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Introduction

UNREST (www.unrest.eu) addresses **Europe's pressing memory problem**. The European Union derives a great deal of legitimacy from its foundational myth of transnational reconciliation. It has consistently championed a consensual approach to traumatic memory reaching from the abyss of the World Wars and the Holocaust to post war peace and prosperity. But the storyline is losing its lustre. All across Europe, populist and nationalist movements are successfully challenging the official EU narrative. They use the heritage of war and violence to push conventional, confrontational notions of collective belonging – with very dangerous consequences. Social cohesion is fraying and ethnic tensions are on the rise. Plus, since most of this happens well within the rules of the democratic process, the EU is watching helplessly, rendered impotent by a sympathetic but unengaging cultural memory.

UNREST proposes to fill the perilous vacuum between top-down cosmopolitan EU memory and bottom-up, antagonistic right-wing memory. UNREST pursues a third memory way, which acknowledges and engages with widespread memory discontent without losing sight of fundamental EU ideals. We call this third way **agonistic memory**. It designates a new mode of remembrance, which embraces political conflict as an opportunity for emotional and ethical growth. For this purpose, UNREST combines groundbreaking theoretical reasoning with the empirical study of existing memory cultures and the implementation and rigorous testing of innovative memory practices.

The logo for UNREST features the word "UNREST" in a large, bold, black, italicized sans-serif font. Below the text is a graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy, translucent bands in shades of red, orange, and green, creating a sense of movement and depth. The entire graphic is enclosed in a thin red border.

UNREST

Unsettling Remembering and Social Cohesion in Transnational Europe

Research Parameters

The UNREST project sought to **develop, test and disseminate new approaches to European heritage** that focus on revitalizing the memory of past conflicts by **promoting a new critical mode of remembering – agonistic memory - and reflective memory practices**. In so doing, it generated an in-depth analysis of the memory cultures present in **war museums** and in **war-related mass grave exhumations** in Europe. The theoretical framework and empirical findings informed the **production and staging of a theatre play** in Madrid, ‘Donde el bosque se espesa’ (‘Where the Forest Thickens’) and an **exhibition** at the Ruhr Museum in Essen, ‘Krieg. Macht. Sinn.’ (‘War makes sense’) which aimed to showcase how agonistic memory might look and work in practice. We also created a **MOOC online training module** aimed at cultural heritage specialists, ‘How we remember war and violence: Theory and Practice’ (<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/memory-of-war>). These activities helped researchers refine the three memory modes and their representations, as well as understand visitors’ and spectators’ emotional and cognitive reactions to agonistic memory products.

UNREST highlights the importance of **research and scholarship in the humanities in understanding the heritage of war**. It is in agreement with the H2020 COURAGE project, which calls for the **critical assessment and professional preservation of cultural heritage**.

UNREST promotes and encourages collaboration across academic disciplines and fields (historians, cultural studies specialists, anthropologists, computer scientists) as well as **with cultural practitioners** (theatre troupes, museum professionals) as key to carrying out this research effectively. **Co-curation** of exhibitions by museum professionals and academics can provide an effective testing ground for new ideas and theories. **Researchers working alongside artists** can also provide a laboratory for different ideas and theories as well as effective **reception evaluation and analysis**.



Discussion with Micomicón actors, UNREST researchers and audience members following a production of *Donde el bosque se espesa* (‘Where the Forest Thickens’). © Micomicón & A priori gestión teatral

Evidence and Analysis

Within the European Union, the dominant approach to heritage of war is one that focuses on the plight and suffering of victims in order to promote peace and reconciliation (**cosmopolitan memory**). This mode of remembering builds on an understanding of the world as one potentially harmonious entity, united by a common culture based on the recognition of human rights. While the cosmopolitan mode is self-reflexive, it decontextualizes and depoliticises the struggles and conflicts of the past and erases the perspectives of perpetrators, bystanders, spies and other agents. The moral categories of good and evil are applied to abstract systems such as democracy and dictatorship. The research underpinning UNREST argues that the cosmopolitan approach to heritage of war, however well meaning, has proved unable to stem the rise of an **antagonistic memory mode**, which relies on a contraposition between heroes and villains, US and THEM, friends and enemies, as witnessed, by the continuing rise and success of extreme-right movements and parties. An antagonistic mode of remembering emphasises the fundamentally conflictive character of society, depicting the 'other' as an enemy to be destroyed. It applies the moral categories of good and evil to the agents involved in the narrative and constructs identities as morally essentialised and immutable.

