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#MoreInCommon:

Collective mourning practices on Twitter and the iconisation of Jo Cox

Katy Parry

Abstract

The murder of Jo Cox MP on 16 June 2016 brought the UK EU Referendum campaign to a shocked standstill, as reports emerged that the killer had shouted 'Britain First' after shooting and stabbing the MP. This chapter examines the role of the aesthetic and symbolic in the tweets shared by those responding to Jo Cox's death. I demonstrate how linkages between popular culture forms, visual tropes and symbols were deployed by those both expressing their identification as an emergent compassionate collectivity and, to a lesser degree, those who articulated their support for her murderer's actions.

The visual sharing practices on Twitter re-cast Jo Cox as a retrospective public figure whose values are to be admired. In becoming a publicly recognisable figure in the wake of her violent death, Jo Cox's values become crystallised by the creative efforts of others, who form a community around her image and political vision.

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Introduction

Jo Cox was the Labour Member of Parliament (MP) for Batley and Spen, murdered during the European Union (EU) referendum campaign in June 2016. The first MP to be killed in the United Kingdom since Ian Gow (by the Provisional IRA in 1990), Cox's death was brutally public as she was repeatedly shot and stabbed in the street by Thomas Mair. According to witnesses, including the MP's constituency manager Fazila Aswat, Mair shouted, 'Britain first. This is for Britain. Britain will always be first', after he killed Jo Cox. At the time of his arrest, Thomas Mair only said to the police, 'I'm a political activist' but then refused to answer any questions at all (in over six hours of interviews). The next day, when asked to give his name at a court appearance, Mair replied: 'My name is Death to Traitors. Freedom for Britain'. The EU Referendum campaign was suspended in wake of the attack and, for a couple of days at least, the shocking event quietened the divisive political discourse.

Whether characterized as a terrorist or mentally ill, Thomas Mair communicated quite clearly his political motivations in targeting an MP known for her campaigning in support of refugees and the Remain campaign. In responding to the news, supporters and members of the public took to social media to express their sorrow and to organise events in commemoration. The #MoreInCommon hashtag campaign derives from Jo Cox's maiden speech in Parliament, only a year before her death. Speaking about how communities had been 'deeply enhanced' by immigration, she continued: '…and whilst we celebrate our

diversity, the thing that surprises me time and time again as I travel around the constituency is that we are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us' (3 June, 2015). In death, Cox's earlier words were deployed as a rallying cry for unity in diversity; a message that seemed particularly apt in the divisive times of the EU Referendum campaign. But as we shall see, the constitution of a common 'we' around the images and words of Jo Cox also prompted a counter strategy from those resistant to such a call.

The social media platform Twitter offers one space where we can observe the construction of both 'ad hoc' (Bruns & Burgess, 2015) and 'affective publics' (Papacharissi, 2015, 2016). On Twitter, among other media spaces, the hashtag #MoreInCommon was used to express sorrow, but also construct solidarities in the symbolism and images created and shared. Drawing on semiotic and thematic analysis of Twitter data, my particular focus is on the communicative functions of the digital images shared as one element in the multimodal performances of solidarity. The photographs, image-text cartoons and memes suggest the constitution of a collective 'we' who use the image and words of Jo Cox to construct her as a *retrospective public figure* with a certain set of values around which people can form a sentiment of togetherness. How do the images shared via Twitter perform memorialisation, belonging and solidarity in interplay with accompanying text? How do the visuals work to co-construct Jo Cox as a 'bonding icon' (Wignell, Tan, & O'Halloran, 2017) symbolising common values and a common 'we'?

Theoretical background: Constructing a common 'we' in response to political violence

This chapter is principally in dialogue with the recent studies on the formation of publics on Twitter in response to shocking events, in which visual material is considered to play an important communicative role (Bruns & Hanusch, 2017; Vis, Faulkner, Parry, Manyukhina,

& Evans, 2013). This is in addition to examinations of the broader media rituals implicated in engendering solidarity, collective grieving and performative commemoration (Berkowitz, 2017; Döveling, Harju, & Sommer, 2018; Merrill, 2017). In turn, such studies are indebted to earlier scholarship on media events (Dayan & Katz, 1992), and especially 'conflictual media events' such as terror attacks, war and disasters (Hepp & Couldry, 2010; Mortensen, 2015), where both the nature of 'media' and 'events' are being rethought in the era of digital technologies and global news flows. Conflictual media events tend to be those concerning mass death rather than a single targeted attack on an individual, but the Jo Cox murder certainly disrupted the regular news flow and also prompted widespread public displays of sorrow and reflections on its broader significance for the national community.

