is exactly what Aristotle says in Book I of the Politics, when he distinguishes political rule (as the ruling of equals) from all other kind of rule; and again in Book III, when he defines the citizen as 'he who partakes in the fact of ruling and the fact of being ruled.' Everything about politics is contained in this specific relationship, this 'partaking' that needs to be interrogated as to its meaning and conditions of possibility."

Jacques Ranciere
Ten Theses on Politics

In this paper I want to engage in a conceptual analysis of the theoretical framework of the relationship between politics, political subject and democracy in Ranciere's theory of democracy and politics. I will argue that this theoretical relational framework is the grounding of Ranciere's theory. By analyzing the particular text of *Ten Theses on Politics* in conjunction with some additional excerpts from other works and their critique, I will analyze modalities of the key concepts in the text and their associations and will explicate the importance of the logic of what Ranciere calls "political relationship." In my view "political relationship" is precisely what defines the form of politics in the paradoxical form of simultaneous junction and disjunction of its elements, where the component that divides and separates is democracy. Precisely this double functioning of democracy as a unifier and divider of the system of ruling (*Arkhe*) with its subject (*demos*) is what prevents democracy from grounding itself in any institutionalized forms or taking any particular shape and form of the rule. I will attempt to show that Ranciere is not satisfied by establishing democracy as permanent motion of internal divide animated by function of connection/separation and attempts to take it one step further towards possibility of reconciliation of *Arkhe* and democracy by introducing democracy as what he calls "supplement" to the logic of "police." This theoretical move allows Ranciere to "salvage" democracy on its own grounds, without reducing it to the logic of institutionalization and formalization while at the same time attempting to influence the logic of "police." I will conclude that while it is a valuable theoretical move it does not resolve much because democracy does not challenge "police" directly in order to institute communities according to its own logic but remains permanently fixated on its agonistic motion of founding and withdrawing at the same time of its foundations, which prevents democracy from any concrete resolution in a form of a new ruling order.

Consensus or Dissensus?

The concept of consensus is at the core of many modern liberal theories of democracy. In these theories consensus appears as a mechanism allowing for reconciliation of diverse opinions and points of view of the members of plural societies. Theoretical structures of such societies imply the presence of trust in institutional systems which resolve conflicts and treat subjects equally despite the diversity of their views. From this point of view stability of society depends on the level of consensus it holds. In the context of this theoretical framework consensus appears as a positive and desirable phenomenon. Despite the emphasis on positive normative implications of consensual models of liberal democracy, they remain challenged by alternative theories of radical democracy and authors such as Mouffe, Laclau, Leffort, Lummis, Castoriadis, Ranciere and others.

Contrary to the idea of consensus, French political philosopher Jacques Ranciere proposes and develops a theory offering re-formulation of politics and democracy based on the claim that at the core of politics and democracy lies not the consensus but the rationality of dissensus and disagreement. This understanding of politics, which Ranciere equates to democracy, is opposed to the concept of the police. Police is described by Ranciere as the mechanism of forms, categories, structures and hierarchies, which counts and distributes positions and defines who exercises power and who is subject to it in the community.¹

¹ Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics* (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 36.

The domain of this distribution always carries the element of exclusion where a certain part of community is not accounted for. "Policing" in its essence is the principle that distributes, assigns and locates that which is visible, what is included within the greater structure of the domain of distribution itself. That is, what is not visible or heard or what is not given visibility has no part and is excluded from this distribution. Every existing society has the element or elements for which, given the distribution of positions and assignments, exercise of power are excluded. Therefore, in opposition to this logic of a mechanism of distribution, Ranciere situates democracy, in the form of groundless, indeterminate subjectivity. Such a definition interrupts the distribution of social spaces and power positions by making the element which is unaccounted and ignored, to appear visible. Dissensus, the uninstitutionalized and ungrounded challenge to the logic of mechanism of the police for Ranciere, is the very institution of politics itself. In contrast to the theoretical conceptualization of politics as the form of rule based on consensus, Ranciere proposes the idea of politics as the mode of dissensual subjectivation, which challenges the reduction of politics to the police. Such a mode stands in opposition to the logic of the police.² In the theoretical context this oppositional relationship between the politics and police is essential as two concepts that, while opposing each other also affirm and objectify each other. The structure of this antagonistic but logical mutual relationship is an overarching framework of Ranciere's theory of democracy and basis of its discursive context.

