

Preface

For as long as I can remember I have suffered from a deep feeling of anxiety which I have tried to express in my art. Without anxiety and illness I should have been like a ship without a rudder.

—Edvard Munch

What is the difference between creative and cultural life? Both art and culture provide meaning to our lives, of course. Both may be located in the maelstrom of a deeply interactive world—its technologies involving people in intense communications and rapidly revolving representations. Human anxiety regarding these interactions informs both art and culture; an artist's angst about the self or a culture's anxieties about its identity are prenatal twins. But, as this book shows, to call something cultural involves social and political deliberations. Creativity begets art, but politics connect art to culture. The creative voice must therefore be distinguished from the cultural voice and identity. We find ourselves in the midst of several global debates that tug at our notions of cultural identity, and the symbolic nature of creative expressions is deeply contested in these debates.

The following pages examine global cultural politics as it arbitrates the implications of symbolic creative expressions. The latter are mostly limited to fine and performing arts, entertainment industries, and cultural tourism. However, these expressions parallel and make salient global anxieties regarding cultural identity in a host of other areas. Global deliberations on the flows of creative expressions thus embody more than one kind of fear amid all kinds of other flows—movements of people, products, and ideas—and creative products are especially important in this regard.

They are the symbols that represent these anxieties and thus salient in our global politics.

This book links creative expressions to the vociferous debates on the politics of cultural identity that are currently raging the world over. These moves parallel the salience of issues of cultural identity in politics, which can range from earnest efforts to address cultural discomforts to outright hypocrisy in presenting or, as the book shows, in deliberately not presenting some entertainment-economy phenomena as “cultural.” The book deals with the clashes among national identities favored by states, other types of group-identity politics in society, and the need for creative industries such as film, television, performing arts, and cultural tourism to locate themselves in global markets.

The book closes as it begins. It warns us against elevating cultural policies to some innocent and unquestionable purpose of enriching our lives with arts and entertainment. At the level of politics, we should be concerned with cultural policies that promote some singular and exclusionary identity through the arts. An exemplar is the national museum that celebrates a national culture at the risk of excluding or marginalizing minority cultures. In the United States, we ought to be careful in thinking that a department of culture will only enhance the case of arts funding. A look at cultural ministries worldwide would show the kinds of political manipulations in these agencies that valorize particular kinds of cultural identities. In France, the only identity for which statistics can be kept is national identity. Its Muslim and other minorities remain uncounted and, by any account, marginalized. How can France’s ministry of culture speak of cultural diversity, as it does vociferously in various international deliberations or negotiations, when it won’t even count its minorities?

The book had a curious start. I was trying to *pitch* a manuscript on international negotiations to the editor at Columbia University Press and for illustration spoke at length about its chapter on creative industries. It was about Hollywood and described some colorful politics and personalities. We had a rather lengthy discussion on the ways in which artists and their arts are manipulated in global negotiations regarding cultural identity. We went tangentially into a conversation about other articles I had written on global cultural politics and policies. At that point I told the editor that the book on the manipulation of creative expressions in global deliberations had not been written but I did have on hand a book on international negotiations in general. Write it then, said this editor at Columbia, write the

book on the global politics of creative expressions. As you can see, I have done so. Thanks first and foremost to my editor, Anne Routon, for encouraging and inspiring me to write this book. She has helped every step of the way with incisive and straightforward feedback.