At such a politically divisive moment in UK politics, the #MoreInCommon movement hoped to engender a sentiment of togetherness across social and political cleavages, and also spread a message of human solidarity beyond the UK. When writing of the 'public' formed here, I am following Papacharissi's work on 'affective publics' understood as 'networked publics that are mobilized and connected, identified, and potentially disconnected through expressions of sentiment' (Papacharissi, 2016, p. 5). Papacharissi examines modalities of engagement on Twitter that are primarily affective, but she is interested in storytelling structures (tonality, rhythm, and texture) rather the role of images in those meaning-making practices. However, I would argue that visual images also have a role to play in the 'public formations that are *textually* rendered into being through emotive expressions that spread virally through networked crowds' (Papacharissi, 2016, p. 320, added emphasis), and in imagining who 'we might be, and how we might get there' (p. 311).

Twitter as an imperfect 'ad hoc' public

This study uses Twitter as an 'imperfect' indicator for the public. Unlike Facebook, Twitter is primarily a public social media platform, associated with instantaneous response especially in

unfolding news events, but participation is deeply uneven and it is an 'imperfect' stand-in for the general public. Twitter has become intertwined in the news media ecology, with top tweeters on events often established news organisations or individual reporters, but vying for space with celebrities and momentary 'influencers' who hold a personal connection to the reported events (as citizen witnesses, family members). Indeed the latter group are often in a position to offer counter-narratives to the established media; correcting information, articulating emotions or challenging authority. I acknowledge that the focus on Twitter is also imperfect in that it cannot fully embrace the hybridity and complexities of the contemporary media ecosystem. Space constraints do not allow for me to discuss the audiovisual material also shared and linked on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram without sacrificing analytical focus and depth.

In addition to its 'publicness' and openness for researchers, Twitter has become increasingly visual. Image tweets, videos, memes and reactions GIFs are part of the everyday language of Twitter, often embedded in tweets as a way to increase the likelihood of retweeting. Where early studies on Twitter during crisis, terror or protest events focused on the text, there is a growing body of work which looks to the role of images, cartoons or audiovisual content in the 'processes of witnessing' (Bruns & Hanusch, 2017; Vis et al., 2013), and as facilitators for building solidarity and collective identification (Gerbaudo, 2015; Kharroub & Bas, 2016). Displays of solidarity and commemoration also take place in public and semi-private spaces, of course, and displaying symbols such as flags, car stickers, tattoos or clothing also provides visual symbols which enact a sense a shared identity and solidarity (Collins, 2004). Dan Berkowitz's (2017) study on the visual representation of solidarity in news coverage of the co-ordinated Brussels attacks in March 2016 considers the interplay of image and text, pointing out how the captions work to anchor meanings. Crucially he examines cartoons in addition to photographs, and the kind of creative symbolism he notes is also relevant to the

drawings, cartoons and memes shared via social media platforms. Indeed the creation, re-working and recontextualisation of images are part of the 'memetic' or viral character of internet images, rapidly circulating and becoming *recognizable* as meaningful or significant across various communication networks. Such reworking practices are not entirely new to activists or artistic groups, of course, and pre-date the digital age, but they have accelerated in the era of 'web 2.0' (Olesen, 2018). The argument here is that images and symbols play a significant role in the construction of political belonging and communities of solidarity, and examining patterns in their form, aesthetics and symbolism reveals how such shared values are articulated and cultivated.

In sum, Twitter is an 'imperfect' stand-in for the public, but it can be utilised as one interconnected space for emotions and identifications to be expressed and shared in visual as well as verbal communication.

Methods

This study uses the open source tool for big data analytics, Mecodify, for the Twitter searches. The tool was developed by Walid al-Saqaf as part of the EU-funded 'Media, Conflict and Democratisation' project.[1] Mecodify enables the selection of tweets based on searches for hashtags or other words or usernames, including historical data. Tweets containing an image or video can be selected enabling the researcher to know the most popular, how they were used, and the time it was sent (al Saqaf, 2016). The guidance on al Saqaf's webpage outlines the various visualisation and analysis options for quantitative

[1] The MeCoDEM project received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 613370.

enquiries of the data. For the purposes of this chapter, I focus on a small selection of image-tweets immediately following Jo Cox's murder, rather than on the quantitative results.

The initial search found tweets including "Jo Cox" OR "#MoreInCommon" between 16 June and 22 June 2016, resulting in 6,988 tweets (or 64,391 with retweets). Restricting the search to those including an image gives 845 results (37,044 with retweets). I then looked at which images were shared, their contexts, and the patterns of their use. I found this to be an iterative process, conducting different searches to capture the transient 'ad hoc' publics (Bruns & Burgess, 2015) that emerge once I started to see the interconnections between key actors and certain hashtags (such as between #MoreInCommon and #LoveLikeJo), but also the counter-public that centres on Thomas Mair, and even celebrates his actions. I therefore conducted a second separate search for "Thomas Mair" OR "Tommy Mair" using the same dates, which returned 4,591 tweets (31,221 with retweets), or 620 tweets with images (15,958 with retweets) in the same seven day period. This led me to dig around further into 'National Action', the neo-Nazi group apparently tweeting support for Mair and who were later banned by the UK Government in December 2016 (Allen, 2017). As a side note, the banning of National Action led to their tweets being removed from Twitter, and so this also speaks to another methodological difficulty in researching such groups retrospectively. Only those tweets screen-grabbed earlier were available for later analysis.

