

# Transformations

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### Sublime Gender Transposition: The Reformed Platonism of Jacques Rancière's Aesthetics as Queer Performance

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Jacques Rancière's *Short Voyages to the Land of People* states that he who "persists in the curiosity of his gaze, displaces his angle of vision, reworks the first way of putting together words and images, undoes the certainties of place, and thereby reawakens the power present in each of us to become a foreigner on the map of places and paths generally known as reality" (3). Who is this person? Who has the ability to thus traverse the limits of society's settings? Within the parameters of gender and queer studies, this persona has often been found in the ambiguously gendered, the thoroughly gender-queer or the transgendered. As an embodiment of the original Platonic hermaphrodite, this character is a symbol of unification or gender deconstruction. [1] By reading Rancière's transpositional fantasy in relation to Leo Bersani and John Cameron Mitchell, two iconic (although controversial) characters within queer theory and performance, I intend to explore the possibilities and limits of this spatial construction.

Rancière's work is not often used in relation to queer performance or queer theory. [2] Although his politics of deconstructive interchange between people of different classes and classifications (*Nights of Labor* 10) and his embrace of an aesthetics that continually redistributes the sensible (*Politics of Aesthetics* 43) correspond closely with queer theory's attempt to bring the regimes of "the normal, the legitimate, the dominant" to a collapse (Halperin 62), Rancière's work is usually classified according to a different set of parameters. [3] The fact is that, rather ironically, Rancière's work has achieved an academic legitimacy that queer theory has always lacked. [4] My attempt here is not to reshape or reverse this division, or to use the authority of Rancière's oeuvre to shed some sort of legitimacy on my selection of queer writers. Rather, in a truly Rancièrian "indisciplinary" fashion, I wish to open up an opportunity for communication that not merely facilitates exchange, but *becomes* a democratic connective event. I will not use Rancière's work to shed light on queer aesthetics or pose queer performance as the aesthetic expression of Rancière. I will go back to one of the prevalent aesthetic paradigms that undergo "collapse" in Rancière's work and map its corresponding queer lines of interjection and departure. This begins in the approach to the ancient Greek philosopher Plato's ethics and aesthetics.

The central focus of both Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips' *Intimacies* and John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* is the vitality and creative connectivity of love, and both of them approach this topic through the philosophy of Plato. Love is portrayed as a principle that not merely serves the queer cause, but develops and expands it. Especially in Bersani's work, love is a critically queering and juxtapositionally binding force that continually disassembles and reassembles the positions of self and others (*Intimacies* 87), and Plato's legacy becomes the basic foundation for this process. Rancière also engages extensively with Plato, but encounters the philosopher from an entirely different perspective. Whereas Bersani and Cameron Mitchell's Plato comes to stand for progression and exchange, Rancière's Plato represents the aesthetic and ethical values that should be reassessed.

Rancière's work critiques the staleness of Plato's deterministic division of society in *The Republic*, *The Statesman* and *The Laws*, [5] and he takes a definitive stance against *The Republic's* emphasis on a binary aesthetic

relationship between the image and its idealised origin. In *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Rancière distinguishes this regime as straightforwardly dichotomous (14-16). Plato's cave allegory famously indicates that an image is nothing but a poor copy of its original "form" in the world of ideas. It has no inherent value in itself: it is a mimetic monstrosity, one step removed from the truth and beauty of the truly "real" world (Plato, *Republic* 240-248). As Rancière points out, this relationship also distinguishes Plato's attitude towards poets and philosophers (Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* 64). Whereas Plato's utopian *Republic* has no place whatsoever for the class of poets, the philosophers or Guardians enjoy the highest of its ranks. They have the pivotal capacity to distinguish between "something that only *appears* to be good" and "something that *really* is" (230; original emphasis). This indicates a simple distinction between that which is true and real and that which is false and fictive.

