

*Chapter 1*

## Introduction

### Art, Culture, Democracy

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Along with the political speeches and the oath of office, the historic inauguration of Barack Obama as the first African American president of the United States featured music, poetry, and prayer. We believe that this signaled a propitious moment to inquire whether these alternative and aesthetic modes of public discourse prefigure a more democratic future. In various ways, contributors to this volume ask: What arts and cultural forms present in the world today provide grounds for optimism about moving toward a more democratic society? What is the promise of the arts and popular culture as partial bases for political activism to move us toward a new political economy and a more democratic politics? How does this promise engage with existing economic and political realities? In what concrete ways are contemporary arts and popular culture forms used to increase the capacities of individuals and groups to act effectively in the world? In particular, how do historically marginalized groups employ the arts and popular culture to advance their political claims and exemplify democratic practices? In sum, how might the arts and popular culture help us do democracy?

These questions arise in a context of rapidly expanding global communications networks. Access to the arts and popular culture has increased commensurately with access to smart phones and the internet experienced across the globe. Musicians, photographers, graffiti artists, painters, dancers, performance artists, filmmakers, writers, and many others

now take advantage of internet platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to disseminate their work. Many do so with explicit political intent. One result is a rapidly changing and expanding terrain for political thought and action using arts and culture. The internet has blurred borders between local and global communities as well as traditional and modern cultures. However, the result has not been a world without borders. The digital divide between rich and poor, north and south, persists. Internet technology has also supported the creation of new borders, such as virtual diasporic communities, global hybrid movements, and even internet-based cybernations.<sup>1</sup>

Another important element of this changing context is the rise of so-called culture wars that link the traditional politics of nation-states with globalization and multiculturalism. At stake is control of the hearts and minds of citizens around the world. Various forms of expression, including and especially those related to the arts and popular culture, carry profound significance for this challenge of engaging reflectively and critically with diverse citizens. While much of popular culture undermines the development of critical consciousness and globalization often homogenizes or even Americanizes, the arts and popular culture also have been used extensively and successfully to nurture critical consciousness and diverse perspectives. The central questions remain: To what degree will political and economic elites continue to fashion the world, both materially and symbolically, in their own interests, and to what degree can activists harness the arts and popular culture to shatter this hegemony and challenge elite power? Although most contributors here focus on how activist art supports progressive causes, some consider how the arts and popular culture are used to resist democratic change and restore traditional hierarchies of class, gender, and race, though perhaps in new forms. These different emphases work together to show how the creation of a democratic society is an ongoing process and that democracy can also unfortunately be undone by some of the popular forces often thought to foster it.

### The Arts and Popular Culture

What do we mean by the arts and popular culture? Many have found it tempting to define a separation between so-called high art and low art.<sup>2</sup> Art hanging on museum walls and performed in magnificent concert halls is deemed high art, while art sprayed-painted on railroad underpasses and performed in anarchists' squat houses qualifies as low art or, presum-

ably, popular culture. We intend to avoid this temptation, because it is ultimately an untenable distinction. Institutional definitions such as these focus on artworks as beautiful objects created for an art world, especially art critics. The effect of this approach is to perpetuate established artistic traditions, including the concept of autonomous art, and to exclude innovative and nonwestern art forms.<sup>3</sup> According to Marshall McLuhan, new art forms are routinely regarded as corrupting or degrading the standards of high art. However, these new art forms often simultaneously serve to legitimate the elevated status of the “great” artworks that preceded them and many new forms are eventually granted the status of high art.<sup>4</sup> At the very least, these interrelationships suggest that historical context shapes our definitions of what constitutes high and low art. However, more than historical context is at stake here. The arts associated with popular culture are also often dismissed as mere entertainment, as commercialized art produced for mass markets.<sup>5</sup> Yet the arts and popular culture also serve a variety of important functions in everyday life. These functions involve more than the artistic beauty that is often found in the ordinary objects that enhance our daily lives. They also include the role of the arts in catalyzing the imagination, expressing creativity, integrating aspects of the self, providing meaningful symbols, sustaining a sense of beauty and harmony, and, most important here, resisting conformity and even subverting the status quo.<sup>6</sup> In these ways, especially the last one, the popular quality of the art forms included here potentially increases their importance for democratic and undemocratic politics.

Although all of our contributors demonstrate the significance of the arts and popular culture for “doing democracy,” they differ in their approaches to defining and analyzing the art forms they discuss. For this reason, we have chosen not to focus on the aforementioned debates over how to define art in general, or even on how to define the individual art forms included in this volume.<sup>7</sup> We would instead emphasize the aesthetic experience of the arts and popular culture, a theme the authors here share. The term “aesthetics” comes from the Greek *aesthesis*, and refers to “the whole region of human perception and sensation” or “the whole of our sensate life together.”<sup>8</sup> Aesthetic experience extends beyond the arts proper to include everyday life, the natural world, and the spiritual realm. Although aesthetic experience is conceptually distinct from artistic experience, it is often closely related in practice. John Dewey, who laments the lack of a single term that unites artistic and aesthetic experience, famously joins them. He writes: “the conception of conscious experience as a perceived relation between doing and undergoing enables

us to understand the connection that art as production and [aesthetic] perception and appreciation as enjoyment sustain to each other.”<sup>9</sup> Dewey’s concept of aesthetic experience expands our experience of “the arts.” It can recognize innovations in content, form, or both as “art”; it also includes the artistic expressions of popular and nonwestern cultures. For Dewey, the arts and popular culture draw on non- and extra-rational dimensions of human identity and experience, while also potentially stimulating critical reflection and shaping political interactions. Like the arts and popular culture, these affective and corporeal dimensions of human experience, which some claim may even constitute an alternative and aesthetic rationality, have arguably received too little attention.<sup>10</sup>

