Chapter 7

Taking Agonism Online: Creating a Mass Open Online Course to Disseminate the Findings of the UNREST Project

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Introduction

This chapter evaluates the design and delivery of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) based on the findings of the UNREST ('Unsettling Remembrance and Social Cohesion in Transnational Europe') research project. In this project's early stages, a key priority was to ensure that an understanding of the memory models that the researchers sought to investigate would be disseminated as widely as possible, not just among identified stakeholder groups (museum and heritage professionals and policymakers, for example), but also to the interested general public. In recent years, MOOCs have gained popularity in the academy, and widespread coverage in the press. The University of Bath, one of the UNREST partners, already had some experience in delivering MOOCs in a variety of subject areas via the FutureLearn platform, and this format appeared to offer an avenue for dissemination of the project findings in an easily digestible and interactive format. The on-line course 'How We Remember War and Violence: Theory and Practice' was therefore designed to support and inform the work and professional development of practitioners in the fields of heritage and commemoration, as well as policymakers, civil society groups and interested members of the public.

This chapter opens with a brief consideration of the development of MOOCs and the challenges of using online spaces to address different memory modes and difficult history more broadly. It goes on to examine the process of co-creating the MOOC for the UNREST project, evaluating and comparing the three course runs, and assessing the efficacy of the MOOC in challenging established modes of remembering. Finally, it analyses how learners engaged with the three memory models (antagonistic, cosmopolitan, and agonistic), and asks how this engagement with academic research in Memory Studies helped to shift participants' perceptions of the social role of remembering.

What is a MOOC?

The first online course labelled as a 'MOOC' appeared in 2008, developed by Siemens and Downes at the University of Manitoba to explore the theoretical framework of 'connectivism,' an educational concept which explores the link between Internet technologies, learning and sharing information (Downes, 2008). The appeal of the MOOC quickly became established, with easily recognisable common characteristics (Porter, 2015). The following five components are indicative of a MOOC: it is a free course with no entry requirements that is open to everyone; it takes place solely online using Internet technologies and interactive tools; a MOOC runs at scale with no limit to student numbers; it has the characteristics of a traditional course, including a start date, prescribed content, instruction, assessment, and feedback; finally, support and input comes from other learners, as well as educators.

Although the MOOC market was initially dominated by North American platforms, such as Coursera, Udacity and EdX, in 2012 the UK's Open University launched the FutureLearn platform as a 'European alternative' to the US dominated market (Porter, 2015). This FutureLearn platform, in common with other Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) or Learning Management Systems (LMS), offers the facility to organise and present pedagogical material online, as well as allowing various forms of interaction between users and instructors, and between users themselves, who can also share and create content, for example by posting links or writing their own texts. As such, VLEs like FutureLearn seek to harness certain features of Web 2.0 (or social media) technology, which 'allow individual and collective publishing; sharing of images, audio and video; and the creation and maintenance of online social networks' (Bennett et al. 2011: 524) in promoting learner engagement. The use of VLEs recognizes changing habits in the use of mobile technology, which has created expectations among learners in terms of being able to access learning materials anywhere in the world (Herman & Mustea, 2016). However, rather than simply delivering those materials to participants (video lectures, readings, quizzes, etc.), VLEs seek to facilitate a 'learning process [that] is no longer an individual endeavor, but can incorporate and leverage the many-to-many relations among learners and with instructors' (Piccoli, Ahmed and Ives 2001: 403), including elements such as storytelling, discussion and community support (Herman & Mustea, 2016). At the same time, it should also be noted that VLEs are spaces that are managed by instructors, who set the learning objectives and seek to guide participants towards an understanding of the subject matter presented, both in the design of the learning materials and (especially in the case of MOOCs) moderation of and intervention in the discussions that occur between participants. For

the sake of clarity, a MOOC is to be distinguished from the VLE platform itself: the former is a kind of course offered to a large number of individuals remotely, whereas the VLE is the online environment in which that course is delivered.

Agonism (and Antagonism) Online

The use of such an environment for exposing learners to the concept of agonistic memory in particular requires some reflection in terms of the potential effects of the medium of delivery. Just as the creation of an agonistic exhibition must take into account the established habits, understandings and practices of museum visitors (see chapter X in this volume), so a MOOC that harnesses Web 2.0 technology in order to encourage participants to consider the value of agonistic discourse in contemporary society must also be cognisant of the habits, understandings and practices of web users who are more than likely to make use of such technology in their everyday lives. As Internet use has spread over the last twenty years, significant concerns have been raised by academic researchers (De-Wit, Brick and Van der Linden 2016) and media commentators (e.g. Adams 2011) that social media in particular have become a space not of cosmopolitan consensus, or even the 'conflictual consensus' proposed by Chantal Mouffe (2013: 8), but rather of a polarizing antagonism with deleterious effects for social cohesion and democracy.

