the politics of *skholé*:

rethinking the political character of scholastic education with jacques rancière

josé miguel vargas-pellicer[1]
katholieke universiteit leuven, leuven, belgium
orcid id: 0000-0003-3004-8569
jan masschelein[2]
katholieke universiteit leuven, leuven, belgium
orcid id: 0000-0003-2850-1571
maarten simons[3]
katholieke universiteit leuven, leuven, belgium
orcid id: 0000-0003-4694-0586

abstract
In this article, our goal is to delve into the political character of scholastic education through a pedagogical-philosophical discussion. We seek to rethink the notions of *politics* and *skholé*, and to take distance from more common approaches to *politics* in relation to scholastic education: not only by avoiding, on one hand, the reduction of politics to a matter of *power dynamics*, or to an *arena for discussing and solving societal problems*, or a matter of *governmentality*; but also by avoiding the reduction of scholastic education to an instrument of these. We believe that a meticulous reading of the political work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière offers a way to articulate the relationship between *politics* and scholastic education without falling into these reductions. We suggest that through this Rancièrian approach, it becomes possible to explore the transformative and emancipatory aspect of scholastic education without denying its political character, and without reducing it to a mere instrument for governmental policy. Therefore, after reviewing what we believe to be some key notions of Rancière's notion of politics, we propose to discuss the political character of scholastic education by addressing two crucial pedagogical aspects: the *formalization of scholè* (meaning the way in which *scholè* takes form), and the *scholastic formation* (the kind of formation enabled throughout scholastic education). Our aim is to contribute to pedagogical debates on scholastic education by enabling a dialogue with a reading of Rancière's work that goes beyond *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*.

keywords: schools; politics; scholastic education; j. rancière; *skholé*

a política da *skholé*:
repensando o caráter político da educação escolar a partir de jacques rancière

resumo
Neste artigo, nosso objetivo é mergulhar no caráter político da educação escolar a partir de uma discussão pedagógica-filosófica. Buscamos repensar as noções de *política* e *skholé*, nos distanciando das abordagens mais comuns da *política* em relação à educação escolar: não apenas evitando, por um lado, a redução da política a uma questão de *dinâmicas de poder*, *uma arena para discutir e resolver problemas sociais* ou uma questão de

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[1] E-mail: jmvpellicer@gmail.com
[2] E-mail: jan.masschelein@kuleuven.be
[3] E-mail: maarten.simons@kuleuven.be

governamentalidade; mas também evitando a redução da escola a um instrumento a favor delas. Acreditamos que uma leitura meticulosa do trabalho político do filósofo francês Jacques Rancière oferece um caminho para articular as relações entre *política* e educação escolar sem cair nessas reduções. Sugerimos que, a partir dessa abordagem rancèriana, se torna possível explorar o aspecto transformador e emancipatório da educação escolar sem negar seu caráter político e sem reduzi-la a um mero instrumento de política governamental. Portanto, depois de revisar o que acreditamos serem algumas noções-chave do conceito de política de Rancière, propomos discutir o caráter político da educação escolar abordando dois aspectos pedagógicos cruciais: *a formalização da skholé* (ou seja, a maneira pela qual a *skholé* toma forma) e a *formação escolar* (o tipo de formação possibilitada pela educação escolar). Nosso objetivo é contribuir para os debates pedagógicos sobre a educação escolar, possibilitando um diálogo com uma leitura de Ranciére que vá além de *O mestre ignorante*.

palavras-chave: escolas; política; educação escolar; j. rancière; *skholé*.

la política de la *skholé*:
repensando el carácter político de la educación escolar con Jacques Rancière

resumen

En este artículo, nuestro objetivo es profundizar en el carácter político de la educación escolar a través de una discusión pedagógico-filosófica. Buscamos repensar las nociones de *política* y *skholé*, y tomar distancia de los enfoques más comunes sobre la política en relación con la educación escolar: no solo evitando, por un lado, la reducción de la política a una cuestión de *dinámicas de poder*, o a una *arena donde se discuten y resuelven problemas sociales* o a una cuestión de *gubernamentalidad*; sino también evitando la reducción de la educación escolar a un instrumento de estas. Creemos que una lectura minuciosa de la obra política del filósofo francés Jacques Rancière ofrece una forma de articular la relación entre la política y la educación escolar sin caer en estas reducciones. Sugerimos que, a través de este enfoque rancèriano, es posible explorar el aspecto transformador y emancipador de la educación escolástica sin negar su carácter político y sin reducirla a un mero instrumento de políticas gubernamentales. Por lo tanto, después de revisar lo que creemos que son algunas nociones clave de la concepción de política de Rancière, proponemos discutir el carácter político de la educación escolar abordando dos aspectos pedagógicos cruciales: la formalización de la scholè (es decir, la manera en que scholè toma forma) y la formación escolar (el tipo de formación que se habilita a través de la educación escolar). Nuestro objetivo es contribuir a los debates pedagógicos sobre la educación escolar al posibilitar un diálogo con una lectura de la obra de Rancière que va más allá de *El maestro ignorante*.

palabras-clave: escuela; política; educación escolar; j. rancière; *skholé*

the politics of *skholé*
rethinking the political character of scholastic education with jacques rancière

intro

In this paper, we aim to explore the intersection of *politics* and *scholastic education* by revisiting its connection through, on the side of *politics*, a specific reading of the notion of *the political* by French philosopher Jacques Rancière,[4] and, on the side of scholastic education, the pedagogical approach based on the concept of *skholé*.[5] Scholastic education is taken as a *specific form of education* that is not focused on socialization or initiation into specific ethos;[6] it differs from the socio-cultural approach that focuses on the way humans learn to become social beings.[7] Instead, in a dialogue with *skholé* (as free –and freed– time), this approach focuses on the possibilities of *subjectivation*, *renewal*, and *transformation* enabled by the creation of a separated time-space encouraging diverse ways of engaging with the world beyond the contextual ethos.

We propose to focus on the *political character* of this way of understanding *scholastic education*. The aim is to offer an alternative reading to a common approach to this articulation that tends to portray scholastic education as a political instrument. This, we suggest, becomes very problematic not only because of the reduction of scholastic education to an *instrument*, but also because of a second reduction where the political is understood merely as the process of shaping a predefined project of life. This double reduction misses the opportunity

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[4] Rancière's work on politics is portrayed along most of its work; for this article, we are mostly focusing on the following texts: "Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization" (Rancière, 1992). *Disagreement. Politics and Philosophy* (Rancière, 1999); "Ten Thesis on Politics" (Rancière, 2001). "The distribution of the sensible" (Rancière, 2004), *Hatred of Democracy* (Rancière, 2006). *La noche de los proletarios: archivos del sueño obrero* (Rancière, 2010).