Ranciere's theory of politics or democracy should not be perceived in a reduced form as a one-dimensional dichotomy or set of dichotomies of police and politics, democracy and liberalism, *Arche* and anarchy, institution and groundlessness, consensus and dissensus, form and content, and alike. While these dichotomies carry an unequivocal character, what makes Ranciere's theory far more complex multi-dimensional and nuanced is the complexity of the concepts that Ranciere operates with and their sometimes paradoxical relationship. This is not surprising as in his theory Ranciere articulates a complicated relationship of two worlds: visible and invisible, empirical distribution of power and idea of politics, material logic and sensual imaginary. In his words: "It is the construction of paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds."³ The key concepts in Ranciere's argument, such as "politics," "democracy," "relationship," "visibility," "partaking," "possibility" and others are multi-dimensional or at least bi-dimensional and are operated within the framework of disjunctions and relationship. Ranciere's language is not only of political theory but balances at the intersection of philosophy, politics and aesthetics, from which, in my view, the richness of texture of the argument is derived and which is important to keep in mind when discerning different underlying currents of Ranciere's thought underneath the texts of his work.

Ranciere seems to consciously avoid the language of "pure" political philosophy as he is aware and remains theoretically sensitive to the notion of the "violent encounter" between philosophy and politics: "Concealed under the anodyne expression 'political philosophy' is the violent encounter between philosophy and the exception to the law of *arkhe* proper to politics, not to mention philosophy's own effort to resituate politics under the auspices of this law."⁴ One of Ranciere's interpretation of politics, that appears as an exception when opposed to the law of *arkhe*, or in that sense "politics proper," is politics understood outside the logic of political philosophy, that is, politics not canceled out by the desire of political philosophy to give community a single foundation.⁵ In that sense politics historically is pre-political-philosophical and theoretically is not situated purely within the confines of political philosophy, which tends to equate it with the logic of police. This transcendental dimension of politics can be interpreted as the realm of the political in comparison to the understanding of politics as a formal domain of organized configuration and relational structure of institutions within which power is allocated accordingly.

In the beginning, there was politics...

In the form of classic deductive argument, the basis of which is categorical propositions, Ranciere's argument can be structured as follows: politics exist; politics is a relationship in the form of ruling and being ruled; the political subject is one who partakes in this relationship; democracy is a form of ruling where the ruler is the ruled, therefore politics is democracy. This reductive simplification of Ranciere's argument does not aim to test validity of the proposition nor the conclusion that politics is democracy but rather to accentuate the *relational* theoretical structure consisting of politics, political subject and democracy. This structure is the grounding theoretical framework of Ranciere's theory of politics and democracy. Although Ranciere is very critical of the conjunction of politics and philosophy, in his theory he comes back to the very beginning of both: to texts of Plato and Aristotle.

² Ibid, 28, 42.

³ Ibid, 39

⁴ Ibid, 40

⁵ Ibid, 41

Aristotle's definition of citizen as "he, who partakes in the fact of ruling and the fact of being ruled" in Book III of *Politics* becomes the sole principle and essence of what politics for Ranciere is. We can say that Ranciere's argument starts with the categorical proposition that "politics exist." This proposition corresponds to the notion of Plato's seventh qualification in the list of qualifications required for governing – the drawing of lots or "the Choice of God."⁶ Democracy is governing qualified on the absence of any qualifications. The proposition that politics exist implied in Ranciere's argument rests upon the same absence of any justification other than that it *is*. Ranciere says that politics cannot be defined on the basis of any pre-existing subject and ought to be defined in its own terms.⁷ Politics is the relationship in the form of ruling and being ruled. Ranciere says: "everything about politics is contained in this specific relationship ..."⁸ The concept of relationship is important as while Ranciere indicates "specific relation," the broader framework of his argument consistently remains in the mode of the relationship.