Gloomy observations about the effects of web-based technologies have accompanied the development of the Internet, particularly in terms of their influence on the quality of democracy, which is not just an issue at the heart of the notion of agonism, but also at the heart of the UNREST project, which takes its inspiration from that notion. While the Internet has been theorized as a potential site of democratic engagement (for an overview, see Dahlberg 2011), these voices have been balanced against dire predictions: for example, that the migration of debate on-line would lead to an emptying out of 'real political community' in favour of a mere simulacrum of the same (Dreyfus 2001: 104); or, that the nature of online communication tends inevitably to create 'echo chambers' that exclude the expression of any point of view that might challenge the beliefs of those who inhabit them (Sunstein 2009).

Scholars of memory have been equally interested in attempting to assess the effect of the Internet and its various applications on the ways in which individuals remember their own personal histories (van Dijk 2007), but also on the quality of debate produced in the digital fora

of Web 2.0 where these pertain to issues of collective historical memory. Some have expressed optimism that the Internet could create a space for multiperspectival reflection on historical events and for deeper self-reflection. In what could easily be a description of an agonistic online space for the discussion of history, Myers and Hamilton (2015: 232) propose that:

> *[social media's] lack of a unitary author combined with multiple authors makes possible not only a clear critique of objectivity as a single event or interpretation, but at best a cubist explosion and refolding of an ostensibly unified event or situation into a spectrum of simultaneously present understandings. Paired with the ability to comment on or reply to postings (and even to reply to replies of postings), the multiperspectivist form of social media discourages the authority of singular assertions while it encourages reflexive thinking, a cascade of comments on comments on comments.*

At the same time, however, other scholars have noted how online debate over historical memory can also lead to outright antagonism based on the expression of entrenched positions and the denigration of others' experiences and interpretations (Drinot 2011; Benzaquen 2014). This kind of 'trench warfare' may well serve the function of confirming to users on all sides the rightness of their position. Indeed, a desire for such confirmation may be the point of engaging with their adversaries in the first place (Karlson et al. 2017). Conversely, others may seek to harness the power of Web 2.0 to create exclusive memory spaces, in which niche historical interpretations (for example, idolisation of Stalin; Khlevnyuk 2019) can be shared and reinforced among ever smaller and more fragmented publics.

The danger of extrapolation from particular instances of memory practice in online spaces, however, is that we can fall into the trap of assuming that one kind of practice is typical of what the Internet does to all debate about historical memory. Rather, we should see these instances as examples of what the Internet *can* do to such debate, while avoiding arguments that are founded in technological determinism. As Phillips and Milner (2017: 13–14) have argued, the Internet is characterised by its ambiguity, particularly in terms of the kinds of practices it makes possible. It is the very same social media platforms, after all, which produce 'antagonistic communication [that] can silence and otherwise minimize diverse public opinion' and also provide an 'outlet for historically underrepresented populations to speak truth to power'. In his exploration of the possibilities of online democracy, Smith (2017: 17–19) usefully points out

that any given instance of Internet-based practice is not simply a product of 'the Internet' per se, which is ultimately only a hardware infrastructure. We also need to pay attention to the ways in which that infrastructure interacts in any given instance with the 'software' of the platform in question, and the 'wetware' of the particular participants who engage in social exchange via that platform. The Internet itself and the individual platforms supported by it are certainly characterised by particular 'affordances' (i.e. there are things one can and cannot do with them). Nevertheless, it is always a community of users that makes use of those possibilities in specific instances. For example, while the comments sections of some newspaper may display a certain amount of thoughtful engagement with the perspectives of others, there are comparable platforms that only seem to provide a space where frustrated supporters of one ideological faction can collectively let off steam (Ruiz et al. 2011). Therefore, while the Internet may arguably make possible the emergence of more radical, agonistic forms of democracy along the lines that Mouffe has proposed (Isin and Rupert 2015), we cannot assume that online interactions automatically lead to that outcome; anymore than we can assume that online interaction necessarily leads to a fragmentation of mutually antagonistic publics, hunkering down in their 'echo chambers.'

The challenge in creating the MOOC for the UNREST project, which intends to familiarise participants with the theory of agonistic memory and to help them better understand the workings of both cosmopolitan memory and antagonistic memory, was therefore to deliver this learning experience in such a way that participants not only came to understand the course content, but also to incorporate the agonistic mode into their own practice. This could, of course, be their own practice in IRL (In Real Life) or in other virtual spaces, and therefore would not necessarily impact on the delivery of the MOOC itself. However, we were also interested to see whether participants would be able to engage with historical memory in their interactions with each other on an agonistic basis. Or, whether more antagonistic discourses, which are undoubtedly fostered elsewhere online, would emerge when sensitive historical topics were presented from a new and potentially unsettling perspective. If the purpose of agonism is, indeed, to support such productive unsettling, how would our participants react to the experience, and would the FutureLearn VLE's features provide appropriate technological affordances for facilitating this process? Furthermore, how would the design of the learning materials themselves help to produce agonistic experiences?

