

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPECIAL ISSUE: THE POETICS OF RESISTANCE

1. *Introduction: The Poetics of Resistance*, Cornelia Gräbner, David M. J. Wood

I. CONCEPTUALISING RESISTANCE

2. *Resistance*, Roberto Echavarren
3. *TINA Go Home! ALBA and Re-theorising Resistance to Global Capitalism*, Thomas Muhr
4. *Movement and the Paradox of Resistance*, Paulina Aroch
5. *Antagonism And Subjectification in the Poem of Resistance*, Arturo Casas

II. WRITING AS RESISTANCE

6. *The Concept of Resistance in Contemporary Galician Culture: Towards a Poetic Ecology*, María do Cebreiro Rábade Villar
7. *'Four Paths Five Destinations': Constructing Imaginaries of Alterglobalization Through Literary Texts*, Cornelia Gräbner
8. *Translation as Aesthetic Resistance: Paratranslating Walter Benjamin*, Burghard Baltrusch

III. RESISTANCE IN CULTURAL PRAXIS

9. *Aesthetic Communities, Peripheral Identities and Social Movements*, Marcos Giadas
10. *Education as Resistance in Literary Criticism and Journalism: Between Professionalization and Democratization of Literature*, Nathalia Jabur
11. *Film and the Archive: Nation, Heritage, Resistance*, David Wood

POETICS OF RESISTANCE¹ INTRODUCTION

Cornelia Gräbner and David Wood

ABSTRACT: The following text provides a conceptual and theoretical introduction to a collection of essays written by members of the multidisciplinary network of scholars, artists and cultural producers named ‘Poetics of Resistance’, which seeks to analyse and encourage discussion of the relationships between creativity, culture and political resistance, in the context of neoliberal globalization. The introduction also provides a critical glossary of a set of loosely interlinking keywords, following Raymond Williams, that mark points of encounter and departure between the approaches of the various authors (not to be confused with the list of keywords used to index each article). Rather than presenting a completed research project, this issue serves as a basis for continuing collaborative research and dialogue in the field, and invites readers to join in the ongoing debate. The contributors to this issue are Paulina Aroch Fugellie, Burghard Baltrusch, Arturo Casas, Maria do Cebreiro Rábade Villar, Roberto Echavarren, Marcos Giadas Conde, Cornelia Gräbner, Nathalia Jabur, Thomas Muhr and David Wood.

KEYWORDS: resistance; poetics; art; literature; neoliberalism; globalization; culture; autonomy; aesthetics

CULTURAL RESISTANCE OR POETICS OF RESISTANCE?

The title of this special issue, Poetics of Resistance, is also the name of a network of scholars and cultural producers. The network was founded in 2007 with the purpose of developing new analytical approaches for an understanding of the relationship between creativity, culture, and political resistance, in the context of neoliberal globalization, and from a perspective of committed scholarship. The founding members of the network felt that global neoliberal politics had created a situation in which the relationship between these three categories—creativity, the impact of neoliberalism, a committed position—became increasingly difficult to translate into practices of committed

1. The project’s webpage can be found at <www.poeres.org>.

research and cultural production. This difficulty seemed to derive from a variety of reasons. One was that the term ‘cultural resistance’ seemed to hold rhetorical rather than analytical or descriptive power. In his introduction to the *Cultural Resistance Reader*, Stephen Duncombe unravels some of the diverse meanings that the term can take on. He suggests that we think of cultural resistance in terms of ‘scales of resistance’, which he equates with ‘political engagement’. Duncombe suggests the existence of three scale measures: political self-consciousness, the social unit engaged in cultural resistance, and the results of cultural resistance.²

While Duncombe’s model of scales can be a productive approach if one wishes to analyse a great variety of practices in light of their resistant function(s), it does raise the question of which cultural practices are *not* at least potentially acts of political resistance, and what descriptive power the term ‘resistance’ still holds if it can be equally applied to shopping and to anti-consumerist culture jamming, for example. As Duncombe himself points out, the concept ‘culture’ is partially the source of such an excess of meaning:³

Here I’m referring to culture as a thing, there as a set of norms, behaviors and ways to make sense of the world, and in still other places, I’m describing culture as a process. ... The term ‘cultural resistance’ is no firmer. In the following pages I use it to describe culture that is used, consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic and/or social structure. But cultural resistance, too, can mean many things and take on many forms.

Combining ‘resistance’ with ‘poetics’ limits the scope of the practices under discussion. ‘Poetics’—as distinct from ‘culture’—encourages a focus on individual creativity rather than on the wider category of cultural practices. Those are still discussed; however, in the contexts discussed here this is usually done in relation to poetic practices.