Anna Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen argued in a seminal paper, 'On **Agonistic Memory**', published in 2015, that the impasse resulting from the mutual incompatibility of these two memory modes could only be overcome through theorising and promoting a third ethico-political mode of remembering, which following Chantal Mouffe they defined as agonistic. This mode, like the antagonistic one, is able to recognise the fundamentally conflictive character of society, but it tries to deconstruct the moral pitting of the 'other' as an enemy on moral grounds through the social and political contextualization of the historical conflict. Crucially, agonistic memory promotes radical multiperspectivism as an efficient strategy to provide historical and political understanding without legitimising perpetratorship, foregrounding voices and perspectives belonging to antagonistically opposed enemies, typically victims and perpetrators, alongside those of bystanders, traitors, and collaborators.

Over the last three years, UNREST researchers have been exploring how agonism:

- is related to the political sphere
- is counter hegemonic
- is relational
- is fluid and dynamic
- creates conflictual consensus
- turns the enemy into an adversary
- generates controversy
- is outcome content dependant

In order to do this, deep understanding is needed of:

- representation of perpetrators
- social and political conditions without legitimization
- radical vs consensual multiperspectivism
- agonistic pathos
- visitors' and audiences' emotional/cognitive reactions.

Findings:

- Cosmopolitan approach is able to generate strong revulsion to bloody conflicts and generic compassion.
- These are welcomed reactions for both cosmopolitans and agonists BUT
- Cosmopolitan memory mode falls short of promoting complex understandings of the conflictual constructions of the collective 'We' and 'They' identities underpinning violent antagonism, as well as of what is required to turn enemies into adversaries.

Within UNREST's framework, **mass grave exhumations** and **war museums** were conceived of as standing on opposite poles of memory building processes with regard to Europe's violent past. Our hypothesis was that the highly unsettling cases of contemporary exhumations of mass graves, on the one hand, expose the bare violence inscribed upon corpses and skeletons, which has to be traumatically absorbed by the affected communities (hot memory). War museums, on the other hand, are the (unstable) result of highly elaborated memory politics (cold memory).

Case Study A: Exhumation of mass graves

Case study 1: Spain

Case study 2: Poland

Case study 3: Bosnia and Herzegovina

In these three different scenarios, relating to respectively the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the Second World War and its aftermath (1940-1956) and the Yugoslav Wars of Dissolution in the 1990s, UNREST contributed new data to the testing of its main theoretical hypotheses on antagonistic, cosmopolitan and agonistic memory styles of remembering. Extensive literature reviews were carried out and researchers on the ground carried out a minimum of five semi-structured interviews with each of the following stakeholders: (a) victims' associations; (b) technical teams; (c) state institutions.

Findings:

Our research shows the need to develop the *dynamics* behind Cento Bull and Hansen's memory modes when it comes to temporality (diachronic) and scale (synchronic), in order to further enrich and develop frameworks of agonistic remembrance. On the ground, we find that different memory agents may develop various memory strategies and plots, depending on the situation, often in rather pragmatic ways. That is, our historical and ethnographic fieldwork not only shows that the memory modes change and develop in multiple directions over time, but that they coexist as well. And this happens not only in the broader memory field, but oftentimes even in the 'voice' of one memory agent and in the relationships and tensions between different memory agents. Depending on which scale we analyse, the memory discourses and debates that are surrounding the exhumations –at the site, in the media, in the parliament, etc.– may employ different modes. In practice, the cosmopolitan and agonistic memory regimes proposed in the theoretical framework usually do not appear in their 'pure' form, but at times coexist, overlap and even merge, into different configurations depending on the context (Poland, Spain, Bosnia). A more dynamic model, which incorporates internal variations and modulations as well as reciprocal influences and relations, would allow us to better understand some of the potential "messiness" of the field.

