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**LANDSCAPE AND ITS MEMORY IN PERFORMER'S BODY
ELEMENTS OF CZECH DUNCANISM AND ITS TRANSFORMATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

The current thesis is written by a practitioner in dance, movement, and choreography, and it aims to support the artistic practice with a conceptual background. The thesis develops two fields of interest: firstly, it introduces the Czech branch of Duncanism, its philosophical origin coming from Isadora and Elizabeth Duncan, and the methodological approaches established by the Czech representatives Jarmila Jeřábková and Eva Blažíčková. The author analyses the principles, elements, and transformations of the Duncanism in the Czech environment, these elements serve as a base for further movement explorations. The second field of the research is represented by the memory of the landscape, examined from the perspective of the performer and her body experience in the process of creation. The silenced, erased, or veiled memory of the landscape is analysed with more attention. The practical part of the research is situated in the area of a defunct town of Lauterbach, a part of the Sudetenland on the Czech borderland. The author from the position of a performer engages the embodied memory of landscape to create a movement reminiscence of a defunct town. In the last part of the thesis, the Duncanist movement elements, applied as a practical tool, and the lived experience of the performer, are used to access the memory of the place and to preserve the transferable physical imprint of the landscape of Lauterbach.

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INTRODUCTION

During my master's studies in movement research at Anton Bruckner Private University, I have encountered new opportunities to support my practice as a professional dancer, performer, dance-maker, and practitioner in the field of movement and choreography. I have been encouraged to reflect on movement creation, to intertwine the theoretical and practical level of my work, and to include the processes of writing and reading, supported by my dancer knowledge, as a starting point for the research. During this enriching experience, two areas of interest crystallized in me, which I have decided to explore thoroughly in my thesis.

From the position of a mover and performer, I would like to investigate the memory of the landscape as an archival medium, consisting of the physical, cultural, symbolic, and metaphorical space. Last year, I found a proposal for the students of architecture to design a layout reminiscence of a former church in a defunct town of Lauterbach, which is located in the Sudetenland, the western part of the Czech borderland. I was immediately intrigued by this proposal, which provoked a question in me about whether dance and movement could serve as another medium for exploring the non-existing town and its memory. Thus, in the next phase of my concern in the landscape, the location of Lauterbach was decisive for indicating the direction and articulating a concrete target of my research.

Another thematic area of my interest is represented by Czech Duncanism – the philosophy of dance and a method based on the work of Isadora and Elizabeth Duncan, whose thoughts grew into a specific form in the Czech environment. I first encountered the Duncanism at the age of four, my dance beginnings are connected to the Duncan Centre in Prague, where I attended the courses for two years. At such an early age, I was guided to develop natural and creative spontaneous movement. Later, I studied classical dance, and various modern and contemporary techniques, and I became a professional ballet dancer. Now, in my research, I turn my attention back to my roots and I realize the artistic, educational, and social values of Duncanist philosophy. An especially important part of my research is the encounters with the main representative of the Czech Duncanism Eva Blažíčková, her strong personality and vitality

are great motivation for me, and an invaluable opportunity to learn about the background of the Czech Duncanism from the source.

The thesis consists of three parts; in the first part, I am intending to outline the diffusion of Isadora Duncan's thoughts into the Czech environment. Isadora Duncan embodies a revelation or milestone in dance history, and I am even more fascinated by the traces of influence, which I can read in the work of her successors. I am particularly interested in the work of Elizabeth Duncan in Prague, which was an impetus for many Czech dancers, and the continuation of the Duncanist line in the work of Jarmila Jeřábková and Eva Blažíčková. On the genealogy of Czech Duncanism, I would like to display the evolution of Duncanist thinking. What captivates me on this theme is the unique approach of the Czech representatives, who used the knowledge of the Duncanism to create their own methodologies. What does Czech Duncanism epitomize as such? And in which ways does the Czech branch reference back to its Duncanist origin?

It leads me to the second part of my thesis, where I would like to analyze the different materials and explore the elements of the Czech Duncanism – movement principles, philosophical ideas, and synergy of the artistic and pedagogical methods. Isadora Duncan refused to be called a dancer in the common meaning of the word, and preferred to be titled an artist – also the Czech Duncanism broadens the conception of the dancer as a creator, choreographer, pedagogue, and independent artist – I believe that the versatility and openness of the dancers are encoded in the Duncanist education, which does not restrict to the movement itself but develops a holistic approach to individuality. I aim to reflect and articulate the essence of what might shape the kinaesthetic memory of Duncanism and what is characteristic for the Czech branch. Does a certain movement vocabulary exist in Czech Duncanism? How did the elements of Duncanism transform regarding the development of modern and contemporary dance tendencies? How does the body of a Duncanist dancer change? I would like to intertwine the theoretical insight with my physical exploration of the analysed elements, and I will use this knowledge to find the tools for my creative process.

