

LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS FROM PERFORMING ARTS IN AND OF EXILE

A LIFE IN THE IN-BETWEEN

*A critical commentary and public works submitted to
Middlesex University in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of*

Doctor of Professional Studies by Public Works

Nadia Arouri

M00647717

April 2019

The views expressed in this document are mine and are not necessarily the views of my supervisory team, examiners or Middlesex University.

To Jaleel, Azad, and Coco...

... for drawing smiles in our lives

Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to my biggest critics and biggest fans, my parents Amal Ghadban and Tayseer Arouri. I am a product of you. This work is about my journey which was shaped and remains a part of your journey. I am in awe to be your daughter. I could not possibly thank you enough for surrounding me with your unconditional love and support. For enabling me even as I launched the I CAN MOVE programme in 2011 and you secretly thought I was crazy. I am lucky, proud and humbled for having you as my parents.

I wouldn't want to imagine my life without my siblings. Thank you for being my entrusted mentors. I CAN MOVE would not have succeeded or been implemented on such high quality without my siblings: Faris, Natasha and Ghassan; and adopted siblings Raed, Ruba, Andreas, and Fatima. Your touches are all over my life and my works. From graphic designs, licenses, content, management, networking, fundraising to logistics. It did take a village to raise this child.

I am indebted to my mentors who demonstrated to me that for the ambitious to achieve they must be enabled and have friends who will take a leap of faith with them. To my friends - my chosen family - thank you for keeping me sane, for bringing fun and dance into my life, for the extensive conversations, constructive debates, and the mental, physical and psychological support when life dealt me its consecutive blows. You know who you are.

I would like to extend my thanks to the many persons who have helped me navigate through, collect, and assemble the different pieces of this work. Thank you to Dr. Mohammad Kittaneh for his help in creating the Map on page 43.

I cannot forget the ones who in challenging circumstances found the patience, creativity and strength to bring the programme forward: the programme team and instructors and the technical team for their ingenuity in what they achieved. To the I CAN MOVE trainees and graduates, thank you for trusting me with your time and having faith in me as a teacher. I learned a lot from you.

None of this would have been possible without all the donors and partner organisations whose support and practical engagement made it possible over a long period of time to have school classes, training sessions, rehearsals, and performances.

Last but not least, a heartfelt thank you to my supervisor, Kate Maguire. Thank you for being the mentor and critical friend throughout this sometime gratifying and pleasurable journey of discovery and learning, and sometimes excruciating journey of reflection and dissection. No short or long words can express my appreciation for your contributions, constructive critiques and long Sunday conversations. Your universalist knowledge, activism, and cohesion gave me the necessary safety to delve deep into my triumphs and my pains. Thank you for being my hermeneut, for being my companion on this challenging and eye-opening journey.

Abstract

The exact direction this critique took was not what I initially expected. It emerged out of my own experiences both professional and personal of creating a large public work called I CAN MOVE under my organisation Yante in Vienna. It follows - through an autoethnographical lens - my, at times, crisscrossing paths and at times paths down rabbit holes, to both personal and professional discoveries in notions of leadership. I CAN MOVE was what I brought with me when I returned to the area of conflict where I was born. It was a four years training of trainers programme in dance and performance in traumatised communities. A programme I wanted to make sustainable and endure in some form. The autoethnographic lens recognises the importance of agency and how that agency shapes environments as well as actual and symbolic objects with which we populate those and how those in turn shape the direction of our agency.

What I came back to Vienna with was the idea of a leadership of self which I now use in my role as a leadership trainer in an Austrian organisation. I critique all aspects of my work to explore mutual impacting and the consequences of a lack of insight into socio/political/personal and professional dynamics when one is having to firefight on a daily basis with internal and external demons not least of those of exile and the returning exile. In many ways I wanted to give to those young people what I did not have when I was them, but now, I can go and they must stay.

There is no great revelation about how to fund and set up community arts projects; each individual has their own motivations and drive and the published reports contain the many performance dimensions that may be useful to others working in this area. The insights through this autoethnographic lens were about my own leadership or lack of it and the struggle to bring that programme to fruition in which I needed to face the obstacles to my own learning and the obstacles others had to theirs. Projects work not because of one individual but because of successful teams, partnerships and committed participants, not just to the programme but to each other. The question arises for all organisations of how that is to be achieved. I think I understand better now that it is not a process of listing steps to take but providing the conditions so that it can emerge.

Public works access

YANTE – I CAN MOVE Programme

NarrativeReport-ICM01 - <https://bit.ly/2GEtI97>

NarrativeReport-ICM02 - <https://bit.ly/2XRiZ26>

NarrativeReport-ICM03 - <https://bit.ly/2IMfDd9>

Official Website: <http://www.yante-icanmove.org>

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/yantecan>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/I.CAN.MOVE>

Flickr Page: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/118678554@N04/>

Links to Performance Videos, Media reports, Press Photos and Information Videos

- **Exile: Pilot Performance** <https://bit.ly/2W98czH>

- **THE RITE OF SPRING: Performance with Child-labourers / Street-Children**

Performance Video <http://goo.gl/OUhHNy>

Al-Falastinaya TV <http://goo.gl/8dQqWt>

Skynews Arabia <http://goo.gl/LQJZ0L>

- **Serendipity: Performance with differently abled persons**

Performance Video <https://goo.gl/JwZDQM>

Press Photos <https://goo.gl/BVN0gY>

Rehearsal video <http://goo.gl/7Koihb>

Media Reports

Dubai TV <https://goo.gl/Foo890>

Palestine TV <https://goo.gl/O6vJGJ>

Al Arabiya <https://goo.gl/ytISdy>

Al Hurra <https://goo.gl/XT1GTp>

Sky News <https://goo.gl/lzjpq4>

Zamn Press <http://goo.gl/BNxkRH>

- **Graduation Performance** <https://bit.ly/2GIUfSy>

- **Various informative Videos**

Ro'ya Television interview <http://goo.gl/J5XsX3>

I Can Move Music Video <http://goo.gl/AJkHAA>

King Abdallah Award for Youth innovation and Achievements <http://goo.gl/v4GztR>

Nadia Arouri | AMENDS <http://goo.gl/auf3ZS>

Table of Images

DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Photo 1: ICM Performance Rehearsal Rite of Spring	12
Photo 2: ICM Performance Rehearsal Rite of Spring	14
Photo 3: ICM Performance Premiere Rite of Spring	16
Photo 4: ICM Performance Premiere Rite of Spring	18
Photo 5: ICM Performance Premiere Serendipity	20
Photo 6: Paris: Solidarity Demonstration with Palestine and our Family	22
Photo 7: ICM Performance Premiere Rite of Spring	24
Photo 8: ICM Performance Rehearsal Rite of Spring	26
Photo 9: ICM Collage of the trainees while renovating the new head quarter	29
Photo 10: ICM Performance Premiere Rite of Spring	31
Photo 11: ICM Performance Premiere Rite of Spring	33
Photo 12: ICM Performance Premiere Rite of Spring	35
Photo 13: ICM Performance Premiere EXILE	37
Photo 14: ICM Community Class	40
Photo 15: Maps	41
Photo 16: ICM Performance Premiere Serendipity	45
Photo 17: ICM Collage of Performance Premiere / Rehearsals EXILE	48
Photo 18: ICM Community Class	50
Photo 19: Public Work	52
Figure 1: Diagram illustration Flow of Activities	53
Photo 20: ICM Collage of Performance Premiere Serendipity	56
Photo 21: ICM Choreography Class at head quarter	58
Photo 22: ICM Performance Premiere Serendipity	60
Photo 23: ICM Dance Technique Class at head quarter	62
Photo 24: ICM Community Class	64
Photo 25: ICM Collage of Community Classes	66
Photo 26: ICM Performance Premiere Serendipity	68
Photo 27: ICM Community Class	71
Photo 28: ICM Collage of Public Class	74
Photo 29: ICM Performance Premiere Serendipity	76
Photo 30: My father, Tayseer Arouri with Nelson Mandela in Tunis 1991/92	78
Photo 31: ICM Performance Premiere Rite of Spring	80
Photo 32: ICM Performance Premiere Rite of Spring	82
Photo 33: ICM Collage of Dance Technique Class at head quarter	84
Photo 34: ICM head quarter entrance	87

Photo 35: ICM Dance Technique Class at head quarter	89
Photo 36: ICM Performance Graduation	91
Photo 37: ICM Dance Technique Class at Danscentrum Stockholm	93
Photo 38: ICM Choreography Intensive Module	95
Photo 39: ICM Sweden Trip	97
Photo 40: ICM head quarter, wall painting by trainees	99
Photo 41: ICM Stage Lighting Design and technique Intensive Module	101
Photo 42: ICM Performance Premiere EXILE	103
Photo 43: ICM Performance Premiere EXILE	106

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	4
ABSTRACT	5
PUBLIC WORKS	6
TABLE OF IMAGES	7
TABLE OF CONTENTS	9
SECTION 1	11
INTRODUCTION	11
THEMES AND PUBLIC WORKS	11
AUTOETHNOGRAPHY	15
BRICOLAGE	15
CRITICAL THEORY OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL	16
COMPLEXITY	17
PRACTICE THEORY	19
INTERSECTIONALITY	20
SECTION 2	21
THE CONTEXT OF THE WORKS AND MYSELF AS PART OF THE CONTEXT	21
A QUESTION OF IDENTITY	21
I AM THE IN BETWEEN	23
MY CONCEPT OF SELF	25
PER ASPERA AD ASTRA	30
SECTION 3	38
FROM LEADERSHIP OF SELF TO LEADERSHIP WITH OTHERS	38
OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC WORKS	39
EXILE	39
I CAN MOVE (ICM)	48
TRAINING OF TRAINERS PROGRAMME	49
THE RITE OF SPRING / LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS	53
SERENDIPITY	55
COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL CLASSES	56
FINAL GRADUATION PERFORMANCE	57
SECTION 4	59
INCITING INSIGHTS	59
TRANSFORMING PAIN OF EXILE FROM SELF AND FROM A HOME	59

FREEDOM: HOPE IN AGENCY	61
GROWTH: CURIOSITY AND LIBERATION FROM OBEDIENCE	63
RESPECT: COHESION AND DIALOGUE	64
SECTION 5	67
INSIGHTS: LEARNING ABOUT LEADERSHIP OF SELF TO BE ABLE TO LEAD WITH OTHERS	67
DISCOMFORT AND DISRUPTION	67
INSIGHT: LEARNING TO EMBRACE LONELINESS	69
INSIGHT: IMPORTANCE OF NON-WORK SUPPORT NETWORK	72
INSIGHT: NEVER SILENCE THE INNER ALARM BELL	72
INSIGHT: WHO IS MY “JOB”, WHO IS MY PRIORITY	73
INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISES	74
INSIGHT: WHICH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS TO ENGAGE WITH	77
INSIGHT: PLAGUE OF COLONIALISM	78
INSIGHT: GHOSTS OF CAPITALISM’S COLONIALISATION	81
INSIGHT: FUNDING	84
INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP IS CULTIVATING A LEARNING ORGANISATION	86
INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT STATUS, TITLES AND POWER OVER PEOPLE	89
INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP IS NON-BINARY	90
INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP OF SELF IS A SHIFT IN POWER PARADIGMS	90
INSIGHT: EVOLVING MY BEHAVIOURS WAS AN OSCILLATION BETWEEN EXTREMES	92
INSIGHT: MENTORING IS A DANCE OF SHAPING AND BEING SHAPED	94
INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP OF SELF IS FIRST AND FOREMOST ABOUT BEING HUMAN	95
INSIGHT: KNOWING MY VALUE	96
INSIGHT: LETTING GO	97
CONCLUSION	100
REFERENCES	108

Section 1

Introduction

THEMES AND PUBLIC WORKS

I live in Vienna. I am the third child of an independently minded foursome: two females and two males. I would describe myself professionally as a creator, educator and social-artist. My professional practice revolves around creating spaces, shifting paradigms and challenging norms and the status quo. My practice is informed by my upbringing, diverse interests, as well as informal and formal education that reflect the diversity of my interests which are harnessed to bring about contributions to individual and community confidence and esteem particularly those who have been marginalised or excised from their roots.

What took me into working on such psychosocial issues, using my love for and training in dance, music and performing arts, was at first an intuitive drive. At later stages in my work, I began to notice the resemblance to my own life of accounts by some participants, mostly women, which they shared with me. In the process I realised that especially dance, which is an occupation as well as creation of space¹, has helped me acknowledge and subsequently begin to process the physical manifestation of the trauma I experienced growing up. Realising how much dance and performing arts helped me release tension and pain, it was an intuitive process for me to want to bring those community art methods to more people, as well as a clear desire for me to work further with those methods as a healing process for myself. My intuition was not therefore instinctual, it was informed. The decision to initiate work in Palestine was based on my connection to the place, my network and knowledge of the art scene as well as the opportunities and the doors I knew my parent's network and their good name would open for me. Another important contributing factor was that as a student I was not allowed to work in Europe although I had to finance my life and studies in Europe.

My work was only made possible by creating my own employer. Unable to create an agency in Austria, due to structural racism (ZARA², Press release 9. April 2009³; Faßmann et al., 2016), which I cover briefly in the introduction and will go into in more depth in later chapters, I founded YANTE – Youth, Art and Levante, a non-profit organisation, in 2010, through which I ran my projects and was partly employed. At the time I was 23 years of age. In this critique I have chosen some of the spaces, projects and public works I created under the umbrella of YANTE through which to explore the themes that seemed to have inspired my work and to make more sense of them now that after the successful completion of the I CAN MOVE programme I have a chance to stand back and reflect.

¹ Brook, 2008.

² Centre for Civil Courage and Anti-racism Work. <https://zara.or.at/de>

³ <https://zara.or.at/index.php/archiv/2148>

The public works I have chosen are:

- EXILE community dance performance and pilot project. (This was the seminal public work)
- I CAN MOVE 4-year training programme (Dance technique and modules).
- I CAN MOVE performances: Le Sacre du Printemps 2013 / Serendipity 2014 / Graduation 2015.
- I CAN MOVE outreach interventions.

These works can be accessed on www.yante-icanmove.org as well as the digital and analogue artefacts which accompany this document.

My approach to this critique of my work which has made sense of what I have done is autoethnography – the opportunity to stand back and look at the familiar as if it is strange. Through viewing difference, I start to look at my practice, culture and the familiar as an outsider as if it is strange to me. It combines the agency of the observer with their environment and in this case with their own created artefacts to evoke a thicker description and understanding of how one shapes the other thereby revealing paths to the future but with the agent becoming one that is more conscious of responses, actions and potentialities through this process of gazing.

Through this opportunity to critique my works, I have been able to surface and articulate what has always been known to me internally: that the common thread between my work, my hobbies, my art, my interests, my socialisation, my readings, my engagement, as well as my political and cultural identity is the attempt to generate a social disruptive innovation through notions of space.

My view of the world is that we live in fear. For many centuries we soothed our fear of the unknown through religion. Religion was then (semi-)replaced by nationalism's fear



of the other (Harari, 2017⁴). Currently capitalism is fuelling our fear of inadequacy by disempowerment through a school and work system of silos, a focus on specialisation and standardisation (Graeber, 2001). Luckily though, the future has become the present through the fast development of technology. Technology is rendering the silo system obsolete, as the present- future requires adaptability if we are to survive as human beings and not just human tools.

This critique started out with a recurring confrontation between the 'I' and the 'we'. In Arabic, the use of 'I' is strongly frowned upon⁵. For many years I used 'we' instead of 'I' because of the shame I felt in the use of the 'I', and because the 'we' projected an illusion of a big team to both supporters and participants. This critique was a process of the release of the 'I' that has been silenced. The use of the 'I' allowed me to reveal various micro and open aggressions, which I refer to later on and make sense of my attributing them to colonialism. Through the emergent theme of leadership of self I could arrive at a non-diminishing 'I' in the 'we', instead of an 'I' separated from them. Further on, in my current new work position, I find myself in an 'I' in the 'them', helping to develop leadership with others across the board.

In the following pages I will view my work through a range of different lenses to support me in contextualising and conceptualising my works as a coherent and integrated expression of my actions in and on the world. My choice is indicative of my positionality as an activist and social constructivist. The main approach to this critique of my works as stated above is Autoethnography. The lenses that illustrate my identity, behaviours and way of being in the world are:

- Bricolage (Kincheloe, Levi Strauss) is my *modus operandi*. It is my playing. It is my creativity. It is the manifestation of my freedom. I take what is at hand and create opportunities that I may not see if I am stuck in a prescribed way of being in the world, if I live with expectation more than hope. I trust hope. I do not fear uncertainty.
- Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, particularly Adorno and Horkheimer, is my dad. It is how I frame my learning. It is my system of doubt. It is how I change paradigms from within and help others to question paradigms. It is how I identify with people within power structures. It is how I dismantle power structures. It demonstrates how my space has been fundamentally infringed and colonised by power structures.
- Complexity (Boulton) is my attitude to the world. It is my way of thinking. It is my way of being. It is my flow. It is my way of seeing a world made of incredible variety. It is how I counter racism and blocks in each system.
- Intersectionality (Crenshaw) is my mom. It is was helps me to articulate my position of the in-between. In-between is also a space of belonging. The in-between is no longer a maligned misfit but a necessary role in system coherence between difference rather than a unification of sameness (Maguire, 2014).

⁴ Harari, 2017.

⁵ واعوذ بالله من كلمة انا (I seek refuge in God from the word I).

- Practice Theory (Nicolini) is how I learn. It is how I survive. It is how I search and research; it is how I advance. It respects the knowledge of the practitioner and the value of that knowledge in not only our survival but the quality of that survival.

What interconnects them is their attitude to reality, their recognition that reality is socially constructed, that practices, experiences and attitude are the foundations of learning. If we are to have sustainable change, we need to surface and challenge the existing power structures and seek an equitable future rather than a dystopian one of elites.

...Adorno argued that the point was no longer one of merely refusing to identify freedom with any system, or collectivity, but rather of conceptualizing the “non-identity” (and heightening the tension) between the individual and society.⁶

These lenses illustrate my non-identity which emerged from complex forces relating to occupation and exile that I detail as this work unfolds. I have been shaped by the context of my birth and the experiences of my life in which I have also shaped my world. I believe that I and many like me are imprisoned by power structures at various levels of intensity and that our actions can be emancipatory (Barad, 2003). I am seeking ways for myself and others to be free from old paradigms so that our mind can be engaged with the possibilities that are closed to us at present by old structures. This is not about chaos or anarchy but about not avoiding and denying the injustices which surround us, not being depressed by them, but by doing something about them. For me a more equitable future for the many requires a breaking down of the barriers to thinking and being.

I was drawn to the following discourses, because they best reflect my attitude to being in the world. These commentators have provided succinct descriptions of what I experienced implicitly. They helped make my felt and implicit experience explicit and known to myself and others. That explicitness unfolds sometimes painfully in this document. It enabled my learning and informed the ‘break free’ lens through which I will be critiquing my works that give me an articulation of my approach to emancipation:



⁶ Bronner, 2011. P.23

to break free from nationalism; my journey was a process towards me embracing my identity of the 'in between':

Autoethnography

"While the long-standing qualitative field of ethnography focuses on understanding the other, the more emergent domain of autoethnography studies "one's own culture and oneself as part of that culture" (Patton, 2002, p. 85). Autoethnography in one sense is "self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts" (Spry, 2001, p. 770). With roots in anthropology, autoethnography began as a way to address the postmodern "crisis of representation" (Clifford, 1988; Geertz, 1973). Autoethnography is a response to research methods that privilege research and method over the subject and pushes against traditional understandings of validity, truth, and generalizability (Denzin, 1992). Instead of seeking to generate theory, autoethnography problematizes the hegemony of "grand narratives" (Anzaldula, 1990) by focusing on context and subjects (Denzin, 1997). Spry describes the sociopolitical nature of such examinations and recognizes the "dynamic and dialectical relation of the text and body" in undertaking this approach (2001, p. 771). Lived experiences are shared directly, and subjectivity is embraced, rather than suppressed."⁷

to break free from absolute truths, forms and norms; for example, the notion that art (or development) needs to be a high form performed on stage rather than seeing it as a human capacity that exists in all contexts, something that is at hand and can facilitate learning and understanding in its various forms which can be worked with culturally and logistically:

Bricolage

"As Derrida claims, the bricoleur is somebody who doesn't care about the purity or the stability of the system s/he uses, but rather uses what's there to get a particular job done... Bricolage doesn't worry about the coherence of the words or ideas it uses. For example, you are a bricoleur if you talk about penis envy or the Oedipus complex and you don't know anything about psychoanalysis; you use the terms without having to acknowledge the whole system of thought that produced these terms and ideas... you don't care if psychology is true or not... as long as the terms and ideas are useful to you... Bricolage is mythopoetic, not rational. The idea of bricolage produces a new way to talk about, and think about, systems without falling into the trap of building a new system... It provides a way to think without establishing a new center, a subject, a privileged reference, an origin.... [T]otalisation is impossible."⁸

⁷ Lee et al., 2016. P. 34.

⁸ Kincheloe et al., 2007. P. 178

“Government, private, and public corporations rely on the knowledge produced by these latter methods and analyses. They rely on the rapidity and reduction of the complexity of the world to numbers and categories of standardization. Control on a large scale is an outcome – control that produces, circulates, and maintains knowledge that legitimizes the standardization and reduction, the assimilation and homogenization of humanity. And it happens in ways so discursive, so invisible.”⁹

to break free from Instrumental reasoning - from the male, white privileged power dynamics:

Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School

“Critical theory was originally intended as an interdisciplinary enterprise to which each might bring his or her unique disciplinary talent and expertise. Its representatives highlighted the relation between philosophy and politics, society and psychology, culture and liberation. They conceived of the totality and changed the way in which the social sciences, the humanities, and even interpreters of the natural sciences look at the world. The Frankfurt School called outworn concepts into question. They looked at cultural ruins and lost hopes and what hegemonic cultural forces had ignored or repressed. They demanded that those committed to the ideals of liberation respond to new contingencies and new constraints. They also intimated the need for a new understanding of the relation between theory and practice.”¹⁰

My life work has evolved around combating superstition, prejudice, cruelty, and the arbitrary exercise of institutional authority (Kant, Hegel). Critical Theory

“wages an unrelenting assault on the exploitation, repression, and alienation embedded within Western civilization... Critical theory insists that thought



⁹ Kincheloe et al., 2007. P. 179

¹⁰ Bronner, 2011. P.109

must respond to the new problems and the new possibilities for liberation that arise from changing historical circumstances. Interdisciplinary and uniquely experimental in character, deeply sceptical of tradition and all absolute claims, critical theory was always concerned not merely with how things were but how they might be and should be.”¹¹

In my work I have come to realise that specialisation and systemisation are obstacles to liberation and servants to colonialism, fundamentalism and exploitation. This is further entrenched by Academia and its “preoccupation with absolute foundations, analytic categories, and fixed criteria for verifying truth claims.”¹² In contrast Critical Theorists “saw two main culprits: *phenomenology*, with its set ontological claims about how individuals experience existence, and *positivism*, with its demand that society be analysed according to the criteria of the natural sciences.”¹³ The later will not be used in this critique, as it contradicts with both Autoethnography and Bricolage. *However, Adorno and Horkheimers’ Dialectic of Enlightenment*

“invert[s] the traditional narrative identifying technological development with progress. They instead connect the growing dominance of instrumental rationality with the totally administered society. The new outlook projects a new form of resistance that calls for heightening the “non-identity” between subject and object—or, less philosophically, the individual and society. Insofar as the whole is false, and progress is an illusion, the only critical option lies in developing what would later become known as a negative dialectic. Only in this way might critique confront the illusions attendant upon Enlightenment... Capitalism, bureaucracy, and science—all expressions of instrumental rationality—constitute the real core of Enlightenment. They turn nature into an object of use, progress into alienation, and freedom into control. Autonomy is a nuisance and critique is a threat.”¹⁴

to break free from the silos of specialisation, for example psychology monopolised by professional bodies with prescribed trainings and accreditations with different tribes each claiming the holy grail of healing, each with gatekeepers charging considerable amounts of money to those aspiring to join the club.

Complexity

Even when all the experts agree, they may well be mistaken. (Bertrand Russell)

“Sustainability is about sustaining life and sustained life is a property of an ecosystem rather than a single organism or species. Nature sustains life by creating and nurturing communities and as no individual organism can exist

¹¹ Bronner, 2011. P.19

¹² Bronner, 2011. P.21

¹³ Bronner, 2011. P.21

¹⁴ Bronner, 2011. P.60 - 61

in isolation, sustainability is a property of an entire interconnected web of relationships.

The fact that sustainability is a property of a web of relationships means that in order to understand it properly we need to shift our focus to the whole and learn how to think in terms of relationships, in terms of interconnections, patterns and context.

Developing this understanding will highlight the many ways in which our human civilisation (especially since the Industrial Revolution) has ignored these patterns and processes and has interfered with them. We will realize that these interferences (our inability to perceive connections) are the fundamental causes of many of our current world problems, i.e. they are systemic problems, are all interconnected and interdependent and just different facets of one single crisis—a crisis of perception.

This inability to perceive broader connections comes from the fact that most people in our society subscribe to the concepts of an outdated worldview (mechanistic, reductionist, separate). Although this has brought many advantages, this thinking is now inadequate for dealing with the sustainability challenges and our complex interconnected world.

We therefore require a radical shift in our perceptions, our thinking and our values. Thinking in systems and more specifically thinking in terms of interconnectedness, is a key element of a broader and more holistic worldview and can itself facilitate and accelerate this transition (Evitts, Seale, & Skybrook, 2010)."¹⁵

to break free from the shackles of the ivory-tower-centred view of the world in Academia and standardised education;



¹⁵ Boulton et al., 2015. P.3-4

Practice Theory

“The enhanced explanatory power of the practice approach, and its capacity to **dissolve** (rather than resolve) such **enduring dualisms**, stems from the fact that adopting such a theoretical stance produces a radical shift in our understanding of social and, in our case, organizational and work matters. Practice-based approaches are radically different on at least five different accounts.

