



'Whaddya got? On Schizoanalysis as an art of sustainable resistance

Mackenzie, I., & Porter, R. (2021). 'Whaddya got? On Schizoanalysis as an art of sustainable resistance. *La Deleuziana: Online Journal of Philosophy*, 164-178. http://www.ladeleuziana.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MacKenzie_Porter.pdf

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

Published in:

La Deleuziana: Online Journal of Philosophy

Publication Status:

Published (in print/issue): 31/05/2021

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via Ulster University's Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The Research Portal is Ulster University's institutional repository that provides access to Ulster's research outputs. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact pure-support@ulster.ac.uk.

'Whaddaya got?' On Schizoanalysis as an Art of Sustainable Resistance

by IAIN MACKENZIE AND ROBERT PORTER

Abstract

This article addresses the relationship between art, politics and resistance by focusing on the following question: on what basis can artistic practices and practices of resistance become mutually sustainable as forms of resistance to 'integrated world capitalism'? The question arises from understanding Deleuze and Guattari's account of schizoanalysis as 'an incomplete project' (Buchanan) and from within current debates about the relationship between art, politics and resistance. We argue that current understandings of the art-politics relationship tend towards two dominant motifs: the contributory and the constitutive. Although both of these approaches provide considerable insight into the increasing areas of overlap between art and politics they nonetheless run the risk of instituting a hierarchical relationship between art and politics. We propose instead that the common space of contemporary art and politics is defined precisely where artistic practices and practices of resistance meet. This is demonstrated through a schizoanalytic reading of Johnny's famously rebellious question in *The Wild One* (1953): 'Whaddaya got?'. We present a reading of this question as a call for immanent and singular (rather than transcendent and universal) forms of resistance. We argue that resistance understood as an immanent and singular intervention in the world is best expressed as a form of artistic practice, and only when expressed as a form of artistic practice will practices of resistance have the theoretical resources to sustain themselves. The article concludes with the claim that schizoanalytical method is the artistic practice of creating sustainable forms of resistance within integrated world capitalism.

Introduction

The idea of schizoanalysis expresses two key, and related, problems in the work of Deleuze and Guattari: the problem of method and the problem of political orientation. At the methodological level, it is not clear that it should be referred to as a method at all and if so what kind of method it articulates. At the political level, the problem is that no obvious principles or positions follow from schizoanalytic practice. For Guattari, of course, these problems were not problems at all. Indeed, the methodological and political indeterminacy of schizoanalysis was one of its key features and virtues. As he put it: «it is not a super-psychoanalysis, or a univocal reading of the political» (Guattari 1996: 228). Moreover, according to Guattari, it is important to retain the problematic status of schizoanalysis

because, «one can never say about a particular situation of oppression that it offers no possibility for struggle; inversely, one can never claim that a society or social group, as such, is definitively protected against the growth of a new form of fascism» (Guattari 2016: 104). Given these dual axioms, one can certainly appreciate that an overtly programmatic articulation of schizoanalysis would undermine both its potential as a means for the identification of sites of resistance and its role as a practice of liberating resistance groups from their own Oedipal desires. With this in mind, Ian Buchanan's (2013) understanding of schizoanalysis as «an incomplete project» gives a good characterization of how it may function as a method and a political intervention that nonetheless resists the temptations of both methodological and political closure: «the more we consider schizoanalysis to be incomplete in its development the better the position we are in to actually realize its potential» (Buchanan 2013: 165). Building on Buchanan's rendering of the necessarily incomplete nature of schizoanalysis, we suggest that further insight into the potential of schizoanalysis as both method and political intervention can be elicited by considering it an art of sustainable resistance. There are two overlapping elements to this formulation that match and also develop Buchanan's understanding of schizoanalysis. First, the idea of art is invoked to refer to the ineluctably practical nature of creating potential sites of resistance within «particular situations of oppression». As we will discuss below, however, this should not be taken as a reification of practice over theory; rather, it should be understood as a form of methodical activity that expresses the creative potential of events. Secondly, the idea of sustainability is invoked to refer to those practices that are able to avoid the «growth of new forms of fascism» within themselves. Here the task will be to outline the immanent and singular nature of such methodical activity as a practice of resistance. That these elements, the artistic and sustainable, are linked to resistance is an indicator of our overall understanding of schizoanalysis as an already politicized method aimed at constructing immanent and singular creative disruptions within postindustrial capitalism, or what Guattari prefers to call, «integrated world capitalism» (Guattari 2000: 47).