By opting to include a hashtag or topical name alongside the images or links, tweeters are signalling that they intend to play a part in a public conversation, or to participate in an 'ad hoc' public (Bruns & Burgess, 2015; Bruns & Hanusch, 2017). However, I have not included identifying data for tweeters unless they already have a public profile as an organisation or campaigner.

Findings

The most shared images on Twitter in response to Jo Cox's death

Unlike in other cases of violent events and terror attacks recently studied, it is not the 'eyewitness' images emerging from Jo Cox's murder that social media users see in the news coverage or share online (Bruns & Hanusch, 2017; Mortensen, 2015). As far as we know, Jo Cox's violent death is not captured on film by citizen witnesses, and the only grainy amateur-style images to emerge later are those of Mair's arrest in the street.

The first images shared are abstract and symbolic in nature, '#Yorkshire sunset, Emley Moor, near Jo Cox's birthplace and constituency. #RIPJoCox', with familiar vigil-based images of flowers and candles starting to appear the same evening, and even a connection to the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando earlier that week: 'Vigil for Orlando & also for Jo Cox.. Moving speeches & Tom Robinson singing Glad to be Gay. Glad to be in Bradford'. This tweet is accompanied with photos of rainbow balloons spelling out 'Pulse' and so nicely conveys 'transcultural political belonging' (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 182) fostered alongside the reassuring comfort of a local embodied co-presence ('Glad to be in Bradford').

The most common image-type is not a singular image, but variations on a theme: a photograph of Jo smiling with her own words quoted from her maiden speech (see Figure 1). By gathering these images and exploring the sharing practices that accompany them, we can observe how Cox's political and cultural legacy is co-constituted in these various pairings, and in a web of hashtags that signal affiliation and belonging.

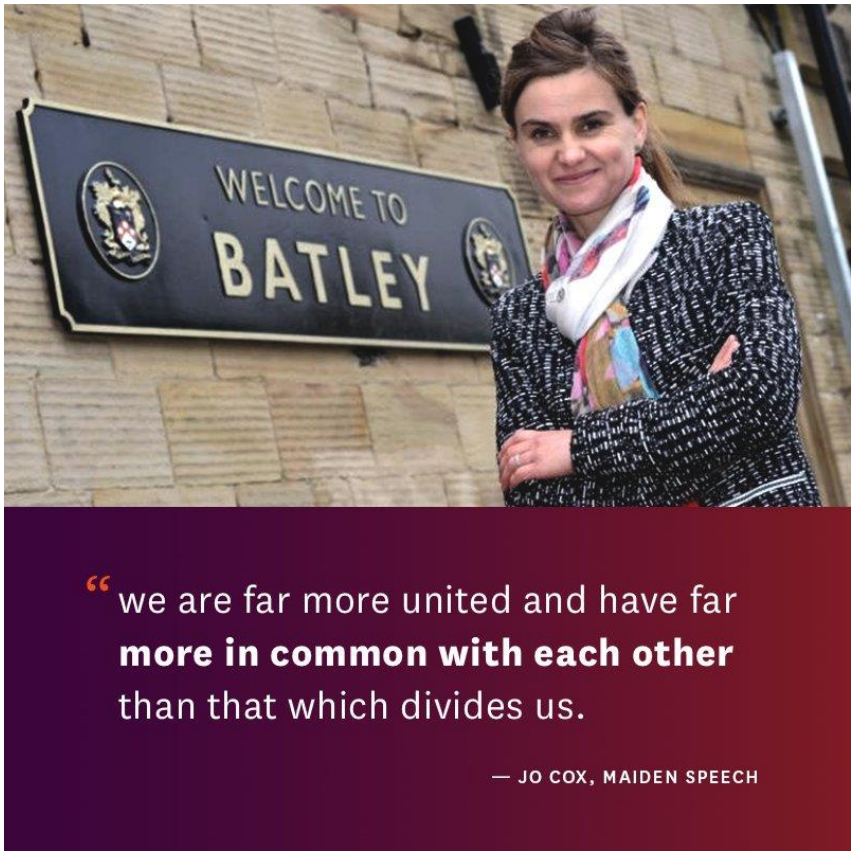

Figure 1: An example of the photo-quote combination observed in the most retweeted images of Jo Cox in the days after her death.

