

# To resist = to create? Some thoughts on the concept of resistance in cultural criminology

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## Introduction

Today, we are told, the practice of resistance – especially political resistance in the form of protest and activism – is making a comeback. ‘The world is facing a wave of uprisings, protests and revolutions’, according to the back cover of Paul Mason’s influential recent book *Why It’s Kicking Off Everywhere* (2012), an engrossing text that has become something of a handbook for all sorts of activists, from hard-core cyber-protestors to would-be revolutionaries. But while resistance is once again highly fashionable, we should not lose sight of the fact that it is also characterized by a palpable lack of definitional consensus, with the term being employed in a haphazard fashion to describe everything from full-blown revolutionary protest (Adib-Moghaddam, 2013; McDermott & Stibbe, 2006) to women who watch television soap operas (Brown, 1994). This broad application of the label ‘resistance’ to a very diverse and often contradictory set of practices also extends to a growing number of activities and pursuits that occur within the discipline of criminology. It is essential therefore that criminologists interested in studying the subject do so with some measure of conceptual clarity. This article aims to provide a more analytical understanding of the label ‘resistance’ – especially as it is deployed and appropriated in Western liberal democracies. It sets out from the premise that the notion of resistance, although it has been current in criminology for some time, is still vaguely defined. In order to provide more analytical precision, we will first review how notions of resistance and rebellion are currently employed within criminology generally and cultural criminology specifically. In the second part, we explore the implications for how we might conceive of a conception of resistance as a positive or ‘creative force’, rather than simply a negative counter-reaction against cultural, social or economical power relations that exist at a particular moment in a society. The third part is devoted to four events that radically transform a certain situation in the fields of politics, art, love and science. In the fourth part we investigate the limitations of resistance by reference to the counterculture of the Sixties. In the fifth and final part, we put forward the case for thinking about resistance as a three-stage process.

## Resistance everywhere?

Despite a recent revival of interest in the subject, resistance remains a highly underdeveloped concept within the social sciences.<sup>1</sup> Even when the term dominates very specific disciplinary subfields such as new social movement theory, post-material politics, or the sociology of insurrection there is little agreement on the parameters of the term. It is a similar case with cultural criminology. While cultural criminologists readily deploy the term there has been almost no theoretical debate on the concept of resistance itself (see Brisman, 2010 for a rare exception). Rather than being theorized, different examples of subversive behaviour, youthful subcultural practices, and social movements are all-too-often simply lauded as forms or repertoires of resistance.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, it is difficult to address why one type of behaviour is called resistance and another not. Writing urban graffiti, for example, is seen as resistance against 'the confinement of kids and others within structures of social and spatial control' (Ferrell, 1995). Likewise, digital culture jammers such as Anne-Marie Schleiner, whose work includes writing subversive images and captions on the virtual surfaces of militaristic video games like *Counterstrike*, are discussed (admittedly with some reservation) within the context of 'resistance to imperialism' (Ferrell et al., 2008: 149; De Jong & Schuilenburg, 2006: 64-71). Even the contemporary street gang is considered by some cultural criminologists less as a pathological or criminal entity and more a political organisation, predicated on 'resistance to state oppression' (Brother-ton, 2004). These and other examples illustrate that, for better or worse, one of the defining features of cultural criminology has been the celebration of an eclectic array of resistance forms – or as the late great Jock Young writes in *The Vertigo of Late Modernity*, 'resistance is always there' (2007: 77). But is there a need for greater precision when it comes to aligning cultural criminology with contemporary practices that purport to be functioning as resistance to wider social, economic or political forces? We think there is. Consider, then, two further forms or repertoires of resistance from recent critical criminology.