The distinction between high art and popular culture overlaps with another distinction between formal (or technical) and performative aesthetics.<sup>11</sup> A formal aesthetic focuses primarily on the abstract systems, structures, and techniques of artworks. For example, a formal analysis of a classical music composition would emphasize its harmonic development, melodic lines, and rhythmic meter. Abstract forms can and sometimes do provide models and metaphors for sociopolitical arrangements. The musical counterpoint of a fugue may mirror the distinct voices in a political dialogue; likewise, perspective lines in an artist’s portrait may reveal complex social hierarchies.<sup>12</sup> As we have seen, more popular art forms often fail to qualify as “art” when measured by the standards of formal aesthetics. We would expand the notion of artistic form beyond the requirements of high art to a variety of popular forms including, for example, military monuments, political cartoons, popular festivals, and public parades. Contributors to this volume also offer more dynamic and democratic understandings of what have traditionally been regarded as forms of high art, including literature, music, poetry, and theater. The capacity of musical form—classical and popular—to “speak” without words plays a role in multiple chapters. Digital forms that incorporate multiple earlier media—television, radio, and newspaper—also increase the power of art for politics. In these and many other cases, to use Marshall McLuhan’s famous phrase, “the medium is the message,” and the various art forms can carry democratic or undemocratic content.<sup>13</sup>

A performative aesthetic better incorporates this more dynamic and inclusive concept of aesthetic form(s). It also places greater emphasis on the affective, corporeal effects of art, especially its capacity to shape the identities and express the needs of groups excluded and marginalized by mainstream politics. Rap music, for example, involves much more than a musical style. It is part of a wider hip hop scene that includes break

dancing, dee-jaying, and remixing, as well as “authentic” dress, paraphernalia, fanzines, and websites, all part of the larger Do-It-Yourself (DIY) movement.<sup>14</sup> Most important, a performative aesthetic construes audiences as participants in artistic experiences and stresses the artist’s engagement with a wider community. Unlike formal aesthetics that elevate art, in part, by making it an object of detached observation in designated spaces, a performative aesthetic explores how people enter into artistic experiences. In doing so, it challenges the assumption that art is somehow autonomous and embraces its role in processes of socioeconomic and political change. Although the arts and popular culture carry and convey content in written form, such as cartoon captions, song lyrics, and theater scripts, they often seek to erode the very distinction between form and content. Many contributors here show how the arts and popular culture ultimately present “form *as* content” by modeling new ways of doing and sometimes undoing democracy.<sup>15</sup>

This understanding of the arts and popular culture as integral to political and, more specifically, democratic processes calls into question the liberal-democratic idea that society has distinct public and private spheres, and that art belongs in the latter realm of personal experience. According to John Locke, liberal individuals demonstrate their capacity to bear the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship through their rationality, industry, and property.<sup>16</sup> For the rational citizens of a liberal democracy, aesthetic sensibilities are largely private matters of personal taste and individual choice. The liberal state tolerates differences in artistic preferences, as well as a variety of political views and religious beliefs, as long as those differences do not violate the rights of other citizens.<sup>17</sup> Of course, one way a rising middle class can display its excellent and quasi-aristocratic taste is by enjoying and acquiring critically acclaimed or high art and emphasizing high art’s superiority over all lower art forms. Wider access to high art through concerts, museums, and theaters open to the public only became possible in Europe very gradually over a period of several centuries. The liberal tendency to locate the arts in the private sphere contributed to perceptions of the artist as an individual, even solitary, creative genius, rather than part of a community. This also reinforced the concept of art as autonomous, as somehow transcending the pressures of economic and political reality.<sup>18</sup> Locating art in the private sphere also served to reinforce the “rationality” of liberal democratic politics. The affective, corporeal experiences associated with the arts became personal matters that were most appropriately confined to the inner worlds of liberal subjects.<sup>19</sup> Members of marginalized groups, such as women and children, laborers, and other

races, were also thought to be more vulnerable to these less-than-rational forms of experience. This greater vulnerability served to further justify their exclusion from full political rights.<sup>20</sup> Although some aesthetic sensibilities, like imagination and sympathy, remained important factors that informed the political judgment of liberal subjects, these qualities needed to be carefully cultivated and controlled. An aesthetic concept of the sublime might indirectly guide political judgments, but it was not an adequate or appropriate foundation for political institutions and processes.<sup>21</sup> From this larger perspective, the liberal privatizing of the aesthetic can itself be seen as a cultural-political project with significant implications for how citizens understand and practice democracy.<sup>22</sup>