Rather than develop the idea of schizoanalysis as an art of sustainable resistance by way of scholarly exegesis of the texts of Guattari and/or Deleuze and Guattari, we will explore how this conceptualization of schizoanalysis can be shown to emerge from within current debates about the relationship between art, politics and resistance. With this in mind, therefore, there are two main tasks that must be addressed. The first task is to frame and then re-frame the current debates about the relationship between art and politics. We will argue that current understandings of the art-politics relationship are constituted by two dominant motifs: the contributory and the constitutive. Although both of these approaches provide considerable insight into the increasing areas of overlap between art and politics they nonetheless run the risk of instituting a hierarchical relationship between art and politics; either art contributes to politics such that politics becomes primary, or art constitutes politics such that art becomes primary. We will propose instead that the common space of contemporary art and politics is defined precisely where artistic

practices and practices of resistance meet. This emphasis on practice, we will suggest, gives a more mobile, open and schizoanalytic rendering of how we conceive of the art-politics relationship. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that there is a risk of levelling the relationship between art and politics while also reinstating a hierarchical relationship between practice and theory. We will address this issue, however, both by making the case for artistic practices and practices of resistance as eventual mediators and by challenging the idea that such eventual mediators are historically determined. The second task is to explore the competing philosophical presuppositions that underpin practices of resistance with a view to assessing the ways in which these may or may not contribute to their sustainability. This will be done through a schizoanalytic reading of Johnny's famously rebellious posture in the film *The Wild One* (1953). Johnny, the eponymous «wild one», played by Marlon Brando, may be thought to represent the related ideas that meaningful forms of social protest must be located outside of the system one is trying to resist and articulated as a universal denunciation of that system. We will present a different reading that views his provocative question, 'Whaddaya got?', as a call for immanent and singular (rather than transcendent and universal) forms of resistance. We will argue that resistance understood as an immanent and singular intervention in the world is best expressed as a form of artistic practice, and only when expressed as a form of artistic practice will practices of resistance have the theoretical resources to sustain themselves «against the growth of new forms of fascism». In this way, we conclude by claiming that schizoanalytical method is the artistic practice of creating sustainable forms of resistance within integrated world capitalism.

Art and Politics

In *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* (2013) Charles Tripp presented the first systematic account of the diverse forms of popular resistance to authoritarian regimes in the MENA region that emerged in 2011 (and that, of course, continue to this day). It is notable for its comprehensive approach to these events but in particular for the care with which he addresses the relationship between art and politics. What he calls «symbolic forms of resistance» are characterized, he argues, by a productive but also potentially disabling «dualism». On the one hand, art has the potential to challenge political hegemony, «harnessing the power of art to make people look again at the status quo» (258). On the other hand, Tripp recognizes that the power of symbolic forms of resistance depends, in large measure, on the capacity they have to engage the people without «departing too far from commonly understood conventions» (258). As he states, «like art more generally, [arts of resistance are] poised between the shock of the new and the incomprehension of the unfamiliar» (258).

As he brings his synoptic account of the ways art has functioned in the uprisings in the

MENA region to a close, Tripp outlines three ways in which artistic forms may strike the right pose in relation to hegemonic forms of political power. First, art has the capacity to «signal presence» (306). Whether through graffiti, posters, visual or performance arts, artistic practices can make visible large swathes of the population that have been excluded from the public sphere under authoritarian conditions. It can even bring to presence the very existence of «a people» seeking to exert their claim to legitimacy and reject «the authority of those in power» (307). Secondly, art has the power «to create or sustain collective solidarities» (307) by articulating forms of shared experience. As he says of the visual arts, they have the capacity to «generate a sense of identity by creating the visual reference points for shared historical memories» (307). Thirdly, Tripp links this potential for the artistic construction of collective identities to the «persuasive power» of counter narratives that can «give voice to the voiceless» (308). While acknowledging that each of these aspects of the potentially subversive power of art plays on the fact that «established power» has itself always used art to reinforce and sustain its order, he concludes on the optimistic note that this also means that art can use the same capillaries of power in the name of resistance to the established order. As he puts it; «art opens up the space for the possibility of debate and critical engagement with power. In doing so, it contributes to the creation of a politics that calls power to account to a public that it may have successfully ignored up to that point» (308).