In the **Polish case**, we see actors with a clearly antagonistic memory narrative disguised in cosmopolitanism by anchoring their memorial claims to victims and human rights. This is probably related to the current international prestige of Human Rights frames –as well as very possibly political expectations within the EU– and to the difficulties of building a memory regime without referencing them. In the **case of Bosnia**, we see some influence of the cosmopolitanism imported by the international NGOs and their associated technologies on the largely antagonistic memory paradigms used by local actors. In **Spain**, we see how the stakeholders employ different strategies to counter the hegemonic narrative of the successful and peaceful transition to democracy.

Within the realm of a more dynamic model of memory modes, we propose that exhumations of unmarked graves could be understood as potential agonistic fora. Architect Eyal Weizman (2017) explicitly reminds us of 'forum' as the etymological root of the word 'forensic'. Hence, forensics should be seen as the art of the forum, the practice or skill to present an argument before a professional, political, or legal gathering. Following this connection, we propose to see the exhumations as fora for debate, which unite the possibilities for contextualizing a historical event through evidence, with the attraction of opposite voices potentially opening up to a radical form of multiperspectivity, including both victims and perpetrators of the crimes. In the case of Spain, the exhumations function as agonistic fora as they repoliticize the past and break the consensus installed through prescriptive forgetting during the transition to democracy. In Poland, the exhumations at Jedwabne brought about an important emotional debate on Polish perpetratorship.



Improvised Mass at the Powązki cemetery, Warsaw. © Marije Hristova

However, when looking at contemporary exhumations of the Cursed Soldiers in Poland, we see that this is not always the case. The Cursed Soldiers' exhumations are used to construct an antagonistic and nationalist discourse of belonging in which the Cursed Soldiers are the heroes embodying Poland's anti-communist and catholic essence, challenging Polish and European cosmopolitan memory discourses. Yet they do so by using some of the arguments usually utilized in cosmopolitan frameworks, mostly those related to human rights and the primacy of victimhood and mourning. In Bosnia, we find that the parachuting in of a global cosmopolitan humanitarian operation in some ways de-politicizes the conflict through the focus on abstract victimhood. But memory politics on the ground, anchored in concrete and mutually excluding victimhood realms, remain largely antagonistic.

The contradictions in the field therefore show us that the three memory modes do not exist independently, but in a relational way reacting to the specific type of hegemonic discourse in each context. That is why we underscore the word *potential*, since cemeteries and exhumations are memory fora, which in the end can be deployed in all three modes.

Project publications

- Ferrándiz, F. 2019. 'Unburials, Generals and Phantom Militarism: Engaging with the Spanish Civil War Legacy'. *Current Anthropology* 60 (S19): S62-S76.
- Ferrándiz, F and M Hristova. In press, 2019. 'Mass Grave Exhumations as Agonistic Fora: A Comparative Study of Spain, Poland and Bosnia', in Johanna Vollmeyer and Marta Fernández Bueno, *Repensar el pasado: La memoria (trans)cultural Europea*. Madrid: Dykinson.
- Jugo, Admir and Sarah Wagner. 2017. 'Memory Politics and Forensic Practices', in Zuzanna Dziuban (ed.), *Mapping the 'Forensic Turn'*, pp. 195-213. Vienna: Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien.

Case Study B: War Museums

Case study 1. Historial de la Grande Guerre, Péronne, France.

Case study 2. Kobarid Museum, Kobarid, Slovenia.

Case study 3. German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlshorst, Germany.

Case study 4. Schindler's Factory, Kraków, Poland.

Case study 5. Military History Museum, Dresden, Germany.

