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Open Your Eyes: Globalization and the Politics of Attention

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IZADORA ZUBEK, MAR 29 2015

I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination – indeed, everything and anything except me.

– Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

For Aristotle, politics is the realm of speech. The political subject appears in the public space where he talks to his peers. He masters the logos: he can discuss and debate about the “good life” of his community. Indeed, in the Book I of *Politics*, Aristotle argues that the gift of speech distinguishes men from other animals.[1] By nature, a human being has a language that enables him to articulate matters of justice and injustice, of good and evil. Therefore, his voice produces more than mere sounds, than mere echoes of pleasure or pain. His voice is a channel that conveys values and connects him with his fellow citizens. Politics is a dialogue between equals.

However, Jacques Rancière challenges the classical definition of the “political animal”. He indicates a practical difficulty: “how one can be sure that the human animal mouthing a noise in front of you is actually voicing an utterance rather than merely expressing a state of being?”[2] The author unveils the problem of recognition. The ability of speech is not enough. The willingness to “hear” is also a condition of politics. The political subject must be seen and heard as “a viable actor” in the public sphere.[3] Otherwise, he does not exist in the eyes of other people.[4] Insulated, the subject cannot be “political”. No man is an island: no isolated individual can be fully considered a man.[5] We need the recognition of others. Even disapproval is a form of recognition. It is preferable to be stigmatized than invisible. You can fight an antagonist that confronts you. In contrast, if you are not seen, there is no possible exchange. Politics is a relationship: it takes at least two.

Political subjectivities can be intentionally denied. As Rancière remarks:

If there is someone you do not wish to recognize as a political being, you begin by not seeing them as the bearers of politicalness, by not understanding what they say, by not hearing that it is an utterance coming out of their mouths. [...] In order to refuse the title of political subjects to a category – workers, women, etc. – it has traditionally been sufficient to assert that they belong to a “domestic” space, to a space separated from public life; one from which only groans or cries expressing suffering, hunger, or anger could emerge, but not actual speeches demonstrating a shared aesthesis.[6]

Some people are deliberately marginalized. Nevertheless, that is not always the case. Occasionally, sheer “distraction” prevents us from acknowledging the claims of others. Michael Shapiro notes that:

“the hiddenness of war crimes and atrocities is owed as much to the psychic suppressions of the phenomenology of everyday life as it is to suppression strategies of government-controlled media.”[7]

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We often “forget” about the suffering of others because we have concerns of our own. We catch a glimpse of their lives in the news but our attention quickly evades. The experience of everyday life seems to absorb and to neutralize our indignation. When we run into “precarious”[8] others, we look the other way. Sometimes, we pity[9] them as victims. Still, we are not attentive to what they have to say. We do not recognize them as political subjects, as equals.

From this perspective, “the politics of attention”[10] matter. Rancière differentiates politics from the police. The police is “a reminder of the obviousness of what there is, or rather, of what there isn’t: ‘Move along! There is nothing to see here!’”[11] In this case, vision is a metaphor for awareness. The police proclaim what is worth of our selective and exclusive attention. On the other hand, politics is “the manifestation of dissensus, as the presence of two worlds in one.”[12] In genuine politics, you have to disobey: you need to stop and see what you were not “supposed” to see. Then, you enter another world. You open your eyes to the fractures in the “distribution of the sensible.”[13] Suddenly, the spatial boundaries and assigned roles look less obvious. At last, you pay attention. You recognize other subjects and you engage with them: you become a subject yourself. Attention comes from the Latin word “attendere” formed by the prefix ad- (to) and the verb tendere (stretch). Attention is an extending movement towards something or someone. It is an effort to go beyond oneself in order to reach otherness.