[5] Although strongly influenced by the same philosopher (Rancière, 1988), it has been further elaborated by articulating it with the educational thoughts from Hannah Arendt (1996), Buber (1925), or Serres (1997). From the text of *In Defense of the School. A Public Issue* by Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons (2013), to the many authors presenting and discussing ideas from this perspective in the books: *Jacques Rancière (e a escola): educação, política e emancipação/organização* edited by José Sérgio Donseca de Carvalho (2022), and *Elogio de la escuela*, edited by Jorge Larrosa Bondia (2018).

[6] We are using the notion of ethos in the same way Rancière uses it: as a form of culture associated with specific communities. As a certain collective morality, character and ways of being that identifies the voice of the community with the voice of the members of the community (Rancière, 1999).

[7] Through, for example, the conceptualizations of *the zone of proximal development* (Cole, 1984), *situated learning*, or *communities of practices* (See Lave; Wenger, 1991).

to elaborate further and with more complexity the conceptualization of both *scholè* and politics.

This double reduction is often taken as truth not only by those arguments which openly defend that scholastic education should promote an *ideal societal project*[8] but also – on the other side – by the argumentations that, in favor of some kind of *education for the sake of education*, overlook a political discussion.[9] The challenge with the latter is that, in their attempt to avoid *political instrumentalization*, there is the risk of dismissing the very notion of the political, which, as we will expose in this article, is helpful to further elaborate the way in which scholastic education participates in our societies.

Hence, our aim is to explore, drawing upon Rancière's work, an alternative way of considering the political character of scholastic education. Based on his work, we will distance ourselves from some common approaches to *politics in relation to scholastic education* that, on one hand, reduce the political domain to a *matter of power dynamics*, or *governmentality*, or to an *arena for discussing and solving societal problems*;[10] and, on the other hand, end up reducing scholastic education to an instrument of these.

The text is divided into two parts. In the first section, we will revisit some notions from Rancière's political reflections that we consider crucial to elaborate on the political character of scholastic education. In educational studies, the

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[8] Which is present from socialist projects of life in which, for example, Fidel Castro (1975) defines education as to "prepare man[sic]… to produce the material and spiritual goods that society needs" [own translation: "Preparar al hombre… para producir los bienes materiales y los bienes espirituales que la sociedad necesita"] (p. 87) to neoliberal ones, in which, for example, Andreas Schleicher, director for Education and Skills of the OECD, states that good education means "to use resources more efficiently, and to increase the supply of knowledge and skills that fuel economic growth and promote social cohesion" (OECD, 2018, p. 4).

[9] This approach can be linked to a very influential reading of Arendt's work in the Crisis of Education in which she argues in favor of divorcing the realm of education from politics "because in politics we always have to deal with those who are already educated" (1958, p. 177). This is very present in the critiques to the politicization of education in both Frank Furedi (2009) and Masschelein and Simons (2013). Similar to this way of rendering the political realm, Hodson et al. (2018) argue for an approach of education for the sake of education (p. 8) as a counterproposal to the way "socio-political crises have been sought in educational solutions: from the introduction of citizenship education to the more recent PREVENT agenda against radicalisation in the UK" (p. 8)

[10] See Hodgson (2016); Bell (2022); Hernández-Rosete and Maya (2016); Carraher et al. (1991); Apple (1996); Battiste (2013).

*un*disciplined[11] work of this philosopher has been extensively used but mostly focusing on two texts more directly linked to education: *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991), and *Escuela, producción, igualdad* (Rancière, 1988). In this first section, we aim to introduce key conceptual notions from Rancière's political thoughts that have been less visited in educational studies but are valuable for enriching the pedagogical discussion.[12] In the second section, drawing upon our Rancièrian reading without losing a pedagogical gaze, we will address the political character of scholastic education by elaborating the *formalization of skholé* (meaning the way in which *skholé* takes form) and the *scholastic formation* (the kind of formation enabled by scholastic education).

rancière's key notions to start a conversation on the politics of skholé

"Briefly and roughly speaking," Rancière states, *the political* is the encounter of two processes: one of *governance*, which establishes a form of distributing the parts of a community by hierarchically stating places and functions, and a second one that consists of a set of practices *guided by the supposition that everyone is equal,* and attempts to verify this assumption (Rancière, 1992). The former is what Rancière calls policy, or *the police order*, and the latter is that of emancipation, also referred to as *politics*. Thus, the political is an encounter between two contrasting logics for organizing and distributing community roles: one of unequal distribution of places and functions (the *police order*); and the one of emancipation, as the assumption and verification of a fundamental equality (*politics*).

equality

Equality is a crucial notion that will be present throughout the text, but there are some important remarks we would like to state first. In line with the rest of the concepts we will discuss, engaging with Rancière's work requires taking some distance and rethinking traditional uses. Equality, hence, is not understood

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[11] In an interview Rancière states that he prefers to avoid being identified either to a specific discipline, or as interdisciplinary. Instead, precisely because his research aims rejecting the frontiers of disciplines, he suggests the use of *un*-disciplinary as the term to describe his approach (Ginedis, 2021).

[12] There are, of course, important contributions that go beyond the cited texts. See Carvalho (2022); as well as Simons and Masschelein (2010).

in a jurisdictional, or sociological way, but rather as a basic assumption that nobody is superior or inferior to anybody (Kohan, 2020, p. 101), that there is a fundamental equality of "anyone at all with anyone else" (Rancière, 1999, p. 15).

A way of addressing Rancière's work on *politics* is departing from his rupture with the Marxist-Althusserian tradition which traditionally viewed intellectuals as the *guiding force* for social mobilizations. He marked his distance precisely because of a fundamental *assumption of equality* which denies the "need" for any kind of emancipator (Crisis and Critique, 2023). This can be seen in his analysis of Jacotot's *universal method* and the *equality of intelligence* (Rancière, 1991), but also in *La noche de los proletarios* (Rancière, 2010), where he recounts how 19th century young workers conquered moments of sensory experience that did not 'belong' to them according to their proletarian status. With these examples, Rancière argues that *emancipation* is not about acquiring specific knowledge, awareness, or empowerment, but about *verifying that fundamental equality*; verifying the faculty that all speaking beings can understand, imagine, and create diverse ways of being in the world.