Politics as disjunction

The existence of politics allows for logical conception of political subject corresponding to it as to the form of specific relation, of which he is a part. The subject of this relation is he who partakes in the fact of ruling and the fact of being ruled, and the relation, which is proper to the subject is precisely this "partaking." Ranciere calls this relation "political relationship" and precisely this form makes it possible to conceive of the subject of politics, and, as Ranciere stresses: "not the other way around." Hence politics is not constitutive of the parts but parts are constitutive of politics of which they are part. This unity between form of ruling and subjects partaking in it is what Ranciere calls "political singularity" as opposed to the single foundation that political philosophy aims to give to the divided and partitioned community.

We have to be clear here. The relationship on which politics rests is not only in the form of ruling as "ruling and being ruled," which is only a part of it. It is a binary relationship between the *political relationship* and the *subject of this relationship*. In the words of Ranciere, "politics disappears the moment this knot between a subject and a relation is undone."⁹ This relationship is in a form of logical disjunction or double disjunction that is the operation of two logical values which can only produce false value if and only if both operands are false. Two operands, *political relationship* and the *subject*, both are true as propositions. Political subject in this relationship is doubled, paradoxically, by being removed from itself. It relates to the *political relation* of which, he is a part (as a subject of two contradictory terms of ruling and being ruled) and to himself as a subject relating to political relation. But this relationship between *political relationship* and its *subject* is a disjunction, which means it is *bringing together* and a *separation* at the same time (of two operands). And this disjunction, this dividing while bringing together, and bringing together by separation, which as Ranciere notes escapes mathematical and geometrical logic of distribution of values, marks that "wrong," that "torsion", "gap" which is democracy, which is the essence of politics and through which the politics occur. This statement requires an explanation of how and what is being separated in the political relationship.

Dividing the subject

As noted previously, in my view political relationship is a binary separation of the subject from ruling (of which he is a part) and by the same token from itself. Through this disjunction the subject of politics, the demos, the people, becomes duplicated. If we were to mark the two parts of the split of political subject as "S1" and "S2", the form of ruling by being ruled as "R+S1" and the whole "political relationship" as "PR" then this relationship could be expressed symbolically as: $PR = ((R + S1) + S2)$. In my view the break occurs between (R+S1) and (S2). The subject becomes separated from itself by separation from the ruling, in the process producing self-other. This is where Ranciere says that society, classes, and people in politics are separated from themselves or have two bodies, which Ranciere considers "a constitutive given of politics itself."¹⁰ As was mentioned, Ranciere's language is not purely of political science, therefore the concepts and their structures are multidimensional and their manipulation affects multiple levels of theoretical structure at the same time. Therefore while focusing on one element we should aim to see it from the perspective of the whole structure. In this context separation of the subject from the ruling (in a form of ruling and being ruled) can be interpreted as "emptying" the ruling of its subject. What is left in the ruling then is the empty space, the gap, lack of position, improper property, empty name of freedom,¹¹ in other words a "shadow" of the subject in the structure of governing having no voice and no appearance, therefore unnoticed and unaccounted.

⁶ Plato, *Laws*. Book III, (690e)

⁷ Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics* (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 36.

⁸ Ibid, 27.

⁹ Ibid, 29.

¹⁰ Ibid, 34

¹¹ Ibid

At the same time, the singularity of the form of ruling based on the core characteristic, equality becomes eliminated, the relationship becomes disbalanced and “ruling” collapses into *arkhe* and subsequently takes up the logic of the “police.” It seems that this “split” of the singularity of the political subject and emptying the form of “ruling and being ruled” from the subject occurs at the very beginning of politics. In Ranciere’s terms it is the beginning of politics. It occurs through “wrong,” which antecedents Ranciere in his essay “The Beginning of Politics” traces back to the texts of Plato and Aristotle. He illustrates the disjunction of the “split” by misplacement of concepts when the structure of relation “useful-harmful” is rearranged using the logic of oppositions and the concept of “justice” becomes introduced forming “unnatural” heterogeneous pairs of “useful – just” and “harmful – unjust.”¹² Ranciere says: “It is in the play of opposites, in the obscure relationship of the ‘harmful’ and the ‘unjust,’ that the heart of the political problem lies – the problem politics poses for philosophical thinking about community.”¹³

