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DANCE AS A HETEROTOPIA AGAINST HEGEMONIC DISCOURSES OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES

Abstract: In this paper, we explore the dance as a practice and "Other" space, a counterhegemonic space which is affected by the existing social ordering, or existing power of traumatic discourse which is some kind of imposed discourse, while simultaneously resisting it. To explore these premises we will use Michel Foucault`s concept of *heterotopia* and apply it on the analysis of the dance as an artistic practice and possibilities to understand dance as a heterotopia in which dominant hegemonic discourses are reversed, and as a counterhegemonic space, as authors Christofidou and Milioni, emphases, that has a potential to disrupt and deconstruct hegemonic discourses of the past traumatic experiences or events. We argue that in order to be able to heal the traumas that are engraved in the body, and to understand the body as an expression and a canvas on which a crisis is outlined, we need bodily memories and stories, both those of survival, trauma and wounds, and those of healing. We demonstrate how dance may provide a counterhegemonic space, enable the reconstruction of the place of traumatic events, that are imprinted in body, into places of communication and reconstruction of the meaning, and how can dance invite individual to reflect on their identity and connect their fragmented self. Here we emphasize the meaning of movement – dance that opens the statics of the body to kinesthetic empathy, which in turn allows us to enter the spaces of unspoken body stories. The ethics of touch, proximity, and the ethics of the

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space between two bodies and what in these spaces "between" means to be, to be in that "not yet" (about-to-be) lead us in this direction. We assert that our bodies are both self-constituted as well as shaped by the collective, the society and history (personal or collective), and that we know by acting, primarily through the body, in synergy with the mind and the environment (enactive approach).

Keywords: Memories, trauma, body, dance, relief, counterhegemonic place, heterotopias

INTRODUCING *HETEROTOPIAS* AND DANCE

In this article, we explore and develop Foucault's concept of heterotopia, understood as 'counter-sites' in which the order of things is challenged. There is a scarcity of sustained academic writings on dance and philosophy of dance, and especially of link between the dance and the writings of Michel Foucault.

One of the aims of this paper is to highlight the connection between dance and Foucault's concept of heterotopia, by showing how the creation of the heterotopic space in dance as an artistic practice and dance as a therapeutic practice, can lead to a change in discourses, to create a space for alternate ways of being. In that sense, we use Foucault's concept of heterotopias as a guide. Thus we can take the ability of dance to create a space for alternative identities to be.

Foucault discusses heterotopia for the first time in his lecture from 1967 describing it as other, different place where there is an interruption, disruption of normality and continuity of everyday life. Heterotopia in this sense is real but peculiar, and in a way outside other spaces. Heterotopia is like a mirror that reveals to the eye the hidden foundations of ordinary places, even, a form of counter-space in which often incompatible spaces are "simultaneously represented, challenged and inverted."[2]

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[2] Dehaene Michiel & Livien Cauter De. »Heterotopia in a Postcivil Society.« in *Heterotopia and the City. Publics Space in a postcivil societ*y, M. Dehaen & L. De Cauter (eds.). London; New York: Routledge, 2008. Accessed March 4, 2023., p. 19.

Heterotopia means a place of supervision, exercising the power over madness, illness, unreason, organized knowledge in the service of social order, creating new identities, new forms of the social subject.[3] They reverse set of relationships and constellations of power and brake with traditional time. The role of them is to create spaces of illusion, spaces of Other, otherness, of different.

Although Foucault uses this term primarily to indicate places that are different, localized, and even contested and disturbing, such as prisons, cemeteries, ships and mental hospitals, psychiatric asylums,[4] that represent forms of coercion, exclusion, marginalization, elimination, disqualification, we will use the term heterotopia when talking about dance. Parts of the cultural sphere have facilitated resistance to dominant discourses, while art studios and galleries, dance studios and performance settings have transformed into spaces within which the order of things is recreated, disrupted and challenged.[5] So dance, as an artistic practice can develop counterhistories, counter-hegemonic space of discourse, when personal histories can be told from a different perspective and thus unsettle hegemonic discourses, aspects of the stories that are imposed as an "official".

Foucault's concept of heterotopia is connected to his vision of utopia. As Foucault argues:

> "First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any

[3] Michael Foucault, *Historija ludila u doba klasicizma*, Nolit, Beograd 1980., pp. 68-69.

[4] Foucault Michel. »Of Other Spaces .« In *Heterotopia and the city: Public space in a postcivil society* (pp. 13-29), M. Dehaene & L. De Cauter (Eds.), Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008., 13, 20.

[5] Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict", *European Journal of Cultural Studies,* (20/2022), DOI: 10.1177/13675494221118385

case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. … Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias."[6]

Heterotopias are thus created in conjunction with utopias, although outside of them. They are counter-sites that allow for inversions of representations to take place. A non-heterotopic space found in Foucault's study of 17th-century society will be helpful in developing this idea. Unlike the heterotopias, Foucault describes non-heterotopic space as confined, housed, in custody, a function of reproduction, full of silence, a place of the law, a model and a norm.[7] On the other hand he describes heterotopic space as no real space, inversion, upside down, unreal, counter and contested. Heterotopic spaces are spaces that represent an 'other' to the collective consciousness.

Foucault later develops this idea of collective consciousness, which can have an effect similar to belonging to a secret society in that it marks an awareness of being a member of a social group, "this aspect of collective consciousness changes over time and varies from place to place. It has, for instance, on different occasions taken the form of being a member of a particular social group. This is an undeniable fact that dates back to ancient times".[8]

Although Foucault did not fully develop the concept of heterotopia, his explanation that heterotopias are counter-sites, which, unlike utopias, are located in real, physical, space-time, has inspired some performances or dance researchers, to build on his ideas, to

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[6] Michael Foucault, „Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", In *Architecture/ Movument/Continuité* 1984., pp. 3-4, https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf, datum pristupa 21. 02. 2023.

[7] Michael Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1., Random House, New York 1990., p. 3.

[8] Ibid., p. 288.

investigate how different social relations are fostered within the practice of dance as heterotopia.

Having used Foucault's concept of heterotopia to investigate how social relations become changed, we offer an explanation on how dance can be heterotopia that reverses sets of relationships of power, how can dance be and offer space for reconstruct the meaning and the place of otherness when we talk about traumas in a Foucault's meaning.

In that sense, we claim that traumatic experience and traumatic discourse of shame and guilt, which often accompanies trauma, can be a hegemonic discourse that limits, enables and constrains what can be said, by whom, where and when, and thus imposes the power over individual or groups of individual who has suffered the trauma.

Heterotopic sites are defined as ones in which all the other real sites within a culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. The relationship of the heterotopic site is to "suspect, neutralize or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect"[9] and thus serve to temporarily introduce different ways of ordering society and space into particular places, at particular times.

According to Foucault, heterotopias are spaces that operate to make existing orders legible. By so doing they unsettle received knowledge, or common sense, both revealing and destabilizing the foundations of knowledge. This destabilization renders knowledge open to critique, introducing contingency into the present and demonstrating that if the order of things is socially produced, then it can be made differently.

