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Introduction

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Diverse processes of democratic participation – and exclusion – are braided with or propelled onwards by ritual acts and complexes. This volume is the result of collaborations and conversations between international researchers who have focused on the employment and deployment of those cultural resources identifiable as ‘ritual’ as particular communities reassemble democracy. The juxtaposition of the key terms ‘ritual’ and ‘democracy’ enriches understanding of processes, performances and even polemics to which they might be attached.

The volume critically addresses democracy as concept, practice, model or vision in a time of climate crisis, nationalism, religious re-traditionalizing, fake news and aspirational fascism. It discusses ways in which ritual and ritualized practices give rise to modes of feeling, processes of representation and patterns of interaction in which democratic explorations, collective resistance and/or involvement with the larger-than-human world are engaged, energized or problematized. The big question integrating the volume concerns the ways in which the performative qualities of ritual resources achieve their potential as forms of political and personal (not necessarily individual) empowerment in our changing and challenging world. Chapters engage with these issues in relation to a diversity of case studies – for example, memorial gatherings, festivals, pilgrimages, worship services, dances, shamanic and interreligious ceremonies. They are the result of a four-year collaboration between international researchers who regularly gathered to discuss and debate emerging perspectives, analyses and conclusions. Before we introduce the chapters which form the three parts of this book, we outline the nature and processes of our shared project.

The REDO project

This book arises from a four-year (2013–2017) project funded by the Norwegian Research Council. Entitled *Reassembling Democracy: Ritual as Cultural Resource* (abbreviated as REDO), the project enabled a team of eighteen international scholars to pursue original research and to meet regularly for sustained face-to-face discussion of emerging themes and issues. In addition, other experts in the study of both ritual and democracy were invited to workshops which enhanced and (re-)shaped the team's thinking, approaches and emerging conclusions. Participants included anthropologists, philosophers, political scientists and scholars of religion and ritual.

The REDO project, prompted by the 2011 far-right terrorist killings in Norway, was based on the recognition that people and communities are currently faced with complex crises and changes in culture, environment, religion, language, media, economy and technology. It set out to test the thesis that in dealing with these transformations, people and communities mobilize cultural resources that may be drawn from varied and competing knowledge and experience bases. Interactions between persons, communities and environments, while potentially enriching democratic processes, may also bring about challenges to existing political and social structures. In cases of innovation and contestation, ritual practices habituated by previous cultural repertoires seem to be utilized – deliberately or casually, by explicit design or by responsive borrowing. In turn, these practices are disseminated and adapted in other contexts, shaping participants and communities as they too are shaped by varying circumstances, conditions and contexts. Cultural resources become visible in ritual acts, which in turn become new cultural resources, assembling and reassembling people and communities at once as actors and as acted-upon. The researchers involved in this project sought to understand this process and to better grasp the ways ritual gestures and modes of organization and expression can mediate how social assemblages develop and evolve. Drawing on descriptive material pertaining to a variety of social situations, they explored different models and theories in order to explain ritual resourcefulness and creativity.

Specifically, the research team sought to test the idea that ritual is not merely a mobilizer – constructed by particular groups and itself a precondition for the construction of social assemblages – but may usefully label processes and relations that themselves contribute to change. They identified communities and events which seemed likely to evidence creative responses to crises triggered by the dynamics of contemporary global transformation and in which culturally

and religiously informed ritualized actions play interesting roles. They did not neglect ritualized practices that resist change or contest processes in which democratic participation and processes might widen and/or deepen. Indeed, much of the project's research engaged precisely with entanglements of expansion and resistance. Case studies included responses to the July 22 terrorist atrocities in Norway, drama in the Occupy movements in London and Hong Kong, communal tree planting in Zimbabwe, an interreligious choir in Turkey, radical environmentalists' protest rituals in the United States, collective New Age dancing of self-discovery, annual water festivals in Ghana, popular participation in a Catholic-founded festival in Poland and performance at cultural festivals like the Sámi organized Riddu Riðđu in Arctic Norway.