As a totalizing phenomenon, globalization seems to overwhelm our lives. All we can think about is how to deal with the global imperatives, with the risks that we must “embrace”[14], or rather, that I must adjust by myself. In fact, the individual feels like a solitary cog in the global steamroller. Globalization is perceived as an inexorable fate. Accordingly, politics appears to be out of reach. This essay will outline how some global processes and neoliberal dynamics exacerbate the logics of distraction. The emphasis on consumption favors everyday apathy. Moreover, precarity and risk tend to trigger denial. In order to cope with a hostile world, people close their eyes to their reality and to others. Despite these gloomy outlooks, the essay argues that limitations are not essential. It shall explore the disruptive paths towards attention. Art can open our imagination and hence pave the way for critical thinking. The critique of globalization is a method for reclaiming politics. If you pay attention to the fissures in the global narrative, you are unlikely to “buy” the myth. Attention can be resistance.

Globalization and the Logics of Distraction

The Numbing Rhythms of Everyday Life

The temporality of everyday life is cyclical and repetitive. It is diametrically opposed to the linear time of History. The rhythms of everyday life are humdrum and vain whereas History[15] seems dazzling and necessary. “We are making history!” is a sanguine exclamation. History will guide us to new horizons, to a luminous future in which change will be possible. History promises a better tomorrow or, at least, a different tomorrow. Conversely, in everyday life, time is uniform. Tomorrow looks like today that looks like yesterday and so on. We are caught in a senseless spiral that will only lead us to death. This monotony is linked with numbness and forgetfulness.

Drawing on the work of Henri Lefebvre, Matt Davies and Michael Niemann affirm that: “everyday life is a contested place characterized by mystifications and the struggle to overcome them.”[16] This essay will focus on the mystifications that “derive from the experience of alienation in modern society”[17] and contribute to the logics of distraction. Specifically, it will examine how the “ideology of consumption”[18] plays a part in daily alienation.

Zygmunt Bauman maintains that globalization is embedded in a consumer society. The function of the current industry, organized in a global scale, is to produce “attractions and temptations.”[19] Desire is the keystone of consumer society. For this reason, satisfaction must be immediate, ephemeral, and volatile. In the blink of an eye, satisfaction ends and desire restarts. The dissolution of the waiting period creates time compression. As a result, frenetic consumption orchestrates the rhythms of everyday life. Furthermore, Bauman notices that time compression is better achieved if consumers cannot pay attention or focus for too long[20]. They are engulfed by indistinct sensations: “the consumers are first and foremost hoarders of sensations; they are collectors of things only in a secondary and derivative way.”[21] The overflow of sensations causes insensibility. Bauman’s viewpoint is rather partial: it implies that globalization affects all subjects in the same uniform way. The author overlooks the fact that globalization also expels some individuals (the poorest) from the distractions of consumer society. For now, this

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essay will only focus on the “distractive” aspects of globalization on people that can actually consume. Later on, it shall explore the limits of this perspective.

Likewise, Roland Barthes states that: “what characterizes the so-called advanced societies is that they today consume images.”[22] As mentioned by Bauman, consumerism is not only about “things”. The consumption of images is deemed problematic because it generates “an impression of nauseated boredom.”[23] For Barthes, the excess of images elicits indifference. When the image is generalized, “it completely de-realizes the human world of conflicts and desires, under cover of illustrating it.”[24] On that account, media is an accomplice of everyday apathy. The audience is engaged as consumers that don’t need to be truly “informed” but can be satisfied by a profusion of formless pictures.

Judith Butler condemns the media coverage of war in Afghanistan and Iraq as a “desensitizing dream machine.”[25] She denounces its ethical consequences: “The derealization of loss – the insensitivity to human suffering and death – becomes the mechanism through which dehumanization is accomplished.”[26] The dehumanization of the Other obscures the politics at stake. The Afghani and Iraqi people are represented as a homogeneous mass that cannot “speak”, that cannot govern their countries on their own terms and thus, need to be policed by the United States. The ongoing depoliticization targets American citizens as well:

That the US government and military called this a “shock and awe” strategy suggests that they were producing a visual spectacle that numbs the senses and, like the sublime itself, puts out of play the very capacity to think. This production takes place not only for the Iraqi population on the ground, whose senses are supposed to be done in by this spectacle, but also for the consumers of war who rely on CNN or Fox[27]

Reducing subjects to consumers is a form of everyday alienation. It is a way to constrain political autonomy since individuals are atomized and treated as numb (and dumb) receivers. Now, the essay will inquire into precarity and risk as factors of “distraction”. Eventually, it will address the limits of these observations.

