MOOCs 2.0: Reviewing n.paradoxa's MOOC on Contemporary Art and Feminism

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Part I: MOOCs 2.0

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MOOCs (massive open online courses) have never been neutral territory. From their modest start in 2008 with a few thousand students to the rampaging numbers in the hundreds of thousands with Coursera, Udacity, and edX, MOOCs challenged established notions of teaching and learning\. In her 2012 TED Talk, Dr. Daphne Koller, former Stanford professor and co-founder of Coursera, eloquently championed the ethical role of MOOCs that made high quality information free and available to anyone, not just the elite enrolled in colleges and universities.[1] As a plan to redefine the landscape of education, MOOCs came under almost immediate criticism. Detractors framed them as an assault on the professoriate, arguing that MOOCs were a disruptive innovation that would destroy authentic learning associated with traditional face-to-face classes, a format already threatened by growing online instruction. There were concerns over transfer requirements and course credit, regulating testing and exam centers, policing plagiarism, and assessment practices.[2] Despite those concerns and others still being raised, MOOCs have settled comfortably into the OER (open educational resource) world, increasing by June 2017 to over 7,000 courses with an estimated 60 million students.[3] Although they have not radicalized teaching and learning, MOOCs are no longer framed as a visceral threat, and faculty teaching in both traditional and alternative ways are finding that MOOCs often offer more opportunities for learning than first imagined.

Initially, academia focused on xMOOCs and program providers such as Coursera, Udacity, and edX.[4] Aligned with premier institutions and initially free of charge, xMOOCs followed the familiar pattern: an expert knowledge provider from a single institution, a specific beginning and ending date, lectures, videos, tests, reading and writing assignments, with opportunities for collaboration on projects or activities. Free access to high quality information was the lure. Co-Coursera founder, Andrew Ng, taught a Machine Learning class at Stanford to 400 students annually, but his same class as a MOOC drew upwards of 100,000 students the first time it was offered. Same material without the Stanford price tag.

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[1] Daphne Koller, "What We're Learning From Online Education," TEDGlobal, 2012. https://www.ted.com/talks/daphne_koller_what_we_re_learning_from_online_education#t-474315

[2] Aras Bozkurt, Ela Akgün-Özbek, and Olaf Zawacki-Richter, "Trends and Patterns in Massive Open Online Courses: Review and Content Analysis of Research on MOOCs (2008-2015)," *International Review Of Research In Open & Distance Learning* 18, no. 5 (2017), 118-146.

[3] Arshad Ahmad and Barbara Oakley, "The Ostrich and the Trend," *Inside Higher Ed*, Oct. 25, 2017. https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/views/2017/10/25/counterpoint-moocs-are-neither-dangerous-nor-dead-opinion

[4] FemNetTech.org is an example of a DOCC. With no single institutional affiliation, the group supports expertise that is distributed throughout the network, encourages collaboration, and affirms different methods of learning. http://femtechnet.org/docc/

Today, the major xMOOC providers and newcomers such as Kadenze, which focuses exclusively on the arts and creative technology, have all moved toward monetization. MOOC content remains free and open, but graded assignments, collaboration options, and completion certificates are generally behind a paywall. Most MOOC providers have established unique credential approaches. Coursera has specializations; Udacity has Nanodegrees; edX has xSeries; and FutureLearn, a subsidiary of The Open University, offers some postgraduate degrees and advertises that successful completion of a program *can* lead to academic credit.

MOOC providers, however, cannot guarantee that successful completion of a course will translate into college credits. Although they have pressed hard for transferable credit through their monetized programs, and there has been some support from the American Council on Education (ACE), there is still strong resistance. High profile institutions may partner with MOOC providers for content and name branding value, but they do not offer the equivalent institutional credit for taking and passing MOOC courses with their faculty.[5] A completion certificate can be used to demonstrate ongoing education in some fields or careers; but, given the rigid criteria that regional accreditors demand of profit and non-profit institutions, the MOOC format for testing and assessment falls short, even with improved practices for test taking, anti-cheating measures, and student verification.[6] Establishing a parallel between credit courses and MOOCs remains a distinct challenge for disciplines like Art History, where courses are frequently research and writing intensive, or require essay examinations rather than the MOOC pattern of peer grading or auto-grading.

Notably, the quality of MOOC content has rarely come under fire. The first MOOC providers hired experts from premier US institutions to design the courses, and that has continued to be the standard. Designing, developing, and building a MOOC course is expensive and labor intensive which has led to an imbalance of institutional collaboration. Most US institutions partnering with major MOOC providers fall within the top 50 of U.S. News "National University Rankings" list.[7] While that elitism is a prime marketing point for xMOOCs, many other qualified and interested faculty cannot compete. They lack the institutional funding and support for course release time to prepare and develop a MOOC, instructional design assistance, and technical expertise for video filming and editing their lectures.

