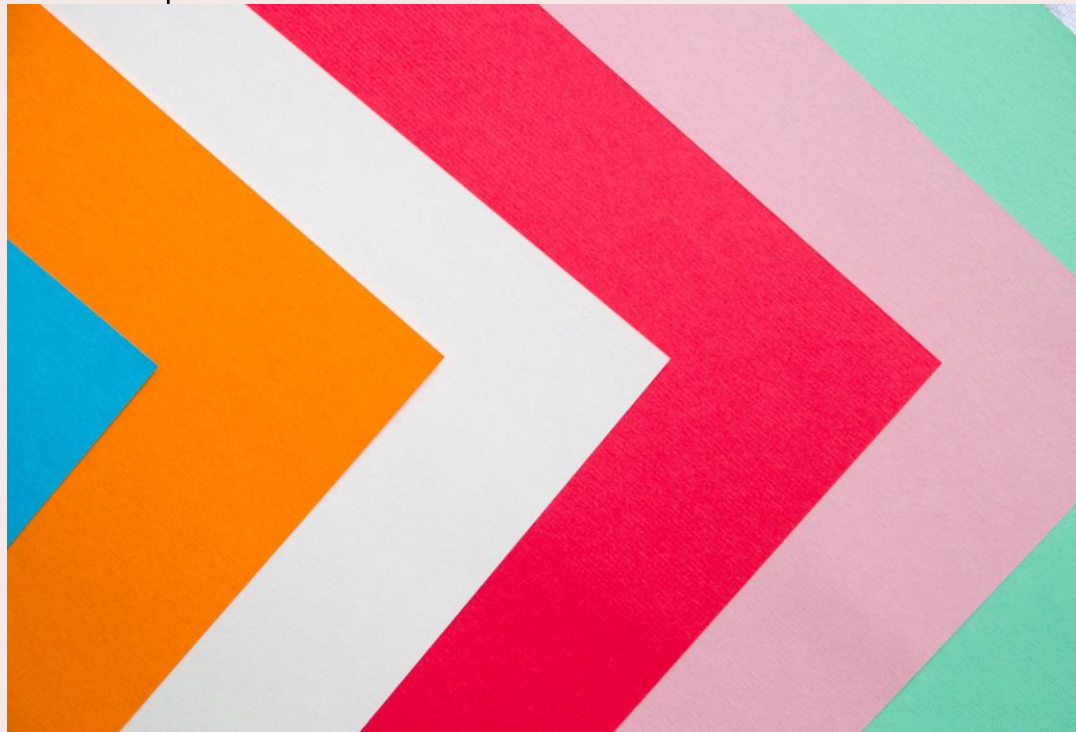
A group of hands of various skin tones are reaching towards a bright, glowing light source in the center of the frame. The hands are positioned around the light, some with fingers spread, some with palms facing up. The background is dark, making the light and the hands stand out. The overall mood is one of hope, support, and collective effort.

TRAUMA-INFORMED  
DRAMATHERAPY  
WITHIN  
EDUCATIONAL  
MILIEUS:  
TWO CASE STUDIES

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## CONTENTS OF MY SPEECH

- Trauma-informed Approaches
- Dramatic Resonances
- Project Report 1
- Project Report 2

# TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

*The fundamental shift in trauma-informed approaches is moving from thinking 'What is wrong with you?' to considering 'What happened to you?' [...]. This means that service providers understand and acknowledge the widespread prevalence and effects of trauma on people and incorporate this into their practice.*

Sweeney, A., Filson, B., Kennedy, A., Collinson, L., & Gillard, S. (2018). A paradigm shift: relationships in trauma-informed mental health services. *BJPsych Advances*, 24(5), 319–333. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2018.29>

# SIX KEY PRINCIPLES OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

1. Safety

2. Trustworthiness and Transparency

3. Peer Support

4. Collaboration and Mutuality

5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice

6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

# UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DRAMATHERAPY TO TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES



# DRAMATIC RESONANCES

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The approach grounded in the transformative power of dramatic reality and its ability resonate in the human psyche.