There is no question that aesthetic experiences often prompt visceral responses that can prove dangerous to political orders, including purportedly democratic ones.<sup>23</sup> The arts and popular culture are often romanticized as sites of popular resistance, as inherently democratic terrains of struggle against hopeless odds, as authentic expressions of the people, and as naturally effective counterweights to power exercised in the interests of domination. Aesthetic experience sometimes does counter hegemonic powers, and the popular expressions of the arts considered here serve a variety of functions for progressive social movements. These include: “survival/identity, resistance/opposition, consciousness-raising/education, agitation/mobilization.”<sup>24</sup> Yet a balanced look at the arts and popular culture will quickly reveal that they are also sites of domination and oppression where citizens are misled and their interests distorted; where various undemocratic ends are pursued, often successfully; where the possibility of resistance is systematically erased; and where the notion of authenticity is hopelessly obfuscated. Antonio Gramsci uses the term “hegemony” to describe how a ruling class can establish political control by shaping the dominant cultural institutions of civil society. For Gramsci, cultural projects are a primary field of political struggle, a site where counterhegemonic artists and intellectuals can also prefigure a new society and join with others to create it.<sup>25</sup> The liberal depoliticization of the aesthetic potentially decreases the capacity of citizens to evaluate critically such cultural-political projects, whether they are democratic or undemocratic in character.

### “Doing (and Undoing) Democracy” with the Arts

The arts and popular culture offer an array of resources for people, especially those in marginalized groups, to use politically. They can contribute

to political equality by increasing political capacity, especially for those who need it the most. As Rousseau and others have argued, political equality is a precondition for political freedom.<sup>26</sup> Freedom requires that each of us is able to participate in the determination of the rules and laws that govern us, and this requires that each of us has a meaningful say in decisions affecting those laws and rules. This presumes a semblance of political equality, where each person has a voice through which they can exercise political influence. Popular sovereignty means that the people rule. Common people need access to decision-making arenas, and for some, the arts and popular culture afford them this access. Iris Young argues that even citizens who have voting rights may experience “internal exclusions” due to their unfamiliarity with the formal procedures of politics such as voter registration requirements or rules of evidence in courts of law. She calls for an expanded understanding of communication that includes the arts and popular culture, specifically greeting and ceremony, various forms of rhetoric, and storytelling, as part of the political vernacular.<sup>27</sup> By pluralizing forms of political communication, the arts and popular culture can enable many citizens to exercise their share of popular sovereignty.

The sites of political participation are also expanded by the arts and popular culture, especially for those who enjoy little, if any, access to institutionalized politics. The arts and popular culture represent a terrain in which new spaces can be opened for political action. As our contributors illustrate, these spaces can include the streets, public monuments, theaters and concert halls, private homes, local bars and clubs, and wherever citizen-photographers engage in countersurveillance of public figures, as well as more traditional spaces such as public assemblies and voting booths. The new spaces opened up in the terrain of the arts and popular culture are often more accessible for relatively marginalized people. Power is potentially rendered accountable through arts and cultural practices in the same way it is rendered accountable through more traditional political avenues; that is, through the political engagement of citizens. Younger citizens in particular often get their information about politics and gain a sense of political efficacy through the arts and popular culture. Participating in these alternative political spaces is one means of drawing ordinary citizens into political engagement and, for some, one that engages them deeply and passionately.

Finally, the arts and popular culture deeply influence character and can foster or undermine civic virtue. Rousseau feared that increased access to the arts would corrupt public morals by creating a desire for wealth and

luxury and increasing the distance between rich and poor. For this reason, he ultimately opposed the introduction of a public theater in Geneva.<sup>28</sup> However, by cultivating the imagination, citizens also can increase their capacity to understand that they share the world with others who are different from them. In *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Martha Nussbaum argues that the arts and literature develop our ability to empathize, a crucial component of ethical decision-making. Drawing on John Dewey, Nussbaum argues that exposure to culturally diverse art forms and reflection on our responses to them enhances a sense of world citizenship.<sup>29</sup> Dewey sees art as a powerful way of sharing experience; it introduces us to the lives and worlds of other people.<sup>30</sup> This sharing of experience occurs partly through the affective dimension of arts and popular culture. Without dismissing or even qualifying the importance of understanding others' lives through our rational and analytical faculties, this volume builds on the presumption that a whole person engages with the world affectively as well as rationally. Often, and perhaps typically, the two faculties are deeply intertwined, and they rely on each other. The arts and popular culture represent the diverse experiences and identities of individuals and the cultures in which they exist. As such, they are also a window into those experiences and identities. They are unique in intentionally drawing upon the whole person, affectively and physically as well as rationally and analytically. As a means of understanding others' lives and experiences, they thus represent a valuable resource for character development and moral decision-making.