The key objectives were to establish the dominant memory regimes in selected war museums in contemporary Europe, and assess the possible inclusion of agonistic representations and practices. Hence, researchers analyzed the representations of war in five war museums and aimed at evaluating the reception of their exhibitions among visitors. A number of questions were addressed. How does the public engage with the dominant message and memory regime? To what extent do visitors acknowledge/ agree with this message? Do they feel empathy with and compassion for former enemies and/or other emotions? Do visitors reflect critically on war-making?

Findings:

- 1) In all five museums the cosmopolitan mode of remembering is dominant, confirming our initial hypothesis that the memory of war in contemporary Europe has shifted from antagonism to cosmopolitanism (at least in institutions striving for an international audience). Everywhere there is a focus on the victimhood of soldiers and civilians and their suffering in war. By contrast, references to perpetrators and violence remain largely abstract.



Medical supplies from the First World War at the 'Historial de la Grande Guerre' museum in Péronne. © Eleanor Rowley

- 2) Antagonistic features are most prominent in Kraków's Historical Museum, where we found an underlying contrast between nationalised (Polish) victimhood and (German) perpetratorship. Antagonistic representations were also present elsewhere. The Kobarid Museum, for instance, offers a narrative of Slovenian nationalism in the rooms dedicated to national history, which undermines its overt messages of peace and reconciliation.

- 3) The existence of antagonistic modes of remembrance should lead future research to pay close attention to them without assuming too readily that they belong to the past. Indeed, additional research across Europe by UNREST researchers found a particularly strong antagonistic construction of the memory of war in Eastern and Southeastern European war museums. This suggests that there is still an ongoing battle between antagonistic and cosmopolitan narratives in the memory of war in contemporary Europe.
- 4) Agonistic features could only be found in one permanent exhibition, namely the Military History Museum in Dresden. Although an institution run and controlled by the German army, its anthropological approach to war combines with a desire to confront the visitor in a critical way with diverging and unsettling perspectives on war and Germany's military history. This is in line with Germany's often praised attempts to 'come to terms' with its National Socialist past. Nevertheless, such agonism still takes place within an overall cosmopolitan frame. However, we agree with Pozzi (2013) that museums often feel freer to present agonistic features in temporary exhibitions.
- 5) The memory of war in contemporary war museums is often linked to attempts to underpin narratives and practices of reconciliation and Europeanisation. This can be seen most strongly in the German-Russian, Historical and Kobarid museums, whose mission is also diplomatic. The former is a transnational museum with representatives from Russia and Germany on its governing bodies which fosters diplomatic encounters. The Historical and Kobarid have both developed an important role in national and European commemorative and reconciliation diplomacy.
- 6) Preliminary findings from our visitor studies point to the success of the cosmopolitan narrative in impressing on the visitors the intended meaning of the museum, generating feelings that war produces only victims and suffering. This may indeed blind visitors to the fact that war makes a lot of sense to a lot of people in different contexts, not least in economic terms. It may even produce a sense of helplessness, as many visitors remarked that victims are shown as passive and the causes of war are not explained. The cosmopolitan approach is thus not able either to engage antagonism, as it tends to ignore the latter's construction of the other as enemy or to provide a more complex and multi-faceted understanding of war and perpetratorship.

Overall, our studies seem to confirm the need to move beyond cosmopolitanism in the representations of memories of war, but also provide some caution not to throw the baby out with the bathwater, as cosmopolitanism provides powerful counter-narratives to antagonistic representations.

References:

- Pozzi, Clelia. 2013. "Museums as Agonistic Spaces", pp. 7-15 in *European Museums in the 21st Century: Setting the Framework*, ed. L. Basso Peressut, F. Lanza and G. Postiglione. Milan: MeLa Books, vol I.
- Thiemeyer, Thoma. 2010. "Geschichtswissenschaft. Das Museum als Quelle". P. 82 in *Museumsanalyse. Methoden und Konturen eines neuen Forschungsfeldes*, ed. J. Baur, Bielefeld: Transcript.