In many respects this is an exhilarating vision of the power of art to foster acts of resistance to hegemonic regimes. It is also a timely discussion with wider resonances than even those it has for our understanding of the events of the MENA region. Whether we think of the protests marking contemporary Greek society and politics, the Occupy movement, the Indignados in Spain or the activities of FEMEN in Ukraine and elsewhere (to name only some of the movements with more global recognition), it is clear that they all have a strongly artistic dimension to them. But what is less clear is what exactly these phenomena reveal to us about the nature of the relationship between art and politics. For all that Tripp, for example, captures the role of symbolic forms of resistance in undermining authoritarianism, he claims that this role is best conceived as a ‘contribution’ to the political processes that are ultimately decisive in regime change: «whether the regime will be successfully undermined or not will depend upon an array of other factors and the force they can bring to bear, but within it all, the imaginative and aesthetic power of art will have made a contribution» (308). Exhilarating as it is, is this account of the ‘contributory’ role of art the best way of theorizing the relationship between art and politics?

One important reason for asking this question can be found in the literature on contemporary art as a form of political activism. Alana Jelinek’s *This is Not Art: Activism and Other Non-Art* (2013) outlines the relationship between art and politics in ways that Tripp would recognize and agree with in many respects but that also calls into question his account of the contributory role that art has in resistance movements. Jelinek begins by warning of the all too easy assumptions we make about the political role of art: «there are

clichés of resistance, like collaborative practice, or working with ephemera, or street art, or involving illegality, such as squatting or trespassing or fly-posting or graffiti. While it is true that these types of practice have been fruitful in producing interesting art, they have also been sites of tired cliché and sites where repressive or exclusive norms have been replicated» (5). According to Jelinek, the main source of these clichés, of the danger that art may simply reproduce the forms of power which it is ostensibly set against, is the persistence of a range of binaries that order contemporary understandings of what 'good' art is today. In particular, however, she argues that it is the binary that orders the relationship between art and politics itself that is most problematic. As Tripp (2013: 11) also makes clear, one of the ways of overcoming this binary is to adopt a broadly Foucauldian perspective that treats all relationships of power as containing the possibility for their resistance. Where Jelinek is perhaps more consistently Foucauldian in her development of this idea, however, is in her insistence that this leads us beyond the 'contributory' role of art toward the claim that art can be 'directly constitutive of the public realm' in such a manner that it has the capacity of 'profoundly disrupting the order of things' (2013: 152).

This constitutive account of the relationship between art and politics draws heavily upon the post-Foucauldian work of Jacques Rancière (2010). As Rancière notes, «we may no longer believe that exhibiting virtues and vices on stage can improve human behaviour, but we continue to act as if reproducing a commercial idol in resin will engender resistance against 'the spectacle', and as if a series of photographs about the way colonizers represent the colonized will work to undermine the fallacies of mainstream representations of identities» (135). The role of art in merely mirroring the oppressive practices of hegemonic regimes back to the dominant power will sustain cliché that holds established powers in office. Developing Rancière's argument, Jelinek claims that art, understood as a knowledge-generating practice that operates within and against disciplinary institutions, has the potential for more direct, less representational, intervention in the constitution of political life; «art is exquisitely constitutive of the public realm» (Jelinek 2013: 161). And yet, as exhilarating as this vision of the constitutive role of art is, is it true that art has the capacity to escape the dangers of cliché in ways that can constitute practices of resistance?

This question arises from an alternative tendency within contemporary reflections upon art and politics that is more cautious with regard to recent discussions about the role of the aesthetic regime in challenging (authoritarian and neo-liberal) political regimes. For Peter Osborne (2013), Rancière's (and by extension Jelinek's) account of the constitutive and disruptive power of art has in fact led to a politically conservative re-trenchment of the political nature of art within the abstract realm of the aesthetic. As he says, «there is no critically relevant pure 'aesthetics' of contemporary art» (10). Or as Osborne and Alliez (2013) ask: «can the aesthetic image distinguish itself from or within the spectacle of capital-becoming-image» (10)? Perhaps Jelinek's emphasis on the constitutive role of art in the public sphere will make it difficult to demarcate art that resists and art that becomes subsumed within that which it is trying to resist? Without drawing too

sharp a distinction between the accounts of Tripp and Jelinek, it is nonetheless clear that they operate with different theoretical assumptions about the relationship between art and politics, especially when considering practices of resistance. Tripp's subtle account of the role of art in the MENA uprisings in the end rests upon the assumption that art can contribute to the overthrow of authoritarian regimes. Albeit in the broader context of neoliberalism, Jelinek's account of the disruptive power of art rests upon the assumption that this power resides in its constitutive role in the formation of the public space of politics. Both the contributory and constitutive accounts seem plausible and yet also open to concerns about either the differentiation of art and politics that may lead to clichéd practices of resistance or the de-differentiation of art and politics that may lead to the subsumption of artistic practice within the object of its critique. Is there a way of conceiving of the relationship between art and politics, from the perspective of resistance to established orders that captures both the contributory and the constitutive dimensions without the associated dangers? What is needed, we suggest, is a reframing of the relationship between art and politics so as to better express both the artistic and political dimensions of practices of resistance. In order to carry out this reframing of the problem, however, we must revisit the key terms.