Beyond the thorny question of transferable credit, MOOC backlash targeted the key issues of authentic learning and pedagogy. Critics charged that regardless of the content quality, real learning was dependent on the face-to-face classroom format, a position at odds with the tens of thousands of students in a single MOOC course. That argument ultimately dissolved on various fronts: grudging acknowledgement that distance learning and online pedagogies were growing and productive factors in college education; the increase of online degree programs from accredited institutions; pedagogical controversies over the value of the flipped classroom versus

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[5] Steve Kolowich, "The Professors Who Make the MOOCs," *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* March 18, 2013. (Accessed December 2, 2017) (http://publicservicesalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/The-Professors-Behind-the-MOOC-Hype-Technology-The-Chronicle-of-Higher-Education.pdf

[6] "State of the MOOC 2016: A Year of Massive Landscape Change for Massive Open Online Courses." *Online Course Report.* (Accessed Dec. 2, 2017) https://www.onlinecoursereport.com/state-of-the-mooc-2016-a-year-of-massive-landscape-change-for-massive-open-online-courses/

[7] Ibid.

the traditional, stand-alone lecture; collaborative and experiential learning activities which often occurred outside of the classroom; and a changing, technologically savvy student population anxious for more flexible course options than the traditional, bundled college experience.[8]

Arguably, MOOCs have impacted pedagogy for both online and face-to-face instruction. Initially, MOOCs paralleled existing online pedagogy with video lectures and readings, although quizzes, tests, and written assignments were either peer graded or auto graded. Daphne Koller's work with "in-video quizzes" and blended on-campus learning was influential in changing MOOC pedagogy to be more interactive, long before the discussion of the flipped classroom had become an issue.[9] Now, a typical MOOC video lecture is 8-10 minutes or less, generally followed by a question or problem to which students should respond. Sometimes those activities are instantly auto-graded and sometimes students can work in groups online, but the goal remains the same. Students participating in the course are continually prompted to interact with the material and/or each other rather than passively sit and listen. While not a true 'flipped classroom,' that instructional model has become a rallying point for educators, many of whom are making or adapting MOOCs with the flipped class format in mind. Duke University began using MOOCs in 2012 to promote innovation in teaching and learning within their campus community. Since then, they have developed over 31 Coursera MOOCs. More, importantly, instructors have learned from the MOOCs as well, and they have adapted those lessons to improve pedagogy campus wide by rethinking how students learn in both face-to-face and distance learning classes.[10]

MOOCs occupy an intriguing and growing educational space and the initial "one size fits all" approach has been modified and customized. Along with xMOOCs, there are cMOOCs that follow a connectivist pattern such as the example from *n.paradoxa* discussed below. Grounded on George Siemans's position about learning in a digital age,[11] cMOOCs focus on "knowledge creation and generation rather than knowledge duplication," which is more typical of xMOOCs.[12] Often without institutional affiliation, the cMOOC format is self-paced, encourages collaboration, commentary, and reflection, with the bulk of the responsibility on the students. Along the same lines, there are DOCCs (Distributed Open Collaborative Courses) such as FemNetTech.org where learner expertise is shared among individuals from diverse institutions. This model of pooling information emphasizes decentralized and collective networking, and

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[8] Aras Bozkurt, et. al., 2017; Phil Hill, "MOOCs Are Dead: Long Live Higher Education," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. August, 26, 2016 https://www.chronicle.com/article/MOOCs-Are-Dead-Long-Live/237569; Jenny Mackness, et. al. *International Review of Research in Open & Distance Learning,* Vol. 14 Issue 4 (2013), 140-159.

[9] Fiona Hollands and Devayani Tirthali, "*MOOCs: Expectations and Reality."* Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2014. http://cbcse.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/MOOCs_Expectations_and_Reality.pdf

[10] Kim Manturuk and Quentin Ruiz-Esparza, "On-Campus Impacts of MOOCs at Duke University," EDUCAUSEreview. August 3, 2015. (Accessed November 19, 2017.) https://er.educause.edu/articles/2015/8/on-campus-impacts-of-moocs-at-duke-university

[11] George Siemans, "Connectivism: A Learning Theory for a Digital Age," elearnspace.org. Dec. 12, 2004 (Accessed Nov. 19, 2017) http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/connectivism.htm

[12] Collin Millighan, Allison Littlejohn, Anoush Margaryan, "Patterns of Engagement in Connectivist MOOCs," *Merlot Journal of Online Teaching and Learning.* Vol. 9, No. 2 (2013), 149. http://jolt.merlot.org/vol9no2/milligan_0613.pdf

encourages different approaches to learning.[13] Some institutions are experimenting with SPOCs (small, private online courses), which essentially function as scaled down MOOCs that reside within a given institution. These offer enhanced opportunities for instructor and student engagement, resulting in a blended learning experience and enabling faculty to embed other MOOC course material in their own course.[14]

For faculty and students, the current value of MOOCs lies primarily in their content and pedagogy, both of which can be mined. While some colleges may have concerns about relying on non-conventional scholarly resources, for most, MOOCs offer free content that can be assigned and accessed much like database articles, electronic books, PDFs, or other OER materials. After determining the quality of the information, which requires the same level of criticality as assigning a new book or article, incorporating content is relatively easy, since all students simply enroll in the MOOC. This is easiest for cMOOCs and DOCCs since these models are always accessible. Using specific xMOOC material in a scheduled college course may involve working around the beginning and ending dates of the MOOC provider, but the payoff can be a lecture by a renowned expert in the field. As early as 2012, Armando Fox of UC Berkeley posited that wrapping or embedding MOOC material in a college course should be seen as a supplement to classroom teaching, not a replacement for it.[15]