This understanding of equality is presented through the notion of *equality of intelligence*, where Rancière-Jacotot[13] dismantles the idea of "the genius" endowed with some sort of given talent and breaks the notion of intelligence into a capacity for repeating, imitating, copying, and translating. The equality of intelligence assumes the shared ability to take something apart, observe its elements, associate them, and put them back together (Rancière, 1991, p. 68). Beyond this shared ability of all speaking beings, the understanding of equality exemplified in *La noche de los proletarios* illustrates how workers recognize for themselves the potential to engage in a sensory relationship with the world beyond the societal category assigned to them as proletarians which condemned them to "only" manual labor. They take time away from that assigned to sleep and rest, deemed "necessary for productivity," to participate in activities perceived as "not theirs," such as reading, creating poetry, writing, painting, and producing music;

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[13] In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière (1991) portrays Jacotot in such a way that sometimes the boundaries of who is talking become blurred. This text is such a keystone for Rancière's political-philosophical work, in the sense that sets the foundations for the key notions of equality and emancipation that it feels only natural that their voices merge.

suspending the "ancestral hierarchy that subordinates those who work with their hands to those who have received the privilege of thought."[14]

Equality is not found "in an equitable unification of interests" but in actions that disable the supposedly "natural order" dictating who can participate in what and how (Rockhill, 2004, p. 90). The very idea of equality does not depend on the *just*, in the sense that it is not about doing the *right* thing. Instead, it rests on the recognition of a fundamental *wrong*, which is the impossibility of coming to a *right* way of distributing the parts of the community. The verification of equality, in this way, does not come to make anything *right*, but to handle the *wrong* (See Ranciére, 1992, pp. 58-59, 61, 1995, pp. 97, 103, 1999, pp. 4, 9, 19, 35, 38-39, 78).

the police order

According to Rancière, what is typically associated to *politics* such as a) the organization of powers, b) the aggregation and consent of collectivities, c) the distribution of the places and functions within the community, as well as d) the legitimation and institutionalization should rather be associated with the notion of *the police*, not with *politics* (Rancière, 1999, p. 28).

Rancière draws from Foucault's work where he shows how some authors of the 17th and 18th centuries referred to the term "police" to describe the organization and governance concerning everything related to "'man' and his 'happiness'," extending beyond the narrow scope of what we now refer to as the police force (the petty police) (Rancière, 1999, p. 28). This petty police, embodied in "the truncheon blows of the forces of law and order and the inquisitions of the secret police" (Rancière, 1999, p. 28) represents just one specific manifestation within a broader order. The *police order* is a wider hierarchical mode of distributing bodies, functions, and places of occupation within the community. It functions as an implicit law established through mechanisms, institutions, practices, fables, and beliefs that sustain a dominant organization and distribution of the bodies relying on a premise of inequality (Rancière, 1992, 1999, 2001).

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[14] Own translation: "…de la ancestral jerarquía que subordina a quienes se dedican a trabajar con sus manos a aquellos que han recibido el privilegio del pensamiento" (Rancière, 2010, p. 20).

The distinction between the *petty police* and the *police order* is quite relevant. When the latter is weak, the former becomes stronger (Rancière, 1999, p. 28). When the mechanisms, narratives, devices, institutions, and norms intended to establish a hierarchical *police order* are weak, the relevance of the police force (petty police) intensifies "to the point of putting it in charge of the whole set of police functions" (Rancière, 1999, p. 28). However, it is crucial to recognize that in places where the petty police is less visibly present and repressive, this does not imply a weakened police order. Instead, it suggests that the order can be sustained by other mechanisms that don't rely necessarily on the *truncheon blows of the forces of law and order* (Rancière, 1999, p. 28), such as some forms of racial, gender, class, or linguistic discrimination, that do not make use of the police force to carry out segmentations.

This could suggest an exploration of how these other mechanisms incorporate the *police order* through the internalization of disciplinary practices focused on the control of bodies. For instance, Escolano Benito's (2000) Foucauldian readings conceptualize schools, through their architectural and furniture arrangements, as "devices to make docile bodies and minds".[15] However, beyond acknowledging the relevance of the *police order's* incorporation into other mechanisms in a disciplinary sense, (See also Foucault, 2009) what seems more interesting, from a Rancierian perspective, is the way in which the *police order* is reproduced in the realm of *aesthetics* (Rancière, 1999, 2004, 2010). Meaning that it is not only about the control of bodies at a disciplinary level, but about the way the *police order* interferes in the experience on a sensory level (the level of perception). Defining and establishing a [police] distribution of the parts of the community goes not only by the use of physical force, but also by the control of ways of being (which rely strongly on ways of doing, seeing, and speaking).

For the sake of thinking about *politics* and scholastic education differently, it is important to note how the police distribution of bodies throughout communities is strongly influenced by "an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a

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[15] Own translation: "…dispositivos para hacer dóciles a los cuerpos y a las conciencias" (Escolano Benito, 2000, p. 184).

particular activity is visible, and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise" (Rancière, 1999, p. 29). The *police order* uses the regulation of modes of perception even more than physical force. Its focus is not on [physical]repression, but the establishment and regulation of the sensible world, ruling on who can perceive what in relation to the places it assigns.

the appearance of politics

In the context where the *police order* defines the hierarchical organization and distribution of the parts of the community, the political is the moment that arises when *something* disrupts this established order. This *something* is the egalitarian logic of *politics*; a circumstantial act of verifying equality, claiming that the existing [police] order is not taking into account some elements in its distribution.

In this way, the political is the "meeting of the police and the egalitarian logic" (Rancière, 1999, p. 32). It is an encounter between two heterogeneous logics (Rancière, 1992) that requires abandoning "certain concepts that assert in advance a smooth connection between them. The concept of power is the main such concept" (Rancière, 1999, p. 32). While recognizing power relationships is crucial to identify and challenge the *police order*, Rancière asserts that nothing is inherently political solely due to power relationships. *Politics* is better understood as "a mode of acting put into practice by a specific kind of subject[s] and deriving from a particular form of reason" (Rancière, 2001, para. 2-3) rather than being the result of power relationships.

A crucial aspect of the *police order* is to distribute the bodies of the communities through what Rancière calls the process of *identification* (Rancière, 1992, 1999). This process can be understood as twofold: establishing "shared" characteristics among individuals and groups and assigning specific places of appearance based on those "shared" characteristics. This can be seen in categorizing persons based on specific features considered "natural" or "given" (whether by biological or cultural explanations/justifications such as sex, gender, age, race, nationality, social class, language, profession, religion, credentials, etc.), and simultaneously, *designating* them to particular societal roles according to ways

of being related to the assigned features. However, the inherent inequality of the *police order* does not lie in the differences among these features/qualities, but in the logic of distribution of the places of appearance based on a hierarchical distinction between them. This police distribution can be seen both in the way racialized and marginalized communities end up expelled to peripheral areas of cities (clearer in Latin-American urban zones); as well as in the uncountable examples of racism and classism around the world that produce segregations not only in terms of spatial distributions but also in terms of human rights access.

Politics emerges precisely when there is a claim, challenge, or interruption confronting inequalities in the name of equality. Examples Rancière uses include Roman plebeians rebelling against Menenius Agrippa's apologia (Rancière, 1999, p. 23), Scythian slaves seizing weapons to verify their equal capacity (Rancière, 1999, p. 12), or French workers and their "feminist sisters" questioning equality during the time of the monarchical bourgeoisie (Rancière, 1999, p. 89). However, *politics* also manifests in the aesthetic field, such as when the workers of the *night of the proletariat* experience life through painting, literature, and music, demonstrating that their "natural" status as workers doesn't preclude them from exploring the world through artistic experiences considered "not theirs" (Rancière, 2010). Another instance is when illiterate peasants, as observed by Paulo Freire, recognize their active participation in producing culture on par with those who read and write, challenging the notion that "culture" is an exclusive product of the literate realm but instead stems from active participation in the historical and collective world (See Freire, 1999).