Evidently, there is considerable conceptual slippage in the way art and politics are themselves understood. Considering what we mean by 'art', it has often been presumed that it is the product of an individual artist, usually a (male) tortured genius; that it must be either privately collected or displayed in an art institution, public or private, for it to be considered as art; and, that artists always produce an art object be it a painting, musical score, play-script, sculpture etc. However, each of these key presumptions has been called into question in the developments of contemporary art; developments, for example, that include collectives engaging the public in sites beyond the gallery and museum in ways that do not leave an art object behind: consider, for example, many of the projects presented in Thompson (2012). While commonplace in current debates about the changing nature of art, being wary of presuming too much about what constitutes an artist and an art object is important as we consider the interface of art and politics. This is especially true when reflecting upon the relationship or not between art and practices of resistance such as those discussed by Tripp and Jelinek. Indeed, with a view to avoiding the traps associated with the deeply contested nature of the term 'art', we propose instead that it is more conceptually precise to talk of 'artistic practices' where such practices are repeated activities that work on a «particular situation of oppression» (Guattari) in order to make a difference. Accepting that there is a nebulous quality to this definition it nonetheless wards off hasty assumptions about the nature of art and shifts our theoretical focus toward both those practices that are self-proclaimed artistic interventions and to those that make a difference to our experience of the world without being overtly declared works of art. In other words, we can begin to reframe the debate in terms of artistic practice as an intervention in a particular site of oppression that draws our attention to the practices of

resistance with which they overlap.

While these conceptual definitions go some way toward sloughing off a set of presumptions about politics, artists and art-works that may otherwise muddy the waters there is a more positive implication that is worth stressing. The insistence upon specifying the debate in terms of artistic practices and practices of resistance opens up the idea that there is a connection between artistic practices, practices of resistance and what happens when they overlap. The emphasis upon practices of resistance makes no hasty judgments about the author of the practice; similarly, the idea of artistic practice is employed to focus on the repeated activity of altering the world of shared experiences without presuming too much about artistic agency in the background, so to speak. Drawing upon our earlier work in this area (MacKenzie & Porter 2011), we can say that behind the artistic practice and the practice of resistance there resides not the artist or the political actor but the event. Whatever the relationship between creative practices and resistant acts, something happens in both cases and whenever we are led to consider what happens we are led to the idea of 'event'.

As hinted at above, however, there is a danger that this metaphysical reductionism, one that treats both artistic practices and practices of resistance as dual aspects of the same event, is precisely that which leads to the abstraction Osborne (2013) argues results in a de-historicized and therefore potentially conservative understanding of the relationship between art and politics. As he understands it, «the apparently transcendental timelessness of the artwork, which constitutes it as art, is in each instance the product of a specific set of idealizing social and historical relations, practices and processes, which produce it as timeless» (176). Moreover, specifically addressing the concept of event, he says; «[the] event is, fundamentally, a narrative category and its meaning has changed as the range and complexity of types of possible narrative have expanded in the wake of literary and other modernisms» (208). Wary of metaphysical reductions that locate the same timeless event in both art and politics, Osborne argues instead for an historicized account of the category of the event itself and, therefore, any eventual characteristics that art and politics may appear to share. On this basis, the contributory and constitutive roles of creative practices in practices of resistance would appear in need of a thorough analysis of the dominant social and historical narratives that govern any particular situation (such as the uprisings in the MENA region or the movements that challenge neoliberal retrenchment in the wake of the economic crisis).

Yet, a tension remains in Osborne's account that is in need of further exploration. On the one hand, it is the social and historical forces that shape our understanding of the timelessness of the artwork. On the other hand, artistic movements such as modernism shape our understandings of the current conjunction through such concepts as the event. It remains unclear whether it is the social and historical forces or the artistic interventions in those social and historical forces that have theoretical priority. He seeks to resolve this tension by claiming that «at its best, contemporary art models experimental practices of

negation that puncture horizons of expectation» (Osborne 2013: 211). This has two key consequences, in the terms of this discussion. First, it provides a cautionary note to those who simply affirm the capacity of some art to bring about a longed-for future, on the grounds that such longing tends to be ineluctably shaped by «the horizon of expectation» engendered by the given (whether authoritarian regimes or neoliberal economics). Secondly, and more pertinently, the contributory and constitutive models of the relationship between artistic practices and practices of resistance are deemed to be too unhistorical, trapped in a series of assumptions about the timeless nature of art, politics and their relation. ‘Art time’, he implies, is the time of negation rather than of contribution or constitution.