Firstly, all practice theories foreground the importance of **activity, performance, and work** in the creation and perpetuation of all aspects of social life. Practice approaches are fundamentally processual and tend to see the world as an ongoing routinized and recurrent accomplishment... [Therefore] social structures are temporal effects that can always break down.

Secondly, and strictly related to the above, practice theories bring to the fore the critical **role of the body and material** things in all social affairs. Most practice theories conceive practices as routine bodily activities made possible by the active contribution of an array of material resources. Practices with no things and no bodies involved are thus simply inconceivable. For one thing, the body is not an ‘instrument which the agent must use in order to act’ (Reckwitz 2002, p. 251), as a practice is the routinized activity of the body...

Thirdly, practice theories carve a specific space for **individual agency** and agents. While homo economicus is conceived as a (semi) rational decision maker and homo sociologicus is depicted as a norm-following, role-performing individual, homo practicus is conceived as a carrier of practices, a body/mind who ‘carries’, but also ‘carries out’, social practices (Reckwitz 2002, p. 256)...

Fourthly, adopting a practice approach radically transforms our view of knowledge, meaning, and discourse. From a practice perspective, knowledge is conceived largely as a form of **mastery** that is expressed in the capacity to carry out a social and material activity. Knowledge is thus always a way of knowing shared with others, a set of practical methods acquired through learning, inscribed in objects, embodied, and only partially articulated in discourse. Becoming part of an existing practice thus involves learning how to act, how to speak, but also how to feel, what to expect, and what things mean...

Practice theory is thus... a **corrective to extreme forms of textualism** that reduce organizations and the world to texts, signs, and communication. Finally, all practice-based approaches foreground the centrality of interest in all human matters and therefore put emphasis on the importance of **power, conflict, and politics** as constitutive elements of the social reality we experience. Practices, in fact, literally put people (and things) in place, and they give (or deny) people the power to do things and to think of themselves in certain ways.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Nicolini, 2013. P. 1 – 6.

to break free from colonialism. “I, too, had been susceptible to paternalistic British colonialism, and the appeal of being perceived by whites as “cultured” and “progressive” and “civilized.”¹⁷

Intersectionality

““When defining intersectionality, Selzer (Chapter 3) asserts that “no one social group is a monolith,” we are all “privileged in some ways and oppressed in other ways” (p. x), and that an intersectional perspective embodies the realities of all of our experiences. The latter assertion aligns with Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1991) earlier work criticizing that conventional scholarship on identity politics “conflates or ignores intragroup differences” (p. 1242). As such, intersectionality is a theoretical as well as methodological approach to understand “the relationships among multiple social dimensions and modalities of social relations and subjects” or how the overlay of multiple, complex social groups in which we belong shapes our experiences.”¹⁸

As the work unfolds, it will become evident that as a bricoleur, which I had to be in challenging circumstances of conflict, deprivation, collision of cultures and breakdowns in structures, the choice to contextualise my work through the prism of such lenses does not mean I subscribe to their entirety. For example, I use intersectionality despite opposing its unintended exclusionism and silencing. Rather I have found something in each choice which has spoken directly to my experience and helps to illuminate and articulate that which has been entangled and implicit. They help me to give a reasoning to the intuitive in me and my work.

So who am I, why does all this matter and why have I been drawn to these voices in the literature, voices which I identify as those standing in and apart at the same time, those who acknowledge difference, observe and do not judge but seek to find a way to increase our understanding of the richness of our own possibilities as individuals and as a species?



¹⁷ Mandela, 1995.

¹⁸ Lee et al., 2016. P. 301.

Section 2

The context of the works and myself as part of the context

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

I exist in the in between.

My skin looks White (especially in winter), so I am supposedly Caucasian. I am often asked if I am Italian, but I was born in Jerusalem, thus I am supposedly Palestinian.

I hold a Palestinian passport, but I do not live in Palestine. I live in Austria, but I am not Austrian.

I create Art, but I am not an artist. I direct projects but I am not a manager. I teach and facilitate workshops, but I am not a pedagogue. I relieve the distressed, but I am not a therapist. I support/guide the socially disadvantaged, but I am not a social worker.

I grew up in a privileged family context, yet as Palestinians we were persecuted and exiled. I live a privileged life in Europe, yet I am discriminated against as Palestinian.

I refuse to be a victim, yet I am survivor. I tell my story as a victor, yet fear I am an underdog.

I have a Masters degree in Musicology, I have performed in orchestras, I have played piano concerts, and won piano competitions, yet I am not a musician. I have performed and choreographed traditional and contemporary dance performances, yet I am not a dancer.

I grew up not belonging. In Paris I was the exiled political refugee, in Jordan I was the shunned Palestinian, in Palestine I was the returnee, and living now in Austria, I am the immigrant. **I am the in between.**

Passport: Mahmoud Darwish

They did not recognize me in the shadows
That suck away my colour in this Passport
And to them my wound was an exhibit
For a tourist Who loves to collect photographs
They did not recognize me, Ah... Don't leave
The palm of my hand without the sun
Because the trees recognize me
All the songs of the rain recognize me
Don't leave me pale like the moon!
All the birds that followed my palm
To the door of the distant airport
All the wheatfields

جواز سفر: محمود درويش

لم يعرفوني في الظلال التي
تمتصّ لوني في جواز السفر
وكان جرحي عندهم معرضاً
لسائح يعشق جمع الصور
لم يعرفوني، أه.. لا تركي
كفي بلا شمس...
لأن الشجر يعرفني
تعرفني كل أغاني المطر
إلا تركيني شاحبا كالقمر
كلّ العصافير التي لاحقت
كفي على باب المطار البعيد

All the prisons
All the white tombstones
All the barbed Boundaries
All the waving handkerchiefs
All the eyes
were with me,
But they dropped them from my passport

Stripped of my name and identity?
On soil I nourished with my own hands?
Today Jacob cried out, Filling the sky:
Don't make an example of me again!
Oh, gentlemen, Prophets,
Don't ask the trees for their names
Don't ask the valleys who their mother is
>From my forehead bursts the sword of light
And from my hand springs the water of the river
All the hearts of the people are my identity
So take away my passport!¹⁹

كل حقول القمح
كل السجون
كل القبور البيض
كل الحدود
كل المناديل التي لوّحت
كل العيون
كانت معي، لكنهم
قد أسقطوها من جواز السفر
عار من الاسم من الانتماء
في تربة ربيتها باليدين
أيوب صاح اليوم ملء السماء
لا تجعلوني عبرة مرتين
يا سادتي! يا سادتي الأنبياء
لا تسألوا الأشجار عن اسمها
لا تسألوا الوديان عن أمها
من جبهتي ينشق سيف الضياء
و من يدي ينبع ماء النهر
كل قلوب الناس ..جنسيتي
فلتسقطوا عني جوار السفر



¹⁹ http://mahmouddarwish.ps/files/server/full/7abibati_tanhad_mn_nawmiha/4/index.html
Translation: <http://www.adab.com/en/modules.php?name=Sh3er&doWhat=shqas&qid=67>

I AM THE IN BETWEEN

“The ability of human beings to form loving bonds is possibly one of their greatest strengths.”²⁰

Each tribe creates a space in a place. Each religion gets a place. Each nation gets state. The in betweens learn to hover over those places, and camouflage in those spaces. We belong everywhere and nowhere. We help the tribe find truce with the other, the one religion to see the similarities in the other and the one nation to reach across to the other. Creating bridges through spaces joining up places was my unconscious purpose and became my conscious choice. Like a bee I fly in between and cross pollinate.

“Recognising and celebrating that we are all inextricably connected to each other. By a power greater than all of us, and our connection to that power and to one another is grounded in love and compassion.”²¹

At an early age space became incredibly important to me. The value of space and therefore the value of freedom hit me during very formative years. That is what it felt like, a physical shock. As a little child, being taken to a prison twice a week, I sensed, I did not cognitivise, but I sensed the reduction of space. The negotiation into the impeding ‘place’ of prison and then the coming out again into the space that should have been a place of belonging and identity was an occupied space, for us a non-place, a space of fear, where my mom feared for our lives driving back from Nablus to Ramallah. A Geographically expansive space, though not fully aware that occupying forces were taking the space so we would have no place, we would be displaced.

Since then I have been constantly fighting for my right to space.

Space to think

Space to question

Space to breathe

Space to be who I am

Space to be creative; and

Space to spread my wings.

As Kahlil Gibran puts it more eloquently, I am like a thought “a bird of space, that in a cage of words may indeed unfold its wings but cannot fly”.²² I lived in spaces occupied by paradigms of whiteness. Paradigms of monopoly of words that formed cages where I could unfold my wings but could never fly. I felt shackled by the safety of set paradigms, impinged on by restrictions and norms, by replicating rather than generating.

²⁰ Aspinwall et al., 2002.

²¹ Brown, 2017. P. 45.

²² Gibran, 2015.

I have been grappling with how not to fly away.

How do I land?

Where do I land?

Because if I land - even if I do not sense it at first - it becomes a cage. Again, I bolt out of the cage. Throughout this doctorate I reflect on how I visit others in cages, how I came to create spaces for myself and others: [safe] spaces for people to meet and creative spaces for new things to form. I kept finding myself in spaces from where I was exiled. I created situations in order to be exiled – to get away from that which is not allowing me to fly. I constantly chose Exile over imprisonment. It is no coincidence, that my seminal work is entitled Exile...

I am a bird of place and space.

I am a bridge.

I am the messenger.

I am Thoth.

I am Hermes.

I am the In between.



“Identities are full of complexities. Intersectionality is defined as “the relationships among multiple dimensions of social relations” (McCall, 2005, p. 1771). The concept of intersectionality was a major contribution from the field of women’s studies and arose out of a critique of research on race and gender. Previous research solely focused on race or gender and failed “to acknowledge lived experience at neglected points of intersection—ones that tended to reflect multiple subordinate locations as opposed to dominant locations.” (McCall, 2005, p. 1780). Butler (2014) points out that many educators still miss the idea of intersectionality in our scholarship, teaching, and campus work. We must use the realities of all of our lived experiences as a basis for analyzing stratification. That way we don’t ignore real differences in experience based on certain aspects of identity. In sum, the longstanding intersectional approach held by feminist thinkers provides a much deeper understanding of oppressed identities and is central to understanding divorced Catholic feminist mothers.

It is important to state at the outset that no one social group is a monolith; and we are all privileged in some ways and oppressed in other ways. By no means does this exploration intend to deny the various parts of my identity that are privileged. As a white, straight, educated, and able-bodied woman I have unearned advantages (McIntosh, 1988).”²³

Although the author was commenting through the lens of a married catholic, I can relate to her words as a single secular in betweenist.

MY CONCEPT OF SELF

The concept of self that I have felt most comfortable with thus far, is that presented by Emilie Wapnick both in her book “How to Be Everything” and in her TEDx Bend talk from April 2015, entitled “Why Some of us Don’t Have One True Calling”, where she presents the concept of *multipotentialites*. Her definition encapsulates my way of being as a Bricoleur, a complex system thinker, a practical learner/researcher²⁴, a critical theorist and a hermeneut²⁵ (Maguire, 2015).

I am like “the octopus... with each arm working on something different.”²⁶ I have many different skills and interests that I try to combine, merge and balance. Like Darwin I use

²³ Lee et al., 2016. P. 44.

²⁴ “In its critical concern for just social change the bricolage seeks insight from the margins of Western societies and the knowledge and ways of knowing of non-Western peoples. Such insight helps bricoleurs reshape and sophisticate social theory, research methods, interpretative strategies, as they discern new topics to be researched... In gaining this insight from the margins bricoleurs display once again the blurred boundary between the hermeneutical search for understanding and the critical concern with social change for social justice.” Kincheloe et al., 2007. P. 30.

²⁵ “A translator who does not solely translate the words of one “culture” to another to ease communication but intentionally facilitates understanding between different realms of experience.” Maguire, 2015. P. 65.

²⁶ <http://puttylike.com/quiz/>

various disciplines to understand complexity, research across not within (Sacks, 2018). My personal library resembles my place, my autobiography of transition, there are books on dance, management, social media, music, fundraising, arts, meditation, opera scores, psychology, art therapy, neuroscience, storytelling, politics, and urbanism. I feel most fulfilled in the cross section, at the threshold, in the in-between of my interest. I am constantly switching between a diverse range of topics and projects, and dream of escaping the limitations of institutionalisation, labels and titles. I constantly strive to create for myself and others a space that accepts and welcomes this diversity of interest and skills so that I/we can be creative, can play and break new grounds.

Thus, I realised I can best describe myself through my doing and my skills, rather than shackling myself to a specific domain. In critically reflecting on how I translate myself into the world which, as can be seen from the above, poses some problems to myself as well as to others, I have made some attempt through the following headings to translate myself in a way that brings into congruence my internal and external being in the world. I enjoy 'idea synthesis'; combining two or more domains and creating something new at the intersection (Crenshaw, 2019; Eboch, 2019; Grant & Zwier, 2014). I often feel inclined and drawn towards addressing pressing social problems with innovative solutions (Christensen et al, 2016). Here are the skills and attributes I have, that I know I have.

Rapid learning

“Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life. There is within each of us a deep hunger for this type of learning.”²⁷



²⁷ Senge, 2010. P. 23.

*Wherever you throw me, I land on my feet.*²⁸ With all the changes and episodes of my life, I understand what it means to be a beginner. Each time it becomes easier, as I have confidence in my ability to absorb and learn new things. It is the **confidence** through **experience**, that I have done it in the past and will easily do it again. “We believe that, ultimately, the most important learning occurs in the context of our day-to-day life, the aspirations we pursue, the challenges we face, and the responses we bring forth.”²⁹

The **learning culture** which my parents cultivated at home was quite influential; a culture of “Mutual reflection. Open and candid conversation. Questioning of old beliefs and assumptions. Learning to let go. Awareness of how our own actions create the systemic structures that produce our problems.”³⁰

I also learn fast because I am mostly learning about topics, I am **passionate** about, mostly by doing, and thus I dare to take **creative risks** and step out of my comfort zone. I can spend hours on end immersing myself in a new endeavour. Very importantly I am rarely starting from scratch as my fields of interest are often related. Even if they are seemingly unrelated, my ability to **think in complex systems**, especially enables me to make those relations; to cross pollinate.

Adaptability

As previously mentioned, I often found myself in new situations. Therefore, I regularly had to develop novel solutions to problems by retrieving and recombining previously unrelated knowledge or ideas that I had posed. I would use “whatever is at hand”/ existing resources for experimenting, tinkering, repackaging, and/or reframing. This process is called psychological bricolage³¹. Contrary to the analytical style of learning and solving problems I partly refer to above, as a bricoleur I adopt a way of learning and solving problems by trying, testing, and playing around. It is an intrinsic realisation that the journey is the ultimate goal, and thereof it is imperative to adapt and change plans, and just as much adapt and change goals and targets. This ability / characteristic is key to the success of the works.

Big picture thinking

Connecting a small idea to the global world is, if anything, my calling – the local is global as my dad often said. He planted critical theory in our young soil: a combination of Marxism, universalist values of solidarity, globalism and dialectic thinking. My ability to zoom-out and consider problems holistically is an important asset I have but I experience it, not as learned, but as intrinsic and intuitive. I do not need to think about doing it, it is

²⁸ Palestinian Proverb.

²⁹ Senge, 2014. P. 20.

³⁰ Senge, 2014. P. 241.

³¹ The term, introduced by Jeffrey Sanchez-Burks, Matthew J. Karlesky and Fiona Lee^[6] [1] of the University of Michigan, draws from two separate disciplines. The first, “social bricolage,” was introduced by cultural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss in 1962. The second, “creative cognition,” is an intra-psychic approach to studying how individuals retrieve and recombine knowledge in new ways. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bricolage#Social_psychology

implicit that I will. This way of living, enables me to anticipate both opportunities and potential problems, analyse information and stay ahead of the curve. It also enables me to highlight our common traits, behaviours and histories as humans. As Peter Senge suggests:

“Sharing knowledge is not about giving people something, or getting something from them. That is only valid for information sharing. Sharing knowledge occurs when people are genuinely interested in helping one another develop new capacities for action; it is about creating learning processes.”³²

Relating and translating

Complexity and Systems thinking...

“is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns rather than static snapshots. It is a set of general principles spanning fields as diverse as physical and social sciences, engineering and management.”³³

As mentioned above, it is important for me to connect with people, and likewise help people connect with one another. Due to the variety of my experiences I connect with people from all walks of life. Thus, I feel it is a drive in me, a responsibility even, to create spaces where connection is made possible, that is connecting people, ideas and domains. My professional practice revolves around creating spaces, shifting paradigms and challenging norms and the status quo as will be demonstrated in the exploration of the way I designed, redesigned and implemented the I CAN MOVE programme. I revisit this issue of the link between thinking and practice in section 5 on insights.

With this introduction to challenges in translating myself which have influenced the focus, creation and impact of my public works I feel I am now in a place to provide some facts which may provide more connections to who I am, who I think I am and who others think I am. I am, for the moment, comfortable with polymath and multipotentialite.

My agency, the impact I have on the world and its impact on me is rooted in my ontology, my being in the world which informs how I go about researching and finding things out. It will always be intersubjective and in a constant process of interpretation within contexts. I believe the lens through which I look at the world needs constant adjustment for different climates and different times. This is the lens which may have been mono or bifocal, but I am indeed grateful for having been given sight at all by my parents. However, it has been my responsibility to develop the multi or varifocal lens which helps me interconnect spaces and places. So what is it that has shaped me from the beginning?

³² Peter Senge cited in: Leistner, 2012. P.171.

³³ Senge, 2010. P. 70.



PER ASPERA AD ASTRA³⁴

I was born in Jerusalem in March 1987 to a family of universalists³⁵ activists (Kant, 2017; Hegel, 2018). I was privileged to be born into a thought-rich family. My parents - an incredibly strong team - were two quite different characters: my mother, a sociologist, hands-on doer; and my father, a physicist, reflective and analytical. Not to say of course that my mother did not reflect and analyse nor that my father was not hands-on. However, a family of activists in Palestine can mean many things; it was a family of freedom, justice and peace advocates who strongly believed in non-violence. This however came at a cost, most significant of which was the arrest of my father on the 8th of August 1988 by the Israeli occupation forces on spurious charges. For over a year we visited my father in prison twice a week. Already then, as a baby, I had a role to play- to, smuggle nail clippers, letters and bonbons to my dad in a diaper I wore outside the prison walls and demanded it be taken off once the prison visit was over.

In August 1989 my father was exiled to Paris, France. We followed him there within a few weeks to start an unknown life in a new cultural, social and political space. None of us spoke French. We were uprooted. I, as a 2 and a half year old, went on strike, and decided at first neither to interact with anyone in Kindergarten nor to eat anything there. I fasted every day from 09:00 – 17:00 (earliest allowed pick-up time). A few months later I started speaking the language and felt I had arrived in this new place.

“When all else failed, I belonged at home, with my family.”³⁶ Brene Brown

The arrival did not last, as one year later we were uprooted again, this time to go to live in Amman, Jordan. In Jordan we were rejects. As Palestinians my parents were denied work permits and we had to sustain ourselves on the minimum for existence. We as children were denied schooling permits. We could not even enrol in private schools until my mother threatened the director of the Inspection Circle³⁷ at the Jordanian ministry of Interior to go to the press. The nightmare of living in Jordan, in an unwelcoming space of subjugation, lasted 4 years, until in 1994, my father who was then a member of the advisory committee to the Palestinian negotiation teams in Madrid and Washington was allowed to return to Palestine. With that, a new school, new house, and a new life began.

Arriving in the Quaker Ramallah Friends Schools in 1994, Ramallah is a principal city in the occupied territories, north east of Jerusalem, I was first laughed at for my different cultural behaviour (standing up when addressed by a teacher) and for pronouncing both

³⁴ Literally translated “through difficulties to the stars”, which means one can reach the stars though overcoming hardships, which is how we learn.

³⁵ Universalist: possessing a sharp and comprehensive outlook as well as being concerned about local and international affairs equally. Or as Graeber 2001, P.225 puts it: “*Universal ideas are not ideas that everyone in the world has, that’s just false positivism; universal ideas are ones that everyone in the world would be capable of understanding; universal moral standards are not ones on which everyone in the world currently agrees—there is obviously nothing on which everyone agrees—but ones that, through a capacity for moral reasoning and experience of forms of moral practice that we already do share, we would be able to work out together and agree to (and probably will have to on some level if we are all to survive in the world), and so on.*”

³⁶ Brown, 2017. P. 9.

³⁷ <http://moi.gov.jo/Pages/viewpage.aspx?pageID=202&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

Arabic and English differently. However very quickly I began to feel like a local in Ramallah, although I never felt just quite at home in the city, in the school, music conservatory nor in the local sports club. Perhaps that is because Ramallah is, in my opinion and according to my observations, a sectarian space, with a predominant tribal mode of behaviour.

Like in other communities, it is not unusual to tell the affiliation of a person from their names. These affiliations stimulate assumptions which might not be accurate (Graeber, 2001). Ramallah has a prominent Christian population. Less than 3% of the population of Palestine is Christian. In Ramallah, if you are a hard-working member of society, you will be given a certain recognition and credit, nonetheless as long as you are not a Christian nor a member of a specific political party, then the recognition opportunities, and credit will remain limited.

For example, for me as a piano student of the National Conservatory of Music, and the first to graduate the piano stream, somehow other students who had Christian names such as “Khoury” [Priest], despite being financially well off, obtained the scholarships to camps or summer schools abroad, whereas I never did. The same applied to the First Ramallah Group better known as Sareyyet Ramallah where I was a member of both the Swimming Team and the Dancing Group. At the Sareyyet the qualifying name was usually Habash, Hussary or Tannous. (Christian Families, originating from the city of alLod, with a majority membership in the PFLP - Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). In-line with my experience at the Conservatory, receiving almost only gold medals in my age category in national swimming competitions was not qualifying enough for recognition.

In Ramallah I grew up amidst the arts scene. As well as being a piano student at the National Conservatory of music later known as the Edward Said conservatory of



music³⁸, I was a member of the Sareyyet Ramallah Dabkeh³⁹ group and later on co-founded its contemporary dance group, and a member of the first Palestinian youth Orchestra playing Cello under Daniel Barenboim⁴⁰. I was also a member of my high school's Dabkeh dance group, as well as the contemporary dance group under Nicholas Rowe⁴¹. I was an actor in the drama club of my high school, and have worked on the film production *The Secret World*⁴² at the Episcopal Evangelical Schools together with Nicolas Rowe and Tina Rafidi⁴³.

“The artist does not allow himself to be influenced by those around him and dreams of the so-called ‘educated’ or ‘cultured’ spectators. He tries to absorb alien traditions without having a firm foundation in his native tradition; he receives a culture as if it were the divine word, without saying a single word of his own.”⁴⁴

In the spring of 2005, at the age of 18, amidst the preparations to leave for Vienna, Austria to pursue higher education, not only did I graduate from the Ramallah Friends Schools and the National Conservatory of Music, I was also thrown out of the Sareyyet dancing group for complaining that I was not being given credit for co-choreographing the At the Checkpoint performance and for being treated as a minor while on tour, although above 18, just because I was a woman. The Sareyyet was a caged space steered by paradigms of sectarianism and male dominance. I felt shackled by those set paradigms and impinged on by religious restrictions and norms. I found myself separated to a corner of the cage. Therefore, I raised my voice, I refused to be silenced (Jack and Ali, 2010; Thiesmeyer, 2003). Looking back now I see that I co-created this situation so that they would exile me. I could then get away from that which was not allowing me to fly. This one insight has helped me to see throughout my works this fear of suffocation, this need to have air and breathe again.

³⁸ The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music is a Palestinian music conservatory with branches in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nablus and Gaza City. In total, there are more than 1000 students. It was established in 1993 as The National Conservatory of Music, with its first branch in Ramallah, opening in October of that year. In September 2004, as a tribute to the Palestinian scholar and musician Edward Said (professor of literature at Columbia University, public intellectual, and founder of the academic field of postcolonial studies) the name of the conservatory was officially changed to The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music.

³⁹ Palestinian Traditional Dance

⁴⁰ a pianist and conductor who is a citizen of Argentina, Israel, Palestine, and Spain. Barenboim is a resolute critic of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. He is known for his work with the Palestinian pianist and intellect Eduard Said on the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, a Seville-based orchestra of young Arab and Israeli musicians.

⁴¹ Associate Professor at the University of Auckland. From 2000-2008 he resided in the Occupied Palestinian Territories working in refugee camps on dance projects with local artists. Nicholas' film work includes the feature-length children's film *The Secret World*, which has been screened at festivals around the world. He has published extensively on education and dance in diverse cultural contexts, and his books include *Talking Dance: Contemporary Histories from the South China Sea* (2015) *Talking Dance: Contemporary Histories from the Southern Mediterranean* (2014), *Moving Oceans: Celebrating Dance in the South Pacific* (2013), *Raising dust: a cultural history of dance in Palestine* (2010), and the performing arts workshop manual *Art, during siege* (2004). He was awarded a University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Award in 2011 and a University of Auckland Research Excellence Award in 2012.

⁴² *The Secret World* is a fiction feature film set in Ramallah. Adapting “Lord of the Flies”, William Golding's classic, dark story of young British schoolboys on a deserted island who descend into brutality, *The Secret World* follows a group of Palestinian school children who wake up one day to find all the adults have disappeared. Confined in the West Bank by a massive encircling wall, they are left to form their own society and rules. Part mystery thriller, part political satire, *The Secret World* examines what happens to a society when it is cut off from both outside influences and its own heritage. As such it provides a fascinating doorway into issues such as democracy, human rights, social cooperation and rule of law - all through the eyes of children.