So quickly after her death, Jo's presence is visually restored in this recognizable genre. What we see in these shared image-tweets is that Jo's portrait is often paired with her own words (Figure 1). Whilst taking different forms, the genre and format is relatively settled, a 'ready made' template – a picture of Jo smiling with a quotation – typically the 'more in common' speech extract. In the photo-quote format, Jo is often visually situated either in her constituency with visual markers of Batley or at the House of Commons. In Figure 1, Jo Cox is pictured standing by a 'Welcome to Batley' sign, from a low oblique angle. Jo smiles directly into the camera with her hair loosely tied up, with a scarf and coat presumably keeping her warm. Despite the low angle, this is an intimate and friendly pose, a portrait that depicts the MP proudly representing her constituency and couple with her own words about how we have 'more in common'. This 'placing' is likely to be a product of available images

in an online search, but in this context of the dedicatory image-tweets, becomes relevant to the meaning-making practices. Jo's work and values are central to how her retrospective public image is co-constituted.

The Iconisation of Jo Cox

Tributes pour in from around the world, and Glastonbury festival opens with a dedication. As newspaper front pages are released later that night for 17 June, their coverage of Jo Cox's death visually dominates, with many headlines including the words of Brendan Cox, her husband, that she 'believed in a better world and she fought for it every day'. Performing commemoration in this way shifts the emotional repertoire from trauma and loss to celebration, empathy and solidarity. Not forgetting this is foremost a personal tragedy for Jo's family and friends, the online sharing and commenting transforms this personal grief into public mourning.

Late in the evening on 18 June we start to see the hashtag #MoreInCommon used to promote co-ordinated memorial events to celebrate Jo's life on 22 June, which would have been her 42nd birthday. Here there is a shift in the function of the images which places the *sharer* of the image as a central protagonist, rather than a conduit for the words and image of Jo Cox. Now the function of the image-tweet changes to a commitment to 'love like Jo' and so becomes attached to social action, expressed through the emotion of love.

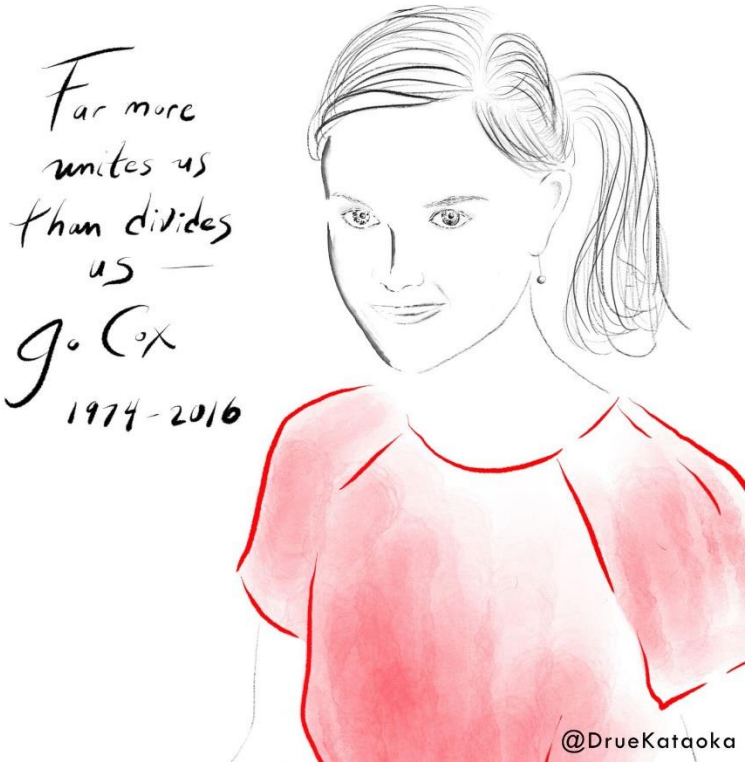

Figure 2: Image shared in pledge to 'love like Jo'. Artwork by Drue Kataoka www.Drue.Net.

The portrait in Figure 2 was reproduced on banners at memorial events in Trafalgar Square, New York, Buenos Aires and many more, with participants adding their own pledge to '#LoveLikeJo' and then later sharing photos on social media where they are depicted holding up the banner. The artist Drue Kataoka had been asked by Jo's friends to create something quickly but was 'on another continent' at the time and so, with time pressing, she painted Jo's face in ink on paper and sketched the body on an iPad, drawing upon the footage of the maiden speech in Parliament for inspiration. The artist's own account describes waking up to see her sketch across the media the very next day: 'The image had taken on a life of its own as part of this larger movement — it was being carried by love, with people building their own meanings on top of it, all of them resolving to #LoveLikeJo' (Kataoka, 2016).

As Paolo Gerbaudo (2015) has observed in relation to protest avatars (where people change their profile picture to a collective icon or image), such visible collective identity symbols are crucial in creating a sense of 'we' (as with badge wearing or waving political flags) but not

all are necessarily durable as political icons of injustice or outrage. Through the sharing of different variations of Jo Cox's likeness and words we can witness the process of 'iconisation', as coined by linguist James Martin and adopted by Peter Wignall and co-authors in a recent study of ISIS's online magazine, *Dabiq*.