Pedagogically, MOOCs offer a resource for questions, activities, and reflections that can be helpful to faculty interested in ways to engage students in traditional or online courses. In particular, cMOOCs and DOCCs nurture learning communities, diversity education, transnational thinking and collaboration on assignments and projects, all examples of High-Impact Practices (HIPS) which strength student learning.[16] In one of the most thoroughly researched studies on MOOCs, Holland and Tirthali reported that faculty engagement with xMOOCs encouraged more critical evaluation of course design and delivery, including a greater emphasis on the flipped classroom, chunking lectures with interspersed questions, and peer-to-peer learning.[17]

While MOOCs have not emerged as the universal answer to a free, high-quality education that Daphne Koller predicted, neither have they wreaked havoc within academia. Rather, they occupy an educational laboratory of sorts that combines valuable content with online technologies and pedagogies. It remains to be seen the extent to which MOOCs can be mined or integrated into

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[13] Ann Balsamo, et. al., "Transforming Higher Education with Distributed Open Collaborative Courses (DOCCs): Feminist Pedagogies and Networked Learning," femtechnet.org. September 30, 2013. (Accessed January 6, 2017), https://femtechnet.org/about/white-paper/

[14] Holland and Tirthali, 93.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "High-Impact Educational Practices." Excerpt from *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter,* by George D. Kuh (American Association of Colleges & Universities, 2008) http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm

[17] Holland and Tirthali, 91-92.

institutional curricula, but the opportunities are there for interested faculty who are willing to investigate, experiment, and assess.

This is one area where Katy Deepwell's *n.paradoxa* MOOC on feminism and feminist theory can address a gap missing in many art history and general education curriculums. Since it is a connectivist MOOC, it is self-paced and continually open to new students, eliminating any problems of starting and ending dates that can occur with xMOOCs. Instructors can easily integrate all or specific sections into their courses while retaining autonomy over assignments and grading. Much like a database article or an eBook, a key value of *n.paradoxa* lies in the quality information that it offers freely and the optional opportunities for reflection and engagement with other students. Mining an existing MOOC for valuable information may not have been a prime consideration of MOOC providers, but it does expand on their position that education and educational delivery systems are changing. It is up to faculties and students anywhere to take advantage of new opportunities and adapt them to individual courses and institutional needs.

Parme Giuntini. Ph.D.

Dr. Giuntini's MOOC "*The Modern Genius: Art and Culture in the 19th Century*," has been running through Kadenze since 2014.

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Part II: The Diversity of Feminisms in an OER: The *n.paradoxa* MOOC

Kathleen Wentrack

The *n.paradoxa* MOOC offers an in-depth resource on feminist art, art history and theory, and curatorial work that far exceeds any other open access resource. Significantly, it provides a deep international component lacking in other resources on feminist art, especially in the United States. Dr. Katy Deepwell, the creator of the MOOC and founder of *n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal* (published by KT Press in print 1998-2017, and with separate online content), has compiled copious amounts of information with links to additional resources. Participants also contribute commentary, suggesting the opportunity for the MOOC to become a living document. My review of *n.paradoxa*'s MOOC is framed by 20 years of teaching in an urban American university serving the most diverse county in the United States; my subscription to the *n.paradoxa* journal since its inception; and my research on European feminist artists. Below, I summarize the content of each lesson to point readers to specific sections that may appeal to their individual curiosity or support learning in the classroom, and conclude with a discussion of the MOOC's benefits and potential applications.

Deepwell has structured the course into ten lessons, with each divided into multiple subsections. The text develops around a series of questions anticipating the thoughts of the reader, especially one new to this area of art history. The MOOC incorporates many resources, all free and easily accessible through embedded links in the lessons, and features significant materials from *n.paradoxa*, a unique journal founded to publish "scholarly and critical articles written by women critics, art historians and artists which extend feminist art, theory, criticism and history on and about the work of contemporary women artists post-1970 (visual arts only) working anywhere in the world."[18] If the course participant wishes to click through all the links, the learning is immense; if not, a solid knowledge is attainable from the information in the lessons themselves. The lessons include an assignment related to the theme, the possibility to add commentary or content, and access to responses from other participants.

Lesson 1: Feminism as a cloud

The MOOC begins by addressing misunderstandings of what feminism is and what a feminist can mean. The concept of the "cloud" follows Anna Wahl's "The Cloud: Lecturing on Feminist Research" to describe what feminism is but also uses this metaphor to diffuse misconceptions.[19] It discusses several ways that people have dismissed feminism because other issues such as capitalism, globalization, and war seem more pressing. This is typical in some European countries, especially early in the women's movement because feminism was viewed as a privileged activity and the struggle of the working class was thought to be more important than

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[18] The *n.paradoxa* MOOC is written in British English and when referencing text from the MOOC, that form is kept. http://www.ktpress.co.uk/about-nparadoxa.asp, accessed 16 November 2017.

[19] Anna Wahl, "The Cloud: Lecturing on Feminist research," *NORA: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, Volume 2-3 (1999), 97-108.

one for women's rights, and art was not regarded as a place for political activity.[20] Waves of feminist movements—first to the possible fourth wave of today—are described with links to other sources. This lesson includes recent popular texts on feminism, a list of writings from 1792 to 2018, and quotes on feminism (participants are invited to add their own). The lesson concludes with "What is Feminist Theory, Analysis, Research?" covering topics such as Gender-Order, Gender-System, Patriarchy, What is Feminist Theory, Feminist Theory in Art and Art History, Feminist Politics/Feminist Theory in Women's Studies/Gender Studies providing a rich introduction to the material.