⁴³ Currently director of the Palestine and Arabic Studies program and an English language lecturer at Birzeit University. Previously English language teacher and director of the drama club at the Ramallah Friends Schools.

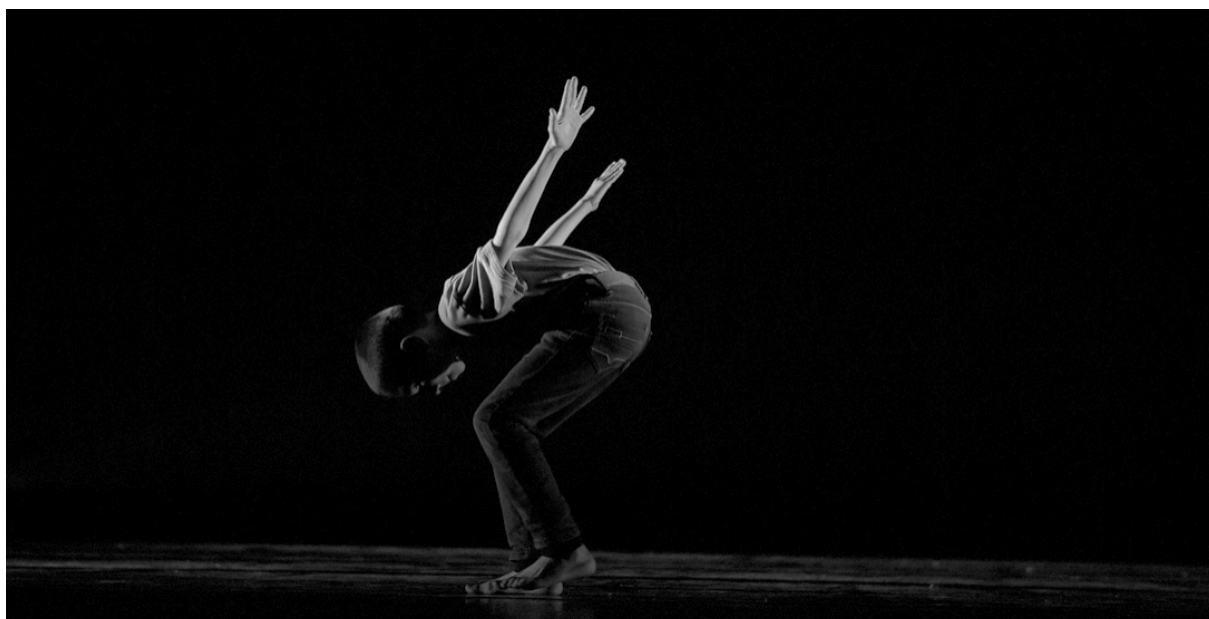
⁴⁴ Boal, 1979. P. 151.

My arrival in Vienna in 2005 resembled a new phase of my life. I had generally more autonomy, space and peace, yet was faced with new issues and challenges. Being removed from the context of Ramallah allowed me ample space for self-reflection, questioning and thus to develop new behavioural patterns, self-image and identity. Despite how hard it was, it felt liberating. Possibly it was easier for me than others, because as an in-betweenist I have had a life-long process of reflection and regular re-negotiation of my identity in any new space I entered. It was however and remains exhausting.

Although this space of Vienna provided me with a new sense of support and safety, I also became immersed in new fears and concerns mainly due to the structural racism of the laws.

Referring back to the organisation ZARA, is indicative that structural racism in Austria is still deeply entrenched within its systems, so much so, it has become a norm. For example, I was not permitted to work in Vienna, I was not permitted to create a cultural management agency so I created my own employer which would lead to employment opportunities abroad. I founded YANTE – Youth, Art and Levante, a non-profit organisation, in 2010, through which I ran my projects and was partly employed. Thus, I have been based between Vienna and Ramallah among other places, working in NGOs and project management, consulting, group-training and teaching of short- and long-term projects, specialising in children and women focused psychosocial program implementation in Post-Conflict-Post-Disaster context (PCPD). Among other international assignments I have taught and worked in Austria; Germany; Jordan; Lebanon; Netherlands; Romania; Singapore and Sweden among others. In this critique of my works I will mainly focus on the spaces, projects and works I created under the umbrella of YANTE.

At launching, my decision to call the programme I CAN MOVE was a play on words; a defiant statement in a Palestine where freedom of movement has been stripped away by



the Israeli occupation. Yet a true statement, as the programme built and worked with the premise that everyone young or old, disabled or enabled can dance (move). Clearly the idea to launch the I CAN MOVE programme was fuelled by my upbringing within a socially engaged family of peace activists, by my experience growing up under occupation, my artistic interests and studies of [Ethno]musicology (I wrote my Masters thesis on Palestinian traditional music and dance), and finally by my personal experience studying contemporary dance education at the Vienna Conservatory (MUK).

I only came to realize how the traumas of my childhood and adolescence inhabited my body and physicality during the first two years of my studies in Contemporary dance education at the Vienna conservatory (MUK). Sadly, I did not find the necessary support for my situation or interest in my story from my professors. I was silently expected to blend into the white European majority (ZARA⁴⁵; Faßmann et al., 2016). I was denied the space to be who I am. Looking back, I believe they did not possess the necessary skills and qualifications to deal with the changes and processes I was experiencing. If respect is the unconditional acceptance of the other, then they also definitely lacked that.

“The dialectical relationships between the body and consciousness, object and subject, students and the world are essential to both a critical understanding of the world and forging actions that can have material consequences on the lives of the oppressed.”⁴⁶

Intercultural teaching tools and the understanding of the repercussions of colonialism on culture were lacking amongst most teachers of the contemporary dance department at MUK. The programme had invited Wera Goldman to teach a master class. She is an Israeli colonizing dancer who admits to appropriating Palestinian traditional dances already in the 1930's and 40's as evidenced in Kaschl (2003), Rowe (2010), and Arouri (2011). As I requested to be excused from attending the master class, Nikolas Selimov - director of the dance programme - instructed that my attendance at the master class was obligatory - leaving me no choice.

“In addition to the creation of these “perfect” silences, silencing also occurs when an individual speaks but they have no authority behind them. This results in the speech act not being acknowledged and hence the words are not able to achieve their desired effect or fulfil their purpose.”⁴⁷

It felt like torture to sit and listen to her talking about the Palestinian rain dance as if it was Israeli and teaching it to my (in my head) ignorant colleagues. Even worse, I was not allowed to express my opinion, or openly discuss her colonizing cultural burglary (Kaschl, 2003). I was again being silenced⁴⁸. My body and mind were being recolonialised. It only took one week at MUK for me to feel as a persona non grata.

⁴⁵ Centre for Civil Courage and Anti-racism Work. <https://zara.or.at/de>

⁴⁶ Darder, 2015. P.79.

⁴⁷ <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/viewFile/12541/13687>

⁴⁸ Edmondson, 2018.

Trust in my teachers was broken. My body was wiser, it knew that. My body was tense every time I entered the building. My body said it is not safe here. It said I do not feel I am allowed to be here. I am not allowed to occupy this space. As Gendlin (2010) observed the body is not only a structure, it is also the living we are doing in the situations we are in. The body is remaking itself in the behaving and meaning and thinking and feeling.

Less than a month later, the lack of intercultural understanding and teaching skills amongst some of the teachers became again evident as Elena Luptak requested that we each prepare a dance Etude. It was considered a matter of course that all participants understood what an Etude was, therefore no explanation of the task was required, and as I attempted to ask for one, I was told I was being too intellectual and without instinct (in German: Verkopftheit). I was categorically being denied the Space to think, the Space to question, the Space to be who I am, the Space to be creative, and the Space to spread my wings. The consequences were inevitable.

My negative experiences at MUK, led me to search for alternative Spaces: a Space to think, a Space to question, and a Space where it was okay to be who I am. Thus, at the beginning of my third year, I decided to skip the first semi-obligatory 2 weeks of class and instead join the classes of Martin Sonderkamp at the Tanzquartier⁴⁹ Vienna. Martin changed my life in ways I am not sure he is aware of. I felt my body change. He was definitely one of those people in my life who -at least briefly- gave me wings to fly. It was a process of releasing old physical patterns that upheld my trauma; a process of overcoming the fear entrenched through the negative body image ingrained by my experiences growing up and sadly enhanced by the negative cycle of feedback at MUK.

The Workshop at Tanzquartier Vienna empowered me to stand up to bullying, express my anger and voice my opinions at the MUK, upon which I was expelled from my studies after a negotiation process failed.



⁴⁹ Centre for contemporary dance & performance. <https://tqw.at/>

“Our system is one of detachment: to keep silenced people from asking questions, to keep the judged from judging, to keep solitary people from joining together, and the soul from putting together its pieces.”⁵⁰

It was only many years after the incident, while reading the passage below on Paulo Freire by Antonia Darder, 2015, that I felt confirmed in my decision to stand up for my right to a voice, to a space, and to be heard; Freire told me “I was not alone in this.”

“critical educators—particularly educators of colour—... are perceived by institutional gatekeepers as disruptive and destructive, while our efforts to achieve greater freedom and autonomy are discouraged or punished, even by those who would call themselves our allies.” (Freire,1970b, p. 46).⁵¹

Luckily such an experience could not deter me, as it was just another incident already known to me. This time MUK was a caged space steered by paradigms of whiteness, colonialism, superiority, male dominance and white academia. Again, I was in a cage separated to a corner away from the heart. Obviously again, I raised my voice and induced being exiled. Just like I have done many times before: I bolt out of the cage. I was comfortable saying the uncomfortable (Ajayi, 2016). Getting expelled made me angry and that gave me a powerful drive to prove the expellers wrong.

In her writing on Paulo Freire, Antonia Darder emphasizes the importance of having the space for expression, the space for anger against oppression and silencing.

“Given the manner in which racialized accusations of anger have been so often used to exclude and undermine the voices of teachers, students, parents, and communities of colour, it is useful to take a moment here to note that, according to Freire (1998a), “the kind of education that does not recognize the right to express appropriate anger against injustice, against disloyalty, against the negation of love, against exploitation, and against violence fails to see the educational role implicit in the expression of these feelings” (p. 45). He often noted that the right to be angry, just as the right to love, serves as a legitimate motivational foundation for our liberatory struggles; in that just anger can remind us that we are not supposed to live as objects of oppression. In the same light, Freire insisted, “my right to be angry presupposes that the historical experience in which I participate tomorrow is not a given, but a challenge and a problem. My just anger is grounded in any indignation in the face of the denial of the right inherent in the very essence of the human condition.” (p. 71)⁵²

The experience with Martin Sonderkamp made it clear to me how powerful a medium dance is in overcoming trauma and empowering myself. I was decided on bringing this “magical medium” to Palestine.

⁵⁰ Galeano et al. 1992.

⁵¹ Darder 2015. P. 43-44.

⁵² Darder 2015. P.53.

A year earlier, at the age of 22 still a student in my second year at MUK, I was standing in front of Halle G at Tanzquartier in Vienna's first district, waiting for a performance to begin, when I saw Royston Maldoom (OBE)⁵³ amongst the crowd. That is when I approached him and asked if he would like to work with me in Palestine.

Back then, I was managing the Sounding Jerusalem Festival. The festival was organised by the Verein⁵⁴ A.MUS.E – Austrian Music Encounter, of which I was a board member as well. I had initially envisioned that through the framework of Sounding Jerusalem a dance intervention could be initiated in Palestine. After a short period of planning, research and exploration it became evident to me that I would need to find a different legal framework for this endeavour. Therefore, I founded YANTE – Youth, Art, and Levante in June 2010.

Returning to my chosen lenses and their role in disentangling, in making sense of my experiences, intersectionality gave me a voice, critical theory helped me question power structures and paradigms, and I used autoethnography to share my autobiography and provide a socio-political contextualisation of my experiences. I am aware of how tricky questions and issues around 'subjective' or 'constructed' truth/s are in autoethnography, yet there is nothing in this text that I would not be happy to share with those mentioned here (Medford, 2006; Sikes, 2015).

This critique and doctoral process stemmed out of my desire to create for myself a space of introspection, research and learning. A space of time to reflect on and for my implicit learnings to surface and become explicit. Little did I expect the main emerging learning to clearly be that of leadership, especially leadership of self.



Section 3

Leadership of Self arising from Leadership with others

I use *leadership with others* as this is one of my insights from this exploration of my works: that leadership is 'with' not 'of' others.

In this section I describe the works explored in this critique before going into each work in depth including the socio-political circumstances which have a major influence on the shaping of the works and the insights which emerged for myself and others. There is a high complexity and multiplicity of variables and influences affecting and shaping the works - I can only hope to mine them for what is important to myself and others at this time but that does not mean at a later stage in my life the other parts will not emerge as important for that time.

Although these works are related to community activities in challenging circumstances through the media of dance training and performance, my role encompassed many responsibilities from chauffeuring to choreography and managing various levels of small and large crises. During the initial stage of critiquing my works to extract learning from a position of standing back, I came to realise that some of these crises were co-created and that what was emerging was my own leadership style at such a young age and how I had always been forced into a position of authority and autonomy to survive and indeed thrive. I did not want to be dependent on anyone for my freedom to act, as trusting an authority to let me breathe in my formative years became something I was committed to avoiding whether that be freedom to think, freedom to choose, freedom to find my own identity then freedom to be myself.

The greatest learning I have gained from this critique is that I first needed to gain insight of leadership of myself, a leadership which did not fall into shifting between the binary of victim and oppressor, of blaming and being blamed but one which was informed and infused with self awareness, insight and ability to see my negative as well as positive impact on the decisions and actions of others and to have a mutual learning response to those who challenge me. The public works are then a vehicle to that sought for destination; music and art could have been the vehicles. I am still on the road.

I thought I had gone back to Palestine to help people to experience freedom of movement in themselves as I had once been them and dance had helped me, it had not solved everything for me but it was a good start. However, I came to realise through this critique that I had gone back to find missing parts of me, to see what had changed in me and what needed fixing. My successes in these works were about my determination, my persuasiveness in getting funding and commitment from others, my own commitment, my negotiation skills and my polymathic disposition.

My challenges were all about the fragility of my identity and those of my people, still there like wounds ready to be split open by a clumsy touch. I did not want to touch those young

people clumsily nor did I want anyone else to. This critique is about a maturing which comes from going back and through insight letting in the goodness that is around through trusting again in oneself and in others.

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC WORKS

Some of the insights gained were technical and professional while others were more personal. These insights made me more consciously aware, thus less reactive to the identity formation challenges that I and many of those who participated in the works faced growing up under multiple oppressors; occupation, gender, society, tribalism and capitalism to name a few. These works were performed in particular socio-political circumstances relating to conflict and occupation. Therefore, they had an important role in focusing attention on the impact of those environments on the young. The works are **EXILE**, a community dance performance, a seminal work for me, designed as a pilot to test the ground for and leading to **I CAN MOVE Training of Trainers Programme** and the substantial outputs from this significant project which used the performing arts as a medium for fostering creativity and alleviating trauma within schools and community settings. The performance of **The Rite of Spring / Le Sacre du Printemps** was with, for and about child labourers, the performance of **Serendipity** with for and about disabled persons, and **public space interventions and community classes**, and the **final graduation performance**. This critique provides a brief description of the works. Detailed class descriptions, evaluations, testimonies of instructors, participants, and graduates, press coverage, among other information can be found in the submitted artefacts (NarrativeReport-ICM01/02/03), as well as online on the yante website.

The time frame from preparation and execution of all the works was from 2009 to 2017.

I was responsible for the academic issues of the I CAN MOVE programme such as pedagogy, accreditation, delivery, as well as day-to-day administration; devising content, semester planning, mentorship of trainers and trainees, individual supervision, mediation, coordinating schedules and timelines, as well as budgeting, financial management, proposal writing, securing the funding, human resource management, and quite importantly mediating between people of varying ideological, cultural and professional backgrounds. This provided me with valuable knowledge and experience in NGO and project management.

EXILE

This was a dance performance which took place in Palestine as it is known historically and to its people but also referred to by others as the Occupied Palestinian Territories or the West Bank depending on the political trends and hegemonies that lay claim to it or claim rights to determine its position in the world. This socio-political impact on identity

and the role of creative performance in such contexts of conflict are discussed in more detail in the body of this critical commentary.

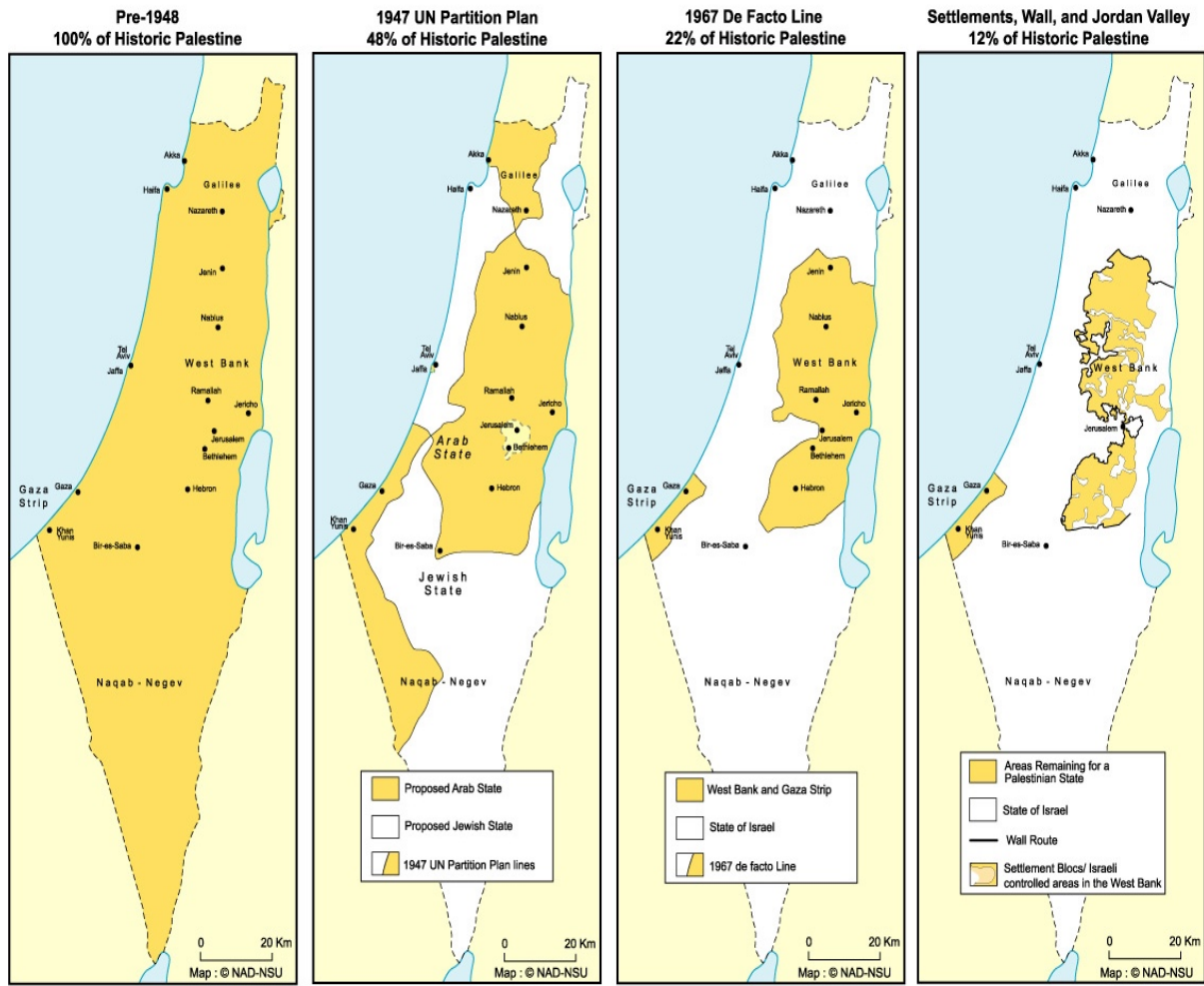
114 school children and university freshmen (aged 6 - 18) (61 male and 53 females) rehearsed daily for a span of 5 weeks (July 20th to August 23rd, 2011) with two pioneer choreographers in the practice of community dance in England and Scotland and assisted by a senior Jewish, Swiss dance therapist and two young dance teachers in training from Austria and Germany. Ordinarily I would not state someone's religion but in the socio-political climate of the region, it was considered in Palestine a critical socio-political statement to have a Jewish dance therapist. They in turn were assisted by 13 local dancers who had previously attended a 10 day 'train the trainer' course at Birzeit University⁵⁵ in artistic and pedagogical aspects of Community Dance. The local dancers were dancers at the Popular Arts Center (a prominent art centre in Palestine) and freshmen at Birzeit University. This project gave these dancers the chance to practise their dance skills and expression under the mentorship of some of the world's most renowned community dance artists and facilitators.

The choice of Choreographers and assistants is rarely a free artistic choice for artistic directors of projects being organised and funded under the so-called umbrella of Development Aid. It is more of a political and financial choice. However, the real art, is how to carve out as much freedom in the artistic choice as possible. For example, when approaching a donor agency like AFD, SIDA, SDC or cultural fora like the Austrian Cultural Forum, Goethe Institute or Pro Helvetia it is important to have already chosen and tentatively checked the availability of artists who are either citizens or residing in the respective country. Therefore, approaching the donor with a concrete name, instead of finding oneself trapped into a name suggested by the donor. Nonetheless I have experiences cases where despite approaching the donor with a specific suggestion, they still felt at liberty to suggest a replacement. As a cultural manager in the Sounding Jerusalem Festival I even witnessed a donor "diplomatically" imposing a musical trio.

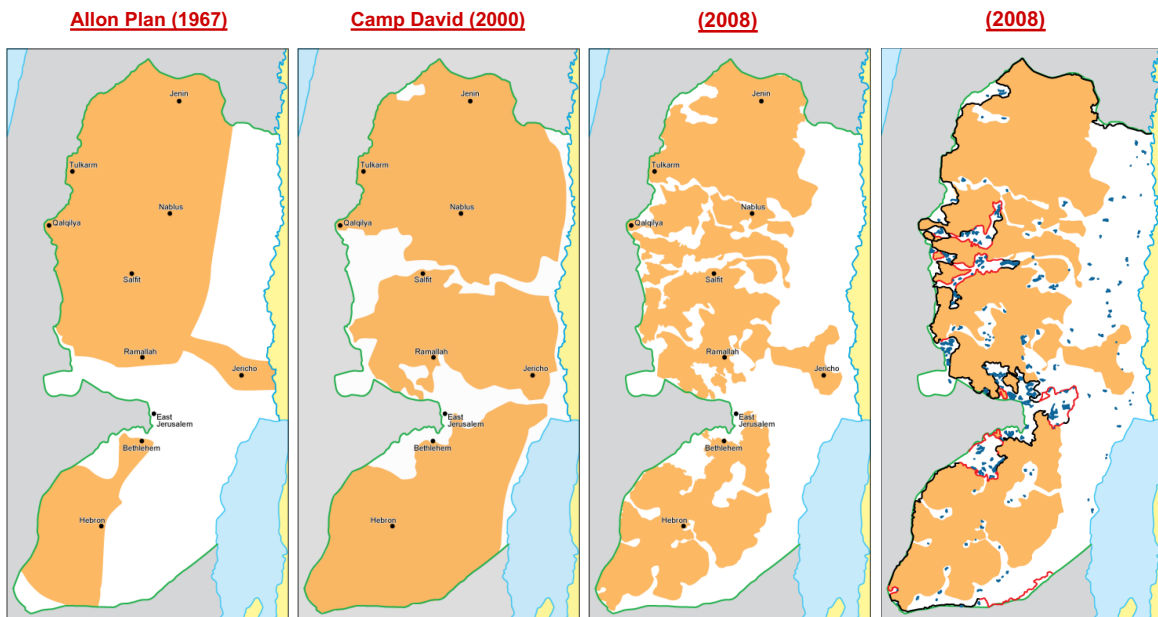


⁵⁵ Birzeit University: founded in 1924 as a school for girls. In 1942 it became Birzeit College, at the not Co-ed yet. In 1953 Birzeit became the first Palestinian co-ed University. The Birzeit University played an important role in cultivating Palestinian leftist thought and resistance until mid- 1990's.