> Iconisation occurs when meanings are condensed and interpersonally charged through various forms of semiosis, such as words, images, objects and practices in emblems, logos, flags, mottos, religious texts, rituals and ceremonies and in combinations of these semiotic artefacts and processes' (Wignell et al., 2017, p. 2)

By referring to the process whereby meanings are 'interpersonally charged' the authors highlight the way in which semiotic resources 'enact social relations', and so again this is about focusing on engendering solidarity and the sociality of such meaning-making practices.

In their article Wignall et al. (2017) examine the use of 'bonding icons' to explain how certain objects come to symbolise unity and hold emotional importance for a certain community. A bonding icon can be used to align people and represent a community's world view. Pertinently they give as an example the blended peace symbol with the Eiffel Tower which was designed by French illustrator Jean Jullien and posted on Twitter in the hours following the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. This icon's dissemination is one of those traced in Bruns and Hanusch's (2017) article comparing audiovisual material on Twitter following the Paris and Brussels attacks. In their conclusions Bruns and Hanusch (2017, p. 1138) stress the significance of 'affective intent' in the sharing of photos and drawings during crisis moments, to the extent that the 'affective response becomes newsworthy in its own right' as it becomes remediated in the news context. The point here is that creative imagery and affective content have an important role to play alongside factual footage when it comes to shaping the intelligibility of such shocking events.

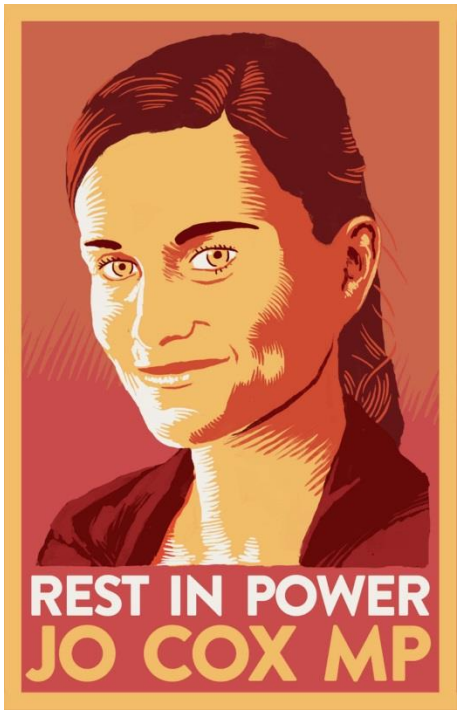

Figure 3: 'Rest in Power'. This was used by *Time Out London* to promote the Trafalgar Square event on 22 June (McGinn, 2016). Illustration reproduced with kind permission from Daniel Murtha.

We can note a striking constellation of semiotic resources at play in Figure 3. The posterisation effect and *sans serif* font visually reference the 'Hope' poster of Obama, in this case associating the two politicians' political values through corresponding design features, rather than pointing out their dissimilarities (as suggested in the many Donald Trump variations). The photographic portrait of Jo Cox is here reduced to five bright but flat colours with high saturation in a bold print, or poster style design, associated with promotional or activist imagery. The warm reds and oranges align with the energy and warmth of the subject (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002), whilst 'Rest in Power' stems from the hip hop community and LGBT activism in the US.