Rancière recognises that Plato's rejection of mimesis does not necessarily mean that the philosopher would deny the power of the concepts we consider under the umbrella of aesthetics today: "what we call art makes no sense to him" (*Aesthetics and Its Discontents* 64). Plato's name is attached to what Rancière in *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* terms the first of three major philosophical attitudes towards art. The second form is the Aristotelian rejection of mimesis, but wholehearted embrace of poesis. Aristotle's *Poetics* recognises the very *real* cathartic effect that a good imitation can have on its audience or spectators. This effect is produced despite or in addition to the simple imitation. Faithful and close imitation gives rise to an aesthetic space beyond imitation. The third form that Rancière lists is the "modernist" distinction of art as unfaithful or failed mimesis. This form is arguably somewhat of a return to, but also a direct opposite of the Platonic rejection of imitation. The aesthetic space is produced separately from or in defiance of more direct imitative methods. It is a sphere outside of reality with an affective power that exceeds the effects of the real. Art is those sublime entities that transport us beyond the real.

Rancière's own attitude towards art and aesthetic philosophy, as it is expressed in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* and *The Emancipated Spectator*, resides somewhere between the Aristotelian and the modernist conceptions of reality and mimesis. On the one hand, Rancière believes in art's power to transpose us, but on the other hand he believes that this transposition functions *upon* and *within* society, not beyond it (*Aesthetics and Its Discontents* 7-8). The unfaithful mimesis, that which problematises the definitive nature of reality has a reformative effect on its structure. Rancière constructs a renegade aesthetics that simultaneously resides within and beyond the limits of society (*Emancipated Spectator* 49). The transformative process takes place not outside reality, but in the interplay or generative friction between reality and mimesis: "it is in the moments when the real world wavers and seems to reel into mere appearance, more than in the slow accumulation of day-to-day experiences, that it becomes possible to form a judgement about the world" (*Nights of Labor* 19). These moments of slippage produce the possibility for continual catharsis and continual play.

Although Plato's dualistic construct of image and ideas certainly would be opposed to Rancière's construction of art and reality, his discussion of the "aesthetic ethics" of love is more compatible with cultivation and play (Bersani, *Intimacies* 87). Not surprisingly, Rancière constructs most of his discussion of Plato's notion of aesthetics on *The Republic*. This is after all where Plato most comprehensively constructs a theory of images and forms. As Rancière correctly points out, however, Plato's discussion is not primarily focusing on creative forms of mimesis here, but rather on the interaction between a conception or an ideal and its disappointing realisation. In *The Symposium* and *Phaedrus* however, Plato moves beyond the strict and immobile boundaries of the world of ideas, to a conception of ideality in which creative mimesis and juxtapositions of categories are the generative principle. The strict binary divisions between ideal and actuality, self and others, and various other categorical positions still remain within the framework of the text, but Plato constructs them in order to subsequently break them down.

Bersani and Cameron Mitchell both encounter the Plato of *The Symposium* and *Phaedrus* through such a progressive construction and deconstruction of gender and sexual boundaries. Bersani acknowledges that this process takes a ritualistic and playful guise which, according to Aristotle's as well as Plato's rules, has to be initiated from an overtly constructed, almost abstract state of strict division (Bersani, *Intimacies* 77). In *The Symposium*, this state is most explicitly represented through Aristophanes' deterministic speech about the misleadingly named "platonic hermaphrodite," which features as part of a competition to explain the true meaning of love. Aristophanes, who is unlucky enough to speak immediately before Plato's master Socrates,

explains that in the beginning there were three human genders: “not just the present two, male and female. There was also a third one, a combination of these two” (Plato, *Symposium* 27). Each human being had either two male sides, two female sides or a female and a male side. The gods, however, decided to cut them in half to decrease their strength. Love is the individual demi-beings’ urge to find the other half from which they have been so painfully separated (Plato, *Symposium* 32).

Cameron Mitchell’s gender-ambiguous protagonist Hedwig, in the off-Broadway queer punk musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, recounts Aristophanes’ myth in one of its initial songs “The Origin of Love” (31). The musical delineates Hedwig’s desperate search for love, which has taken her from the restrictions of her life as a boy in East Berlin to an equally restrictive “freedom” as a gender-ambiguous woman in America. Hedwig is unsure of what love is exactly, but in accordance with Aristophanes’ myth, she concludes that it is the result of an initial differentiation and binary dissolution. She thus determines that “[i]t is clear that I must find my other half” (31). In order to relate to the Platonic hermaphrodite, Hedwig realises that she will have to connect with another being, but she is uncertain what to look for: “is it a she or a he? Identical to me? Or somehow complementary? Does my other half have what I don’t?” (31-32). Hedwig contemplates the links between difference and sameness and decides that both need to be performed. She negotiates the ritualistic effects of this performance in relation to an act of becoming; “what about sex? Is that how we put ourselves back together again? ... can two people *actually become* one again?” (32; my emphasis).