Inspiration, despite its dramatic aura, has quotidian elements. At a practical everyday level, for the purposes of this book, it involved the slow delineation of ideas, mulling over thoughts, erasing sentences, and executing minor decisions. I was trying to transcend the facile notions that flows of creative expressions, especially through commerce, destroy cultures and cultural identity. This would pit me against the ready acceptance of the idea in many intellectual circles that “true” creativity and culture must be located away from commerce. Deliberative cultural politics in these accounts involves only citizen activists and artists. Instead, this book finds that both commercial networks and citizen deliberations are necessary for creative expressions to flourish and for cultural politics to be democratic. Helping me argue this stance with conviction and carefulness are fellow intellectuals, in academia and otherwise, who listened and read or otherwise provided useful feedback. I would especially like to thank Françoise Benhamou, Tyler Cowan, Mima Dedaic, Patricia Dewey, Joni Cherbo, Jo Dickison, Harvey Feigenbaum, Jeff Hart, Vijayendra Rao, Jeff Peck, and Margaret Jane Wyzsomirski. Feedback received from anonymous reviewers of the manuscript both at an early stage of the manuscript development and at the end was immensely helpful. They all helped me go beyond the quotidian to find my creative voice.

Article versions of the book chapters were presented at several iterations of the following conferences: International Studies Association, American Political Science Association, Association of Cultural Economics International, International Conference on Cultural Policy Research, and Social Theory Politics and the Arts. Many of these conferences were held in great creative cities—Istanbul, Vienna, and Chicago, to name a few—and I was happy to be there. I am grateful to the International Studies Association’s International Communication Section for awarding me with their best article prize for the paper that forms the basis of chapter 4 in this book. It was a needed boost at that time to know that I was headed in a meaningful direction with my research. The three cultural policy conferences named above involve small interdisciplinary communities of scholars who can speak across academic turfs and engage in thoughtful conversations about the arts and cultural policies. I would like to thank the audiences at

these conferences for their feedback but especially Peter Cowhey and Ken Rogerson. The Film in Trade Evenings sponsored by the Curb Center of Vanderbilt University that Carol Balassa convenes in Washington, D.C., have been enormously useful in getting a sense of policy trends in creative industries. I am grateful to my colleague Mima Dedaic, who called chapter 1 “a harmonized interdisciplinary accord.”

I have also been fortunate these last few years to serve on the UNESCO Expert Group on the Measurement of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the UNESCO Taskforce on Cultural Statistics. Participation in these forums introduced me to many of the best minds on culture policy from across the world. Our discussions further emboldened me to think that measuring culture is incredibly hard, if not impossible, and involves sidestepping or tripping over all kinds of politics. Therefore, the argument in this book veers more toward the creative rather than the cultural. I would like to thank the following people in UNESCO: Guiomar Alonso Cano, Lydia Deloumeaux, Simon Ellis, and Jose Pessoa. A trip to UNESCO, Paris, at the end of 2009 just as I headed toward the final set of revisions was enormously useful in clarifying concepts and adding missing details to the many negotiations discussed in the book. The U.S. ambassador to UNESCO, David Killion, went out of his way to render all kinds of help for which I am enormously grateful. I have also had occasion to meet with a number of officials in the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organizations and thank them for their help. Chapter 3 is adapted from my book *Negotiation and the Global Information Economy*. This was the chapter that prompted me to start thinking about cultural politics. The chapter reflects conversations with numerous European Union and U.S. government officials who participated in the creative-industry negotiations in the WTO and UNESCO. A few other sections in this book are adapted from other publications. Chapter 5 borrows from “Culture or Commerce? A Comparative Assessment of International Interactions and Developing Countries at UNESCO, WTO, and Beyond,” *International Studies Perspectives* 8 (2007): 36–53. The section on the sex industry in Thailand is adapted from “Sex Workers and Cultural Policy: Mapping the Issues and Actors in Thailand” (with Shilpa A. Hart), *Review of Policy Research* (March 2007). Many people who helped with the preparation of these articles are acknowledged in the original articles, but many of them also provided ideas for subsequent revisions. These include Don Abelson, Donna Ghelfi, Todd Nissen, Martin Roy, Pierre Sauvé, Lee Tuthill, and Jayashree Watal. I

also thank numerous cultural policy officials in Belize, China, Costa Rica, India, Senegal, South Africa, and Uruguay who provided all manner of assistance for this book. Many thanks to Michael Haskell for attending to the book's production with great care at Columbia University Press.