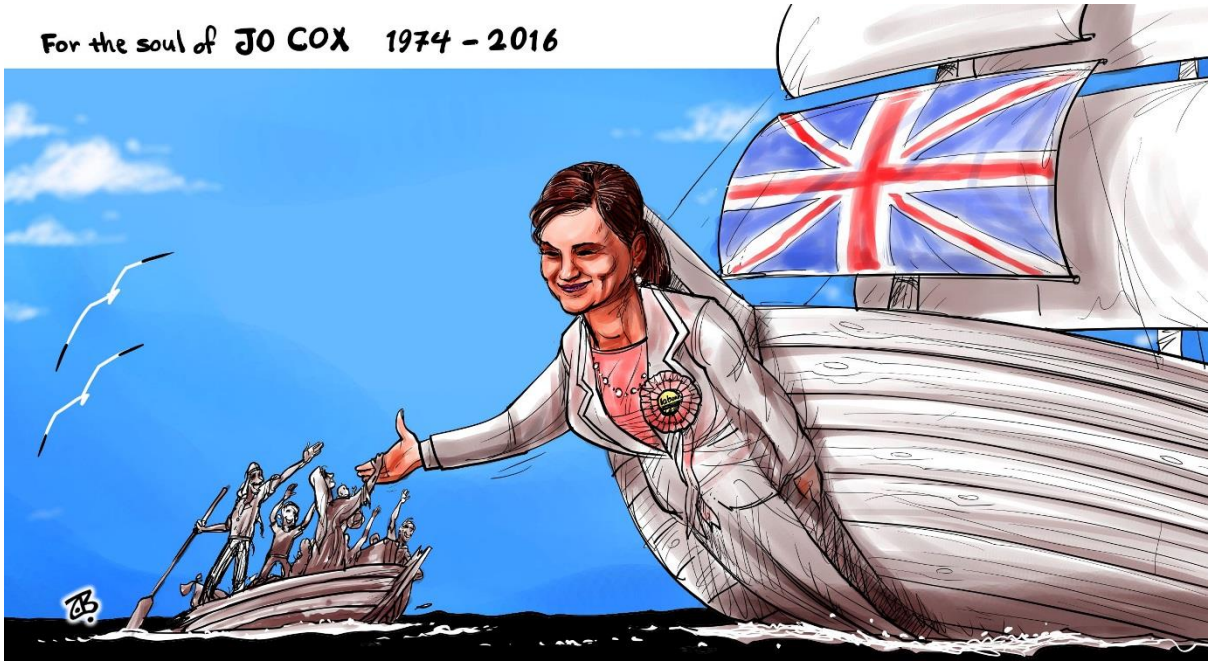

Figure 4: Cartoon is by the Palestinian cartoonist Emad Hajjaj. Credit: Emad Hajjaj/Cartoon Movement.

In Figure 4, the respected Palestinian cartoonist Emad Hajjaj pays tribute to Jo Cox, reimagined as the 'figurehead' on the prow of a ship bearing the Union Jack. But she is not a wooden or immobile figure; rather she is depicted as responsive, reaching out to much smaller figures in a boat, possibly representing refugees. The blue jacket worn by Jo in many photos is now white, connoting purity and spirituality. The caption reads 'For the soul of Jo Cox, 1974-2016' and there is certainly a religious or mystical character to this image, not only in the colouring, but in her godlike blessing of the tiny figures reaching up to her. In both Figure 3 and 4, there is a message of transcendence, with references to the soul of Jo Cox and to her power to affect social change in death. The creativity of those responding to her death also speaks to the way in which co-constructing a political legacy necessarily embraces the aesthetic, cultural and moral.

The cartoon from Emad Hajjaj is just one example which demonstrates how '[n]ew textures of collectivity emerge' in such online spaces of communication, where networked media

technologies enable a number of 'differentiated collectivities' to be defined and constructed, and the responses to Jo Cox's death were certainly transnational and multi-lingual (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p.175). Images of Jo Cox being remembered in Hebron, Palestine and in Aleppo, Syria are also shared.

Twitter and Facebook take on their publicity and fund-raising functions at this stage, as we see the engagement and solidarity fostered online move into social action. In only three days following her death the informal Jo Cox fund on 'gofundme' had raised £1 million, and continued to attract donations. Such efforts became formalised and in January 2017 the Jo Cox Foundation was granted charitable status so it could continue to support various causes, including support for Syrian refugees and initiatives to combat loneliness and social isolation in the UK.

The impetus for the collective online mourning practices is the terrorist murder of a young female MP. But Cox was relatively unknown until her death, having only served in Parliament for a year. She was not a national cultural icon or hero. As a targeted victim of a terror attack, the memorialising of Jo Cox falls between the fan-style commemoration when a star dies, and the generalised shock and grief shared with those victims of a terrorist attack who only become known to the public through their photographs and naming in the media. Outside of her constituency and the Labour party she was not a recognised political figure to the general public, but in her violent death she becomes a symbol for a certain political vision (idealistic, compassionate, cosmopolitan), undoubtedly linked to her support for Remain. Because Jo Cox was targeted for her political beliefs, she is not an incidental victim. It is as a retrospective public figure that we come to know her and recognise her as a symbol or even icon for positive politics.

Looking in the dark corners

What about those who fail to subscribe to the norms of collective mourning?

There has been widespread attention recently to the incivility expressed on social media and the possible motivations for ‘trolls’ who might simply be hoping to engender a negative emotional response. The spaces for online participation and connection are often characterised in metaphors of ‘clouds’ and ‘global villages’, but occasionally the sensation is more like finding yourself in a dark corner. This spatial metaphor also reflects the inequalities of access and legitimacy; the atomisation of figures such as Mair, and those who cast him as a hero. ‘Tommy Mair’ is named on Twitter as the killer soon after 3pm on 16 June, with comments focusing on his ‘loner’ status, mental health issues, whether he shouted ‘Britain First’, and how he would be a labelled a terrorist if Muslim: ‘They're always loners when they're white’.

I would like to focus on a cartoon image shared on 17 June, the day after the murder.