What Foucault appears to be arguing is that heterotopias are counter-sites: actually existing sites where other sites are

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[9] M. Foucault, „Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", p. 3.

simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. In other words, they are spaces that simultaneously reflect and unsettle other spaces.[10]

Using Foucault's concept we claim that dance as a material (bodily) and discursive practice, acts as a re-constitutive gaze that enacts critical (artistic) subjectivities. Dance may function as a heterotopia, a space where artists or person in some sort of therapeutic and somatic practice, reconstruct their own selves, create new subjectivities, critical dancing perspectives and political positions.[11]

The artists suggest that the arts more widely, and dance more specifically, have the potential to disrupt the order of things and hegemonic narrations that continue to separate communities and to separate within the person. Thus the art, and dance as an artistic practice with its creative potential, become the way of connecting all our stories and sharing our humanity.

We emphasize that embodied simulation has a crucial importance and meaning both for the body that remembers and for the transmission of trauma. We point out that situated within existing power relations, the arts and other artistic practices may be approached as a counter-space, which undermines power relations and the hegemonic discourses that they produce and are reproduced by.

Artists often talk about art as a form of communication, which does not require people to speak the same language. Dance, and art in general, has the transformative potential of the current situation, the potential to communicate, to respond and to mediate the new reality and the meaning, and challenge the hegemonic discourses.

In that sense, this article focuses on how personal, traumatic experiences and personal and inner conflicts that arise from that events can become imposed hegemonic discourses. We analyse dance

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[10] Peter Johnson, „Unravelling Foucault's 'Different Spaces", *History of the Human Sciences,* 19(4/2006), pp. 75-90.
[11] M. Foucault, „Of other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias", p. 3.

as a heterotopia, as an opening of the possibility of the new space in which hegemonic discourses and foundations of power are (re)negotiated, as Christofidou and Milioni emphasize.[12]

What are the discourses then and what is their relationship to trauma? To show how trauma can be the imposed set of statements that construct the power relations in society, in the case of collective trauma, and in individual, in the case of personal trauma, in a sense that traumatic discourses can shape the realities of shame and guilt, what will be discussed later, we use Foucault's term of discourse.

Discourses are one of Foucault's most powerful concepts, designate, among other things, a set of statements that constructs an object and an array of subject positions. Discourses make available to people certain ways of seeing the world and certain ways of being in the world. Discourses facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said, by whom, where and when, thus comprising expressions of significant power. In what follows, we show how dance, which is found everywhere, albeit in different forms, can sometimes function as a space and a practice that counters hegemonic discourses, thus contesting the very systems of power within which it is born.[13] In doing so, we brought Foucault's concept of *heterotopia*.

Analogous to that, that the desire to recover moments of inception, to find and pose all sorts of beginnings, to back to origins of trauma and wounds that are stored in the body as an archive, we claim that body and dance as an artistic practice, with its creative potentiality, can reveal the meaning of traumatic experience as a promise of relief and a responsibility for tomorrow.

We ask how can we open up the personal or collective past memories and historical experiences to the future and learn something from it. How can we now understand the dancing bodies and dance alone as an artistic practice and how they can offer reinterpretations of personal and common history and historical events and approached

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[12] Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict", pp. 5-6.
[13] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

issues such as trauma and death to prevent future conflicts from re-occurring, to develop trust and empathy, and to build bridges between the people in communities?

Artistic acts of resistance, as Christofidou and Milioni assert, can problematize and question the established order of things, thus serving as counter-acts, that challenge and subvert dominant discourses, situations, values, people and power relations. We discuss dance as a practice through which, and a space within which, artists[14] or persons who use dance and movement in a setting of creative therapy, as a means to dance their personal trauma and give meaning to it. Through dance, the artist can invite audiences, or the therapist as a witness can invite the person who has experienced trauma, to re-reinterpret the past and break the established line of division, thus resisting the hegemonic discourse that relies on, and reproduces, personal, social, or nationalist ideologies.

Thus artistic practices may act as an effective medium to construct an alternative reality through the deformation and reformation of the standing situation and generate collective narratives that problematize the official and institutional ones. Over the past century, art and art practices were also used as methods for constructing alternative realities based on Foucauldian heterotopia.[15]

DANCE AS A COUNTER-HEGEMONIC PRACTICE AND SPACE OF DISRUPTION AND DECONSTRUCTION OF HEGEMONIC DISCOURSES

Our further discussion will provide an analysis of dance as a practice and an 'Other' space, a counter-hegemonic space, which is affected by the existing social ordering, while simultaneously resisting it. Foucault's notion of 'heterotopia' has been used to analyse mainly real places that disrupt the order of things.

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[14] Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict", p. 5.
[15] Ibid., p. 5.

In this paper we will also use his term linking it to the practice of dance in a sense that dance is interpreted as "heterotopia", an "Other space" that facilitates reflections, reconsiderations and reconstructions of hegemonic discourses of the past and thus interrupting "the stream of everyday experiences, opening spaces of rest, refuge and play... spaces of, and for, the imagination"[16] and spaces that comprises a dialectical play between the private/public dimension, an event of transformation and of suspension.[17]

But bodies are also in motion, moving through changing contexts and encounters in which they engage in imaginative transactions and negotiations between past and present. We propose ritualised, theatrical and participatory dance as carriers of communal identity and cultural memory.[18] Rather than defining cultural memory as a storage system, they understand dance as an 'activity of remembering' that is generated through movements and relations.[19] As Lefebvre suggests, the body that moves physically can also move politically, culturally, socially, affectively, imaginatively and kinesthetically, which can imply ephemerality, disruption and negotiation of memory.[20]

Most crucially, however, we can learn from anthropologists that the moving body in dance practice provides an entry point in

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[16] Peter Johnson, "The geographies of heterotopia", *Geography Compass* 7 (11/2013), pp. 790–803, here pp. 797-798.

[17] Michiel Dehaene, Lieven De Cauter, „The space of play: towards a general theory of heterotopia", In: Michiel Dehaene, Lieven De Cauter (eds.), *Heterotopia and the city*, Routledge, New York 2008., pp. 88–101.

[18] Julia Giese and Emily Keightley, „Dancing through time: A methodological exploration of embodied memories", *Sage Journals*, OnlineFirst, October 4, 2022., https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980221126611, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/17506980221126611, access date 2. 6. 2023.

[19] Tim Ingold, *Culture and the Perception of the Environment*, Routledge, New York 2002., p. 142.