At the deepest level, artistic experiences can invoke a shared sense of our all-too-human vulnerability to pain, suffering, and death. In *The Ethos of a Late-Modern Citizen*, Stephen K. White explores the contours of a new ethos of global citizenship that is at once cognitive, moral, and aesthetic-affective. Moving beyond the association of western reason with the domination and the exclusion of difference, White focuses on the limited capacity of human reason to control external reality. He urges us to bring a spirit of generosity to our encounters with different individuals and cultures. Instead of a politics of resentment, he would infuse our political interactions with a sense of reasonableness that springs from an understanding of our shared human limits.<sup>31</sup> Artistic experiences are especially conducive to positive encounters with difference because they can balance anxiety over identity, even mortality, with the pleasure of creativity. As we have seen, the arts and popular culture can represent a terrain of human experience where creativity and experimentation are expected and valued. In creating new artistic and popular cultural forms,



artists and popular culture workers are simultaneously shaping new possibilities for human experience including, for the purposes of this edited volume, new possibilities for political thought and action.

### The Arts and Prefigurative Politics

The arts and popular culture have a prefigurative capacity that rivals or exceeds other areas of human experience. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to “prefigure” means to provide “an early indication or version of, to represent beforehand by a figure or type.”<sup>32</sup> Prefigurative politics is often associated with New Left movements of the 1960s, whose political activism also employed the arts and popular culture to challenge “the system” in innovative ways. Their continuing influence can be seen in several contributions to this volume. Drawing on the experience of the New Left, Wini Breines writes that prefigurative politics:

may be recognized in counter institutions, demonstrations and the attempt to embody personal and anti-hierarchical values in politics. Participatory democracy was central to prefigurative politics. “Anti-organization” should not be construed as disorganized. Movements are organized in numerous obvious and often hidden ways. . . . The crux of prefigurative politics imposed substantial tasks, the central one being to create and sustain within the lived practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that “prefigured” and embodied the desired society.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to participatory democracy, prefigurative politics has a long history in anarchist direct action and is frequently described as a call to “build a new world in the shell of the old.”<sup>34</sup> In the process of exemplifying this new world, prefigurative politics usually creates further disruptions in the old order. Sometimes, though, the prefigurative politics of artists simply involves bearing witness to the possibility of a more democratic politics. For example, Herbert Marcuse argued that the arts invoked another dimension of experience, a third dimension beyond the two-dimensional conformity of mass society.<sup>35</sup> Theodor Adorno, who was more pessimistic about the prospects for democratic change, defended the intransigence of the artist or philosopher as itself a democratic form of political practice.<sup>36</sup>

*Doing Democracy: Activist Art and Cultural Politics* attempts to take advantage of a historical opportunity presented by the central, and growing, importance in the contemporary life of the arts and popular culture. As widely noted in academic and popular media, younger generations spend countless hours on electronic forms of media exploring various forms of the arts and popular culture.<sup>37</sup> Many older people are rapidly catching up. Through YouTube, Facebook, Bit Torrent, cell phones (with cameras), Blackberries, and iPods, contemporary citizens consume and create various forms of the arts and popular culture, including especially music, film, videos, and photography. For many of them, these worlds of the arts and popular culture define the main parameters of their everyday lives. While most (especially young) people find traditional politics dreary and alienating, they are quickly and readily drawn into political life through the arts and popular culture. Today this means they are also drawn into an increasingly global reality.

The arts and popular culture have traditionally been located in place, defined geographically as the cultural products of a particular nation, people, or region. The new spaces of the twenty-first century—the internet, multinational corporations, transnational movements—bring diverse populations together in ways that flow across these borders and create an increasingly global environment for the arts and popular culture. Although some citizens of modern as well as traditional societies have responded to these rapid changes with attempts to fortify their borders, others have reached out to share cultural resources in a spirit of mutual understanding. Many Indigenous peoples, in particular, are currently sharing their cultural traditions. For example, Native Americans have long embraced what Gregory Cajete calls a “geopsyche” that integrates mind, body, and spirit with the land. Their understanding of place is not only deeply rooted, but also radically open to changing contexts, a survival necessity for groups who were forcibly relocated.<sup>38</sup> The increasing fluidity and hybridity of the arts and popular culture today again prompt the realization that “where we come from” in our interactions with other peoples transcends geographic location along with other standard markers of identity. The arts and popular culture have long played a major role in shaping such a creative, expansive, and democratic understanding of the relationships between peoples and can do so today in new ways.<sup>39</sup>

The contributions to this volume engage these new global realities from a variety of perspectives. The contributors come from Austria, Canada, England, India, and Finland, as well as the United States. More important, they study how the arts and popular culture are used politically in a variety of local, regional, and national contexts, including Afghani-

stan, Brazil, Canada, Great Britain, Iraq, Mexico, South Africa, and the United States. While some contributors emphasize the impact of global interactions on more traditional understandings of place and space, others explicitly focus on how the arts and popular culture, including new digital media and the internet, facilitate aesthetic experiences across cultural and political traditions. They also consider how the arts and popular culture can either diversify or homogenize aesthetic experiences and thereby contribute to a more or less democratic world.