The wrong, then, in the form of this obscure relationship appears double sided. Firstly it is a wrong which on the grounds of equality provided by the entitlement to rule without any qualification for ruling, undermines the logic of assignment of qualifications and distributions of the communal parts for those who have particular qualifications (education, wealth, nobility). It is a wrong done to them, to *arkhe* and the logic of police. The other side of the wrong is that those who on the basis of equality of entitlement to rule without any qualifications aim to have their part in the distribution of determinable property remain unaccounted and unrecognized. The wrong is on them. This wrong is a “faulty connection” which causes a short circuit in the smooth functioning of the network of natural logic of properties¹⁴ of the police.

Uniting the subject

The gap produced in the logic of ruling by the incomplete presence of the subject divided in itself is an important part of the theoretical framework of politics and democracy within which Ranciere operates, however this gap by itself is not the democracy and not the politics yet as some readers of Ranciere argue.¹⁵ Politics is a form of relationship that defines a specific subject and the “gap” discussed above is only one side of this relationship. The other side is the other part of the divided subject which is subject of politics itself. So the real torsion, the force that is source and essence of democracy, is the intention or the attempt, the struggle of the divided subject, the class, the people, the poor, the demos, to unify itself with itself by overcoming the gap created by wrong. This struggle is also one to appear, to become heard, to fill the gap and on the basis of entitlement to rule without any qualifications for ruling, and by opposing the logic of the “police” to restore equality which is the source of the political subject in the first place. This attempt, the effort and motion animated by this effort to unify the political relationship with its constitutive subject, is where politics occur.

In the words of Ranciere: “Politics disappears the moment this knot between a subject and a relationship is undone.”¹⁶ In my view democracy is precisely this intent, the fixation on the possibility of attainment of unification of the subject and as such it keeps politics in existence. Ranciere says that there exist two ways of counting parts of the community, the first one counts real parts, the actual groups defined by different functions, places and interests that make up the social body, and the second one is to count part of those without part.¹⁷ Democracy is an attempt to bring together two worlds, the visible and the invisible, accounted and the unaccounted, on the basis of the pre-supposition of equality and in doing so accomplish the political singularity. Todd May in his book on Ranciere’s political thought notices that Ranciere proposes to think about equality actively.¹⁸ May says that active equality in Ranciere’s theory is doing equality rather than just having it. While we may agree with this interpretation, we need to ask the question what “doing-equality” as part of democracy in the context of the text really entails.

Here I am trying to challenge the concept of the “action” often used in descriptions of politics and democracy in Ranciere’s theory, e.g., democracy and politics as an action of disruption, action of becoming seen, action of demanding being accounted and so on. The question is what kind of action it is? That is why earlier I repeatedly used terms such as “attempt,” “constant trying,” or “struggle” rather than the word ‘action.’ In this context I tend to disagree with May about the idea of *doing* equality. The action and doing implies the notion of means and ends, that is, activity in order to actually achieve a certain objective, goal, or fulfill the plan. However, the “plan” in the text of the theory is never completed, accomplished and fulfilled.

¹² The beginning of politics 2,3

¹³ Ibid, 3

¹⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), IX.

¹⁵ Jacques Ranciere. Focusing on work of Jacques Ranciere. <http://ranciere.blogspot.com/2008/03/zizek-ranciere-democracy.html>

¹⁶ Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics* (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 29.

¹⁷ Ibid. 36.

¹⁸ Todd May, *The Political Thought of Jacques Rancière: Creating Equality*, (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 196.

That is first, because there is no plan, and second it is not constructed argumentatively to be able to resolve itself into some kind of final resolution in concrete envisioned terms.

Perpetual opposition

If *Arkhe* is the theoretical principle of distribution of power and entailing that the fact of ruling is anticipated in the disposition to rule in the evidence of its empirical operation, then democracy carries the opposite characteristics. Ranciere says that democracy is neither a pre-determined distribution of roles nor an attribution of the exercise of power to a disposition for ruling. In my opinion these are important characteristics as they indicate democracy's indeterminacy in relation to any final resolution or "plan." Paradoxically this indeterminacy is precisely "doing" of democracy. From this point of view, the critique that Ranciere does not resolve anything, that he proposes just another "democratic utopia" and that like many theories of radical democracy it is just another obscure object, could be answered on two points. First, Ranciere never claimed and his work was not intended to be some kind of manifesto, laying down a coherent action plan, explaining what needs to be done and how it will be done in order to achieve particular results and why those results should be desired.