Sticking with Jock Young, in his recent work *The Criminological Imagination* (2011) Young continues to uphold his assertion that 'resistance is always there'. Drawing on Michel Maffesoli's (1996) notion of 'postmodern neo-tribalism', Young sees 'the youth cultural forms' associated with the Ibiza club and drug scene as a 'form of resistance'. However, as one of us can attest from having undertaken empirical research in and around Ibiza's mega clubs in 2011, in reality "resistance" is in rather short supply in these environments. Indeed, the intoxicat-

- 1 We wish to state at the outset that this paper is concerned with social scientific accounts of resistance in the context of Western liberal democracies. We recognize that elsewhere in the world (perhaps most notably Latin America) political and cultural resistance takes different forms and has a very different history.
- 2 We should point out that this is not the first time that the subject of resistance has been debated within criminology. Most notably in the late 1960s and 1970s there was much discussion among Marxist and leftist criminologists about whether or not forms of street crime such as mugging and even burglary could be conceived as a form of crypto-political resistance against capitalist oppression (see, most famously, Hall et al., 1978).

ed punters on the streets of San Antonio are anything but purveyors of Maffesolian *puissance*. Instead they are simply reflections of the dominant capitalist order, an order which seeks only to transform itself into more of the same (Hayward & Hobbs, 2007). A second example is actually a more general point about a certain type of paper that we have encountered over the years at various criminological conferences. These papers typically take the following familiar form. To start with, they engage with supposedly controversial subject matter (often linked to the researcher's particular personal or biographical interests). Examples here might include say sadomasochism, a new form of street art, or an allegedly controversial 'outsider' or 'rebel' figure from popular culture. The researcher then slathers the chosen subject matter with the sheen of 'resistance' and we are told that this is enough to warrant the attention of cultural criminologists. While these papers may have some sort of descriptive value, we wish to stress that in such cases the term 'resistance' is being deployed more for effect than as a rigorous analytical category. For example, with tawdry BDSM (Bondage/domination/sadomasochism) novels such as *Fifty Shades of Grey* topping the best seller lists and high-street retail chains selling dominatrix gear, it's hard to understand exactly how accounts of erotic sexual practice are in any way synonymous with resistance – unless, of course, one is referring to the chaffing caused by handcuffs and leg restraints... In summary, then, despite the fact that the label 'resistance' is widely used and fostered in (cultural) criminology, we remain in a strange position. In far too many cases, we still don't know exactly what resistance means.

In a bid to add some conceptual precision let us take a moment to discuss an important paper on resistance that has been largely ignored by criminologists: Jocelyn Hollander and Rachel Einwohner's influential article 'Conceptualizing resistance' (2004). Hollander and Einwohner's starting premise is the same as ours, specifically that while 'resistance is a fashionable subject' there is absolutely no consensus on its definition (2004: 533). In a bid to address this shortcoming, the authors present a 'typology of resistance forms' that aims to move beyond definitional debates to focus instead on the distinct analytical components of resistance. After a detailed review of the pre-existing social scientific literature, Hollander and Einwohner identify eight types of resistance ('overt resistance'; 'covert resistance'; 'unwitting resistance'; 'target-defined resistance'; 'externally-defined resistance'; 'missed resistance'; 'attempted resistance'; and 'not resistance'). They then pose each mode of resistance three straightforward 'yes' and 'no' questions: 'Is act [of resistance] intended as resistance by actor?'; 'Is act [of resistance] recognized as resistance by target?'; and 'Is act [of resistance] recognized as resistance by observer?'. Fairly obviously, mass street-level political protest is classified as 'overt resistance', because the answer to all three questions is an unequivocal 'yes'. However, other forms of resistance are more opaque. So, for example, 'unwitting resistance' such as the 'Tomboy' behavior of girls or day-dreaming at work may not be intended as resistance by the actor (i.e. 'no' to question one), but is often recognized as threatening by targets and other observers (i.e. 'yes' to questions two and three). In summary, the key analytical components for Hollander and Einwohner are 'intention' and 'recognition'. We agree, but for our purposes it is the penultimate type of resistance – 'attempted resist-

ance’ – that is of most interest, as we believe that much of what passes for ‘resistance’ in criminology, and indeed the social sciences more generally, today can actually be classified under this category. Consider, as evidence, our two examples from earlier: the drink-and-drug related hedonism associated with the Ibiza club scene, and the supposedly transgressive practices associated with BDSM. In both cases, it doesn’t matter one iota if the actor thinks that what he or she is doing is resistance if the act itself either goes unnoticed or does not threaten the observer or the surrounding environment. In Ibiza, for example, virtually the whole island is predicated on hedonism, something reflected in the laissez-faire stance of the San Antonio police department to overt drug use on popular sunset beach spots. To put it another way, much of today’s so-called rebellion is nothing of the sort. Instead of challenging the status quo, too much contemporary resistance ends up simply reaffirming the pre-existing socio-political situation (Heath & Potter, 2006). It is to this very point that we now turn.