Nevertheless, *politics* is not about establishing a new order of distribution (that ultimately could turn into a new *police order*); it is not about *making things right* but about handling the intrinsic *wrong* of the police distribution.

This intrinsic wrong is the manifestation of the impossibility of an equal distribution, whether based on what Rancière names as an *arithmetical logic* or a *proportionally geometrical* one (Rancière, 1999). The first is the logic of distribution based on the contributions parts of society make in exchange for occupying the place "that corresponds to them" according to their contributions (the meritocratic

system, as well as that only property owners can participate in public matters are a good example of this fantasy). The second is based on the invention of a divine "common good" determining participation forms according to pre-established qualities. Rancière refers to Plato's fable of the three metals to exemplify the *geometrical logic*. The fable recognizes the need for a *noble lie* to persuade *rulers* and *citizens* to differentiate their "place" in society based on the kind of "metals" in their bodies assigned by the gods: gold for those capable of ruling; silver for the guards, and bronze for workers and craftsmen (Platón, 1988, pp. 196-197).

The wrong, hence, is when something that escapes the arithmetical and geometrical rationale is introduced in the logic of distribution of speaking bodies, denying both logics. This is an endless process that cannot be *fixed*, "because verification of equality is infinite and the resistance of any *police order* to such verification is a matter of principle" (Rancière, 1999, p. 39).

In this way, "politics occurs wherever a community with the capacity to argue and to make metaphors is likely, *at any time and through anyone's intervention*, to crop up" (Rancière, 1999, p. 60). And this happens through what Rancière calls *political subjectivation*, which is the disidentification with the *assigned identity* given by the *police order* and thus emergence of the *political subject*. This is not a specific body (a public servant in government, or an assembly[wo]man, or a social activist), but the "fluctuating performers who have their moments, places, [and] occurrences… to bring the non-relationship into relationship and give place to the nonplace" (Rancière, 1999, p. 90). What is proper to the political subject is to disturb the *police distribution of the sensible* by challenging, in the first place, who is capable or incapable of dealing with community matters.

the distribution of the sensible

Rancière refers to the sensible as the realm where the experience of the common world is mediated by the sensible perception through what is visible, audible, and sayable [with the potential addition of the smellable and touchable] (Rancière, 2004). The *police order* in this realm is not solely grounded in *explicit* jurisdictional, market, religious or moral laws; it also relies on *implicit laws* governing modes of perception that are crucial to a police parcellation of the

common world. An example of the *police distribution of the sensible* is evident in racist associations that presuppose, classify, and hierarchize ways of speaking (accents, tones, dialects), smells, or textures and colors of the body in relation to defined or given "races." But it can also be seen in the order that associates and determines hierarchies between ways of dressing or cultural interests (music, literature, or film tastes) in relation to social classes.

Politics appears in the moments of disruption of the *police distribution of the sensible* through political subjectivations; where political subjects challenge these implicit laws that divide and assign forms of participation in the common world based on modes of perception. Political subjectivations are manifestations that break away from the assigned forms of relating to the world, from the assigned *distribution of the sensible* that defines what is visible, sayable, audible, smellable, and touchable for each part of the community. These manifestations are not only exclusive to public demonstrations claiming human rights; they can also occur in moments where a sensory experience that does not "correspond" to the "assigned place" is enacted. It can be thought of as a *dis-identification* with the ways of being in the common world through experimenting with different modes of perception that are not part of the *police distribution of the sensible*. Just as Rancière shows in *La Noche de los Proletarios* (See Rancière, 2010), where workers claim literature, painting, and music as part of their lives. The examples shown in the book highlight that disrupting the *police order* also involves transgressing assigned modes of perception, challenging norms that dictate specific forms of experiencing the sensual world. Such disruptions are alternative forms of verifying equality. It is important to recall that the *equality* sustaining political subjectivation is not a *flattening* process seeking an "equitable unification of interests". Disrupting the *police order* in the pursuit of verifying equality does not aim to neglect the "original" ethos of the workers. Instead, it aims to create alternative ways of experiencing different worlds, through different names, images, and sounds.

The *aesthetic* aspect of *politics* gains relevance here. Shifting the attention from institutions traditionally associated with the regulation of the dominant order (like those related to territorial, legal, or jurisdictional realms) to the

dimensions of the sensory experience (what can be seen, heard, said, smelled, touched) as equally participating in the regulation of the distribution of the forms of participation in society. Here, *aesthetics* is not taken merely as "art theory in general or as a theory that would consign art to its effects on sensibility… but a *mode of articulation* between ways of doing and making, their corresponding forms of visibility, and possible ways of thinking about their relationship" (Rancière, 2004, p. 4). Arguing that political subjectivations occur through *aesthetic* acts relies on the notion that the *police order* "extends well beyond its specialized institutions and techniques" (Rancière, 1999, p. 32) and is mostly established through defining *aesthetical* ways of being.

For Rancière (2004), the link between *politics* and *aesthetics* lies in defining "what is visible or not in a common space, endowed with a common language" (p. 8). In a way, we could say that modes of perception influence ways of being, but simultaneously, the ways of being constantly reconfigure the modes of perception. It is crucial to recognize that this recursive relationship (Morin, 2004) is not made in an abstract way; it relies on institutions and artifacts (such as specific devices, practices, objects, designs, stories, etc.) that sustain the recursive mechanism. Some of these institutions-artifacts have the strength to interrupt the constant flux of life where identifications are reproduced. They re-articulate the relationship between modes of perception and ways of being. Without these, an infinite reproduction of practices would never stop. Re-articulation, hence, seems to rest on forms of interruption and suspension, rather than attempting to lubricate the constant flux. Hence, these devices can participate either in the lubrication or in the interruption, exposing the possibilities of either reinforcing specific articulations that associate modes of perception to ways of being (proper to the *police order*), or allow for re-articulating the relationship between modes of perception and ways of being (proper to *politics*).

democracy

Rancière's elaboration on the concept of democracy is crucial in avoiding its misrepresentation when used loosely. "[I]t is not a set of institutions or one kind of regime among others, but a way for politics to be" (Rancière, 1999, p. 99).

Democracy, *as a way for politics to be*, means confronting and disrupting the *police order*. The risk of addressing it as a regime among others is that it can easily justify the *police order* in the name of democracy. For example, self-proclaimed "democratic" governments commonly end up enabling "oligarchies to rule in the name of the people," turning "democracy" into a "society that governs the power of commodities" (Rancière, 2006, p. 96). By twisting the notion, the possibility of actually confronting and interrupting the *police order* is hindered.