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It draws on the creative-intuitive responses of group members and the therapist to an “input” presented to them.

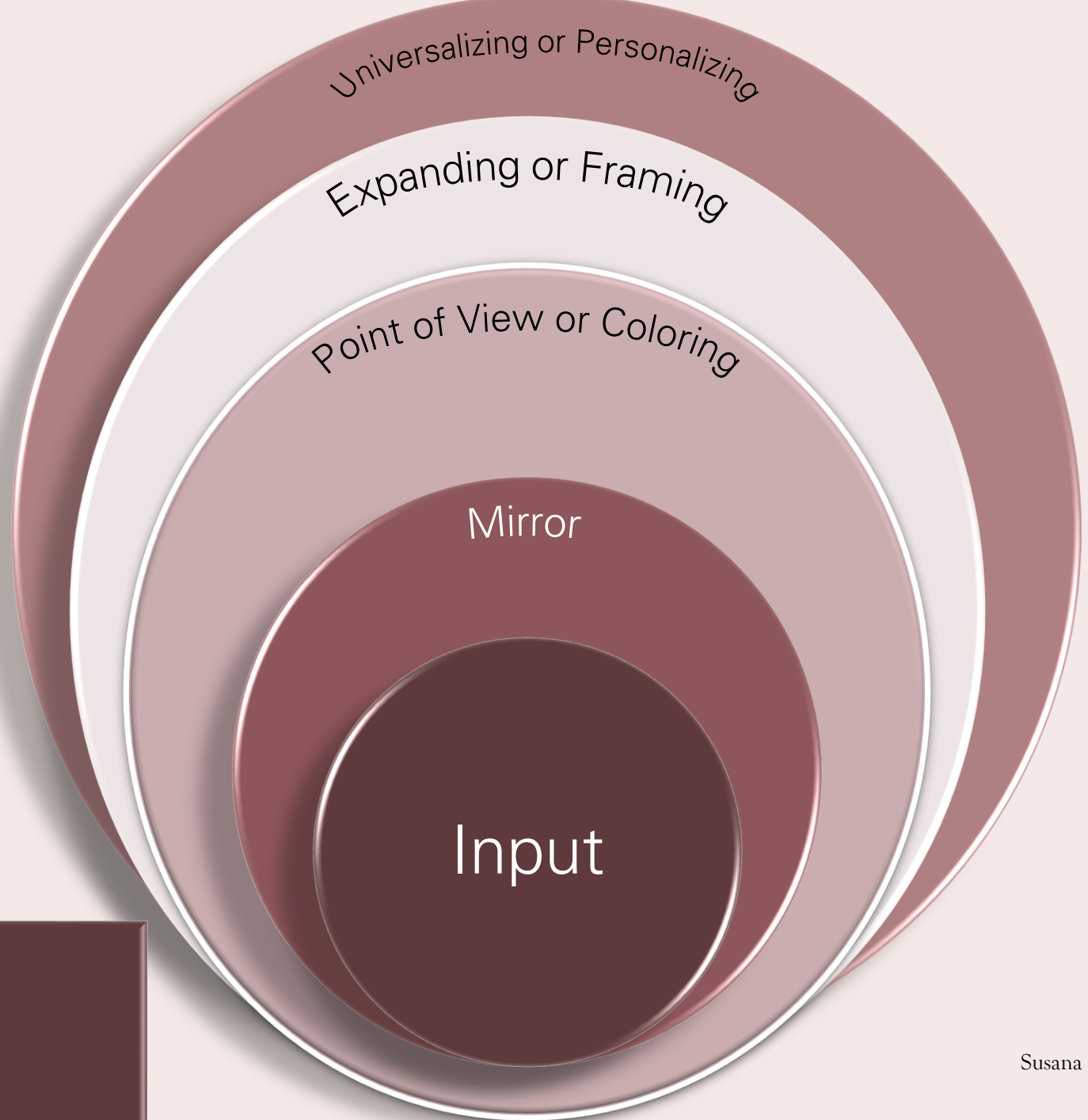
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The input may be a personal experience, memory or dream, brought up by participants, or a non-personal source (such as a myth, story, a theme, a literary text, etc.) introduced as a therapeutic intervention.