In short, we were interested to see not just whether our participants understood agonism and approved of an agonistic approach to memory as it might impact on their own lives, experiences and attitudes, but also to assess the extent to which the hardware of the Internet, the software of FutureLearn as a Web 2.0 platform and our MOOC within that platform, and the 'wetware' of our particular (and self-selecting) groups of participants might interact to create agonistic moments within the MOOC itself. With these elements in mind, how was the course designed?

Designing 'How We Remember War and Violence: Theory and Practice'

As mentioned previously, the aim of the course was to introduce interested stakeholders and policymakers to the theory underpinning the UNREST project, the practical case studies applying this theory, and the cultural products, created by UNREST colleagues and partner organisations. FutureLearn works with hundreds of academic institutions (including American universities), specialist organisations such as the British Library and the European University Institute (EUI), and with associate partners with expertise in a wide range of subject areas, from the Hans Christian Andersen Centre to the British Heart Foundation (Futurelearn, 2019). From this point of view, it was hoped that FutureLearn's portfolio of non-academic partner organisations would suit the multidisciplinary nature of the UNREST consortium, which includes the Spanish theatre company, Micomicón, and the Ruhr Museum in Essen, Germany.

It was anticipated that interested stakeholders would include professionals and civil society organizations in the field of memory and commemoration, including museum directors, curators, conservators, as well as educators and policy makers responsible for funding and coordinating commemorative activities. According to Porter, market research is an 'essential step' in MOOC planning and MOOCs have been previously criticised as a '"solution looking for a problem" rather than being led by the needs of users' (2015: 74). It was important to identify the target group of learners and assess the areas in which they were interested. Between September 2016 and May 2018, stakeholders from these networks were invited to complete an online survey asking about the aspects of UNREST which were relevant to their work, how much time they could invest in training, and how they would assess the value of particular training elements. As Figure 1 illustrates, of those surveyed, 29% could invest 1 hour per week in online training, and 25% could devote 1 to 2 hours to training, when they had the time. In terms of training which was considered to be 'valuable/very valuable', stakeholders were keen

to learn about: new approaches to memories/heritage, agonistic memory, digital tools, an awareness of academic research, and the UNREST project (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Online stakeholder survey - Question 8.

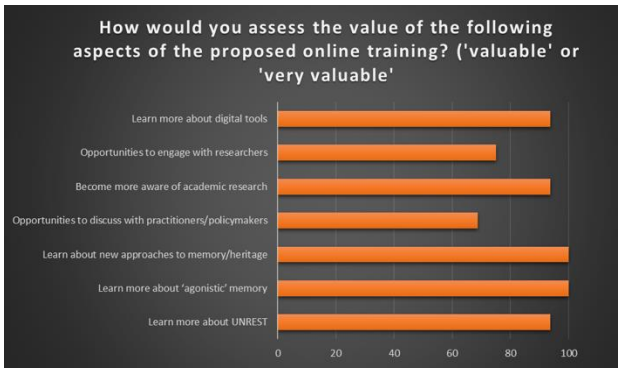

Figure 2. Online stakeholder survey - Question 9.

Based on the results of the stakeholder survey, the course was designed to take one hour per week, in order to make it possible to complete alongside other commitments, and hopefully to encourage those already working in the heritage and museum sectors to participate. It was hoped that this shorter time commitment, combined with the flexible study pattern afforded by the FutureLearn platform, would suit the target audience. The learning content was divided thematically into four weeks: weeks one to three were based on three memory models (antagonistic, cosmopolitan, and agonistic) and week four looked at the creation of cultural products commissioned specifically for the UNREST project, including the theatre production (*Donde el bosque se espesa / Where the forest thickens*; see Chapter X in this volume), the exhibition at the Ruhr Museum, Essen (*Krieg. Macht. Sinn. / War makes sense*; see Chapter Y in this volume) which ran from 12 November 2018 to 10 June 2019 as well as agonistic video games (*Endless Blitz* and *Umschlag '43)* made for this exhibition (See Chapter Z in this volume). These thematic choices tallied with aspects ranked 'valuable/very valuable' by stakeholders including new approaches to memory practice, the agonistic theory developed by UNREST, and digital tools.