During the course of the REDO project the researchers engaged with participants in these various activities, seeking to understand how – under what conditions and facing what barriers – they gave rise to new conditions for engagement and action, acquired and demonstrated novel competencies, and renegotiated social identities, thereby transforming diverse democratic processes. Project members studied selected rituals as performances that arise out of and inspire social and environmental activism and grassroots political change, helping to shape the future, create community and reassemble more democratic modes of participation in changing global contexts. They were particularly interested in new forms of participatory democracy, where respect for individual differences and the need for community are negotiated in new ways.

As a result, this book presents analyses of selected events and processes in which people address – successfully or unsuccessfully – their concerns about political breakdown, economic and social crises, environmental loss, change within and confrontations between cultural communities. It examines, for example, public memorials, acts of political protest and resistance, the performance of Indigenous identities, 'spiritual' experimentation and interreligious encounter. Chapter outlines (below) will provide further pointers to specific contexts, debates and issues.

Key terms

'Ritual', 'democracy', 'assembling' and 'resource' are the key terms of the REDO project. The central insight and provocative proposal of this book is that these terms are greatly enriched by their critical juxtaposition. Indeed, treating ritual without treating democracy or processes of assemblage and resourcing

impoverishes understanding. Similarly, treating democracy in the absence of reflection on rituals and the resources they provide for processes and modes of assembling significantly curtails debate. Bringing these key terms together in diverse ways, as the chapters that follow demonstrate, opens up new avenues of inquiry and new perspectives on social relations.

Ritual is too easily associated with religion and thus demarcated from putatively secular, quotidian or worldly matters. But this has much to do with processes by which religion came to be defined in Europe as something separate from political and other public social pursuits. The recent and ongoing scholarly turn towards ‘lived religion’ and/or ‘everyday religion’ – regardless of the success or otherwise of assertions of a ‘post-secularity’ – contests this ghettoization of religion. Instead of being defined by privatized notions of transcendence (as it may be when thought of as ‘belief in god(s)’) and therefore, it is implied or asserted, irrelevant to politics, religion can inform, structure and mobilize all aspects of people’s lives. At the same time, similar processes in the religious and secular history of Europe have insisted that religion is definitively hierarchical and its rituals supportive of undemocratic power structures and practices. While no one is likely to explicitly deny that political processes are highly ritualized – as exemplified in the opening ceremonies of legislatures, the costuming of public officials and the protocols marking meetings between heads of state – these are less often associated with ritual than otherwise similar religious events.

This book is not specifically focused on the narrowly political rituals of democracy. What is offered here is an examination of the roles of ritual as a resource when people – individually or gathered – seek to enhance participation in public processes. ‘Assembling’ and related terms (clearly and explicitly inspired by Bruno Latour’s usage) direct attention towards processes and relations – especially, for this project, those between ritual and democracy – rather than to the kind of already fixed forms that ‘society’ implies. It is equally important that all our key terms are understood as dynamic, polyvalent, relational and contestable. Thus, for example, the rituals which people deploy as resources might be deemed more ‘cultural’ than ‘religious’ – even when we refuse to set ‘religion’ aside as a purely private concern. People might assert their presence and participation by wearing particular costumes or by carrying particularly freighted objects (e.g. flowers or flags). By sharing one another’s musical traditions, mourning displays and therapeutic practices and other ritually informed acts, they might reject separations between groups – including those based on identity politics (‘identities’ often stressing in-group likenesses against their alterities).

Contributors to the volume are well aware that rituals may be deployed to limit, constrain or even oppose increased access to and participation in democracy. Indeed, much of the discussion that follows arises precisely from contests with those who oppose such opening up. A defining example of this is the 22 July 2011 assault on the Norwegian Labour Party youths associated (most strongly by their assailant) with multiculturalism – a form of expansive reassembling of the Norwegian polity. There is, then, no assumption that ritual *must* or *usually does* lead to increased harmony or other unalloyed ‘goods’. Just as religions, in lived reality, evidence tensions between socially cohesive and socially divisive trends, and may function to disrupt or repair communal well-being, so rituals can be drawn on to support a wide range of ambitions. While rituals may effect social change – or energize efforts to enhance democracy – they may also reinforce existing norms, hierarchies and orders. Such frictions contribute to the debates that have enlivened our REDO project and shaped the discussions that have resulted in the chapters that follow.