[20] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Blackwell, Oxford 1991., p. 216.

forming a dynamic view of culture[21] as well as the physically enacted production and transmission of historically situated knowledge, identities and memories.[22] In this regard, dance has not only been found to conserve pasts but also to be able to stimulate reterritorialisations of memories.[23]

What we propose is a reflexive relationship with what Taylor defines as the 'repertoire'.[24] Rather than only observing and participating in 'naturally occurring' performances of the repertoire, research can be designed to create times and spaces in which researchers and research participants can come together to co-investigate embodied memories through participatory dance practice. Movements can mobilise different pasts and modes of remembering, enter them into the conversation, and gives insight into processes of mnemonic negotiation.[25]

The combination of repetition and ephemerality of dances allows for re-enactment but also embodied re-imagination, revision, clarification and dialogues of pasts. Through joint performance, dance as an artistic practice or dance movement therapy, in a therapeutic environment or settlement, watching, copying and mirroring movements of others, as well as the development of choreography, both products and processes of remembering

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[21] Brenda Farnell, „Moving bodies, acting selves", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28 (1/1999), 341–373., p. 344.

[22] Victor W. Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience*, AZ: University of Arizona Press, Tucson 1985., p. 187.

[23] Jonathan Skinner, „Leading questions and body memories: a case of phenomenology and physical ethnography in the dance interview", In: Peter Collins, Anselma Gallinat (eds.) *The Ethnographic Self as Resource: Writing Memory and Experience into Ethnography*, Berghahn, New York 2010., pp. 111–128; 119.

[24] D. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Duke University Press, New York, Durham 2003., p. 20.

[25] Julia Giese and Emily Keightley, „Dancing through time: A methodological exploration of embodied memories", *Sage Journals*, OnlineFirst, October 4, 2022., https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980221126611, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/17506980221126611, access date 2. 6. 2023.

intertwine and shared understandings of the past can be elaborated between researcher and researched. Dance as an artistic and therapeutic practice allows the researcher access to the transmission of "non-narrative mnemonic meaning by enabling participation in the memories of others."[26]

In that sense, we explore and take into account similar exploration of how dance may provide a space to problematize the past and recraft the present, enable the re-signification of places of conflict into places of communication and peace and invite artists to reflect on their subjectivities and transform into agents of peace.[27] In that sense dance as an artistic or therapeutic practice can enable the space for bodily-based reflection and recommunication of the past traumatic events that had caused rupture of the personal narrative and create the counterhegemonic discourse over the imposed shame and guilt that trauma may cause in someone. In the therapeutic settlement the therapist and the client, through bodily based and somatic practices can bridge the gap and rupture, and bring the meaning to the personal stories, memories and narratives.

Trauma that provokes PTSD is well known to cause deeply rooted feelings of shame that are fostered over time. This is a severe detrimental emotion and it damages a person's self-image in such a way that no other emotion can. Shame is an internal, self-conscious emotion. It is self-punishment and serves no real purpose. Though shame takes some time to build and is not always there right from the beginning of the trauma, it does cultivate a distress and shame cycle that inhibits people from being able to live a stable, healthy life.[28] These kind of feelings may be interpreted in a Foucauldian way that they are hegemonic discourse or sets of statements in a person that

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict", p. 10.

[28] "Shame: Why does it come from Trauma?" posted on 4 august 2020 by gregw, https://questpsychologyservices.co.uk/shame-why-does-it-come-from-trauma/

impose (by others or by person itself) certain ways of seeing themselves and being in the world. In that way, traumatic event can impose a certain degree of power over a person and be a certain confirmation and legitimation of existing hegemonic discourse that feeling of shame, as a result of trauma, impose over person.[29] This will be discussed later.

Different position of what is shameful have both Deleuze and Agamben, and what is shameful for them is not simply the sense of being judged by others or self as unworthy, unwanted, or wrong, but rather the awareness of one's complicity in Others' suffering.[30] But this exposition will not be considered here due to the scope of this issue.

In that sense dance, as a practice that can disrupt and deconstruct hegemonic discourses, become a counter-hegemonic practice and space that can hinder imposed order of things. Dance may not be, strictly speaking, understand only as a spatial concept, but it can be understood as a discursive and material *practice* that creates a *space* to (re)negotiate and (re)construct meaning.[31]

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[29] To see more about relationship between trauma and shame and guilt see for example: Sabrina J. Stotz, Thomas Elbert, Veronika Müller, and Maggie Schauer, "The relationship between trauma, shame, and guilt: findings from a community-based study of refugee minors in Germany", *European Journal Psychotraumatoogy.* 6 (1/2015); Tangney J. P, Wagner P. E., Gramzow R, "Proneness to shame, proneness to guilt, and pathology", *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* (101/1992), pp. 469–478; Tangney J. P, Burggraf S. A., Wagner P. E., "Shame-proneness, guilt-proneness, and psychological symptoms", In: Tangney J. P., Fischer K. W. (eds.), *Self-conscious emotions: The psychology of shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride,* NY: Guilford Press, New York 1995., pp. 343–367; Leskela J., Dieperink M., Thuras P., "Shame and posttraumatic stress disorder", *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (15/2002), pp. 223–226; John P. Wilson, Boris Droždek, and Silvana Turkovic, "Posttraumatic Shame and Guilt", *Trauma Violence & Abuse* 7 (2/2006), pp. 122-141.
[30] Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The witness and the archive* (trans. D. Heller-Roazen), NY: Zone Books, New York 2005.
[31] Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict", pp. 12-14.

We see dance as a heterotopia, bearing in mind that dance creates spaces in which hegemonic discourses and foundations of power are (re)negotiated. We seek to explore how dance, albeit in different forms, can sometimes function as a space and a practice that counters hegemonic discourses, thus contesting the very systems of power within which it is born.

Dance, as an artistic practice, can be heterotopia. Thus dance, as an anti-institutional artistic intervention is often perceived as a provocation or political act, rather in the sense of "rupture and challenge, than as an ideological or dogmatic position."[32]

Bearing in mind what has been said so far, we can say that stories and memories of trauma, regardless of whether they are personal or dominant and prevalent in culture and society, imposed by the majority, sometimes are a form of hegemonic discourses and systems of power over a group of individuals or individual alone, in the Foucauldian sense, imprinted in the body and imposed from outside as narratives of shame and guilt. These narratives, embodied and then taken as our own story, our own narrative, in return, shape our own beings, and can be challenged through dance practice and be rewritten and retold as a moment of some sort of political act in the sense of rupture and challenge for these prevailing discourses and dogmatic positions of shame and guilt.

Thus dance as an artistic practice, resists the hegemonic discourses and institutions that set them apart and by bridging the gap between personal and collective conscious and unconscious and providing and communicating the meaning. They encourage peace-building within person and society and the formation of honest and long-lasting relationships between the members of communities.

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[32] Compare D. Taylor, *Performance*, NC: Duke University Press. Crossref, Durham 2016., pp. 49., E. Tselika, Ethno-nationally divided cities and the use of art for purposes of conflict resolution and urban regeneration. *Visual Studies* 33: 280–294. Crossref., 2018., E. Tselika, *Conflict transformation art: Cultivating coexistence through the use of socially engaged artistic practices*, PRIO Cyprus Centre report 4. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre 2019.

In the case of personal trauma, trauma means the brake of a personal story, personal narrative and meaning, dance and artistic practices can resist the hegemonic discourses of the shame and guilt, imposed by traumatic experience, and thus build and restore personal narratives and re-connect meaning to them.