### Resisting ‘dogmatic images of thought’

One of the central features of cultural criminology as so far imagined has been the attention it has paid to crime and crime control, to emotion and rationality, and to *resistance and submission* – especially in the context of everyday life (Ferrell et al., 2008 Ch. 4; Hayward, 2004). It is this framing of everyday life, which also runs through various studies of resistance, emphasizing that meaningful statements and knowledge are produced and regulated through the rules of social practices. For example, in his analysis of the configuration of power and authority in criminology, Ferrell states that ‘systems of domination’ reside ‘in structures of knowledge, perception, and understanding’. As a consequence, ‘authority operates not only through prison cells and poverty, but by constructing and defending epistemologies of universality and truth’ (Ferrell, 1994: 162). The idea that a social practice mediates the way that a topic can be meaningfully discussed and reasoned about resembles Foucault’s notion of a discourse. To gain a better understanding of the relation between a discourse and the act of resistance, we must first consider both what a discourse is and its function as a semi-autonomous practice. Only then will we be in a position to consider how resistance works in this context, to what ends, and at what cost.

In his analysis of our modern society, Michel Foucault defined a discourse as ‘a group of statements that belong to the same discursive formation’ (1972: 117). As he argued, any discourse that has been built and rebuilt over a long period of time is ‘controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures’ (1981: 52). As such, any discourse is accompanied by rules of power regarding prohibition, exclusion, inclusion and the repression of everything that is, or could have been, seen and spoken. As a consequence, each discourse not only excludes other discourses, but also produces outsiders by using binary dichotomies such as ‘normal-abnormal’, ‘reason-madness’ and ‘sick-healthy’. Truth, or, more accurately, the ‘true-false’ dichotomy, is one of those systems of rules inherent to a discourse. By way of an example, consider Foucault’s discus-

sion of Gregor Mendel [1822-1884] – the acknowledged father of modern genetics – in his now-famous inaugural lecture ‘The Order of Discourse’ at the *Collège de France*. In this address, Foucault stated that, although Mendel spoke the ‘truth’ with respect to the process of genetic inheritance, his path breaking scientific discovery did not fit ‘within the “true” of the biological discourse’ (1981: 61) of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It is precisely by the way procedures of inclusion and exclusion work, that it becomes apparent that each established discourse (scientific or otherwise) is structured by a *dogmatic (or orthodox) image of thought* that is pre-supposed in all disciplines and that must be seen as ‘a template for conceiving the world’ (May, 2005: 74). Set against the function of a discourse, as Foucault described it, it becomes apparent that such an image of thought involves a particular set of ‘subjective and objective presuppositions’ (Deleuze, 1994). This set of presuppositions *precedes* or *underlies* a certain discourse and in a sense guides the thinking in that discourse. Take, for instance, philosophy in which a set of presuppositions can be found in the work of René Descartes. According to Descartes, the inceptor of modern philosophy, thought has always an orientation towards the category of ‘truth’. Likewise, in economics, another long-established discourse, a deeply entrenched set of philosophical presuppositions can be found in the definition of man as a rational animal who arrives at his optimum strategies through pure calculation (see Hayward 2007; 2011 for cultural criminology’s position on rationality).