The register of individuality and subjectivity that is linked with the term poetics, and the evocation of collectivity and community through the term resistance, places the practices and works under discussion in a tension between these categories. It encourages an analytical approach that considers the relationship between the work of art, the subjectivities of its creator(s) and of its recipients, and the social movements or political ideologies with which it is linked. The place of the work of art in the tension field between the subjective and the collective, and the relationality that the existence of this tension field necessarily entails, has emerged as one of the most important foci of the work of members of the network.

The term ‘resistance’, in the way it is used by the network, needs further explanation. We use it with specific reference to neoliberalism, as one recent form of capitalism, while also maintaining an interest in practices of creative resistance to pre-neoliberal regimes of capital. This focus was chosen to facilitate the response to a very particular situation which is characterized by the implementation of a specific set of ideologically based policies while, at the same time, the existence of the ideological dimension is disavowed by policy makers. As Eagleton points out, proponents of conservatism (we may apply this

2. Stephen Duncombe, *Cultural Resistance Reader*, London, Verso, 2002, p. 7.

3. Duncombe, *Cultural Resistance Reader*, p. 5.

more concretely to neoliberalism) are wary of acknowledging its own ideological status, since ‘to dub their own beliefs ideological would be to risk turning them into objects of contestation’.⁴ Neoliberalism thus pretends to be pragmatic rather than ideological; interested in policy rather than ideology. This pretence is made easier by neoliberalism having originally emerged as an economic theory. David Harvey writes:⁵

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. ... But beyond these tasks the state should not venture.

This ‘theory of political economic practices’ does, however, have ideological underpinnings which are crucially important to an understanding of neoliberalism’s impact on the arts, and also on scholarship. Those ideological underpinnings have become ever more obvious as the economic theory proves to be flawed, inadequate, and destructive. Since the crisis of 2008, it has become ever more necessary for neoliberalism’s proponents to maintain the appearance of its overall coherence and effectiveness. Ideology is indispensable for this. Other actors—not politicians—have to step in and provide the justification for the continuity of neoliberal politics. This justification draws on the previous ‘construction of consent’, as Harvey calls it, and this draws increasingly on the pretension that ‘there is no alternative’. Culture in the widest sense plays a part in translating the ideological points outlined by Harvey into more generalized assumptions, discursive figures, and commonly held beliefs. Thus, neoliberalism creates imaginaries that can then inform the creative imagination or that, conversely, are projected through works of art without this necessarily being the intention of the artist. The potentially complicit functions of art and scholarship and their co-optation, are important areas of interest of the members of the network. At the same time—and this interest is more prominently represented in the articles collected in this issue—the members of the network explore how works of art can effectively resist the imposition of neoliberal ideology and the absorption of art by neoliberal politics, either by creating alternative imaginaries or by contributing to and interacting with political projects that stand in opposition to the neoliberal model. This sometimes implies seeking spaces of artistic praxis ‘outside’ neoliberalism, but frequently involves entering into discursive, and sometimes financial, negotiation with neoliberally-informed social, cultural and educational structures. For those of us working in higher education, as we will see below, such negotiation is an everyday reality.

CONCEPTUALIZING RESISTANCE

The decision to focus specifically on neoliberalism, and on poetics rather than culture, requires a re-conceptualization of resistance and, with reference to scholarship, a re-

4. Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, New York, Verso, 1991, p.6.

5. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 2.

thinking of the critical approaches to the relationship between creativity and resistance. A brief discussion of influential theoretical works on poetry as a practice of resistance highlights why it is difficult to use these approaches to understand the work of art in times of neoliberalism.

John Beverley and Marc Zimmerman's analysis of poetry in the Central American revolutions was able to draw on a revolutionary and ideological practice that informed literature; Barbara Harlow in *Resistance Literature* establishes a connection between resistance in literature and anti-colonial liberation struggles; and Carolyn Forché in *Against Forgetting* argues that the act of witnessing as an act of resistance against enforced oblivion translates into an act of political resistance. However, the insidious and gradual insertion of a supposedly non-ideological neoliberal imaginary into cultural imaginaries is not as easily identifiable as an act of oppression or persecution. The neoliberal imaginary does not explicitly endorse or justify violence, and therefore is more complex to resist or to contest. Hardt and Negri's concepts of the global state of war and the global state of exception capture this elastic presence of violence and oppression.⁶

The conceptualization of resistance is tied in with two further complexities: the place of the work of art in relation to resistance struggles, and the effectiveness of resistant works of art. Both points are addressed in most essays in this issue, though authors come to different resolutions. The bearers of resistance struggles in the political sphere are some governments—for instance, those that form part of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA)—and a great variety of social movements. The emergence of new social movements as bearers of resistance struggles has opened up the question about the place of art and culture in relation to these movements. Hardt and Negri's approach has been influential in this respect, and it is also exemplary of an approach with which members of the network struggle. In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri argue for an approach to culture that emphasizes its economic power:⁷

The various analyses of 'new social movements' have done a great service in insisting on the political importance of cultural movements against narrowly economic perspectives that minimize their significance. These analyses, however, are extremely limited themselves because ... they perpetuate narrow understandings of the economic and the cultural. Most important, they fail to recognize *the profound economic power of the cultural movements*, or really the increasing indistinguishability of economic and cultural phenomena. On the one hand, capitalist relations were expanding to subsume all aspects of social production and reproduction, the entire realm of life; and on the other hand, cultural relations were redefining the production processes and economic structures of value. A regime of production, and above all a regime of the production of subjectivity, was being destroyed and another invented by the enormous accumulation of struggles.