Hedwig thus describes the Platonic hermaphrodite as a concept of pure difference, empowered by an urge for unity – and this desire is performed in ritual sex acts. Perhaps not surprisingly, Bersani makes comparisons between Aristophanes’ idea of love making and the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s definition of difference and desire in “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I.” Like Aristophanes, Lacan describes an originary moment of simultaneous gendering and division between self and the other, which produces a subsequent desire to return to the pre-gendered state through sexual intercourse (75-81). According to Bersani, such a model of gender and sexuality is useful as long as it is merely regarded as a model. The division into self and other, individual and surrounding can function as a means of friction, and lead to future progression and change, as long as it functions as a starting point rather than a final conclusion – and this is, according to Bersani, ensured by the injection of love (*Intimacies* 76).

Rancière also recognises the division of self and other in psychoanalysis as a simultaneous source of limitations and generative possibilities in *The Aesthetic Unconscious*. However, he emphasises that he is more interested in its generative possibilities. The various stages and characters that Freud and Lacan present throughout their work is here presented as dramatic spaces and signifying actors (Rancière, *Aesthetic Unconscious* 1-3). This is also how Aristophanes’ speech functions in *The Symposium*. He prepares a stage for Socrates’ final insights about love – and this insight is based in the fact that this is nothing but a stage. According to the master, the particular lovers are merely actors within a continual signifying drama, whereas love itself resides within the productive connection, the abstraction that draws them together. Socrates explains that the love of a person allows the character to give birth to, and understand the drama *as a* drama, and thus to understand the ideal abstraction or image of love (*Symposium* 52-53).

Indeed, the concept of drama or play is also crucial throughout Rancière’s philosophy – especially to his conception of the interaction and interrelation between image and self and the formation of aesthetics in society. The various “distributions of the sensible,” the “general distribution of ways of doing and making, as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility” that Rancière conceptualises in *The Politics of Aesthetics* (13) are creative playgrounds that set new identities, new constellations and new generative processes into motion. Like Bersani, Rancière argues that the fruitfulness of these spaces is dependent on a heterogeneous element of friction, what he calls a “dissensus”, that continually protects the process from stagnation (*Dissensus* 37-38). The type of unity that Aristophanes proposes to be the final goal of love making is not at all a desirable state to Rancière. In an interview in *Artforum* he states that “the main enemy of artistic creativity as well as of political creativity is consensus” as this merely perpetuates society’s “given roles, possibilities and competencies” (“Art of the possible”).

Socrates also rejects the idea of absolute unity. Instead, he advocates a type of dissensual immanence. Socrates considers love partly in terms of a binary opposition, referring to two planes of existence: that of the divine and

that of the physical, which can also be interpreted as the plane of ideal abstractions and a plane of physical imitations of these abstractions referred to in *The Republic's* cave allegory. He refers to love as a “spirit”; a concept that resides between the ideal and the image: “Being intermediate between the other two, they fill the gap between them and enable the universe to form an interconnected whole” (Plato, *Symposium* 48). It is important to note that love is thus not just the union of two lovers: it is the concept which unifies the lovers with their abstract forms. The fact that other people consider there to be an appearance of love between two lovers, connects the lovers and their observers to the ideal abstraction. When love between lovers is discussed, “[w]hat we’re doing is picking out one kind of love and applying to it the name (‘love’) that belongs to the whole class” (Plato, *Symposium* 51). This image, or continual performance of love, progressively creates an impression which may lead to the apprehension of the ideal drama.

Socrates’ love is thus a form of in-between-ness: it functions like a connective element or indicator of the subject’s interactions with the world. At the point of perfection this in-between-ness implodes and the line or bridge between subject and object dissolves. The in-between *becomes* complete immanence, the ideal connection, or the perfect whole. This is where the subject should aim to situate itself. In this sense, Socratic love features rather strongly in Jacques Rancière’s philosophy. Rancière continually emphasises that the ideal subject position is the in-between. In *The Politics of Aesthetics*, he argues that there is an “immanence of thought in sensible matter” needed in the consideration of art, politics and society (43). In *The Future of the Image*, he claims that the creative aesthetic event takes place through an artistic “ambivalence” (106-107) and in *The Emancipated Spectator* he poses the emancipatory catharsis in-between communal participation and separation; in the “‘being together’ in ‘being apart’” (78).