Project publications:

- Berger Stefan, Anna Cento Bull, Zofia Wóycicka, Cristian Cercel, Nina Parish, Małgorzata A. Quinkenstein, Eleanor Rowley, 'War Museums and Agonistic Memory. A Report' *Museum Worlds*, Vol. 6, Issue 1 (July 2019)
- Cento Bull Anna, David Clarke, Marianna Deganutti. 'Soft Power and Dark Heritage: Multiple Potentialities' *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 23(6), 2017: 660-674.
- Cercel Cristian. 'The Military History Museum in Dresden: Forum and Temple Alike?' *History & Memory*, vol. 30(1), March 2018: 3-39.
- Cento Bull Anna, Hans Lauge Hansen, Wulf Kansteiner, Nina Parish. 'War museums as agonistic spaces: possibilities, opportunities and constraints' *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 25, no. 6, 2018.
- Cercel Cristian, Nina Parish and Eleanor Rowley 'War in the Museum: The Historical of the Great War in Péronne and the Military History Museum in Dresden' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, March 2019
- Parish Nina, Marianna Deganutti, Eleanor Rowley. 'Representing Multilingual Difficult History: Voices of the First World War in the Kobarid Museum (Slovenia) and the Historial de la Grande Guerre (France)' *JoSTrans: The Journal of Specialised Translation*, issue 29, January 2018.

Forthcoming:

- Berger, Stefan. 'Is the Memory of War in Contemporary Europe Enhancing Historical Dialogue?' an edited collection, ed. by Elazar Barkan and Constantin Goschler, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2019.
- Parish Nina, Eleanor Rowley 'Remembering the First World War in France: the Historial de la Grande Guerre and Thiepval Museum' *The Routledge Handbook of French Politics and Culture*, forthcoming 2019.
- Clarke David and Zofia Wóycicka, 'Cultural Diplomacy in the War Museum. The Case of the German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlshorst' submitted to *History & Memory* – under review.

UNREST Dissemination Tools

- **UNREST researchers devised and produced a MOOC online training module on modes of remembering war and conflict and their practical applications.** The four-week module, 'How We Remember War and Violence: Theory and Practice', was made accessible to the public on three separate occasions, at the end of 2018 and early in 2019. Altogether, it was subscribed by over 1500 people from almost 100 countries, many of them heritage or post-conflict practitioners as well as students of museology, memory and conflict. The module generated numerous comments, varying from positive to enthusiastic, from participants, many of them keen to apply agonistic memory theory to their field of work. The content from the training module is accessible on YouTube, the TES teaching resources website and on the University of Bath Research Data Archive.
- We created a **free pedagogical package** based on work with Micomicón theatre group – '**Where the Forest Thickens: Tools for engaging with memory questions through aesthetic experiences**'. The pedagogical package aims to be a useful learning tool for all cultural agents, artists, scholars and students who engage or would like to– with memory questions through aesthetic experience in Europe and beyond. The resource can be downloaded for free from the UNREST website.
- **Conference** - WP5 organised a successful conference at the British School in Rome on 7-8 February with over 60 delegates including UNREST researchers, museum stakeholders, artists, and independent researchers. The entire conference is available to watch online via the UNREST YouTube channel.

Cultural creation and products

One of the main cultural products generated by the UNREST team was a **new war exhibition**, which opened at the Ruhr Museum in Essen, Germany, on 11 November 2018 and ran until summer 2019. The exhibition was directly informed by Bull and Hansen's agonistic memory theory and specifically by the concept of radical perspectivism. **The museum's Director and curators collaborated with UNREST academics**, repeatedly discussing ways of applying agonism to a war exhibition. These exchanges resulted in new challenges for the curators, making them step out of their comfort zone in order to devise novel and unsettling ways of exhibiting war and conflict and engaging with visitors.