In this passage, Hardt and Negri implicitly re-affirm the power of culture—not of art—within a regime of economic production and of the production of subjectivities; they

6. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude*, London, Penguin, 2005.

7. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, London and Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 275.

value culture and cultural relations because they hold ‘profound economic power’, and within this context they contribute to the production of new subjectivities. However, their assessment of culture subsumes it within, and argues that it is indistinguishable from, economic phenomena. This indistinguishability is crucial to the relevance of culture for contemporary resistance struggles. Many interpretations of Zapatista writing exemplify this approach: the poetic style of Zapatista writing is considered to be in the service of public relations, and poetic style is valued *because* it makes a contribution to the political project—not because it critically interrogates it, which Zapatista writing also does and which is conveniently swept under the carpet. The literary establishment, in turn, might be willing to consider and value certain types of literature as a vehicle for a political cause, but the sophisticated representation of political causes through poetic language is rarely appreciated as an enrichment of literature. Thus, art is assimilated into public discourse and political language. Consequently, the work of art and the artists lose their critical autonomy; the artist is empowered as social actor, but disempowered as artist-and-social-actor.

The authors of most essays presented here oppose this wholesale assimilation of the work of art and instead, insist on diverse articulations of what we might call a ‘porous autonomy’. Importantly, this type of autonomy differs from the Adornian approach which locates the work of art in a third space where it is safeguarded from two competing ideological poles, each of which sought to assimilate it.⁸ On the one hand, porous autonomy acknowledges that due to neoliberalism’s all-encompassing tendency to co-opt even the most resistant cultural production, it is futile to conceive it in monolithic terms, and that there is much to be salvaged in what has been or might be assimilated; spaces of resistance can thus be thought of as being lodged within hegemony. There is thus a rapprochement between *poetic* resistance and resistance in oppositional thought on cultural production more broadly, which holds that the social and political configurations with which artists interact, and the creative process itself, are not necessarily ‘pure’ of the hegemonic ideological structures that they resist, and therefore ‘outside ideology’. An analogy might thus be drawn between the poetics of resistance and Brazilian media theorist Arlindo Machado’s ‘technological poetics’, in which ‘the most important question is ultimately not whether the artist becomes more or less free, more or less creative, as she works at the heart of machines, but whether she is capable of repostulating the notions of freedom and creativity within the context of a society that is ever more defined by information.’⁹ While Wood’s article in this issue addresses most explicitly the relationship between technology and artistic practices, the contributions by Aroch and Jabur explore analogous negotiations between creative or political autonomy and potentially co-optable spaces of expression.

8. We make special reference here to Adorno’s article ‘Commitment’, which responds to Sartre’s conceptualization of *littérature engagée* in *Qu’est-ce que la littérature?*. See Theodor Adorno, ‘Commitment’, in Rolf Tiedemann (ed.), *Can one live after Auschwitz?*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2003, pp. 240-258.

9. Arlindo Machado, ‘Máquina e imaginario: el desafío de las poéticas tecnológicas’, en *El paisaje mediático: sobre el desafío de las poéticas tecnológicas*, Buenos Aires, Libros del Rojas/Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2000, pp. 233-51, p. 249.

On the other hand, porous autonomy is developed through a relationality between the work of art that maintains its autonomy, and the social movements or political groups that articulate similar demands on a political level. The issue here is not co-optation; it is rather to what extent a committed work of art or aesthetic practice maintains its critical distance from the social movements with which it sympathizes while at the same time productively interacting with them from a critical perspective. Porous autonomy also becomes a very useful position of resistance in situations in which aesthetics and aesthetic communities (see Giadas) become the carriers of political demands in the absence of carriers of real political power. Echavarren, Giadas, Gräbner, Jabur and Rábade explore such scenarios in this issue. Importantly, the porous autonomy of the work of art opens up political potentialities that draw on but exceed the space of art and cultural production; however, how this potentiality is then translated into political realities is a question that remains unresolved.