Rancière’s in-between-ness is not necessarily an abstraction or ideal, however. It is not a perfect form, but a continual localisation in a political and perceptive process. Socrates’ love is not a predetermined state of perfection either. As Bersani acknowledges, love is completely unlike the world of ideas in *The Republic*. Love is the affective relativity that urges the subject to position itself in relation to the ideally “beautiful and good.” Bersani argues that “Socratic ideality ... is more cultivated than it is contemplated” (*Intimacies* 87) and in accordance with Rancière’s formula for the continually creative redistribution of the sensible it is “Cultivated through dialogue – intrinsically unending dialogue, for we are always either moving toward or falling away from the being it is our greatest happiness to ‘re-find’ in others” (Bersani, *Intimacies* 87).

Socrates describes the cultivating process in terms of an educational “ladder of love”: “the purpose of these rites, if they are performed correctly, is to reach the final vision of the mysteries” (Plato, *Symposium* 59). The ritual performance first takes the form of a sexual union with a beloved object, which if the roles are performed *as roles*, leads to the disruption of the particular love, through the comprehension of the generality of this object’s performance, and so to the comprehension – and apprehension – of the abstract idea of beauty (59-60). The apprehension of the “beautiful and good” is a creation and destruction of that which seems “beautiful and good.” Love, for Socrates, is thus an act of catharsis: a deconstruction which leads to a state that is both physical and abstract; both performance and form. The subject will finally be both liberated and emancipated: “Instead of this low and small-minded slavery, he will be turned towards the great sea of beauty and gazing on it he will give birth ... to many beautiful discourses and ideas” (60).

Leo Bersani recognises this Socratic “birth” to be entirely narcissistic, but in the best possible sense that this term can accommodate: “it undoes the opposition between the active lover and the passive loved one by instituting a kind of reciprocal self-recognition in which the very opposition between sameness and difference becomes irrelevant” (*Intimacies* 86). It is the production of the perfect positioning or the perfect relationship to one’s self, and it is this narcissistic reality that sets the stage for the development of a type example of dissensual immanence in the final scenario of John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask’s *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

The protagonist Hedwig eventually finds a lover, Tommy Gnosis, who she thinks may be her “other half”: “He’s the one. The one who was taken. The one who left. The twin born by fission” (66). Tommy betrays her however, and makes himself a famous pop star using the songs they have written together. Hedwig’s true relationship to Tommy is not fully revealed until she sheds her wig, breasts and makeup at the end of the play and exposes him to be a persona within herself. Her estranged “other half” is literally her creation. Gnosis and Hedwig are both discovered to be performances, which have been made embodied. The estranged Tommy

Gnosis is a part of the character that he and Hedwig created together: “me, the real me, the me I used to be” (42). When Hedwig reunites with Tommy in Cameron Mitchell’s one body, the stage directions state that two images of a male and a female face, which have been shown on a projector above the stage throughout the show, should be seen to merge into a new single face (Mitchell & Trask 79).

Socrates states that love is created by the desire of the mortal to become immortal; it is the human desire for the divine (Plato, *Symposium* 56), and in accordance with this declaration, Hedwig tells Tommy that love never dies. When Tommy asks how, Hedwig replies:

(Hedwig:) “Well, perhaps because love creates something that was not there before.”

(Tommy:) “What, like procreation?”

(Hedwig:) “Yes, but not only.”

He grabs my ass and he laughs. I don’t.

(Hedwig:) “Sometimes just creation. Don’t move.”

I paint a bold silver cross on his forehead.