In short, this means that each discourse always starts with a particular set of presuppositions. These presuppositions take the following form: ‘everybody knows this... everybody recognizes this... nobody can deny it’ (Deleuze, 1994: 129-131). It would be a mistake, however, to assume that these presuppositions are essentially conscious or need to be spoken. Indeed as Gilles Deleuze makes clear, ‘they function all the more effectively in silence’ (1994: 167). Nevertheless, one way to describe them is through the notions of ‘common sense’ and ‘good sense’. Good sense is what everyone with good intuitions has; common sense, which is sense of the ‘in-common’, is to be able to recognise what is obvious. Common sense and good sense together is what everybody knows or should know. In ancient Greek, the co-formation of ‘common sense’ and ‘good sense’ is called *doxa* (δόξα from δοκεῖν *dokein*). *Doxa* is a conformist conception of thought that is expressed in popular opinions and common belief, which are based on the most banal act of everyday thinking: the principle of communication. In *Republic*, Plato placed *doxa* between ‘knowledge’ (*gnôsis/epistêmê*) and ‘ignorance’ (*agnôsia*), ‘an intermediate state which is not knowledge but at least provides some starting-points in the quest for real understanding’ (Szaif, 2007). Similarly, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu used the term ‘*doxa*’ in his book *Outline of a Theory of Practice* as a description for what is taken for granted in a society. According to Bourdieu, *doxa* exists in the universe of the undisputed, in ‘the twofold sense of what goes without saying and what cannot be said’ (1977: 170).

Taken together, then, Foucault and Deleuze suggest that each discourse is accompanied with, on the one hand, procedures of inclusion and exclusion, and on the other hand, a dogmatic image of thought that simply relays and reaffirms purport-

ed actual knowledge and the demands of popular opinion. This means that to overcome common opinions, one must inevitably confront the fundamental question of *how to move from a dogmatic image of thought to a new image of thought*, one that no longer dogmatically reproduces the assumptions of common sense or the clichés of cultural representation. In other words, to confront a specific discourse means to confront it with the problem of its *presuppositions*. It is at this point that two important and interconnected problems emerge, issues that are essential for making sense of how resistance is employed within cultural criminology. The first problem concerns the role of creativity within resistance. If resistance is about replacing one dogmatic image of thought with something new (in Žižekian terms, for example, trying to develop new political forms that are capable of looking beyond ‘the capitalist horizon’, Žižek, 2009), then to what extent does such a transformation demand that resistance includes a necessarily positive or creative dimension, in the sense of being able to think or culturally represent something that transcends existing dogmatic images of thought? The second problem stems directly from the first: specifically, is there a danger that, by stressing creativity over and above other elements – say, for example, robust street-level protest and intervention – certain resistance activities might be reduced to *simple acts of communication*, empty cultural messages devoid of any real transformative potential? In a bid to answer these questions, it is instructive to consider the origins of the term ‘resistance’.

### What is creative resistance?

The historical origins of the term resistance can be found in the Old French *resistance* and Late Latin *resistentia*, both of which have a reference to ‘make a stand against, oppose, to stand back, or withstand’. As such, the etymological root of the term is unambiguous: the ‘re’ in resistance means ‘against’, and as such resistance is framed clearly as a negative term, meaning those personal acts exerted against the exercise of power by institutions, persons or a dominant social structure. Expressed in more philosophical terms, ‘resistance’ refers to any force, which acts contrary to another. We wish to argue that today a subtle but important transformation is taking place regarding the usage of the term. Let us explain.

To start with, we reject the common idea that ‘resistance is always there’. To put it bluntly, we think that people resist in the true sense of the term (i.e. by taking a highly principled stance in a bid to resist or withstand something oppressive and specific) only very rarely. Instead, whether it’s the liberal ‘faux-hemiansm’ of the urban hipster, or the primitivist proclamations of the radically detached green life stylist, what is more common in the West today is the *reactive gesture*; something akin to what Friedrich Nietzsche ([1887] 2007) identified in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, as ‘a reaction to the behaviour of the masters’. This type of reaction maybe subversive and pessimistic about existing circumstances but it is not oppositional behaviour in the sense that it does not represent a meaningful challenge to the *doxa*. Indeed, labelling every dissenting voice ‘resistance’ is inaccurate and



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counterproductive. Instead, as Hollander and Einwohner made clear earlier, in reality many such actions are better understood as ‘attempted resistance’. This is not to say that today’s many ‘reactive gestures’ are not creative – quite the contrary. In many cases these expressions of dissent and dissatisfaction with existing circumstances and presuppositions (*doxa*) are extremely creative and, as we will see below, are vital when it comes to developing the means to resist established forms of dogmatic thought, to challenge common norms and plough up common ground.