I would like to thank the participants in three graduate seminars at Georgetown that allowed us to engage in disparate literatures. These seminars were politics of cultural representation, international cultural policies, and cultural economics. Several graduate assistants also helped me collect materials and provided feedback on the chapters. These include Jehan Agha, Marcus Holmes, Becky Jakobs, Andrea Salvatore, Teresa Schlawley, Kim Singletary, and Sarah Thompson. Two competitive grants-in-aid for this book from the Georgetown graduate school enabled me to travel to UNESCO offices in Paris and funded a trip to West and South Africa that allowed me to witness firsthand the tremendous creativity of artists and the struggles among many officials to keep art alive. The scintillating mbalax sound at Youssou N'Dour's club Thioissane in Dakar was the highlight of this trip. A WTO assignment to Colombia and Uruguay showed the ingenuity of creative producers in these countries. A jaunt over to the small production company Metro Films in Montevideo will cure anyone of the notion that small countries lack production capacities or access to global networks.

I have thought about this book these past few years as I enjoyed several opera performances, found myself at fascinating arts festivals, watched the pictures at many an exhibition, immersed myself in cultural tourism, listened to music, and recited poetry. I have shared these magical moments with my life partner, Chuck Johnson, whose support for my intellectual work is beyond words.

Most of all, art is its own muse. Thank goodness!

standable. It has happened before. At the dawn of the industrial revolution, the fascination with the machine was coupled with fears about its serendipitous monstrosity. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* embodied such anxieties.¹ So did the Paleolithic cave dweller who set out to scratch her representations on the cave walls. "Man's first expression, like his first dream, was an aesthetic one. Speech was a poetic outcry rather than a demand for communication. Original man, shouting his consonants, did so in yells of awe and anger at his tragic state, at his own self-awareness and at his own helplessness before the void" (Newman 1947). What took place in caves next to real fires now glows from theatrical stages and LED screens. In the words of Postman: "Our media are our metaphors. Our metaphors create the content of our culture" (1985, 15).²

This book explains the origins of cultural policies that result from the politics around creative expressions, such as those produced through fine and performing arts, entertainment industries, and cultural tourism. These politics are increasingly global and reveal the ways in which an artist's expression or a creative industry's output becomes a purveyor of cultural identity or a way of life for a group. It is important to examine these politics carefully: the marriage of art and politics reveals powerful agendas regarding identity. All too often it is assumed that cultural policies attached to arts and entertainment speak to our highest aspirations as human beings. They may, in fact, speak to our basest instincts if the creative expressions upheld by these policies actually exclude and marginalize "other" people and lead to a politics of hatred.

The conversion from the creative output to policies about collective identities entails a deliberative politics that involves various stakeholders—some with entrenched interests, others with emerging agendas and burgeoning passions. This book examines these deliberations or discussions at the global level of cultural-policy elite and politicians, domestic and transnational civil society, international organizations, and the creative producers. States involved in shaping global rules are *primus inter pares*: their actions at the global level and refracted in national discussions are especially important. Cultural politics are almost always dramatic, festooned with colorful statements and personalities. These politics then result in particular cultural policies that states and other international actors enact to protect or enhance particular notions of cultural identity. While these cultural policies are made explicit through subsidies, quotas, tax incentives, and the like, at a deeper level the context for these measures lies in



Figure 0.1 Creativity and Culture

cultural politics of identity through which these measures are deliberated. The identity debate is old; only the global context is new. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Barnett Newman's cavemen lived through the old debates. Nevertheless, the debate is revisited here to draw out insights on the politics of cultural identities through a rapidly evolving globalization. Figure 0.1 illustrates the argument, and table 0.1 defines the major terms used throughout this book.