The Blindfolds of Precarity and Risk

Louise Amoore disputes the dominant representation of risk as “an unavoidable symptom of globalization.”[28] She reveals that the discursive linking of risk and globalization has become central to neo-liberal programmes of work flexibilization. The embracing of uncertainty is a potent rationale that naturalizes precarious labor[29] and invalidates political contestation.[30] Risk is designed as an ambiguous reality: it is at once an opportunity and a threat, a source of hope and fear. This ambiguity operates as a “disciplinary force”: “the message is that, in an uncertain world, the winners could become losers, and the losers, if sufficiently enterprising, could become winners.”[31] People grow obsessed with their prospects in the global arena. According to Jean-Philippe Deranty, the accepted sociological premise is that: “some will have to be sacrificed for [...] the economic order (identified with society) to maintain itself.”[32]

Focusing on the writings of Christophe Dejours, Deranty discloses the suffering at work. Suffering arises from the constant fear[33] that subjugates precarious workers. Work is constitutive of a subject’s identity[34], thus the deterioration of work conditions entails intimate anguish. Besides, suffering is often rendered invisible. Workers cannot complain of their jobs because they are “lucky” to have them: “the experience of suffering becomes unsayable, and for the subject a forbidden thought.”[35] Then, individuals develop defense mechanisms in order to endure their existences. Such defense mechanisms can be “detrimental in the long run, notably because they can make subjects blind and mute to their own suffering, not to mention the suffering of others.”[36] Workers need to “suspend” their attention; otherwise they won’t be able to face their everyday lives. They need blindfolds to keep going. This denial can engender a myriad of pathologies[37] and undermine inter-subjective recognition. Precarity press individuals to “close themselves off from narratives and practices of solidarity.”[38]

In similar fashion, Nancy Ettlinger stresses the importance of “reflexive denial” as a response to precarity and risk. She explains that “an illusion of certainty”[39] is constructed in order to conceal the tensions of precarious life. This illusion turns a blind eye to the complexities of the modern world.[40] Ironically, the denial of precarity reproduces

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precarity at multiple scales.[41] Furthermore, Ettlinger aims to dismantle the “essentialist enterprise”[42] of denial. Essentialist thinking directs an exclusive attention on certain traits of a given group while suppressing others. Contingency is actively ignored. However, we may wonder if this critique of essentialism is not essentialist itself: saying that “people” are in denial or “people grope for certainty”[43] overlooks the ineluctable diversity of human beings.

There is nowhere we can find the paragon of “the” consumer or of “the” precarious worker. We can delineate paradigms and worry about the pessimistic conclusions that derive from them. Yet, life outshines our assumptions. Even in the most oppressive situation, creativity can emerge. As Davies and Niemann show:

In fact, however burdensome the daily grind of the worker, work does not exhaust the entire complex of everyday life. Everyday life resists its abstraction and reduction to spatial practices and the representation of space: everyday life takes place in the concrete lived spaces people make for themselves.[44]

In our everyday lives, we can find spaces for regaining attention and repossessing politics.

The Disruptive Paths of Attention

Art and the Opening of the “I”

Thanks to Ulysses, the sixteenth of June has never been the same. Today known as “Bloomsday”, it is the date chosen by James Joyce to set the narrative that “rescue[d], one after the other, each face of the quotidian from anonymity.”[45] According to Henry Lefebvre, “readers were suddenly made aware of everyday life through the medium of literature.”[46] This medium is very peculiar. As noted by Lefebvre, in the novel “the objects are super-objects, Dublin, the City, becomes all the cities.”[47] Literature, and art in general, has the power of reaching abstraction through concreteness. One particular story told with particular resources can aspire to capture a universal experience. The space of art transcends the local but also the global: indeed, the world is the limit. Roland Bleiker highlights “Goethe’s idea that novels open up spaces to think – and mentally travel – across national boundaries.”[48] Goethe advocated for a *Weltliteratur* that enables us to imagine a world dialogue.[49] Building bridges across cultures and subjects, art sparks forms of connection that can be political.

