

**Crossing Contested Borders: *Quid pro quo* (2011) – a performance act embodying the conceptual and material significance of women’s experience of the divide**

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**Abstract**

Contested borders do not only represent the physical, institutional and legal boundaries of geographical frameworks, but also speak for the disputed processes of a constant negotiation between territory, power and socio-political identity. The Cyprus Green Line, Barbed-wire, ‘Peace-Force’, Buffer Zone are some of the collection of names that personify the geographical frontier, or the twisted iron thorned object that runs horizontally from East to West of the island, separating the northern from the southern part since 1974. This quintessential symbol of war, exile and migration is not only a technology of social control that memorialises the violent history that led to its forceful establishment; it is not only made out of barbed-wire, sand bags and military troops, but it is also a physical manifestation of cultural construction that represents the Cypriot’s political and socio-cultural anxiety. This article addresses an artistic practice that emerged from conflict and struggles of forced migration, focusing on Cypriot performance artist Christina Georgiou’s performance intervention *Quid pro quo* (2011). Through discussion of this piece, the paper asks how performance is used to engage with such crises, through reenacting women’s experiences of encountering technologies of war.

In 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus. This resulted in the fracture of the island in two and the exodus and re-rooting of its people. Approximately 200,000 Greek Cypriots fled their cities and villages from the North to the South, while around 65,000 Turkish Cypriots living in the South were analogously forced into abandoning their houses and migrating to the North. Today, Cyprus remains partitioned by the United Nations patrolled buffer zone, with Greek Cypriots concentrated in the southern part and Turkish Cypriots in the northern part of the island.

Contested borders do not only represent the physical, institutional and legal boundaries of geographical frameworks, but also speak for the disputed processes of a constant negotiation between territory, power and socio-political identity. The Cyprus Green Line, Barbed wire, 'Peace-Force', *Buffer Zone* are some of the names that personify the geographical frontier, or the twisted iron-thorned partition that runs horizontally from East to West of the island, separating the northern from the southern part since 1974. As Maria Hadjipavlou states, "These different designations of the 'line' constitute part of the collective historical and political experience in each Cypriot community; the 'line' has acquired both a symbolic and a physical presence in our daily life" (94). This quintessential symbol of war, exile and migration is not only a technology of social control that memorialises the violent history that led to its forceful establishment; it is not only made out of barbed-wire, sand bags and military troops, but along with its checkpoints (as different narratives and sets of scripts), where 'audiences' must stay in their seats, provokes a performed corporal action. It is also a physical manifestation of cultural construction that represents the Cypriot's (both Greek and Turkish) political and socio-cultural anxiety of proximity, disidentification and liminality. This article address-

es artistic practices which emerge in such crises, conflicts and struggles of forced migration, with a focus on Cypriot performance artist Christina Georgiou's performance action *Quid pro quo* (2011), a creative act of resistance that countered nationalist and hegemonic narratives. The artist returned to the site of conflict. Georgiou carried her mother across the border, as her mother carried her children in 1974, an intervention symbolic of returning 'home'. This piece is used as a case study to explore the materiality and symbolic nature of borders. Through discussion of the case study, which was influenced by women's<sup>1</sup> voices of war and the role of the female in such conflicts, this paper will investigate how artistic practice facilitates the experience of interacting with borders. It will ask how performance is used to engage with crises, through reenacting female experiences of encountering technologies of war.

Political conflicts construct social and personal divisions between individuals and communities, aggravating and setting partitions through the formation of hostile and disputed physical spaces: battlefields, borders, walls and prisons. When the gunfire comes to a *telos*, "the same people in their communities are left to live with these spaces" (Pubrick, 1). These points of active separation, where the architecture of the spectacle embodies the rhetoric, modify the nation's geopolitical geography and create spatial formations that are rooted in a struggle for control and sovereignty. Here the Cypriot map has never solely been a two-dimensional topographical chart, as territorial tropes have profoundly fashioned nationalist narratives of history, identity and ideology. In *The Line* (2004), Cynthia Cockburn

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'women' is used to refer to those who are female identified. However, I recognise that they are not a homogenous group. I am not reiterating the construction of gender and identity, but rather I acknowledge the power that the split has for the cultural construction of identity and gender roles within the context of Cyprus and for the specific moment in time, affected by post-colonial, nationalist, and patriarchal narratives.

contextualises the performance of Greek Cypriot dancer Ariana Economou, entitled *Walking the Line* (2003 – 2005), in which the artist attempts to converse with the partition of Cyprus. Cockburn writes:

What strikes me about this scene is that the dividing line seems to be alive. The rope slithers and slides, now one thing, now another. This helps me to see how a geopolitical partition is not just armored fencing, it is also a line inside our heads, and in our hearts. In fact, the physical fence is a manifestation of these more cognitive and emotional lines that shape our thoughts and feelings [...]. When we are afraid or angry at some identifiable moment, a line springs out and plants itself in the earth as a barrier. It becomes *The Line*, and passage across it is controlled, by uniformed men, at a checkpoint. (5)

Inexorably contested, these sites, these internal ‘demarcation’ lines, are moulded by a conflict that continues to conjure diverse opposing understandings because of the emotional and psychological baggage they carry.<sup>2</sup> As Nikoletta Christodoulou writes. “for most Cypriots of every age, Cyprus still bleeds” (31).

Cockburn notes,

The partition line that divides Cyprus from shore to shore is two fences separated by a buffer zone. It is patrolled by a UN peacekeeping force, UNFICYP. In some places the line is fierce with razor wire, and at others it lapses into rusty iron sheet and oil drums. (5)

Places of conflict transform into compelling representations because of their very materiality and archaeology. They comprise

<sup>2</sup> To use the term post-conflict within the Cyprus context is problematic, as the conflict still exists through forms of complex hostility. These can be characterised by Ernesto Verdeja’s minimalist approaches to the spectrum of post-violence, which understands ‘reconciliation’ as coexistence between two enemies, that are founded on a rejection of violence; concentrating on the pacification of violence rather than a reciprocated forgiveness.

traces and residues of the dead and signify the forms of violence. As suggested by Louise Pubrick, “Hosts to violence, pain and loss they have been irrevocably altered; their pasts cannot be dispelled, so they assume otherworldly or sacred status, are prohibited or at the very least, are difficult to live with” (1), as with the case of Famagusta, the buffer zone. As repositories of the past, they retain history in their outlines and consistencies; they are urban archives of violent histories.<sup>3</sup>

And I remember taking all the keys from the cupboards, from the doors. I took them with me...I thought that I was going to go back. So, getting out of the door my husband says to me: “Just have a sight again of our house because you will not see it again; if we leave we won’t come back. (Antonetta Pelekanos - Cyprus Oral History Project, 2011)

We had nothing with us. We left empty handed. I remember that people left food on the stove and they fled away...glasses on the table. (Nahide – *The Women of Cyprus* documentary, 2004)

I waited by the telephone for days we didn’t know where he was, whether he was alive or dead. I wrote letters to my Turkish Cypriot neighbour in the village, that stayed there. I sent her some money to give to him so he can come and find us. My brother was missing for over a year, it was terrible...We later found out that he was captured and was imprisoned. The oldest son of our neighbour was very close to my brother. He tracked down my brother and helped him escape. My brother

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<sup>3</sup> For years each side had knowledge only of its own trauma; only recently have they realised that they share a common tragedy because of initiatives to unearth disenfranchised public histories.

said that he read my letter countless times until his release and it gave him strength. I thought we would never get to see our friends again, the help that they gave us was immeasurable. Years later, when the borders opened and we crossed to the side of our roots, I knocked on the door where they used to live. We embraced each other, cried and laughed like children for hours. (Anastasia Demetriou-Hambi, in interview with P. A. Demetriou for *The Echo of Loss*, 2008)

We came back to Kyrenia first. Then Kyrenia was mostly a greek town with a minority of Turkish Cypriots in it, and all the Greek Cypriots had fled. The house we rented was like somebody else had moved in before us and then they decided to move out. They had taken all the furniture with them and thrown out all the books in the field next to the house. And I grew up reading those books of those two Greek Cypriot children and I always wondered who they were. [...] everywhere there were bullets, and I was picking bullets. That was our childhood game. There were bullets in the walls and we were picking them. (Yeshim – *The Women of Cyprus* documentary, 2004)

The decade between 1963 and 1974, as well as the post-war era, were difficult periods for both communities, as the permanency of exile made Greek and Turkish Cypriots both outsiders and insiders, with an ambiguous refugee status.<sup>4</sup> The Greek Cypriots