But does this really resolve the tension in the earlier claims about the social and historical forces that shape and are shaped by artistic movements? What remains unclear, we suggest, is how contemporary art as a force of negation has been produced. If Osborne (2013) is correct in claiming that contemporary art has this role, such that reductive accounts of the ontology of the art work based on philosophies of the event have «failed to come to terms with the decisive historical transformation in the ontology of the artwork that is constitutive of its very contemporaneity» (8) then it would seem plausible to suggest that one of the historical determinants of this transformation emanates from artistic practices themselves. Unless ‘history’ is afforded some quasi-Hegelian role in the constitution of all forms of life, the role of artistic practice in the constitution of the artwork, even in the constitution of the artwork as an «experimental practice of negation», would seem to require some positive, affirmative, account of the role of art in its own changing ontology. If this is the case, then it is more productive to consider the ‘transhistorical’ (Raunig 2007: 17) relationship between art and politics (or artistic practices and practices of resistance, as we prefer).

The importance of this term is the resonance (indeed debt) that it has to Osborne’s work on the transdisciplinary nature of philosophical interpretations of art. When Osborne (2013) correctly identifies that «it is only possible to grasp the critical issues at stake in contemporary art by moving across (and in the process, reworking the relations between) an array of disciplinary formations» (11) he nonetheless limits the potential of such critical work by reinstating a historical frame of reference that trumps all, no matter how complicated the temporalities of the contemporary. What Raunig (2007) offers instead is a way of thinking about the ways and means that we can move across (and in the process rework the relations between) historical periods themselves. Although Berardi criticizes Raunig for failing «to grasp the absolute specificity of the present situation – that is, the crisis and exhaustion of all activism» (110), we would argue that both Berardi (and Osborne) presume too much about the present situation on the basis of an implicit historicism. In the process they limit the possibilities for transhistorical investigations that can illuminate the transformative capacity of art and politics: the capacities they express to create experiments in negation, for sure, but more fundamentally, simply to create. This

can only make sense, however, on the basis of a philosophy of the event that secures both the possibility for radical transformation throughout history by appeal to a metaphysics of the event as well as the potential for transformation in the here and now, whatever its conditions. But can this be done without slipping into a potentially conservative form of aestheticism?

At this stage, it is useful to state the problem at which we have now arrived as clearly as possible: is there a way of conceiving of the relationship between artistic practices and practices of resistance that expresses both the contributory and the constitutive dimensions of that relationship within a transhistorical frame of reference? An important contribution to answering this question can be found in the detailed theoretical and sociological work around the new forms of artistic practice and practices of resistance that have emerged primarily from the Occupy movement. One particularly important contribution, we suggest, is the idea of ‘medial forms’ developed by McLagan and McKee.

In their ‘Introduction’ to *Sensible Politics* (2013), McLagan and McKee state:

Political acts are encoded in medial forms – feet marching on a street, punch holes on a card, images on a television newscast, tweets about events unfolding in real time – by which the political becomes manifest. These forms have force, shaping people as subjects and constituting the contours of what is perceptible, sensible, legible. In doing so, they define the terms of political possibility and create terrain for political acts.
(9)

It is a view of political acts informed by the work of Ranciere’s distinction between the policing of the sensible that animates «everyday politics» and the «redistribution of the sensible» that constitutes a political incursion in the tightly policed world of the everyday. It is also a view of the relationship between «the representational world of visual culture» and «the domain of the political» that does not treat them as «distinct realms». Moreover, in a manner that Tripp would recognize, they emphasize the ways in which images can «make things public» and «make possible various forms of political action» (McLagan & McKee 2013: 9-10). Equally, however, they address the role of visual culture, of the sensible more broadly understood, as «practices of mediation whereby social movements constitute particular publics», in a manner that resonates with Jelinek’s account. It would appear, therefore, that they present a general account that does little to advance the debate between contributory and constitutive perspectives of the relationship between creative practices and resistant acts. However, it is their stress on the «medial forms» that express this relationship that is of interest:

Attending to political aesthetics means attending not to a disembodied image that travels under the concept of art or visual culture or to a preformed domain of the political that seeks subsequent expression in media form. It demands not just an examination of the visual forms that comment upon and constitute politics, but analysis of

the networks of circulation whereby images exist in the world and the platforms by which they come into public prominence. (10)