JULY 2005

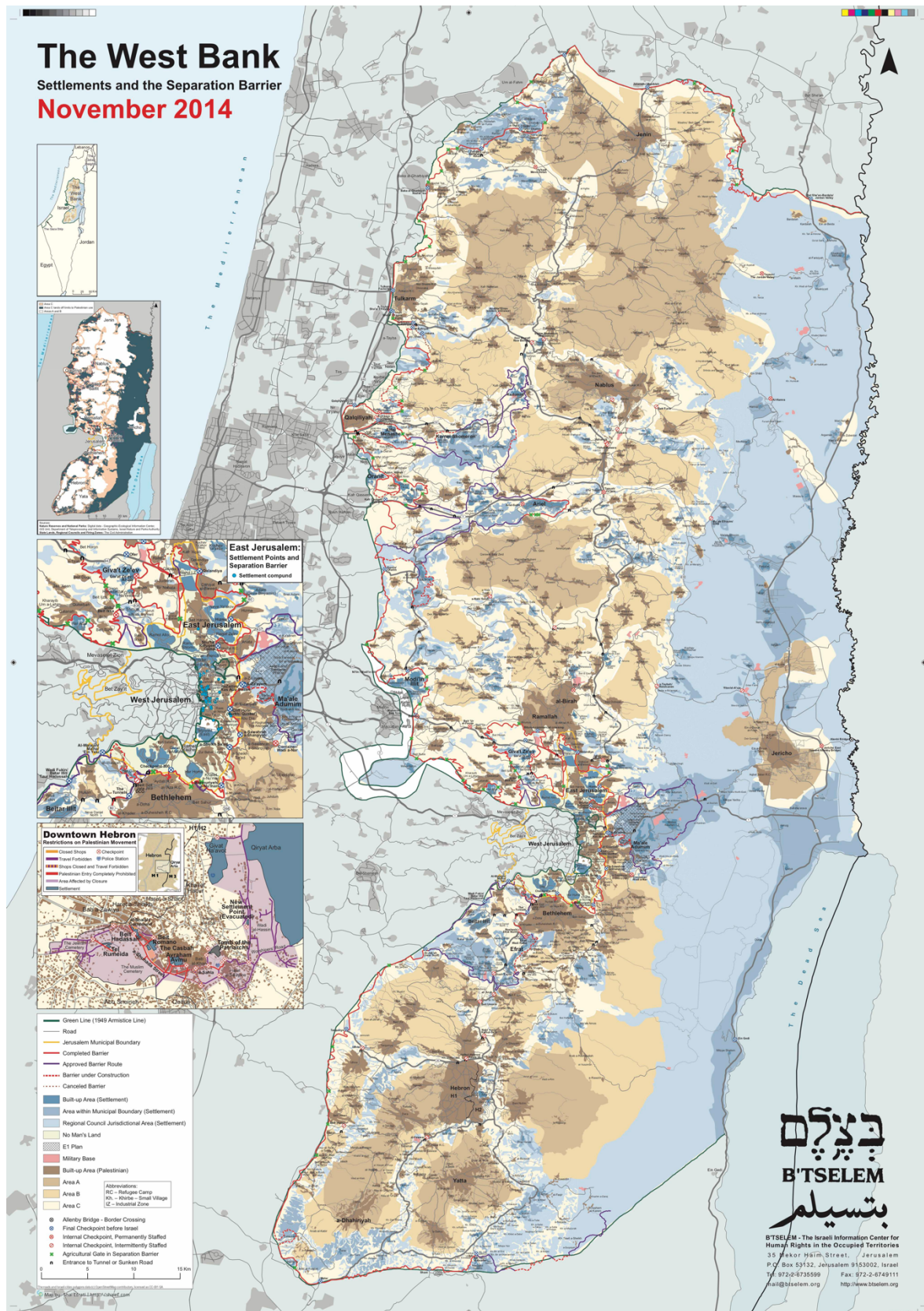


These maps are for illustrative purposes only. Boundary representations are not authoritative.



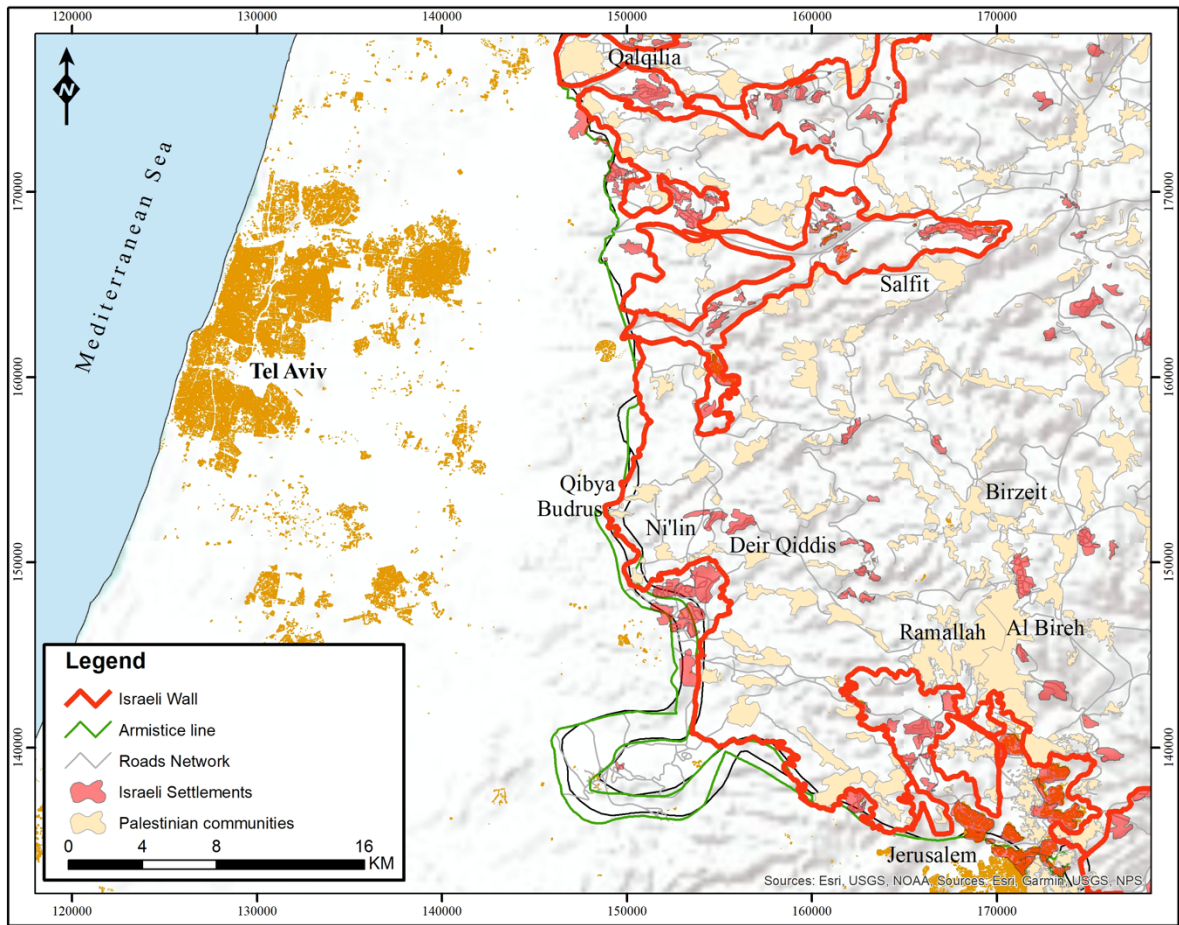
Source: Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Department <https://www.nad.ps/en>

An interactive up-to-date Map⁵⁶ of Human Rights violations in Palestine can be found on the website of B'tselem (The Israeli Center for Human Rights in the occupied Territories).



⁵⁶ <https://www.btselem.org/map>

Direct link to above Map: https://www.btselem.org/download/201411_btselem_map_of_wb_eng.pdf



In the case of EXILE, the choice also entailed a negotiation of the various parameters. After inviting Royston, he said it is a prerequisite to invite Ms. Mags Byrne to join. It is not a choice I regret, because she worked tirelessly and delivered amazing results. She arrived ahead of Royston and led the initial 10-day Training of Trainers programme prior to the commencement of rehearsals with the children. But until today I could not define in which capacity she had joined the performance team. EXILE was pre-choreographed by Royston; thus, she was not joining as a Choreographer. She is clearly too experienced and competent, as founder of Dance United Northern Ireland, and having led the community dance work in Ethiopia 15 years prior, to be considered an assistant. I was grateful for her presence and engagement. In later years I came to reflect on this in the context of the power dynamic of male dominance in the personal and professional relationship and why it was not explained to me as project lead what he thought necessitated her presence, when she was sadly an uncredited lynchpin in the success of the work. I credited her in the reports, and I am again doing it here.

My choice of assistance was also not entirely free. Money played a pivotal role in the options I had. The choice was made at a point where fundraising was not yet complete. Thus, I had to engage young artists who were willing to join the performance possibly pro bono, either because of the sense of engagement they had towards Palestine and the region or because they felt it is an important learning experience for them and added value to their CV. Eventually, funds were sufficient that the 2 assistants were well deservedly remunerated.

This was one of the most exhausting, yet gratifying experiences of my life. I felt like I was on a constant high. I would often go to bed at 2 or 3am, only to wake up at 5 or 6am fully energised and ready to roll. My role can be best described in German as “Mädchen für alles” (Girl for everything). From chauffeuring to managing to artistic direction. Among other things I was responsible for:

1. Writing the Proposal, budget and Fundraising.
2. Signing contracts, setting up back accounts.
3. Price offers, invoicing and bookkeeping.
4. Assembling the international and local teams.
5. Coordinating dates.
6. Booking flights and arranging accommodation.
7. Developing partnerships, arranging for participants.
8. Coordinating and habituation of rehearsal spaces.
9. Coordinating and ordering rehearsal uniforms.
10. Coordinating transportation of both artists and participants.
11. Liaison to parents.
12. Mediation and conflict resolution between communities and participants.
13. Choosing and coordinating performance locations.
14. Rental of stage truss, lighting, and mobile auditorium seating.

15. Writing press releases and coordinating translation.
16. Contacting the press.
17. Coordinating and holding a press conference.
18. Coordinating poster, flyer and ticket designs and print.
19. Coordinating Prime Ministers' Auspices.
20. Organising permits to enter Jerusalem.
21. Coordinating photo documentation of rehearsals.
22. Coordinating photo and video documentation of performance.
23. and more...

The rehearsals resulted in a high-profile community dance performance entitled "EXILE" to the music of "Harmonielehre" [Harmonics] by the composer John Adams. "Exile", choreographed by Royston Maldoom, was first created in Luxembourg in 2007. In March it was recreated in Saarbrücken, southern Germany and in August 2009 in Vienna with a group that included children from refugee centres. The same choreography was performed with young people including Syrian, Afghan and North African refugees in Duisburg in March 2018 with the Duisburg Philharmonic Orchestra.

Due to strategic considerations, EXILE was the one choreography chosen out of Royston's choreographic repertoire. The topic of exile is a unifying one amongst Palestinians; every generation relates to it. It transcends every tribal divide; therefore its name alone was persuasive in engendering curiosity and later engagement in our project of parents and sceptics of the medium of contemporary dance. It spoke to the desire for a reminder of national and cultural identity (Said, 1993) which was being daily and intentionally eroded by a raft of external interests. This unifying theme helped to get the pilot project off the ground and it increased acceptance amongst local communities, especially the more religious ones.



The performance toured Palestine performing free of charge in East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Zababdeh and Bethlehem for a week in 2011. For geographical context, see Maps P41.

Having spent 7 years both convincing sceptics, ranging from funders, private sector stakeholders, or just as much friends of the impact of the work, as well as collecting prizes and recognition for it across 5 continents⁵⁷, I am confident and have witnessed first-hand the benefits of dance as a method in building resilience, processing trauma through cohesion and the sense of community in the collective process. Below is an example from the reporting done on EXILE based on the verbatim feedback from all the stakeholders including participants, trainers, audiences...etc. Many such contemporaneous documentations can be found in the attached artefacts, press reporting on the yante youtube Channel⁵⁸ and on the yante website⁵⁹.

“The project provided youth with a multifaceted experience; a social, physical, emotional, cognitive and intellectual experience where important social values such as commitment, enthusiasm, respect, interest and passion were mediated. They were encouraged to work at their best in all the fields of life and most importantly they realised that they CAN do and achieve anything if they really want it.

Many positive changes of attitude were observed among the participants. To name an example, there were three male participants from religious Muslim families. At the beginning of rehearsals they were sceptical of the project and the prospect of men dancing, and were undisciplined in the first two weeks of rehearsals. Starting week three they became very focused and disciplined in rehearsals, did not miss a rehearsal though it was Ramadan and they were fasting all through it and even on Fridays where they went to prayer they were punctual. During week five they were very active in distributing flyers and hanging posters around Ramallah & Al-Bireh, Jenin, Zababdeh and Bethlehem. During week six they helped with stage set-up / tear-down.

Two other participants where great change could be observed were from Christian families. During the first two weeks, although generally well disciplined, they had a very negative, almost racist attitude towards their fellow Muslim participants. Starting week three change could be perceived as they were observed helping a couple of Muslim participants memorise a dance sequence. By the end of the project the trainers observed full consolidation of participants.

In another case, three participants were generally aggressive during the first three weeks of rehearsals. Their aggression started to subdue in week four,

⁵⁷ For details, see sections 5 and 7 of attached Narrative Report artefacts and yante website www.yante-icanmove.org.

⁵⁸ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGuGA8WdU_0XrvmW9Ufg4gw

⁵⁹ www.yante-icanmove.org

however it was only when stage rehearsals started in week five that the behaviour of those participants took a drastic turn. The participants emitted positive energy that contributed to the rest of the group.

On a different level, one of the participants showed signs of anorexia at the beginning of rehearsals. The importance of food was openly discussed with the participants as a whole. In addition, the child was closely observed at breaks, and close coordination was held with the child's mother. Towards the end of the project the team noticed positive change in the participants' eating habits.

These are only a few examples of the changes the team witnessed among individual participants and the groups in general. Despite the difference in age, interest, religion and discipline of the participants, they all expressed interest in undergoing another community dance experience. Some expressed interest in becoming community dance trainers. Here are some of the comments we received:

"It was an amazing performance that changed my life. It expressed all places and times, the good and the bad days."

"I am really thankful for the possibility of being part of such an experience."

"The project helped me gain self-confidence. It strengthened my personality."

"I felt that the training was very good, not only physically but also mentally. I gained a lot physically and learned how to focus."

"I learned from this experience discipline, organization and helping one another."

"The experience was wonderful, I loved the performance and how we worked hand in hand to represent Palestine. It is the most beautiful experience in my life."

"I like in this project the discipline, order, organization, love, and working together."

"I met many people with different characters and personalities that I did not know before. And I went to many places where I hadn't been before, like Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramallah, and Birzeit University."⁶⁰

In a more contemporary setting, it was a delight to perceive further sustainable impacts of the I CAN MOVE programme, as one of the I CAN MOVE graduates informed me in a meeting on Sunday November 4th, 2018 that he just started a job in a community setting

⁶⁰ <http://www.yante-icanmove.org/portfolio/exile-2/>

in a suburb of Jerusalem, where the know-how and experiences he gained during the programme were the key reasons he got the job in the first place.

On a final note, until today I wonder, why arts require an extra and more rigorous set of qualifications, and have to meet a higher order to prove their validity especially when working within the context of conflict.



I CAN MOVE (ICM)

TRAINING OF TRAINERS PROGRAMME

This programme emerged from the evaluation of the 2011 project. It was a comprehensive training program for the Palestinian community dance trainees and launched in February 2012. ICM was initially designed along the practice guidelines communicated by community dance “experts” and former international experiences. In addition, the design took into consideration information collected through the seminal work of EXILE in 2011. It was, very importantly also designed to address the specific needs of the Palestinian case. It was composed of two parallel and interconnecting tracks: 1. the Training of Trainers Programme (ToT), and 2. periodic community dance performances whose topics and targets were decided upon during the run of ICM depending on the input from the community.

The programme was firstly planned for 3 years. However, it was expanded to four years by the end of year 1. Each year was divided into 2 semesters. This structure was decided upon in order to:

- Give a clear and coherent structure to the program, by which the participants were able to plan their time as well as connect the different capacity building blocks, whether technically or theoretically.
- Expand the learning time on a period that was adequate for the absorption of new information and skills, including time to reflect, question, and exercise.
- Provide a service and an atmosphere of the positive aspects that assimilate to those of professional dance schools. This maximised the value of the training for the future record of the participants.
- Be able to cover all the necessary components for the practice, where the trainees received 8 semesters of training in dance technique and choreography, as well as 8 pivotal domains for the cultural work, hence elevating their level of production. Each semester corresponded to a topic of necessary training, and these were: 1. Group Establishment, 2. Communication, 3. Pedagogy, 4. Anthropology and Cultural Studies, 5. Choreography, 6. Management and Fundraising, 7. Psychology and 8. Dance History.
- Enable the provision of a full-scale exercising of the acquired knowledge, by which the trainees learned the theory, improved their dance and choreography skills, and practiced those on the ground through and teaching regular community dance classes and co-producing 4 pieces of community dance alongside the international experts in the field, like Maldoom and Byrne.

In line with the above, the ICM had a structure of three building blocks that were repeated in each semester, in varying frequencies:

[Block 1] Dance Technique classes were held 3 – 4 times weekly. The

participants were introduced to the various modern and contemporary dance techniques such as: Limon, Graham, Cunningham, and Chladek. Trainees also received classes in modern Ballet and complimentary somatic practices such as Yoga, Pilates, and Feldenkrais, Body Mind Centering, among others.

These courses were given by recruited visiting international and local dancers, who worked with the trainees for a period of 5-8 consecutive weeks, depending on the academic plan and time availability. By such, the trainees were gradually exposed to different forms of modern dance and contemporary dance techniques. Given the time frame the trainees were able to develop a personal relationship with the visiting artists and hence expand their network, as well as having enough time to fully absorb and physically practice the new skills.

[Block 2] Intensive Modules were held every 6 weeks, on average 3-5 times per semester. The intensive 10 days Module covered following contents: Pedagogy (with a focus on safety), Anatomy, Non-Violent Communication, Cultural Studies, Psychology, Anthropology, and dance teaching skills for special-requirement target-groups, namely: 1) youth, 2) Handicapped, 3) Elderly, 4) and mixed groups. The taught skills included adequate class planning and teachers' responsibilities.

Those intensive-classes were also taught by recruited specialized visiting international artists as well as local professionals. They served as connectors for the skills learned in the Dance Technique classes, as well as additional case-specific skills, whether technical or soft skills. In addition to expanding their network, through these classes the trainees got to understand the wider frame of the cultural field, such as modes of social engagement, analysis, identification and mediation towards an art-work that is directly connected to its social surrounding - that being the core of community dance.

Those Modules permitted the trainees to regularly practice working under pressure, how to allocate and utilize scarce resources, and how to maximize and bring into practice the different skills they have acquired, towards achieving a particular output, whether practical, theoretical, or both.



[Block 3] Practice via Performance were held once a year. A large-scale community dance performance was organised targeting a particular social strata, phenomena, or stereotype. The topic was determined according to input from the community and the capacity of the team. The performances included the participants, where they work under the directives and in close contact with renowned community dance choreographers. The dancers were ordinary local people, normally in groups of 100-250 persons.

The performances gave a chance for the organising team to test the efficiency and effectiveness of the ToT programme, as well as being the space for all parties to evaluate ICM and level of its contents, and by such decision-making on necessary interim amendments.

Likewise, it is through these performances that the dancers were able to address the pressing social divide issues and contribute to the amelioration of the dance practice in Palestine. By working with school children, they were influencing the curricula, by working with the disabled they were advocating for their cause and raising awareness, and by working in different geographies they were bringing together generations that have been separated by the fragmenting policies of the occupation, as demonstrated by the pilot project: EXILE 2011.

Equally, those performances were the medium by which community dance was established as a practice, gained visibility and credibility, and gave the necessary momentum for the trainees to take on the leadership of the originally desired end-product: a viable and sustainable Palestinian community dance movement.

In addition, the performances were the medium through which the local dance heritage was translated, developed, and transmitted to other countries and cultures. One after the other they constitute a repertoire, that in itself is a narration of the social topics that concern the Palestinians as a community, and by that the story of addressing social inequalities and prejudices, and the bottom-up fighting of social marginalization, fragmentation, and otherness.

As a starting point, a set of performance-topics were selected. Those themes underwent research and scrutinised planning, to decide which topic should be implemented, and if so, when. Those topics were:

Street-Children | Disabled without Wheelchair | Elderly | Disabled with Wheelchair | Culturally Differentiated Youth | Mixed Group

The last block of the ToT programme - the community dance performances were also considered as an independent track of ICM, since it involved additional participants (Children, Elderly, Disabled) and its execution depended on elements different to those of the ToT, such as the availability of a particular set of choreographers, trainers, therapists and assistants, the local setting and social analysis dependent of the culture and art scenes, and finally the funding possibilities. Hence, even though they were

interconnected and inter-dependent to a large extent, in the design of ICM the performances were considered as a parallel and important track, yet not dependent on the progress of the ToT programme. This is due to the fact that the performances could take place and achieve their social goals independent of whether the trainees have achieved excellence in community dance choreography, teaching skills and management through their training, or not. However, it is important to note that the Performances were pivotal in terms of experience, vocational training and practice for the trainees (for Planning calendar see artefact NarrativeReport-ICM02 page 10-11).

Creating the Palestinian Community Dance Network - viability through the stakeholders

ICM aimed at creating a Palestinian Community Dance Movement not because it was an attractive term, but because it was the heart of ICM, without which it lost its significance.

I realised that for an intervention to be effective it has to be viable, continuous, and dynamic with time and changing input. A dance performance is attractive and can help observers gain a different perspective regarding one or multiple topics, but it will not induce a lasting change unless it is progressive, sustainable, and has its foundation in the existing system, that is when it works within the local system, and not parallel to it.

Based on this belief, I worked on integrating ICM into the existing social, economic and institutional fabrics. I identified 8 sectors with which I sought and did establish a mode of durable cooperation, as the basis for the sustainability and viability of the intended Palestinian community dance movement. This network was transmitted to the trainees for them to utilize and expand in their cultural work beyond the time frame of the projects.



I succeeded in achieving agreements for cooperation with institutions from the following sectors:

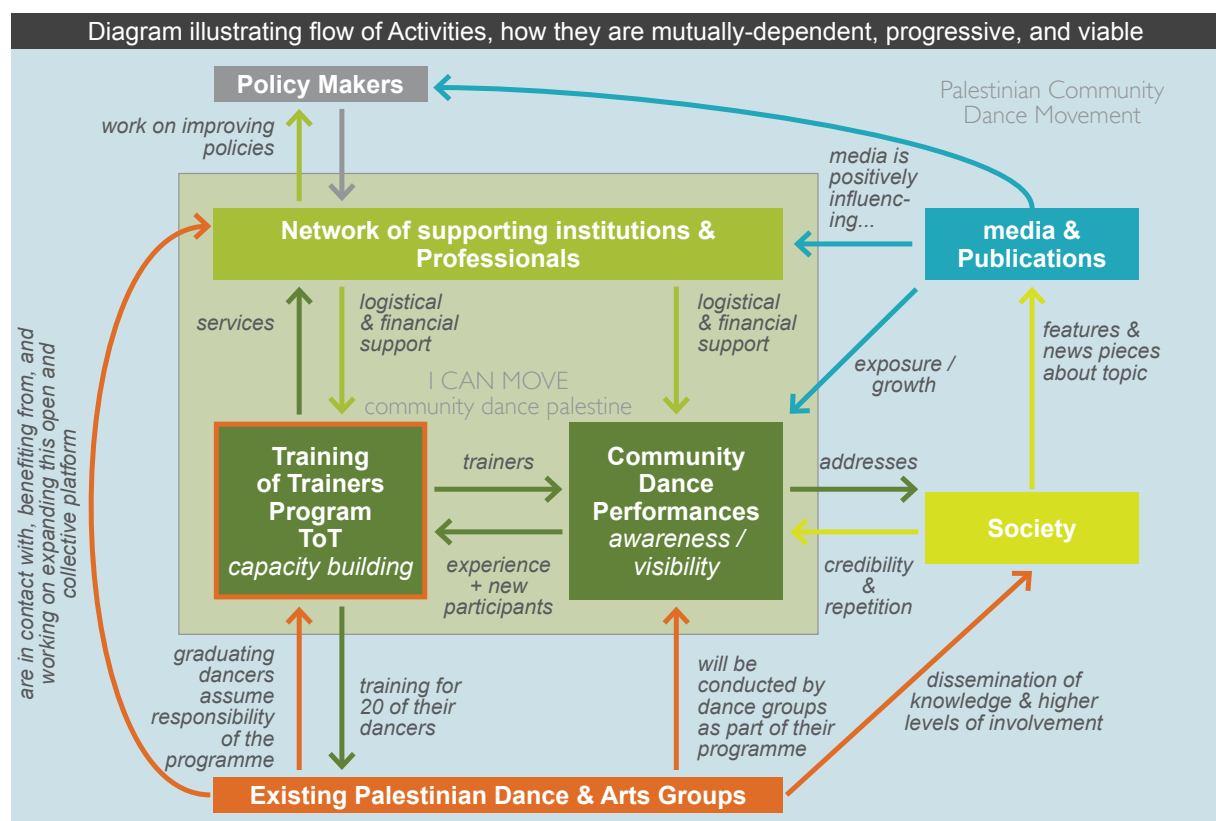
- A. Local Educational Institutions.
- B. Local Dance Groups.
- C. Local Cultural Institutions.
- D. Local Youth initiatives.
- E. Local institutions/Private sector.
- F. Public Sector.
- G. International Art and Community Dance Institutions.
- H. International Institutions.

Dissemination of Information & Publications

Given the goals of ICM, information sharing and publications are a primary element. Within the course of the ToT programme visiting trainers were regularly preparing and distributing valuable reading materials that constitute a foundation for the practice, whether in its technical or managerial aspects. Copies of these materials were maintained. In the process an open library was developed for those who are interested.

In addition to the physical library, a website was launched describing the 4-year experience, and the lessons learned along the road. The website also includes videos from training sessions, modules, as well as the community dance performances.

The detailed description of the curriculum can be found under <http://www.yante-icanmove.org/portfolio/i-can-move-2012/>



THE RITE OF SPRING / LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS

The idea of creating a community dance performance that targets⁶¹ street-children / child-labourers developed in me gradually throughout the rehearsals of the community dance performance of EXILE in the summer of 2011. The artistic team and I would sometimes go out after our rehearsals to grab a coffee and cake in Café de la Paix, across the street from the Ramallah⁶² Municipality. Each time we went there, child-labourers/workers came by and asked if we would buy gum, ID covers, or whatever it is they had at that moment. However, one boy asked us “what is it that you do?”. The minute we told him about our programme, his eyes widened, and he asked if we do ‘such things’ with ‘normal’ children or with boys like him as well?

I took the boy’s number and promised to contact him next time we did a performance so that he could join us. I also promised to call him in a week’s time to give him tickets to the premiere of EXILE at the Ramallah Cultural Palace. He walked back to the traffic lights singing like he always did. A week later I tried to call him only to find out the number I had was wrong. Back then I felt angry with myself as I thought I had made a mistake when writing down the number. Little did I know about the reality of boys like him who live in constant fear and thus would never share their real name nor contact details with a stranger.