However, before we discuss the role of creativity further by asking whether the historic framing of the word resistance as a negative verb has ensured that the more creative elements of the term have been overlooked. We must first say something about how, if it is indeed true that ‘to resist = to create’, the creative aspects of resistance differ from simple communication. Generally, communication is understood as ‘a logic that extends what we have already grasped and recognized in representational form about the past and attempts to extend this information to the future’ (Lorraine, 2011: 17). In other words, communication is transmitting information from sender to receiver, with the ultimate goal of reaching agreement or establishing consensus between the interactants. Social communication, then, is resulting in an ever-expanding ‘common ground’ (Clark, 1996). In the name of communication, several forms of resistance have been completely defused. A good example is the recent Occupy Movement, a protest movement driven by people’s discontent with social and economic inequality, which has spiraled into irrelevance because it was unable to establish a political dissensus, irreducible to the ‘objectivity’ of a given neo-liberal logic.

Having outlined how important it is for resistance to go beyond communication, let us now explore further the creative dimension of resistance, and whether or not, in part at least, to create means to resist? In particular, let us pose the more substantive question: if we accept that resistance is a positive and creative process, then how might such creativity help challenge established forms of dogmatic thought, in particular the common sense or *doxa*? In what follows we attempt to answer this very question by distinguishing four different ways to penetrate a discourse and therefore resist *doxa* – four ways to move from a dogmatic image of thought to a new image of thought that no longer unbendingly reproduces the assumptions of common sense or the clichés of cultural or political representation.

#### **Four types of creative acts**

Thinking of resistance in creative terms is difficult, but it also offers a better way of understanding the term as it is often problematically articulated in cultural criminology. To understand exactly what we mean by this let us return to the aforementioned discussion of discourse and how, over a long period of time, it is built and rebuilt, controlled, selected, organised and guarded to the extent that ultimately it becomes structured by a *dogmatic (or orthodox) image of thought*. In that discussion we also stated that each discourse sees itself as always confronted

with the question of how to deal with its own presuppositions. One way to counter such a set of presuppositions is to understand that there are different fields in which a dogmatic image of thought operates – and thus in which resistance can take place. The French philosopher Alain Badiou distinguishes four semi-autonomous practices or, in his words, ‘truth procedures’ that illustrate the idea of resistance as a creative act: politics, love, science, and art. In each of these fields events can take place that change each field fundamentally and which cannot be reduced to the domain of *doxa*. Although events that break with the routines and opinions of these fields are relatively rare, they can be understood as ‘a logical rupture with dominant and circulating opinions’ (Badiou, 2005: 5-6).

Before clarifying this idea further, we need to distinguish four types of events, each accustomed to one of the aforementioned practices of politics, love, science, and art: ‘a political revolution, an amorous encounter, an invention of the sciences or a creation of art’ (Badiou, 2000: 90-91). As concerned to arts, a good example, and one much commented on, would be the creative function of poetry and how it opposes normal forms of communication. For instance in the work of Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Celan, poetry interrupts language and liberates it ‘from the existing regime of representation (habits, conventions, clichés, and so on)’ (Hallward, 2003: 197). Likewise in painting and literature, we find examples of artists who invent a new language by resisting what is taken for granted in these disciplines. In painting, for instance, the genius of Francis Bacon lies in the fact that he resisted a long tradition of organic representation or complete abstraction in art and created an existential language occupying a grey area between representation and abstraction. Similar processes can be pointed to in literature. William Burroughs, for example, with his radical cut-up technique, pushed language beyond the limits of representation and opened his texts to a radical reconfiguration of human subjectivity.

Regarding the discourse of science, established knowledge is organized in a paradigm that structures and guides direction to research and scientific efforts (Kuhn, [1962] 2012). In this discourse, a scientific revolution occurs when a dominant set of expectations and assumptions is overturned and replaced by another. Scientists move from one paradigm to another by the invention of new ideas and the debunking of the common sense that nothing is more certain than the ‘hard facts’ of a dominant paradigm. Classic examples of paradigm shifts are the Copernican revolution, Einstein’s theories and the physics of Galileo. In a way similar to science and art, this process can be encountered in the practice of love. First and foremost, love must not be seen as a romantic conception, a variant of desire or a matter of pleasure, but as a transformative power that *forever changes two individuals*. An amorous encounter takes place then ‘in the joy of the empty gap of the Two of the sexes which it founds’ (Badiou, 2008: 161).