Introducing Part One: Ritual and democracy

Part One of the book establishes provocative foundations for rethinking and reflecting on the key terms with which this book engages. It is made up of two chapters, by Ronald Grimes on ‘ritual’ and by Agnes Czajka on ‘democracy’. Emphasizing the essential role of indeterminacy, they depart from prevailing approaches to frame these key concepts in exceptionally dynamic and somewhat counterintuitive ways that point to largely uncharted connexions between them.

Ronald Grimes goes against conventional wisdom by stressing the importance of improvisation not only in ceremonial practices that explicitly require inventive participation but even in the most well-established liturgical traditions. Drawing on academic works, detailed testimonies provided by ritual performers and ritual studies scholars, his own extensive video-based research on ritual creativity and the workings of improvisational skills in the performing arts, he provides overwhelming evidence to the effect that improvisation is not only an inevitable feature of ceremonial undertakings but also in many respects the mainspring of ritual effectiveness. On the one hand, improvisation, as ‘making do with what you have’, articulates creative initiative and recognizable structure in ways that allow participants to take into account the changing circumstances of their performance, thereby upholding the latter’s ongoing relevance and persistence through time. At the same time, as ‘composing

while performing', it encourages interactive patterns in which mutual support, reciprocal attunement, critical self-awareness and sensitivity to context are given pride of place. Undermining in this way the established bipolar split between scripted and spontaneous performance, Grimes's argument is not only a welcomed contribution to ritual theory but also opens new perspectives on the role of ritual as a resource for democracy. Thus, towards the end of his chapter, Grimes raises the question 'What would a "democratic ritual" look like?', which he immediately rephrases as 'What ritual dynamic might facilitate assemblages that foster justice and the thriving of a multitude of species on the planet?' For 'the beginning of a provisional answer', he suggests looking to ceremonial performances having a sustained improvisational phase that facilitates self-critical reflexivity and stimulates attuned co-acting among human (and other-than-human) participants.

Agnes Czajka, in an equally unusual move, turns to Derrida's conception of democracy as a self-undermining and therefore inherently equivocal political process in order to explore what 'being democratic' in times of crisis may mean. Because the very principle of democracy is to recognize and accept even those opposed to its fundamental values, it is 'already always' in crisis. In this respect, Derrida argues, democracy is analogous to European identity whose definition, grounded in the ongoing incorporation of differences, is perpetually deferred, or to hospitality, plagued by unresolvable frictions between an ideal of absolute openness and the imbalance of power between host and guest that conditional welcome implies. A democratic community must define its membership and territory, but at the same time deal with members acting as inimical others. As such, it is perpetually at risk of setting off a self-destructive, 'autoimmune' response, as when the 1992 Algerian elections were suspended to avoid ushering in a government intent on destroying democracy. At the same time, however, democracy's inherent instability can also provide opportunities for negotiated choices that further democratic principles. Czajka argues that Derrida's approach, in allowing us to avoid unrealistic quests for a definite 'solution' to the conundrum of democratic practice, encourages us to take the measure of what being democratic might actually entail. In this spirit, as a conceptual guideline, notably with regard to present-day Europe, she proposes the notion of 'hospitable democracy' based on an openness to the other-than-democratic only to the point of not destroying itself. In keeping with its internal inconsistency (its 'aporetic' nature in Derrida's terms), hospitable democracy does not entail applying a general rule of 'law', but rather continually suspends possible resolutions to the problematic interplay between conditional and unconditional hospitality by

favouring singular, negotiated, provisional ‘acts of justice.’ In short, hospitable democracy seeks to overcome its own crisis-producing limitations one concrete content-dependent case at a time. Czajka ends her chapter by suggesting that ritual may prove to be a fruitful resource for advancing this type of hospitable democracy. Indeed, ritual performances, by providing not definitive answers but new ways of asking the same questions of particular situations, seem especially well suited for upholding a political process whose self-contradictory general principles are destined to be left dangling.