Each week contained activities in a sequence of steps to complete within that week and subscribers learnt by watching videos, reading articles, and taking short quizzes. Research into online learning reveals that users find it easier when content is 'organized in small chunks of information' (Oakley et al., 2016: 10). Both the stakeholder survey and advice from FutureLearn and the digital education development team at the University of Bath further underlined the need to be concise and to-the-point as a key consideration in using the Internet

as a medium. It was therefore important to avoid lengthy articles, to condense complex theoretical content, and communicate only the elements of the research which would be most pertinent to stakeholders. The brevity of both visual and written content forced the academic researchers on the project, accustomed to being able to develop ideas in a more nuanced way in extended prose, to think about and formulate their ideas differently. Video content was mobilised throughout the course taking the form of short, 'talking-head' interviews with UNREST researchers who introduced the different memory models and relevant case studies. This visual media provided a strong narrative thread, encouraging learning by storytelling, and were accompanied by accessible transcripts and subtitles. For the second and third course runs, the MOOC was also translated into French, German and Spanish to facilitate maximum participation. Self-assessment tools, such as short quizzes, allowed students to measure their progress against learning objectives and have also been shown to maintain student interest and develop critical thinking skills (Skillings & Ferrell, 2000). Following each activity, discussion boards allowed learners to comment or ask questions. Fellow students were then free to comment on these contributions, as were the 'educators' (UNREST researchers monitoring the MOOC), who offered guidance and responded to students' questions. The previously mentioned emphasis on brevity also proved to be challenging at this point. Many of the learners are used to commenting in this manner on social media platforms such as Facebook and this familiarity often made understanding and answering learners' comments difficult when the idea put forward was expressed in very few words and required further explanation and development. At the end of each week, the educators recorded a live video in which they highlighted learners' contributions and summarised the week. This afforded learners another opportunity to interact with researchers, which had been cited as 'valuable/very valuable' in the stakeholder surveys.

The first run of the MOOC, 'How We Remember War and Violence: Theory and Practice', began in September 2018 and two further iterations followed in January and March 2019. There was relatively little time between each course run because of the time constraints of the UNREST project which ended on 30 March 2019. It was necessary to produce the MOOC in the final year of the project so as to draw on and disseminate the project's findings. However, in order to maximise take-up and to act effectively on learner feedback, so as to improve the course content, it would have been preferable to run the course annually. Tables 1 and 2 show learner demographics from each course run. A total of 2112 students enrolled in the three course runs. The United Kingdom was the primary country for enrolments across all courses, followed

by the United States. A FutureLearn report on user demographics in 2018 showed that 48% of learners came from Europe, 9.3% from the United States and 24% from Asia (Shah, 2018). Since FutureLearn is a UK-based MOOC provider and the first course run was offered only in English, it is perhaps unsurprising that the courses were popular in the English-speaking nations.

This monolingual appeal is further compounded by FutureLearn's policy of not allowing learners to comment in languages other than English. FutureLearn's disappointing practice of deleting any comments from learners in other languages went against the multilingual approach of the UNREST team, many of whom are based in Modern Languages departments, and stifled the multiperspectival possibilities of interacting in different languages. This points to a limitation of working within the parameters of this platform and a definite anglophone bias which needs to be addressed. Overall, the UNREST MOOC conformed to FutureLearn statistics for 2018 with popularity amongst users in the UK, USA, and Asia. Although the translation of the MOOC for courses two and three does not appear to have significantly influenced the percentage of enrolments by country, comments by users on the course indicate that this did attract some Spanish, German, and French-speaking learners who would not otherwise have joined the MOOC.

Course run	Start date	Joiners	Countries represented	Enrolments by country (Top 5)	Enrolments by age range
1	24/09/2018	836	87	UK (32%) USA (6%) Germany (4%) Australia/India/France/ Mexico/Greece (3%)	>65: 22% 56-65: 18% 26-35: 18% 46-55: 17% 36-45: 13% 18-25: 9% Unknown: 2% <18: 1%
2	7/01/2019	775	97	UK (31%) USA (7%) India (4%) Spain/Canada/Germany/	18-25: 22% 26-35: 18% >65: 16% 36-45: 14%

				Netherlands (3%)	46-55: 12% 56-65: 13% Unknown: 5% <18: 2%
3	4/03/2019	501	83	UK (32%) USA (8%) Australia (4%) France/Ireland/Germany/ Mexico/Canada (3%)	>65: 25% 18-25: 17% 46-55: 15% 36-45: 13% 56-65: 12% 26-35: 12% Unknown: 5% <18: 2%

Table 1. Learner demographics per course run - data gathered by FutureLearn.

In terms of enrolments by age range, each of the iterations of the course was popular with over-65s, and this group represented the largest percentage of subscribers in courses one and three. The second course run was particularly popular with under-35s, although learners over 56 still accounted for 29% of users. Online learning has always been popular with retirees looking to expand their knowledge (Konrad, 2015). Based on comments from these learners, pursuing their passion for a particular subject area, often history or the study of Europe, was a key motivation for retirees to select this MOOC. In step 1.3 of each course, joiners were invited to introduce themselves to fellow learners. Table 2 shows the responses to this step as articulated by MOOC users. It should be noted that not all users chose to respond to this question, therefore this data is based on those who did respond. It is evident that the target audience of heritage and museum professionals, representatives from civil society organisations and policy makers did subscribe to the MOOC. It also appealed to individuals in creative industries, such as poets, artists, playwrights and writers, many of whom were keen to engage with the cultural products presented in week four.