Analogous to that, the desire to recover moments of inception, to find and pose all sorts of beginnings, to back to origins of trauma and wounds that are stored in the body as an archive, we claim that body and dance as an artistic practice, with its creative potentiality, can reveal the meaning of traumatic experience as a promise of relief and a responsibility for tomorrow. By opening the space for recovery, by re-communicating thus restoring the narrative and find meaning of these experiences, and thus to recover the moments of inception, to find and poses the beginnings and ultimately the origins.

Therefore, there is not just one aspect of trauma memory. There's a kind of linear, factual aspect to it, but when we experience trauma, we experience it in our bodies. There is a feeling associated with this, and in some ways this feeling can disrupt our factual memory of the event. The second aspect of memory, the one that's in the body, where people tend to store traumatic experience, gets less attention.[33]

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[33] For research on the way trauma is inscribed in the body, the way trauma victims react to a traumatic event and how they (re)construct their identity, self-image and memory after trauma, see more in some of the research and literature: van Giezen A. E., Arensman E., Spinhoven P., Wolters G., „Consistency of memory for emotionally arousing events: a review of prospective and experimental studies", *Clin Psychol Rev*, 2005., pp. 935-953; American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4th ed.), Washington, DC, 1994.; Southwick S. M., Morgan A., Nicolau A. L., Charney D., „Consistency of memory for combat-related traumatic events in veterans of operation Desert Storm", *Am J Psychiatry,* 142, 1997., pp. 173-177; Christianson S. A., „Flashbulb memories: special, but not special", *Memory and Cognition* 1989; 17: 433-43; Zola S. M., „Memory, amnesia, and the issue of recovered memory: neurobiological aspects", *Clin Psychol Rev*, 18, 1998., pp. 915-932.

The body become the hub and place of resistance and reconciliation, the place of restauration of the meaning, reconnection with self and other, and bridge between past and future, thus providing spaces for interactions, re-creating, re-negotiating the past events, relationships and dialogical exchanges "that have the potential to diffuse alternate readings of the past and lead to long-lasting unifying actions"[34] and the healing of the past and self in whole.

Dance heterotopias prefigure a vision of a future world and invite participants and viewers to bracket hegemonic discourses and take part, albeit temporarily, in this "other place".[35] Political dance cultivates various opportunities for reflection, troubling and resistance.[36] It encourages dancers to self-reflect and start trying to change all these which they disagree with.

Through art, dance, body, movement and creativity person can rework the memories and embedded perceptions of the difficult past. To do this they have to reinvent their own identities and develop a political consciousness, undoing the deeply embedded indoctrination into hegemonic perceptions and identities about the past.[37] In this respect, the space of dance is reminiscent of the mirror in Foucault's (1984) account, which is described both as a utopia and a heterotopia:

> „I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in

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[34] Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict", p. 10.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Duke University Press, Durham, New York 2003.

[37] Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict", p. 11.

order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there." [38]

Dance, then, as a material (bodily) and discursive practice, acts as a re-constitutive gaze that enacts critical artistic subjectivities. Political dance functions as a heterotopia: a space where artists reconstruct their own selves, create new subjectivities, critical dancing perspectives and political positions.[39] This process of 'undoing' is akin to Foucault's counter-sites, where 'real sites' (in this case, selves) are 'represented, contested, and inverted'.[40]

The artists suggest that the arts more widely, and dance more specifically, have the potential to disrupt the order of things and hegemonic narrations that continue to separate communities and to separate within the person.[41] Thus the art, and dance as an artistic practice with its creative potential, become the way of "connecting all our stories and sharing our humanity."[42]

In his poem about the body, Paul Valery shows that the phenomenon of the body, the dancing body, is special and that it has its own internal logic that cannot be reduced to purely subjective formal processes. While saying:

"You forget but your body lasts
You didn't feel anything,
but your body changed
You speak but your body will do
You see but it doesn't.
You step but it taps

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[38] Michael Foucault, *Of other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias Architecture*, *Mouvement, Continuité* 5(1), pp. 1–9, here 4.
[39] Compare Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict".
[40] Michael Foucault, *Of other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias Architecture*, *Mouvement, Continuité* 5(1), pp. 1–9, here 3.
[41] Compare Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict".
[42] Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict", p. 11.

You sweeten it, but it cooks
You smile and it fights,
You sleep and it sleeps.
It didn't know you changed your mind
You didn't know it changed power,
in its depth."[43]

Valery indicated how the body must be sensitively and sensibly distinguished from the subjective mental body and his processes of thinking and gathering information from the outside world, but also from the inner world of experiences, given that the body as an inner self is an authentic way of acting. There is no doubt that in our body we can feel what in the world of dance as an art is known as the bodily experience of dancers and is called proprioceptive and kinesthetic feeling, later defined as kinesthetic empathy, which will be discussed in more depth in the following exposition.

We emphasize that embodied simulation has a crucial importance and meaning both for the body that remembers, for the transmission of trauma, and for the development of kinesthetic empathy. In order to be able to heal the traumas that are engraved in the body, and to understand the body as an expression and a canvas on which a crisis is outlined, we believe that we need bodily

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[43] Paul Valery, *Pesme,* Letopis Matice srpske, Novi Sad 1978., pp. 154 (421).
„Ti zaboravljaš ali tvoje tijelo traje
Ti nisi ništa osjetio ali tvoje se tijelo izmijenilo
Ti govoriš ali tvoje će tijelo učiniti
Ti vidiš ali ono ne vidi.
Ti koračaš ali ono tapka
Ti se sladiš ali ono kuha
Ti se smiješ a ono se bora,
Ti spavaš i ono spava.
Ono nije znalo da si promijenio ideju
Ti nisi znao da je promijenilo snagu,
u svojoj dubini.“

memories and stories, both those of survival, traumas and wounds, as well as those of healing.

What is the meaning of movement-dance, which opens the digital technical statics of the body to kinesthetic empathy, and which in turn enables us to enter the spaces of unspoken body stories? The ethics of touch, proximity, and the ethics of the space between two bodies and what in these spaces "between" means to be, to be in that "not yet" (about-to-be) lead us in this direction. Hamera calls it the ethics of obligation, the ethics of presence for the other, physical interdependence and entanglement,[44] which means going beyond the framework of the modality of the simulacrum, into the space of freedom and embodiment of the experience of reality and the existing one.

Artists often talk about dance, and the arts more widely, as a meeting point and a point where one can test one's boundaries, either as a spectator or performer. Furthermore, they talk about art as a form of communication, which does not require people to speak the same language.[45] As we said, dance – and art in general – has the transformative potential of the current situation, the potential to communicate, to respond (respons-ability) and to mediate the new reality and the meaning, and challenge the hegemonic discourses.

We need the wisdom of the untold stories that our body carries inside us, we need to learn to listen to the wisdom and narratives of the body, the body's stories and what our body tells us. Through the body and the so-called kinesthetic or bodily and proprioceptive empathy, we gain deeper interpretations and meanings of what our body receives, remembers and imprints. The body has its own wisdom, it has its own memory and intelligence, and it remembers.