---

The input is carefully handled and aesthetically developed, with a sense of empathy and awareness.

The technique has two main components: The initial input, and the resonances themselves: a series of aesthetic responses.



# DRAMATIC RESONANCES

# THE MIRROR RESONANCE

The mirror resonance attempts to grasp the communication conveyed by the input-giver by staying “close to the text” and reflecting it in a theatrical language. Such close reflection offers the input-giver a sense of recognition and empathy that validates the communication.





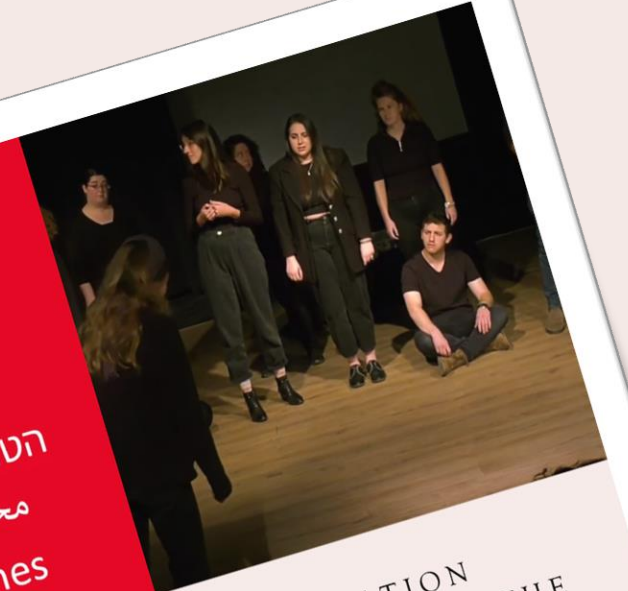
# CASE REPORTS

De/constructing the past, constructing the future: A theatre-based and trauma-sensitive project on the perception of the Holocaust by German youngsters in Berlin



הטריבונל: תביעות צדק לפגיעות מגדריות  
محكمة جماهيرية بديلة للنساء والفتيات  
The Tribunal for Gender Crimes

THERAPEUTIC THEATRE PROJECT: A COLLABORATION  
BETWEEN THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM & THE  
TRIBUNAL FOR GENDER CRIMES



# De/constructing the past, constructing the future: A theatre-based and trauma- sensitive project on the perception of the Holocaust by German youth in Berlin



SUSANA PENDZIK; INGRID LUTZ; JUTTA HEPPEKAUSEN;  
HENK GÖBEL; ILIL LAND-BOSS; CORINNA FOCK-  
WIEDENMANN; FRANCA CASABONNE; JOHANNES  
REMMEL-BECK; RHADA HAMMOUDAH; ANNA SHRAER;  
YUVAL WEINTRAUB; CATHY CLIFT.



- The project explored how the events that occurred in Germany between 1933-1945, including the Holocaust legacy, are formulated today in the psyche of German youth.
- The target group were young 9th graders from two schools in Berlin. They were the “source”.
- Applying trauma-sensitive dramatherapy methods, we collected the images and narratives put forth by the youth.
- Using “Dramatic Resonances” this information was elaborated by the team as a filmed theatre piece that was presented to the youth for discussion and further reflection.
- The intention was to get a sense of how these events are perceived nowadays and to ascertain if the narratives handed down from previous generations needed to be changed and/or adapted to promote dialogue, empathy, etc.