It is because of this unresolved question of realising the potentiality of resistant poetics—which is tied in with the question of political effectivity—that not all authors in this issue endorse the porous autonomy of the work of art. Thomas Muhr most explicitly confronts the fact that, for such potentialities to even be explored and certainly for them to flourish and translate into political realities, a safe environment free of repression has to be created. Muhr argues that such an environment can realistically only be created by the State, and he posits the models of governance created by the ALBA-governments as conducive to the construction of such an environment. At stake here is the transition from resistance to counterhegemony, and the uneasy relationship between resistance as expressed in the construction of an alternative that sidesteps or exists parallel to existing power structures (as in ‘alter-’), and resistance as expressed in the construction of an alternative that is positioned explicitly against existing power structures (as in ‘counter-’). In terms of historical and political context, some of the case studies presented here suggest that the poetics of resistance might function very differently in the case of stateless nations or communities on the one hand, and counterhegemonic projects where state power has been taken on the other hand.

One last issue needs to be pointed out, concerning the importance of subjectivity. What Subcomandante Marcos has called the ‘decision-making capacity of the aggrieved’¹⁰ and, moreover, the individual’s decision to embrace their decision-making capacity and thus turn into a subject, is crucial to almost all arguments put forward in these articles. Roberto Echavarren makes this very explicit with reference to queer identity, which the subject has to embrace before being able to resist an oppressive heterosexual culture. This emphasis sets apart the approaches put forward here from those approaches, informed by poststructuralism or cultural studies, that argue that a work of art becomes resistant because the reader makes it thus through their reading in a particular context.¹¹

10. Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, ‘El mundo; siete pensamientos en mayo’, *Revista Rebeldia*, 5. May 2003. For full quote see article by Gräbner.

11. See, for instance, Stuart Hall, ‘Notes on Deconstructing “the Popular”’, *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, Raphael Samuel (ed.), London, Kegan Paul and Routledge, 1981, pp. 231-235, 2237-239; Judith Mayne, *Cinema and Spectatorship*, London, Routledge, 1993, for discussions of this issue.

The work of art as it is conceptualized here is an author's act of resistance which includes an invitation to the reader to also resist; but the reader has to symbolically accept this invitation for the work of art to become effective outside of itself. Thus, aesthetics are not in themselves empowering—as the modernist avant-gardes suggested—but they can become so if author and reader jointly make this decision.

COMMITTED SCHOLARSHIP?

The crucial importance of subjective commitment, and the subject's willingness to engage with their community, recurs in the context of the third pillar of the Poetics of Resistance network: the revisiting of the notion of committed scholarship. Maintaining a committed anti-capitalist position from within the higher education system becomes ever more difficult. Funding cuts in the arts and in research increase dependency on the criteria of funding councils and stimulate competitiveness over collaboration; corporatism and an increasing market orientation in academic publishing reduces possible outlets. The question that the members asked themselves as academics was similar to the one that those members of the network who were cultural producers asked themselves, regarding the relationship between their professional activity, and activism: can and should research be a practice of resistance? And if the answer to this question is 'Yes', then how does research that is committed to a practice of resistance map onto or interact with the political practices of social movements? Pierre Bourdieu formulates this dilemma in *Acts of Resistance* by pointing out what the researcher—in his example, the social scientist—cannot be:¹²

[The effective participation of the social scientist] rules out from the start a certain number of roles: social scientists are not fellow-travellers, in other words hostages and guarantors, figureheads and alibis who sign petitions and who are disposed of as soon as they have been used; nor are they Zhdanovian apparatchiks who come in to exercise apparently intellectual powers within the social movements which they cannot exercise in intellectual life; nor are they experts coming in to give lessons—not even anti-expert experts; nor are they prophets who will provide answers to all questions about the social movement and its future.

The question that remains—and that Bourdieu does not answer—is of course that of what the researcher *can* be in relation to social movements. Members of the network have been looking for this answer in different ways, in different areas of expertise, within different contexts, and before different backgrounds. The response to it seems to be a position that is analogous to a committed porous autonomy of the work of art and the artist.

The way in which many in the network deal with critical theory is indicative of this approach. In the articles collected here, authors draw on a wide range of critical cultural theorists: Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, Chantal Mouffe, Mieke Bal, Walter Benjamin, Gilles Deleuze, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Derrida and Slavoj Žižek, among

12. Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1998, p. 56.

others. Yet, the work of these authors is used to establish a tension field within which the argument is then developed; only in very few cases—such as María Rábade’s use of Deleuze and Guattari’s immanent territoriality or in Arturo Casas’ adoption of Mieke Bal’s formulation ‘art for the political’ as ‘poetry for the political’—does the engagement of the work of art under discussion with an approach taken from critical theory, lead to an engagement without fissures. For instance, both Burghard Baltrusch and David Wood invest in the usefulness of Derrida in their respective discussions of translation and of online archiving as a basis for creative praxis, but rather than reading *through the lens* of deconstruction, both authors take it as a conceptual field from which to think around the subjects than concern them.