Course run	Joiner professions
1	Students (UG/PG), Curators, Heritage professionals, Retirees, Freelance researchers, History enthusiasts, Aid workers, Writers, Interpreters, Lecturers, Teachers, Archaeologists, Diplomats, Artists.

2	Retirees, Charity workers, Curators, Heritage professionals, Anthropologists, University lecturers, Cultural heritage policy makers, Secondary school teachers, Secondary school students, Media advisors to national governments, Playwrights, Poets, Artists, Students (UG/PG).
3	Retirees, Army officer/chaplain, Curators, Heritage professionals, Anthropologists, Secondary school students, Secondary school teachers, Artists, Students (UG/PG).

Table 2. Joiner professions per course run - answers in response to Step 1.3 'Tell us about yourself.'

Low completion rates in MOOCs have become an increasing concern, reported both in the media and in academic studies (Murray, 2019). Average completion rates for FutureLearn courses sit at 20%, for the UNREST MOOC the percentage of learners who successfully completed 90% or more of the steps in the course was 22.5% (FutureLearn, 2019). Although just under a quarter of learners completed 90% or more of the course, the percentage of 'Active learners' was fairly high at an average of 65.4% across the three course runs (FutureLearn, 2019). 'Active learners' are defined by FutureLearn as:

> Those (of any role) who have completed at least one step at any time in any course week. Completion varies by step type, with some requiring additional user interaction (e.g. "mark as complete") while others are completed through submission (Assignment, Review) and question attempts (Quizzes & Tests) (FutureLearn, 2019).

This statistic is more encouraging, suggesting that learners did remain engaged in the course throughout the four weeks, even though they may not have completed all the steps. It aligns with arguments made by online learning providers that completion rates are the wrong measure of success (Murray, 2019). Instead, learners are more likely to concentrate on certain elements of courses which are either of personal interest to them or will aid their professional development. The low percentage of learners who left the UNREST MOOC (an average of 8.2%) indicates that learners did remain engaged with the course material, although particular topics may have been of more interest than others. The next section evaluates learners' responses to the course and asks to what extent the MOOC provoked them to question and challenge their current understanding of memory models.

Evaluating Learner Responses

All FutureLearn courses include an end of course survey with pre-set multiple choice questions established by the company with outside project teams not being invited to contribute to their formulation. Examining the data produced for the UNREST MOOC highlights some interesting points of convergence and divergence across the three runs of the courses. Response rates for this activity were generally fairly low (Run 1: 54; Runs 2 and 3: 43) but in keeping with the completion rates discussed above. Between 44% (Run 2) and 63% (Run 1) stated that the course was better than expected. Between 35% (Run 1) and 49% (Run 2) said it met their expectations. For all three runs, 93% and over responded that they gained new knowledge/skills by taking the course. Between 57% (Run 2) and 65% (Run 1) stated that they had applied what they had learned since starting the course. For all three runs, 76% and over stated that they had shared what they had learned with other people. These statistics are encouraging and show that on the whole learners engaged with the material and found it valuable and thought-provoking. Nevertheless, it must be underlined that those who completed the course as well as the end of course survey were a highly self-selecting group.

Learners were generally appreciative of the material covered on the course in the free text feedback sections in the end of course survey included for each run of the MOOC. One learner stated extremely positively: 'My initial feeling is the UNREST project is probably the most important project in Europe if not the world. If there's a blog I'd like to follow it.' (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 3) Another commented:

> *For a while now I've set aside my Sunday mornings for a MOOC module of my choice. I started 'How we remember war and violence' this morning. Normally I would have continued the three remaining units on the next three Sundays but I could not tear myself away. I've just finished after a solid eight and a half hours.* (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 3)

Another demonstrated their engagement with the theoretical elements underpinning the UNREST project through the following comment: 'I note that the course itself was agonistic: developing multiple perspectives on antagonistic, cosmopolitan, and agonistic memory.' (User CJ, 4 February 2019, Run 2)

Constructive criticism and suggestions for how to improve the course were also very much part of these surveys. For example, some learners were critical of the Eurocentric, predominantly Western focus of the different memory modes and the examples explored: a) ‘So far we looked at memory from a Western European perspective. I am curious about other modes of memory from non European points of view. The western view dominates much of the literature. How do other cultures memorialize war?’ (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 1); b) ‘I also would like to learn about colonial societies and the memories of both colonialists and the colonised peoples.’(anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 1); c) ‘I would like to learn more on memory experiences outside Europe, how the different memory modes have been applied in other regions of the world? Are there different theoretical approaches to memory in those regions?’ (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 1) These comments are highly pertinent in relation to the UNREST project, which focused chiefly on member states of the European Union. This emphasis of the project, which (as the other chapters in this volume show) took in case studies from across Europe, did not necessarily limit the usefulness of the MOOC, however. Indeed, one of the explicit aims of the MOOC was to disseminate the project findings so that these memory models could be explored in different contexts, international, regional, local and otherwise, by the learners themselves. Many learners were particularly sensitive to broadening these frames of reference as shown by the following suggestions: ‘I would like to learn about ho[w] these different [to] types of memories can be applied on more re[c]ent wars, or possibl[y] terrorism.’ (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 2); ‘Local memory frames, how they are formed and impacted.’ (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 2) Other learners rose to this challenge stating, for example: ‘I'm obviously keen to apply this knowledge in the context of Cambodia, and also address issues pertaining to cross-cultural psychology as well.’ (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 1) Such comments make clear that learners had understood that the models presented were not just pertinent to the European context.