What kinds of connection does art allow? First of all, we should underline that art does not provide certainty. It does not authoritatively show you the truth: instead, it reveals “the world as an ambiguity.”[50] It does not make you “open your eyes” to an undoubted reality, but it helps you to “open your I” to others. Bleiker observes that:

Aesthetic sources cannot give us certainty. Embracing them is all about refusing a single-voiced and single-minded approach to politics in favour of embracing multiple voices and the possibility of multiple truths.[51]

The openness of art can nurture the encounter with others. Their speeches, muffled in the public sphere, can be poetically restored and finally listened. Through art, politics recovers its polyphony.

Besides, for Marcel Proust, art is the only way to get outside ourselves and “to know what another sees of this universe which is not the same as our own.”[52] In other words, it is a way of putting oneself in someone else’s place. Art connects us with the “lifeworlds” of others and illuminates the distribution of the sensible.[53] The different universes cease to be indifferent to us: we share a community of sense that can lead to a sense of community. Art involves empathy[54] and understanding. Thus, it creates aesthetic bonds that have political implications. Art can facilitate recognition (the viewpoint of the other is dignified) and enhance critical thinking (alternative stories unveil the breaches in the hegemonic narrative).

Moreover, Butler holds that the multiplicity of angles and the decentering of the “I” broaden our comprehension of global politics:

The ability to narrate ourselves not from the first person alone, but from, say, the position of the third, or to receive an

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account delivered in the second, can actually work to expand our understanding of the forms that global power has taken.[55]

Comparably, Cynthia Enloe defends the “margins, silences and bottom rungs”[56] as objects of study. According to her, the discipline of International Relations underestimates power because it only deals with central actors and spaces. A “decentering” is necessary in order to understand the whole magnitude and complexity of global politics. In this enterprise, literature is an ally. Enloe focus on the novel *The Nine Guardians* by Rosario Castellanos in order to examine the lives of women in the state of Chiapas. Women, and specifically indigenous women, are the “others” so often disregarded by mainstream IR. In her novel, Castellanos introduces us to local politics “by putting us in the shoes of a white young Mexican girl who feels closer to her Mayan nanny than to her privileged mother and father.”[57] This unique viewpoint gives us original and intimate insights on the power relations in the region. It uncovers the hidden structures that bear the public domain. By opening the private sphere to the public, art can expand the space for politics and thus include more subjects.

Actually, art can cast light on neglected issues. In the first pages of *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, as mentioned earlier, Lefebvre resorts to Joyce in order to launch his inquiry. One may notice that, in their distinctive fashions, both authors are achieving the same purpose: they are drawing attention to the blind spots of the modern world. Lefebvre and Joyce are both exploring everyday life and refreshing our perspective on the matter. They are acknowledging the previously unacknowledged. They are disrupting the ordinary indifference. One can identify affinities between the work of art and the critique as two paths towards attention. Now, the essay will follow the second trail and envisage the critique of globalization as a form of resistance.

The Critique of Globalization: Attention as Resistance

Critical thinking is the refusal to overlook the world that surrounds us. It consists in being attentive to the details, the fissures, and the contradictions of the dominant discourse. The critical position dismisses self-evident concepts. It does not distractedly admit what was already thought. It challenges the common sense and questions the arguments from authority. For instance, this essay started with a reference to Aristotle. The Greek philosopher presupposes that men are by nature political animals endowed with speech and hence politics is the realm of speech. He establishes a regulative ideal, i.e. a model that orders what politics should be. In addition, he assumes that all men have the same intrinsic properties. He takes human essence as a given. However, if you look closer, you may realize that this essence is not so essential after all. Why does a human being need to be defined *a priori*? Jean-Paul Sartre contests the primacy of essence over existence:

What do we mean here by “existence precedes essence”? We mean that man first exists: he materializes in the world, encounters himself, and only afterward defines himself. [...] Thus, there is no human nature since there is no God to conceive of it. Man is not only that which he conceives himself to be, but that which he wills himself to be, and since he conceives of himself only after he exists, just as he wills himself to be after being thrown into existence, man is nothing other than what he makes of himself.[58]

If man is nothing other than what he makes of himself, he has the freedom of choice. He can imagine and choose the life he wants. His life only belongs to himself – he is the ultimate subject of his own story. Consequently, he can resist stories that disempower him: globalization is one of them.

The scholars from the “Newcastle Research Working Group on Globalization”[59] conduct a critique of this global “story”. They expose globalization as a teleological narrative in the service of the neoliberal project. “Globalization” cannot be taken for granted: we need to be attentive to the ideology behind the concept. Therefore, resistance begins with the demystification of global processes[60] and in the “struggle against intellectual opponents through elaboration of an alternative political economy.”[61]

The authors maintain that we need to question “assumptions made about the presumed definition of globalisation and its relationship with the state, civil society and social movements.”[62] This questioning is a form of dissent. It aims to reclaim the “political” by unmasking the choices that were made. The disclosure of the history of globalization

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is a way of debunking the myth. By carefully analyzing what we call “globalization”, we may discern continuities in the processes of capitalist accumulation. Globalization is not a grand epoch crowned by absolute novelty. It is not an irresistible future but a disputable and changeable present.

On the top of that, questioning can be a crucial element of emancipation. Davies and Niemann associate the emancipatory potential of IR theory with the “ability to generate those questions that allow individuals to uncover the linkages between global politics and their everyday lives.”[63] Overall, “the emancipatory potential of all social theory lies in the ability to generate questions rather than to tell us what reality is.”[64] Nonetheless, the ability to question requires attention – in fact, it is a specific form of attention. You need to be attentive in order to recognize the “contradictions between the hegemonic claims about life in capitalist societies and the actual experience of everyday life.”[65] You need to be aware of others and yourself. You need to keep your eyes wide open and contemplate the world with attention, grit and responsibility. Then, and only then, you can hope to transform it.

Conclusion: After Attention

This essay was conceived as a search after attention. In the first place, it intended to demonstrate the political relevance of attention. Secondly, it investigated how globalization makes us “lose” attention. Global processes intensify the logics of alienation and thus favor “distraction”. The rhythms of everyday life are already prone to forgetfulness. In addition, consumerism, promoted as a global ideology, exacerbate the atomization and numbness of subjects. Moreover, precarity coupled with risk tend to encourage reflexive denial. “Distraction” becomes a defense mechanism: people stop paying attention to others and to themselves in order to cope with their bitter routines. Practices of solidarity are inhibited.

Nevertheless, the essay sustained that despair is neither total nor essential. There are breaches where creativity can flourish. Then, it explored the paths towards attention. Art offers ways of connecting with others that can be deeply political. Besides, art draws attention to hidden and neglected stories. Like art, critical thinking challenges the dominant representations of the world. The critique of globalization is a form of attention that focus on the fissures and contradictions of the neoliberal narrative. Furthermore, it argued that attention is a mode of resistance and thereby a condition for emancipation.

Still, the search after attention is meant to stay incomplete. Although attention is an important political goal, it remains an unattainable horizon. Attention is partial. When we are aware of something, we are ineluctably disregarding something else. We cannot possibly look at everything and everyone at the same time. We cannot bear everything and everyone in mind. We are always forgetting. As expressed by Jorge Luis Borges:

Our minds are porous and forgetfulness seeps in; I myself am distorting and losing, under the wearing away of the years, the face of Beatriz.[66]

If we even forget the faces of our loved ones, how can we remember others? Attention and memory are endlessly fading away. They are fugitives that disappear in time.