For the most part, the articles presented here are characterized by a strong presence of the voice of their relative author; this mirrors the relational approach taken by the artists.

To facilitate intercultural communication and the re-conceptualization of resistance, the network has been working on a collection of ‘Keywords’, in the tradition of Raymond Williams’ seminal work.¹³ The idea emerged from the two symposia that the network has organized so far, in Leeds, U.K., in 2008, and in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain, in 2009. The shared interests of members of the network are loosely expressed through keywords, two of which—poetics and resistance—are in the name of the network. Thus, keywords are markers of connections but, when clearly defined, can also pinpoint differences in the approaches taken by those who use them. Moreover, keywords are instruments of interdisciplinarity. This is especially clear in the case of resistance, which travels through the disciplines to such an extent that its meaning becomes diffuse. To ensure that it still has descriptive and analytical power, it is important to clarify the ways in which the concept is used by members of the network. On the basis of these articles, we have identified a number of keywords that can serve as a thread that leads throughout all the work gathered in this issue. The articles still reflect the initial interests, concerns and approaches that different members of the network brought to the meetings; but the articles also reflect how their authors’ thought has developed since then through the exchange with other members of the network.

KEYWORDS

Aesthetics. That there is a link between aesthetics, poetics and politics is accepted throughout. However, this link does not have the emancipatory implications of political modernism (see *Modernity/Modernization/Modernism*), with the possible exception of Nathalia Jabur’s case studies, and even here the unproblematic link between aesthetics and politics that was assumed in the 1950s was no longer accepted in the 1960s and 1970s. The link between aesthetics, poetics and politics emerges here as opening up a potentiality for a practice of liberation, emancipation, equality; but the work of art in itself, or aesthetics in themselves, do not translate this potential into real power.

13. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, London, Fontana, 1976.

Several authors argue that aesthetics can become the vehicle for causes and demands, when social movements or political parties fail to articulate these causes. Echavarren articulates this with regard to issues as diverse as gender, sexuality and colonialism, while Giadas makes a similar argument with reference to Galician national and cultural identity.

Autonomy. The concept returns explicitly and implicitly throughout the articles, in its political and cultural manifestations: as political or financial autonomy, as the autonomy of the artist and of the scholar, and as the autonomy of the work of art. Autonomy is defined variously in relation to progressive or repressive states and state mechanisms, private capital or the social and political movements with which poetics critically engage.

Questions regarding the autonomy of the work of art underpin many of the analyses presented here. Casas' discussion of the approaches of Mouffe and Rancière, and Badiou and Žižek, and his adaptation of Mieke Bal's term 'art for the political'—as opposed to 'political art'—to the study of poetry, addresses them most directly. Casas points out that Bal's term leads her back to Adorno and toward negativity. He then develops the notion of repertoire and focuses on relationality as crucial elements of 'poetry for the political' and its resistant function.

The relationship between work of art, artist, scholar, and social movements is a delicate one: sometimes the innovative ideas and political practices are first experimented within the area of art, not in social movements, as is seen in the contributions by Giadas, Rábade and Gräbner; elsewhere, as in the piece by Echavarren, the poetics of micropolitics both come in the wake of earlier, broader societal processes and aim to feed back into them. In all cases, the aesthetic ekes out a space of 'porous autonomy', as discussed above, at once informing, informed by and critically distanced from the social movements with which it engages.

The relationship of culture to the State is also problematized (see *The (nation-) State*). Muhr's article emphasizes that the project of ALBA will encompass all areas, including that of culture. The experience of stateless nations like Galicia has made it necessary to develop other strategies: Giadas and Rábade develop models of resistance that rely on the mobilization of civil society and on social movements that are autonomous from the State. Wood shows how the notion of audiovisual heritage is both mobilized by the State as a nationalist discourse, and appropriated by cultural actors wishing to forge spaces of resistance that operate on both a discursive and a political level.

Commitment. Resistance requires an explicit commitment of the individual. This commitment can consist of the decision to take a stand, the conscious embrace of a marginalized identity, the endorsement of a particular cause. However, what the Subcomandante Marcos in a passage cited by Gräbner calls 'the decision-making capacities of the aggrieved human being' (see *Revolution*), and the individual's decision to exercise these capacities, is crucial. The construction of a resistant community can take place only on the basis of a commitment made by those who are involved. This

emphasis on commitment resonates with the general focus on works of art, as opposed to cultural practices.

