

## Lierre Keith on Alternative vs. Oppositional Culture

### Alternative Culture:

Also known as cultural appropriation, politics is who you are, a politics of emotion in which feeling states outweigh effective strategy or tactics, goal is to feel intense, authentic, unmediated emotions, attacks on conventions—all boundaries are fair game, shock value, change is seen in psychological and cultural terms

### Oppositional Culture:

Alternative conceived of as cultural reclamation, protection, cultural respect and political solidarity; politics is what you do, a politics of community that values responsibility, mutual aid, work ethic—dependent on self-regulation, goals to guide community, socialize the young, enforce the norms, participate in larger project of righting the world, attacks on power structures, change seen in economic and political terms.

Alternative Culture	Oppositional Culture
Apathetic or hostile to concept of political engagement	Consciously embraces resistance
Change seen in psychological and cultural terms	Change seen in economic and political terms
Individual consciousness is the target	Concrete institutions are targeted
Adolescent values of youth movement	Adult values of discernment responsibility
All authority is rejected out of hand	Legitimate authority is accepted and cultivated
Rejection of moral judgment	Strong moral code based on universal human rights
Attack on conventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All boundaries are fair game</li> <li>• Shock value</li> </ul>	Attacks on power structures

Alienated individual valorized	Loyalty and solidarity valued
Goal to feel intense “authentic” unmediated emotions	Goals and adult concerns guide the community, socialize the young, enforce norms, participate in larger projects of righting the world
A politics of emotions in which feeling states outweighs effective strategy or tactics	A politics of community that values responsibility, mutual aid, work ethic, dependent upon self regulation of mature adults.
Politics is who you are	Politics is what you do
Human relations are corrupted in the act of political resistance; only right consciousness can prevail	Human relations are corrupted by systems of power and oppression; justice must prevail even if it takes generations
Generalized withdrawal as strategy	Withdraw loyalty from systems of oppression and the oppressors but active engagement to stop injustice
Moral vigor of youth cut off from action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizontal hostility</li> <li>• Questions of in group / out group</li> </ul>	Idealism tempered by experience
Cultural appropriation	Cultural reclamation and protection; cultural respect, political solidarity (allies)
Cited from Lierre Keith (2013) in <i>Earth at Risk: Building a Resistance Movement to Save the Planet</i> . Edited by Derek Jensen and Lierre Keith, p. 158.	