Although not all learners commented on the MOOC, those who did were keen to discuss existing memory models, as well as to offer their feedback on agonistic memory and the cultural products created by the UNREST project. Some learners said that they would like to apply agonistic memory theory to their own projects, which included a play, a museum, a PhD thesis, and an art exhibition. Comments included direct applications of the explored theoretical

approaches to specific examples: ‘Your course has definitely inspired how I will approach the theme of WW2 “myth and hero” focusing on women in an English conversation class with my French sixth formers’ (User IK, 4 November 2018, Run 1) and ‘I'll definitely be applying the concept of agonistic memory to my approach to the study of World War II refugees and their representation in museums and think that the medium of a computer game could be an effective way of putting this in to practice.’ (User NT, 21 October 2018, Run 1)

In an online follow-up survey conducted in June 2019 by researchers based at the University of Bath, learners were contacted and asked further questions about their experience of the MOOC. This survey generated the following comments which demonstrate how learners are mobilising the different memory modes explored on the MOOC in different contexts. For example, one South African respondent said that he had been inspired to think about alternative ways of addressing historical conflict in his own country and how this might promote reconciliation. Comments from other users demonstrated how the content of the MOOC had encouraged reflection on conflict situations more generally: ‘I now see it as a multi-faceted and really malleable thing, not a yes or no occurrence. I think about memory of conflict a lot more now, and apply what I have learned about it to different situations I hear about.’ Some learners talked about how they had used the material covered on the MOOC in the interpretation of specific museums: ‘I am currently trying to analyse and “read” the first Partition museum in India built in Amritsar. Completing the MOOC before my visit sensitised me to the way the trauma of this event was narrated and curated!’. Others found links between the course material and everyday life: ‘I have recognised examples of both agonistic and cosmopolitan approaches in others [sic] responses whereas previously I would only have noticed antagonism as the “natural” behaviour.’; ‘The course changed my approach to just about everything I write, read, or consider. Especially has provided a filter to what I choose to listen to or engage in online. There are no “sides”.’

Subscribers took part in some lively but mostly consensual debates, for example, the place of video games in the museum space provoked discussion and also drew attention to the demographics of our learners who, it would be safe to say, were not digital natives. One learner expressed a view on agonistic computer games that many of the UNREST researchers might share: ‘Agonistic approaches are risky. What if the “bomber” visitor only ends up feeling proud of their success, their “score”, for example?’ (User JH, 19 October 2018, Run 1). The role of the curator in the museum space was another talking point: one learner stated that:

> *I think that the viewers may not be always be aware of the power of curators to create and influence narratives represented in museums. Their role is sort of opaque in the same way as hands controlling a puppet – maybe that is too simplistic.* (User DN, 11 October 2018, Run 1)

In summary, a brief overview of these comments and feedback indicates that the UNREST MOOC fulfilled its various objectives of encouraging knowledge of the theoretical modes of antagonistic, cosmopolitan and agonistic memory as well as engagement with their different applications using UNREST case studies and learners' own examples. This initial conclusion is, however, too simplistic in its approach and neglects some of the challenges that learners and educators on the MOOC faced.

One of the challenges of presenting these memory models in this format is that agonistic memory took some learners longer to grasp than cosmopolitan or antagonistic memory. This frustration was expressed in short comments as follow: 'The agonistic ideal is still a little unreal to me' (User EL, 18 January 2019, Run 2); '[u]nfortunately all a bit too utopian' (User AC, 27 November 2018, Run 1). The linear pattern of the MOOC also meant that some learners assumed that there was a chronological progression from antagonistic to agonistic memory via cosmopolitanism, sometimes expressed in a rather tongue-in-cheek manner: 'And so we are primed for agonistic memory next week!' (User PW, 19 January 2019, Run 2). The educators were at pains to emphasise that the mapping was far more complex and some learners were able to grasp the overlapping between different modes: 'On the third listen, I think I'm beginning to understand. Of course, the 3 memories do not happen in a straight line of development as I was previously thinking, they all co exist.' (User EL, 17 January 2019, Run 2). Some learners quickly raised debates that the UNREST team had had themselves in numerous formats and fora. For example, one learner underlined the potential limitations of this ambitious and potentially controversial memory model where it shifts the focus from victims and tries to understand the motives of perpetrators, traitors and bystanders: 'Do you really propose giving everyone a voice in the debate? […] Are we emotionally and intellectually literate enough to take this step forward yet?' (AC, 28 November 2018, Run 1) The extent of the reach of the theoretical models beyond the worlds of academia, museums and theatre was also called into question:

> I am looking forward to some subsequent sections because I can't help but think that those people who will engage with agonistic (or for that matter cosmopolitan) 'curations' of memory are those who least need to... how can presentations catch antagonistically inclined people unawares and so strongly that an alternative perspective reaches through? (User AF, 24 May, Run 3)

Doubts were expressed about whether these abstract theories could function outside these contexts: 'It all sounds so plausible, having it explained on a video from an academic point of view. How does it work out on the ground?' (User AtB, 30 March, Run 3) These various tensions surrounding the multiperspectival approach and the limitations of applying abstract theory to real-life situations are summarised in the following suggestion on how to improve the course:

> More about the balance between agonism and not pushing people too far and shutting down conversations and more generally how agonism progresses as a theory to inform real life art, exhibition, acts of remembering etc. (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 1)

Once learners, however, had seen some examples of how agonistic memory could be applied, responses were generally more positive, for example, in relation to presenting multiple conflicting perspectives in museums:

> I think […] what's important while presenting the contested narratives or controversial points of view […] is to show that [the] museum also has a position and a stance. Not as 'this is good and this is evil', but in the sense like 'this is what we think is problematic - let's discuss it together'. Looks like [the] agonistic approach can do that, so thank you the UNREST team for this concept and your examples! (User OZ, 12 October 2019, Run 1).

Furthermore, when asked, 'Would you like to visit a memory site (museum, memorial, study day or other) which has agonistic elements?' 95% to 97% voted 'Yes' (Runs 1-3).

Another challenge was the lack of face-to-face communication which the educators on the MOOC were accustomed to in the classroom environment. The discussion forum offered by a

MOOC enables learners to ask questions and share feelings and comments quickly and easily. At times, as mentioned previously, comments lacked context, were abrupt or even rude: 'Please tell me this is a wind up!' (User AC, 1 December 2018, Run 1). 'If this course is going to be another embarrassing display of Identarian bigotry it's going to be a real hoot. But that just me [sic] antagonistic I suppose because all contrarian opions [sic] are toxic.' (User BK, 17 March 2019, Run 3) If comments went too far, they were removed by a moderator, employed by FutureLearn, but they were often mediated in discussion with other learners. This shows that concerns about Web 2.0 as a potentially antagonistic space, as discussed above, were borne out to an extent by the interactions of some learners. Some (although by no means all) learners clearly felt it was appropriate to adopt antagonistic stances and commensurate language when encountering perspectives that they found challenging. The fact that educators had to intervene to moderate and sometimes remove these comments represents an unresolved dilemma. For a small minority of users, engaging with the notion of agonism intellectually did not produce an agonistic approach to discussion, so that the MOOC could only become an agonistic space (if it did at all) through artificial interventions.

A key element of the UNREST project was to consider the role that emotions and passions play in remembering difficult history and how different memory modes engage with these feelings (Bull and Hansen, 2016: 398). One hypothesis that underpinned the theoretical development of agonistic memory was that antagonistic memory agents were better able to incite and capitalise on emotions than cosmopolitan memory had done. Although some analysis has been carried out on the role of emotions in agonistic politics more generally (Mihai 2014) the relationship between agonistic memory and emotion remains a fertile area for future research. That said, there was no doubt that emotions were a key motivator in users taking the course and their frankness in evoking these often raw, traumatic and personally motivated memories was often deeply moving, for example:

> […] I grew up in post war Berlin, where my Father was working for the British government. I have always been interested in the way the stories of people's experiences of the conflict of the Second World War and the Cold War are shared and recorded for future generations. My Father was a prisoner in Buchenwald Concentration Camp and he has written about his experiences and kept in contact with the Buchenwald and Dora Museum in Weimer, Germany. (User PV, 7 January 2018, Run 2).

The following example is long but merits inclusion as it engages with many different elements of the various memory modes but is also painstakingly honest in its depiction of how history, memory and identity are key to trying to understand different realities and experiences:

> In Crete in the 1980s we visited the Souda Bay Allied War Cemetery. Very emotional of course. It was British, Australian including a fifteen year old who had been in the Merchant Navy that had been trying to get supplies to the island. After leaving we noticed a small sign to the German war graves at Maleme, along the road towards Chania. So we went. It was an epiphany for both of us - me and my husband. We wept there as we had at the Allied graves. Once the site of intense fighting and bloodshed and now the quiet resting place of the former enemy. There were fresh wreaths - one was to fallen comrades of the Luftwaffe. That realisation that the enemy mourns its war dead too changed my pathway in life for my art, writing and research. The PS to this is that back at the small pension where we were staying my husband had met a German man from Munich and they had watched Norway v England play football in the bar. Later our new German friend became our daughter's godfather and travelled from Munich where we had visited to be at her christening. When my husband became ill with cancer he flew over immediately, later he came back for the funeral. (User SF, 23 January 2019, Run 2)