Lesson 2: Statistics and the situation of the woman artist

This lesson queries how to assess the situation of women artists based on statistics. One answers a questionnaire on women artists in different countries then statistics are provided. Resources include information about the larger picture for women and work, references to additional information on *n.paradoxa*, and other essays and recorded panels. Discrimination against women artists is clearly delineated in this lesson in addition to reasons why this is the case.

Lesson 3: What is feminist art?

This lesson provides a broad discussion on what feminist art is or can be, and asks a number of questions that surround what feminist art means. Statements include "Studying feminism requires asking questions, it requires an open, reflexive and critical approach to knowledge as it is formulated today…" and "Defining a work through its medium or style is a modernist approach to art and modernism has been…consistently rejected, challenged or questioned by feminists for its sexism, for its male-centric language and value system." And it explains that "many prefer to use 'feminist art practices' to move away from the idea that there is or could be a singular form for feminist art." The last section of the lesson explains different emphases in feminist art over time: a rejection of traditional media, "scripto-visual" techniques which present work in image-text or object-text" in the 1980s, and cyberfeminism in the 1990s.[21]

Lesson 4: What is a feminist reading?

This lesson facilitates learning through *n.paradoxa*'s "Feminist Art Topics" page that describes 940 works that have been or could be discussed in relation to feminism. The works of art are divided into 30 topics that range from "Women at work" to "Ecology/Ecofeminism" to "Rape/violence against women." Following the aims of the *n.paradoxa* journal, the works are transnational and multimedia, and links are given to essays from the *n.paradoxa* website, video works, and performances. The assignment of this lesson is to choose one of the works and

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[20] Kathleen Wentrack, "What's so Feminist about the *Feministische Kunst Internationaal*? Critical Directions in 1970s Feminist Art," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, Volume 33, Number 2 (2012): 78; Valie Export, "Woman's Art: A Manifesto," in Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 755, originally published in German as "Woman's Art: Ein Manifest," *Neues Forum*, no. 228 (Jan. 1973), 73; and Anette Kubitza, "Rereading the Readings of *The Dinner Party* in Europe," in Amelia Jones, ed., *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 152.

[21] All quotes in this paragraph are taken from http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-3/, accessed 16 November 2017.

complete a brief discussion of it based on resources available on the Internet. It discusses what to do with the list, the lack of images online especially from the 1980s, copyright issues, and notes that libraries need to be consulted to find expansive art historical knowledge. The lesson asks the student to consider what makes a work feminist or informed by feminism and concludes that there is no one answer but rather multiple aspects and considerations.

Lesson 5: Theories of the gaze

The first of three parts in this lesson traces theories of the gaze starting with John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972) explaining his main concepts including: "Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at."[22] The text then carefully explains "objectification" and "stereotyping" in popular culture and art, but also how women have demanded individual agency. Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema" (1975) is explained with links to online sources for the text and a quiz. The lesson makes clear that since the publication of the Berger and the Mulvey text on the "male gaze" that many other theories on representation and the gaze have been developed.

The following part addresses the female gaze and how feminist artists have employed the politics of the gaze in their work. It asks, "does the 'gaze' have a gender?" Questions are asked to the reader about gay and lesbian spectatorship and desire, and "How does class, race and ethnicity impact upon the structure of heterosexual and homosexual desire and the representations of masculine or feminine – determining who has the power to look and how other people are looked at?"[23] These kinds of thoughtful questions throughout probe a participant's thinking. The practice of role reversal is analyzed as an example of how feminist artists worked to undermine the construct of the gaze. The final part of the lesson is entitled "Recognizing Ideology at Work" and considers other theories of women's self-representation. Concepts on identity, identification, and ideology from a number of thinkers are presented including Diana Fuss, Eve Sedgwick, Louis Althusser, and Griselda Pollock.

Lesson 6: Theories of sexual difference

In terms accessible to anyone unfamiliar with concepts of sexual difference, the text describes the difference between "sexed bodies" as defined at birth according to biology and "gendered bodies" as socially learned practices that vary by culture and change over time. Both sexed and gendered bodies rely on the binary of male and female with gendered bodies conforming to norms associated with male or female attributes. It explains that "Claims for a 'third sex' or 'inter-sex' or 'queer' identity are also determined by gendered attributes – manners of dress and behaviour which may borrow from recognisable stereotypes of femininity or masculinity or be hybrid and 'indeterminate.'"[24] The influence of Queer theory on theories of sexual difference is mentioned as distinct from feminist theory.[25] The text points out that feminists use theories of

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[22] http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-5/, accessed 5 December 2017.

[23] http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-5/lesson-5-part-2/, accessed 5 December 2017.

[24] http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-6/, accessed 8 December 2017.