“Agency is about the possibilities and accountability entailed in reconfiguring material-discursive apparatuses of bodily production, including the boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by those practices in the enactment of a causal structure. Particular possibilities for acting exist at every moment, and these changing possibilities entail a responsibility to intervene in the world’s becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering.”⁶³

Between August 2011 and June 2012, it seemed that the number of street-children/ child-labourers in Ramallah had quadrupled. As if that alone was not enough, I sadly also observed people becoming more aggressive towards them. When a child would pass by a coffee shop, various accusations would be thrown at the children, ranging from calling them thieves, to theories about how wealthy their parents were or theories of parental abuse.

On June 10th, 2012 while sitting 150m down the street from Café de la Paix, outside QMH Bakery (which was partly owned by my mother then), with my colleague, I noticed a street- child /child-labourer approach a car that had just parked. After exchanging some words with the child, the man in the parked 4-wheel drive aggressively opened the car

⁶¹ The terms target group and beneficiaries used in this critique are in line with those identified by the European Commission in International Development practices. Target groups being those you work with directly (the participants in this case), whereas beneficiaries are those benefiting in a first degree out of the work, even if they are not being worked with directly.

⁶² Ramallah is a Palestinian city in the central West Bank located 10 km (6 miles) north of Jerusalem. It currently serves as the *de facto* administrative capital of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

⁶³ Barad, 2003. P. 827.

door, hitting the child to the floor. It only took me a few seconds to recognise the child – it was the singing boy.

The next time I saw the boy, I told him how sad I was that I had obviously written his number down wrongly and that I could not reach him to give him the tickets for the premiere of EXILE, upon which he told me that he had given me the wrong number and that he could not give me the real one because I could give it to the police. Hence, I gave him my business-card and told him he could check our website, and if he felt like he would like to join us, and trust that we would not go to the police then he could call me. With this he walked away again in the direction of the traffic light singing like he always did. It was then I made a promise that the next performance would be for “boys like him”.

250 school children (aged 6 - 18) from Ramallah (some of whom were street children and child-labourers) and Tammoun, some of whom had participated in the seminal work of EXILE, joined the rehearsals for this performance. Rehearsals were held on daily basis for 4 weeks between February 15th to March 13th, 2013 with the children split into 3 groups. Stravinsky’s ballet music of *Le Sacre du Printemps* premiered in 1913, to the choreography of Vaslav Nijinsky. Both the music and choreography are emblematic of how society sacrifices some of its weakest members. This amongst other reasons was the rationale for choosing this choreography out of the repertoire of Royston Maldoom, who again led the rehearsals of this second performance. He was assisted by four young dance teachers from Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

“The performance was organised based on my belief that inequality is a process by which the victim is forced into a reduced level of participation in the public sphere. The performance utilised the stage of dance, allowing the usually marginalised to claim the spotlight and to get back a portion of their childhood.” Nadia Arouri (NarrativeReport-ICM02 page 66)

SERENDIPITY

This performance was centred around 60 differently-abled persons. Some of the participants were differently abled mentally, others physically. Those differently abled physically were with and without wheelchairs. This performance was choreographed by the Palestinian dance trainees of ICM under the mentorship of the Mexican choreographer and dance therapist, Maria Arroyo Menendez.

The 5-weeks rehearsal period from March 4th to April 4th, 2014 took the physically and mentally differently-abled participants on an artistic journey of physical and emotional social defiance. This performance aimed at empowering the participants through the opportunity to show their skills and commitment and step out of the margins of society into the centre. As a result, large parts of the community, and even their families, began to look at them in a different way. Some finally began to see them as possible active members of society: givers, not only recipients.

The performance premiered on April 5th to the music of the Palestinian composer Tareq Abboushi.

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL CLASSES

After cooperating with two Palestinian Schools in the seminal EXILE project in 2011, the programme then organised two modules in teaching methods in 2012 and 2013 in cooperation with the Friends Schools, The Arab Evangelical Episcopal School, Al-Mustaqbal School and Al-Tawasul Al-Tam School for deaf and mute children. This paved the way for the launch of the regular school classes and community classes. Starting April



2013 weekly classes were offered to women in Budrus, a village highly affected by the occupation. The class combined physical training, body awareness, basic elements of contemporary dance and had a playful character. It offered the women a safe environment of social solidarity, group building, and cultivating a sense of sharing and trusting. The classes attracted more women (usually between 8 and 15 women attending), also bringing children aged 15-18 to the classes. Due to the success in Budrus classes were launched in August 2013 in the neighbouring village of Qibya, upon the request of the villagers in Qibya. The women were equally appreciative and welcoming.

Half a year later, in the spring of 2014, the trainees started giving classes in the Budros Elementary Girls School, and by September 2014 classes were expanded to the Qibya Elementary Girls School, the Qibya Elementary Boys School and the Budros Elementary Boys School. The trainees continued giving classes while gradually expanding the classes to additional villages. By 2015 the expansion included classes in the schools and village councils of Nilin and Deir Qiddies.

FINAL GRADUATION PERFORMANCE

This performance premiered on July 14th, 2015. It combined all the learnings throughout the 5 years of operations. Thus, I will only describe it here briefly. The performance was held in the courtyard of Al-Sakakini cultural centre. The participants were children from the villages of Budros, Qibya, and Nilin. It was choreographed, organised, and administered by the ICM trainees, as their graduation performance.

Europe and Palestine, unlike the UK, do not have a separate code of ethics in working with participants in artistic projects. Embedding of ethics in the curriculum from the outset is, in my opinion and experience, of considerable value because it presents ethics as a way of being which informs a way of doing and our curriculum was of this design: examples include ways of touch; not being alone in the room with vulnerable adults or children, never approaching from behind, always explaining each movement before it takes place and more. Unfortunately, negative behaviours towards vulnerable adults and children, from my personal and professional experience, are not always monitorable in 'private time', especially between adults and young adults.

Reflecting on my chosen lenses and their role in my learning and making explicit what I did implicitly, I believe in this section which focuses on the public works implementation, my modus operandi as a practitioner, critical thinker and activist, as well as a bricoleur comes to the fore. I see it more clearly now in terms of leadership. I was intent on both operationalising a long-term programme that would not only have a positive impact on the communities through self-expression (dance) but an enduring one. I look back on what I have written, and I am at times surprised by what was achieved and how working 'with' others, leading 'with' others was a key component of the programmes' success.

I realised that I was not consciously doing this following a leadership template, I did it because it 'felt' right. I had hated being patronised when I was a young performer, I hated being given a map that I knew was not for me but felt I had to follow it. But I also knew that children need safe boundaries, but safe boundaries do not mean imprisonment. They are like rope guides on cliff edges that embed the skills and behaviours needed when the ropes are no longer available. It is patronising to think that children do not understand, to think they do not have a voice or an idea, that they should not be part of the conversation. Our community dance programme could not be a participatory project in the sense that everyone creates the choreography. The dance was not the epicentre of the work, rather the journey and process of self-expression that the children and adults underwent. If we had increased the complexity by having the children choreograph the dance in a participatory process, it would have likely become too overwhelming and less conducive to the learning and healing process. Our programme was about helping children express themselves through pieces already choreographed so they could develop the skills and behaviours while experiencing the thrill of 'being free' safely.

I worked sometimes as a strategist, sometimes as a tactician/bricoleur fulfilling both the requirements of the funders and at the same time responding to the needs of the communities within their complex contexts of diversity, conflict, deprivation, traditions and limited resources. I have found that complexity never made me anxious, rather it still excites me, that place at the edge of difference and how we can dissolve the barriers safely. I found myself harnessing my exiled notion of the in-between as something totally positive - as an interconnector, facilitating intersectionality thinking and expression. I have found that this exercise in gathering my thoughts and examining my own behaviours and actions through different lenses has moved me closer to leadership of myself, challenging my own assumptions and issues and appreciating my efforts and the intentions behind them. I believe it is the experiences of my own childhood that have brought me to this notion of leadership 'with' others. I expand on these thoughts in the following section.



Section 4

Inciting Insights

I use this word 'incite' to flip its normal association with its use to describe something negative in the context of conflict, it is as if what incites to action is never examined and judged only the actions which follow. I am using the term positively in its meaning to awaken, to rouse. Insights do not always emerge from AHA moments but often from dissonance and pain. In this section of the critique I will deal with insights I had through my work. I start with the thematic insights of hope, freedom and respect applying to the works, team, participants, audience and just as much to myself. Then I detail the practice insights that evolved through the work.

Insights for me are the understanding of relationships that sheds light on or helps to solve a problem. It is the recognition of sources of emotional difficulty and an understanding of the motivational forces behind one's actions, thoughts, or behaviour; self-knowledge. Only through my developing insights could I design what might incite insights in other young people - because I have been there.

TRANSFORMING PAIN OF EXILE FROM SELF AND FROM A HOME

Since creativity and education are essential accumulative processes (Freire, 2017), I have come to analyse potentials of combinations of public and/or private partnerships with social/educational institutions/ideas. In the past seven years I have established and managed close to forty partnerships with local and international parties, including Universities and specialised centres.

At the heart of my work was, and still, is the belief that Art is a fundamental engine of social transformation, progressive or radicalizing, as it is genealogically political (choice of symbols, venues and more). (Boal, 1979).

Recognising - both in the global North and South - our colonial present, and its everyday tentacles in core areas including health, education, manufacturing, since 2010 the YANTE teams, supporters of I CAN MOVE, and I have been addressing dance and dance training as social work and a community development medium. Our curricula and activities intertwined capacity building of professionals - dance trainers⁶⁴, with shedding light on particular social problems that needed urgent attention for a society to have a chance at resilience in the absence of a capable state; e.g. child labour⁶⁵, disenfranchisement of disabled-persons⁶⁶. I CAN MOVE is but an example of many that campaign for cross-network discussion of experiences to figure out ways so that decentralised, innovative

⁶⁴ <https://goo.gl/EGBo00>

⁶⁵ <http://goo.gl/OUhHNY>

⁶⁶ <https://goo.gl/JwZDOM>

cultural works can link-up; so the many ‘nudges’⁶⁷ can reduce violence and engine progressive social change.

I have observed how dance and movement with participants of various ages but especially in schools and with traumatised children have had a range of impacts. These include the following and from which have emerged a range of themes which I want to critique more closely. In doing so, I hope to bring further enlightenment to my own practice but also to harness my personal experiences which does not entangle itself with its creative actions but harnesses the agency of self to nurture creative actions:

FREEDOM

Space to Envision / Dream / and Imagine.

Harnessing imagination and meaning.

Theme State: **Hope**

Theme Action: **Agency.**

GROWTH

Space to learn / play / emancipate.

Liberating minds through dialectic and critical thinking.

Theme State: **Curiosity**

Theme Action: **Liberate from Obedience.**

RESPECT

Space to be / Identity.

Holding a position of an unconditional positive regard: embracing difference.

Theme State: **Cohesion**

Theme Action: **Dialogue.**



⁶⁷ Thaler et al., 2008. (Nudge is the concept of positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions as ways to influence the behaviour and decision making of groups or individuals.)

In retrospect I realise how these elements were applicable in I CAN MOVE. What I CAN MOVE achieved is the creation of a learning organisation and environment, it is also a movement meant to generate change over time. Therefore, only time will reveal its impact, only time will tell. (Senge, 2010 & 2014; Leistner, 2012; Edmondson, 2018)

“Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become the next moment. By the same token, every human being has the freedom to change at any instant.”⁶⁸ Viktor Emil Frankl

FREEDOM: HOPE IN AGENCY

According to Frankl (2011) freedom is the ability to choose between stimulus and response. It is the response-ability that maintains and generates transcendent Hope. There is a reasonable consensus among psychologists that hope is composed of two levels, a cognitive element and an affective one.

C. R. Snyder studies hope and believes that it includes a goal, a perceived path to the goal and agency. Agency is the action, it is the ability to put things (hope) into action. While Hope is a state, Agency can be considered as both a trait and a state. “Hope is the sum of the mental willpower (agency) and waypower (pathway) that you have for your goals”⁶⁹.

“Agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. Agency cannot be designated as an attribute of “subjects” or “objects” (as they do not preexist as such). Agency is not an attribute whatsoever—it is “doing”/“being” in its intra-activity. Agency is the enactment of iterative changes to particular practices through the dynamics of intra-activity.”⁷⁰

Already before starting ICM I was aware that Hope should not be constrained by expectation. Nonetheless I had a few expectations at the outset. Expectation is a fantasy of something. A fantasy of desire. A fantasy of release from anxiety. Fantasy of certainty. I realized even those few expectations I had stem from a place of fear. I was setting up myself and the others for failure. That is where choosing instructors whose practice did not project expectations but emphasised the transcendence of hope became my priority.

Groopman in *The Anatomy of Hope* says it is “the elevating feeling we experience when we see—in the mind’s eye—a path to a better future”⁷¹; he also quotes Richard Davidson saying, “hope involves what I would call affective forecasting—that is, the comforting, energizing, elevating feeling that you experience when you project in your mind a positive future. This requires the brain to generate a different affective, or feeling, state than the one you are currently in.”⁷².

⁶⁸ Frankl, 1985. P. 154.

⁶⁹ Snyder, 2010. P. 13.

⁷⁰ Barad, 2003. P. 826-827.

⁷¹ Groopman, 2005. P. xiv.

⁷² Groopman, 2005. P. 193.

Graeber links hope to the ability to imagine saying that

“To adopt a dialectical approach means to define things not in terms of what one imagines them to be in a certain abstract moment, outside time, but partly by what they have the potential to become. It is extremely difficult to think this way consistently. But when one is able to, any number of seemingly impossible quandaries dissolve away.”⁷³

Frankl’s work (logotherapy) focuses on meaning. He believes agency comes through motivation. He also emphasises the importance of attitude. “Everything can be taken from a man but... the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s way..” We are, by nature, creatures of habit. We create pathways in our minds in much the same way as daily habits. Because these patterns are automatic, we may believe these habitual ways of thinking and behaving are beyond our control (Pattakos, 2010). For Frankl, Meaning analysis challenges us to break free from the prison of our habits, thinking, and behaving, and rather make conscious choices about those. In my reading and understanding of Frankl, the ultimate meaning in our life is freedom which can be best illustrated in his *True Optimism* model. They have helped me make explicit what I was doing and the choices I was making implicitly. I had this internal compass in both (re)-designing ICM as well as in mentoring the trainees. Firstly, choosing a positive attitude about the situation at hand. Secondly, designing / visualizing what is possible for dealing with the situation at hand. Thirdly, and lastly taking action with passion, diligence and dedication which makes the possible or seemingly impossible become reality.



⁷³ Graeber 2001. P. 254.

GROWTH: CURIOSITY AND LIBERATION FROM OBEDIENCE

The I CAN MOVE programme was initially planned under and within the domination of nationalistic and neo-liberal paradigms (Palestine). It was planned for a community forced into obedience and abeyance, into silence, and non-action. It was planned based on the model of previous community dance experiences in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria and Ethiopia. Even though the actions were successful to the public, on paper and in numbers, the team and I felt more drained than satisfied at the end of the day. Through shifting to methods of experiential learning we undertook a difficult but honest process to free ourselves from a Eurocentric vision of academic authority and structures in dance and performance. Rather than teaching 'best practices', our learning emerged from discussions around what did not work which opened the space for varied interpretations on how to tackle the particular problem through dance and communication. Looking back on this training programme, I see it now as a form of action research in which everyone partakes of the learning; co creates the learning, through reflection and action cycles and the focus of the researcher is on an improvement of themselves as practitioners usually in leadership. Learning structures and pedagogies need to be designed in a way, so that they do not *own* us, rather enable us to be liberated from socio-political paradigms.

“Freire (1970b) articulated a vision that he considered “an indispensable condition for the quest for human completion” (p. 31)—a completion that although would remain ever unfinished, nevertheless could enliven our imagination, creativity, hope, and commitment to resist the forces of domination and exploitation within education and the larger society. For Freire, freedom encompassed our human capacity “to be” and to exist authentically. Moreover, our capacity to live free required a fundamental shift in how we defined ourselves and the conditions in which we exist. This entailed a humanizing process that could support and facilitate the ongoing development of critical consciousness, so that we might find the cognitive, emotional, psychological, and spiritual strength necessary to critique and denounce conditions of oppression, embrace a life of solidarity, and announce new possibilities for a more just world.”⁷⁴

I devised an appreciative teaching process that embraced the individualist and collective cultures as well as daily situations that we were dealing with.

The guiding question became and remains: how do we shift educative norms and structures from learning as information, to learning as experiencing (Kolb, 2014; Piaget, 2013; Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) and collecting better, more dialectic tools and know-how? (McPeck, 2016; Lisle, 2010; Gadotti, 1999) And how can we foster polycontextuality in teaching processes? (Usher and Edwards, 2007)

⁷⁴ Darder 2015. P. 6.

In structuring the psychosocial work in schools, we as a team varying in size between 2 and 15 people, depending on the project phase believed we could not separate art and politics from social work. We refrained from silos of disciplines and embraced what I now see as complexity. The training thereof became built around strong personal bonds of reciprocal growth between trainees and trainers, teachers and children, instructors and participants. One of the main mediums we used in training was individually tailored mentorship to complement and customise knowledge gained in collective classes.

“The crucial thing point is that what we call structure is not something that exists prior to action. Ultimately, “structure” is identical with the process of its own construction. Complex abstract systems are simply the way actors come to understand the logic of their own interactions with the world.”⁷⁵

Through the dialogue, the trainees and teachers alike cultivated a constant status of curiosity and research (Inan et al., 2018) - where each question had multiple answers, questions and “if’s” and thus where a sense of community emerged through letting go of preconceived notions and appreciating the ability to see the perspective of the other.

RESPECT: COHESION AND DIALOGUE

“Egocentrism, then, involves first and foremost an inability to see things from other points of view. Even if it’s a matter of understanding the continual existence of objects, one is aware of them through potential perspectives: when one looks at a car, or a duck, or a mountain, the fact that there are other sides to it (other perspectives from which one could be looking at it) becomes internalized into the very nature of what one is perceiving. It would simply not look the same otherwise.”⁷⁶

The approaches and methods generated curiosity to self-educate. Moreover, strong personal bonds of vulnerability and growth evolved. Can these findings help to explore



⁷⁵ Graeber 2001. P. 61.

⁷⁶ Graeber 2001. P. 64.

better ways to contribute to educational reform and to shift traditional pedagogic practices based on a bounded dialectic, a mere transmission of information, towards understanding education as a life-long process of questioning our assumptions and those of 'experts' who own the territory?

Holding a position of an unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1992; Rogers et al. 2013), although deeply desirable, and for a long time I felt I was failing in it, I came to the realisation that it is one of the most challenging positions for a leader to maintain, because of its impact on having to make difficult decisions on an everyday basis: for example sometimes to sacrifice an individual or even yourself is for the benefit of the cohesion of the group. It is worth noting though, people sometimes mistake the need to be liked as having unconditional positive regard for somebody.

Through the works the team, our supporters and I developed a wide network of cooperation, merged and contributed to activities of local actors, and shared in their infrastructures to maximise resource effectiveness. Impressed by our performance and communications, several private sector stakeholders engaged with us in public-private partnerships, hiring ICM graduates to operate in 8 Universities and various schools. Since, in most countries, possibilities are reduced by budget cuts and rising costs, creativity in puzzling out alternative resources is indispensable. So, given these circumstances how did we create enabling environments/spaces?

There are however three overarching themes to the three above-mentioned themes. Firstly, and quite importantly the theme of power and colonialism: growth is about beginning to fathom how our spaces are being colonised. It is about freeing our minds and imaginations from the colonialization. It is about abolishing colonial paradigms of racism and superiority through the Rogerian respect of unconditional acceptance of others as they are (Said, 1993 & 2014). Secondly, the theme of hope per se: Hope the transcendent. Hope that is not tied to the temporality of expectation.

Hope is needed to make them happen, hope is needed to sustain them. Thirdly and lastly, that of **positive disruption** also known as disruptive innovation⁷⁷ (Christensen et al, 2016). Like in Markets, I CAN MOVE was a process by which the services offered initially took root in simple applications at the bottom of the market – being less expensive and more accessible – and then relentlessly moved upmarket, however instead of displacing established competitors, it democratised them.

Why disruption? Because I am a professional trouble maker (Ajayi, 2016). Firstly, I never learned how to conform, nor felt, at least consciously, the need to belong, and most importantly, have been wired for critical social observations and striving for growth. Throughout my life I have had to fight for being a Palestinian living under occupation; I have had to fight for being a women in a predominantly macho society; I have had to fight for being secular in Christian/Muslim society; I have had to fight for upholding

⁷⁷ <http://www.claytonchristensen.com/key-concepts/>

universalist values of peace; I have had to fight to be allowed to study in Austria; I have had to fight to be allowed to work and pay taxes in Europe and Austria; I have had to fight to be able to stay in Austria; I have had to fight to study Arts, and to be allowed to practice Arts; I have been fighting most of my life for daily small things. It is what I know how to do best. I have had to fight for the Space to breathe and be. I know what it means to stand alone and brave the criticism, fear and hurt. But I know:

“You are only free when you realise you belong no place - you belong every place - no place at all. The price is high. The reward is great.”⁷⁸ Maya Angelou



⁷⁸ *The price is high, the reward is great:* Bill Moyers, “A Conversation with Maya Angelou,” *Bill Moyers Journal*, original series, Public Broadcasting System, first aired November 21, 1973. Cited in Brown, 2017. P. 5.

Section 5

Insights: Learning about leadership of self to be able to lead with others

In this section I detail the insights that informed my practice. The above thematic insights are an important frame of reference in the following pages. I start with insights reflecting on the many complex nuances of respect of self and others: behaviours (non)-conductive to managerial effectiveness and applying knowledge, wisdom and self-value. I move to insights reflecting normative structures, (sub)-conscious paradigms of power, and dichotomies of freedom. I end this section with a detailing of inspirational leadership towards and in learning organisations.

DISCOMFORT AND DISRUPTION

In February 2011, 18 months after our initial encounter in September 2009, Royston Maldoom and I travelled to Palestine for a planning visit. We agreed at the end of the visit, based on the meetings held and dates on which Ramadan⁷⁹ fell that year (31.July – 29.August.2011), to start the project at the beginning of June, in order to finish the rehearsals and tour before the start of Ramadan. However, a few months later, when confirming dates, I was informed by Mr. Maldoom that he had accepted another higher paying offer, and his earliest starting date would be the 20th of July which was the middle of Ramadan.

Before the project had even started, this raised a slight alarm bell in me but eager for the project to begin and with such a renowned person I let it fall silent. Only later after the end of the seminal project EXILE did I pay attention and reflect on the relationships which had shaped and misshaped the project. I was naive in certain things when this project started but not in others. My naivety was in taking trust for granted. My insight is I either trust too much or too little: the first because I want to trust, I want to feel people are good and want to help. Sometimes it is because I have been brought up in a situation of occupation and historical colonialism in which one is desperate to trust one's 'masters' as having good intentions, the paternalistic syndrome. However, this latter point is also why I came to trust no one, that, combined with experiences with a range of personalities whose own interests would always come first not from political inclinations but from personal inclinations. I now underpin good will with a contract; always sign written detailed contracts with anyone involved, even those insisting that they are joining pro bono on a solidarity basis or as activists. Clear written terms and conditions are

⁷⁹ Ramadan: is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting. This annual observance is regarded as one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Fasting is obligatory for adult Muslims, with some exceptions. Ramadan's dating depends on phases of the moon, therefore is also influenced by region of residence. Ramadan shifts by an average of 10 days earlier every year.

extremely important for professional communication and a professional work atmosphere. Maybe this was not the most crucial learning of my work over the years, but it was indicative of the one topic that shadowed the entire experience of EXILE and was also present in other insights I developed about my role in allowing myself to be put in the cage of power and colonialism and what emerges from a particular mindset or personality and what emerges from a form of entitlement to superiority because history and indeed cultural history is written by the victor.

“If I had to name one quality as the genius of patriarchy, it would be compartmentalisation, the capacity for institutionalisation disconnection. Intellect severed from emotion. Thought separated from action. Science split from art. The earth itself divided; national borders. Human beings categorised: by sex, age, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, height, weight, class, religion, physical ability, ad, nauseam. The personal isolated from the political. Sex divorced from love. The material ruptured from the spiritual. The past parted from the present disjoined from the future. Law detached from justice. Vision dissociated from reality.”⁸⁰

Royston was in a position of personal and professional power prior to my work with him on EXILE, as his reputation, contacts and name were essential for acquiring the funding necessary to launch EXILE, and thus the future activities of YANTE. His position was one I respected and worked with initially. I began to realize then and continue to challenge myself on this that I have the power to challenge my own internalization of the power of another and to shift my lens from a potential victim of power to an equal. I struggled at first as I was young, female, Palestinian, an exile, a nomad and my identity was not anchored in consistency over time and cultural continuity as Royston’s was. This is an insight which went beyond standing up for myself. It led me to explore the complex dynamics of power and identity and bring them into full awareness.



⁸⁰ Morgan, 2014.

I learned a substantial amount both concurrent with the EXILE project and from reflections afterwards, but it also became the spring board for other projects. It started as a lonely journey for me as a developing leader (Boyatzis & Mckee 2005). Leaders I believe often come across as those who work alone but I was more than alone, I was lonely. I was 24 years of age. I did not have local staff to support me, and was surrounded by a team of white Europeans. Not to be misunderstood, the majority of the staff were strongly supportive, however they sometimes expressed views and attitudes from a white European colonial perspective, their unconscious bias. In addition, I experienced both age bias and gender bias from my own people with embedded traditional belief systems. Participants and parents automatically presumed I was a locally hired coordinator by the international team and asked to speak to my international superiors when they had a query or issue, or they automatically went to speak to the male lead choreographer assuming he was my senior manager.