This searing honesty regularly took the course educators by surprise, but here the online platform allowed for direct personal engagement in a way which would be less obvious in a traditional classroom environment. It was also encouraging to see that, despite these personal memories often emerging from conflicts pertinent to learners' home countries, the emotions expressed were frequently discussed (as above) in terms of a desire to understand the experience of others, rather than as a basis for antagonistic identity-building. These moments tended to counter-balance the more problematic instances of rhetorical aggression already outlined above, but were arguably difficult to categorise within the context of agonistic and cosmopolitan memory. In the second quotation cited, however, a rhetoric of shared humanity and suffering ('the enemy mourns its war dead too') clearly predominated. This highlights another challenge faced by the MOOC: while it was not the educators' job to 'convert' learners to the value of the agonistic memory mode, participants arrived in the learning space with a strong interest in the topic of historical memory and, in some cases, were clearly conversant in cosmopolitan approaches to memory that have achieved a hegemonic (although by no means unchallenged)

status in the context of the European Union. In these cases, cosmopolitanism appeared to provide learners with a persuasive emotional vocabulary that survived their intellectual engagement with the theory of agonistic memory.

Emotions and passions evoked on the MOOC were further shaped and heightened by current political events, which as many of our MOOC participants were British often came back to Brexit, for example: 'I live in the UK where we are currently working our way through the Brexit process. […]. It has been and still is a war. Terrible "memories" have surfaced.' (User EL, 8 January 2019, Run 2); or

> […] this is heavy thinking - it will take a lot of digestion particularly in the tense conflictive situation we British are currently undergoing with our politicians and the superabundance of views on how or whether Brexit should be handled. (User JT, 11 March 2019, Run 3).

Discussions about Brexit on the MOOC arguably demonstrate the self-selecting nature of such a course, as they were conducted in a very diplomatic and consensual manner with little disagreement on the outcome of the referendum.

At the beginning of this chapter, we posed the question of how the 'software' of our MOOC would interact with the 'wetware' of our users. With some notable exceptions, concerns that the MOOC would produce a space of antagonistic memory debate due to the confrontational nature of some on-line debate proved unfounded. While this sort of debate can certainly be found on other platforms on the Internet, from Twitter to Youtube, it did not emerge in this instance. From our observations above, however, this was arguably less a question of the FutureLearn software as an enabling context than it was a result of the self-selection of our participants. Many arrived with a shared set of underlying assumptions about the need to understand past conflict from new perspectives, and of the value of memory per se in the pursuit of reconciliation, which are arguably at odds with antagonistic conceptualizations of the past. While they were often committed to cosmopolitan viewpoints, this potentially made them more open to engaging with the notion of agonism, since both agonistic memory and cosmopolitan memory have a shared commitment to the avoidance of violent conflict. If learners were wary of agonistic memory, this tended to be because they were wary of sacrificing the perceived benefits of cosmopolitan memory. Given that the FutureLearn platform is not a public forum in

the strict sense, since users have to log on to participate in discussions that are not visible to non-learners, there would also have been little value for more aggressive opponents of cosmopolitan or agonistic memory (so-called 'trolls') in attempting to intervene in the MOOC in order to press their point of view.

Conclusion

Part of the UNREST project's commitment to 'Communication and Training Impact' was to create an 'impact toolkit' to communicate the findings of the research, to allow practitioners to engage with the theoretical ideas informing the case studies and draw comparisons between their own practice and those examples. From analysing the data collected from the three runs of the UNREST MOOC, it can be stated that this objective was fulfilled. Learners engaged successfully with new memory modes, which made them challenge previous understandings of the social role of remembering and consider how they could apply agonistic memory to their own different practices.

The question remains, however, whether the medium of the MOOC can be successful in informing agonistic practices more generally. Of course, it might be possible to use the platform more innovatively, as indeed our learners encouraged us to do at times: 'Be [b]old and innovative with new courses (try live streaming:- especially forums, gamification, off-line downloads, real-time tests/quiz)' (anonymous written feedback from the end of course survey, Run 3). Although there were several limitations to this platform including its monolingualism and its pre-formatted framework, this invitation to be bold and innovative rings true. Rather than adapting classroom content to an online environment inviting learners to watch videos, read articles, and take short quizzes, this content should be delivered in a way that makes the most of the digital possibilities on offer. Nevertheless, whatever technological possibilities might still be explored in the delivery of the pedagogical content, the self-selecting nature of learners in this context unavoidably limited the potential for the MOOC itself to become a space in which agonistic memory could be put into practice. As researchers consider the ever-expanding role of the Internet in the politics of memory the conundrum of how to facilitate such agonistic spaces remains.

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