[25] Mark E. Casey, Janice McLaughlin, and Diane Richardson, eds., *Intersections between Feminist and Queer Theory* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

sex and gender to undermine "sex role" constructs and to render masculinities, femininities, and gender stereotypes more fluid for men and women.[26] This section concludes with an assignment to view videos on feminist thinkers Ann Oakley, Luce Irigary, and Judith Butler with a series of questions asking the viewer to identify differences in their perspectives.[27]

The second part of the lesson introduces structuralist and post-structuralist concepts and states one feminist response to such theories: "Feminist theory has developed theories of sexual difference by re-examining the post-structuralist critique of how binary oppositions structure language/culture/thought in the traditions of Western Enlightenment."[28] It also explains how identity often develops in relation to how one sees the other as different from themselves.[29] The third part of the lesson asks the student to consider the theories of four important thinkers on sexual difference: Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subject, Gayatri Spivak's "strategic essentialism," Donna Haraway's thoughts in a manifesto for cyborgs, and Nancy Fraser's conceptions on recognition and redistribution. Summaries, quotes, references, and video presentations by some of the theorists provide a solid resource on these key thinkers.

Lesson 7: Feminist art histories

This lesson argues that early feminist art is an avant-garde movement according to the historical analysis of the avant-garde. However, a distinct difference in feminist art is that it does not have one cohesive style which has been linked to such movements and, moreover, feminist art has critiqued concepts associated with the avant-garde such as originality. The text quotes Lucy Lippard who recognizes the difference between liberal feminists fighting to improve women's lives and socialist feminists who want to overthrow the system. This points to a difference between American feminism which fought for equal rights and some European countries that argued for a change to the system.[30] The discussion briefly mentions postmodernism and critics such as Craig Owens and Hal Foster. Several supplemental videos are included as additional resources including a video on the *Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s, Works from the Verbund Collection* (2016) and *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (2007) exhibitions.

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[26]The lesson acknowledges the limited scope of the information presented, as this summary does the same in regards to the information in the MOOC. http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-6/, accessed 8 December 2017.

[27] The author also notes the following language differences: "The English language makes a distinction between sex and gender which is not shared by other languages in the world: French, German, Italian schools of feminist thought have developed different approaches, not only conceptually but also because of the differences in language about masculine, feminine and neuter terms as well as ideas regarding feminism, sex and gender." References to sources of this information could be helpful to some participants. http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-6/, accessed 8 December 2017.

[28] Ibid.

[29] While Audrey Lorde is referred to in this section, this lesson on Theories of Sexual Difference could benefit from references to other distinctions in identity such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation. However, the MOOC allows for others to build this information.

[30] In Germany, for example, feminists argued for special treatment for women because they were different from men and their rights should be different. See Kathleen Wentrack, "A Contextual Overview of the Women's Movements in the United States, Austria, and West Germany," Chapter 1 of "The Female Body in Conflict: US and European Feminist Performance Art 1963–1979, Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach" (PhD diss., Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, 2006).

The remainder of the lesson covers the role of feminism in revising art histories and lists concepts in feminist art theory and history (with references and links) such as Feminine Stereotype, Feminine Sensibility, Female Aesthetic in Women's Art, Feminine Aesthetics, Feminist Aesthetics, and Femininities/Masculinities. The text quotes Mary Kelly on how feminism has been instrumental in the post-modern moment to deconstruct modernist concepts of materiality, sociality, and sexuality.[31] It concludes that more attention be given to women artists, stressing that the narrative needs to be reconstructed.

Lesson 8: Exhibition politics

Lesson 8 focuses on how the work of women artists is presented in permanent collections, special exhibitions, and women-only art spaces, and the politics behind these curatorial choices. It presents different initiatives in Washington DC, Bonn, Paris, New York, London, and Stockholm that present women's work in either museum collections or separate spaces. Links to a variety of discussions on the issue of exhibition politics are given. The following part speaks to a distinction between feminist curating and exhibitions about women artists, and lists feminist exhibitions and exhibition catalogues. Dr. Deepwell's analysis found that until the mid-1980s these exhibitions were organized by female critics, art historians, and artists as a group but since the late 1980s the curator has become the organizer and concept developer of such shows following the growth of the international art biennales. The final section addresses feminist curating and its intersection with global or international exchanges; tokenism based on race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation; and exhibitions that focus on local versus a global identification. It closes with a plea: "Instead of focusing on the negative question of whether or not gender/sex is a valid criteria for the basis of an exhibition, perhaps what we need to celebrate is the history of women artists' exhibitions, precisely for their diversity and their contribution to broadening our understanding of ART."[32]

Lesson 9: Women's art organizations

Lesson 9 considers women's arts organizations framed by the politics involved in organizing. It describes different types of organizations (museums, commercial galleries, not-for-profit spaces, etc.) and the activities in which they are involved (exhibitions, mentoring, workshops, networking, etc,). Some groups work more as a collective, producing art, magazines, or festivals. A distinction is made between women's art organizations and feminist art groups in that the latter works collectively in its decision-making processes in order to challenge the hierarchical structure of traditional, male-dominated groups. A number of sub-themes then address a history of different types of women's arts organizations with lists of organizations around the world (with most in the US and Europe) and links to websites or relevant information about each group.

The lesson continues with a discussion of how women artists have organized themselves stating, "Understanding the history of women artists' groups is part of understanding the relationships between feminism and contemporary art through the histories of the women's art movement."[33]

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[31] Mary Kelly, *Imaging Desire* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996), 98.