In the third and last part, I would like to examine the phenomenon of the landscape and its memory, which can be reflected in my movement. In the embodied memory of the landscape,

I want to understand the processes arising between my body, the place, and the emotion, as well as the different processes shaping the memory. I want to let the landscape speak to me as material to be deciphered, experienced, and interpreted. From the broader reflection on the landscape and memory, which has been in some way interrupted, suppressed, radically changed, or overlaid with different sediments, I want to approach the specific cultural landscape of a defunct town Lauterbach. I am interested in perceiving the history of the town in the context of the Sudetenland and I want to have a better understanding of the place and the individual layers of its memory. As a performer, I feel an urgency to read the landscape within my body – I search for the tools and structure, which could help to proceed with my creative explorations. I intend to connect in my artistic practice two of my interests, existing independently of each other – the usage of knowledge of Duncanism and my lived experience from the landscape. I am also interested in the relationship between memory and the poetic imagination in the creative process. How to deal with the absence of physical traces? How to embody something that no longer exists? What to draw the movement from?

I think that the connection between Duncanism and the memory of the landscape can bring an interesting dialogue that will allow seeing both themes from new perspectives. This thesis aims to provide a theoretical basis for my artistic explorations and at the same time to record these explorations, which do not necessarily lead to the creation of a specific work of art, but rather I want to discover the potentiality of this concept that can be further developed. My concern lies more in the process and the journey as such, with an open space for various outcomes.

1. ROOTS OF CZECH DUNCANISM

In this chapter, I introduce the movement, which is called the Czech Duncanism, an independent branch transforming the essence of Isadora Duncan's thought into a unique artistic and pedagogical concept. I observe the paths, by which Duncanist ideas had enrooted to the Czech dance landscape – where the reformatory approach to body and movement found such a great resonance, especially in dance education. I focus on the line of three personalities, representing the continuity of the Duncanist thought; this line begins with the influence of Elizabeth Duncan (1871-1948) and her dance school that moved to Prague in the early 1930s. Elizabeth brought up the new generation of Czech modern dancers and pedagogues, who based their teaching methods on the principles of Duncanism. One of Elizabeth Duncan's students was Jarmila Jeřábková (1912-1989), who was commissioned to be a leading head of the Czech branch of Duncanism; with her lifelong pedagogical efforts, she developed a dance method based on universal Duncanist principles. Jeřábková shifted the original Duncanism towards more creative approach, she enriched the natural movement with the temperament of Czech folkloric dance, and with the classical music of the Czech composers. The dance group of Jarmila Jeřábková represented an alternative current to the official dance scene, she maintained the values of liberated modern dance and the Duncanist tradition against the obstructive culture politics of former communist regime. Jeřábková's successor Eva Blažíčková (1943) leads the Czech Duncanism to individualized and emancipated contemporary dance movement, carrying the philosophical and spiritual legacy from her teacher. Eva Blažíčková contributed to the professionalization of the Czech Duncanism by founding the Duncan Centre Conservatory (1992), which is the only secondary school in the Czech Republic devoted entirely to choreography and contemporary dance. According to Eva Blažíčková, the Czech branch of Duncanism is one of the most lineal descendant of Duncanism in general¹; the dance knowledge passed from one generation to the next is constantly evolving and changing, reflecting on current dance developments.

¹ Interview with Eva Blažíčková in Hulec, *Dát tělu jeho původní význam*. In *Taneční sezóna*, 1998, year 2, number 5-7, p. 6.

The first Czech reflections on Duncanism in its early phase were written by Emanuel Siblík (1886-1941) and Jan Rey (Jan Reimoser, 1904-1979), who were the first authors founding the Czech-written professional dance literature. Emanuel Siblík, the dance critic and publicist, was a great admirer of Isadora Duncan, and a witness of her performances in Paris. Siblík published the monography *Isadora* (1929), a variant of Isadora's autobiographical book *My Life*, extended by a selection of the texts by various authors, and the aesthetic reflections of Siblík himself. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of Isadora Duncan's death, Siblík wrote a study devoted to Duncan's relationship to the ancient Greek dance and philosophy – *Ancient Beauty in Modern Dance*, a subtitle *From Plato to Duncan – Antické krásno v moderním tanci, Od Platóna k Duncanové* (1937). Siblík was in close connection to Elizabeth Duncan School in Prague, and he documented the context of the origin of Prague Duncanist movement in one chapter of the book *Dance Outside and Inside Us – Tanec mimo nás i v nás* (1937, pp. 117-128). Jan Rey, Siblík's younger colleague, and a founder of Czech dance historiography, translated Isadora Duncan's most important essays in a book *Isadora Duncan: Dance*, published on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Isadora's tragic death (1947). Jan Rey set Isadora Duncan as a role model for the young modern dancers. Nonetheless, in another book from 1947 (*How to Look on Dance – Jak se dívat na tanec*), he stays rather reluctant to the successors of Isadora Duncan. Rey mentions the "tragedy of great personalities" as Isadora, whose spiritual heritage is often deadened by the dilettantism and stylistic platitudes of many so-called Duncanist dancers, who repeat the dance and emotional clichés. (Rey, 1947, p. 63) Rey only acknowledges Jeřábková's school and dance group, which distinguish from other so-called Duncanist dancers. According to Rey, Jarmila Jeřábková, the head representative of the Czech Duncanism, develops a valuable and ingenuine approach to the Duncanist legacy.