There is a plethora of literature on the grand politics of cultural identity; this book intentionally makes a less-than-grand contribution. The existing literature describes global identity politics as a clash of civilizations, as a battle between market forces and recessive ethnic identity (*Jihad vs. McWorld*), or as commodified and packaged through commercial means in a global consumer culture.³ I set aside these grand narratives to focus instead on creative expressions, examining the micropolitics of identity from the national to the international levels. The book's empirical chapters detail the politics surrounding creative expressions and the ways in which the creative becomes the cultural. Such a focus is missing in the grand narratives of identity mentioned above or in cultural-studies literatures obsessed with finding a commercial hue in every shade of identity—describing any kind of identity merely as another layer of commodification and evidence of the growing power of commerce invading every aspect of human life. Creative expressions, while speaking to micropolitics, have an important stature in an age concerned with identity and culture. A Hollywood film, a Bollywood song, or a Latin American telenovela is not just a creative product: in the realm of politics, it becomes an embodiment of a cultural identity.

Creative expressions, which the following chapters deal with in detail, parallel most textbook definitions of creative industries as comprising a *core* group of creative arts (performing and fine arts, museums) and then overlapped by successive layers of *affiliated* creative activities with a high

TABLE 0.1
Definitions

-
- *Creative expressions or products*: Fine and performing arts; entertainment such as films, TV, music, radio; design such as architecture and advertising; specific types of tourism. Also referred to as creative goods and services. The shorthand term “arts,” as in the title of the book, is also used throughout the text.
 - *Creative industries*: the economic organization of inputs and outputs for producing creative products. The ‘value chain’ encompasses creativity/imagination, production, distribution, exhibition, preservation/archiving. The term ‘audio-visual’ industry is used in the World Trade Organization.
 - *Cultural politics*: Political deliberations among a variety of political actors that endow collective meanings to creative expressions. This book specifies an ideal type for deliberations that involves political actors in problem solving through a high degree of trust, transparency, and inclusion.
 - *Cultural representations or products*: Creative expressions endowed with meanings borne from cultural politics.
 - *Cultural identity*: Any sense of group or collective identity, including local, national, and international cultural identities. Might include notions of race, gender, sexuality, class, nationality.
 - *Cultural policy*: In a *general* or *macro* sense it refers in this book to any institutional support for assigning cultural identity boundaries. Creative arts policies, not the subject of this book, provide institutional support without reference to cultural identity. In an *instrumental* or *micro* sense cultural policy refers to specific institutional support mechanisms such as grants, subsidies, quotas, tax and philanthropy incentives, and capacity building.
-

commercial element (entertainment industries such as film and television, games and toys, cultural tourism) and, finally, some elements of artistic design in several *ancillary* industries such as furniture, textiles, architecture, or advertising.⁴ This book focuses primarily upon entertainment industries and cultural tourism, as they unleash the greatest controversies across the globe, but it also attends in certain places to fine and performing arts. Most texts employ the term “cultural industries” instead of “creative industries,” which in these texts stand for aesthetic and design industries.⁵ However, cultural products and industries, by definition, must be endowed with meanings regarding collective identities. I consider the term “creative industries” to be more politically neutral.

Allow me to be even more clear about what this book does *not* attempt: this is not a book on the effects of market production on cultural identity.

There are several texts (detailed later) on the efficacies or, conversely, the pathologies, of market capitalism for cultural products.⁶ While this book is broadly sympathetic to market processes, my intent is not to venerate markets but to make salient the politics that mediate between the production of creative expressions (through markets or technological or other means) and the types of cultural identity that arise as a result.⁷ As detailed later, such politics may not be terribly deliberative if they simply allow cultural-policy elites to legitimize their prefabricated positions rather than allowing problem solving to take place among a variety of stakeholders, bolstered by transparency and trust (Singh 2008b, chapter 7). Chapters 1 and 2 will detail the relevant market-driven and technologically driven production systems for creative expressions and the way they privilege particular cultural politics.

Chapter 1 examines, first, the deliberative cultural politics that lead us from the creative to the cultural and, second, the significance of creative expressions amid global anxieties. Chapter 2 details the political economy and technological changes underlying these representational practices, while the four chapters following it provide the empirical substantiation for my claims.