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<sup>4</sup> Borrowing from Roger Zetter's article *The Greek-Cypriot Refugees: Perceptions of Return Under Conditions of Protracted Exile*, the use of the terms 'refugee' and 'repatriation' in the context of Cyprus are problematic in terms of their ontological significance under international law. Greek Cypriot refugees are neither refugees according to the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol, for the reason that they are not "outside of their country of origin", nor can they be considered as potential repatriates. Instead, they are technically "internally displaced" and described as being in a "refugee-like" situation (308).

have a prolonged desire to return to the North, while the Turkish Cypriots insist that the parting is absolute. As Mary Fong and Rueyling Chuang argue, “like the married couple seeking a legal divorce, the two communities of Cyprus find themselves in a position of interdependence” (228). This represents the psychological state of a national organism at odds with itself, which is characterised by schism – in the words of Peter Viereck, “two souls in one breast” (15). Identity issues divide them but also connect them, as the dominance of the conflict concerning the spatial framework of the country acts as an unsettled presence, which infiltrates society but also permeates the individual’s identity construction through the collective psyche. Borders represent issues of identity and are functionally equivalent to ego boundaries. They not only epitomise external geography but also signify internal choices of cultural orientation, the degree of security or the extent of dismay regarding one’s place in one’s locale (187).

The barbed wire barrier of permanent immobility was thrown open by the Turkish authorities in April 2003 for authorised crossing, and only through personal identification, along four points on the Green Line, where thousands of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriots could make one-day visits. In this sense, as Donnan and Wilson indicate, it is essential to recognise that the border is as much of an event as it is a physical reality - natural (rivers, lakes, mountain ranges), or artificial (a simple line on the ground, walls, barbed-wire). Thus, the experience of crossing different types of borders, in a legal or unlawful manner, becomes a substantial marker of one’s identity (Spyrou; Christou). The Cypriots who migrated from one part of the island to the other exist between two contradictory realities of the past and the present, thus partitioning their life into the status of

*before* and the status of *after* their exodus. The movement of the body between the two communities (North and South) forms exchanges between these two states of existence, whilst producing an ambivalent structure of feeling, in terms of inclusion/exclusion, belonging/becoming, and remembering/forgetting. Christine Sylvester suggests that war is an experience of the body. She sees the body as a bio-political fact of war, performative and an externally manipulated actor, which is also a disputed and diverse entity “that comes with gender, race, class, generational, cultural and locational markings that affect and are affected by social experiences” (Sylvester 5). In light of this, the frontier becomes a performative arena not least through performing the theatricality of the national political ritual, but also, as borders involve the daily performances of those who routinely cross and check, through endorsing or disputing the unwarranted and lasting limits of state dominance (Sylvester 75).

I am also a product of the Cypriot conflict. Whilst I have not directly experienced it, my sense of identity has been profoundly shaped by the aftermath of the division. My mother is a ‘refugee-like refugee’, and for this reason I have encountered the war and lived its destruction through growing up with the stories of the women in my family, who have been directly affected by it. A question emerges here that is relevant to my own standpoint but is also equally significant to the artistic case study contextualised further in this paper, is addressed by Hadjipavlou (2010): “What are the feminist conceptions of the Cyprus conflict and what have been the Cypriot women’s interventions that counter the nationalist hegemonic narrative?” According to Bryant and Hadjipavlou, heterogeneous histories and memories are utilised as ‘text’ towards dehumanising ‘the other’ to justify the partition. In relation to this, Hadjipavlou also argues that



nationalism gravitates towards the reinforcement of patriarchal power structures by obliging women to show their loyalty to these institutions and therefore transforming them into symbols of their national collectivities.

The Cyprus problem is situated in the preconception that Eurocentric heteronormative order is a structural foundation for forming the nation (Riley *et al.*, 3). It is within this context that women and other marginalised social groups from both sides of Cyprus disturb the conflict culture and official narratives imposed by those patriarchal institutions (11).<sup>5</sup> As Loomba maintained, throughout the island's history the "female body became the site of discovery, rape, and conquest. The Cypriot woman's body is a physical and symbolic space, where the creation of the nation is justified and defended" (Loomba cited in Papastavrou, 97). In this context, the role of women as bearers of the nation in the form of 'mothers' and 'wives' is core to the sustainability of the colonial project and collective postcolonial ideologies. In present-day Cyprus, women continue to be the symbols of home and 'nation-blood', and the breeders to preserve and perpetuate the population of the two main ethnic groups (Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot). Women's experiences of encountering war, as well as gender-based violence, do not conclude post-conflict; as suggested by Meintjes *et al.* (2001), in the case of Cyprus patriarchal gender structures are rooted in the very fabric of the society. As Hadjipavlou (2006) writes, "Women are absent from key policy-making centres of power so they are not allowed to voice their concerns and views unless they behave like men or do as men say" (41). Vassiliadou argues that women are put to the side in a nationalist discourse for the reason that "they them-