At last, we can ask ourselves: what comes after attention? Attention is fundamental to engage in politics but it is not enough. There is an abyss between awareness and deed. Attention is fragile and fallible; therefore action has to follow. In order to constitute oneself as a political and ethical subject, attention doesn't suffice. The subject has to react: to be responsive to global injustices and thus responsible for a more inclusive world. After attention, we need mobilization.

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[1] "Nature makes nothing pointlessly, as we say, and no animal has speech except a human being. A voice is a signifier of what is pleasant or painful, which is why it is also possessed by the other animals [...]. But speech is for making clear what is beneficial or harmful, and hence also what is just or unjust. For it is peculiar to human beings, in comparison to the other animals, that they alone have perception of what is good or bad, just or unjust, and the rest"

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(Aristotle, 1998, p. 4).

[2] Rancière, J. (2001) "Ten Thesis on Politics", Thesis 8.

[3] "The public sphere is constituted in part by what cannot be said and what cannot be shown. The limits of the sayable, the limits of what can appear, circumscribe the domain in which political speech operates and certain kinds of subjects appear as viable actors" (Butler, 2004, p. XVII).

[4] Here "other people" designate the anonymous strangers that constitute a political community. It does not refer to people that are immediately related to the subject in the private sphere. This choice can be contested.

[5] "It is evident [...] that a human being is by nature a political animal, and that anyone who is without a city-state, not by luck but by nature, is either a poor specimen or else superhuman" (Aristotle, 1998, p. 4).

[6] Rancière, J. (2001) "Ten Thesis on Politics", Thesis 8.

[7] Shapiro, M. J. (in press, 2014) *War Crimes, Atrocity and Justice*, p. 185.

[8] In *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler follows Emmanuel Levinas and conceives the "precariousness" of the Other as an ethical demand (2004, p. 139). When we disregard the Other, we fail this ethical request.

[9] In *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt strongly criticized pity: "But pity, in contrast to solidarity, does not look upon both fortune and misfortune, the strong and the weak, with an equal eye; without the presence of misfortune, pity could not exist, and it therefore has just as much vested interest in the existence of the unhappy as thirst for power has a vested interest in the existence of the weak" (1973, p. 89).

[10] Michael Shapiro coined this expression in one of his classes at PUC-Rio (June 6, 2014).

[11] Rancière, J. (2001) "Ten Thesis on Politics", Thesis 8.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] In *Le Partage du Sensible* (2000), Rancière defines the concept: "I call the distribution of the sensible the system of sensible evidences that discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. A distribution of the sensible therefore sets at the same time common shares and exclusive parts" (my translation, p. 12).

[14] See Amoore, L. (2004) "Risk, Reward and Discipline at Work". Amoore investigates how the "embracing of risk" has become a rhetoric used to promote work flexibilization.

[15] I resort to a conventional conception of History induced by Hegelianism.

[16] Davies, M., Niemann, M. (2002) "The Everyday Spaces of Global Politics: Work, Leisure, Family", p. 558.

[17] *Ibid.* p. 558.

[18] "What Lefebvre called the 'repressive organizations of everyday life through compulsions and by a persuasive ideology of consumption more than by consumption itself,' integrates the dominated classes into the capitalist system and thus forestalls the emancipatory potential present in everyday life." (Davies, Niemann, 2002, p. 567)

[19] Bauman, Z. (1999) *Globalização: as Consequências Humanas*, p. 86.

[20] Bauman, Z. (1999) *Globalização: as Consequências Humanas*, p. 90.

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[21] *Ibid.* p. 91.

[22] Barthes, R. (1981) *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, p. 119.

[23] *Ibid.* p. 119.

[24] *Ibid.* p. 118.

[25] Butler, J. (2004) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, p. 149

[26] *Ibid.* p. 148.

[27] Butler, J. (2004) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, p. 148.

[28] Amoore, L. (2004) "Risk, Reward and Discipline at Work", p. 175.

[29] "The risks of globalisation are treated as unquestionable realities that demand a flexible and contingent workforce" (Amoore, 2004, p. 181).