The importance of drawing our attention to the networks of circulation that medial forms inhabit is two-fold. On the one hand, it provides further grounds for Osborne's transdisciplinary approach to art criticism, such that criticism of an artwork that presumes the artwork's isolation from such medial forms is always likely to result in politically conservative aesthetic criticism. On the other hand, it gives a way of thinking transhistorically about the manner in which artistic practices relate to practices of resistance. On this latter point, the medial forms are always caught in networks of circulation that require an analysis of the here and now but they can only be thought to «become manifest» on account of a latent metaphysics of the event that takes them beyond the here and now. It is a point well-captured by Judith Butler (2013); «And if this conjuncture of street and media constitutes a very contemporary version of the public sphere, then bodies on the line have to be thought as both there and here, now and then» (131); and, we would add; they are also to come. As Butler indicates, one cannot think about the medial forms articulating contemporary artistic practices and practices of resistance without thinking both of the current historical distribution of those forms and of the eternal dynamics of events that condition their appearance as medial forms. Whatever is happening 'here' as a resistant act is always connected to what is also happening 'there'; and what is happening 'now' is always connected to the creative practice occurring 'then'; and, to the creative practices expressed as resistance to come.

It is a point that Deleuze (1995) alights upon in a brief yet crucial text *Mediators*. Discussing the 'mutual resonance and exchange' between the 'equally creative' disciplines of philosophy, art and science, Deleuze argues that 'parallel' creativity, trying to follow creativity in art by being creative in philosophy, does nothing. The ground of creative exploration of these relationships is to be found in the mediators that can be constructed to establish the 'give and take' between the two. After a biographical aside – 'Felix Guattari and I are one another's mediators' – he generalizes the claim that 'the left needs mediators'. But who or what are these mediators? Following through our reframing of the relationship between art and politics we can now say that the mediators are those artistic practices that are indistinguishable from practices of resistance and those activist practices that are indistinguishable from art. These are the schizo-practices, because both artistic and political, that inhabit the networks of circulation that constitute (the sites of resistance to) integrated world capitalism. But are such practices sustainable, or will they tend toward «the growth of a new form of fascism»?

The Art of Sustainable Resistance

It is important to begin by specifying the problem of sustaining practices of resistance.

First, by practices of resistance we refer to those practices that seek to proffer a fundamental challenge to that which they seek to resist, rather than those that aim to advance or correct the internal dynamics of a particular system, however defined. In this sense, we are not considering those movements that simply call for the completion of a project already well established or understood: for example, rights based movements within liberal democratic regimes. Rather, our interest is in those movements that call for a more radical transformation of the premises upon which the system is based. In this sense, practices of resistance are those that specify the nature of the system they wish to resist in order to challenge it 'in toto', so to speak. Secondly, we presume that even a casual glance across the history of resistance movements makes it evident that one of the main problems they face is that of maintaining «the capacity to resist» (Caygill 2013: Chapters 4 and 5, in particular) in the face of, what we will call, the cunning of the system. By the cunning of the system we mean the ways in which dominant systemic powers are able to respond to fundamental challenges to their principles and paradigms. This cunning, we suggest, takes three forms: incorporation, absorption and dissipation. Incorporation is when the system is able to modify itself in ways that incorporate acts of resistance into itself; we might say, the ways in which the body of the system can mutate so as to make the resistant practices part of its own organisation. By absorption we understand the ways in which practices of resistance can be dissolved within the existing body of the system. By dissipation we understand the ways in which practices are dispersed at the borders of the system, therefore without being able to enter into it. Moreover, while each of these routines of the cunning of the system is distinct they often work in harmony together ensuring a threefold problem for any practice of resistance that aims to sustain itself. If we may be allowed an alliterative flourish; the routines are mechanised in the system-oriented practices associated with priests, politicians and the police (or their system equivalents). Also, and turning to the resistance movements themselves, we take the problem of sustainable resistance to be, in part, a problem of how movements characterise their own activity in the light of the cunning of the system. While there are clearly questions of tactics at stake in the problem of sustainable resistance – questions of tactics that refer to both external and internal challenges - we argue that practices of resistance will inevitably become prey to incorporation, absorption and dissipation if they are bound by a certain idea of what it means to resist. Further, are there ways of conceptualizing resistance as that which counters the cunning of the system, but in a manner that enables practices to sustain their critical momentum? We suggest that this distinction between an idea of resistance prey to the cunning of the system and one that may sidestep such cunning can be elaborated with reference to this classic moment from the film *The Wild One* (1953):

Mildred: 'What you rebelling against, Johnny?'

Johnny: 'Whaddaya got?'