(Mitchell & Trask 64)

The silver cross becomes the marker of the created character; the pop star Tommy Gnosis. As Socrates shows, love gives birth to knowledge (Gnosis), and to “something beautiful and new” (Mitchell & Trask 74). This concept is immortal, because it is “more than a woman or a man” (Mitchell & Trask 73): it is the multiply gendered form; the ideal drama of love, which is reiterated continually through time. Socrates argues that “this is the way that every mortal thing is maintained in existence, not by being completely the same, as divine things [the ideals] are, but ... leav[ing] behind another new thing of the same *type*” (Plato, *Symposium* 56; my emphasis). The fact that the punk rock musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* is performed on stage emphasises this idea, since the same show will inevitably be reiterated in different spaces and with different performing bodies. Hedwig remains in a continual process of subjective becoming.

So what type of a becoming is this and how does it correspond with queer theory? So far, I have read Rancière’s ethics and aesthetics in relation to Plato’s philosophy of love, and I have argued that John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask create an embodiment of this ideal relationality in their protagonist Hedwig-Tommy. However, Socrates’ narcissistic in-between subject merely sets up a space for communication and a possibility for creative reformation. It does not provide any specific suggestions of how this new being may function or what its potential purpose may be beyond its connective capabilities. Bersani argues that this is an important (and possibly sufficient) beginning: there is no doubt “that our lives would be better” if the world was never considered as “outside” of the self (*Intimacies* 124-125). According to Bersani, “the fundamental premise of impersonal narcissism is that to love the other’s potential self is a form of self-love, a recognition that the partners in this intimacy already share a certain type of being” (*Intimacies* 124). However, both John Cameron Mitchell and Rancière would suggest that there is an emancipatory promise evoked by the in-between subject that can be taken significantly further than this.

In accordance with such a promise, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* thus moves beyond its previously sustained Socratic symbolism at the climactic point of the drama. Bersani argues that Socrates’ ideal being merely exists virtually and must be traced according to its relationship to itself: “[v]irtual being is unmappable as a distinct identity; it *is* only in becoming more like itself” (86; original emphasis). According to Bersani, the process of Socratic love only functions within and in favour of itself, and as such it cannot affect or be affected by its own movements. Hedwig, its allegorised embodiment, is certainly not “unmappable,” however. The final Tommy-Hedwig in-between entity bears the marks of all the previous incarnations on its body. His/her face is smeared with lipstick and eyeshadow and on his/her forehead there is a faded silver cross. Although his/her bare chest is flat like a man’s, it is damp and stained from the juice of the tomatoes that were used to create Hedwig’s bosom. In the transformative scene he/she describes him/herself as “A collage / All sewn up” (71) and his/her

subjective markers are explicitly described in terms of “mapping”: “you can trace the lines / Through Misery’s design / That map across my body” (Mitchell & Trask 70).

Hedwig-Tommy is not merely a product of dissensual friction, he/she is the friction. He/she carries the bodily markers of the material or the actual. All his/her experiences and personas are displayed on his/her skin. The shared body is literally a map of the play’s various conflicts. Yet this Socratic in-between entity, in all its symbolic power, is definitely virtual or abstract to some degree. The question is whether virtuality is necessarily actuality’s mimetic counterpart. Bersani is assuming that the virtual engages in the same simplistic type of mimetic relationship with the “real” that Rancière finds between image and form in *The Republic*. This is not necessarily the case. As Luciana Parisi establishes in *Abstract Sex*, the virtual body, although not material is “real” “in terms of strength or potential that tends towards actualization or emergence” (14). Like Bersani, she considers the interaction between the actual material and the virtual body, but for Parisi the virtual *is* the mapping of materiality: “The mutations of a body are not predetermined by a given ideal or infrastructure defining the realm of biological possibilities of a body. On the contrary, these mutations designate the abstract or virtual operations of matter” (14). The virtual can thus never be fully separated from the actual, since the two necessarily function through each other and continually coalesce in a dance of “symbiotic merging of non-identical powers ... unfolding the unpredictable mutations of a body” (Parisi 15).