Since Plato's famous discussion of the tensions between poetry and philosophy, many in the west have recognized the political importance of the arts and popular culture.<sup>40</sup> Although the relationship between aesthetics and politics is not new, it is changing today in significant ways that political scientists cannot afford to ignore.<sup>41</sup> With relatively few exceptions, including the coeditors and contributors to this volume, political science as a discipline has been strangely silent on the political importance of the arts and popular culture.<sup>42</sup> Instead, we have made scientific attempts to represent the "real" world of politics our top priority. The prefigurative quality of art and popular culture redirects our attention instead to the gap between actually existing democracy and democratic possibilities.<sup>43</sup> Researchers in many disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, musicology, communications, American studies, and others, have extensively explored the political significance of aesthetic experiences. While our contributors acknowledge research from these other disciplines that has contributed much to our understanding of the arts and culture, the general absence of contributions from political scientists and political theorists suggests that their unique concerns and insights are either underrepresented or absent entirely. These unique concerns and insights include, for example, power and its many faces; the various forms of political action including, for example, deliberation, problem-solving, and resistance; extra- or nonrational dimensions of human experience; democracy in its strongest forms; freedom and equality; and the many issues related to the theory and practice of citizenship. The following chapters provide important insights on these and other issues crucial for the ongoing creative and collective process of "doing democracy."

### Contributions to This Volume

The contributors to this volume consider how a variety of artistic media contribute to processes of doing (and undoing) democracy. We begin with

two chapters that discuss the visual arts, specifically photo-activism and political cartoons, and engage questions of visibility and agency, including how images construct democratic (and undemocratic) spaces. In “Photo-Activism in the Digital Age: Visions from Rio de Janeiro,” Frank Möller examines how the relationship between knowing and seeing changes when we move beyond the written word to photographic images, especially digital photography. Möller notes that photographic images potentially challenge power in several ways: they tend to be user-driven; they often reveal otherwise unseen phenomena, such as war zones; and they can strengthen political awareness. In the digital age, the emergence of the citizen-photographer creates new possibilities by expanding the possible relationships between the subjects, agents, and spectators of photography. Möller discusses three examples of photo-activism from popular communities in Rio de Janeiro. In the Morro da Providência area, the French visual artist JR’s project, *Women Are Heroes*, displayed women’s photos on the walls of prominent buildings. In Jacarezinho, residents and citizens used security cameras to observe and record the activities of police and drug dealers in their neighborhood. Both examples reveal complex relationships between surveillance, including self-surveillance, and what Möller calls “sousveillance,” a kind of countersurveillance that involves ordinary citizens creating images of political authorities. A third example, Vik Muniz’ images of the *catadores* (garbage pickers) of Jardim Gramacho, reveals how trash becomes art and art becomes cash. Drawing on Arendt’s work, Möller concludes that photo-activism in the digital age multiplies the ways individuals can appear in public. However, he concludes with a cautionary note: seeing and being seen do not necessarily involve active participation, and much remains to be studied regarding the roles images play in “doing democracy.”

In “Framing the Obama Political Cartoons: Injury or Democracy?,” Sushmita Chatterjee asks when and how the process of visual image-making that she calls “cartooning democracy” is also “doing democracy.” Beginning with the violence in 2005 that followed the Mohammed cartoons published in a Danish newspaper, Chatterjee notes the ambivalent quality of cartoon frames. Are the caricatures and stereotypes of political cartoons inherently subversive or do they simply add insult to injury? In an argument informed by Judith Butler, Art Spiegelman, and critical race theorists, Chatterjee reveals the complex associations of injury and democracy found in the aforementioned cartoons and the more recent Obama cartoons. In the process, she presents a method for reading political cartoons that recognizes their porous frames, the play of image

and text, and the “drawing out” of the “ridiculous under the real and recognizable.” For Chatterjee, ongoing power relations ultimately contextualize and thereby influence how the mix of injury and democracy works in political cartoons. In other words, responsibility for redeeming democracy, if not beauty, is in the eye and intention of the beholder of political cartoons.

The next two chapters move beyond visual imagery to explore the uses of memorials and monuments in cultural rituals that honor the dead. Regina Marchi’s “The Moral Economy: ‘Doing Democracy’ via Public Day of the Dead Rituals” examines how Mexico’s *Día de los Muertos* celebrations were recreated among Latino communities in Los Angeles and San Francisco as, what Eric Hobsbawm calls, an “invented tradition.” Since the 1970s U.S. Day of the Dead celebrations have been held on November 1 and 2 (Roman Catholics’ All Saints Day and All Souls Day) and combined Indigenous, Catholic, and Mexican–U.S. cultural traditions in syncretistic personal and public rituals. The celebrations include altar installations with harvest offerings and ancestral photos, art exhibits of sugar skulls (*Calaveras*), street processions, as well as decorated gravesites and family picnics. Marchi argues that Day of the Dead rituals simultaneously reinforce communal identities, protest political injustices, and uphold moral obligations to the deceased. They exemplify what E. P. Thompson called “a moral economy of social protest.” Day of the Dead rituals protest the farm workers poisoned by pesticides, the illegal immigrants killed crossing the United States/Mexico border, and the innocent victims of U.S.–sponsored wars, including drug-related gang violence. These injustices highlight the harsh realities of U.S. imperialism and the living presence of Hispanic communities within U.S. borders, while employing multiple media that allow participants simultaneously to engage in cultural celebration and political protest.