In the case of politics, the last of the four disciplines, a radical transformation takes place in the form of a revolution. A revolution sweeps away a whole social and political system and helps replace it with another. According to Badiou, examples of a revolutionary break are the Jacobin Revolution in 1794, the Revolution of 1848, and the October Revolution of 1917. In each of these events a novel mode of being-in-the-world is created that breaks with ordinary, estab-



lished life as such.<sup>3</sup> The French Revolution, for example, ruptured the power relations between the aristocracy and the people and showed what the main feature of the *Ancien Régime* was: the legal inequality between the different positions in society. As we can now see, resistance is never solely the result of communication or consensus. It is an event that brings about the 'new' in a situation. It disrupts relations of power and resists the norms of a certain situation ('what is') – and breaks as such fundamentally with the prevailing practice.

Each of these avenues for transcending dogmatic images of thought will be of some interest to cultural criminologists. But in terms of the original objective of this article (to provide criminologists with a measure of conceptual clarity when dealing with the subject of resistance), it is the fourth practice that is most important: the radical transformation associated with revolution. After all, for certain cultural criminologists, radical political and social change is at the heart of the endeavour (Ferrell, 1998, 2009). At this point we return to our earlier assertion that, today, a subtle but important transformation is taking place regarding the usage of the label resistance. To illustrate what we mean by this, it is instructive to focus on the clear distinction that exists between the types of revolutions outlined above, where a fundamental radical rupture takes place in society as a whole, and 'revolutions' of a more recent vintage, such as the (counter) culture revolution of the 1960s that culminated in the events of 'May '68', and more recently the Arab Spring of 2011. This distinction is important for two reasons. First, it highlights how in late modernity it can be difficult in political terms to overcome the existing *doxa*. For example, if we look at the situation today in Egypt following the tumultuous events of January 2011 we can see that, although a revolution of sorts took place; it was not one that transcended the pre-existing dogmatic image of thought. President Hosni Mubarak's longstanding regime was certainly toppled, but it was eventually replaced with something very similar, another crypto-democracy in which the real power continues to reside with the military class. Likewise, no sooner had Mubarak been unseated, than the traditional clerics and Islamic politicians of the Muslim Brotherhood took to the streets in a bid to gain support and impose their own dogmatic ideas. Second, it highlights how, in contemporary society generally and cultural criminology specifically, resistance now functions as a *three-stage process*. To understand these points let us take a closer look at the transformations that occurred as a result of the 1960s counter culture and how they shaped current thinking on resistance.

3 A fundamental question is whether or not a revolution always entails violence? Clearly, Badiou does not dismiss violence out of hand. Indeed, according to Badiou, it is impossible to say 'Never violence'. However, he has recently introduced the idea of 'defensive violence' in relation to the revolts in Egypt and Tunisia by building free spaces at a distance from the power of the state. Violence by the protesters only then takes place when the state itself uses violence to crush these spaces.