In other words it is not a program, party "platform," or a doctrine. Ranciere does not fall into the trap of what Bakunin called "doctrine revolutions" when criticizing Marx's programs. Bakunin said that Marxian doctrinal objectives are to overthrow existing governments and regimes so as to create their own regimes.¹⁹ Ranciere seem to be very aware of that when in he says that politics is not a function of the fact that it is useful to assemble, nor of the fact that assemblies are held for the sake of the good management of common business. It is a function of the fact that a wrong exists, and injustice that needs to be addressed.²⁰ Hence, politics is the function of the wrong and democracy then is not the resolution of the wrong but the practice of the addressing of the wrong. We also should recall that Ranciere does not think within a purely political-institutional framework but alternates between politics, philosophy and aesthetics and rather consciously in order to "demystify" conventional politics which for him is representation of "police" logic.

As I already pointed out, democracy is not a "straight" singular act, but rather a desire, a drive, an act of opposition as a means without ends. It is a place and the form of the political *dispute*, momentous site of disagreement, crossing of the boundary between the two worlds in order to appear, to become visible, to have a voice, to materialize in the realm of distribution of the common. It is not the actual materialization, the actual acquisition of voice, nor the actual incorporation of a previously ignored part in the mechanism of the social distribution it aims. From the point of view of the political relationship it is a perpetual breaking and restoring of the relationship between politics and its subject. One should not think that "drive", or "fixation" are irrational or purely transcendental, especially in opposition to the rational, geometrical distribution of the social by the logic and rules of *police*. Here we should look closer at what *police* is. As are other concepts in Ranciere's theory, *police* is a multidimensional, relation-based concept. Police is a combination of *Arkhe* as the source of the ultimate principle, the logic of seeing the social as the structure, the combination of assigned parts. It is the institutionalization of the structure and strategy of distribution by "techniques" of power such as law, bureaucracy, hierarchy and so on.

We can say police has its logic, its rationality and its instrumentality. Democracy in the form of the drive, the intent, the desire as opposition to the police also has its logic and its rationality. Logically it is not groundless. The basis of the act of opposing the police is equality. This equality is an *Arkhe* of one of the two worlds, of the invisible world, which is not the "outside" world, some external entity, but is inside the confines of the world of the police, even the part of it, its "other"; i.e., the second part of the political singularity which was split by wrong, as we discussed earlier. Hence it is also the second part of the split *Arkhe* of the politics proper. Making a claim to be counted in the distribution of the sensible²¹ is based on the proposition that at the beginning, before the wrong there was politics and it was in a form that those who ruled were also ruled by themselves, hence everybody and anyone was equal. Democracy is the mode of bringing two worlds together, of "repairing" the wrong, of "returning" the subject back to the political relationship.

Supplementing police with politics

Despite the drive to repair the wrong, to reverse the disjunction between the political relationship and its subject by uniting the subject with itself, the exposition and inclusion of the uncounted parts in the distribution of the part of the "sensible" does not happen in Ranciere's work.

¹⁹ Michael, Bakunin. Statism and Anarchy, tr. and ed. Marshall S. Shatz. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1990.

²⁰ Jacques Ranciere: the philosopher and his poor on the shores of democratic politics. The Free Library.
<http://www.thefreelibrary.com>

²¹ Sensible here should not be confused with sensual (although this reasoning is also correct keeping in mind Ranciere's resorts to aesthetics) but it means common, something shared.

