

EDITORIAL Modes of Cultural Resistance

The concept of resistance sends to an almost inherent ability of the human being, that of withstanding adversity and hardship, perhaps resulting from the activation of the survival instinct. Along with this capacity comes the refusal to accept difficulty, to be changed, affected or weakened by it. It can thus lead to opposition to a situation which is unwanted, because it is (undesirably) new or perilous, and can even lead to a state of crisis. “Resistance studies” underline that “resistance is an oppositional act” (Vinthagen & Johansson 2013). Its positive implication alludes to surviving after confronting difficulty, even defying its harmful influence.

The concept of cultural resistance refers to “the broad use of arts, literature and traditional practices to challenge or fight oppressive systems” (newtactics.org). It relates to “everyday resistance”, which refers to the way in which “people act in their everyday lives in ways that might undermine power” (Vinthagen & Johansson 2013). It may also challenge dominant or traditional beliefs, norms and practices, which are viewed as obsolete or harmful.

Cultural resistance also entails “the practice of using (...) culture to contest and combat a dominant power” (Wiley Online Library) or a dominant ideology. Cultural forms of facing difficulty or crisis coming from various areas of contemporary concern, such as the pandemic, natural calamities, or war have proliferated in recent times plagued by many global-scale problems and worries. All these troubling challenges for people in many parts of the world have built up equally strong forms of resistance. They have served as modes of survival, endurance, opposition, while personally or collectively acting against the crises of our times. In so doing, these forms of resistance also relate to resilience, revealing people’s toughness and ability to recover from difficulty.

Resulting from disagreement with adversity or dominant trends and situations in society, the creation of various forms of expression surrounding the topic of cultural resistance in various discourses, such as the media, literature, cultural legacy forms, or political ideologies also engaged the attention of scholars around the world. The articles in this issue constitute research explorations of some of these modes of cultural resistance and come as a necessary continuation of the critical reflections from the previous issue, proposing ways to counteract current crises in culture.

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Katarína Brziaková adopts a comparative approach to represent real and fictional women's modes of resistance to injustice and oppression by making reference to a number of English female writers. Desislava Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva ponders over special modes of resistance in the media, related to the problematics of the COVID-19 pandemic. Focusing on a corpus of memes circulated in the social media in 2020, the paper presents the main trends in their creation along with the established intertextual links and the ideologies transmitted. Florinela Floria analyses components of Romanian cultural heritage, revealing the potential of food as language and discussing specific forms of resilience through the *eCultfood* research project and the Romanian communication campaign "100 fire recipes". In their article, Raluca Galița and Elena Bonta turn to British cultural resistance through memes, their study revealing how memes acted as a form of resistance and criticism against the "Partygate" scandal associated to PM Boris Johnson in 2021. Elisabetta Marino's article offers a close reading of Maria Mazziotti Gillan's poetry collection *When the Stars Were Still Visible* (2021) with the aim of analysing the strategies she has articulated to heal her individual and collective wounds, while resisting the obliteration of her cultural background.

This issue also includes a collection of articles written by doctoral students, a special section which reflects PhD candidates' interest in focal subjects of our contemporary society. Hana Berraf presents Instagram as a heterotopia of the twenty-first century. Crina Gociu adopts a socio-cultural perspective to deal with Brexit, exploring Brexiters' nationalism and Euroscepticism as opposed to Remainers' resistance and Pro-Europeanism. Noemi Neconesnic explores Scottish resistance through language in the novel *Outlander* by Diana Gabaldon, and Zamfira Petrescu proposes the (redemptive) solution of humour as a resistance strategy in *Murdoch Mysteries* TV series.

References

- Vinthagen, Stellan; Johansson, Anna (2013): "Everyday Resistance': Exploration of a Concept and Its Theories", in *Resistance Studies Magazine*, no. 1, pp. 1-46, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Everyday-Resistance-%E2%80%9D-%3A-Exploration-of-a-Concept-Vinthagen-Johansson/4c4137a422db492193fdb521609be218a60a4fd2>, accessed on October 15, 2022.
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