It is not that democracy does not refer to the *power of demos*, but the *power of demos* sets a more complex arrangement than regimes ruled by the virtuous (aristocracy) or the rich (oligarchy). This is because the qualities and qualifications that give the right to rule to democracy (*freedom* and *equality* of the people) escape the arithmetic or geometric distribution. When the form of governing relies on accountable elements (the wealth of the *oligoï*, or the divine virtue or excellence of the *aristoï*) it becomes *natural*, or *right*, that the *best* or *richest*, set the rules. But freedom and equality (of *demos*) set a more complex problem: how to distribute the forms of participation if what is envisaged for distribution is shared by all? *Demos*, the people, in this way, is not the "people gathered together, […] the majority, or […] the working class" (Rancière, 2006, p. 46), but rather the "undifferentiated mass of those who have no positive qualification – no wealth, no virtue – but who are nonetheless acknowledged to enjoy the same freedom as those who do" (Rancière, 1999, p. 8). This basic logic of equality handles the fundamental wrong: the equalization between those who have no wealth or virtue "with those who are otherwise superior to them in all things that gives them a specific qualification" (Rancière, 1999, p. 8). The people (*demos*) sets the fundamental wrong by claiming as its own a quality that belongs to all. This part – that has actually no part–identifies its property – which is not proper – with the whole of the community. The *demos* become the controversy for the principle of the community because it appropriates these common qualities (freedom and equality) as their own. This is why it is not a consistent body, but a mode of subjectivation.

Democracy, according to Rancière, is not characterized by a representational or electoral process but is an active dispute initiated by a part – that is not a part –

that claims as its own a property – that is not proper. Politics reconfigures the *police order* by challenging and restructuring the logic of the distribution based on the merchandized regulation of profits and losses (arithmetical logic) or the fantasy of the parts that work for a predefined divine "common good" (the geometrical logic). It is not about consensus or what is *right*, but about the enunciation and recognition of the essential wrong that comes with a distribution that escapes these arithmetical and geometrical logics.

For Rancière, democracy only exists when *demos* intervene as a force that disrupts consensus (see Rancière, 1999, 2006). Democracy does not consider *consensus* as it implies a *passion for unification*, a passion "for sharing without dividing, the passion for an equality with substance in a social body which is measured by it" (Rancière, 1995, p. 88); a *passion* that relies on identifications. For Rancière, consensus is not attributed to *demos*, but to *ochlos*, as a congregation of individuals that transform the principle of equality into a principle of unity in the pursuit of defining the *self of a community* (Rancière, 1992, 1995). In this way, democracy only exists "to the degree that the *demos* exist as the power to divide the ochlos" (Rancière, 1995, p. 32).

Democracy becomes this dividing power and disrupts the *police order* through punctual and contingent acts. They are done through what Rancière calls *singular mechanisms of political subjectivation* manifested through the *forms of democracy* characterized by three aspects: 1) The *appearance*[16] and the recognition of the people (*demos*) not only in the sense of making visible the *part that has no part*, but also (2) establishing the particularity of *demos* as an undefined "unity," as the miscount of a part that is not a particular social group, but a political subjectivation (a *dis-identification* with the assigned places of the police distribution); and 3) the setting of polemical communities through a *dispute* that is not to be confused with a *discussion between actors*, but as the interlocution that puts the situation of interlocution itself at stake (Rancière, 1999, pp. 98-100).

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[16] The notion of appearance is key because it highlights its two meanings: the one of making something visible. But also, to make visible something that *appears* as if it was something else. Some kind of a "mask" that "is not an illusion… that is not opposed to reality. [But it rather] splits reality and reconfigures it as double" (Rancière, 1999, p. 99).

Notably, these *forms of democracy* are not exclusive to electoral processes. It is common to reduce the power of democracy – the power of a mode of subjectivation of *politics* (Rancière, 1999, p. 99) – to suffrage. But democracy is broader. It is the way of being for *politics*, in which the constant is active participation in re-configuring the police distribution of the sensible. Certainly, what is usually associated with democracy (elections, house of representatives, alternation, separation of powers, etc.) can be part of these modes of subjectivation, but they are not, by themselves, democratic or political, but *institutional mechanisms* that can be used by *politics*.

Democracy, as a mode of political subjectivation, makes use of these institutions, yet these institutions also influence the modes of subjectivation (Rancière, 1999, p. 100). *Politics*, in its confrontation with the *police order*, constitutes a complex and recursive process, being both a product and a producer of these institutions (see Morin, 2004). Democracy may well use the constitution, the law, or elections to confront the *police order*, but at the same time, these are constantly re-structured and re-written by democracy through the modes of subjectivation that enact the verification of equality avoiding turning them into instruments of the *police order*. Hence, various elements not directly tied to governmental dynamics but actively involved in shaping the *distribution of the sensible* – as we shall see in the following section with schools – play crucial roles in *politics*. Through the enactment of *democratic forms*, which are not the *institutional mechanisms* but the form in which the *ternary mechanism of subjectivation* manifests (appearance, miscount, and dispute), aesthetic practices articulate and rearrange modes of relating to the world through the sensory experiences of ways of seeing, hearing, making, smelling, and touching.

The enactment of *politics*, as the moments of demonstration and verification of equality, relies on the contingency of the *democratic forms*. These moments can be observed in those who speak when they are "not supposed to" or in the moments of exposure to worlds that do not "correspond" to them. This challenges the *police order* by re-distributing the sensible, in which equality can be verified. The possibility of *politics*, as the action of *actualizing the contingency of equality*, is based

on the re-configuration of the established [police] order that dictates and distributes the ways of experiencing the world.

What we are doing with this reading is setting some references to re-claim the *political* as part of what shapes scholastic education. But not as a matter of bringing societal problems to schools, or as an instrument to shape a specific and pre-define society, but as a way of disrupting the police order. In this way, instead of blurring the notion of the political as a way of taking distance from instrumental perspective, what we propose is that it is precisely because it does not aim to be an instrument that it is political.

the politics of scholastic education

Articulating Ranière's political ideas with scholastic education is not surprising, given that he himself has highlighted the significance of education in the political realm.[17] Moreover, his work has spurred noteworthy contributions to educational studies.[18] In this section, we will present a set of reflections to argue that both scholastic education, when enacted as *skholé*, plays a crucial role in *politics*, but also that *politics* plays a crucial role in *skholé*. Following some of Ranière's insights, our aim is to elaborate the argument on the *politics of scholastic education* by drawing upon the notion of the *form*, a concept integral to how *politics* comes to be throughout democratic acts (as mentioned in the previous lines). Rancière contends that *forms*, and their use, are crucial aspects of "democratic life" (Rancière, 1995, pp. 45-58). It is through the *forms of democracy* that the *police order* is undermined.