[32] http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-8/lesson-8_part-3/, accessed 8 December 2017.

[33] http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-9_part-2/, accessed 21 December 2017.

The text notes that while some women's artists groups have an online presence, much historical information is only available in print, referencing books, exhibitions, and women's art groups listed on the KT Press website. One goal of many of these groups was to have their own exhibition space, and the Woman's Building in Los Angeles is discussed as a successful example. Two Danish groups are covered in more detail to demonstrate what can, and cannot be, found online: *Kanonklubben* (Canon Club) started in 1970 by a group of students at the Danish Art Academy and Women Down the Pub (1997-2010). Students are then asked to find and post their own information about a women's art organization. The last part of the lesson considers three topics: strategies women take to create space in which to work, women's unpaid labor, and women's participation in political and social groups.

Lesson 10: Feminist art magazines

The lesson asks what is a feminist art magazine? The author makes distinctions between feminist art criticism, writing about feminist art, and writing on art by women. Quoting Hillary Robinson's argument that the words used to describe women's art tend to be disapproving ("soft," "passive") while those for male artists are approving ("strong," "assertive"), the point is clearly made that language used to discuss women's art differs from that applied to men.[34] Furthermore, it notes Mira Schor's idea that criticism of artwork by men and women often makes reference to other male artists for context, but rarely are female artists used to contextualize men's work.[35] Then a list of texts on what the author delineates is writing on feminism and contemporary art is given, to be distinguished from feminist art criticism which is the content of the next part.

A thoughtful list of questions around women's and feminist art magazines accompanies a list of magazines and journals, organized by decade since the 1970s with links to active websites. The final part of the lesson lists quotes only feminist art criticism by well-known feminist critics and historians that span back to the 1970s. Dr. Deepwell explains there are multiple feminisms that risk fracturing and depoliticizing the movement and concludes: "Building alliances across different groups of women for specific political ends remains important as a means to move forward."[36] The MOOC ends with a rallying cry for feminists to continue engagement for political change.

Benefits and Conclusions

The *n.paradoxa* MOOC benefits many potential users from the college student, studying feminism and feminist art for the first time, to others simply looking for new information and resources. For undergraduates, its impact is immeasurable. It exposes the developing intellectual mind of a college student to the breadth of a political perspective and its application in one area of the humanities. Furthermore, the content on theory, politics, and art from a feminist perspective can provide a critical lens to understanding the increasingly visual world in which we

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[34] Hilary Robinson, *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology, 1968-2014*, 2nd ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 129.

[35] Mira Schor, "Patrilineage," *Art Journal*, Volume 50, Number 2 (1991), 58-63.

[36] http://nparadoxa.com/lesson-10/lesson-10_part-3/, accessed 30 December 2017.

live. The MOOC can also benefit artists, art historians, curators, or critics, interested in learning more about feminist visual arts from an international perspective.

Because it is offered for free, the MOOC provides valuable content for educators to incorporate into their lesson plans, whether the discipline is studio art, art history, sociology, women's studies, history, or other humanities. A significant trend in higher education is the development of Open Educational Resources. My institution, The City University of New York (CUNY), recently received a grant from New York State to develop new and ongoing OER initiatives. Managed by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Library Services, these initiatives include OER development, webinars on OERs and workshops on their use, some designed specifically for adjunct faculty. As the largest urban university in the United States and one with a record on improving upward mobility, CUNY recognizes the importance of OERs as a cost-effective way to provide educational materials from a variety of sources and perspectives. Prior to registering for courses, students can now view the expense of course materials in the registration system and select those designated as a Zero Textbook Cost Course. CUNY is but one example of how a public university is working to adopt OERs as part of the effort to improve retention and graduation rates by reducing the cost of an education by adopting alternative learning materials for the students.

Libraries at CUNY campuses continue to be instrumental in facilitating the development of OERs. The library at my campus, Queensborough Community College, offers workshops to guide faculty in developing their own OERs which they describe as using "only materials that are openly available and covered by creative commons copyright licenses."[37] Lessons or a part of a lesson on the *n.paradoxa* MOOC could be incorporated as content for a course depending on the level and needs of students in conjunction with other material.

The *n.paradoxa* MOOC is an incredible resource for those interested in feminism, feminist art, and feminist politics. At a time when political engagement for social change is increasingly urgent, this MOOC can provide a solid resource from a feminist political perspective.

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[37] Email exchange with Sheila Beck (and comments by Jeanne Galvin), Associate Professor, The Kurt R. Schmeller Library, Queensborough Community College, 21 November 2017. One concern that institutions may have on using OERs is accreditation. According to Queensborough library faculty, accreditation organizations are "not concerned with textbook selection or its medium" but rather "concerned with students' learning experience and its effectiveness."

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Part III: A Much-Needed Resource: *n.paradoxa*'s MOOC
on contemporary art and feminism

Anne Swartz

"*n.paradoxa* MOOC," written by feminist art historian Katy Deepwell, editor of *n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal*, overwhelms as an open-educational resource on feminist art history and theory. Announced as an offering, early in 2017, it is one of the many free, extensive resources provided by KT press and available at the site. What makes this MOOC impressive is, that at a moment when feminism is under worldwide siege, Deepwell continues her valiant efforts to expand her contributions to knowledge about women artists and their work from a feminist perspective. Her international treatment of transnational feminism has made her project highly significant, since English-language discussions de facto center routinely on American feminism. This course answers an urgent need. It continues her broader treatment of feminist art: beyond the borders of the USA and as a contextual element to analyze critical gender and social theory issues.