Poster for the 'Krieg.Macht.Sinn' exhibition and the audience at the exhibition opening on 11 November 2018.
© Ruhr Museum

Findings:

- Agonism and agonistic memory as theoretical constructs/concepts can furnish the necessary instruments in order to conceptualize an exhibition on a historically/politically/socially relevant topic.
- It should be emphasized that exhibitions are not supposed/meant to illustrate theoretical concepts. In a creative context, theory is useful as an approach, not as a goal in itself.
- Exhibitions rely on narratives. Conceptualizing exhibitions by resorting to an agonistic approach without a narrative is fundamentally difficult. Yet a narrative in the sense of agonism has in effect to be understood in plural. Agonistic exhibitions have to be polyphonic, i.e. have to open the space for different – conflicting (even ideologically conflicting) – narratives.
- In their quest for strife, the danger is that agonistic exhibitions will end up staging a conflict exclusively between antagonistic and cosmopolitan positions, which will either lead to a de facto legitimation of the former or to a strengthening of the latter.
- Another danger is that agonism in museums is – very technically – interpreted as a cold and neutral presentation of opposing positions.
- Agonistic exhibitions should not be neutral and should not even aim towards neutrality, but should rather make evident that their aim is that of presenting and strengthening counter-hegemonic radically democratic positions.
- Agonistic exhibitions are political interventions whose ultimate objective/goal is that of providing a counterweight to both cosmopolitanism and antagonistic nationalism/parochialism.
- If agonistic exhibitions are understood as providing a critical take on cosmopolitanism, they should also acknowledge that cosmopolitanism can stand for very different positions: both victimhood-centred pacifism and military interventionism (see Yugoslavia, Iraq), two in effect radically different positions, are in effect considered to be “cosmopolitan” positions with respect to war.

One of these novel ways to exhibit consisted of two **new video games**, developed by UNREST researchers. Conceived as a specific **agonistic intervention**, these custom-made video games engage visitors with multiple socio-political perspectives through role-playing, requiring them to make decisions about a number of historical and memorial dilemmas. In this way, visitors can gain a better sense of the feelings of ordinary men and women who ended up becoming victims, perpetrators or bystanders. Thus, in one game ('Umschlagplatz 43'), players take on the roles of complex characters, based on real life testimonies, who are given a chance to save themselves from the Nazis at the expense of others. Through interaction and reflection, players gain an understanding of how decisions are shaped by context but also of how the options of the bystanders of history and memory may exact severe moral and political sacrifices. An evaluation of visitors' reactions to the exhibition and the agonistic use of computer games, based on interviews and a tablet survey using emojis elicited positive comments and appreciations.



Agonistic games on display in the 'Krieg.Macht.Sinn' exhibition at the Ruhr Museum, Essen. © Daniela de Angeli

UNREST found that **video/computer games** are relevant tools that can be used in order to ask questions, raise problems, delineate (contingent) answers to contemporary problems, build solidarities etc.; at the same time, bearing in mind the complexity of such enterprises (i.e. the development video/computer games), both in terms of financial, time and human resources. It might be worth thinking whether the engagement with games should not perhaps be the core part of research projects rather than one tool amongst others; it might also be worth considering funding high-class research on games and the social and political aspects that are part and parcel of such media.

Through UNREST cultural and training products, agonistic memory theory and approaches to heritage of war and conflict have influenced **museum curators, heritage practitioners and the general public**.

UNREST researchers collaborated with museum curators in the UK, Belgium, France, Slovenia, Poland and Germany through specific workshops in which the theory of agonistic memory and its possible applications to museum exhibitions were presented and discussed. These exchanges led curators to re-appraise and rethink their approaches to the heritage of war and to exhibition practices and the UNREST researchers to refine and develop their theoretical work.

Agonistic memory theory and the concept of radical multiperspectivism have also influenced another **exhibition**, which is not part of the UNREST project, proving that the theory can also be fruitfully applied to exhibitions dealing with recent conflicts. Dr Chris Reynolds from the University of Nottingham Trent, co-produced a new interactive exhibition with the Ulster museum, entitled 'Voices of '68', which opened in September 2018 and lasted for one month, generating much public interest and positive reactions; a travelling version has toured Ireland, the UK and the USA. Dr Reynolds also developed educational materials for schools. He explains how he incorporated key elements of agonistic memory theory into the exhibition in the MOOC online training module developed by UNREST researchers.