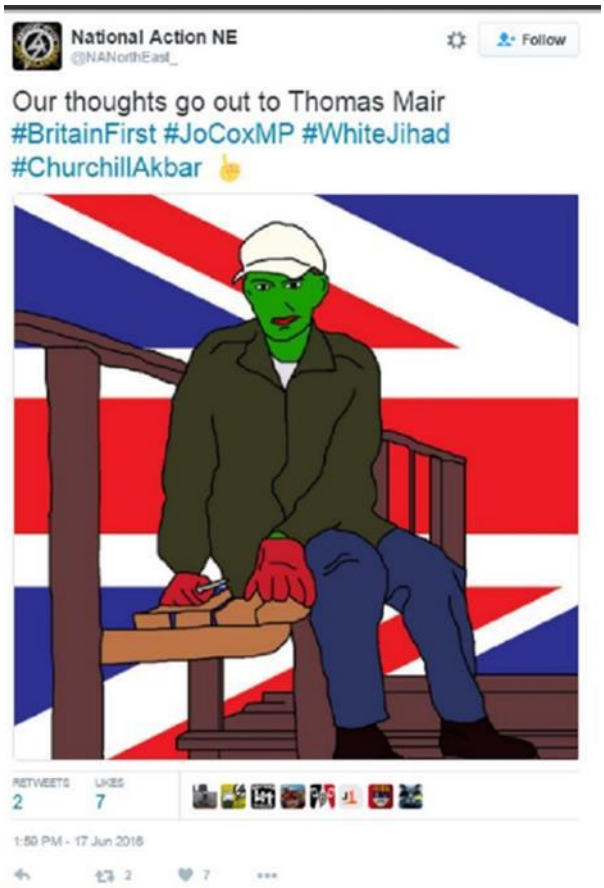

Figure 5: Tweet shared on 17 June 2016 by National Action North East.

Using an expression conventionally associated with grieving or families of victims, 'Our thoughts go out to…' , @NANorthEast here applies those words to Thomas Mair, accompanied with a cluster of hashtags (Figure 5). Addressed in this way, the murderer becomes a subject for empathising grief. The recognisable moral functions of media reporting of violent death are subverted here in a shocking combination of words and image.

The image requires explanation, with a mix of cultural codes that blend the local, national, and the transnational. The cartoon image is recognisably based on the local news photograph of Mair which had originally appeared in *Batley News* when Mair was interviewed about his volunteer work as a gardener. This soon becomes ***the*** mainstream media image of Mair, reproduced across the news media sphere. Thus the general compositional inspiration is extracted from a news photograph. The mundane photographic background is replaced with the Union Jack flag – clearly linking Mair with patriotic symbolism.

The final striking modification is Mair's green face. If anything, this cartoon image seems to attract more attention from perplexed tweeters, who either copy it to the local police or express puzzlement as to why he is green. But for those on the far right, the green face is of course a reference to Pepe the Frog, the internet meme used on 4Chan and in other platforms as a mascot of the far right. The original creator of Pepe, Matt Furie, is now fighting this use of his creation wherever it promotes hate, employing cease and desist letters and Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) notices (Gault, 2018). The creative transformation of Mair's photographic image into this cartoon combines the recognisability of the news photograph, the memetic power of Pepe the Frog and the national symbolism of the flag. However it fails to gain any traction in the ad hoc Twitter public.

The symbolism here is about creating an in-group, a visual in-joke for those conversant with Pepe's digital transformation as a symbol of hate. But the dissemination of tweets celebrating Mair as a 'hero' is limited in practice and such posts are generally ignored or disputed by other users. That is not to deny that a number of far-right groups, including National Action but also beyond the UK, perpetuated the idea of Jo Cox as a traitor. Indeed, National Action adopted Mair's stated name, 'My name is Death to Traitors, Freedom for Britain', as its listing on Google before their website was removed. Despite being proscribed as a terrorist organisation under the Terrorism Act 2000 since December 2016, we cannot assume that its members have simply given up its ideology of hate. On 27 October 2017 the *Guardian* reported that a 22-year old man had been arrested for planning to kill Labour MP Rosie Cooper with a machete allegedly in the name of National Action (Grierson & Greenfield, 2017).

During the murder trial it was confirmed that Mair's home contained a shrine-like bookcase full of white supremacist and neo-Nazi material. The timing would suggest that the Brexit campaign had fuelled his determination to kill Jo Cox but just how much the toxic political discourse contributed to his actions is hard to judge. Leave campaigners berated what they saw as Remainers' attempts to exploit the murder for political gain and to connect his actions with the rhetoric of their campaign. Such debates are beyond the scope of this chapter but this was undoubtedly an act of political extremism; one which seemed to symbolise where stoking hatred of others leads, but also conversely how the emotion of love can be harnessed for social and political change.