In 2002, Deepwell spoke with artist Maureen Connor about using feminist art in this way (which I argue is what she does in this MOOC). Deepwell remarked that:

> There is a historical split between teaching art in women's studies and the teaching of feminist theory in art schools. But there are some art historians who teach in women's studies departments. They work in a truly interdisciplinary way to encourage writing about contemporary art. [Lesbian feminist artist] Harmony Hammond once said to me, 'Give me any subject that is on a woman's studies agenda, be it violence against women, rape, discrimination at work, or sexual relationships between men and women, and I'll find feminist work which addresses those issues in ways that will help students understand them.' Contemporary women's art practice is informed by ideas in the social world, including the broader sphere of feminist theory and politics. However, until women's studies takes the visual arts more seriously in their project of visual culture and stops treating them as a propaganda mechanism for campaigning or as bourgeois entertainment, then this opportunity may remain unrecognized. Of course, if you look at the problem the other way around, the majority of people who study, teach, and write about contemporary art rarely address feminist politics but speak only in the vaguest terms of representation and gender, avoiding discussions of women artists.[38]

In this course, Deepwell has effectively interwoven gender theory in and amid her incisive examinations of feminist art. She does this by emphasizing feminism as a *political* movement. This point may seem like a small one; however, some publications about feminist art have

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[38] Maureen Connor and Katy Deepwell, "Working Notes: Conversation with Katy Deepwell," *Art Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Summer, 2002), 40.

drained politics from the conversation.[39] Deepwell's mission—or, one of them—is to spread an activated discourse of feminist art. It fuels much of her scholarship.

An engaged dialogue about feminist art was an instigating element of *n.paradoxa,* the online e-journal she began in 1996. In 1998, she started KT Press and then began producing the journal in print form too. She concluded the journal in the summer of 2017 after making 40 volumes and establishing *n.paradoxa* as a prestigious scholarly journal.[40] *n.paradoxa* became known for its thematic approach to feminist art and its coverage of the far-flung and the little-known artist. As an editor, Deepwell did not stick to the "official story" of feminist art and avoided privileging what was made and circulated solely in western Europe and America. Further, *n.paradoxa* is part of her larger scholarly endeavors as she has promoted efforts to document the varied histories of feminist art to as wide an audience as possible. She has conceded sometimes that the initial audience is small. In a recent public talk, she described the general roles of publication and exhibition in the scholarly discourse, commenting:

> *n.paradoxa* has a long and glorious history of following through and initiating things which go somewhere else. That's what I wanted it to be. I wanted it to be like a research engine encouraging certain kinds of debate and fostering certain kinds of people to develop their ideas.[41]

Returning to this course and its role in the overall scope of her scholarship and research project, Deepwell had previously taught compact courses on feminist art.[42] Appearing at this moment in time suggests that this MOOC is *a next phase* of evolution in her process of maturing her research (and, by extension, the conversation about feminist art).

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[39] See the two volumes by Eleanor Heartney, Helaine Posner, Nancy Princethal, and Sue Scott, with preface by Linda Nochlin, *After the Revolution: Women Who Transformed Contemporary Art,* revised (NY: Prestel, 2013) and Eleanor Heartney, Helaine Posner, Nancy Princethal, and Sue Scott, *The Reckoning: Women Artists of the New Millennium* (NY: Prestel, 2013).

[40] Over the life of the journal, Deepwell diverged the print and online forms, variously publishing different materials in each venue. Further, the site provides information pages with data and links of information about feminist art exhibitions, publications, theses and dissertations, films, festivals. The press also briefly produced online books on feminist art. With its focus on visual arts, during its twenty years, *n.paradoxa* included more than 500 articles which covered and included artists and writers from over 80 countries.

[41] Katy Deepwell, "Opening Speech," Lecture, Local/Global Dynamics in Feminism and Contemporary Art Conference, Middlesex University, July 3, 2017. Accessed December 12, 2017 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6fIeVxoDeQ

[42] Deepwell offered on-ground short four seminars on feminism and contemporary art as a collaboration between the ICA and *n.paradoxa* in London in 2016 and a post-graduate five-day short course at Middlesex University on Feminism and Contemporary Art in 2017. The Feminist Art Seminars with Katy Deepwell were a collaboration between between ICA and n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal between January 26 and May 18, 2011 (held on January 26, March 30, May 4, and May 18, 2011). See https://www.ica.art/bulletin/tags/feminist-art-seminar. SUM0122 Feminism and Contemporary Art, taught by Katy Deepwell at Middlesex University, London, July 6-12, 2016. https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/206066/SUM0122-Feminism-and-Contemporary-Art.pdf.

