CALL FOR PAPERS

CRITICAL ARTS Special Issue

Contemporary Youth Resistance Culture: Viability, Relevancy, and Pragmatism

Theme Editor:

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In 2011 Chile saw its largest student mobilisation since the US-backed military coup that brought Pinochet to power in 1973. Some 600,000 public and private school students declared a strike against the government, staging marches in all the main cities of the country. Meanwhile the Nigerian youth arguably face far greater troubles. In recent months the Niger Delta crude oil flow was disrupted by youths in protest against a multi-national oil company operating in the area. This well-known company - the target of sabotage attacks and protests for decades - has been operating onshore in Africa's most populous nation longer than any other foreign energy power. On the whole, however, the overwhelming majority of that country’s citizens, some 158 million people, continue live in unspeakable poverty and misery. Per capita GDP in the country is lower today than in 1960 when independence was declared. Approximately 57 percent of the population live on less than US$1 per day, whereas overall life expectancy is 49.5 years. When we turn our attention further north, the gargantuan challenges made against the ruling establishments of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, can never be ignored. Here, too, we found the youth being integral to the popular uprisings against traditional, undemocratic ruling systems. While the
outcomes of these developments remain open to conjecture, the youth of England, likewise, found themselves engaged in a major skirmish against the powers of the day. Barely a few weeks prior to this, hundreds of thousands of young people in Portugal, Spain, and especially Greece, joined groups hostile to the austerity measures inaugurated to ‘save’ the capitalist economies from total ruin. The coming to power of America’s first ever black president (perceived by many as a ‘victim of oppression’, and thus, a ‘messenger of hope’) has hardly assured the tranquillity and happiness of those people, let alone the young. The latter part of 2011 witnessed the intensification of wars on foreign soil, accompanied by the mobilisation of mass rallies and marches against drastic cuts in social spending. Against this backdrop, the rise of America’s disfavoured youths against the status quo appears to loom larger and larger. On home soil, South African public students (most of whom lack basic skills in reading, writing, and calculating) have vented their anger and frustration mainly against education authorities, in their endeavour to secure basic teaching amenities, such as libraries, in their schools. The fact that some 40% of young people in this country are currently redundant, immediately evokes memories of the country’s prolonged period of struggle against unutterable human affliction, marked by the dominant presence and participation during the 1970s to the 1980s of non other than the youth themselves.

Whilst there certainly are many other situations that can attest to heightened levels of rebelliousness and militancy amongst youths from all over the world today, the distressing fact is that in most, if not all such cases, this ‘culture of contestation’ has by and large been
unrewarding, as a result of deepened repression and deception on the part of existing power systems, illusory decorative changes, or the capitulation or betrayal of those in the forefront of struggle, while the root sources of the present order have remained largely uncontaminated.

This Call for Papers is concerned predominantly, though not exclusively, with the theoretical substructures that inform and underpin this prevailing universal ‘youth resistance culture’. The fact that youths from different parts of the world, on arguably all continents, and almost simultaneously, find themselves entangled in their own, idiosyncratic ‘mode of contestation’, does suggest the presence of a common set of problems and aspirations, one which traverses human, social, cultural, political, and territorial boundaries. Accordingly, the call is made on writers, teachers, analysts, scholars, researchers, and commentators, to submit transdisciplinary, erudite, bold perspectives that explore and dissect the conjectural frameworks of this modern, yet by no means rare combative cultural trend amongst the world’s younger generations. In particular, submissions are called for that critically evaluate the significance, worthiness, promise, or potential impact, of these agendas. Of special import, then, is the opportunity for contributors to evaluate not merely the substance, but the viability, relevancy, or pragmatism, of this ‘critical culture’ that distinguishes young people’s lives in the current epoch of human existence. Insofar as contributors are at liberty to focus on specific cases in point, perspectives on the global situation, and thus the broader context of such paradigms, would especially be appreciated.
As a special edition of Critical Arts, full-length academic papers are limited to 5000 words, while specialist commentaries, not exceeding 2000 words, are also welcome.

- **Deadlines for Abstracts (200 words): 20 January 2012**
- **Deadline for Submissions: 20 June 2012**
- **Submissions, including Abstract, Biographical Note, Key Words, End Notes, and References, in MS Word Format, to be sent via email to The Guest Editor: Critical Arts: Dr Clive W. Kronenberg (kronenbergc@cput.ac.za); Research Fellow: Critical Thinking Group, Education & Social Sciences Faculty, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Mowbray Campus, Cape Town, 7700, South Africa**
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