UNREST brought together museum professionals at various events and **promotes networking between museum professionals** (project partners and non-project partners) as an effective tool for the exchange of knowledge, skills and experience. Since these networking opportunities proved fruitful, UNREST proposes the **introduction of an EU-level funding programme for to facilitate similar exchanges between museum professionals and researchers** in different institutions and different countries.

The **second cultural product** created in partnership with Micomicón theatre company was the theatre performance: *Donde el bosque se espesa* (*Where the Forest Thickens*), which was world-premiered in Madrid in June 2017. This theatre performance **interwove different European sites and times** (mainly the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War and the Yugoslav break-up wars) and tackled the question of memory through the **intergenerational transmission of memory**. Micomicón is one of Spain's leading theatre companies within the field of experimental, political drama, with extensive experience of bringing the memory of war and post-war repression to the stage. Laila Ripoll and Mariano Llorente, the playwrights and artists who lead Micomicón, agreed to collaborate on the project with the creation of a play that **challenges the public ethically and politically** on questions singled out as demarcation lines between the three major modes of remembering, antagonistic, cosmopolitan and agonistic.



Poster for the world-premiere of *Donde el bosque se espesa*. © Micomicón & A priori gestión teatral

Artistic creation differs from academic practice and artists have the possibility of framing their work within fiction. Fiction gives them an immense freedom that is crucial for experimentation with **new and different ways of dealing with difficult pasts** in the present. The joint forces of the academic and the artistic are extremely powerful in giving shape to the concept of agonistic memory since they combine the freedom of fantasy with the rigour of academic explorations. Both the artistic and the academic nurtured each other in UNREST. **Artistic fictionalization** was particularly effective in bringing the **voice of the perpetrator**. Once the violent acts of the past have been interpreted as horrific crimes, perpetrators do not talk. In the best of cases, they try to excuse or legitimize themselves. Fictionalization has the power to make us understand not only why a perpetrator was willing to do what he or her did believing it was the right thing to do, but also what the framing conditions were.

A possible danger related to the application of the perpetrator perspective is that the artwork **contributes to the legitimization of the crimes** committed. This is why we strongly recommend focalizing the depicted world of the past through a **split, double, or multi-perspectivist approach**. Good works of art that manage to combine or juxtapose victim and perpetrator perspectives can allow us to understand the social and political dynamics that dehumanize co-citizens and normalize violence, without excusing or legitimizing the crimes committed.

Audience analysis was conducted in three different European settings – Spain, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Poland – with the following targeted groups: memory activists, cultural heritage professionals and policy makers. Most spectators across the three European settings only scarcely referred to the emotions of ‘hope’ nor ‘indignation’ and did usually mention ‘fear’, ‘anger’, ‘disgust’, ‘rage’, ‘pain’, among others normally regarded as ‘negative’. **Negative emotions** are relevant for art enjoyment and can also be enlightening for agonism, understanding it as the opportunity to shift, for instance, from hate or anger to more **democratic and inclusive emotions**. The fact that the play gives the floor to a perpetrator was often questioned and felt to be morally and politically objectionable by Spanish stakeholders. Paradoxically, in BiH, where the war is so recent, the perpetrator, who was so problematic for Spanish audiences, was familiar and understandable for many Bosnian stakeholders.



Micomición, researchers and audience at open debate right after the world-premiere at Teatro del Bosque. June 22, 2017. © Micomicón & A priori gestión teatral

We concluded that although we can create works of art that contain **‘agonistic moments’**, we cannot create agonistic works of art. There are many examples of these ‘agonistic moments’. However, considering a novel, a film or a theatre performance as agonistic as such would be inaccurate, since it would diminish agonism’s relational nature and the importance of the social context in which a given artistic work takes place. **Agonism emerges in the interaction between artworks and social actors**. The latter are the ones who can potentially empower themselves and rise up against the conservative and capitalist hegemonic power.