What makes this MOOC compelling is its interweaving of gender studies with art history and a broad range of references to international artists. A dedicated online course, especially a free one, has been non-existent. There is a hunger for feminist art subjects[43] but no widely available online option has been accessible until now. Deepwell's perspective is a welcome one. Beginning with her organizational framework, she takes an original approach to structuring studying feminist art. Usually feminist art is taught as a single unit within a course on Contemporary Art or a post-1945 art course, emphasizing American artists with perhaps a smattering of European and—*maybe*—an occasional Asian, African, or South American artist mentioned. If a student (and faculty) is fortunate, there might be a dedicated course. Not even all the Anglophone countries would be represented in the standard course. Typically, such a course will orient around the chronology, unfolding a narrative progressing from one period to the next with some occasional geographic variation, even though women artists have been practitioners in all movements since 1945. Another approach is a thematic one but the national distribution of the selected artists, writers, and theorists is typically narrow. It can be challenging to keep the course on track with diversification. Part of the reason for these orientations are the available texts. Deepwell goes beyond these provided outlines. Instead, she relies on copious Internet materials for the readings and videos, thus emancipating the course structure from the rigidity of a chronological or thematic narrative with a limited perspective.[44]

Studying theoretical structures of contemporary art and criticism vis-a-vis the contributions of women artists is a novel approach. Deepwell continues her inquiry into feminism in the ways she has otherwise considered it in her scholarly pursuits and professional activities—broadly and openly. Thus, her expansive view of feminist art is a framing device for this course. She opens the conversation up, valorizing international artists and writers (I counted 40 in the ten lessons).[45] While respecting the reality of activity in American feminist scholarship,[46] she simultaneously promotes rigor and vigor in looking and thinking about feminist art wherever it emerges, regardless of whether it connects to a particular art market or national economic flow.

There are a few framing points in the beginning, outlining "Who is it for?" on the *About This Course* page. It is an appropriate course for anyone interested in studying post-1970 art and

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[43] I base this sweeping statement on the international explosion of visual material and the conversation about it especially on social media in the Women's Marches of 2017 as one of many possible measures.

[44] I refer in this paragraph to the online choices. In on-ground courses, there are many examples of course offerings which address wide numbers of international feminist artists and feminist theory. And, as I indicate later in this review, there could be more surveying of other topics in Deepwell's MOOC. But this *n.paradoxa* MOOC is notable because Deepwell has uniquely interconnected feminist art and gender theory in a broad way.

[45] In alphabetical order: Argentina, Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, United States, Vietnam, Wales.

[46] Deepwell made the point that the history of American feminist art has been disproportionately over-reported in the United States because the highest numbers of exhibitions and publications occurred there. (Deepwell, lecture, July 2017).

feminism, regardless of engagement at present. That is one of the pleasures of the MOOC project. The age range expressed for the course – that it is acceptable for people aged 16 to 90 years -- is ambitious. The material is aimed at a student with a sophisticated general vocabulary and general awareness of major concerns in gender studies and contemporary art. The specialized language is explained, but the reading level is advanced. The tone is mostly neutral. The sentiment analysis is similarly mainly balanced, but the language is not dispassionate. The engagement in the forums, as example, centers on the student/reader's immediate application of the unit:

> How would you define your own feminism? Would you happily define yourself as a feminist? What does it mean for you? Is it a belief? About a fight against injustice? Are you "for" equality? Or against" discrimination? Which provides the foundation for the feminism(s) you support? Now that you have got to the end of the lesson: maybe you would like to comment on how feminist theory/ knowledge might contribute to your feminism?[47]

The primary emphasis is on stimulating the student with multimedia materials about the subject of the unit. There is often text or video, followed by questions or some other kind of offering such as a weblink to a timeline or another article. As a teaching resource, this MOOC will serve faculty in many ways. Any faculty member teaching feminist art is being handed opportunities to give students easy access to weighty philosophical, theoretical issues about feminist art, such as the notion of the avant-garde and the ways feminism bristles at this conceptualization. Lesson 3, as the weightiest lesson in the course, involves a relatively massive text investigation of the question "What is Feminist Art?". It is then followed by Lesson 4, which diverges from the text-emphasis of the prior lesson to a focus on images. It consists of 30 links to feminist art topics with images on the ktpress.com website. This course does need expansions and developments. A limitation of the course is the way sexuality is handled. Lesson 6 focuses on sexual difference and centers on the distinction between sex and gender. There is no art discussed here. Lesbianism and transsexuality are not meaningfully examined in relation to art, but are mentioned only in brief. Another issue is that race needs much more attention. There is no dedicated discussion of race in this course or in relation to art. Absent as well are considerations of body size or ability. While feminist critiques of society have represented a wide range of subjects, Deepwell admirably covers a great deal of the terrain in a compact course structure.

Feminist artists emerged in the 1970s and have become a key component of contemporary art. Yet, feminist art remains a challenging subject to study because of limited published summary approaches and detailed monographs. The *n.paradoxa* MOOC combines explorations of

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[47] *n.paradoxa* MOOC, Lesson 1: "Feminism as a Cloud: Part 4: What is Feminist Theory, Analysis, Research?"

political, social, and cultural issues, alongside ideas about self, the gaze, aesthetics, among other topics, against the backdrop of feminist art. A student interested in learning about feminist art will come away from this MOOC with a great deal of knowledge about the subject, but would need some motivation to pursue it independently as the experience is both rich and dense. The appropriately engaged student will enjoy it. It is a ready set of modules for educators seeking teaching resources on the respective topics of the lessons.

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