In other words the wrong is not resolved and the police is not replaced by the politics. We have to examine the composition of the theoretical framework without falling into the trap of normative inclinations. Democracy as we mentioned earlier makes the claim to become the part of the counting of the community, distribution of the parts of the social, of the sensible, of something that everyone has in common. However, this distribution and the drive to be accounted in it is the locus point of the paradox of democracy and at the same time the “gap” in the theory itself. The question is what is this distribution? In *Ten Theses on Politics* Ranciere, in his explication of thesis nine says, “Two ways of counting the parts of the community exist. The first counts real parts only – actual groups defined by difference in birth, and by the different functions, places and interests that make up the social body on the exclusion of every supplement. The second, in addition to this, counts a part of those without part. I call the first the police and the second politics.”²² In following passage he clarifies that police is the symbolic constitution of the social, that is, a law that defines the forms or partaking by defining modes of perception in which they are inscribed, in other words the law of partition of the sensible.²³ This law implicitly separates those who take part from those who does not and presupposes as prior a division between the visible and the invisible. But what does it mean to be counted in the distribution of parts? Logically it means becoming the part of the process, of the logic, of the mechanism of such distribution by searching for or claiming a certain entitlement for sharing power.

That is, becoming part of the logic of the police, becoming the subject of *Akhe*. The implication could be discerned that democracy while opposing *Arkhe* at the same time aims at having it, and opposition to the logic of the police is exactly that – restoring the split *Arkhe* of politics. But what is this *Arkhe* of politics? There are not many clues that would lead to the answer except that the basic law of politics would be equality, in a political form of ruling of equals, the same political relation which is the principle formula of Ranciere’s theory of politics and democracy. One could make a valid argument that democracy, in the form of an attempt to make the invisible part visible and the unaccounted part to be counted in the distribution of social parts, aims to become a part and *submit* to the principles of the police. There is a tendency for democracy to collapse into the logic, and to become just another part of the order of the police. Ranciere is aware of this logical “trap” and therefore provides the “safeguard” for it by accentuating the idea of separation or partition implied in the construction of the police order. Such partition as Ranciere explains is partition in a double sense. It separates and excludes and at the same time allows for participation. It divides up and distributes all visible parts of the common, or the sensible, of what everybody as a community shares.

As Ranciere explains, the “distribution of the sensible” is the law that describes the forms of partaking and the modes perception in which they are inscribed. In other words it describes the manner of distribution, the presupposition of the principle, the establishment of the “language” which would be used in the process of the dividing up the world and the people. This language, the conventional agreement of what is being recognized, what names are given and what meanings are prescribed is what makes the people, the demos, unrecognized. The language of the demos and the language of the police are different. Ranciere accentuates this idea by saying that disagreement is not the disagreement over something but a disability of understanding, or refusal to understand, refusal to hear, to see, to count, to include by ignoring. Two parties may argue about an identical subject but if they speak different languages or if one party decides not to listen or not to hear the other, the presence of the other will not be complete, because it will be lacking its subjectification, its presence expressed in language in the world of the other. But that does not mean that the other part does not exist. Thus is the paradox of the partition of the sensible which separates and excludes and allows for participation at the same time. However, the existence of the demos, of unaccounted of ‘invisible’ is affirmed by the fact that division and distribution is division of the common, of something that is being shared by everybody.

Does that mean that democracy is inherently part of the police? It does not. I believe Ranciere is saying that equality is inherent in any society but the particular logic, language of the division and distribution of the parts of the common does not understand, therefore does not see and does not recognize the claims made on the basis of equality. Here is the logic of inclusion and separation at the same time. Demos is the common, but has no share in it. To resolve the tendency of democracy collapsing into the police by the unaccounted part becoming accounted and becoming just another constituting part of the division and distribution of the shares of the common, Ranciere introduces the concept of “supplementation.” The invisible part becoming visible is not “the part” but the “supplement” in the process of division and distribution of parts of the common. The people is the supplementary part in the count of the parts of the population, making it possible to identify “the count of the unaccounted” with the whole of the community.²⁴

²² Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics* (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 34.

²³ Ibid.

Hence it is not the “organic” part of the mechanism of the distribution. It is the supplement, the part which is *made*, the artifice, the “abstract supplement” to account of the parts of the population, the “supplementary existence.” It is important to note, that this “supplement”, this “artifice” is strictly not a *complimentary* part in the principle of *Arkhe*. Quite the opposite, it is something that has no ascribed place, something alien to the logic of the distribution, which at the same time rises from *within* that logic. The occurrence of the people in the place where there is no place for them creates the tension, the torsion of the politics. It becomes the excess, the surplus in relation to the count of the parts of society, a specific figure of the part of those without part.²⁵ For Ranciere it is the very stake of politics itself.