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[44] Judith Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire 2011., pp. 184-185.
[45] Compare Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict".

As dance is a kinesthetic experience, does dance help us in this direction? Dance as an emanation of thought, an embodied thought, a thought that moves through space, an embodied eternity in motion, which by creating disappears and by disappearing creates. Dance as a concentration of the universe in one dancing body that is constantly changing, creating space that disappears and time that disappears, can lead to liberation of traumatic experiences.

FROM EMPATHY TOWARD KINESTHETIC EMPATHY AS AN ENACTIVE APPROACH TO BODILY BASED UNDERSTANDING

Since dance, to use Badiou's metaphorical vocabulary, is embodied thought, and thought is a bodily experience, it is a gesture and an experience that requires corporeality. In dance, this approach is called kinesthetic empathy, which is an enactive approach or enactment, which means that we comprehend and know by acting or that we can only perceive something through activity, i.e. action and active involvement.

Perhaps no other concept in philosophy and psychology in the past hundred years has experienced such upheavals and caused confusion as the term empathy. Empathy entered English psychological and philosophical literature in 1909, as Edward Titchener's favorite English translation of the German word *Einfühlung*. The term *Einfühlung* has been in use in German psychological literature ever since Robert Vischer coined the term in 1873, and used it in aesthetics, but it also has older roots in German romanticism from the beginning of the 19th century. In aesthetics, empathy was meant to indicate the way of how we understand works of art by feeling the meaning they present to us. For many years, the details of what we experience when we empathize, what psychological mechanisms are at work in empathy, and how, or even if, empathy arises in human development have been hotly debated.

The precursor to the word empathy was the word *compassion*, a term that came to light during the European

Enlightenment. Unlike compassion, which is more passive, empathy assumes active engagement. Empathy includes the willingness of the observer to become part of another's experience, to experience another's experience. Empathy is the art of taking an imaginative leap and putting yourself in another's shoes, understanding the emotions of other beings and using that understanding to guide our behavior and actions.

In the works of Theodor Lipps (1851 – 1914), a German psychologist and philosopher, who used the word in his psychological theory of aesthetic experience, the term indicates how someone, while observing works of art, projects his feelings and sensibilities onto them and as a way of explaining how someone and in what way one comes to know about the artistic value and beauty of a work. Lipps emphasized that by observing a body in motion, like the body of an acrobat or a dancer, the observer can feel an inner mimesis or imitation, where he can feel as if he himself enables this action in himself, as if he himself acts.

Understanding Lipps' concept and theory of empathy in his works is as difficult as an attempt to establish a unique theory. One of the difficulties of interpreting and approaching his term empathy is the fact that Lipps himself did not have a single meaning for the term. He used the term to explain our emotional interaction with works of art, as well as our understanding, knowledge and knowing of other, other egos.

Karsten Stueber points out that Lipps is actually talking about the cognitive, but also the emotional components of empathy, the so-called intellectual empathy, aesthetic empathy, general and specific empathy, apperceptive empathy as a synthetic power and empirical empathy, and uses the term to refer to any of the subject's contributions to the constitution of the recognizable world.[46]

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[46] Karsten Stueber, "Empathy", In: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2008., https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/empathy/, date of access 20.06.2023.

We previously pointed out that Titchener coined the term empathy to translate the German word *Einfühlung*. The literal translation and etymology of the word itself lead us to how empathy means to feel inside someone, to enter into him, to feel into... (feeling-into). Thus, this translation indicates that empathy expresses the way we understand the mental the life of other subjects, feeling inside them, entering them and feeling them. Lipps points out how through empathy "I try and experience, in me, the inner state that I see expressed in to another."[47]

Lipps used the term *Einfühlung* to refer to knowledge of other selves, other egos, versus the knowledge of the self (internal perception) and the knowledge of external objects (sensible perception). However, to expand this analysis, we must not forget that *Einfühlung* is one way, among others, of explaining the other's experience (*Fremderfahrung*). In other words, in light of current comparisons between what is usually called empathy and the experience of the other, we must show that this version is a peculiar way of interpreting the other's experience. Therefore the question of the other's experience (*Fremderfahrung*), is the experience we have of other selves and their lived experiences.[48]

The German philosopher and historian Wilhelm Dilthey borrowed the term from aesthetics and began using it to describe the mental process in which one person enters the world and being of another person and comes to an understanding of how that person feels and thinks.[49] In America, the dance critic John Martin (1893 – 1985), who followed the works of Mary Wigman and Martha Graham, further developed Lippman's concept and ideas, and used terms such as the observer's inner mimicry, kinesthetic sympathy or metakinesis, as motor experience that shapes neurological pathways closely related to emotion in the neuromuscular system. A sensory

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[47] Theodor Lipps, "The knowledge of other egos", pp. 719.

[48] Thomas Kessel „*Theodor Lipps: Schriften zur Einfühlung: Mit einer Einleitung und Anmerkungen*", J. B. Metzler, 2019.

[49] Carolyn J. Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press, New York 2004., pp. 6.

experience can have the effects of reviving the memory of previous experiences in the same neuromuscular pathways, also creating the initial movements.

The concept of kinesthetic empathy was first coined by Miriam Roskin Berger, 1989.[50] Dosamantes-Alperson points out that kinesthetic empathy is the recreation or re-creation of body movements in the therapist's body, which allows the therapist to feel and respond to the client's emotional state.[51] Both kinesthetic ability and empathy are important qualities that dance and movement therapists must possess. Observing the actions and movements, and the dance itself of another person, automatically activates the so-called mirror neurons, parts of the brain that are activated, for example, when we observe the movements of another person.[52]

For Berger what was of utmost importance was the deliberation of Susanne Langer's ideas of dance as "a virtual realm of

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[50] Dita Federman, „Kinesthetic ability and the development of empathy in Dance Movement Therapy", Journal of Applied Arts and Health 2 (2/2011), pp. 137-154, here 138; Robyn Flaum Cruz, „Introduction to Marian Chace Foundation Lecture: October 21, 2011", *American Journal of Dance Therapy* 34 (1/2012*)*; Miriam Roskin Berger, „Marian Chace Foundation Annual Lecture", *American Journal of Dance Therapy* 34 (1/2012), pp. 3–5.

[51] See Irma Dosamantes, „The intersubjective relationship between therapist and patient: A key to understanding denied and denigrated aspects of the patient's self", *The Arts in Psychotherapy,* 19 (5/1992), pp. 359-365, here 360; Dosamantes-Alperson, E., "The intrapsychic and the interpersonal in movement psychotherapy", *American Journal of Dance Therapy* (3/1979), pp. 20–31; Dosamantes-Alperson, E. (1980). "Contacting bodily-felt experiencing in psychotherapy", In: J. E. Shorr, G. E. Sobel, P. Robin, & J. A. Connella (Eds.), *Imagery: Its many dimensions and applications,* Plenum Press, New York, pp. 223–236; Dosamantes-Alperson, E., "Experiencing in movement psychotherapy", *American Journal of Dance Therapy,* (4/1981), pp. 33–44; Dosamantes-Alperson, E. (1982–83), "Working with internalized relationships through a kinesthetic and kinetic imagery process", *Imagination, Cognition and Personality,* (2/1982-83), pp. 333–343.