Timothy W. Luke’s “The National D-Day Memorial: An American Military Monument as ‘Doing Democracy’” provides an important comparison with Marchi’s analysis of Day of the Dead rituals. It tells the convoluted history of the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia. Constructed as a national memorial and regional economic stimulus, the memorial immortalizes soldiers from the small Virginia town that suffered the most casualties per capita in the D-Day invasion. The memorial serves many ideological functions: it enshrines the United States as a superpower fighting for democracy across the globe; symbolizes national unity in a region still haunted by the legacy of the civil war; exemplifies a collaborative corporate, public, and private initiative; immortalizes the horrors and

sacrifices of war; and celebrates freedom and hope, values highlighted and compromised by the ongoing War on Terror. Most important, it presents the United States as, what Luke calls, “a doing democracy,” a nation with imperial aspirations, some of whose effects appear very differently in the Day of the Dead rituals Marchi discusses. Drawing on Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities,” Luke presents war memorials as public sites where ordinary citizens and political elites can meet and share their stories of national heroes and values. Read together, Marchi’s and Luke’s chapters highlight the variability and vulnerability of these stories, and the need to continually revisit and recreate them.

Poetry and literature have long immortalized heroic conquests and exploits for future generations, and they are the media on which the next two chapters focus. In “The Message in the Medium: Poetry Slam as Democratic Practice,” Mark Mattern presents changing forms of poetry as examples of the tensions between high art and popular culture. He notes that even as some pundits lamented the decline of poetry (more precisely, its shift from public fora to academic institutions), a more democratic form of performance poetry—poetry slams—was emerging. As Mattern notes, public poetry has a longer history in oral traditions that include “Homeric epics, African griots, Zuni priests, Japanese kojiki poets, and Greek bards.” Mattern locates the politics of poetry in its form, and he argues that poetry slams embrace many democratic features: broad access, active participation, critical judgment, egalitarian community, individual freedom, and communal responsibility. Poetry slams reconnect audiences with poetry and mirror a more participatory politics in the process. The message is: “anybody can write and perform poetry and everyone is encouraged to do so.” What began as a local phenomenon—Marc Smith invented poetry slams in Chicago, Illinois—has now become an organized network of national and international competitions. Mattern argues that the participatory politics at work here revitalizes poetry; challenges hegemonic power in its many guises, ranging from high art to commercial entertainment; and resurrects deeply rooted democratic traditions.

In “Tragedy and Democracy: The Fate of Liberal Democratic Values in a Violent World,” Wairimu Njonya writes of literary and musical traditions that have survived the racial terrors of slavery and now offer renewed hope to a deeply compromised American democracy. With Schiller and Kant as philosophical foundations, Njonya turns to Angela Davis, Toni Morrison, and Cornel West to reveal how black political culture has given meaning to “ineffable suffering” by rehumanizing, memorializing, and thereby atoning for it. The “slave sublime,” Njonya argues, models

a political alternative to the strategic violence and security politics of America's ongoing War on Terror. It steadfastly refuses to reproduce the violence. Instead, the "blues people" sustain the understanding that some things matter more than mere life, especially the values Americans share as a democratic people, values they have long held in trust. Njoya turns to Billie Holiday's hauntingly beautiful rendition of "Strange Fruit" to illustrate this deeply democratic ethos of the blues people. Njoya suggests that Barack Obama's call for Americans today to "choose our better history" reinvokes this tragic legacy.

The next two selections more directly engage the relationships between music and democracy. In "You're an American rapper, so what do you know?: The Political Uses of British and U.S. Popular Culture by First-Time Voters in the United Kingdom," Sanna Inthorn and John Street present their empirical research on how popular culture affects the political capacities of first-time voters in the United Kingdom. This chapter makes a unique contribution to the volume with its focus on "what popular culture in its commercial, everyday form contributes to 'doing democracy,'" specifically, mainstream electoral politics. Street and Inthorn argue that popular culture plays three roles in politics: representing the wider world, forming collective identities, and mobilizing action. Their focus here is on the second contribution, and they emphasize how television and music industry celebrities—for example, Britney Spears, Kanye West, and Eminem—shape young voters' sense of collective identity. Drawing on questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews, they find that celebrities have impact on young voters' sense of national identity. That impact varies, though, depending on their perceptions of the artist's integrity, especially whether the artist has an "authentic" voice or speaks for the music industry. Perhaps most important, Street and Inthorn find that popular culture has a positive effect on political engagement by contributing to the creation of collective identities that give young voters a basis for action.