The last question to consider is where is democracy? What is its role, its part and position in this complicated mechanism of politics as a relation Ranciere presents us with? In my view democracy is the mechanism, the action, the act of noise becoming the language in order to declare “I am”. However, as I mentioned earlier it is not the resolute action but the fixation, the intent, the “claiming.” It is also the act of disturbance, the hammering the splint into the structure of the *Arkhe*, the disturbance of the police order. Democracy is the state of mind, the disposition on which the claims of inclusion are made. At the same time democracy is also the permanent tension within itself, a permanent process of dissolution of its own attempts of grounding, of constituting any structure, of founding. It is the reiteration of the “political relationship”, which itself is a permanent junction and disjunction between the relationship and its subject, It is its constant and simultaneous subjectification and de-subjectification in the process of politics.

Conclusion

In the light of the understanding of politics in Ranciere’s theory as the specific relation between politics and its subject, what Ranciere calls “political relationship” and democracy as dissensus,, Ranciere’s argument, despite its own critique of these notions, leads to the same direction as the “end of politics” and the “return of politics,” that is, towards some kind of teleological resolution. However, as I see it, Ranciere’s project is different and it implies neither “the end of politics” nor the “return of politics” but the permanent *attempt* of return *to* politics by the means of democracy. Democracy then is the “tool”, for the construction of the “passage” to politics. It is the *intermediate* stage of the larger project of the returning *to* politics. In this context democracy is not just “another democratic utopia” the expression often used to criticize radical theories of democracy due to their uninstitutionalization and groundlessness, but the “passage” towards the political. In this sense Ranciere pushes boundaries of our understanding and conceptualization of the possibility of democratic practices within the framework of liberal institutional regimes.

He proposes the democracy as the “supplement” to the police or conventional understanding of politics based on consensus as the temporary solution for “here” and “now.” Democracy as a constant confrontation and interruption of regimes of hierarchical structures distributing social positions and determining power relations in society mitigates and attempts to balance out their powers legitimized by consensus. However, precisely this paradoxical state of democracy as permanent temporality becomes a “trap” on the path towards the institutionalization of the political. Following the horizon of the political and focused on democracy as the *perpetum mobile* of the disruption of logic of *arkhe*, Ranciere never considers combining democracy’s position of “here” and “now” in a form of “supplement” with the logic of distribution of parts in order to bring “in” those who stand unnoticed. Ranciere provides the theory of the principle of combining two worlds: visible and invisible, accounted and unaccounted, mathematical and aesthetical. However, while providing the principle for the disposition for turning the noise made by the “muted” into a language understood by those who control distribution of the common, Ranciere falls short of providing the principle for disposition of democracy as a materializing of political self-institution.

Ranciere while understanding the importance and need for *Arkhe* at the same time remains trapped in the permanent attempt of the escape from *Arkhe* and does not “dare” to think in terms of democracy as a revolutionary (or aiming to be resolved), or as institutionalized self-founding as a different type of *Arkhe*, transforming the regime of the police. He only assigns democracy the roles of the supplement to the existing forms of regimes based on consensus. In other words Ranciere’s message about democracy could be read as encouragement to think it or do it but do not *make* it as the making of democracy in his view leads to the undoing of it. The lack of the theoretical project of democracy as something that would have the possibility of being constituted in terms of actual existing parts in addition to its aesthetical model leaves the gap in Ranciere’s theory.

²⁴ Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics* (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 45 – 53.

Therefore, the “unaccounted” while permanently demanding incorporation at the same time remain permanently “outside” and the readers, following Ranciere on return *to* politics find themselves “stuck” in the “passage” of democracy leading towards politics. If we are looking for the politics and after we found it we want to stay in as the political subjects (that is subjects re-united with ourselves) we need the Arkhe in order to keep the political relationship intact, otherwise we risk depoliticizing the whole project of society altogether.

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