[52] More about kinestetic empathy see in: Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason *(ed.), Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural* Practices, Intellect, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2012; Dita Federman, „Kinesthetic ability and the development of empathy in Dance Movement Therapy", *Journal of Applied Arts and Health* 2 (2/2011), pp. 137-154.

power" and of dance as the channel of "forms of feeling". She connected the concept of "virtual realm of power" to what dance therapy calls the exchange of energy through kinesthetic empathy. She also developed concept of Wengrower's referencing to Langer's concept "forms of feeling" which denotes the capacity of dance to contain the range of our felt experiences, sensations, emotions, and all of our subjective experiences. Dance expresses experiences difficult to analyze because it may be ambiguous or complex, because it might have multiple levels of meaning. Words cannot describe the intensity of the experience as emotional life is complex and fluid.[53]

According to some authors, such as Gallese, the fundamental aspects of social recognition and cognition are primarily based on motor cognition. He concludes that our own active body, the body in motion, becomes the main source of information related to the behavior of others and points out that embodied simulation has a crucial importance and meaning for empathy.[54] Gallese even points out that intersubjectivity is best understood as intercorporeality. Thus Merleau-Ponty's and Gallese's notion of intercorporeality (intercorporéité) is a new theory of social cognition.

Our interest in empathy goes to it meaning that empathy can be a bridge between the subject and that which is unknown or unfamiliar, and which can evoke an ethical awareness. By ethical awareness we refer to a sense of seriousness and urgency, a sense of something being 'for real' and something of concern to me.[55]

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[53] Compare Hilda Wengrower and Sharon Chaiklin (ed.), *Dance and Creativity within Dance Movement Therapy – International Perspectives*, Routledge, London 2020.

[54] Vittorio Gallese, „Neoteny and social cognition: A Neuroscientific Perspective on Embodiment", in C. Durt, T. Fuchs, C. Tewes (eds.), *Embodiment, enaction and culture. Investigating the constitution of the shared world*, MIT Press, Boston 2017., pp. 309-332.

[55] Rose Parekh-Gaihede, „Breaking the Distance: Empathy and Ethical Awareness in Performance", In: Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason (Ed.), *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, Intellect The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2012., pp. 176.

Philosopher Michael Slote in *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* directly stresses the relevance of our feeling of empathy to our sense of morality:

> "empathy is essential to caring moral motivation, the broad correspondence between empathy and morality doesn't seem as if it can be an accident".[56]

When we talk about traumatic experiences and their possibilities of communicating, representation and understanding, we must be aware of its ongoing fundamental distance of representation between a person communicating an experience and receiver and that can be even more traumatic on the part of the individual trying to share his/ her story. That same distance, however, is a starting point for our ethical meeting with the other.

This is exemplified by a passage in Slavoj Žižek's *The Plague of Fantasies*, where he refers to the inability of victims of extreme violence (the victims of rape in the Bosnian war) to truly bear witness to their own experience, because the recognition or sharing of the experience through symbolic representation, necessarily fails. He states that this inability produces a second trauma (the first being the trauma of violence).

Žižek's account deals with the limits of empathy (understood as the sharing of the other person's experience) as a fundamental condition of our ethical awareness, an awareness of the fact that, as he states, we cannot "tell everything", that "every articulated symbolic truth is forever not-all, failed". Furthermore, we are "always already" involved in the trauma of the other, in and through the attempts to understand and represent. Žižek states that there is an ethical dimension in the recognition of this involvement, and consequently, of the impossibility inherent in representation.[57]

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[56] Michael Slote, *The Ethics of Care and Empathy,* Routledge, London, New York 2007., pp. 8.
[57] Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, Verso, London & New York 2008., First published 1997. pp. 276-277.

Maurice Marleau-Ponty, in his work *Phenomenology of the Perception*, points out that the living body is not only a material, objective body, but a subjective body that is in constant dialogue with the world. For him, consciousness, awareness is not "I think", but rather "I can", "I act", "I do".[58] Thus, the reception of information that occurs in the dialogue between the body and the world that surrounds it, is not passive, but includes activity, especially the movement of the body, i.e. everything happens in the body and is drawn into it. Everything that happens and tempts, happens on the body, in the body and on that body.[59]

The fundamental concept of his philosophy is the concept of motor intentionality.[60] It was this pre-reflexive, operative awareness that served Merleau-Ponty as a reference point for thinking about motor intentionality. He is talking about conscious perceptions and sensations or kinesthetic bodily sensations.[61]

These abilities and sensations are actually proprioceptive awareness, which is our primordial body, pre-reflexive, our primary perception and pre-reflexive awareness.[62]

According to Levinas 'the face' demands a response. Reaching towards contact in the jam is not closed in on itself in a solipsistic somatic experience but also demands action and response from others without which it does not exist.

In his work, *Totality and Infinity*, Emmanuel Lévinas makes a similar point regarding the implications of the individual's attempt to understand the other. Lévinas poses the ethical question: how can you relate to the other without depriving the other of otherness?[63]

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[58] Compare Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of the Perception,* Routledge Classics, New York 2014., pp. 159.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., pp. 153.

[61] Ibid., pp. 96.

[62] *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/self-consciousness-phenomenological/

[63] Emanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 2009., pp. 27., Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l'Extériorité. Paris: Librairie Générale Française. First published 1971 by Martinus Nijhof.

Lévinas's ethics centres around the face-to-face meeting with the other human being. To Lévinas the ethical dimension in this encounter is that it surpasses the spontaneous impulse to "possess" the other, to include the other under oneself, depriving the other of its otherness. The ethical dimension of the human being, accordingly, is linked to the capacity to have a non-possessive meeting with the other human being.[64]

In this meeting, encounter, the face of the other expresses a fragility that is at the same time a strength. It expresses the ethical realisation that "you cannot commit murder."[65] The face of the other addresses me and commands me to answer back, to take responsibility. The face-to-face meeting is a confrontation with, simultaneously, the absolute separation from and the strong relatedness to the other (humanity expressed in the face of the other).[66] To take responsibility for the other, in Lévinas' thinking, implies a recognition of these two sides of the relation.

How can these ethical premises materialise or be made clear to us? If empathy is important for our ethical relation to the other, the separation from the other, in order to not possess the other or not depriving the other of otherness, as an ethical starting point, constitutes a challenge. How do we empathise without violating this separation from the other? In the context of dance as an artistic practice or in context of performance, we shall explore that empathy may be regarded as a pathway to ethical awareness that recognises our involvement and responsibility in relation to the other, rather than an assumption of understanding or attempts to understand and represent, in Žižek's sense, which conflates the self with the other. In certain empathic moments performance can provoke a reflexivity that is tied to an immediate embodied experience. Through this experience it can bring us closer to the other in a subtle, non-possessive way.