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<sup>5</sup> Özkaleli and Yilmaz (2013) state that rather than perceiving women, men and children as a collective whole that deal with war together, the governing discourse on wars divides men and women into austere roles and into distinct spaces of battlefield and 'safe' homes. Women are attributed with roles as "supporting actors whose roles reflect masculine notions of femininity and of women's proper 'place'" (Nagel, 243).

selves are constituted by the binaries of modernity” (473). It is the lost, forgotten, marginal and unspoken voices that represent the nation, but at the same time it is the nation that marginalises these accounts.<sup>6</sup> There have been very few endeavours to document Cypriot women’s war narratives and to integrate their knowledge into public discourse; the majority of initiatives focus on dominant male narratives. Even so, these silent or disenfranchised histories have mostly been transmitted through oral traditions and rarely documented in writing. Those that have been documented<sup>7</sup> are limited within their modes of representation and lack the transmission of a visceral experience, which is imperative to the dissemination and accessibility of oral history collections within public discourse.

In this context, Cynthia Enloe argued that militaries need men and women to behave as their gendered subjects (Peterson, V. S.; Runyan, 83 - 4). The role of women during war is mainly humanitarian. For Enloe, “the national political arena is dominated by men but allows women some select access whereby they are expected not to shake masculine presumptions” (13). Women speaking about their experiences of war, as well as writing about them, can provide an ‘alternative’ narrative to war and can challenge capitalist heteronormative patriarchy and European models of civil society formation that have excluded Cypriot women. The recollections provided above rep-

<sup>6</sup> The struggle against colonial rule and for independence of Cyprus “was created by men, ordered by men, and carried out by men. It was a patriarchal struggle on a patriarchal island which most women followed and became involved... in fact they were used by men to promote their interests” (Vassiliadou, 459). It should be added that this is not the first instance Cyprus’ history when women’s voices have been shut out. Women have been left out of most of the island’s historical narrative (Papastavrou).

<sup>7</sup> There have been a few recent initiatives to represent these histories, with an attempt to engage a wide range of people’s narratives such as *The Cyprus Oral History & Living Memory Project* (2011) led by Nikoletta Christodoulou and the *Frederick Institute of Research* in Cyprus. Even though the project was successful in its initiative of collecting and preserving both Greek Cypriots’ and Turkish Cypriots’ accounts, the approaches to the contents dissemination do not facilitate wider accessibility or active engagement with a broader audience.

resent Cypriot women's narrations of the 1974 invasion from several initiatives. As Umut Özkaleli and Ömür Yılmaz indicate, the exclusion of women's accounts from the history of war makes transparent how this omission is methodical, seeing that it contributes to the facilitation of patriarchy, ethnic nationalism and patriarchal nationalism. They argue, "Women's accounts pose a direct challenge to patriarchal nationalism by surfacing contradictions and tensions between patriarchy and nationalism between this alliance" (138). Female "situated knowledges" (Haraway) lead us to unearth the existence of marginal depictions of reality (Jaggar). This type of 'counterhistory' not only exposes women's war experiences that have been overlooked, but can also alter how individuals interpret the present and visualise the future - since "what we know about the past, and thus our understanding of the present, is shaped by the voices that speak to us out of history" (Hirsch, and Smith, 12).

Influenced by the stories of the women in her family about the tragic happenings of 1974 and in particular by an account shared at a women's war remembrance meeting, Cypriot performance artist Christina Georgiou produced the performance intervention *Quid pro quo* (2011). In August 2011, using minimal movement with strong visual connotations, Georgiou carried her mother whilst walking towards the Ledra Palace<sup>8</sup> crossing point in an endeavour to cross the border of Nicosia. This action mirrored an exchange between her mother and all the mothers who carried their children whilst moving from place to place during the exile. The artist's mother had been exiled together with her family from the North to the South part of Cyprus in 1974. With this intervention Georgiou attempted to return her mother to the place that she called 'home'.

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<sup>8</sup> The Ledra Palace Hotel is located in central Nicosia. It operated until 1974 as was one of the most affluent hotels of the capital.