## The possibilities and limitations of resistance – ‘Sixties’ style

Like it or not, the counter culture changed the way the West understood the concept of resistance forever. For the student radicals and counter culture leftists, the Sixties was a golden age of change and protest, the underlying goal being the creation of a fairer, more progressive, and less inhibited society. The transformative spirit of the age is captured in some of the book titles that have subsequently attempted to chronicle the decade (e.g. *The World the 1960s Made*, *Coming Apart*, *The Sixties and the End of Modern America*). Read these texts and you might be forgiven for thinking that little if anything remained undisturbed by the various ruptures brought about by the counterculture. But in reality this was not the case. Many of the political gains of the era were partial, mixed, or late arriving, and in the very few industrialized countries that were actually affected by the counterculture, it was as much a case of continuity as change. True, at the start of the decade, when diverse activist groups *functioned collectively*, some tremendous gains were made. But while the new radicals of the '60s youth revolution posed a far greater threat to capitalism than anything devised in the 1950s, by the end of the decade, any sense of collective politics had long since evaporated. The reason, of course, was the state and its attendant capitalist system were still all-powerful. In the United States, the radicals were viciously beaten down by the Chicago Police Department at the 1968 Democratic Convention, and two years later the full force of the state was unleashed at Kent State University, where four unarmed student protestors were fatally shot by the Ohio National Guard. It was a period marked by similar shows of police strength against student protestors in a number of Western cities, including London, Madrid, Rome, and Berlin – where in 1967 an unarmed student was shot in the head during protests against an official visit of the Shah of Iran. Unsurprisingly, experiencing the power of the state close up had a sobering effect on many radicals, especially in the United States. And after the heady days of the ‘May 1968’ Paris rebellion fizzled out only to be replaced by a retrenched Gaullist party, many on the left faced up to the fact that the revolutionary party was over.<sup>4</sup> At street level, this loss of faith in wide scale political transformation had two consequences. First, a pronounced flight from collective politics took place. The unity that was such a feature of the Movement’s early success was replaced with a new landscape of single-issue concerns and independent political causes, exemplified by the rise of feminist separatists, environmental and gay rights campaigners, and most notably ‘Black Power’ activists concerned only with the idea of a separate black state. Second, as it became increasingly clear to all but the most drug-addled that the leftist student Movement had failed in its attempt to overthrow the corporate state and its supposed system of control and manipulation, a new more atomized template of ‘resist-

4 Our analysis of post-1968 resistance forms is limited predominantly to developments in the Anglo-American world. We recognize that in continental Europe a more robust, politicized campaign of resistance to capitalism and statist militarism took place in the 1970s in places such as the former West Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Greece. By the 1980s though, even significant groups such as the Red Army Faction and Action Directe had lost traction as tangible revolutionary entities.

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ance' emerged that focused on *the arena of the individual* and the ideal of the 'protest lifestyle'. In sum, for all the posturing, the dogmatic image of thought in the shape of the dominant capitalist order remained intact.

By the end of the decade, conventional organized politics was giving way to new modes of putative protest shaped this time by the *personal feelings and private relations* associated with the therapeutic turn and its problematic confederate, the metaphysic of 'identity'. It is striking, for example, that Black Power activists rejected the notion of a collective multiracial revolution shortly after they started emphasizing the need to discover 'the black inside the Negro'. As astute commentators, such as Barbara Epstein (1991), have pointed out, the rebellious nature of the counterculture also brought with it a strong emphasis on self-expression, and it was this aspect of Sixties culture that came to the fore in the wake of the botched attempts at revolution. In all of these cases, politics was no longer 'about the subordination of the self to some larger political cause; instead it [had become]... the path to self-fulfillment. This ultimately was the power of sixties radicalism' (Echolls, 1994: 164). The left's decision to follow the narrow path of self-fulfillment, rather than the broad boulevard of collective politics, led ultimately to the world of self-interest and self-identified action groups that we now associate with the term *identity politics* – an insular and solipsistic preoccupation with self-transformation that would go on to dominate cultural politics in the subsequent decades.

### Resistance as a three-stage process

Not only did the counterculture gloss over the complexity associated with most political problems, but more importantly, it also downplayed the role of collective, uniform action in bringing about meaningful political change. This logic – one of the many problematic legacies of a Sixties culture that ended up prioritizing the self over the cause – facilitated a confused, almost schizophrenic relationship between the individual and the issue. In sum, what really took place in the counterculture was a change in culture and lifestyle rather than a revolution in politics. The changes that took place occurred through pleasure rather than through power (Frank, 1997). Accordingly, resistance became as much about cultural invention as political revolution. Moreover, as a consequence of the ever-expanding culture industries, *inventive* forms of resistance (stage 1), such as rebellious posturing, anti-authoritarian music and film, and the rise of the anti-hero, were quickly *imitated* (stage 2) and developed into the default position of a post-political late modern consumer society. As this resistance became routine or commonplace, it developed into something akin to the habits of everyday life.