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[64] Ibid., pp. 36-37, 235.
[65] Ibid., pp. 217.
[66] Ibid., pp. 104-108, 233-235.

But in the isolated setting of a performance, the possibility for empathy is intensified, not least because we pay extraordinary attention to the things that happen around or in front of us.[67] Furthermore, performance can make reality more tangible to us by provoking emotive or physical movement of/in our bodies. Performance and dance as an art form and practice holds the capacity to provoke such close encounters with a traumatic experience of other or of my self and with given reality by evoking empathy in ways that stand out from everyday experiences.[68]

Thus, through movement, dance and ultimately the body, the individual connects with others and the world that surrounds him, and in this way reproduces the movements he perceives with kinesthetic empathy, inscribing them in his body, creating a story in the muscular experience and awakening such associations as if they were original movement, which we see as our own. Kinesthetic experience is intrinsically related to emotional experience. Every movement is affective, every affective state is a movement. As such, kinesthetic empathy is the ability to embrace kinesthetic qualities.[69] This kinesthetic dimension of empathy allows us to feel the physical state of another person with our own body.[70] Precisely in such breakthroughs, moments of bridging difference, distance and physical distance, we enter into a relationship through the use of space and approaches to the *kinesphere* of others through proximity and face-to-face meeting. Precisely in the form and entry into the space and the

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[67] B. S. Funch, *The Psychology of Art Appreciation*, Museum Tusculanum Press, Copenhagen 1997., pp. 236-237.

[68] Rose Parekh-Gaihede, „Breaking the Distance: Empathy and Ethical Awareness in Performance", In: Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason (Ed.), *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, pp. 180.

[69] Deidre Sklar, „Can bodylore be brought to its senses?", *Journal of American Folklore*, (107/1994), pp. 9–22, here 15.

[70] Andrea Behrends, Sybille Müller and Isabel Dziobek, "Moving in and out of synchrony: A concept for a new inrtervention fostering empathy trough interactional movement and dance", *The arts in Psychotherapy*, (39/2012), pp. 107-116.

use of the same, there is our intention, but also our understanding of the other with whom we enter or want to enter into a relationship.

THERAPEUTIC AND CREATIVE POTENTIAL OF DANCE AS A MEANS TO GAIN COMPLETENESS, INTEGRITY, OPEN NEW SPACES OF FREEDOM AND PLAY, AND CREATE AND WRITE NEW STORIES/ETHICS OF ENCOUNTER

Following the above, we put emphasis on CI – *Contact improvisation* – contact improvisation, as a dance practice through which contact and touch are achieved, and closeness through the body and dance, as a form of communication and relationship.

Judith Hamera describes such an ethics of encounter, ethics of proximity and touch in the choreography of Hae Kyung Lee in which "dancers jump and roll over one another so quickly that they must initiate a move by anticipating, not actually seeing, where another dancer will be [as] requiring a strong sense of responsibility, both for one own body and those of others with whom one shares the space."[71]

She goes on to say that this results in "an ethics of obligation, an ethics of presence to others as bodies rooted in these dancers' physical interdependence… it is corporeal, rooted in physical proximity, in touch."[72] The obligation herein is what Kelly Oliver, in Hamera describes as being "obligated to respond to our environment and other people in ways that open up rather than close off the possibility of response."[73]

In that sense, Judith Hamera points out that contact improvisation (CI), as a dance style and artistic practice, is a kind of duet that is relational in the ontological sense and therefore as ethical as well, because it assumes and includes touch and relationship. In

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[71] Judith Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City*, pp. 184.
[72] Ibid., pp. 185.
[73] Ibid.

this relationship, the dancers must anticipate the movements and body positions of the other without actually seeing them, which requires a strong sense of responsibility for the other, trust, surrender, partnership, cooperation and dialogue. CI means being "in-between space", being in the "not yet" or "about-to-be" space.[74]

Furthermore, perhaps it is only through making contact in the material 'hands on' sense that we can sense its absence, generate this somatic attention, the ethics of presence that Hamera describes, and thereby create an in-between space that is at once uncertain and full of possibilities.[75]

Instead, it is possible to imagine an ethics of touch that becomes a way of 'being together' in our singular plurality, an ethical ontology rooted in the body, that can permeate beyond the dance studio. An ethics of touch relies on a response-ability, a response that is in fact, "an obligation to life itself."[76]

Hamera calls it the ethics of obligation, the ethics of presence for the other, physical interdependence and entanglement, corporeality that is rooted in physical proximity, in touch. The obligation here is the obligation to give an answer to our environment and what surrounds us, and to the other people in our vicinity, nearness and closeness, in such a way that they open themselves to the possibility of an answer. [77]

Contact improvisation becomes even more relevant in the conditions in which we find ourselves more and more, in conditions of social and increasingly physical distance, and becomes an embodied experience of our ability to respond and enter into communication and relationship with the Other.[78]

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Judith Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City*, pp. 187.

[76] Ibid., pp. 185.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., pp. 185., D. Williams, „Dancing (in) the In-between: Contact Improvisation as an Ethical Practice" *Writings on Dance*, 15., 1996., pp. 23-33.

The dancers in the moment, here and now, negotiate their materiality and bodies. In this way, they connect in the moment and take a physical risk together. To make and create contact requires an embodied quality of attention vis-à-vis the other, like Levinas's, readiness to respond. Thus, the bodily experience is at the same time an experience of both proximity and distance with others.

This "in-between space", created by the ethics of presence, is full of uncertainty, vulnerability, but also possibilities. Ethics is the one that asks about the possibilities of inhabiting uncertainty, inhabiting what should be (*Sollen*), together. Thus, the experience of physical proximity has a key and decisive role in the ethical relationship as well. The ethical meaning of the CI as a dance style, is that "it happens between people, in the social gaps (…) The ethical value of an action is what it brings out in the situation (…) how it breaks sociality open. Ethics is about how we inhabit uncertainty, together."[79]

In the description of the co-presence of the performance space, Fischer-Lichte refers to empathy as a transformative power (*transformatorische Kraft*).[80] The performance offers the possibility to try what it might be like to be an other being by discovering otherness within oneself.

The body is the central concept of Nancy's thought. Talking about the connection between the body and subjectivity, Nancy introduces the term "being-with". The body is always primarily connected to other bodies, therefore to other people. Thus, Nancy points out that the other, if it is the other, is always another body. For him, to be means to be embodied, to be a recognizable body. So for something to exist, it must be recognized, encompassed, understood, seen, experienced. Therefore, it must be embodied.[81]

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[79] Brian Massumi, *Navigating moments*, 2002., http://www.brianmassumi.com/english/interviews.html

[80] E. Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2004., pp. 171.

[81] Compare Jean Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, Fordham University Press, New York 2008.