In "Playing with Hate: White Power Music and the Undoing of Democracy," Nancy S. Love examines another example of how music and popular culture influence the political identity of teenage youth. Variouslly described as the "soundtrack to the white revolution," "a common language and a unifying ideology," and, in the case of Skrewdriver, "the musical wing" of the National Front, White Noise or White Rock has created a music scene that is fueling and funding white supremacist groups across the globe. Love situates these right-wing extremist movements in a longer history of cultural-political projects of racial hegemony

in western liberal democracies. Through an analysis of song lyrics and musical performances, she shows how Skrewdriver's music globalizes and inverts a traditional fascist aesthetic. Her title phrase, "playing with hate," refers not only to Skrewdriver's identity-based aversion to nonwhites, but also to what Wendy Brown has called liberal "tolerance talk." By positioning white supremacists as disturbed, even pathological, individuals, liberal toleration minimizes the deep complicity of hegemonic liberalism with white supremacy and denies that racist skinheads may be an external manifestation of liberalism's internal demons. Love argues that the future of democracy depends on citizens' capacity to recognize and redeem this history of racialized liberalism, and she reminds readers that such an "undoing" offers an opportunity to begin "doing democracy" anew.

The next two pieces examine the role of theater in "doing democracy." In "Betrayed by Democracy: Verbatim Theater as Prefigurative Politics," Mark Chou and Roland Bleiker compare George Packer's work as a journalist and a playwright in order to understand what his play, *Betrayed*, adds to the story of Iraqi interpreters who served U.S. forces and found themselves caught between the United States and their home country. Chou and Bleiker argue that theater can evade the censorship—legal and informal—that often marks public discourse in times of war. It offers an alternative site for representing reality and engages questions artistically that are too painful and volatile for political deliberation, including representing people who are otherwise rendered silent or invisible. Packer's play is an example of "verbatim" or "reality" theater, a genre that "uses facts to create fictional representations." In *Betrayed*, Iraqi interpreters give firsthand accounts of their experiences and engage their audience in a dialogue. This positions the audience as participants in the drama as well as its spectators and witnesses. Unlike commercialized entertainment, the play uses art to create a democratic dialogue and to reveal the ambiguous, complex, and uncertain quality of "truth." Like the Iraqi interpreters, the audience of *Betrayed* is positioned as "in between"; it confronts anew the reality of war, but only in its fictional representation. Through the dialogue of verbatim theater audiences are urged to rethink the meaning of war, including their own roles as democratic citizens.

In "Political Actors: Performance as Democratic Protest in Anti-Apartheid Theater," Emily Beausoleil also examines how theater can contest power when other channels of participation are closed. She focuses on how those who resisted apartheid in South Africa used theater against a coercive state that censored scripts, enforced codes, and restricted spaces



for their productions. Beausoleil focuses on two aspects of theater—polyphony and transience—that are crucial for democratic resistance. Like Chou and Bleiker, she discusses the multiple voices theater represents, but extends polyphony beyond language to include the affective codes, embodied metaphors, and sonic texts of live theater. These aspects of theater are politically powerful precisely because their meanings are indeterminate and, hence, less vulnerable to censorship. Dramatic performances also have a transient or ephemeral quality that South African resistant theater embraced. Building on oral traditions, including improvisation and storytelling, South Africans extended their medium to guerilla theater and propertyless theater. In the process, they increased the capacity of theatrical productions to evade state control. Beausoleil ultimately argues that this very *unruliness* of theater makes it a potentially powerful site of democratic engagement. Like Chou and Bleiker, Beausoleil argues that theater blurs lines between fact and fiction, and between art and politics.

Our next two chapters examine festivals and parades as ways of using the arts and popular culture to turn city neighborhoods and streets into public spaces where historically marginalized groups can engage in political expression and democratic resistance. Bruce Baum's "Art in the House: Cultural Democracy in a Neighborhood" explores how performative art that is nondidactic, nonpartisan, or even apolitical can nonetheless prefigure forms of democratic community. The June 2011 In the House Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia, brought artworks representing many media and genres into the everyday lives of local residents by using private homes as performance venues. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin, Baum compares In the House to a postmodern carnival, though now the democratic-capitalist culture industry rather than a feudal hierarchy is being inverted. As an alternative to the commercialized artworks of mass culture, this festival also resembles what Theodor Adorno calls "autonomous art." For Baum, In the House creates a counterspace where diverse artists and art forms meet the everyday lives of people in local communities. If there is a politics here, it is a "politics of generosity" or, as Baum puts it, artistic "intimations of a more humane world." As Baum notes, In the House is a model other cities can use to stage similar festivals that offer popular experiences, however, brief, of democratic freedom in community.

In "Democracy despite Government: African American Parading and Democratic Theory," Peter G. Stillman and Adelaide H. Villmoare examine parading as an example of what they call "democracy de-

spite government.” This phrase describes a parallel politics of “doing democracy” that expresses citizens’ needs and empowers them to act on their own behalf, regardless of the less-than-democratic features of neo-liberal political orders. In a fascinating, richly historical analysis, Stillman and Villmoare show how parades transform the public streets of New Orleans, Louisiana, from privatized, commercial spaces into expressive and communal sites of political action. The African American “second line,” a parade style that originated with enslaved Africans and included Native Americans in colonial New Orleans, powerfully illustrates how parading can foster an egalitarian, participatory politics. Precisely because parading remains deinstitutionalized, Stillman and Villmoare claim it can prefigure another way of being political; parades bridge past and future by carrying forward the living democratic traditions that government institutions ignore, occlude, and silence.