Introducing Part Two: Reassembling communities

Part Two provides a series of case studies in which ritual and/or ritualized practices give rise to exceptional communities enlivened by democratic values and ideas, and typically composed of both human and other-than-human beings. Participants often assert that their highly memorable experiences of these democratically oriented assemblages – shamanic ceremonies, Indigenous festivals, spiritual dance meetups, walking pilgrimages, interreligious choirs – productively inform their everyday lives.

Local understandings of ‘democracy’ can have unexpected entailments. As Gregory Delaplace shows, in present-day Mongolia, democracy and the values of collective and personal freedom it conveys are closely linked to the possibility of reclaiming a connection with an illustrious past the communist regime is supposed to have suppressed. Access to this redemptive, collective heritage, animated by ancestral and other spirits, and epitomized by the figure of Chinggis Khan (Genghis Khan) and the harmonious Mongolian homeland he is said to have created, is achieved largely through shamanic practices that are flourishing anew. Delaplace, drawing on his field research from 2008 to 2019, documents this development by presenting two quite different, complementary ways in which shamanic rituals make it possible for individuals and collectivities to acquire an immediate experience of what they take to be their own history. In what Delaplace, in the light of cross-cultural comparisons, calls ‘vertical’ or ‘liturgical’ shamanism, officially acknowledged celebrants engage in what are presumed to be ‘traditional’ performances for the good of assembled polities. In what he calls ‘horizontal’ or ‘inspired’ shamanism, exceptional individuals incarnate powerful entities from bygone eras (ancestors, tutelary spirits, etc.) in order to protect their individual clients from harmful spiritual influences. In both cases, the past is brought to life through ritual performance. However, in

the first case, this takes place through ceremonial iterations that consecrate the immemorial identities of local communities in whose name these ceremonies are undertaken, whereas in the second, it is accomplished through acts of extraordinary embodiment aiming to safeguard particular persons from unwanted interactions with ill-intentioned other-than-human beings. Although these two modes of shamanism, governed by radically divergent logics, are mutually exclusive, individual practitioners readily switch back and forth from one to the other in order to explore, in an eminently pragmatic fashion, the various avenues whereby ritually mediated performances of democracy can contribute to the refashioning of personal and public identities.

Graham Harvey's research at two cultural festivals which showcase Indigenous arts and performances results in a chapter which further examines notions of personhood and relations. Within the context of the annual Sámi organized Riddu Ridđu festival (in western Sápmi/Arctic Norway) and the London-based biennial ORIGINS Festival of First Nations, Indigenous actors, musicians, artists, film-makers, chefs, storytellers and other performers draw on the resources of customary ceremonies and protocols to present work to audiences. Inspired by critical studies of Indigenous literatures, Harvey considers movements between and among international Indigenous performers and their ideas, inspirations, expectations and aspirations. Specific moments in performances and conversations during the festivals are brought into dialogue with notions of personhood that could be summed up as 'dividualism' and 'new animism'. In the former, persons are not points or positions in a structure but inherently and necessarily relations. Beings become persons precisely by engaging and interacting with others. Rather than considering identities, dividual or relational personhood points to the definitive value of performance and interaction. The 'new animism' emphasizes that humans are in no way separate from other persons. They do not exist in a distinct environment but are made up of relations involving both human and other-than-human persons, all with needs and fears, some of which conflict with those of others. Indigenous performances draw on customary rites and knowledges which convey a pervasive (and definitively Indigenous) assumption of a larger-than-human community. Reassembling thoughts and practices related to 'democracy', in this perspective, necessitates consideration of relations with mountains, rivers, salmon, ancestors, masks and many others. Harvey argues that entertainment and education fuse within these festivals as Indigenous performers seek to inspire 'world-making' that is more inclusive and thus more democratic in a more-than-human world.