Conclusions

As more events are researched in this way, we can build up a broader understanding of the role that shared symbols and images play across local, national and international intersecting communities, especially in times of crisis and shock. In this conclusion I'd like to briefly reflect on the findings in relation to both the role of the visual in the formations of publics on social media, and the way in which Jo Cox's legacy is retrospectively moulded in order to engender a positive political vision.

The visual material shared in this case does not follow other terror attacks in originating from module phone footage (citizen witnessing) or news coverage, but predominantly presents a portrait of Jo Cox (photographed in her role as an MP) or a drawing, alongside an extract of her speech. As I have argued, such sharing practices co-create a 'bonding icon' (Wignell et al., 2017), which re-casts Jo Cox as a retrospective public figure whose values are to be admired and followed. In becoming a publicly recognisable figure in the wake of her violent death, Jo Cox's values become crystallised by the creative efforts of others, who form a community around her image and political vision. Icons symbolise the mythologies of a better society, and so what we see here is the iconisation of Jo Cox: a figure who becomes heroic in death. This co-created iconisation serves to make her death comprehensible and to reclaim the meaning of the tragic event by fostering feelings of belonging, love and togetherness in the spirit of #MoreInCommon.

Importantly there is not a single icon or image but multiple manifestations of the same message in multimodal form. This constellation or accumulation of similar but different 'iconic' images chimes with other authors' re-conceptualisations of icons in recent studies. For example Bruns and Hanusch (2017) argue that in a connective environment we should move beyond the traditional focus on photographs to include drawings, videos and re-appropriations, while Berkowitz (2017) examines political cartoons alongside news photographs. In truth, the malleability of icons and their re-worked appropriations have

already been scrutinized by leading scholars in the field (Hariman & Lucaites, 2007), but the idea that an assemblage of similar but different images work to form an icon collectively is a newer idea. Here, Maria Rovisco's (2017) work on the image of the occupied square as a global icon for the Indignados movement is valuable. In this case, rather than a single image, the multiplicity of images and their rapid circulation across media are the very features which demonstrate recognition and meaning for audiences across national contexts: 'In this sense, the occupied square is not reduced to a single and situated iconic moment of dissent but becomes a universal model of citizen protest to be used elsewhere in the world in struggles for a better democratic politics' (2017, p. 354). The icon is conceived here not as the exceptional one-off photograph, but the generic, universal model or template suitable for circulation as a symbolic resource for political change.

The political and affective are deeply entwined in the statements and images shared. The photographs show us the living, smiling Jo as a parliamentarian, and so conjure an earlier time, but their function is future-oriented for those sharing it: to imagine ourselves and others living according to Jo's ideals, and fight for those causes that Jo *would have been* promoting. In Papacharissi's words cited earlier, imagining who 'we might be, and how we might get there' (2016, p. 311). This is, therefore, part of a wider political project.

At a moment in which political affiliations are polarised in the referendum debate, the #MoreInCommon hashtag and campaigning initiatives in memory of Jo Cox ask others to imagine what Jo could have achieved. She becomes both a retrospective public figure and a prospective icon for social change. Even if instigated by an elite political community (with the Labour Party, Hope Note Hate, and Oxfam as leading actors), #MoreInCommon as a movement only becomes meaningful through collaborative and intersubjective articulations. But there are tensions here in generating consensus and pluralism as a way to fight populism and division. An attempt to remake the world following the legacy of Jo Cox (women's

rights, welcoming refugees, combating loneliness), for some, imposes a potentially constraining universalism and uneasy togetherness. Resistance and struggles over Cox's legacy are to be expected – indeed, it would be more worrying if they did not exist.

For those inclined to kick against conformity, being exhorted to have 'more in common' could serve to encourage performances of difference and deviant behaviours. This might take harmless and even healthy forms in most cases, but the extreme manifestations celebrate the murder and incite hatred, particularly directed towards Muslims, immigrants, women and refugees. Such pre-existing divisive communities are also adept at using social media to express affinities and build solidarities. In this case they were however relatively isolated in terms of retweeting or supportive comments.

It is too early to know how Jo Cox will be remembered in the longer political history of the UK and whether the campaigns she inspired will sustain. But both grassroots community-building initiatives and government-led programmes undertaken in her name, to combat loneliness and social isolation for example, have already been funded, realised and celebrated. Many of these efforts have been criticised for their 'soft' politics, focused on bringing neighbours together across social and political divides for street parties, picnics, and football tournaments, for instance. Most notably the first 'Great Get Together', held in partnership with The Big Lunch on the anniversary of Jo Cox's death, reportedly attracted 9.3 million participants in June 2017 (Eden Project, 2017). Women are often at the heart of organising such events, hoping to heal deep social divisions by sharing food and encouraging conversation. It is undoubtedly idealistic but it's a good place to start. I would argue that such acts of community-building are political in nature, engendering concerns for others' well-being and offering a more hopeful political vision. Jo Cox: Rest in Power.

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