These last two pieces lead directly into our concluding chapter on “Activist Arts, Community Development, and Democracy.” In the introduction, we challenged the distinction between high art and low art, and we appropriately conclude by troubling another related distinction between elites-driven and community arts projects. Community arts, we argue, is a more democratic mode of arts activism that suggests how elites-driven arts projects might be moved in the direction of greater democracy. That is, these categories mark poles of a continuum on which some of the contributions to this volume might be arrayed. They also engage explicitly with arts-based approaches to public policy, a topic that earlier chapters often address only indirectly. Two concluding case studies serve to highlight the elites-driven and community arts distinction. On the elites-driven end of the continuum, the Artists’ Village community development project in Santa Ana, California, tells a story of arts-based development narrowly focused on economic growth. A second community-arts-based project, the Music and Performing Arts community development program created by Trinity Cathedral in the Quadrangle neighborhood of downtown Cleveland, illustrates a broader notion of democratic community. The latter example reintegrates the arts and popular culture into the daily lives of community members and challenges liberal notions of the arts as non- or apolitical, the artist as an individual genius, and popular culture as commercialized mass entertainment. Instead, as many of our contributors’ pieces so aptly convey, the arts and popular culture play a crucial role in celebrating and criticizing, creating and sustaining, the many and varied communal ties that bind citizens together in the ongoing processes of “doing democracy.”

## Notes

1. Marco Adria, *Technology and Nationalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), chap. 6.
2. For an extensive historical discussion of this distinction, see Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1990).
3. For an excellent history of attempts to define art, including the distinction between institutional and historical definitions, see Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatic Aesthetics, Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), chap. 2. On the tendency of such definitions to exclude innovative and non-European art forms, see Paul Crowther, *Defining Art, Creating the Canon, Artistic Value in an Era of Doubt* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2007), part 1.
4. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: New American Library, 1964), viii.
5. For a popular version of this argument, see Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).
6. For a concise summary of functional and other definitions of art, see Thomas Adajian, "The Definition of Art," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2012 edition, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/art-definition/>.
7. See Aaron Meskin, "From Defining Art to Defining the Individual Arts: The Role of Theory in the Philosophies of Arts," in *New Waves in Aesthetics*, eds. Kathleen Stock and Katherine Thomson-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 125–49.
8. Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 13.
9. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925–1953*, volume 10, 1934, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989 [1934]), 53.
10. Morton Schoolman, "Avoiding 'Embarrassment': Aesthetic Reason and Aporetic Critique in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *Polity* 37, no. 3 (2005): 335–64; Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic*, chap. 14.
11. Barbara Engh, "Loving It: Music and Criticism in Roland Barthes," in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 73–74.
12. On musical counterpoint and democratic discourse, see John Schleuter, "The Art of Debate: Disagreement, Consensus, and Democratic Association," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 92, nos. 3–4 (Fall/Winter 1990): 279–302. Also see Michel Foucault's well-known discussion of Velasquez's use of perspective in his painting, *Las Meninas*, in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 3–16.
13. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7.
14. See Anthony Kwame Harrison, *Hip Hop Underground: The Integrity and Ethics of Racial Identification* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009).

15. Mark Chou, *Greek Tragedy and Contemporary Democracy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012).

16. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* in *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1960), chap. 5.

17. John Locke writes, "Civil interests I call life, liberty, health, and indolency of body, and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like." *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (London: J. Brook Printers, 1796), 10.

18. Marc Redfield, *The Politics of Aesthetics, Nationalism, Gender, Romanticism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

19. Marcel Henaff and Tracy B. Strong, "The Conditions of Public Space: Vision, Speech, and Theatricality," in *Public Space and Democracy*, eds. Marcel Henaff and Tracy B. Strong (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 1–40.

20. Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993) and Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

21. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, ed. Nicholas Walker, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007). Also see George Kateb, "Aestheticism and Morality: Their Cooperation and Hostility," *Political Theory* 28, no. 1 (February 2000): 5–37; and Arne Johan Vetlesen, *Perception, Empathy and Judgment: An Inquiry into the Preconditions of Moral Performance* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

22. Daniel Fischlin, "Take One/Rebel Musics: Human Rights, Resistant Sounds, and the Politics of Music Making," in *Rebel Musics: Human Rights, Resistant Sounds, and the Politics of Music Making*, eds. Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2003), 10–43.

23. For a discussion of body/brain/culture networks and politics, see William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Recent works by neuroscientists examining these linkages include Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York: Dutton, 2007) and Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008).

24. Rebee Garofalo's succinct summary of the functions of music for social movements also applies more broadly here. Rebee Garofalo, "Introduction" to *Rockin' the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 2.

25. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971). For a discussion of how Gramsci's views compare with more orthodox Marxist analyses of base and superstructure relations, see Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), chap. 4.