Community. Most authors point out that any act of resistance has to entail a relationship between a subjectivity and a community. How this relationship is negotiated, and what the notion of community means in a context that clearly draws on diffuse international and cosmopolitan links, is the crux of the question (see *Cosmopolitanism*). Giadas and Muhr explicitly analyse the construction of resistant communities, though they do so from very different points of departure and with very different examples. Muhr focuses on the construction of the political structures for ALBA, and the subsequent construction of community on the basis of the structures and principles implemented by the governments who are committed to this counterhegemonic project (see *The (nation-) State*). With reference to the Galician movement Bravú, Giadas demonstrates how different aesthetic communities can collaborate with each other, and how shared goals are expressed through shared or compatible aesthetics. The notion of aesthetic community can be applied to the group of writers that Gräbner connects under the label ‘alter-globalization literature’. The notion also strongly resonates with the project of journalistic education through literary criticism in the Uruguayan paper *Marcha* and the Brazilian *Jornal das Letras*, put forward by Jabur. She argues that throughout the 1950s, cultural journalists in newspapers of different political positions were united in their conceptualization of education as an emancipatory project, and they pursued this through literary criticism. Once events such as the Cuban Revolution created a situation in which culture became increasingly politicized, these projects died down. However, they had already created communities with a shared frame of cultural references. Wood’s analysis of historical and contemporary discourses surrounding audiovisual heritage hints at both the notion of imagined national community and the alternative, deterritorialized (see *Translation*), virtual communities of remix artists.

Cosmopolitanism. Members of the network struggle for the appropriate terminology for intercultural or international collaboration and engagement. Giadas operates with the notion of cosmopolitanism to theorize the connection between different movements and aesthetic communities, and the re-invention of Galician identity as one that is constructed through engagement with other identities. Gräbner favours the notion of encounter over those of cosmopolitanism or internationalism in order to emphasize the involvement of subjectivities. These notions of global collaborations contrast with those put forward by Muhr, where collaboration is clearly the result of a shared political and economic programme.

Literature. Several papers discuss the relevance of literature—especially poetry—to the overall project of resistance to neoliberal capitalism. Jabur and Gräbner explicitly address the institution or concept of literature and its relevance for projects of resistance. Jabur’s analysis of the use of literary criticism for an educational project of liberation

refers to the 1950s and early 1960s (see *Resistance; Revolution*). She ends her article on the note that, due to the political developments in Latin America, the political project of one of the newspapers—the Uruguayan *Marcha*—was radicalized. As a result, the journalists working for the paper chose different modes of expressing their political commitment. Gräbner’s argument picks up chronologically where Jabur’s left off, with reference to the writer Eduardo Galeano who worked for *Marcha* in the 1970s. Gräbner argues that, in the 1990s and the early 21st century, Galeano’s conceptualization of literature as a practice of dialogue and liberation is revisited and adapted by the Zapatistas. Literature now becomes an arena in which to develop political imaginaries and to re-construct political language. This use of literature links with Giadas’ conceptualization of aesthetics as a vehicle when political power cannot be obtained (see *Autonomy*).

Modernity/Modernization/Modernism. Most authors critique in some way the teleologies and utopias uttered by discourses of modernity and analogous modernist artistic practices. For Gräbner modernity represents a repressive and ultimately ill-fated rationalization of both urban space (see *Territory*) and of social and economic relations—utopian ideals that have run aground in the form of the megacity and neoliberal politics. Jabur discusses the at once productive and problematic notion of journalistic and educational modernization, while Aroch, through her analysis of the novel *The Dispossessed*, deals with the crisis of the modern ideal of the emancipation of the subject (see *Autonomy*) from the 1960s, which sets in motion a broad transition from revolution towards resistance as the most forceful paradigm of struggle. Wood accounts for the potentially transformative nature of the urge to archive film in late nineteenth and early twentieth century modernity as regards the writing of history, and traces the archival impulse through national, imperial and revolutionary modernity towards virtual postmodernity. Giadas considers the cross-fertilization of modernity and tradition in oppositional Galician cultural production.

Baltrusch, Wood and Rábade all look back to tropes of nineteenth century Romanticism such as the sublime, autonomous creative genius and posterity, which both inform and rub against the increasing fragmentation of social and cultural experience in modernity (see *Revolution*). Baltrusch and Wood also consider Romanticism’s characterization of meaning as intangible and eternally deferred, and relate it to subsequent textual practices of resistance. Seen in this light, this set of essays could be read as a discussion of the extent to which postmodernity constitutes a certain deferred continuity with Romanticism and modernity, or a radical break with those categories.

The (nation-) State. Giadas, Rábade and Gräbner all draw on a relationship between aesthetics, culture and political movements that is based on the State being unavailable as a protective or fostering entity. Whereas in cases such as Bravú, the ecological movements cited by Rábade, and the literary and musical case studies of Gräbner, artists engage their poetics with those of a social movement and a political alternative is developed out of the interaction between them and in clear opposition to the state, Muhr’s case study introduces the notion of a popular movements that has already taken

State power, and is now developing aesthetics on the basis of its politics. Wood analyses varying degrees of coincidence and departure between national and oppositional discourses of heritage. Thus, these aesthetic and political movements and discourses operate either in opposition to the State or side-by-side with it, with varying degrees of consonance or dissonance (see *Autonomy*). Muhr looks at the very different case of the ALBA initiative. In the case of ALBA, several Latin American governments have committed to fostering economic, political and cultural collaboration between their member states. ALBA provides a counter-hegemonic alternative to the dominance of U.S. hegemony and their local allies in Latin America. After strengthening economic and political collaboration, the ALBA governments are now implementing a cultural programme as well.