This is a Rancièrian conception of play – specifically the play of the mobilising dissensus. A virtual or abstract element is necessary in conjunction with an actual emanation to set the redistribution of the sensible into motion: “Dissensus brings back into play both the obviousness of what can be perceived, thought and done, and the distribution of those who are capable of perceiving, thinking and altering the coordinates of the shared world” (*Emancipated Spectator* 49). Tommy-Hedwig experiences the power of the subjectivity-within-the-Dissensus, the position in-between the virtual and the actual, the lover and the loved, man and woman in the final scene of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. As he/she appears as the immanent emanation of the dissenting principle, it is not merely as a symbol of the divides that have been overcome – he/she is the implosive drive. Although Tommy-Hedwig has taken centre-stage throughout the performance (forcedly so, when other characters have tried to make themselves heard), he/she now creates a democratic sphere. The reconciliatory song, which is sung in unison, describes the Tommy-Hedwig entity as somebody “so much more / Than any god could ever plan / More than a woman or a man,” who takes “the pieces off the ground / And show[s] into this wicked little town / Something beautiful and new” (Mitchell & Trask 73-74). Finally, the actors break the prescriptive boundary between stage and audience by moving through the crowd and inviting all willing members to join the celebration of an unconditional love.

This joyous ending cannot be understood merely through its Socratic analogy. It is the type of dissensual event that Rancière continually commends throughout his work. In *The Emancipated Spectator* he particularly emphasises the possibilities for immanent relationships between actual “reality” and the emanations of the abstract, the virtual and the performative arts (21-22). This is where a cathartic meta-theatrical “third” in-between space may be formed and the gifts of sublime or transformative escape lines may be distributed. After the experience of “A dream / Or a song / That hits you so hard / Filling you up” and is “suddenly gone” (Mitchell & Trask 75), Hedwig’s audience is invited into an emancipatory space where it for a brief moment is allowed to “Breathe, Feel, Love / Give – Free!” (75).

*Hedwig and the Angry Inch* builds up and momentarily sustains a final climactic event, through which its queer Socratic dialogue of love may give voice to more general transformative possibilities. Hedwig-Tommy and his/her band disperse among the audience in order to celebrate the gift of freedom with them. This type of dramatic dialogue does not merely collapse the set boundaries between the characters in the play, but problematises the very ways to conduct drama and dialogue. The fourth wall is broken down; the audience becomes part of the play and the characters become part of the immanent whole represented by the crowd. However, the transpositional effect of the cathartic finale in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* is transient. The “third” space where spectator becomes performer and emancipator will not necessarily be sustained after the theatrical dynamic loosens its grip, but as Rancière states:

Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying seeing and doing

themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection. It begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions. (Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator* 13)

As I am concluding this article, I would like to emphasise that it is merely by going through the distinct forms of man and woman that Hedwig-Tommy manages to create the frictive dissensus and contrasting dialogue necessary for his/her final rebirth as an in-between subject. By posing such contrasting theoretical paradigms as those presented by Bersani, Plato and Rancière, I am attempting to produce a similarly transformative new space. Rancière acknowledges that past and present ethics and aesthetics take part in a continual dialogue. New distributions of the sensible are always interacting with their past incarnations: “The aesthetic regime of the arts is first of all a new regime for relating to the past ... it devotes itself to the invention of new forms of life on the basis of an idea of what art *was*, an idea of what art *would have been*” (*Politics of Aesthetics* 25; original emphasis). The past is both a point of departure and a subject for reform. This is certainly true for Rancière’s own use of Plato in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, *The Future of the Image* and elsewhere. Plato represents a stigmatizing division that subsequent art as well as creative social reforms have had to overcome (*Politics of Aesthetics* 15-17). Aesthetics form absolutes and each new artistic expression to some extent challenges them. If read from a Rancièrian perspective, even Plato’s world of ideas, from which the perfect forms of all concepts communicate and contrast with their imperfect worldly images, is to some extent constructed as a platform for heterogeneous dissensus.

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## Endnotes

1. See for example Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 57-58.
2. This is rapidly changing, however. There is a 2009 special issue of *Borderlines* entitled “Rancière on the Shores of Queer Theory,” edited by Michael O’Rourke and Samuel A. Chambers.
3. The striking similarities between Rancière’s work and the work of queer theorists such as David Halperin, Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick is not altogether surprising, considering that they all express an allegiance to the work of Michel Foucault (Rancière, “Politics and Aesthetics” 191; Halperin 61-65).
4. See Michael O’Rourke and Samuel A. Chambers’s introduction to the “Rancière on the Shores of Queer Theory” special issue of *Borderlines*.
5. See for example Rancière’s critique of Plato in “Good Times or Pleasures at the Barriers”, *Dissensus and Chronicles of Consensual Times*.

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