# PHASES IN THE PROCESS

1- Consolidating a working team and exploring members' relationship with the topic

2- Preparation: Elaborating a "toolkit" of trauma-sensitive dramatherapy methods aimed at gathering the images/narratives of the youth and contacting schools that could host the project.

3- Carrying out dramatherapy sessions with the youth and documenting the process.

4- Processing the information using dramatic resonances and elaborating a theatre/video performance.

5- Performing the piece for the youth leading into an exchange.

6- Reflecting on the process, writing papers, presenting at conferences, etc.

# NEUKÖLLN SCHOOL



- 
- Was it possible to go outside for a walk during the war?

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  - Why did the second world war happen? How did it come about?

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  - Where could one buy radios? From "traveling salesmen"?

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  - Was it publicized on the radio when "foreigners" were discovered?

---

  - Which people were persecuted?

---

  - Were there only right-wing radicals at that time in Germany?

---

  - Were there only Nazis at that time? National Socialists? ("What does Nazi mean?")

---

  - Who was gassed? Also, men, women, and children?

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  - Why did Goebbels kill himself and his children?

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  - Are there people whose last name is "Hitler"?

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  - Could Hitler have been voted out of office?

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  - Why did so many people support Hitler? ("Maybe they had the same enemies").

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  - If people didn't like Hitler, how did he have so much power?

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  - To whom did Germany lose WWI?

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  - Did Hitler also kill his own family?

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  - In what time period were 6 million Jews murdered?

# CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

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# PRIMO LEVY GYMNASIUM





**Meinung im Stillen**

**Die Angst hält mich gefangen**

**Hoffnung stirbt zuletzt**

**Opinion in silence**

**Fear holds me captive**

**Hope dies last**

**Sein Name ist Rolf.**

**Er ist jung und kampferprobt.**

**Er ist schon achtzehn.**

**His name is Rolf.**

**He is young and battle-hardened.**

**He is already eighteen.**

**Ein Kriegsmediziner und  
Forscher, treuer Soldat der  
Deutschen Nation.**

**Verlor alle, suchte zielstrebig,  
bekam seine Rache.**

**Jetzt ist sein Ziel erfüllt, doch  
war es richtig?**

**A war doctor and researcher, loyal  
soldier of the German nation.**

**Lost everything, searched single-  
mindedly, got his revenge.**

**Now his goal is fulfilled, but was it  
right?**

A person wearing a red jacket is holding a white sheet of paper with both hands. The paper features a hand-drawn illustration of a globe with green continents and blue oceans, set within a decorative, scalloped border. The person is standing outdoors, with a body of water and tall grass visible in the background. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.

# THE MOVIE

Could Hitler have been voted out?



## Conclusions

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The experience of our project suggests that distanced and trauma-sensitive dramatherapy methods are effective for approaching this historical and collective trauma in the school context .

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In the Neukölln School, the method allowed the youth to engage with the topic in a way that sidetracked the potential resistance due to stigmatization and preconceptions– and meaningfully brought the topic “home”.