Resistance. Several authors—especially Aroch, Casas, Giadas and Rábade—explicitly tackle the different meanings that the term takes on in different creative contexts and academic disciplines. The conceptualization of resistance by these writers draws on critical approaches and case studies from a great variety of fields of study. Casas explores relational approaches to resistant poetry, in order to move beyond dichotomies such as the dominant versus the subaltern, or power versus resistance. He contrasts approaches taken by Žižek, Mouffe, and Rancière, and comes to reformulate Mieke Bal's reformulation of 'political art' as 'art for the political' for the case of poetry. He suggests that the concept of repertoire as developed by Itamar Even-Zohar provides a useful basis for a relational approach to the conceptualization of resistance. Paulina Aroch unravels the tension between resistance and revolution, through her analysis of the representation of time in the novel *The Dispossessed*. David Wood draws on Aroch's distinction between those two categories in tracing revolutionary and resistant impulses in archival practices.

Rábade revisits the concept of resistance through that of nature. She argues that critical ecology and ecological movements in Galicia understand nature as an 'ecological machine', in the sense of Toni Negri. This approach posits them in opposition to capitalism, and permits them to develop an imaginary of their own which can become the platform for the construction of an alternative approach to land and nature. This approach is placed in constructive interaction with the poetics of the poet Chus Pato, who draws on metaphors from the natural environment to envision an alternative 'republic' in which citizenship is conceptualized in ways that highlight the dependency of the human being on ecology. Consequently, resistance against capitalism is tied in with an engagement with the ecological.

Muhr retheorizes the concept of resistance through that of counterhegemony. By taking the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) as an example, Muhr criticizes approaches to resistance that eschew the need to take state power. He argues that any constructive resistance to neoliberalism has to reorganize the relations of power and property, and explores the theoretical possibilities for a counter-hegemonic resistance through a collaboration between the state-in-revolution and organized society.

Revolution. This concept highlights more differences than communalities between the different articles. Many authors do not mention revolution at all. Whereas in Muhr's case study, the 'Bolivarian Revolution' is positive and empowering within the contemporary context, Echavarren criticizes notions of revolutionary liberation movements because of their homogenizing politics regarding gender and identity (see *The (nation-) State*). Among the authors of this issue, he articulates the most fundamental critique of revolution and revolutionary movements, because he explicates his disagreement with the notion of the revolutionary movement whereas other authors simply do not engage with the notion of revolution. Wood's analysis of politicized discourses surrounding the notion of cinematic and media heritage also critiques emancipatory revolutionary pronouncements around film archiving at the peak of the New Latin American Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s, which tended to be tied up in top-down models of cultural change, and favours participatory and diffused actions of media resistance enabled by subsequent technological change. Aroch's reading of the science fiction novel *The Dispossessed* further highlights the theoretical shortcomings of the teleological notion of revolution, read through the temporal category of sequentiality, but rather than rejecting it outright in favour of simultaneity—the temporal logic of resistance -, she argues that both categories should be regarded within their own referential frameworks, relationally and dialectically.

The relative absence of the term 'revolution' throughout the articles collected in this issue is replicated in the implicit and diverging views regarding political and aesthetic avant-gardes. Most authors conceptualize the role of art as relational or dialogical with social movements and political projects (see *Autonomy*); thus, activism and the arts are on equal terms with each other. Neither of the two aspires to leadership. This has to be contextualized—the possibility or impossibility of taking state power, and the practicality of it—, and it leads back to the question of how the potentialities liberated by the interaction of politics and aesthetics can be translated into political change.

Territory, its tenuous relationship to the nation, and its relation to the globalized world emerges as another key concept. Rábade theorizes the notion of territory in relation to critical ecology. She employs the Deleuzian concept of immanent territoriality to define the territory of stateless nations as 'the site of an alternative political and cultural project' which is tied to one particular territory, but connects it with other territories and groups all over the world. Her reference to the catch-phrase 'No pasarán' ('They will not pass') which epitomizes the defence of Madrid by the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War, highlights the importance of defending and of not giving up territory, and the symbolic and inclusive meaning that territory and the call to its defence can acquire.