Against this cultural and political backdrop, political resistance linked to a tangible *transformative* agenda (stage 3) became increasingly rare – in the West at least.<sup>5</sup> This situation remains the case today, even though we are supposedly experiencing a revival of political resistance. Today we inhabit a world of resistance symbols – or to put it another way, far too much current resistance never gets beyond the first two stages. As one of us has described elsewhere, to protest today for many people means the adoption of ‘a resistance lifestyle’ involving the use of ‘radical iconography’ (Hayward, forthcoming). Worse still, as Heath and Potter (2006: 11) have argued, we are now experiencing a permanent revolution of consumer culture linked to (youthful) rebellion. Even when resistance and political protest goes beyond ‘stage 2’, it often lacks real collective political legitimacy. Consider, the Occupy Movement again, this time in its London manifestation. After conducting an analysis of protestors at Occupy London, Nikos Sotirakopoulos and Chris Rootes (forthcoming) outlined a fractured and individualised on-the-ground politics. Of the 106 activists they interviewed, 47 identified with the Greens, 33 with the Labour Party, 8 with the Liberal Democrats, 4 with the Conservative Party, 4 with the Socialist Workers’ Party, and one Communist. Even the signs of resistance themselves were recycled: the much-photographed ‘Capitalism IS crisis’ banner originally appearing at a Climate Camp earlier in the decade.<sup>6</sup> In such examples, it’s not just that politics itself is fractured, but that even when the enemy is agreed upon – in this case the global financial system – protestors find it hard to go beyond ‘stage 2’ forms of resistance. Consequently, as Sotirakopoulos and Rootes assert, when key demands in such events are ‘equality’ and ‘democracy’, themes so vague as to be almost meaningless, we are experiencing ‘not politics but morality’; a symbolic form of resistance so devoid of political principle that it risks becoming an empty signifier (Rocamadur, 2013). It is essential that cultural criminology recognizes this situation and adjusts its thinking accordingly. Not only does resistance in its ‘stage 1 and 2 form’ make it harder to generate clearly delineated political principles, but the ‘hedonism-as-revolutionary’ sensibility that characterizes some cultural criminologists research interests actually brings with it an unintended contempt for incremental democratic political action (let alone the working class themselves). In sum, unless cultural criminology treats resistance seriously, and by that we mean striving to move beyond Sixties-style stage 2 resistance, it will remain imprisoned by the same cave of ideas. Or in the words of Deleuze and Guattari: ‘We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. *We lack resistance to the present*’ (1994: 108).

- 5 These stages resemble in a way the analysis of Gabriel Tarde, one of the forgotten fathers of cultural criminology, of interpersonal interactions. To find an answer to the question how interactions take place in general and, more specifically, how interactions provide society with some degree of social structure, Tarde made a systematic distinction between processes of ‘imitation’ and ‘invention’; two series of interactions that each form a reality in itself, but that also influence each other (Schuilenburg, 2012).
- 6 In a related paper on the Athens protests in Syntagma Square, Sotirakopoulos & Sotiropoulos (2013: 451) similarly found that there was no specific political platform to unify the heterogeneous protestors, only a ‘negative consensus’.

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## Conclusion

Our concern in this paper has been to encourage more attention to the notion of resistance. This was guided by the following question: 'How to understand resistance?' We have argued that resistance is not just a negative term, but can also be seen as a positive and creative force in society. As such, resistance compels us to decide a new way of being-in-the-world. One could also say that the primary function of resistance is to serve as a solvent of *doxa*, to continuously question obviousness and common sense, in order to create a new image of thought, and thus to remind us that things do not have to stay the way they are. Unlike other criminologists, we maintain that radical transformations in fields such as art and politics take place only very rarely. What makes the situation even more complex is that resistance is not a 'one-way process', but that at a deeper level three stages in the process of resistance can be distinguished: invention, imitation and transformation. Each of these stages will attract interest, but it is the third stage that warrants deeper investigation within cultural criminology. This brings us back to the question raised by this article: what must be assessed is – in the words of Badiou (2005: 8) – that 'not to resist is not to think. And not to think is not to risk risk-ing.'

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