[30] "The embracing of uncertainty thus achieves a public 'common sense' logic that is somewhat insulated from political questioning and contestation" (Amoore, 2004, p. 178).

[31] Amoore, L. (2004) "Risk, Reward and Discipline at Work", p. 184.

[32] Deranty, J.-P. (2008) "Work and the Precarisation of Existence", p. 461.

[33] "The affect that arises at work and from work, to subsequently vitiate all social bonds, is fear: the fear of losing one's job; [...] the fear of not being able to adapt in the face of the systematic compulsion to introduce rapid and constant changes, and so on" (Deranty, 2008, p. 456-457).

[34] Deranty, J.-P. (2008) "Work and the Precarisation of Existence", p. 457.

[35] *Ibid.* p. 459.

[36] Deranty, J.-P. (2008) "Work and the Precarisation of Existence", p. 457.

[37] In their article on cultural work, Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt list some of the "injuries" of precarious work: "exhaustion, burn-out, alcohol and drug-related problems, premature heart attacks and strokes, and a whole host of mental and emotional disorders related to anxiety and depression" (2008, p. 18).

[38] Deranty, J.-P. (2008) "Work and the Precarisation of Existence", p. 461.

[39] Ettlinger, N. (2007) "Precarity Unbound", p. 319.

[40] "However, although our economic, political, social, cultural, and ecological environments across time and space do not conform to unidimensional modernist designs, people nonetheless strive to represent their world in modernist terms. This is because a non-modernist, non-essentialist world is uncomfortable! People grope for certainty" (Ettlinger, 2007, p. 320).

[41] "Reflexive denial of precarious life poses problems as people misrepresent complex realities and act on those misrepresentations, in turn re-creating precarity" (Ettlinger, 2007, p. 320).

[42] *Ibid.* p. 320.

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[43] *Ibid.* p. 320.

[44] Davies, M., Niemann, M. (2002) "The Everyday Spaces of Global Politics: Work, Leisure, Family", p. 570.

[45] Lefebvre, H. (1971) *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, p. 2.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[48] Bleiker, R. (2009) *Aesthetics and World Politics*, p. 182.

[49] "Goethe's idea of promoting an age of *Weltliteratur* is certainly commendable, for it seeks a 'cosmopolitan conversation between different national literatures that would bring different nations together'. [...] Literature can, indeed, be part of a cosmopolitan project, for it has long engaged in cross-cultural conversations" (Bleiker, 2009, p. 182).

[50] Kundera, M. (1986) *L'Art du Roman*, p. 17.

[51] Bleiker, R. (2009) *Aesthetics and World Politics*, p. 188.

[52] Proust, M. (1999) *À la recherche du temps perdu*, p. 2285.

[53] See note 13.

[54] Unlike pity that relies on sorrow, empathy is the wider ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

[55] Butler, J. (2004) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, p. 8.

[56] Enloe, C. (1996) "Margins, Silences, and Bottom Rungs" In: *International theory: Positivism and beyond*.

[57] *Ibid.* p. 27.

[58] Sartre, J.-P. (2007) *Existentialism is a Humanism*, p. 22

[59] Amoore, L., Dodgson, R., Gills, B., Langley, P., Marshall, D., Watson, I. (1997) "Overturning Globalisation: Resisting the Teleological, Reclaiming the Political"

[60] "[...] globalisation as overdetermined reality, i.e. as something external, has to be rejected; yet certain processes which currently come under the rubric of globalisation and have real and felt damaging effects on people must be recognised and resisted, a process which begins by demystifying them" (Amoore et al., 1997, p. 180).

[61] Amoore et al. (1997) "Overturning Globalisation: Resisting the Teleological, Reclaiming the Political", p. 180.

[62] *Ibid* p. 181.

[63] Davies, M., Niemann, M. (2002) "The Everyday Spaces of Global Politics: Work, Leisure, Family", p. 558.

[64] *Ibid.* p. 577.

[65] *Ibid.* p. 559.

[66] Borges, J. L. (1945) *El Aleph*, Translation by Norman Thomas Di Giovanni.

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