Michael Houseman explores the performative grounds of the special sociability that emerges in the course of weekly sessions of collective dancing explicitly aimed to promote ‘authenticity’, ‘creativity’ and ‘connection with others’: 5 Rhythms, Movement Medicine, Open Floor, Biodanza, Chakradance and the like. Taking Biodanza as his main example, he shows how these practices provide participants with memorable experiences of deliberate self-actualization in which they ‘discover’ their ability to become, however briefly, the spontaneous, open, sensitive persons they feel they are meant to be. They do so by drawing on facilitators’ allusive directives, the bodily sensations and emotional expressions occasioned by moving to music, intense dance interactions with others and affecting words spoken during sharing/talking circles. These practices, however, are not oriented solely towards the ongoing production of participants’ personal ‘selves’. Thus, the latter are also induced to experience themselves members of a collectivity made up of such potentially self-determining individuals, in which continually negotiated, intimate interpersonal entanglements give way to looser, less problematic assemblages founded on relations of distanced intimacy. Indeed, the aim of these practices is not to encourage dancers to cultivate close relationships among themselves but to allow them to develop and demonstrate, through each other’s intermediary, their aptitude for entering into close relationships with others at a further remove. The particular flavour of we-ness these dances put into effect – collective individualism or the state of being autonomous together – enacts a happy reconciliation between personal self-fulfillment (‘an encounter with oneself ...’) and collective interdependency (‘... through others’). As such, it resonates both with certain ‘democratic’ values and with influential accounts of contemporary Western personhood and society. However, as a ritual performance, this exceptional sociality is to be understood not as a realistic model for everyday behaviour but as a compelling yet largely unfathomable conventional yardstick whereby participants can re-evaluate themselves, their everyday relationships and their place in the world.

Catholic Portuguese pilgrims express and confirm democratic forms when they walk together on sacred journeys. As Anna Fedele shows in her chapter, they do this through their bodies, moving together on the way to the shrine, embodying democratic social forms that suggest changes at the national level. Fedele’s many years of fieldwork among Catholic Portuguese pilgrims walking to the Marian shrine of Fátima in Portugal involved collecting their life stories as well as walking and talking with them. During collective walking pilgrimages from their hometowns to the shrine of Fátima, participants experience patterns of support and solidarity that stand in stark contrast to the frictions and

inequities characteristic of their everyday lives in a context of ongoing social and economic crises in Portugal. Moreover, these pilgrimages are enjoying increasing participation, while church attendance in Portugal is declining, making the pilgrimages important sites for understanding contemporary religiosity in southern Europe. Analysing the logistics Fátima pilgrimages entail (support cars, communal lodging, various organizations, media coverage, etc.), and drawing on the symbolism they bring into play, Fedele suggests that these sacred journeys be understood as ‘strategies to reaffirm [the] grassroots forms of solidarity and democracy’ so lacking in pilgrims’ everyday lives. By foregrounding one woman’s story, Fedele explores the various meanings of the *cajado*, a walking stick that many pilgrims use and that itself symbolizes the pilgrimage to Fátima. The *cajado* brings together past and present, family and national histories. Because it embodies a family lineage, carrying the *cajado* is one of the ways in which pilgrims never walk alone. Whether or not they travel in groups, they are intricately connected to relational networks. It has long been argued that pilgrims experience exceptional forms of solidarity during collective pilgrimages. The additional, innovative argument advanced here is that they relate these experiences to the possibility of a reconfigured national identity and a renewed mundane sociality, that is, to a ‘different, thriving and “happy” Portugal’.

Drawing on ethnographic research about the Choir of Civilizations in Antakya (Antioch), Turkey, Jens Kreinath’s chapter discusses the intricate relationship between ritual and democracy in the context of interreligious relations. The Choir was designed to represent the diversity of religious groups in the region (Hatay) – including the majority of Turkish Sunnis and Arab Alawites as well as smaller populations of Jews, Orthodox Christians, Armenian Christians and Catholics – in the form of a musical kaleidoscope of religious coexistence. The Choir began in the old town of Antakya with its already rich sonic environment or soundscape emerging from a complexity of religious buildings (especially the mosques and churches). The first members were familiar with each other and with the song and acoustic traditions of each other’s religious and/or local and national folk cultures. As the stated ambition of the Choir was to represent the peaceful coexistence of people with different religious affiliations and commitments – some of which are entangled with conflict in some places – it would appear to be the perfect location to find that rituals provide excellent resources for the increase of democracy. In practice, the Choir’s performances – for audiences of tourists, businesses, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and by any other group who invite them – set songs from the