Policy Recommendations

From the wide-ranging research undertaken by UNREST researchers, we recommend the following:

National and European leaders need to acknowledge that at times of great structural inequalities those who feel marginalised rally around a national culture and identity pitted against a global culture perceived as sustained and promoted by privileged elites for their own interests. For too long, national and European interests and cultures have been deemed to enjoy a harmonic relationship to each other, with overlapping identities and belonging. **This ‘cosmopolitan’ vision and narrative should be replaced with an ‘agonistic’ narrative which recognises that the relationship can be conflictual and confrontational. Measures should be put into place to manage such conflict and thus to avoid total rupture.**

The policies that have to deal with heritage institutions and memory spaces in societies with a traumatic past -like those which have undergone civil or international war, genocide, or were issued from a colonial context- should be designed as to permit the interaction of contested perspectives within a negotiated legal and political frame of dissent. This is key to the resignification of ‘memoryscapes’ inherited from authoritarian experiences and to the agonistic interpretation of shared but disputed pasts. Museums -including national museums, national history museums, war museums- should be encouraged to see themselves as places of experimentation and confrontation, as agonistic ‘fora’, where pressing societal and political problems can be addressed head-on and where hegemonic discourses can be critically discussed and undermined, solidarities constructed, exclusionary visions tackled etc. **UNREST therefore recommends that agonistic approaches to memory politics should be encouraged in the democratic member states of the EU and at EU level through training of museum staff and others who are involved in memory work.**

In post conflict societies, it is recommended that international and domestic policymakers give serious consideration to, and incorporate elements of, a non-consensual approach, derived from Chantal Mouffe and termed ‘agonistic peacebuilding’, on which there is a burgeoning literature. All practitioners in peacekeeping should be trained in this approach at least as much as they currently are in pursuing consensual practices. Our MOOC training module on modes of remembering war and conflict, devised and offered free to interested people all over the world in 2018 and 2019, elicited very positive responses to an agonistic approach from expert practitioners keen to apply it in their respective areas of work. There is therefore a demand for new approaches from those directly involved in peacekeeping.

In post-conflict societies, where the conflict is recent and the trauma acute, agonistic approaches should be applied with caution and under strict supervision and control from people familiar with agonistic memory strategies. They are unlikely to work in non-democratic, authoritarian and dictatorial societies.

In established democratic societies, agonistic memory politics work best where they can be pursued in conjunction with social movements and/or a mobilisation of citizens. A similar approach should therefore be considered by policymakers in addressing relations between long-term residents and migrants, introducing practices of ‘agonistic dialogue’ which can help deal with existing tensions and animosity. In this case too, training practitioners in agonistic theory and interventions should be promoted.

Project Identity

PROJECT NAME	UNSETTLING REMEMBERING AND SOCIAL COHESION IN TRANSNATIONAL EUROPE (UNREST)
COORDINATOR	PROFESSOR STEFAN BERGER RUHR UNIVERSITY BOCHUM, GERMANY.
CONSORTIUM	UNIVERSITY OF BATH, UK. DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS, LANGUAGE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE. AARHUS UNIVERSITY, DENMARK. DEPARTMENT OF AESTHETICS AND COMMUNICATION). SPANISH NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, SPAIN. CENTER FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN BERLIN OF THE POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCE. RUHR MUSEUM ESSEN, GERMANY. MICOMICÓN THEATRE COMPANY, SPAIN.
FUNDING SCHEME	HORIZON 2020 TOPIC: THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF WAR IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE TYPE OF ACTION: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ACTION CALL: H2020-REFLECTIVE-2014-2015 THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION'S HORIZON 2020 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT NO 693523.
DURATION	APRIL 2016 – MARCH 2019 (36 MONTHS)
BUDGET	EU CONTRIBUTION: € 2 489 648, 75
WEBSITE	HTTP://WWW.UNREST.EU/HOME/