“Even with the best of intentions and great leaders, a top-down authority system leads almost inevitable to a parent-child dynamic between the boss and the employee. Familiar archetypes are almost impossible to avoid; the result is that workers feel disempowered and victimised, and managers feel overwhelmed by the sense that it is up to them to take on all the responsibility and deal with everyone’s tensions.”⁸¹

INSIGHT: LEARNING TO EMBRACE LONELINESS

Learning to embrace loneliness was an integral part of assuming leadership of myself before I could lead with others throughout the projects. Upon the first confrontation / conflict between the male lead choreographer and myself during the last 2 weeks of EXILE rehearsals, despite constantly stating to the team that I would prefer if they remained impartial, I had a strong need for support and affirmation from ‘my’ team of white Europeans. I needed to be acknowledged as equal, as good enough. I was their ‘superior⁸²’, and yet felt inferior to them.

“... when leaders sacrifice too much for too long—and reap too little—they can become trapped in what we call the Sacrifice Syndrome. Leadership is exciting, but it is also stressful. And it is lonely. Leadership is the exercise of power and influence—and power creates distance between people. Leaders are often cut off from support and relationships with people. Our bodies are just not equipped to deal with this kind of pressure day after day. Over time, we become exhausted—we burn out or burn up. The constant small crises, heavy responsibilities, and perpetual need to influence people can be a heavy

⁸¹ Robertson, 2015. P.22.

⁸² Despite the fact that I was obviously leading the project as director, there were no clear hierarchies, rather an attempt of working on eye level as a team. As unrealistic and unreal as that was in reality.

burden, so much so that we find ourselves trapped in the Sacrifice Syndrome and slip into internal disquiet, unrest, and distress.

... dissonance becomes the default, even for leaders who can create resonance. And, because our emotions are contagious, dissonance spreads quickly to those around us and eventually permeates our organizations.”⁸³

And there the language tells of my role in this discomfort which causes disruption in me professionally and personally. They were not ‘my’ team, I was not ‘superior’ nor was I ‘inferior’. I did not want to be self-sacrificial, I wanted to work with but have a recognition or perhaps more an appreciation that I was responsible for the funding, the design, and the results which would impact whether any more community projects would be funded. I was also exhausted from the emotional tensions of personally bearing full legal liability and this huge responsibility. Perhaps I had some envy that I could not, like them, enjoy the experience. I no longer assume leadership, assume it should be recognised in me. I work with people. There is no ‘my’ but ‘us’.

In the first year of ICM I explicitly refrained from inviting Royston to teach or work in Palestine again. I attributed the challenges to his divisive character. Many questions were raised in me in September 2012, upon some criticism from a young visiting European artist devoid of basic knowledge of facts, let alone any cultural understanding. I nonetheless did not connect both incidents at that time. I was not yet aware that the main issue was that of colonialism in reality and colonialism internalised in me.

In March 2013 I re-invited Royston Maldoom to rehearse his famous “Sacre du Printemps” Choreography. It was a *deja vu* of EXILE, only this time I was not alone. Many have asked me over the years why I re-invited him. My relationship to Royston was like a broken marriage. Royston was powerful, with a wide aura surrounding him. We had a child together called Exile... but soon after I had to decide to either give the child up for adoption or raise it alone. I decided it to raise it alone, but it felt like the father still had some visiting rights. We talked and reflected after Exile, therefore I imagined healing was possible. I was lonely, scared and tired of raising the child on my own, so we tried mending our marriage. But we almost killed the child through our attempt. That is when I decided a final divorce was due.

This time I had a local administrative team as well as some of the trainees who clearly sided with me. Despite the difficulty of this process, I used the insights I had gained in EXILE. I strongly encouraged a partnership perspective so that no one felt they needed to take sides between me or Royston. I initiated this through a workshop with the trainees where we analysed the situation from a professional, factual perspective. This increased my credibility amongst the trainees, but most importantly, was a new form of affirmation for me; an affirmation not given by any one person, but one I gained by asserting the values I believed in and with which I was raised.

⁸³ Boyatzis et al., 2005, P.16.

Notwithstanding the above, the experience was not all rosy and smiles. The international artistic team consisting of 4 young female assistants all explicitly sided with Royston with one exception. Perhaps the three had something at stake, a future career with, or with the assistance of this community dance guru which I understand. Power is nuanced, it is not only an axis of coloured vs. white, but also white senior male vs. white young female. Again I still reflected on my role and his in creating these conditions of splitting but perhaps it was in the end more pragmatic for young dancers to follow the person who would be most useful in their career. Generally, I do think that high achieving personalities do consciously or unconsciously encourage followings. Followers in turn follow, perhaps in desperation to be recognised or pragmatically because it is a door into the world to which they want to belong and this is regardless of whether they are following a materially motivated person or one that aspires to Frankl's notion of transcending self.

“The more one forgets himself--by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love--the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself. What is called self-actualization is not an attainable aim at all, for the simple reason that the more one would strive for it, the more he would miss it. In other words, self-actualization is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence.”⁸⁴

In my experience so far, self-actualisation emerges in a moment of flow, it is a temporary ecstatic state where I feel as though 'I' do not exist, and then it goes away again, and a new struggle starts. I have come to understand that this is actually a sensation involving a number of things including an achievement; a rare congruence; an acceptance of who I



⁸⁴ Frankl, 1985. P. 133.

am, an overflow of compassion. Frankl's notion hints more at something I do not yet know, an acceptance, a forgiveness and inner peace and contentment. I am not sure that is where I want to be at the moment because my anger and passion are fuel to my actions. Now that I am more explicitly aware of them, I can temper and harness them to a common good.

INSIGHT: IMPORTANCE OF NON-WORK SUPPORT NETWORK

I do not now have illusions of being self-actualised or transcendent of self. It is more a tentative aspiration. Few in the public domain ever reach it but I am certain there are those not well known who do and perhaps that is the nature of it: this leadership of self is letting go of leadership of others as a goal. It was precisely by giving myself to the cause, that the importance of maintaining a support network outside the frame of ICM had become evident for me. I gradually developed many new and fostered old mentoring relationships that supported me in my process in the years to follow. These relationships were diverse. My regular mentees were my sister, my therapist, and my father amongst other irregular ones. I also developed some sparring relationships such as the one with my colleague Lina Höhne who became an integral part of many projects in the years to follow.

Subconsciously still a prisoner of my colonial inferiority complex, I did not apply to others what I applied to myself. Thus, I did not check and apply the same standards of maintaining a support network outside the frame of ICM when hiring fellow white Europeans, as evident in my hiring the new lead coordinator in the summer of 2013.

INSIGHT: NEVER SILENCE THE INNER ALARM BELL

By beginning of November 2013, my inner alarm bell regarding the lead coordinator was sounding loudly and continuously due to some informal disclosures. I became worried about a decline in their productivity and engagement due to a lack of consistency and role boundaries. I thought they might be exhibiting signs of loneliness and homesickness. Aware of the approaching performance in March 2014, knowing that performances are the most stressful and consuming time of the ICM academic year, I was afraid of replacing this person, so I decided it was best to extend the offer of a one-month vacation with their family in Europe in December of 2013.

Also following the experience of being highly understaffed in the previous performances of EXILE and The Rite of spring, I decided to hire 2 full time volunteers in February for the duration of the performance rehearsals, premiere and tour. Thus, a total of four full time management team personnel should have been secured.

My lack of both understanding and experience in dealing with people with challenging behaviours rendered my optimism that all would go well, naïve. Just like in the previously

mentioned case with Royston, I did not listen to the alarm bell, in fact I silenced it, resulting in very negative consequences. On 14 March 2014, just 10 days after the start of rehearsals of the performance Serendipity, there was a dangerous car accident that the coordinator and a volunteer miraculously survived, but with serious injuries and bruising. By silencing that bell, I ended up with both the main managerial staff member and a volunteer less. I then had the additional burden of dealing with the practical and legal repercussions of such an accident.

Silencing is a powerful phenomenon. Silencing starts by disengaging you from yourself. It is powerful. You start not listening to the inner voice which is a guiding compass to what is for oneself right or wrong.

“With so much at hand that generations have striven for, how bewildering that the meaning of life should evade us. Freedoms we have, broader than ever before. But more than ever before most of us yearn for a self realisation that eludes us, while we abide restless in the midst of plenty. As we achieve freedom, we are frightened by social forces that seem to suffocate us, seem to move in on us from all parts of an ever contracting world.”⁸⁵

INSIGHT: WHO IS MY “JOB”, WHO IS MY PRIORITY

This experience, just much as the ones before it, placed the important issue of prioritising to the forefront. It was clear my physical resources were not only limited, but they were declining with time. During EXILE (2011), my adrenaline among other bodily functions was running high, so that I managed to pull 8 weeks with workdays of up to 20 hours, with barely any rest or break, that is an average 4-5 hours of sleep per night. Not only that, the work hours often involved multi-tasking, most prominent of which was driving the team back from Zababdeh to Ramallah, with one of the members sitting next to me with the project file in their hand, dialling various numbers on my phone, while I drove and performed the necessary administrative and logistic coordination phone calls.

Serendipity (March 2014) focused on persons with physical and mental disabilities and was the third high profile community dance performance. Despite the car accident, and the slight spike in adrenaline herewith, it was physically impossible to pull off that which I had pulled off during EXILE. Not only was my body getting used to adversities and probably producing less adrenaline, but also Serendipity was the first performance that the trainees were due to choreograph themselves, thus there were no artistic assistants present as in previous performances. Maria Arroyo Menendez director of Dance Ability⁸⁶ Mexico and I provided a rigorous mentoring process to the trainees, who related that they felt empowered and mastered many of the tasks previously performed by European

⁸⁵ Bettelheim, 1986. P. vii - viii.

⁸⁶ <https://www.danceability.com>

artistic assistants. For more details on Serendipity please see artefact NarrativeReport-ICM03 or visit <http://www.yante-icanmove.org/portfolio/serendipity/>

This adversity posed an important question. Who and what needs to be my priority as a leader? It became evident to me that the most important asset of the work was the trainees. Thus, my priority was to support and mentor the trainees throughout this process, so that they themselves could support the participants. My next priority was the participants in this performance, who were differently-abled physically and mentally.

But what about my employees? I concluded that especially in such a highly complex, charity, and psychologically demanding work in a development context, my job is to lead not to manage the employees and staff, therefore to inspire them rather than support them. It is their job to be alongside me in supporting the trainees and participants. Up until this eureka moment, this felt counter intuitive for me. I consider myself a “chronic helper⁸⁷”, because I often felt obliged to support everyone involved. Only my growing inability to do that, as the programme grew, and the number of persons and duration of required support periods expanded, forced me to face this fact and reach this conclusion

“We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”⁸⁸

I started gaining insight into the difference and boundaries of management and leadership.



⁸⁷ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helfersyndrom>

⁸⁸ “We must always take sides”. Elie Wiesel, Nobel Prize acceptance speech, December 10, 1986. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1986/wiesel/26054-elie-wiesel-acceptance-speech-1986/>

INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISES

The role of a leader is to mediate between and ensure the flow of process between the different elements of the ecosystem. Indeed, I did previously mention the importance of the support network I had to ensure for myself as a leader outside the frame of ICM. I wonder if having the necessary support network allowed me nonetheless to tilt the balance and forfeit myself to the system. I wonder where and when and how to draw the lines. I negotiate these questions until today. I still do not have an answer, and I do not think I will easily find one. I acknowledge the importance of not forfeiting myself to the work, yet the precarity of my situation whether real or imagined, compelled me to “sacrifice” myself. The failure of the work meant my failure and my failure to help make things happen for others. It meant losing my existence. The complexity of the situation tossed me around. I negotiated many options, the most recent one I am currently trying out is to get out. A point I will elaborate more on in my closing statement.

As for the technicalities of leadership,

I learned to accept not being liked.

I accepted that those with power attract projections and transferences.

I accepted that if I go into counter transference I lose.

I accepted that I am not omnipotent.

I embraced and accepted it is okay that I do not belong to either group.

I accepted that I will never be perceived as fully Palestinian, because I do not suffer enough. I am privileged to be able to leave.

I accepted that I will never be perceived as I once thought I needed or wanted; to be fully white / western / european / civilised. I will always be not white / western / european / civilised enough. I will always be not privileged enough. Two critical incidents – my father’s death and this doctorate – have shifted my position. I no longer subscribe to the binaries.

I yet wonder how a person who has been truly oppressed and preoccupied with the intensity of the pain, can transition from “I” to “we, us, them” when their experience of inflicted pain includes being prevented from trusting anyone.

In retrospect, the repercussions of the accident in 2014, were traumatising. As the director of the organisation I bear legal liability for actions of the employees within the frame of their work. I am the leader. Employees, trainees and participants can talk and suggest and criticise all they want. They will not be held accountable for decisions made and actions taken. I was the only one to be held accountable. The loneliness of my position dawned on me. Yet I was so exhausted, I was so sick and tired, that I actually embraced being often blamed for things outside of my control or actions, and being often perceived as the villain. So be it. This was my state of mind.

It is poignant, that a programme built and inspired by the post traumatic growth theory of Calhoun and Tedeschi (2006) was both a source of trauma and growth through critical reflection.

The world is full of diverse personalities, making it often very difficult to predict behaviour. But the colliding of different behaviours can seriously undermine any project. Some of these collisions of personalities create critical incidents from which we can learn. In the case of the accident involving the two staff members, there was a tremendous amount of blaming projections which led to litigation. Ironically the two members of staff were temporarily disabled by the accident, I was disabled through litigation and managing the repercussions of the accident but was determined to go ahead and put on a performance with 60 disabled participants.

I am aware that these entanglements of personal and professional, behaviours and personalities, budget holders and logistics divert from the main purpose of what these projects are. I did not want any of this, even though it was serious to interfere with what we, the trainees and I were here for: this performance was created for and dedicated to the differently-abled. The full performance video and the extensive media coverage of it can be viewed on the yante youtube channel or under this link. <https://goo.gl/stTm3A>

This accident was a turning point, a **critical incident**. I have asked myself if I was distracted from confronting some things by being so busy (Halquist and Musanti, 2010). I asked myself what those things could have been. Looking back, perhaps wisdom comes with hindsight, I did not look to be liked. I did not become mean. But I did finally stop trying to please and take care of everybody. I finally started taking more care of myself (Stewart and Joines, 2012). I voiced my needs. I voiced my vulnerabilities (Brown, 2016), yet I was very clear and decisive in my leadership. I did not cause the accident, but I was held accountable. At the end of the day that is the price of leadership, accountability which raises the issue which I have not resolved as to what the responsibility is of each person



in the group to take care of themselves, I am reminded here of Byrne's Transactional Analysis model in which he describes relational dynamics in terms of Parent, Adult and Child. I see here that I had started to behave more like an adult and less as the child trying to be everything to everybody and in my leadership, I was perceived in this last situation as a parent to blame. As an adult I did not encounter any more crisis situations as I had done previously because I had as the adult boundaried my responsibilities and those of others. I am grateful to my friend and colleague Lina Höhne for helping me with this insight. She often told me, and kept repeating over the years: "Nadia, ask yourself, is this person healing for you?".

I realised that the personal was tangled up with the purpose of what I set out to do which was to help young people in Palestine not fully realising that the young person was me and that through learning from these issues which triggered off emotional responses I could be released from that entanglement and focus on the 'they' and the 'we' and the 'us'.

INSIGHT: WHICH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS TO ENGAGE WITH

Similar to the quest for persons to surround myself with and artists to invite to work in the programme I had to decide on partner organisations to work with. When the dance and cultural institutions I had previously negotiated with only sent their amateur dancers to the TOT segment of EXILE and not the professional ones as agreed, I saw this in the context of other influences on their time and resources such as timing, trying to squeeze in their usual summer programme of performances and tours before Ramadan commenced. Therefore, when planning ICM, I initially planned it over 3 years, considering that professionals with previous teaching experience would join the programme. It soon became evident that these high profile and experienced organisations had reasons beyond my first speculation. I reflected on whether they did not see the value in what we were offering or did not understand or trust our intentions or very importantly felt that not enough had been done to involve them more closely in what was to be an intensive and long training programme. For me, the involving at a design and co creating level of all these organisations would have stalled the project due to creative differences rather than consensus. I saw the involvement evolving over time, setting a template or a collaborative way of practice that would endure once the project was finished. Therefore, the focus and content had to be shifted to target the trainees joining the programme who were less experienced, the structure had to be changed into a more instructive programme and the duration extended to 4 full years, instead of the originally planned 2 years of instruction followed by a year of mentorship. Therefore, in semester II (starting September 2012) the duration and number of classes were gradually expanded, while trying as much as possible to take into consideration the time schedules of the trainees,

who had the challenge of balancing between daily obligations (work, studies, etc.) and the intensive training⁸⁹. As a bricoleur I worked with and around what was at hand.

The shift in the type of organisations to seek partnerships then became a shift that was to be more beneficial and satisfactory. The original idea had been to close entry to the programme after the first semester, but I changed this to end of the second semester to give time for communities and individuals to become more familiar with and trusting of what we were offering and the benefits it could bring. When I write this, I am struck by bricolage and complexity and how adaptive responses to field conditions can lead to greater insights and action and how complexity is best navigated by keeping it flowing rather than blocking it with pre-conceived notions or templates about how things must be done or followed to the letter. In the following years, partnerships were developed and fostered with grass root organisations whose goals were the genuine attempt to contribute to community and social development, rather than pleasing the donor community, and the competition over donor money.

INSIGHT: PLAGUE OF COLONIALISM

For anyone who does not live with the consequences of colonialism, with a dark heritage, the following may appear to be dramatic. For those who have, the most powerful language of oppression is metaphor as many oppressions and cruelties are beyond ordinary words. Ordinary words can make normal that which is not and trivialise the pain because we all seem to be doing just fine. Peeling off the tentacles of colonialism is an ongoing process. It is like a canvas, except every time you think you are starting to see more details on it, you realise you are far from beginning to see or understand the connections and correlation of its parts. I will attempt to give a few examples here. It is important to note though, that in cases of ongoing colonialism, like the case of Palestine, it is rarely possible to draw out clear learnings as much has been embedded in the very



⁸⁹ The trainees underwent rigorous training during the first two semesters completing up to 240hours in modules, and 180 hours in dance technique classes.

being of a person. To fight colonialism body and soul it almost commits one's life to reaction so that one no longer knows if one's behaviour is a creative response to life, actions to throw off colonial mind sets, generational trauma or behaviours which everyone has about the universal experiences of life. Through my experiences in Palestine relating to my public works I can through the haze of behavioural origins offer small examples to illustrate the complexities which a colonial inheritor lives with.

These examples may on the surface appear somewhat trivial. One critical element that was included at the outset of the design of the programme to ensure psychological well being and safety was that semester evaluation sessions were not to be held with the trainees at the end of any semester, when they were heading for break, rather at the beginning of the following semester. The idea was that pointing out to the trainees everything they cannot do and should have focused on during the past semester would leave them going frustrated into the break, reducing physical recuperation. We changed this to assessments being done at the beginning of the following semester, when the trainees had the opportunity to discuss their development and go through the basic techniques of what they had learned and could work to catch up on in the new semester.

Punctuality.

Among the established rules of classes at the outset of the programme was the requirement for punctuality. The rationale behind it, was that it is disrespectful to the instructors and fellow trainees not to be on time. It was only in Autumn of 2014, two years into the programme, that we began to question, is punctuality an indicator of respect? It was only then that I realised that punctuality is a construct of the industrial revolution and capitalism; an instrumental tool, that disregards human needs and ecosystem in favour of the harnessing of the collective to capitalists' efforts. It was a collective decision by the group of trainees to opt for punctuality in order to ensure best use of their time, and in order to be able to maintain a ritual of starting and ending a session for an increased sense of safety and reliability. The unpunctual arrival was henceforth removed as an indicator of disregard and disrespect.

Curriculum.

As previously detailed the curriculum content and structure adopted at the outset of the programme was based on previous international experiences in community dance. One of the main structural conclusions at the end of Semester III (July 2013), was that although the teachers / instructors were required to deliver detailed protocols of their classes and a reflection on the trainees, the handing over from one teacher / instructor to the other was not as good as I had hoped and desired. As detailed above, the choice of artists and instructors, was influenced by development aid, who not only required their nationals but also favoured famous artists over dedicated art educators. Hence the following conclusions were drawn:

1. the need to identify teachers / instructors who would teach at ICM on a more regular basis.
2. the need to plan a transitional period between the teachers / instructors where the following teacher / instructor has the chance to observe at least the last two classes of the previous teacher / instructor.
3. the need to affirm when identifying teachers / instructors that their teaching values correspond with those of YANTE, where the values are more decisive than the technical and artistic knowhow and skills.

Language.

The language of instruction had to be English, due to the linguistic abilities of visiting international artists. Notwithstanding that the great value of dance and music is that they transcend the spoken word and providing translation would have placed too high an emphasis on the spoken word instead of the wisdom of the body. The fact that we were rarely able to provide instruction in Arabic, is in itself an important tentacle of colonialism. As Alfred Korzybski noted in his book *Science and Sanity*; our language, our symbolic categories distort our worlds like prisms (Korzybski, 2005). Despite globalisation, in Palestine English still has an aftertaste of the British Mandate of Palestine to it. Additionally, it has become a symbol of wealth and education amongst the economically middle and upper class in society. I am one of those whose words have been colonised. I am sadly incapable of expressing myself fully in Arabic as I do in English, which has been professionally advantageous. It would be a lie however, not to admit that the reason for that, is that as teenagers we experienced Arabic as inferior. It was “not cool” to speak Arabic!

My experience in professional life in general and in my position of leadership especially made me realise that my high linguistic proficiency in both English and German are unfortunately not only advantageous. High linguistic proficiency of language other than the mother tongue translates into a wide range of vocabulary, grammatical and technical



abilities. It however lacks the emotional epicentre of the language which is often perceived by the interlocutor as incongruence. Considering that sometimes the language of leadership can sound patronising when using one's mother tongue, can be an indication at how problematic the amplification caused by the instrumental linguistic proficiency and incongruence can be. To borrow from Gadamer:

“The prejudices and fore-meanings that occupy the interpreter's consciousness are not at his free disposal. He cannot separate in advance the productive prejudices that enable understanding from the prejudices that hinder it and lead to misunderstandings.”⁹⁰

Terminology.

In the performance of Serendipity targeting physically and mentally disabled / differently-abled persons, we faced a challenge in the naming of the target group. Most recent international guidelines -mainly led by the UK- maintained the politically correct terminology to be *differently abled persons*, which I unreflectedly introduced, without consulting with those concerned. However, the Palestinian participants insisted on being acknowledged as disabled. For them it was important for society to actually call them disabled. It became evident that the struggles of disabled / differently-abled persons had stark geopolitical differences.

Political, social, and economic instability.

Of course, in the context of Palestine, colonialism is still a daily reality. Therefore, the notion of planning, sometimes just got ridiculous. For example, in the second semester there were many University strikes due to economic precarity. The strikes led to a shift in the mid-term and final exams of the Universities. I had originally planned the semester break around the time of final exams for Universities and schools, i.e. mid December – mid January; however, the exams of Birzeit University were postponed to the end of January 2013, which reflected negatively on the launch of the third semester, where preparations were held for the performance of *Le Sacre du Printemps* - an allegory of colonialism.

INSIGHT: GHOSTS OF CAPITALISM'S COLONIALISATION

Although the following is also an aspect of the colonialism of capitalism, I opted to separate it from the ones above due to the importance of the process experienced. This process was and is for me the core development of the programme. It is the process of liberation from the shackles of capitalism's colonialisation. Especially colonialism of the mind, intellect, and culture. A gradual, yet significant structure change was introduced to

⁹⁰ Gadamer, 2004. P. 295.

the notion of what and how a community dance performance is planned, organised, and brought to the stage. The notion of what a stage even is, was also changed in the process. When analysing the details of the first community dance performance EXILE, one would rarely be able to tell the difference between it and another performance taking place in the outskirts of Zurich or Vienna. It was a pre-choreographed performance, to western classical orchestra music. The participants were “disadvantaged” / aspiring children. The children did not nag their parents to join the rehearsals. It was adults in schools, community centers, and municipal councils who decided on their participation. The children often did not know why they were being sent and where.

The rehearsal period was highly stressful, and from my perspective, seemed again to only accommodate the needs of adults (Choreographers, trainees and managerial staff), who did not or could not afford to spend too much time with and on them. It seemed everything was being driven by commercial or social considerations rather than the creative experience of and for the children; the welfare of the children was not a first priority. All adults mentioned above were convinced that the value of the work (in this case the performance), was in line with those of capitalism: the better they are as adults, the faster they can deliver results at work / the better the children are, the faster the performance goes on stage. What happened behind the scenes, who got stepped over, stepped out, or crushed in the process, was insignificant. What was brought to the lime light was that which mattered. It was that which was reported on.

With all my good intentions, I am guilty of being the blind and ignorant enabler of that process. Those children were irresponsibly ploughed out of their world, immersed into a



fantastic world of hope and possibility. They worked hard and exerted themselves throughout the tour of the performance, only to be sent back to their realities with nothing but the memory of a once upon a time. The children were incremental to the success of the seminal project EXILE, which facilitated the launch of the full ICM programme. After EXILE, I felt we instrumentalised those children. That was the beginning of the quest for alternatives in structure.

The end result of this quest was a complete change in my approach to art and the value of it. In the fourth and final graduation performance of the trainees, the children participating in the performance were not recruited or decided for. They were children from the villages of Qibya, Budros and Nilin with whom the trainees had been working with for up to three years already. The participating children joined because they enjoyed the process of the classes offered at their schools during the previous school years, and had voluntarily opted to join in their summer vacation. The process was not a stressful one, rather pedagogically supportive of learning and supportive for social cohesion and solidarity. Most importantly the children were not deserted after the performance. Classes in their schools continued like they had before the performance.