It is an empathy that can be evoked in performance, because of the art form's ability to employ sense impulses that disturb our expectations. Central to the discussion is the paradoxical relationship between the importance of empathy for our ethical awareness and the ethical perspective in facing the ultimate failure of empathy, realising that we can never fully understand and represent the other. One must have empathy enough to ethically realise this, to realise an involvement or responsibility towards the other, but without imposing oneself on the other. Not only do I come closer to the other but also, as my body activates its memory of earlier sense impressions, the mirroring processes become an internal mirror. I feel included in the pain of the other. With the physical and emotional closeness of the other in the dance or performance moment, in the breakthrough of empathy, that balances between the known and the unknown, the trauma of the simultaneous separation from (unable to understand and represent the other, or her/his inability to represent her/his traumatic experience) and involvement with this other becomes real to me.

This recognition happens through the body, here and now. Thought is a bodily experience, it is a gesture and an experience that requires physicality. Kinesthetic empathy is an active approach or enactment, which means knowing by acting. We can only know something through activity, i.e. action and active involvement.

CONCLUSION

We are increasingly discovering that if we want to heal trauma, it is not necessary to talk about old memories and relive emotional pain. It can only further retraumatize the victims and intensify old wounds. What we have to do in order to get rid of the symptoms and fears we feel, is to bring to the surface the deeply hidden physiological resources, the resources that our body possesses and use them consciously to help the body to heal itself and the psyche. If we continue to repress and ignore our ability to change the course of our instinctual responses from reactive to proactive, we will remain imprisoned and in pain. We must re-create the space of

recovery, the space of communication through the body in dance, as counterhegemonic and imposed discourse of traumatic experience.

Therefore, the application of the method of somatic, bodily experience through movement and dance as therapy, not only aims to heal the traumatic experience, but also to provide the individual with the opportunity to find within himself a source of new strength and wisdom for the future ahead of him. Through the therapeutic and creative potential of dance as an artistic practice, we can gain completeness, integrity, open new spaces of freedom and play, and create and write new stories, bearing in mind our memories.

Thus dancing bodies and dance alone as an artistic practice, can offer reinterpretations of personal and common history and historical events and approached issues such as trauma and death to prevent future conflicts from re-occurring, to develop trust and empathy, and to build bridges between the separates individuals or communities.[82] They challenged practices that lead to hostility and separation, and tried to create "zones of contact and encounter".[83]

Produced within existing relations of power, heterotopic dance challenges institutional forces. Situated within a larger 'wave' of resistances, comprising artistic and political practices, and collective endeavours materialized in the margins, it opposes the current situation. Found in an agonistic struggle with institutional forces reproducing discourses of nationalism, hate, distrust, lack of self-respect, the artists represent resisting voices and bodies, and

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[82] Daniella Gold, »The art of building peace: How the visual arts aid peace-building initiatives in Cyprus«, Available at: https://digitalcollections. sit.edu/isp_collection/370; Dorinda Hulton, »Sites of micro-political theatre«, *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 30 (3/2008), pp. 94–103.; Evanthia Tselika, »Ethno-nationally divided cities and the use of art for purposes of conflict resolution and urban regeneration«, *Visual Studies* (33/2018), pp. 280–294; Evanthia Tselika, *Conflict transformation art: Cultivating coexistence through the use of socially engaged artistic practices*. PRIO Cyprus Centre report 4. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre 2019.
[83] Compare Andria Christofidou & Dimitra L. Milioni, "Art Heterotopias Against Hegemonic Discourses: Dancing the Cyprus conflict.

heterotopic dance communicates of the new discourse of unification, peace and cooperation.

We emphasize that embodied simulation has a crucial importance and meaning both for the body that remembers, for the transmission of trauma, and for the development of kinesthetic empathy. In order to be able to heal the traumas that are engraved in the body, and to understand the body as an expression and a canvas on which a crisis is outlined, we believe that we need bodily memories and stories, both those of survival, traumas and wounds, as well as those of healing.

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Therefore, the application of the method of somatic, bodily experience through movement and dance as therapy, not only aims to heal the traumatic experience, but also aims to provide the individual with the opportunity to find within himself a source of new strength and wisdom for the future ahead of him. Through the therapeutic and creative potential of dance as an artistic practice, we can gain completeness, integrity, open new spaces of freedom and play, and create and write new stories, bearing in mind our memories.

A new understanding of the vital role of dance, and artistic practices as a performance, from plays to official events to grassroots protests, must be taken seriously as a means of storing and transmitting knowledge. In this paper, we tried to elucidate how the repertoire of embodied memory, conveyed in body, in gestures, spoken words, movements, dance and other performance practices, offers alternative perspectives to those derived from the written archive and is particularly useful to a reconsideration of historical processes of transnational contact. We tried to explain how the

archive and the repertoire work together to make political claims, transmit traumatic memory and forge a better communication and a new sense of cultural identity and unity. Although they are not exhausted by this paper, the study of the body as an archive, dance and performances as artistic practices enables a deeper understanding of the past and present, of ourselves and others.

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PLES KAO HETEROTOPIJA PROTIV HEGEMONISTIČKOG DISKURSA TRAUMATIČNIH ISKUSTAVA

Sažetak: U ovom radu, istražujemo ples kao praksu i kao "Drugi" prostor, protivhegemonijski prostor koji je pod uticajem postojećeg društvenog uređenja, ili postojeće moći traumatičnog diskursa kao neke vrste nametnutog diskursa, dok mu se istodobno opire. Da bismo istražili te premise, koristićemo Fukoov pojam *heterotopije* i primenićemo ga na analizu plesa kao umetničke prakse i mogućnosti da razumemo ples kao heterotopiju u kojoj su preokrenuti preovlađujući hegemonistički diskursi, te kao protivhegemonijski prostor, kako to naglašavaju Kristofidu i Milioni, koji ima sposobnost da poremeti i dekonstruiše hegemonističe diskurse

prošlih traumatičnih iskustava ili događaja. Da bismo bili u stanju da lečimo traume koje su urezane u telo, i da shvatimo telo kao izraz i platno na kojem je ocrtana kriza, tvrdimo da su nam potrebni telesno pamćenje i priče, kako one o preživljavanju, traumi i ranama, tako i one o zaceljivanju. Pokazujemo kako ples može pružiti protivhegemonijski prostor, prostor kadar da rekonstruiše mesto traumatičnih događaja, koji su utisnuti u telo, u mesta komunikacije i rekonstrukcije značenja, te kako ples poziva individuu da reflektuje vlastiti identitet i da poveže fragmentirano sopstvo. Ovde naglašavamo značenje pokreta – plesa koji statičnost tela otvara za kinestetičku empatiju, koja nam zauzvrat dopušta da stupimo u prostor neizgovorenih telesnih priča. Etika dodira, blizine, kao i etika prostora između dva tela i onoga što u tim prostorima „između" znači – biti u onom „ne-još" – vodi nas u tom pravcu. Tvrdimo da su naša tela i samosačinjena i oblikovana zajednicom, društvom i povešću (ličnom ili kolektivnom), i da to spoznajemo izvođenjem, i to najpre telom, u sinergiji s umom i okruženjem (enaktivni pristup).

Ključne reči: pamćenja, trauma, telo, ples, olakšanje, protivhegemonijsko mesto, heterotopije