Now, we would like to explore one form that Rancière deems crucial for democratic life: *skholé*, or the school form (see Rancière, 1988; 1995, p. 52). In this

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[17] Not only through *Jacotot's universal method* in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991); but also (a) through his reflections on *scholè as a symbolic form (a school-form)* in *School, Production and Equality* [*Escuela, Procucción e Igualdad*] (Rancière, 1988); (b) through the distinction between *education* and *instruction* in *The Hatred of Democracy* (Rancière, 2006, p. 62); or (c) through the "project of education" as a way of forming citizens in *archipolitics* equating politics to police in *Disagreement* (Rancière, 1999, pp. 68-69); and (d) the recognition of schools as one of the cardinal forms used for what he calls the *vita democratica* in *On the Shore of Politics* (Rancière, 1995, pp. 45, 52-58).

[18] As mentioned already, some crucial works of Dussel (2009); Simons and Masschelein (2010); Simons and Masschelein (2011); Bingham and Biesta (2010); Biesta (2010, 2017); Tur Porres et al. (2014); Vlieghe (2018); Masschelein et al. (2019); Säfström (2021); Carvalho (2022).

section, we will examine, on the one hand, the *formalization of skholé* (as in the making of the school-form) emphasizing its relationship to *politics*. Subsequently, on the other hand, we will address the possible transformations that scholè enables through the exploration of *scholastic formation*.

politics and the formalization of scholè

Although the term *school* can be etymologically linked to *scholè*, meaning *leisure* or *free time* (Kennedy; Kohan, 2014), it's essential to distinguish certain characteristics between them. *Skholé*, or the school-form, according to Rancière (1988), is a symbolic form understood as a *norm that separates spaces, times, and social occupations* (p. 1). It denotes the symbolic form that establishes a division between those who have free time (exempt from work demands) and those who, because of their obligation to attend the demands of work, lack free time. In this way, *scholè*, for Rancière (1988), can be conceptualized as a time-place characterized by (a) its heterogeneity to productive-mercantile logic, (b) its emphasis on learning for the sake of learning, and (c) its role as the place-time of equality par excellence (pp. 1-2).

The concept of equality in this context, as previously mentioned, is not treated as a social ideal or an endpoint but as a point of departure. *Skholé* produces a specific kind of equality, distinct from jurisdictional or economic forms, creating a time of equals concerning the subjects brought to schools. This is why scholastic education cannot "falsely promise an equality that social reality would deny".[19] *Scholè*, as leisure time, serves as the quintessential time-place of equality precisely because it is not a *preparation* for obedience, ruling, or executing specific tasks; instead, it is a simple *occupation* (Rancière, 1988). A form of relating to the common world that is separated from the logic of the productive order.

The relationship between *skholé* and our conventional understanding of *schools* (as a set of educational and administrative practices and resources bonded to specific architectures and institutions)[20] is complex. On one hand, *skholé*, as this free [and freed] time-place breaking with the logic of productivity, is not exclusive

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[19] Own translation from: "La escuela no puede prometer de manera mentirosa una igualdad que la realidad social permitiría desmentir" (Rancière, 1988, p. 2).
[20] See Zufiaurre and Hamilton (2015), also Simons and Masschelein (2010).

to schools–as it can be experienced in the way films, theater plays, art exhibitions, sports, and games can also disrupt the *police order*; but it does find a privileged space within them. Yet, schools themselves do not guarantee the actual enactment of this *free[d] time*. Schools may or may not produce *skholé* to the extent that they can manage to break not only with the productive logic, but also to crack certain forms of *police distribution of the sensible*. This *breaking with the productivity logic* and the *redistribution of the sensible* is how *skholé*, through schools, can interrupt "the smooth working" of the *police order* (Ranicère, 1999, p. 99).

Claiming that school-*skholé* interrupts the *police order* traces a link between school-*scholè* and *politics*, specifically to democracy, understood as *a way for politics to be. Democracy as a way for politics to be*, the *vita democratica* (Rancière, 1995), is sustained by the *forms of democracy*, which are the manifestations of the *ternary mechanism of subjectivation* (*appearance*, *miscount*, and *dispute*). The proposal is to recognize the school form (*scholè*) as one of the *forms of democracy* by exploring how *scholè* manifests the *ternary mechanism*.

We will return to how this *ternary mechanism* manifests within *scholè*-school, but before delving into that, it is important to consider the role of *schools* in the scholé-schools duality. If *scholè* represents a *form of democracy* where the assumption of equality is verified through the *ternary mechanism of subjectivation*, then schools, within state-organized societies, can be seen as *institutional mechanisms* with the potential of enacting *skholé*.

Schools, as *institutional mechanisms* of *politics*, share similarities with other mechanisms of *politics* like parliaments, suffrage, or freedom of speech. They are crucial for the interruption of the *police order*, yet not a guarantee for it. Schools, as institutions, are not only an assembly of specific *matter* (architecture, blackboards, tables, school objects), *practices* (both pedagogical and administrative), *regulations* (rules, timetables, ways of speaking and behaving, etc.), and *persons characterized by specific ways of being* (schoolmasters and pupils); but also, *assemblies becoming agents* (Masschelein et al., 2019, p. 140). They act as part of the *vita democratica*, but they can also be used as tools to reproduce the *police order*. Although the *institutional mechanisms* are crucial in formalizing democracy, they are insufficient

for interrupting the *police order* on their own. They can either be used *for* – what Rancière calls – *postdemocracy* (as the identification of *politics* with police by eliminating the *ternary mechanism of subjectification*) (see Rancière, 1999, p. 102), or they can actually be used *by* democracy [as the way for politics to be] through the manifestations of the *ternary mechanism of subjectivation*. *Scholè* [as a *form of democracy*] sees in schools [as *institutional mechanisms*] "the conditions for being exercised and in turn modify them. But they [the *forms of democracy*] do not identify with them" (Rancière, 1999, p. 101).

 Scholè, as one of the *forms of democracy* (Rancière, 1995, p. 52), as the manifestation of the *ternary mechanism of subjectivation*, is characterized not only by the elements that sustain it as an institution because, as we can see, these alone do not guarantee the disruption of the *police order*. What makes it possible for school-scholé to break with the logic of productivity and to crack the process of identification is through the emergence of the sphere of appearance of a part that does not identify with a defined social group, where a dispute is conducted. We suggest that this *ternary mechanism of subjectivation* can be understood in a scholastic clef.

 The first mechanism of subjectivation, *the emergence of the sphere of appearance*, can be seen in *skholé* as the setting where the symbolic form of separation of time and space takes place. The concept of appearance is crucial, implying not only *making something visible* but also presenting something *as if* it were something else. It involves the emergence of an illusion, enabling an appearance that may not always be "real" or "possible." Like a mask, it creates room for distinct realities, not to dismiss or deny contextual reality but to split it, re-presenting other ways of relating that go beyond the "natural" or "cultural" predestinations.