Marlon Brando's iconic portrayal of Johnny in this classic post-WWII teenage rebellion

movie may be read as an expression of total rejection: a social outsider pitted against the values of the post-war consensus gives vent to his nihilistic desire to destroy the world around him. It is an image of rebellion that still lingers to this day in the idea that radical forms of social protest must be located outside of the system one is trying to resist and articulated as a universal denunciation of that system. However, there are at least two complications to this scene that suggest an alternative reading.

The first complication is this: Johnny's response is to a question from Mildred who is in an interesting position vis-à-vis Johnny's gang, the Black Rebels Motorcycle Club. While she is clearly a subordinate figure, to the extent that she is not one of the leather jacket wearing gang, she is also in an important sense part of the gang in that she is dancing with a gang member and knows Johnny well enough to ask the question. Even more so, she is sufficiently internal to the gang to be able to laugh off his answer to the question without reprisals. To the extent that Mildred can be thought to be a part of the gang, therefore, Johnny's answer is interesting: he does not answer, «whatever he/she/the Man/they got» rather he answers «whaddaya got?». In this sense, Johnny is not invoking a generalised Other against which he is pitted and as such he does not situate himself outside of a system of oppression that he aims to resist. Rather, his response recognises that whatever is to be resisted must, in some sense, be internal to the gang of which he is a part. His positioning through this response, therefore, is that of an insider to the nature of that which he aims to resist; he is not, we would suggest, the archetypal outsider. The second complication is related to this: in replying «whaddya got?» Johnny is not asking for «everything you got». As such, his answer does not imply a universal denunciation of the system that he is resisting. Rather he stands poised to rebel against any single aspect of the system that Mildred cares to mention. Johnny's critical posture, therefore, is not simply in relation to the abstract nature of the system (of which he is, as he recognises, a part).

What we want to suggest is two alternative ideas of the nature of resistance: the first, traditional, reading is that Johnny is an outsider pitted against the entirety of the system, the second, based on the interpretive complications we have just mentioned, suggests that Johnny recognises his insider position and the singular nature of that which must be resisted from within. Before considering the relative merits of these alternatives from the perspective of sustainability we can note the philosophical stakes involved in the second reading: it is a practice of resistance that recognises its immanent and singular relation to that which is being resisted.

To claim that a practice of resistance is immanent is to claim that it treats the object of resistance and the practices engendered in resisting as all part of the same 'world'. This can be summarised as 'resistance in' rather than 'resistance to'. Indeed, there is a long tradition throughout the canon of Western (political) philosophy (and beyond) that has grappled with the nature of 'resistance in' (Caygill 2013). One can, for example, think of the 'masters of suspicion' in this way. For Marx it is a question of how we can resist the alienating effects of capitalism while the whole world becomes capitalist; for Nietzsche it is a

question of resisting the deadening qualities of the herd mentality while we are so happy being resentful sheep; for Freud, how can we liberate our desires while civilization is based upon their suppression? That each of these masters of suspicion may have ultimately ended up with answers to these questions that may be said to take the form of ‘resistance to’ (capital, slavish morality and social convention) is less important than that they sought to find immanent grounds for an idea of resistance within the world they sought to critique. Johnny’s critical posture, we suggest, is in this tradition; it is a gesture of suspicion based on an immanent understanding of the grounds of resistance.

Further, it also a gesture that foregrounds the singular nature of ‘resistance in’ the world. The singular requires some specification, however, as it is often confused with two conceptual near-neighbours; the individual and the particular. Circumventing many conceptual quagmires, the singular can be differentiated from any pre-conceived notion of the individual if by individual we mean a subject capable of transcending the conditions of its emergence (such as the liberal rational individual, by some accounts) but nor is the singular to be confused with the particular if by that we mean simply the opposite of the universal. Rather the singular is a process within the world that traverses everything but that does so through a unique variation in the system rather than from a position of exteriority to it. The singular that Johnny enjoins us to embrace is the dynamic posture capable of moving wherever Mildred takes him. Although it would require the kind of textual exegesis that we have shied away from in this text, Johnny’s response is, in fact, an example of a collective and individual subjectivity that completely exceeds the limits of individualisation, stagnation, identificatory closure, and will instead open itself up on all sides to the socius, but also to the machinic Phylum, to techno-scientific Universes of reference, to aesthetic worlds, as well as to new “pre-personal” understanding of time, of the body, of sexuality (Guattari 2000: 68). For now, though, we simply want to establish the general point that it proffers a form of resistance that is sustainable.