In contrast to Rábade's focus on the rural, Gräbner uses urban territory as a metaphor. She structures her analysis of 'alterglobalization literature' as an exploration of a global megacity, performatively constructed by literary encounters between authors and between these authors and their readers. The global megacity that emerges out of these encounters is poetically constructed as a space of agency for those who inhabit

it. With reference to a definition of resistance by Subcomandante Marcos, Gräbner indicates that this space of agency and construction of an alternative type of globalization might at times have to turn into a ‘territory of resistance’.

Marcos Giadas argues that the aesthetic movement Bravú developed a particular aesthetics that established links with other movements in Europe and Latin America and in doing so, constructed what Giadas terms an ‘aesthetic community’. The international and cosmopolitan scope of Bravú draws on a strong attachment to territory in Rábade’s sense of critical ecology, framed by Giadas in a more explicitly nationalist and socialist framework.

Translation. Burghard Baltrusch, following Walter Benjamin, conceptualizes translation as a practice of aesthetic resistance to what is termed ‘the totalitarianism of the idea of the “original”’. He conceives translation as a process of transculturation and transposition. The resulting notions of paratranslation and, in relation to poetry, of ‘transelation’, take on an ideological dimension as they highlight the semantically, territorially and culturally relational nature of expression and artistic creation. Thus, literary translation can become a practice of resistance.

Gräbner uses the notion of translation, with reference to the author-figure of the Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos (see *Literature, Autonomy*). She argues that the figure of ‘Marcos’ is constructed as a translator between different cultural communities and social sectors of Mexican society, between different political traditions of resistance and revolutionary struggle, and between Mexican and global resistant communities. ‘Marcos’ thus becomes a symbol of the potentiality released by the respectful encounter of radically different subjectivities and communities.

This list of Keywords is by no means complete. Upon publication of this issue, members of the network will continue to elaborate on the Keywords on the interactive webpage of the project, www.poeres.org.

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Burghard Baltrusch (<http://uvigo.academia.edu/BurghardBaltrusch>) obtained his Ph.D. in Luso-Brazilian and Hispanic Studies in 1996 from the University of Bonn (Germany). At present he is senior lecturer in Portuguese and Translation Studies at the University of Vigo (Galicia/Spain), where he has coordinated several Ph.D. programmes on Translation & Paratranslation. He taught seminars on Portuguese and Brazilian literature, Galician and Translation Studies in Vigo, Bonn, Augsburg and Coimbra. His research adopts mostly approaches related with postcolonialism, feminism, cultural translation, paratranslation and an ethically motivated postmodernism. Examples of his publications are *Bewußtsein und Erzählungen der Moderne im Werk Fernando Pessoa*, Frankfurt/New York 1997, *Kritisches Lexikon der Romanischen Gegenwartsliteraturen* (with W.-D. Lange et al.), 5 vols. Tübingen (since 1999) and *Soldando Sal—Galician Studies in Translation and Paratranslation*, Munich 2010 (with Gabriel Pérez Durán). He has been engaged in the support of minorized cultures, for instance as president of the International Association of Galician Studies (<http://www.estudiosgalegos.org>) and participates in *Poetics of Resistance* since 2009, where he appreciates the forum's attempt to relate academic theory with cultural intervention.

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María do Cebreiro Rábade Villar holds a doctorate in Literary Theory. She is a lecturer at the University of Santiago de Compostela. Her research focuses on contemporary Galician poetry, anthologies on the Spanish Peninsula, cultural processes that are linked to migration, and the relationship between literature and spectrality. Through various objects and foci of analysis, her research is related with the analysis of the relationship between literature and power, and with phenomena of cultural resistance. This links her to the group Poetics of Resistance, in which she participates since the first international meeting of the network in 2008. She has published articles in several national and international journals. She is author of the monographs *As antoloxías de poesía en Galicia e Cataluña. Representación poética e ficción lóxica* (2004) which was awarded the Dámaso Alonso Prize for Filological Research, *As terceiras mulleres* (2005) and *Fogar impronunciado. Poesía e pantasma* (2010). Together with Fernando Cabo she has co-authored *Manual de teoría de la literatura* (2005).

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Nathalia Jabur is a journalist and a PhD candidate in Spanish American and Brazilian Studies at King's College London (UK). She is writing about journalism's fundamental role in the formation of literature and the intellectual in Brazil and Uruguay in 1945-1960. Her work focuses on two newspapers, *Jornal de Letras* and *Marcha*, as spaces of literary and political debates and vehicles of cultural modernization. The comparative aspect of her analysis intends, among other things, to cross the linguistic barrier that often isolates Brazil in Latin America's intellectual history. Nathalia has been awarded two master degrees, in Journalism and Comparative Literature, and has worked as a journalist in Brasília, São Paulo and Madrid. She appreciates her participation in Poetics of Resistance as an opportunity to discuss and consider, in one same forum, theories and practical possibilities of cultural resistance. It has also helped her to think of the practical repercussions of the historical data that originate from her archival work.

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