The graduation performance did not entail the stress of fundraising for me. Zero funds were allocated to the process. The trainees were given the option to either themselves fundraise for their graduation performance or in-line with the above conclusions work with what is at hand. Indeed, the trainees could relate to my wish to attempt to avoid replicating and hence being shackled by the colonisation of the mind, work force, and even artistic spaces. They opted for working with what was at hand. The performance was thus choreographed as an open-air performance that:

- 1) Did not require a stage.
- 2) Did not require lighting nor light-design.
- 3) Did not require extensive if any props.
- 4) Did not require special costumes.
- 5) Engaged interactively with the audience. (Void of colonial hierarchy / segregation)
- 6) Used local and popular music, familiar to the audience and participants.
- 7) Did not incur any costs except for those of the transportation of children from the villages to the performance venue in Ramallah.
- 8) A partnership with an important community organisation such as the Khalil alSakakini cultural centre was developed by the trainees, as the performance was held in their garden.

“Here the cathartical effect is entirely avoided. We are used to plays in which the characters make the revolution on stage and the spectators in their seats feel themselves to be triumphant revolutionaries. Why make a revolution in reality if we have already made it in the theatre? But that does not happen here: the rehearsal stimulates the practice of the act in reality. Forum theatre, as well as these other forms of a people’s theatre, instead of taking something away

from the spectator, evoke in him a desire to practise in reality the act he has rehearsed in the theatre. The practice of these theatrical forms creates a sort of uneasy sense of incompleteness that seeks fulfilment through real action.”⁹¹

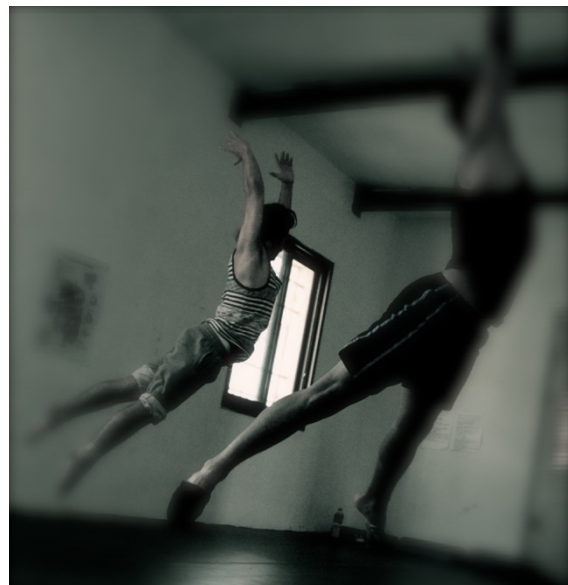
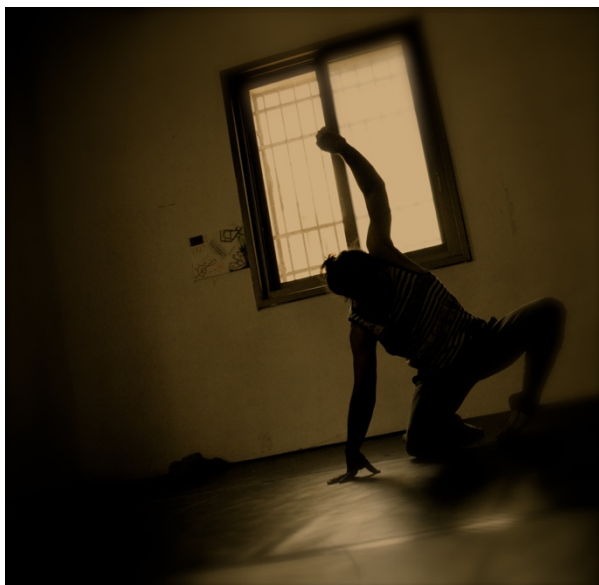
When considering the Palestinian cultural heritage, I feel that especially the final graduation performance resembled indeed what I set out to achieve with ICM. As I wrote in the initial proposal at the end of 2011:

“the current Palestinian cultural scene that is dominated by the glamour of rich voices, eloquent poets, sportive dancers and attractive performers; this scene will be enriched by the cases of those who have been hitherto voiceless. Those performances will combine entertainment with social awareness against community-fragmenting stereotyping and practices, towards consolidation of the culture of peace and tolerance amongst Palestinians.

On a parallel level, ICM provides a unique opportunity for the Palestinian cultural scene to re-define itself; this programme is an open invitation and platform for local contributions towards re-orienting the focus onto ‘Palestine the society’, as the best mirror and advocate to the Palestinian cause. It is a reflection of a society’s strength in facing and tackling its points of weakness.”⁹²

INSIGHT: FUNDING

This is a complex topic. It is the epitome of confusion and uncondusive structures in reference to existing memetic codes (Beck, 2007; Beck & Cowan, 2014; Graves and Lee, 2004). I will not go into details here on the structural and socio-political problematics of development aid, however I will mention two stressful anecdotes.



⁹¹ Boal, 1979. P. 120.

⁹² Nadia Arouri (NarrativeReport-ICM02 page 66)

In March 2013 I was nominated for the King Abdallah Award for Youth Innovations and Achievements. The award would have been fifty thousand dollars. However, the King Abdallah Fund for Development was faced with financial constraints and did not grant any funds at first. Towards the end of 2013 they eventually granted ten thousand dollars.

In the meantime, however, some disparaging elements in society spread rumours that I had received the fifty thousand dollars into my private pocket! Such claims are not unusual amongst resentful NGOs and are quite destructive.

Due to the fact that NGOs are not entitled to play by the same rules as the for-profit sector (Pallotta, 2010), there is an inherent discouragement for sound financial management. For example, if we saved money due to sound management, we were expected to give it back to the donors at the end of the project / fiscal year. Therefore, in cases of small surplus of up to 500 euros, I would advance a down payment to our stationary supplier and use it up in the months to follow.

Here are various technical insights, especially those concerning management and fundraising, that I consider important, and have often observed a lack of, especially among NGOs. These techniques are ones I consider “obvious” and utilised in planning and managing YANTE and ICM programme. Here are some things I believe NGOs need to consider and do:

- 1) Cultivate a relationship on eye level with Donor agencies.** Donor agencies rely equally on NGOs as NGOs rely on Donor agencies. Donor agencies set and have to achieve certain goals, a task they outsource to NGOs, thus it is not a relationship of charity, it is a partnership. Partnerships require transparent communication of needs, challenges, changes, and results. It becomes a hierarchal relationship if NGOs allow it to become one. A common example of that is NGOs fearing to submit a change of budget in fear of rejection. To the contrary, I have had to introduce budget amendments with different donor agencies. Some budget amendments could be submitted and approved by an agency in advance, others were instantaneously communicated by phone / e-mail, i.e. not approved in advance, rather only submitted / reported on retroactively due to urgency. I have never experienced any problem with any of the donors, as those changes were well-founded, clearly communicated, and transparent in operation. Quite importantly these donors remained as recurring donors.
- 2) Define and abide by a set of values.** It is valid to attempt to reformulate / repackage proposals in accordance to the set priorities of donor agencies as long as NGOs do not lose sight of their own priorities, values, and goals. It is in my opinion dangerous when NGOs start tailoring their own activities to fit the whims and trends of politicians and donors. It is a loss of identity that will likely incur long term damages and loss of credibility.

- 3) Aim to become self-sufficient.** NGOs often behave and plan, as if donor resources are infinite. Palestine is a stark example of that. Donor funds were enthusiastically channelled to Palestine post the signing of the Oslo Accords⁹³. The money tap was gradually closed in recent years and more rapidly with the so called “Arab spring”, when many, especially European countries, split the allocated funds among the different countries in the region. Also the USA obviously has historically used the funds as a pressure mechanism to influence politics. So when Palestinians, as in recent months, stood up for their rights in defiance of US diplomatic desires, funds were completely cut. NGOs that relied on an infinite flow of funds, and who had not: a) Diversified their funding resources. b) Networked and partnered with local private sector (public-private partnerships), c) cultivated partnerships and synergies where resources are shared and thus costs reduced, endured a strong blow in recent years.
- 4) Aim to become redundant.** Some NGOs seemed to me to be job-procurement spaces. The priority of the NGO became not how do we empower those we work with to a level that they do not need us, rather how do we ensure that we become indispensable to a community in order to ensure the sustainability of our pay-cheques!
- 5) Think and behave economically.** Just because the money is not coming out of one’s personal pocket as is the case for a corporation owner, does not justify a lack of economical decision making and financial scrutiny amongst NGOs.
- 6) Employ creativity in generating alternative funding methods.** Firstly, I developed a wide network of cooperation, merged and contributed to activities of local actors, and shared in their infrastructures to maximise resource effectiveness and save financial resources for all parties involved. Additionally, I diligently planned and maintained a long process of “lobbying” with private sector companies who were gradually involved into the programme through contributions in kind, or just by maintaining information channels in the first 3 years of the programme. In the last year of the programme I approached those private sector stakeholders and presented to them an alternative funding model, where they would indirectly engage with us in a public-private partnership, hiring ICM graduates within their Corporate Social Responsibility departments (CSR) to operate in 8 Universities and various schools. Since in most countries possibilities are reduced by budget cuts and rising costs, creativity in puzzling alternative resources is indispensable.

⁹³ The Oslo Accords are a set of agreements between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israeli Government. The Accords marked the start of the Oslo peace process aimed at achieving a peace treaty based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and at fulfilling the “right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.”

مؤسسة يانته

YANTE - Youth, Art & Levante

INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP IS CULTIVATING A LEARNING ORGANISATION

Last but not least here are a few learnings I took away as a director and leader. A leader has “the ability to be tough and tender, excited and scared, brave and afraid - all in the same moment. It’s showing up in our vulnerability and courage, being both fierce and kind.”⁹⁴

It goes of course without saying, that someone who leads is not always a leader. I can say with confidence that in this age of fast innovation and changes, cultivating a learning organisation (Senge, 2010) and space is a prerequisite for leadership. Leadership is bestowed rather than taken. Someone can lead a team for a project, they are then technically a manager, but they may or may not have attributes of a leader. People follow a manager because it is required of their employment, they respond to the role; they engage with a leader because they trust and are inspired by the person. In war for example soldiers have to obey the prescribed hierarchy but they follow the soldier they have designated.

For myself these public works taught me about recovering leadership of myself through disentangling the personal and professional so that they could be aligned more closely. They taught me that leadership is bestowed and earned through leading with others and that I have yet to develop more insightful leadership. It is a maturing process.

I am confident that I will revisit this section in the future. The more I try to write this, the more I realise, not only have I learned from working with a variety of people, voices and languages which I would like to share, but also that I need to take the time to translate my experiences on Paper, experiment with them, and; create possibly a “viable framework” out of them: a framework that is not static but alive. A leadership of self that invites disciplines ranging from science to art in a relationship of cross-pollination. An emergent framework that transcends generations, theories, methods and tools. It is a work in progress which this critique has moved along considerably.

Here I will present what I would like to later on in my career develop into a tensegrity⁹⁵ framework of my findings. It is a flexible framework. IT CAN MOVE!

Cultivating a learning organisation or ecosystem “is not to develop a procedure of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place.”⁹⁶ In my opinion and experience it requires three essential components, which I have previously introduced as the themes of this critique of my works and career. These I have termed as 1) Growth (Curiosity & Liberation), 2) Freedom (Hope & Agency), and 3) Respect (Compassion/Solidarity & Dialogue). I have identified these terms earlier on in this critique. Here I will elaborate on why I believe these components are essential, my understanding of their manifestation, and some of the tools and techniques I found

⁹⁴ Brown, 2017. P. 155.

⁹⁵ the characteristic property of a stable three-dimensional structure consisting of members under tension that are contiguous and members under compression that are not.

⁹⁶ Gadamer, 2004. P. 295.

helpful in each, as well as attempt to demonstrate their complex intertwinement and relationships of cross-pollination.

This framework is both a space and a place, because any can feel they belong in it. These ideas are inclusive. They are not paradigms. It is a framework of how we interconnect and learn from complexity and the various tools that can inhabit this space.

“In our work with executives we have found that true renewal relies on three key elements... The first element is mindfulness, or living in a state of full, conscious awareness of one’s whole self, other people, and the context in which we live and work... The second element, hope, enables us to believe that the future we envision is attainable, and to move toward our visions and goals while inspiring others toward those goals as well. When we experience the third critical element for renewal, compassion, we understand people’s wants and needs and feel motivated to act on our feelings.”⁹⁷

INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT STATUS, TITLES AND POWER OVER PEOPLE

Leadership is accountability for recognising the potential in people and ideas and developing that potential. I often said to the I CAN MOVE trainees that what would make me a good leader / teacher / instructor is if they become better at the tasks at hand than I am and are capable of not only replacing me, but doing a better job while at it. This is real leadership - real sustainability. However, for that to happen, it was important that the trainees had a Space to learn, play, and emancipate. I will elaborate more on this at the end of this chapter.



⁹⁷ Boyatzis et al., 2005. P. 20.

There are many self-help books on leadership on the market, some of which are best sellers. Their content in my experience is not necessarily false, rather reductionist and plagued by the dichotomies of binaries. For example, many books promote the notion of a humble leader, which is an oxymoron. A leader needs to have the confidence and courage to act in critical incidents, like the accident I mention above. It is not humble to lead the team through that difficult time. At the same time, it is humble to seek a sparring partner in one of my mentors or ask for advice in such a critical situation.

“We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because “we” are of the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming. The separation of epistemology from ontology is a reverberation of a metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse.”⁹⁸

Having leadership of self does not rely on binary language. When asked by an employee about something outside of one’s knowledge, responding as a leader with “I do not know, let me look into it and get back to you”, or “I do not know, but I will find out” can be considered humble, but that would be reductionist, because it can also be courageous, curious, and if incongruent its even instrumental and manipulative! It is reductionist and arrogant of us to put a label on it.

INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP IS NON-BINARY

Leadership of self is first and foremost about being human. It might sound esoteric, or one would ask but what is the definition of being human. Uncertainty is not something we should be worried about (see complexity). Certainty leads us to expectations, metrics, and the need to control everything, which in my experience was counterproductive.

“Our prevailing system of management has destroyed our people. People are born with intrinsic motivation, self-respect, dignity, curiosity to learn, joy in learning. The forces of destruction begin with toddlers—a prize for the best Halloween costume, grades in school, gold stars—and on up through the university. On the job, people, teams, and divisions are ranked, reward for the top, punishment for the bottom. Management by Objectives, quotas, incentive pay, business plans, put together separately, division by division, cause further loss, unknown and unknowable.” W. Edwards Deming⁹⁹

INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP OF SELF IS A SHIFT IN POWER PARADIGMS

As leaders we can individually and collectively reflect on the power paradigms that

⁹⁸ Barad, 2003. P. 829

⁹⁹ Senge, 2010. P. 6.

shaped, moulded and caged us. Among other things leadership of self is a gradual dismantling of the dichotomies of us and them. It is a gradual liberation from the duality and the binary of right and wrong. It is a gradual emancipation away from labels of good and bad towards “is”.

Before elaborating on the above, it is important for me to give thanks to my mentors, especially my sister Natasha. They contributed significantly to my growth process from a manager into a leader. They helped me see my blind spots¹⁰⁰, and recognise my mental model. It is therefore that with great confidence I dare say that leadership of self and learning organisations equally require a culture and level of authentic communication that enables us to give and receive feedback whole heartedly.

Our “mental models” determine not only how we make sense of the world, but how we take action. Harvard’s Chris Argyris... puts it this way: “Although people do not [always] behave congruently with their espoused theories [what they say], they do behave congruently with their theories-in-use [their mental models].”¹⁰¹ ...Why are mental models so powerful in affecting what we do? In part, because they affect what we see. Two people with different mental models can observe the same event and describe it differently, because they’ve looked at different details and made different interpretations... As Albert Einstein once wrote, “Our theories determine what we measure.”¹⁰²



¹⁰⁰ Luft, 1969.

¹⁰¹ Argyris, 1982. Cited in Senge, 2010. P. 175.

¹⁰² Kuhn, 1970, cited in Senge, 2010. P. 175.

My mentors helped me discern that I sometimes conflated observations and interpretations (Rosenberg, 2003). With integrity, compassion and cohesion they interrogated my perception traps, confirmation bias, Dunning-Kruger, or even cognitive dissonance. We were a great Team; they helped me acknowledge my shortcomings, and I in turn helped the trainees see their shortcomings. I transferred their integrity, compassion and cohesion on to the trainees. I often asked the trainees to try to describe the situation, as if it was a detailed play script, down to the smallest detail. It was like a line of credit that once filled had to be passed on, because that is how it is filled up again and again.

INSIGHT: EVOLVING MY BEHAVIOURS WAS AN OSCILLATION BETWEEN EXTREMES

I do not know if this negotiation process I had with myself applies to everyone, or if it was distinctive to my growth process. I tend to oscillate from one extreme, rebelling to the other extreme – back and forth, until I find the non-binary golden middle that is at neither extreme.

In my experience learning organisations are ones that manage the extremely difficult paradigm shift from a paradigm of extremes, from a paradigm of right and wrong, from a paradigm of righteousness, from a paradigm of missionary acts, towards a paradigm of openness. So that these oscillations are reduced to a minimum.

Anyone who knows me, definitely either knows or has heard me say “patience is not one of my merits.” I am equally impatient with myself. So as much as I wish it was different, I had to often remind myself for my sake and for the sake of others, that a process of growth or change is a slow and gradual process. That is why it is called a process.

For us as individuals and equally for organisations I believe paradigm shifts cannot be dictated top-down; they are a gradual bottom-up change process. Clare Graves’ Spiral dynamics helped me understand the phases of such a process. He calls these phases cultural codes: to understand the value and importance of every culture code, its merits and its necessity for certain time periods, but also and quite importantly to understand the inevitability and significance of a gradual process of change along those culture codes. This helped me to become genuinely respectful.

Respect is about embracing diversity and not attempting to mould the trainees into a clone. Respect is about acknowledging and working with the strengths of the trainees. As stated, in the mission statement of YANTE, looking back now the words are more aspirational than reality, more an intention which is not yet a deed:

Our vision is to see people of all ages and social parameters participating in various art projects, within and for communities. Participants express themselves while believing that the uniqueness of an individual lays in the

diversity of the whole. They gradually build a consensus through a bottom-up process, and agree that a rich culture is one nourished by all social strata.¹⁰³

Reading about Clare Graves work on memetic codes and Spiral Dynamics in Beck (2017) helped me develop a more nuanced understanding of the experiences I had with the trainees. I realised that that there is no such thing as one culture, just because they are all Palestinians of a similar age. Where some were at home in more technology-based styles of management, able to deliver reports, use e-mails, and produce excel sheets, others were at home talking to villagers, forging connections, resolving conflicts and building communities. It felt indeed that they lived in differing memetic phases. (Beck 2007; Beck and Cowan, 2014). Through the process, it became evident to me, that I only need to realise how difficult it is to change myself to understand how futile it is to try to change the trainees. Therefore, it was important for me to learn to work with variety and a range of skills instead of using everyone's energy to be the same.

Yet again, I realized how reductionist the management advice of “putting people's strength to work” is. Because it does not address the essential notion of how to find out what these strengths are in the first place. It became evident to me that an appreciative approach to the work environment and those in it, has to be combined with the skill to know and most importantly ask what peoples' strength are and how they can be harnessed; not only an appreciation of what people can and cannot do, but what they love to or feel reluctant to do, and equally in what would they like to be developed.

Excursion: Failure of Development Aid. I will not elaborate on this topic further than the above; however, it was inevitable to mention it briefly. One of the main failures of development aid in my opinion is its righteous approach and regular attempt to induce a non-organic culture change from outside across various culture codes at once, while entirely ignoring the essentiality of taking one step at a time. Development aid would be



¹⁰³ <http://www.yante-icanmove.org/about-2/>

wise to shift to being “in the business of trying to create the structures, the habitats... that will naturally produce the environments for the self-organising nonlinear jumps to occur in humans.”¹⁰⁴

INSIGHT: MENTORING IS A DANCE OF SHAPING AND BEING SHAPED

Guiding and mentoring the trainees was just as much a process of learning from them. It was leadership of self by being human. Or maybe humanly flawed. I found myself often questioning whether my personal issues were being triggered by their behaviours - both in their awareness and out of their awareness - and was I doing the same to them? Do they remind me of myself? Are they behaving in ways that trigger power struggles for me? Can I remain interested. Am I being compromised by my own interests, pains, needs, fears and experiences?

Leadership is about maturity, which for Piaget “is a matter of “decentering” oneself: of being able to see one’s own interests or perspective as simply one part of a much larger totality not intrinsically more important than any other.”¹⁰⁵

In some cases, I felt I am compromised as a mentor. Certain similarities or behaviours triggered visceral reactions in me. I found it important to maintain honesty with the person involved about the place of reflexivity I found myself in. With time I could also be OK with being triggered (Berne, 2010; Harris, 2011; Stewart and Joines, 2012).

“Because in a world that wants us to walk around as representatives of ourselves, being yourself can be a revolutionary act.”¹⁰⁶

These were positions of vulnerability for me (Senge, 2015; Brown 2017; Beck 2007; Beck and Cowan, 2014). People want a leader to be human and to be able to change clothes for each occasion without fundamentally changing the core of who they are¹⁰⁷. When we are vulnerable, we put down our masks, we do not play roles and games (Goffman, 2007).

“Vulnerability is a very important element in leadership... The truth is that your flaws are there, no matter what you want to say, and if you try to hide them from people’s perceptions, it destroys your ability to be consistent. If you don’t have a fundamental commitment to the truth and telling the truth, you can’t lead. And telling the truth is so much more difficult than just ‘not lying.’¹⁰⁸
Fluor and former Shell Oil CEO Phil Carroll

¹⁰⁴ Beck, 2007, 3:01:35 – 3:01:58.

¹⁰⁵ Graeber, 2001. P. 64.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OijH4UAqGD8> TED talk; Get comfortable with being uncomfortable minute 9:25 – 9:31.

¹⁰⁷ <https://academicjournals.org/journal/IISA/article-full-text/144926455266>

¹⁰⁸ Senge, 2014. P. 248.

In my experience with my colleagues, the trainees and my mentors being vulnerable forged trust. It diffused the urge of making assumptions about the incongruence in behaviour. It invites an understanding instead of blaming of the other. It invites cohesion and support of each other. Vulnerability for me is an important shift in power paradigms, it is a “radical truth”.

“I’ve read books. They lie beautifully, with inspiration, stirring you up. There are lies that console, that reconcile a person to his lot. Lies find an excuse for the weight that smashed the worker’s arm; lies blame a man for starving to death. I know your lies! Only those who are faint-hearted or live at other people’s expense have need of lies. Some people are supported by lies, others hide behind them. But the person who is his own boss – the person who is independent and doesn’t suck other people’s blood – what need has he of lies? Lies are the religion of slaves and bosses! Truth is the god of the free man!”¹⁰⁹
Gorky, *The Lower Depths*, Act 4

INSIGHT: LEADERSHIP OF SELF IS FIRST AND FOREMOST ABOUT BEING HUMAN

Leadership of self is about being human, and humans are among other things vulnerable. At the outset, being 24 and female, I projected superhuman characteristics, which evidently discouraged others from taking responsibility and that inevitably meant at some point discouraging them from trying. Without trial and error there is no learning. Without learning there is not growth. That is where I changed my behaviours, because I realised a culture where mistakes are permitted, while upholding accountability, is a corner stone for not only organisational survival in our time but also the growth to which I was aspiring.

It was important for me throughout I CAN MOVE to cultivate a spirit of curiosity and research. Studying arts in Austria I was horrified about the notion that Knowledge is just



¹⁰⁹ <http://www.socialiststories.com/liberate/The%20Lower%20Depths%20-%20Gorky.pdf>

textbooks and perceived monopoly or ivory towers of academia. I perceived a lack of generating knowledge instead I saw replicating knowledge. generating knowledge requires daring to defy, daring to think and act differently. It seemed to me that it was about reciting text books, instead of making connections (Vester, 2015). In designing and managing I CAN MOVE I emphasised the Knowledge and learning in and through practice (Nicoloni, 2013). As dancers, of course that included understanding and tapping into our own physical, corporeal wisdom. I wanted to cultivate a culture of dialogue (Senge, 2010; Bohm, 2013) and discourse.

“An innovative group that can develop the capacity to continually test their own thinking is less likely to confuse confidence with certainty than one that does not. Nurturing reflective openness also represents an important strategy for leaders.”¹¹⁰

I was privileged to observe how this curiosity of questioning critically and dialectically was an Enabling structure for some of the trainees. It helped them seek mastery. They had drive, self-discipline, and a laser focus on the process of learning (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009; McDermott et al., 2006).

“People with a high level of personal mastery live in a continual learning mode. They never “arrive.” Sometimes, language, such as the term “personal mastery,” creates a misleading sense of definiteness, of black and white. But personal mastery is not something you possess. It is a process. It is a lifelong discipline. People with a high level of personal mastery are acutely aware of their ignorance, their incompetence, their growth areas. And they are deeply self-confident. Paradoxical? Only for those who do not see that “the journey is the reward.””¹¹¹

INSIGHT: KNOWING MY VALUE

This is definitely a very individual and personal topic. In my case, cultivating a healthy self-esteem required dealing with Impostor Syndrome and learning to say NO to both people and colonialising structures.

a) Impostor Syndrome. The words of Boyatzis & Mckee 2005 could not possibly describe my experience better: “People who excel at school, and then in the workplace, often get a tremendous amount of positive feedback—more, maybe, than they think they deserve. Leaders may find themselves waiting for the other shoe to drop, thinking that somehow people will figure out that they are really not all that great and the game will be over.”¹¹² I still grapple day in and day out in my

¹¹⁰ Senge, 2014. P. 328.

¹¹¹ Senge, 2010. P. 142.