 We distinguish two dimensions regarding the idea of appearance in *skholé*: on one hand, the appearance of *a common world*; and on the other – linked to the second mechanism of subjectivation – the appearance of *a specific group of people who are miscounted, who are not defined by a social position*. In relation to the first one, it is done through the notion of *studying*. In which, through a specific way of

relating to the world mediated by exercises, textbooks, drawings on notebooks and blackboards, experiments in the laboratories, etc., a particular world appears. This set of scholastic practices, which differ from the dominant *police distribution of the sensible*, is the way in which a "mask" of reality [of a common world] is produced. *Skholé*, as a suspension, is a time-space that is not the one of labor (breaking away from the logic of productivity), but also not the one of the contextual realities of the individuals (breaking away from the ethos). The emergence of the sphere of appearance is what turns *skholé* into a symbolic form that separates spaces, times, and social occupations by fracturing and disrupting reality to allow alternative relationships with the world. The common world presented at schools: that of arts, techniques, narratives and sciences – which is often criticized for not being "the real world"– is precisely an appearance; one enabled by *skholé*.

For the second mechanism, the idea of the *miscount* seems to have some overlaps between *demos* (as the part of those who have no part) and the emergence of both *pupils* and *schoolmasters* (as a group who is suspended from both their productive activities, as well as from their family and cultural roles/determinations). Both pupils and schoolmasters can be understood as undefined and disidentified in the sense that they set aside their familial and contextual relationships to foster *study relationships* with the worlds in which their personal histories are placed aside so that they do not pre-determine their possibilities and intentions. This is not a vindication for some kind of alienation, but the result of the attentive observation of what happens when, in certain moments in scholastic education, pupils submit themselves to the utterances and exercises proposed by schoolmasters, breaking away from contextual determinations and engaging with other forms of perception.

Skholé breaking with the contextual ethos is not a false promise that by following certain actions, individuals can change their social reality. Instead, it represents the possibility to experience reality from another place: the place of study. Engaging with worlds that not necessarily belong to their contextual realities such as those of arts, history, science, etc. without the limitations of their

social roles. Rancière's perspective suggests that individuals are disposed into democracy not by reinforcing their ethos, not by – in educational terms – initiating or socializing them into specific ways of being, but precisely by creating a gap, or breaking with their contextual ethos (Rancière, 1999, p. 101).

Through this process of dis-identification, or subjectivation, the third *mechanism of subjectivation* is enacted: *a dispute is conducted*, not only in relation to the multiple interlocutions and debates within classrooms but from the understanding of the dispute as "the interlocution that undermines the very situation of interlocution" (Rancière, 1999, p. 100). We propose two ways of observing this in relation to *skholé*. On a *broad dimension*, or on the *curricular level*, the dispute can be seen in the redistribution of specialized fields of knowledge that are thought to be – from a police logic – *naturally* destined for those exempted from the demands of manual labor. *Scholè*, by performing a certain profanation or expropriation of knowledge and skills, enacts a dispute by putting at stake the very situation of the interlocution: regardless of the cultural and familiar context of the pupils, the worlds of arts, language, history, sciences, technics, etc. are brought and exposed for everyone to be able to relate with them. This challenges and re-arranges the *police distribution of the sensible*, enabling and promoting an engagement with "non-productive fields of knowledge" for all, confronting the distribution of knowledge where the "non-productive knowledge" is reserved for those who rule. *Scholè* challenges what Rancière calls the *politics* of illustration, in which the task of education is to *discover* and *introduce* "the wise" in the spheres of those who take decisions, leaving the "rest" to be taught necessary and sufficient knowledge for the "correct functioning" of society (see Rancière, 1988, p. 3). The dispute, in this sense, is present by expropriating certain fields of knowledge from the spheres that are believed to be reserved for those who make decisions.

The other way of observing the dispute within *scholè* is focusing on another dimension: the *scholastic formation*. To elaborate on this dimension, we propose to focus on the notions of *study* and *literacy* as key elements of scholastic education. These notions, as we will address in the following section, are strongly linked to the process of subjectivation. Understood as a way of engaging not only with

aspects broader than the self (such as language, history, nature, etc.) but also through the recognition that these same aspects, even if broader, are constitutive parts of the self.

politics and scholastic formation

When Rancière wrote in the late 80s about scholè as the symbolic form that separates the uses of time, he brought – very opportunely during the rise of neoliberalism – the idea of *learning for the sake of learning* as a response to the slogan *learning to undertake* (Rancière, 1988). While this is crucial for distinguishing the *school within the [neoliberal] police order* (learning to undertake), from the *school-scholè as a democratic form*, the notion of *learning for the sake of learning* can be a bit misleading. It does not necessarily point to a disconnected relationship with the world, but rather, we propose, it aims to think of a specific formation enabled by scholè. For this, we propose to approach scholastic education through the traditional/classic idea of a process of both *study* and *literacy formation*. However, we aim to highlight the political dimension of these notions.

Understanding "learning for the sake of learning" as *study* is crucial to take a distance from the appropriative connotations of learning[21] present in the neoliberal perspective (see López, 2019) and by the promoters of the *knowledge economy*, *lifelong learning*, and *learning society*, which "pretends to build a natural bond between school and the market."[22]

While learning places subjects –with their intentions and desires – at the center, *study* compels them to turn towards what is studied (López, 2022, p. 222). It involves a double operation: a disposition or an openness towards the world, and a recognition that this openness allows for transformation. Study, according to Maximiliano López (2019), means attention, commitment, dedication, care, and affection. A study relationship, as seeking for a relationship of care and affection towards and with the world can be linked to Arendt's idea of education as an act

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[21] In many Romance languages "learning" comes from the Latin *apprehendere*, which means to capture, to grasp or to appropriate (see López, 2019, 2022).
[22] Own translation taken from: "Para esto resulta fundamental distinguir el gesto adquisitivo del aprendizaje, a partir del cual el neoliberalismo pretende construir un vínculo natural entre escuela y mercado" (López, 2019, p. 75).

of love for both the world and for the new generations (Arendt, 1996; see also Vlieghe; Zamojski, 2019; Vargas-Pellicer, 2020). Studying is a way of being present in the present, exposing oneself to the world, and allowing oneself to be transformed by what it has to offer (Masschelein, 2010). To study means to be attentive, involved in the "suspension of judgment and implies a kind of waiting" (Masschelein, 2019, p. 197).

This *study relationship* with the world is a disruption of the *police order* by enabling a relationship that is heterogeneous to productivity. It sets aside the acquisitive approach to knowledge, skills, and competencies, placing the *object of study* at the center, stripped of its functionality as much as possible. This displacement is not because knowledge, skills, or competences are irrelevant *per se*, but because they are seen as elements of *scholastic formation*; not as means to a productive end.[23] Formation, from this perspective, is about "working on 'your own form', on your being…in (good) 'shape'" (Simons & Masschelein, 2021, p. 85).