different traditions alongside each other. Rituals and/or liturgical elements are clearly drawn on as resources for these performances, but they are employed with the same intention and affect as the songs and music drawn from popular folk traditions. That is, the Choir presents existing diversity but does not pursue or achieve an ambition to enhance democracy or to change society. Indeed, perhaps it can be manipulated to portray an ideal of peaceful coexistence that masks interreligious tensions. In Kreinath's chapter, then, we have a powerful test of the thesis that rituals could provide democratizing resources and a clear counter to any naïve anticipation that they must always do so.

Introducing Part Three: Commemoration and resistance

The four chapters in Part Three are also about the reassembling of communities and the exploration of ritualizing as a contribution to democratization. They focus, however, on acts of commemoration and resistance. They are concerned with disruptive events and processes that put collective values to the test and highlight how different communities contest various ways in which democracy is diminished and assaulted.

When Anders Behring Breivik attacked Norwegian democracy by terrorizing Oslo and a social democratic youth camp at Utøya, the police closed off the streets and ordered people home. People obeyed and bewilderment and fear were a first response. The second response was protest. It started quietly as a condolence ritual in the square around Oslo Cathedral and quickly turned into a massive mobilization. For a limited time, it marked togetherness, solidarity and a different kind of 'love of country' than Breivik's nationalist feelings and extremist gestures. In subsequent years, memorials for the victims of Breivik's violence that have tried to capture this powerful non-violent gesture have been designed. In her chapter, Jone Salomonsen analyses Breivik's mission and the protest it aroused from 'the weak'. Ritual in the streets of Oslo and in two memorial events is analysed with a view to what they convey about ordinary people's ritual competence and sense of democracy. The political and democratic theories of Hannah Arendt and Chantal Mouffe are used to interpret the findings, and ritual is revealed to be both gate and fence between community and democracy. The chapter asks if the elusive forms of rituality that evolved post-2011 in Norway are integral to building a stronger democracy, or if ritual is, rather, a pre-political tool to secure the *precondition* of liberal democracy: that is an egalitarian community or polity which accepts others' humanity and rights.

The following chapter, by Ida Høeg, is also concerned with public reactions to Breivik's killing spree on 22 July 2011. It focuses on the central role played by flowers in the funeral/memorial services for three Muslim adolescents assassinated at the Labour Party youth camp on the island of Utøya. During these events that were significantly more inclusive, creative, participatory and anti-authoritarian than funeral celebrations generally, flowers were overwhelmingly present: ordered in advance or brought by those attending, they were held in mourners' hands, exhibited on the altar or stage, deposited on or around the victims' photograph, coffin and/or grave. Drawing on Bruno Latour's actor-network approach, Høeg argues that flowers intervened in these celebrations less as expressive representations (of personal sadness, national solidarity, religious commitment, etc.) than as ritual participants in their own right. By providing a readily accessible and evocative resource for mourners' joint participation in the performance of partially improvised liturgies (processions, memorial practices, etc.), flowers acted as mediators whose attendance encouraged and shaped interactions between mourners of different ages, backgrounds and religious traditions. By 'calling for action' in this way, flowers took on other-than-human agency in the creation and structuring of the consensual solidarity these celebrations were presumed to enact. Agency, however, whether human or not, cuts both ways. The unnegotiable presence of flowers prompted a majority of participants to perform certain actions together, giving rise to exceptional, inter-confessional assemblies. However, it also incited some mourners, ill at ease with what they perceived as an inflated manifestation of Norway's mainstream Christian celebratory tradition, to refuse to do so. Here again, we see that ritual performances of democratic pluralism are not exempt from the spontaneous drawing of culturally grounded boundaries.