¹¹² Boyatzis et al., 2005. P. 137.

work space with praise and equally the lack thereof. My first instinctive reaction when I hear praise is ‘is this person trying to manipulate me into something?’ Or “Do they really mean this?” Or ‘Are they fishing for complements’ Or ‘Who are they to judge me?’ ... It takes me a lot of effort not to panic, nor respond. It takes presence (Brown, 2017 & 2018; Senge, 2010; Goleman, 2012) and mindfulness (Boyatzis & Mckee, 2005; Senge 2014; Hanh, 2016) to just to smile, let the acknowledgement brush over me and say thank you.

b) Learning to say NO. As a leader it was important for me to learn to say no. To refuse invitations to conferences, such as those of the UNAoC (United Nations Alliance of Civilisations) because I realised cost – benefit ratio was clearly not paying out. I also learnt that I do not need to pick up the phone every time it rings. I can simply call back at my convenience. I definitely do not need to answer e-mails on the spot, not even those of donors. I can wait and respond at my convenience and when I have had enough time to also process the content not only intellectually, but also emotionally in some cases.

“It is an inappropriate use of love and care to use love and care to get something done.” David Allen¹¹³

INSIGHT: LETTING GO

Quite importantly empowerment is about our ability as leaders to let go, step back and give space for others to lead, even if they do it differently to how we would have done it. As an example of that, in semester 6 Building up on the management modules of the previous semester and following our aim at graduating community dance trainers and art practitioners, who are capable of leading a community dance movement independent



¹¹³ CEO David Allen company. Cited in Robertson, 2015. P. 199.

of YANTE, the management module of this semester provided the trainees with an outside perspective on professional administrative practices, which rather slowly, but gradually enabled the trainees to gain a better understanding of the role and decisions taken by the management and artistic direction of the programme.

As an enhancement of the above, after launching the semester in September 2014 I did not travel to Palestine again during the entire semester. My absence contributed to making the conditions for those on the ground to claim more responsibility. This led to various successes amongst the trainees, an important one of which was the DVD performance tour organised, implemented and reported on by the ICM trainees Hala Sweidan and Asef Masalmeh.

SUMMING UP INSIGHTS: CONTRIBUTIONS TO LEADERSHIP THEORY AND PRACTICE

The above are insights I have gained from deeply reflecting on my works and disentangling and reforming the personal, the social, the political and the universal. Senge (2010) describes a learning organisation as one which develops its members and supports sustained transformation and in which leadership, according to Senge and with which I agree, is about creating new realities. For me it is also about creating a culture of possibilities. If I were to select the overarching insight which arose out of this critical engagement with my practice and the artefacts of my knowledge – and which is before I had ever read Senge’s work – that is both useful beyond my own practice and is, in my opinion, a key indicator of success towards developing a learning organisation, it would be

leadership of self that does not rely on **contextual and situational binary thought or language** and is therefore able to harness this awareness to encourage dialogue and to bridge and translate neutrally in **the in-between**.

- 1) Leadership of self regularly pushes oneself into the space of critical reflection which I would consider as the most important prerequisite for transformational growth.
- 2) The role of a leader is to mediate between and ensure the flow of processes between the different elements of the ecosystem. With increasingly complex ecosystems more in-betweenists, more multipotentialites will be needed to hover over those places, and camouflage in those spaces to cross pollinate, to reach across and build bridges between silos.
- 3) Leadership of self is a gradual dismantling of the dichotomies of us and them. It is a gradual liberation from the duality and the binary of right and wrong. It is a gradual emancipation away from labels of good and bad towards “is”. A non-binary leadership of self is one that intrinsically embraces difference, thus mediates between people of varying ideological, cultural and professional backgrounds. It is a shift in power paradigms.

I have arrived at this distillation of leadership through lived experience, which is now- in the form of knowledge - consciously informing my approach to my current role and to my life.



Conclusion

Looking at it now, I see this work, the critique - itself is my graphy of the autoethnography. The auto is my critique of self through an exploration of my ontology which then enabled me to explore what I have shaped and what has shaped me in the works which I helped bring into being in challenging contexts which are the complexities of my 'ethno'. I have enjoyed articulating my adaptability in bricolage, understanding my identity and experience with oppression in intersectionality, externalising the knowledge I gathered in my experiences without corrupting or compromising it in Practice Theory, while gaining confidence as a native to complexity in the value of my intellect and intuition. Last but not least Critical Theory has helped me navigate the difficult process of questioning power structures and paradigms; a changing from within by making the hidden structures visible. I described Critical Theory earlier in the work as my dad, because up into old age he was able to challenge his own very heavily embedded cultural paradigms and beliefs.

This critique has been nothing short of an excruciating journey. A journey of reckoning. A journey of placing my life, feelings, numbness, triumphs, and traumas under the microscope. The more excruciating it was, the further we zoomed in, untangling distortions and peeling off the many layers of oppression as

a woman

a Palestinian woman

a secular Palestinian woman

a daring secular Palestinian woman

a daring sexual secular Palestinian woman

a creative daring sexual secular Palestinian woman

a defiant creative daring sexual secular Palestinian woman

a smart defiant creative daring sexual secular Palestinian woman

a liberal smart defiant creative daring sexual secular Palestinian woman

I have been a victim of Israeli occupation, western colonialism, white male dominance, sectarianism, racism and what I lately realised in and through the process of this doctorate, child grooming. I was groomed by a visiting music teacher. The reason I mention this here is because it is still fresh and unformed for me. However, it was important for me to mention it as one of the power structures influencing my path, because I have been brought up independent, and to challenge structures and paradigms. Even as a so called reflected and critical person, if it took 16 years and such a critical doctoral process for me to realise my experience was not a "significant relationship" but insidious and invidious "child grooming", then I wonder how hard it must be for many

others. Grooming is rampant in many sectors of society and in the professional world, especially in the artistic sector where young aspiring people are particularly vulnerable to predators. Although much is being done, we need to do more to safeguard children and, in the arts sector, this needs to be done explicitly. Safe spaces of mind and body need to be created so that children can speak without fear of reprisals, that the shame is in the perpetrator not the child. However, it is by far insufficient. As a society we need to introduce more widespread awareness measures with and for children, so that they can recognise grooming as it happens.

I have fought hard not to admit my victimhood to myself. I resisted the many small nudges, until I broke and surrendered. I coped by painting a picture of myself as the victor, the one who can survive anything. I did not only paint the picture, I impersonated the role. I was it. I am it. Or was I it? I do not know.

The reason I fought to admit victimhood, is because I was plagued by binaries. Binary thinking is an either / or: either I am a victim, or I am a victor - both cannot coincide. I saw myself working the system, growing through and because of oppression (*ad astra per aspera*), succeeding and claiming recognition. Through this critique it has become clear to me that the one probably needs the other. Victim and victor coexist and coincide in a dance of resilience, a dance of life.

As Arundhati Roy said; you cannot unsee after you see. I submit this critique and embark on a new journey. With eyes wide open.

As evident in the insights I have gained above, I gradually came to realise that I have been unknowingly promoting colonial paradigms. Despite the nudges and changes that I introduced towards un-colonising the work, the more I changed and introduced, the more I understood the complexity of colonialism and capitalism's colonialisation especially of the mind, intellect, and culture and how deeply entrenched it was in my upbringing, thinking, othering and behavioural patterns. Evidently, I needed to take a step back and pursue a reflection process. Considering the complex structures of development aid, and the promise I had made to the trainees, that they will receive 4-years of comprehensive training, I brought the programme to a conclusion, before taking a step back to reflect and contemplate.



I chose to take a distance from the work in order to on the one hand pursue this reflection process and on the other because I felt lonely. I also could not disregard my unfulfilled potential and desires. As director I could create spaces (for others), but at some point, I did not have the time or resources to prepare a Workshop or Seminar, i.e. to shape the details of the spaces I created. I became a full-time manager. 90% of my time was spent between managing people, fundraising and controlling. In the last 2 years where the individual mentorship sessions were introduced, the content work reached maybe 20%.

Working now within the private sector, I can still be involved with the public sector and non-profit organisations and initiatives with the advantage of not having to earn a living out of the non-profit work – a financial and survival dependency that is bound to cause a blind spot at some point or another.

A question that I will always ask myself is, have I inflicted on others, what has been inflicted upon me? I stumbled upon the below list published by RISE in 2016, and it made me question my ethics and intentions.

“10 things you need to consider if you are an artist – not of the refugee and asylum seeker community – looking to work with our community.

There has been a huge influx of artists approaching us in order to find participants for their next project. The artist often claims to want to show ‘the human side of the story’ through a false sense of neutrality and limited understanding of their own bias, privilege and frameworks.

1. Process not product. *We are not a resource to feed into your next artistic project. You may be talented at your particular craft but do not assume that this automatically translates to an ethical, responsible and self-determining process. Understand community cultural development methodology but also understand that it is not a full-proof methodology. Who and what institutions are benefiting from the exchange?*

2. Critically interrogate your intention. *Our struggle is not an opportunity, or our bodies’ a currency, by which to build your career. Rather than merely focusing on the ‘other’ (‘where do I find refugees’.. etc) Subject your own intention to critical, reflexive analysis. What is your motivation to work with this particular subject matter? Why at this particular time?*

3. Realise your own privilege. *What biases and intentions, even if you consider these ‘good’ intentions, do you carry with you? What social positionality (and power) do you bring to the space? Know how much space you take up. Know when to step back.*

4. Participation is not always progressive or empowering. *Your project may have elements of participation but know how this can just as easily be limiting, tokenistic and condescending. Your demands on our community sharing our*

stories may be just as easily disempowering. What frameworks have you already imposed on participation? What power dynamics are you reinforcing with such a framework? What relationships are you creating (eg. informant vs expert, enunciated vs enunciator)

5. Presentation vs representation. *Know the difference!*

6. It is not a safe-space just because you say it is. *This requires long term grass-roots work, solidarity and commitment.*

7. Do not expect us to be grateful. *We are not your next interesting arts project. Our community are not sitting waiting for our struggle to be acknowledged by your individual consciousness nor highlighted through your art practice.*

8. Do not reduce us to an issue. *We are whole humans with various experiences, knowledge and skills. We can speak on many things; do not reduce us to one narrative.*

9. Do your research. *Know the solidarity work already being done. Know the nuanced differences between organizations and projects. Just because we may work with the same community doesn't mean we work in the same way.*

10. Art is not neutral. *Our community has been politicized and any art work done with/by us is inherently political. If you wish to build with our community know that your artistic practice cannot be neutral.”¹¹⁴*

Despite the fact, that when going through the list, I could objectively demonstrate that my work does not fall into the above descriptions, it also did not completely “not fall” into the



¹¹⁴ October 5, 2015, By Tania Canas, RISE Arts Director / Member <http://riserefugee.org/10-things-you-need-to-consider-if-you-are-an-artist-not-of-the-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-community-looking-to-work-with-our-community/> (26.05.2016)

above descriptions. To start with, I am not an “outsider”, yet I am not entirely and insider either, because I could always leave and go back to Vienna. The intention was definitely not to “build my career”, but it definitely was as I mentioned above, one where I, in a position of privilege, felt I could help “develop” Palestine. A notion entrenched in paradigms of power.

“as long as we have a certain kind of life conditions, then we think that we can simply take people out of those life conditions and for a summer camp or short term retreat expose them to more complex thinking in order to get them encouraged, but then send them back to the same life conditions, the same jungle inner city that produced the problem. we are really fooling ourself, if we think that is going to hold very long.”¹¹⁵

In retrospect I see the moral dilemma in introducing interim spaces, then leaving, without changing the environment. For example, during the Performances the participants gained a voice. They could express themselves and be heard. The performances helped the participants translate themselves, their identity, but had to later on go back to their original environments where they could not, or at least grappled to incorporate these experiences.

“I’ve argued that systems of categories, or knowledge, are really just one side of a system of action; that society is therefore in a sense always an active project or set of projects; that value is the way actions become meaningful to the actors by being placed in some larger social whole, real or imaginary.”¹¹⁶

Beck (2007) describes it as the Gamma trap. It is the sense of having an epiphany. The world opening and sudden insight emerging: a clarity for each of what they want and need. But knowing they cannot get there. They are blocked. A sense of being trapped in reality. That is where self-destructive behaviours occur – either self-sabotage or sabotage of the surrounding system or organisation.

At the same time, I still acknowledge the important of imagination. As Albert Einstein said “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution. It is, strictly speaking, a real factor in scientific research.” The experience enables participants to imagine, to envision a new reality. As per Graeber and Frankl above, imagination is essential for hope, and for the process of being the change.

“You cannot create a new culture. You can immerse yourself in studying a culture (your own, or someone else’s) until you understand it. Then you can propose new values, introduce new ways of doing things, and articulate new governing ideas. Over time, these actions will set the stage for new behavior. If people who adopt that new behavior feel that it helps them do better, they may try it again, and after many trials, taking as long as five or ten years, the

¹¹⁵ Beck, 2007. 1:05:13 – 1:05:39.

¹¹⁶ Graeber, 2001. P. 254.

organizational culture may embody a different set of assumptions, and a different way of looking at things, than it did before. Even then, you haven't changed the culture; you've set the stage for the culture to evolve."¹¹⁷

Setting the stage requires the ability to visualise.

"like good intentions, positive affirmations are not enough in and of themselves. They must be supported by two other steps: our ability to visualize the possibilities for dealing with the situation at hand resulting from our choice of attitude and, importantly, our passion for taking the action required to actualize those possibilities."¹¹⁸

At the end of this critique I am starting to realise the complexity of the loneliness I feel. Even if I stepped down from being a "leader" of an organisation partly because I recognise it is a position of loneliness, I cannot unlearn the growth I worked hard for in order to achieve leadership of self. Leadership of self is analogous with the Adult Ego State (A) in Eric Byrne's Transactional Analysis. Being an Adult means acting responsibly, and taking responsibility, it means clarity in one's values and positions. It is the courage to call things by their name while remaining tentative. It is embracing conflict on the path to harmony. These qualities however can be projected on as being parental (P). A parent does not need our support or cohesion, whereas a child (C) does. If anything wrong happens, we hold the parent responsible - definitely not the child. We blame the parent, not the child.

Having a strong personality and a high sense of urgency (P) combined with being responsible (A) and decisive (A) meant I am still easily a "punching bag". I am an easy target for blame. Whether at work, with friends, or with family we tend to take advantage of someone's strong position. We live in a culture where if a capable person is juggling twelve balls and drops one of them (A), we are oblivious and blame them for dropping the ball: blame them for not fulfilling our projection on them as being perfect (P). Whereas if an incapable person juggling three balls drops one of them (C), we show them our support and understanding because they fulfilled our projection of them (C) and then we hand the ball they dropped to the person juggling the twelve!

According to Transactional Analysis, to solve such a pattern, I would have to come out of the parental, which I tend to fall into when feeling pushed into a corner, and mediate so that everyone involved becomes an adult. A task that sounds clear cut and straight forward in theory, however is not only difficult in real life, but most importantly raises issues of responsibility. Am I responsible for others? I have a tendency to say no, yet I guess it depends on the specific role and constellation. It is something I am currently exploring and hope to gain insight on.

When considering the above, I cannot help but think of my father. As children, after asking him a question, we would often pantomime pulling a rope out of his mouth, as he would

¹¹⁷ Senge, 2014. P. 334 - 335.

¹¹⁸ Pattakos, 2010. P. 32.

take what seemed to be a long time to respond. Looking at his face while awaiting the response felt like he is having a dialectic dialogue in his head on the potentiality of every word that could come out of his mouth and the phrasing. I have yet to meet someone who weighed down his words, acknowledged their importance and took responsibility for his responses the way he did (Frankl, 1985). I miss him. I miss him even more in those moment where I experience authority figures who could benefit dearly and find their leadership in such a skill, serenity, and the sovereignty in bearing the silence **in-between**.

In April 2015, towards the end of the intensive 3-week trip to Sweden with the trainees, realising the 7th and pre-final semester was coming to an end, I devised an artistic farewell ritual to initiate a gradual disentanglement and separation process till the end of the programme. I took the time and space to prepare the process, and weigh my words. The energy released by the ritual was an immense combination of grief, validation and release.

“The spectator does not delegate power to the characters to think in his place, although he continues to delegate power to them to act in his place. The experience is revealing on the level of consciousness, but not globally on the level of the action. Dramatic action throws light upon real action. The spectacle is a preparation for action. The *poetics of the oppressed* is essentially the poetics of liberation: the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters either to think or to act in his place. The spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself! Theatre is action! Perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution!”¹¹⁹

In the end it is only for time to tell: has I CAN MOVE produced *Agents of Change*?



¹¹⁹ Boal, 1979. P.135.

The Great Revolution

The great revolution
Always seems to wait
Just around the corner

For some

Arrives
(quietly enough)

For others
Revolutions
On the whole
Are private things¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Less than Complete: poems by Philip Padfield, British hostage shot in Beirut 1986. Private publication. Available at katemag@hotmail.co.uk

References

- Ajayi, L. (2016). *I'm Judging You*. New York City: Henry Holt and Co.
- Argyris, C. (1982). *Reasoning, learning, and action: Individual and Organizational*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Arouri, N. (2011). *PALESTINE Culture Between the 3 P's: Past, Present, and Politics*. Unpublished. Master Thesis submitted at the University of Vienna, 2011.
- Aspinwall, L. and Staudinger, U. (2002). *A Psychology of human strengths*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(3), pp.801-831.
- Beck, Don. (2007). *Spiral Dynamics Integral*. Audible. Sounds True.
©2006 Don Beck (P)2007 Sounds True <https://adbl.co/2G6jsmp>
- Beck, D. and Cowan, C. (2014). *Spiral dynamics*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Berne, E. (2010). *Games people play*. London: Penguin.
- Bettelheim, B. (1986). *Informed heart*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.
- Boal, A., McBride, C. and McBride, M. (1979). *Theatre of the oppressed*. London: Pluto Press.
- Bohm, D. (2013). *On dialogue*. London: Routledge.
- Boulton, J., Allen, P. and Bowman, C. (2015). *Embracing complexity*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boyatzis, R. and McKee, A. (2005). *Resonant leadership*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Bronner, S. (2011). *Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction (Very short introductions)*. Oxford University Press.
- Brook, P. (2008). *The empty space*. London: Penguin Books.
- Brown, B. (2016). *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Brown, B. (2017). *Braving the wilderness*. New York: Random House Publishing Group.
- Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to lead*. New York: Random House.

- Calhoun, L., Tedeschi, R. and Amir, M. (2006). *Handbook of posttraumatic growth*. 1st ed. London: Routledge.
- Crenshaw, K. (2019). *On intersectionality*. New York: The New Press.
- Christensen, C., Horn, M. and Johnson, C. (2016). *Disrupting class*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2009). *Flow*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Darder, A. (2015). *Freire and education*. New York: Routledge.
- Eboch, M. (2019). *Intersectionality and identity politics*. 1st ed. Farmington Hills: Greenhaven Press.
- Edmondson, A. (2018). *Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley & Sons Canada, Limited, John.
- Frankl, V. (1985). *Man's search for meaning*. New York: Simon and Schuster
- Frankl, V. (2011). *Man's search for ultimate meaning*. London: Rider.
- Freire, P. (2017). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin Random House UK.
- Faßmann, H., Reinprecht, C., Schellenbacher, J. and Dahlvik, J. (2016). *Migration und Integration - wissenschaftliche Perspektiven aus Österreich*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Gadamer, H., Weinsheimer, J. and Marshall, D. (2004). *Truth and method*. London: Continuum.
- Gadotti, M. (1999). *Pedagogy of praxis*. Boulder, Colo.: NetLibrary, Inc.
- Galeano, E., Belfrage, C. and Schafer, M. (1992). *The book of embraces*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Gendlin, E. (2010). *Focusing*. New York: Random House.
- Gibran, K. (2015). *The Prophet* (Wisehouse Classics Edition). [S.l.]: Wisehouse Classics.
- Goffman, E. (2007). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: Penguin Books.
- Goleman, D. (2012). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York City: Random House Publishing Group.
- Graeber, D. (2001). *Toward an anthropological theory of value*. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave.

- Grant, C. and Zwier, E. (2014). *Intersectionality and urban education*. Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing Inc.
- Graves, C. and Lee, W. (2004). *Levels of human existence*. Santa Barbara: ECLET Publ.
- Groopman, J. (2005). *The anatomy of hope*. New York: Random House.
- Halquist, D. and Musanti, S. (2010). Critical incidents and reflection: turning points that challenge the researcher and create opportunities for knowing. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(4), pp.449-461.
- Hanh, T. (2016). *The miracle of mindfulness, gift edition*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.
- Harari, Y. (2017). *Homo Deus*. 1st ed. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Harris, T. (2011). *I'm Ok, You're Ok*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Hegel, G. (2018). *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*. Norderstedt: Books on Demand.
- Inan, I., Watson, L., Whitcomb, D. and Yigit, S. (2018). *The Moral Psychology of Curiosity*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Jack, D. and Ali, A. (2010). *Silencing the self across cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kant, I. (2017). *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*. East Sussex: Delphi Classics.
- Kaschl, E. (2003). *Dance and authenticity in Israel and Palestine*. Leiden: Brill.
- Kincheloe, J. and Berry, K. (2007). *Rigour and Complexity in Educational Research*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill International (UK) Ltd.
- Kolb, D. (2014). *Experiential learning*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Korzybski, A. (2005). *Science and sanity*. Fort Worth, Tx.: Institute of General Semantics.
- Lee, P., Mansfield, K. and Welton, A. (2016). *Identity intersectionalities, mentoring, and work-life (im)balance*. 1st ed.
- Leistner, F. (2012). *Connecting organizational silos*. Hoboken, N.J.: J. Wiley & Sons.
- Lisle, A. (2010). *Reflexive practice*. Philadelphia: Xlibris.
- Luft, J. (1969). *Of human interaction*. Palo Alto, California: National Press Books.

- Machiavelli, N. (1950). *The Prince and the Discourses* (edited by M. Lerner). New York: Random House Modern Library.
- Maguire, K. (2015). *Margaret Mead*. Berlin: Springer.
- Maguire, K. (2014). Transdisciplinarity as Translation (165-177), in P.Gibbs (Ed) *Transdisciplinary Professional Learning and Practice*, Springer.
- MANDELA, N. (1995). *Long walk to freedom: the autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. Boston, Back Bay Books.
- McDermott, R., Goldman, S. and Varenne, H. (2006) 'The Cultural Work of Learning Disabilities', *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), pp. 12-17. doi: 10.3102/0013189X035006012.
- McPeck, J. (2016). *Teaching critical thinking*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Medford, K. (2006) 'Caught With A Fake ID: Ethical Questions About Slippage in Autoethnography' *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, 5: 835 - 864
- Morgan, R. (2014). *The Demon Lover*. Newburyport: Open Road Media.
- Nicolini, D. (2013). *Practice Theory, Work, and Organization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pallotta, D. (2010). *Uncharitable*. Medford (Mass.): Tufts University Press.
- Pattakos, A. (2010). *Prisoners of our thoughts*. San Francisco, Calif.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Piaget, J. (2003). *The Psychology of Intelligence*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a theory of social practices. *European journal of social theory*, 5(2), 243-63.
- Robertson, B. (2015). *Holacracy*. New York: Holt
- Rogers, C. (1992). *Freedom to learn for the 80's*. New York u.a.: Merrill.
- Rogers, C., Lyon, H. and Tausch, R. (2013). *On becoming an effective teacher*. Routledge.
- Rosenberg, M. (2003). *Non-violent communication*. Encinitas, California: Puddle Dancer.
- Rowe, N. (2010). *Raising Dust: A Cultural History of Dance in Palestine*. 1st ed. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Sacks, O. (2018). *River of Consciousness*. [S.l.]: Pocador.
- Said, E. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. New York City: Knopf.

- Said, E. (2014). *Orientalism*. New York: Random House US.
- Senge, P. (2010). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Random House.
- Senge, P. (2014). *The dance of change*. New York: Crown Publishing Group.
- Sikes, P. (2015). *Ethical considerations in autoethnographic research*. Retrieved from: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.586562!/file/SREGPAutoethnography-2015.pdf.
- Stewart, I. and Joines, V. (2012). *TA today*. 2nd ed. Nottingham: Lifespace Publishing.
- Snyder, C. (2010). *Psychology of Hope*. Riverside: Free Press.
- Thaler, R. and Sunstein, C. (2008). *Nudge. Improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Thiesmeyer, L. (2003). *Discourse and silencing*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.
- Kuhn, T. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Usher, R. and Edwards, R. (2007). *Lifelong learning*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Vester, F. (2015). *Die Kunst vernetzt zu denken*. München: Dtv.
- <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/viewFile/12541/13687>
- <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helfersyndrom>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bricolage#Social_psychology
- <https://goo.gl/EGBo00>
- <https://goo.gl/JwZDQM>
- <http://goo.gl/OUhHNy>
- <http://puttylike.com/quiz/>
- http://mahmouddarwish.ps/files/server/full/7abibati_tanhad_mn_nawmiha/4/index.html
- <http://moi.gov.jo/Pages/viewpage.aspx?pageID=202&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>
- <http://riserefugee.org/10-things-you-need-to-consider-if-you-are-an-artist-not-of-the-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-community-looking-to-work-with-our-community/>

<https://tqw.at/>

<http://www.adab.com/en/modules.php?name=Sh3er&doWhat=shqas&qid=67>

<https://www.btselem.org/map>

<http://www.claytonchristensen.com/key-concepts/>

<https://www.danceability.com>

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1986/wiesel/26054-elie-wiesel-acceptance-speech-1986/>

<http://www.socialiststories.com/liberate/The%20Lower%20Depths%20-%20Gorky.pdf>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGuGA8WdU_OXrvmW9Ufg4gw

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QijH4UAqGD8>

<https://zara.or.at/index.php/archiv/2148>