**Figure 1: Christina Georgiou, *Quid pro quo*. Nicosia, Cyprus. Anna Stylianidou (2011)**

The audience, at the time of action, happened to be the authorities who patrolled the surrounding area and the few that were situated at the checkpoint. They actively contributed to the piece as their authoritative presence and gaze restricted Georgiou's physical actions. Their power was reflected by their physical appearance at the border and therefore acted as an additional border, which heightened the emotional registers of the piece.



**Figure 2: Christina Georgiou, *Quid pro quo*. Nicosia, Cyprus. Anna Stylianidou (2011)**

Reenacting this praxis, the artist crossed between the contested political unconscious and the political conscious. Her intervention raised questions in relation to how the idea of the border and its solidified historicity can be experienced differently through performing, whilst producing a psychophysical transformation of this experience. Furthermore, the very praxis of carrying her mother critiqued the past and present position of women in the Cyprus conflict, in terms of understanding the act of ‘carrying’ as

‘caring’ and thus performing the gendered role of the woman in the Cypriot context. It reflected and brought to the surface ideas that stem from patriarchal societies and nationalist perspectives on the “preservative love” (Ruddick, 65), the ‘nature’/ ‘nurture’ argument, that emerges from the responsibility of the mother to preserve and protect the child;<sup>9</sup> questioning the ethno-national, and the gender power that intersect, promote inequality and are maintained by coercion. Hence, through the action of ‘carrying’, Georgiou performs the anatomy and dichotomy of civil society divided into public and private arenas: women and the family as part of the private domain, anticipated to support the diminishing, ‘ethically’ produced narrative, “which they internalise as being their national duty” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 622). Through this embodied action she performed her identity, which included her own cultural and political heritage attached to layers of all the female war narratives she had previously encountered. Georgiou participated in a social process and in the production of knowledge about her own culture. In her piece, the body is considered as a tool to generate a live action that engages with the border of Nicosia as well as conceptual borders of ethnicity, gender, and power; perceiving it as a site to be experienced, explored, measured, archived and memorised anew (Georgiou). She realises the border as a space in-between places, which defines the outlines of maps through correlation and interrelation while suggesting the here and there. Its physicality regulates proximity and remoteness whilst enabling movement and stagnation within its topographic frame.<sup>10</sup> For Georgiou the

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<sup>9</sup> This describes women as being moral by default because they have a “biological connection to life” (Woehrle). This idea is contested by feminist perspectives as it implies that the image of the ‘moral mother’ is biologically constructed rather than formed on a sociocultural level and it excludes the possibility that men can also ‘preserve love’.

<sup>10</sup> As Ramon Rivera-Servera and Harvey Young state, every border holds a paradoxical status “as a site of tension between an impulse for stasis and a desire for controlled movement” (5).

border is a point of arrival and departure that activates movement or stillness, actions related to its material and conceptual properties.

A border is portrayed in relation to the affect it has on each individual that engages with it. On its own it is a cause of binary constituents, not because of its existence but because of the divide it creates by its placement. In Georgiou's words, "The effects of the border can be easily described through what can be seen around its topography: segregation, disparity, isolation, and ruins" (Georgiou, 16). Like the personal account I gave above, the artist's identity formation was also influenced by the older generation of women in her family and in particular her grandmother, who she describes as a "powerful mourning figure" with strong feelings of grief and nostalgia. "Her constant mourning through her stories about the past functioned as a powerful symbol of national recognition. She referred to her present house as a 'foreign' one, which she constantly failed to identify with, leading to her feeling of being lost" (ibid). This state of existence can be described in terms of liminality, a limbo phase, where one exists between two worlds. The immediate force of exodus produces a vast emotional bearing, merging places/spaces and memories of past and present, which create an uncertain future and form a hybrid identity.

Similarly, the performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña concentrated on the crossing point between North and South, Mexico and the U.S., a performance act that also acted as a springboard for Georgiou's work. Gómez-Peña conceived the border as a state of culture that carried with it the politics of the 'brown body', through which it represented his hybrid identity by rendering the disunion of colonialism. The borders between the two countries consist of what lives in-between the U.S. and

the various Latino cultures: the U.S.-Mexico border, immigration, cross-cultural and hybrid identities, misconceptions between cultures, the conceptual misinterpretations through languages and the distinction between races. These are components that Georgiou also felt in association with her praxis of crossing the border:

I have experienced and felt this fear while crossing and moving along the border of Nicosia throughout this project. Upon my crossing to 'the other side', I could immediately perceive my difference in relation to the 'other'. My temporary 'immigration' was giving me a little taste of the dreadful occurrence of exile, experienced by the Cypriot refugees in 1974. I see the immigrants and the citizens on both sides of the divided city as disidentificatory subjects and the buffer zone as a way to control them through political power, which is employed over them while setting restrictions in physical and emotional means (Georgiou, 16)

The processes of identification and disidentification shifted depending on which side of Nicosia the artist's body was situated (North/South). In this sense, the condition of liminality was experienced during the crossing of the border, by travelling between the two communities, considering it as the formation of a movement according to the manner through which the body is perceived at each side of the divided city. Georgiou's interaction with the Green Line hints at an exploration of attaining empathetic understanding towards her mother and other Cypriot women who practiced the same action but under exile. The embodiment and emplacement that occurred through the performance intervention *Quid pro quo* facilitated another dimension of experience towards reforming and transforming fixed percep-



tions of reality. The journey whilst carrying her mother across the border reveals a nomadic action within the very place of their home, constructing a dialogue between the artist's body, her mother's and the border.

Military borders construct possibilities for identification, counteridentification and disidentification. Consequently, the Cypriot borders can act as a force for people, artists and activists towards reframing its existence and ideology. In Mark Phelan's words, "Performance can be an effective medium for making ethical memory, providing alternative modes of commemoration that can open up different avenues of forgetting, echoing amnesia and evading the problems posed by physical forms of memorialisation" (Phelan in O'Rawe and Phelan, 139). The currency of performative modes induced from effectual and experiential registers, through taking advantage of its ephemerality and immanent sense of loss, seems 'appropriate' when it comes to embodying "the loss of so many lives for so little" (ibid). The Green Line, Barbed-wire, 'Peace-Force', Buffer Zone, appears as a more tangible component where the individual's identity is reconstructed through the outer and incarnate experience of crossing it. As Rebecca Schneider states, "the syncopated time of reenactment, where *there* and *now* punctuate each other, reenactors try to bring the prior moment to the very fingertips of the present" (2). Performing crisis or tragedy raises ethico-political questions in relation to what is at stake when attempting to represent the wounds of others from the 'outside' or from a more privileged standpoint, as the artist-observer-researcher-author, as well as striving to convey the 'voices' of the wounded from within. In using the term reenactment I am not hinting at the artist commodifying trauma. On the contrary, Georgiou's action is a response to the specific context of refugee

trauma and an embodied reenactment of how she interpreted the experiences of the women in her family. Through performing the wound, Georgiou also seeks to show how the expression of pain can overturn the ‘private languages’ of individuals, in terms of there being no individual ownership in pain. In this sense, through her performance intervention as well as other performances that engage with crisis and conflict, there is an endeavour to construct an alternative reality through the deformation and reformation of the standing situation. This new formation can transport individuals into a restructured collective sphere, which can include subjectivities of ‘previously’ marginalised voices, such as refugees’ war narratives and, in the context of the discussion in this article, war accounts of Cypriot women.

As Poposki and Todorova suggest,

Creating a place not of silent obedience and interiority before the great monoliths memorialising and celebrating hegemonic power, but instead forming an arena of perpetual pluralism where opposing values, expectations are confronted through public deliberation and discourse (in O’Rawe and Phelan, 109).

In this way, performance can be used as a platform for dialogic practices and offer effective modes of generating collective narratives, as well as contesting the ‘official’ and ‘institutional’, “providing a participatory public forum for recording stories and memories inimical with the progress of official narratives and representing those who have been occluded and absent from public space” (O’Rawe and Phelan, 3). By resisting the totalisation of hegemonic narratives, performance as a medium can establish how notions of conflict or post-conflict regeneration should also be applicable to the reconstruction of the self and communities (ibid). Echoing Schneider’s view, Georgiou commented

“Crossing the border is about ‘moving back’ in time in order to reform the present” (Georgiou, 16). According to psychogeographical notions, by crossing the border, by retelling a narrative through embodied practice, Georgiou performed according to a set of different scripts or discourses: contradictory acts of power, gender, race and class that are performed repetitively. With her attempt to cross the border she sought out gaps, challenged the hegemonic narratives of the nation, and at the same time reflected on her position in this geography of power that is manifested in space. Through using performance as a mode to engage with such crises, by reenacting female experiences of encountering technologies of war, the performance artist sought the transformation of the situation by creating a “possible future while, at the same time, stag[ing] a new political formation in the present” (Muñoz, 200).

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