Studying, as this disruption of the productive-police order is the baseline for the scholastic formation; nonetheless, we propose a second element: literacy formation. For this, we can draw a connection to *politics* through an operation that, grounded in the process of grammatisation (we will return to this), closely aligns with the notion of subjectivation. Subjectivation, as Rancière (1992) notes, is the "formation of a one that is not a self but is the relation of a self to another" (p. 60). This has a strong resemblance with literacy, where – for example – written language, as an external, historical, and collective system of representation, is constantly *constructed* by individuals rather than merely *acquired* (See Ferreiro, 1987, pp. 10-11). Becoming literate is not the process of the acquisition of a technique, of coding and decoding; but a long process of creation of a new system of representation that, while built individually, relies on external, historical, and collective processes (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1979). As the Argentinian writer Maria Teresa Andruetto suggests: "language is mine, but not only mine."[24] Thus,

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[23] Simons and Masschelein (2021) point *study* as one of the *learning activities* of scholastic formation, among exercises, practices or potentially games. However, study, from this more general perspective, as a *non-appropriative use of the commons* (López, 2022) proposes that exercises, practices and games can be thought of as activities involved in *study*.

[24] Own translation: "La lengua es mía pero no sólo mía." Maria Teresa Andruetto, in the Congreso Internacional de la Lengua Española, 2019 (Canal U, 2019)).

becoming literate is a simultaneous recognition that certain elements that exceed us (external, historical, common, and collective) are, at the same time, elements actively shaping our constitution. Being in language is being in the voices of others. As much as being involved in the worlds of history, arts, sciences, agriculture, is being involved in worlds shaped by others in which we let ourselves be affected and shaped by them. This condition strongly resonates with Rancière's paradox of *the self as the relation of the self to another*.

The way scholastic formation enacts literacy is through the process of grammatization, which is understood as *breaking down a continuous flux into a system of discrete elements* (see Stiegler, 2010; Tinnel, 2015). Grammatization, in scholastic education, can be understood as the process where the worlds brought to schools to be studied (those of language, history, sciences, arts, etc.) are disclosed, enabling distinctions, naming their parts, and where they can be discussed, and taken care of. In language literacy, for example, the grammatical dimension in written language becomes the set of external and collective historical elements that make the flux of the spoken language discrete and relatable.

It is not that the spoken language does not have grammar in the manner that we are referring to. Historically, we know from the sophists' schools that oral rhetoric borrowed from the poets the mnemonic devices "such as meter, rhythm, and highly formalized tropes and figures" (Poulakos, 2004, p. 80; also see Ong, 1982; Illich, 1993). And we could associate these devices to a set of discrete elements in which the orality is being grammatized. Nevertheless, the written word brought up something different.

Poulakos' genealogical perspective on the school helps to understand the political relevance of grammatization in written language. Poulakos (2004) narrates how with Isocrates, the school of rhetoric transitioned from a "nomadic show on the road" to an "institutional home" (p. 74). Isocrates' school not only broke with the sophists' nomadic tradition but also housed a significant cultural transformation marking the transition from the fifth to the fourth century, viewed with suspicion due to its innovation: writing (Poulakos, 2004, p. 78). This shift has political consequences as writing counterbalances the manipulative power of oral

rhetoric, where "[e]ffectively, the orator became democracy's δυναστης [dunastes: lord, ruler] as his will was imposed on and made to appear identical with the will of the people" (Poulakos, 2004, p. 79). Furthermore, this identification is problematic for politics, as Rancière would note, because it seeks consensus that implies *a passion for unification, transforming the principle of equality into the principle of unity in defining the self of the community.*

Writing, in this broader sense of grammatization, allows breaking with identifications. Isocrates' school, not the sophists', is a key institutional mechanism that, through literacy formation, enables disruption of identification modes by breaking a continuous flux into discrete elements. The pause, attention, and study of these elements are political aspects that – from the perspective of the written language – not only form the foundation of scholastic education as in Stubbs' (1976) assertion that all teachers are language teachers, and all lessons are language lessons (p. 17). But it also opens the door to considering grammar and literacy's relevance in other domains (arts, history, sciences, math, etc.) as in scholastic education being about studying the language of these other domains (terminology, naming, norms, etc.).

Suspending the productive logic in scholastic education does not diminish its political character; rather, it emphasizes it. It is political not only because of the creation of a free [and freed] time that disrupts the *police order* but also through a *redistribution of the sensible*. The political dimension is not only tied to the idea of establishing a study relationship detached from cultural, economic, and governmental objectives but also to the condition that *skholé* does not seek to reinforce individual identifications. By suspending, as much as possible, pupils' *intentions and desires*, and placing them in a position of *waiting* and *attentiveness*, individual subjects, with their specific identities, become detached from their individual ethos, yet importantly, they are not *left alone*.

Study, as these acts of subjectivation, or as the set of practices that verify equality – which is what challenges the *police order* – can also be seen as emancipation (See Rancière, 1991, 1992). Scholastic education is thus linked to *politics* through the idea of emancipation, conceived both as the verification of

equality and, as articulated by Sara Magaraggia (2018), as the freeing of pupils' hands. Freeing the hands of the pupils from their contextual bonds allows them to "study," to *grasp* [and to be grasped by] other worlds; and freeing their hands from that which ties them to the identifications of the *police order* allows to them to *handle* the fundamental wrong: that of *the formation of a one that is not a self but is the relation of a self to another*.

outro

The purpose of this article, as part of the interest in the configuration of scholastic education in what we could call *school studies*, is to actively contribute to an attentive and caring examination of the role played by scholastic education in our societies. This theoretical/philosophical exercise belongs to the quest to bridge connections between Rancièrian and scholastic references, aiming to re-read either *scholè* from a *political clef*, and/or *politics* from a *scholèstic clef*. It is an exercise to re-think *the political role of scholastic education* not only in the *formalization of scholè* (as the making of a time-space suspended for study), but also in *scholastic formation* as a *democratic formation* that, breaking with the ethos of individuals, enables committed and caring engagements with other worlds. This exercise invites consideration of the political character of scholastic education and its potential to disrupt, transgress, and challenge the *police order*. Scholastic formation, as a democratic mechanism, is not about fixing identifications (in the sense of *setting them* and *making them right*) or preparing the new generation to conform to the existing world. Instead, while dealing with political subjectivations and re-distributing the sensible, enables the possibility of breaking free from the identifications that constrain, parcel, and assign relegated places of participation in the common world (Rancière, 1999, p. 101).

With this text, we did not seek to establish a *final definition* that "one must" adhere to when approaching the political in educational debates. It is simply a proposal where we seek to underline a reading of Rancière's work that we believe to be crucial for delving deeper into the relationship between *politics* and scholastic

the politics of *skholé*: rethinking the political character of scholastic education with jacques rancière

education. It is an alternative to consider carefully and attentively the articulation of *politics* and scholastic education within the *scope of skholé*.

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