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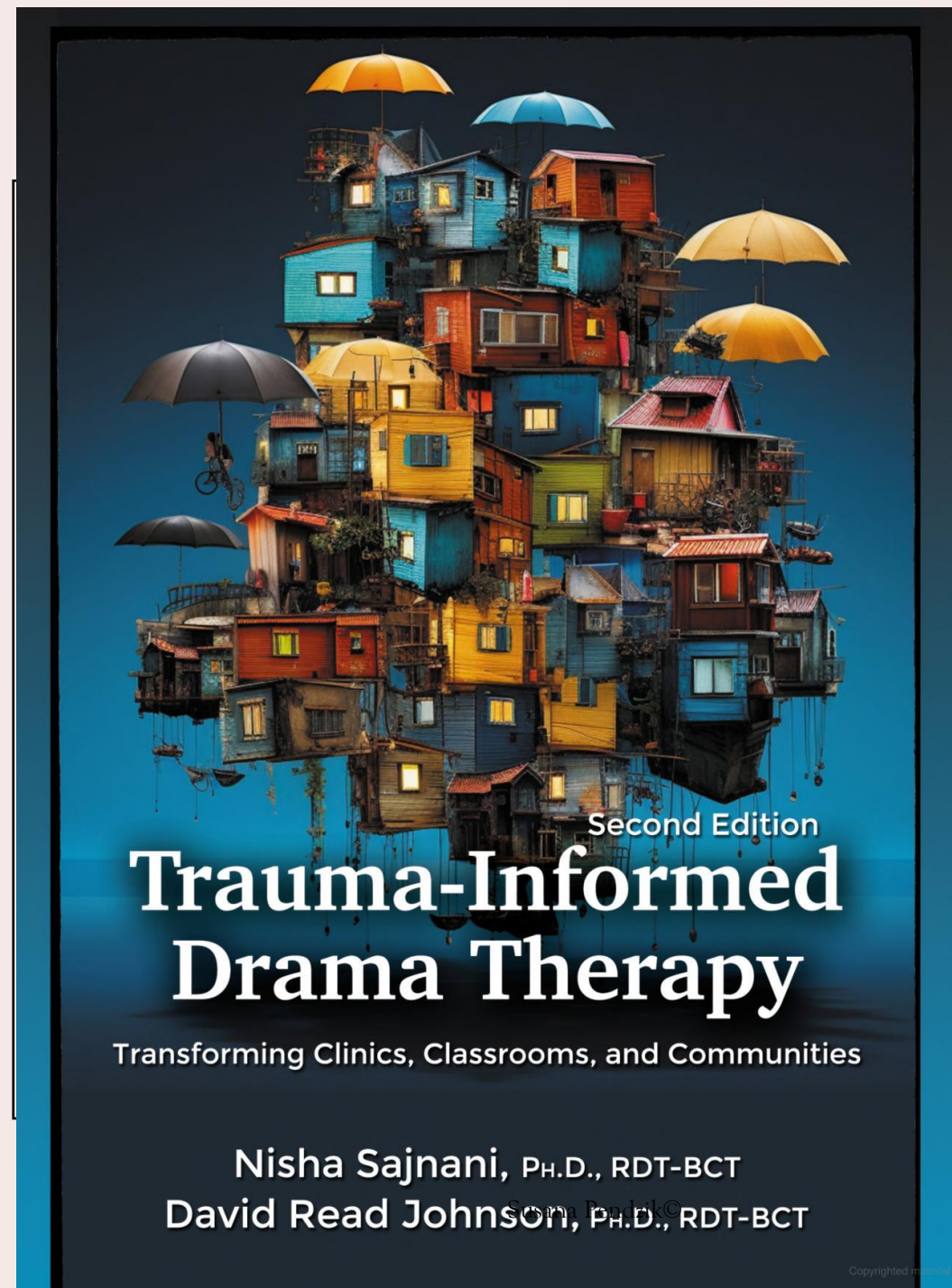
In the Primo-Levy school, the appeal to create fictional drama worlds let the pupils “off the hook” of producing scholarly inputs, freeing their imagination and their psychic world.

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Dramatic resonances and other sociodramatic tools (including Theatre of the Oppressed) allowed participants to express feelings they might not have expressed if the approach would have been more personal.

Pendzik, S., Lutz, I., and Heppekausen, J. (2024). Deconstructing the past, constructing the future: Perception of the Holocaust by German Youth. In Nisha Sajnani and David Read Johnson (eds.), *Trauma-informed drama therapy, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* (pp.205-230). Springfield, IL: Charles. C. Thomas.