Unexpected large-scale tragedies and catastrophes, such as the 22 July terrorist attacks in Norway, pose challenges to the typical ways death is ritualized (or more accurately, de-ritualized) in contemporary Western Europe. In her chapter, Marika Moisseff explores how collective commemorations of the tragic deaths described in Salomonsen's and Høeg's chapters are similar to funeral rites in some non-Western cultures: emotions are expressed, and loss is shared in ways that articulate multiple points of view, in contrast to the internalization and privatization of grief more characteristic of Western cultures. By comparing contemporary Western deathways with those of Australian Aborigines and the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea, Moisseff demonstrates that the externalization of grief in these latter cases is the opposite process of the more typical internalization of grief and the absence of the corpse in the West. Moisseff proposes a

comparative framework for a cross-cultural perspective on mourning, with which we might think through what is happening in the case of contemporary Western collective tragedies. The framework she outlines is composed of three parts: the material presence of a corpse, the emotional reactions of those directly affected by the death(s) and collective representations of death and loss. In the contemporary West, these three aspects are typically dealt with separately and emotional expressions of grief are constrained. By contrast, in many of the cultures studied by anthropologists such as Moisseff herself, the three parts are treated all together in collective funerary rituals where the corpse is present and individual emotions are expressed and shared in communal settings. Marches and memorial services in response to collective public tragedies, such as terrorist attacks, involve the shared expression of emotions and ritualized position-taking for values that participants believe have come under siege, such as democracy, inclusivity and free speech. The disruptions, challenges to democratic structures and emotional trauma caused by a mass tragedy must be publicly acknowledged through shared representations of loss, even when there are no institutionalized forms – as there are for the Aboriginals and the Kaluli – for responding to them.

Ken Derry's chapter explores very different forms of resistance and agency in the context of three films by Indigenous film-makers. For Derry, the films *Maliglutit* (2016, directed by Inuk film-maker Zacharias Kunuk), *Mahana* (2016, directed by Māori film-maker Lee Tamahori) and *Goldstone* (2016, directed by Kamilaroi film-maker Ivan Sen) all suggest ways in which Indigenous people appropriate the tools of colonialism and put them to their own uses, indigenizing them, especially by reinventing rituals that blend and borrow from both traditional Indigenous and colonial practices. Through these varied processes of indigenization, reinvented rituals can function as medicine for the ills brought about by the long-lasting trauma of colonialism. Most importantly, these braided practices and reinventions enable healing from historical and ongoing colonial violence, including conflicts and violence within Indigenous communities, especially sexual violence. Using traditional tools as well as the tools of their oppressors, these three film-makers from three different Indigenous cultures (Canadian Arctic Inuit, New Zealand Māori and Australian Aboriginal), engage with and portray ritual practices from their cultures within the contexts of specific places as well as shared histories of colonialism, working with rather than against the environment. Through particular kinds of filmic narratives, a reconfiguring of traditional storytelling, these Indigenous film-makers have taken control of the process of representing

their cultures. Interestingly, they do so in ways that incorporate and re-frame Hollywood genres such as westerns and film noir with Indigenous strategies as tools of resistance and empowerment. Moreover, Derry reminds us that 'democracy' is not everyone's ideal: Indigenous communities have their own forms and structures, but they do want to be given equal access to participate in the governing bodies colonial processes have burdened them with and to heal the damage done to their communities on individual as well as social and political levels.

Conclusion

The chapters that follow do far more than merely present the conclusions of a completed project. Our ambition as collaborative and interdisciplinary researchers and authors is to provoke and enrich further debate about the key themes of ritual and democracy. This book is intended to excite further attention to the ways in which democracy can be (re-)assembled (sometimes in conflicting ways) through processes that might be recognized and theorized as ritual. To do so requires that the key terms of the debate are themselves allowed to reassemble more dynamically, creatively and argumentatively than in some previous discussions. In the dangerous times in which we live and work, questions about what ritual actions reveal and mobilize in the ever-shifting assemblages of social, ecological, cultural, political, religious, national, ethnic and other relations have become crucial.

Finally, as a community of scholars who have enjoyed participating together in a collaboration replete with ritual and democratic experimentation, we are unashamed to assert our hope that rituals might not only reveal and mobilize contemporary cultural values and resources but also contribute to enhance democracy and change the world for the better.