Having distinguished between two ideas of resistance that animate practices our claim is this (negatively first): if resistance movements do not recognise that they exist in the world, that their acts of resistance are acts within the system they are seeking to resist, and if they do not focus on the dynamics of singular practices of resistance but get tempted by claims of universality then they will fall prey to the mechanisms of the priests, politicians and police that enable the cunning of the system to operate most effectively. Why is this the case? There are two answers to this, which, for now, must be simply, yet clearly, stated: a) positioning resistance outside of the system always-already situates the practice within the organising logic of the identity of the system itself, because that which is merely opposed to an identity is always a part of the constitution of that identity; b) to cede to the universal claims of the system is always-already to incorporate practices of resistance as a particular element within that universal. The positive formulation of the claim that we wish to make, therefore, is this: practices of resistance that conceive of themselves as part of the system they wish to challenge and that engage in singular processes that traverse

the entirety of the system will not fall prey to its cunning in that they will always escape the mechanisms of the priest, the politician and the police. Mapping these two responses, we can say: a) that practices of resistance situated within that which they wish to resist are capable of engendering transformation within the processes of identity formation that organise the system and b) that such practices express the possibility of changing the ways in which the system organises the relationship between the universal and particular. These two claims constitute the common ground occupied by artistic practice and practices of resistance and indicate how this common ground can be sustained.

Our last wager is that immanent and singular artistic practices and practices of resistance are not as foreign to our experience of this world as we might think. In fact, we find exactly such forms of resistance in those artistic practices aimed at the creation of new forms of aesthetic experience (so, not art that merely seeks to represent some feature of the world as we know it). In diagnosing the homogenising effects of Integrated World Capitalism, Guattari calls for the resingularisation of experience. He recognises that while this is «not just the activity of established artists but of a whole subjective creativity which traverses the generations and oppressed peoples, ghettos, minorities...» (Guattari 1995: 91) it is nonetheless in artistic practice that we find the model for singular interventions in the world that can sustain our practices of resistance. As he says, «It is in underground art that we find some of the most important cells of resistance against the steamroller of capitalist subjectivity – the subjectivity of one-dimensionality, generalised equivalence, segregation and the deafness to true alterity» (Guattari 1995: 90-1). He goes on, «and in this regard, poetry, music, the plastic arts, the cinema – particularly in their performance or performative modalities – have an important role to play, with their specific contribution and as a paradigm of reference in new social and analytic practices» (Guattari 1995: 91).

If we adopt the artistic paradigm in our practices of resistance, and sustainable forms of resistance within our artistic practices, then it has the potential to challenge the system from within, by traversing the entirety of the system's organisation from the perspective of its emergence. It is a way of enacting the potential of schizoanalysis as an «incomplete project» by formulating it as an already politicised method of the art of sustainable resistance. Moreover, it is why Johnny may have been right: when faced with the question of what it is that we want to resist, the schizoanalytical answer, by which we mean the one that expresses an artistic method most likely to create a sustainable practice of resistance, may well be «whaddaya got?».

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alliez, E., & Osborne, P. (eds) (2013). *Spheres of Action: Art and Politics*. London: Tate.

- Bennett, J. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Berardi, F. (2013). '(T)error and Poetry' in Alliez, E., & Osborne, P. (eds.). *Spheres of Action: Art and Politics*. London: Tate, 107-116.
- Buchanan, I. (2013). "Schizoanalysis: An Incomplete Project". In Dillet, B. MacKenzie, I., & Porter, R. (eds). *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 163-88.
- Butler, J. (2013). "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street". In McLagan, M., & McKee, Y. (eds.). *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*. New York: Zone Books, 117-138.
- Caygill, H. (2013). *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Deleuze, G. (1995). *Negotiations 1972-1990*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Guattari, F. (1995). *Chaosmosis: An ethico-aesthetic paradigm*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Guattari, F. (1996). *Soft Subversions*. New York: Semiotext(e).
- Guattari, F. (2000). *The Three Ecologies*. London: The Athlone Press.
- Guattari, F. (2016). *Lines of Flight: For another world of possibilities*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Jelinek, A. (2013). *This is Not Art: Activism and Other Non-Art*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- MacKenzie, I., & Porter, R. (2011). *Dramatizing the Political: Deleuze and Guattari*. London: Palgrave.
- McLagan, M., & McKee, Y. (eds.) (2012). *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*. New York: Zone Books.
- Osborne, P. (2013). *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*. London: Verso.
- Rancière, J. (2010). *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. London: Continuum.
- Raunig, G. (2007). *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*. New York: Semiotext(e).
- Thompson, N. (ed.) (2012). *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*. New York: Creative Time Books.
- Tripp, C. (2013). *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.