Susana Pendzik ©

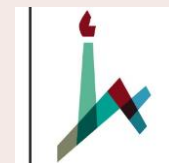




הטריבונל. תביעות צדק לפגיעות מגדריות  
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THERAPEUTIC THEATRE PROJECT:  
A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE THEATRE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM  
& THE TRIBUNAL FOR GENDER CRIMES





Susana Pendzik ©

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The Tribunal for Gender Crimes is an independent project developing in Israel that supports the application of new paradigms, such as restorative and alternative justice procedures to confront gender-based crimes.

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The initiative was started by Argentinian-born feminist sociologist and activist Jessica Nevo, after over 30 years of accompanying victims, training professionals in gender perspective treatments, and studying alternative justice processes.

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The Tribunal staff includes lawyers, sociologists, therapists, feminists, social activists, artists and facilitators (many of whom have been harmed themselves), who wish to design alternative or complementary procedures to the official legal system, as part of the global movement for "direct justice".



# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

*I arrived at the transitional justice paradigm while looking for alternative responses to 'personal' traumas/experiences of violence, abuse, violation and crimes and became interested in alternative processes—i.e., outside the criminal justice process—undertaken by communities and societies coming to terms with collective traumas and crimes, and searching for justice, closure and healing. The transitional justice paradigm goes beyond criminal justice and broadens the concept of making justice. While trials focus on the perpetrators, transitional justice, combined with a restorative component, focuses more clearly on 'survivor's justice'.*

Jessica Nevo (2009). Transitional justice and its applicability to the Zionist/Palestinian conflict and the Palestinian refugee issue. In Terry Rempel (ed.), *Rights in principle - rights in practice* (pp. 327-338). Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights (p.324).





- Public hearings constitute an alternative channel for the community of women to demand justice from state institutions or get recognition and validity regarding the harm they have endured.
- The hearings can take various forms, according to the subject or the case. For instance, it may call expert witnesses, include the offenders or not, take place publicly or privately, be documented on video, recording, or published as an anonymous transcript.
- If the woman presenting her case wishes so, actresses can be used at the hearing to communicate the evidence. The tribunal trains women and men to reply on a panel of "respondents" or "alternative judges," whose role is to listen, respond and validate the claim.

# THE PROJECT



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18 students from the Theatre Department participated in the course

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The course was open to students from theatre, psychology, education, etc.

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The Tribunal for Gender Crimes contacted a justice-seeker who was interested to perform a public hearing about her story, was willing to provide self-written texts concerning her experience, and to keep some form of contact with the group.

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The course took place over one semester in weekly classes of 90 min

The first sessions were devoted to explore the subject of “gender crimes” and to get to know each other, using dramatherapy and TO exercises.

Weekly meetings online were held between the justice-seeker, a representative of the Tribunal, the course teacher, and the TA, to process emergent issues and keep the justice-seeker in touch with the process of the class.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> class, students participated in an interactive forum-lecture about the Tribunal’s aims and were introduced to the justice-seeker in person to hear her story.

Students were asked to explore a personal experience of becoming aware of gender using dramatherapy exercises, and to write a brief, structured text about it.

Students received a text by the justice-seeker, inspired by their assignment in which she shared some of her childhood experiences.

Students explored this text and responded to it by formulating written questions, which were handed to the justice-seeker. She answered back with a text.



- Students divided into small groups to create dramatic resonances based on the justice-seeker's texts. They could participate in various resonance groups in parallel.
- One group took the performance of the "mirror resonance."
- Various dramatic resonances were created, including a movement piece that highlighted feelings of loneliness and abandonment: a children's game where one child was scapegoated; taking the point of view of society, a woman was bombarded with questions; and a universal resonance, presenting the myth of Iphigenia in Aulis, as an illustration of the sacrifice of his daughter by a father, for political reasons.

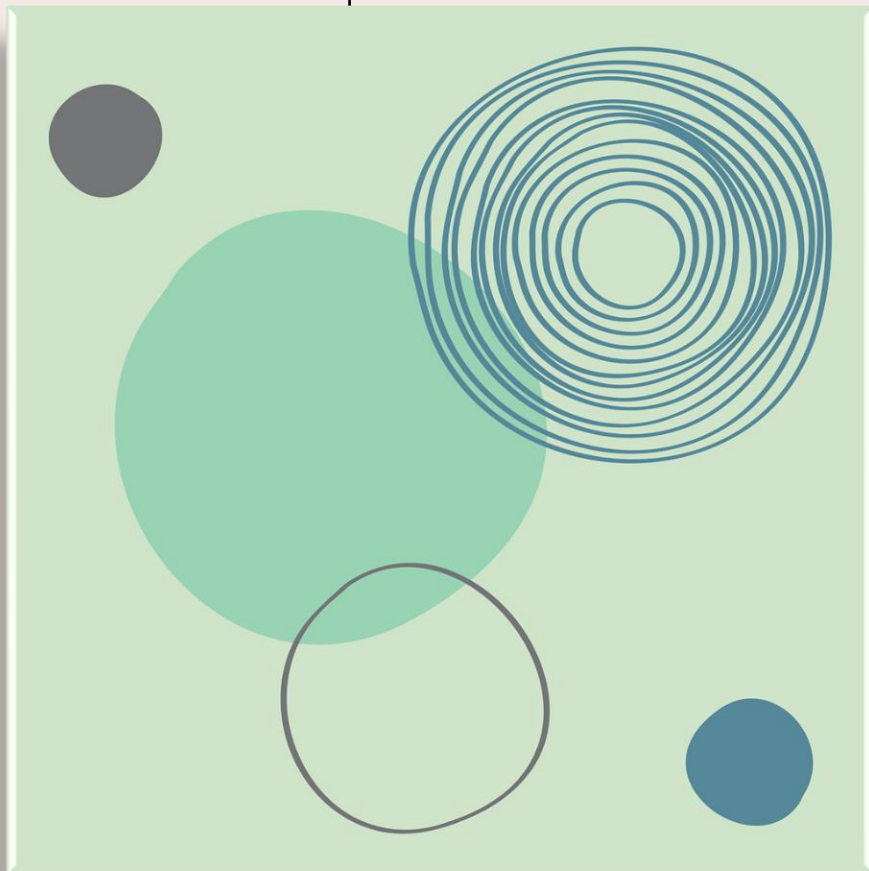


# “ 3<sup>RD</sup> PUBLIC HEARING: OPEN DOORS ”

The Public Hearing included a presentation of the Tribunal’s aims, the audio of the claim by the justice-seeker, the resonances by the students, and a panel of respondents that replied to the claim through the Tribunal’s approach.

Following a short Q & A, the event concluded with a circle that included all participants and the audience.





## CIRCLES OF CARE

- Justice-seeker and her therapist
- Justice-seeker, companion from the Tribunal, Course teacher (who is also a therapist), and TA
- Course teacher and TA
- Course teacher and her peer-supervisor
- Course teacher, TA, and students of the course
- Small working groups of students, and the course teacher and TA
- Students were invited to turn to the course teacher if they so wished, if they needed support



## A STUDENT'S REFLECTIONS

*The process of working on the performances was interesting, but I didn't fully understand its meaning until the very last moment – until the evening [of the performance] itself. Only [then], together with [the justice-seeker's] testimony, the presence of the respondents, and the connection between all the resonances – only then, did I understand how reflecting and processing [her] story can be the beginning of some sort of healing. The circles were not only of resonances: they were also in the audience: A personal story that started... in [the justice-seeker], unwrapped and expanded, reaching [the group], and [then] also...a wider audience. Slowly, we became part of the story, part of the healing process that the [justice-seeker] goes through her whole life. And we were privileged to touch a small portion of its path, and perhaps add a little light, a little mirroring, a little processing, to a story that is difficult to contain in words.*



Thank you!