I have had a unique opportunity to draw the material from the private archive of Eva Blažičková, providing primary and secondary sources of information about the Duncanism in connection to the Czech environment, and including the books, articles, programs from the performances, photographs, and video recordings. From the primary sources, the unpublished typewritten notes and reflections by Ladislav Vavruch, a longtime friend of Elizabeth Duncan, document his impressions from the stay at the Elizabeth Duncan School in Klessheim (1929), and later with Gertrude Drück at the Duncan School in Mörlbach (1964). Vavruch describes the course of the lessons and the principles of Duncan teaching. The personal recollections of

Elizabeth Duncan are captured by Vavruch's wife Marie Vavruchová (1905-1994) in an unpublished transcript entitled *Memories of Tanta or The Case of Duncanism (Vzpomínky na Tantu aneb Věc Duncanismus, 1986, the archive of Eva Blažíčková)*. Vavruchová presents an informal and cordial portrait of Elizabeth Duncan (nicknamed *Tanta*), she also gives an interesting view on her teaching style, and methods.

The representatives of Czech Duncanism Jarmila Jeřábková and Eva Blažíčková are the authors of the original dance methodologies grown from the Duncanist principles, these publications belong to the essential literature for dance pedagogy in the Czech context: *Dance Education – Taneční průprava* written by Jarmila Jeřábková (1979) and *Methodology and Didactics of Dance Education – Metodika a didaktika taneční výchovy* by Eva Blažíčková (2005). My personal encounters with Eva Blažíčková, the most competent witness and active representative of the Czech branch of Duncanism, are the invaluable source of information, which help me to elucidate the background of Czech Duncanism and its situation across different time periods.

I also studied the material in The Theatre Institute in Prague – especially, the Czech dance magazines – *Dance Letters (Taneční listy)*, where the critical reviews, reports, and articles about Jarmila Jeřábková and Eva Blažíčková and their dance groups were published, and *Dance Season (Taneční sezóna)*, a magazine founded in 1997 (today known as *Dance Zone – Taneční zóna*), and devoted to the contemporary dance scene. For the historical context of the beginnings of modern dance in Czech environment, I came from the publication of Ivana Kloubková (*Expressive Dance in the Czechoslovak Republic – Výrazový tanec v ČSR, 1989*).

In this chapter, the Czech authors connected to Duncanism are represented by Zdeňka Pilková, Ladislava Petišková, Nina Vangeli, Dorota Gremlicová and Marta Lajnerová. Musicologist Zdeňka Pilková (1931-1999) was closely connected to the work of both head representatives of Czech Duncanism. She was a former student of Jarmila Jeřábková, and worked as the dramaturge and director of the Chamber Dance Studio, founded by Eva Blažíčková. Ladislava Petišková (1943) a teatrologist, with a focus on pantomime and interdisciplinary genres, devoted several texts to the philosophy of Duncanism. Nina Vangeli (1946), a current leading theorist of theatre and contemporary dance, and a pedagogue of The Duncan Centre

Conservatory has an insight into the work of the youngest generation of Czech Duncanism, and its activities. The historical research of Isadora Duncan's performances in Bohemia was published by Dorota Gremlicová (1966), a choreologist, a dance critic and publicist. Marta Lajnerová (1975) concentrates on the historical beginnings of the Czech Duncanism, the Elizabeth Duncan School, and its continuation in the work of Jarmila Jeřábková. Several contributions from these authors are published in the proceedings of the conference held in November 1998 in Prague on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the birth of Isadora Duncan and the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Elizabeth Duncan (entitled *Tribute to Isadora Duncan*, 1998). The complex view on the program of the Duncan Centre Conservatory, its foundation, development, and the alumni is presented in two proceedings published by the Duncan Centre Conservatory itself: *DUNCAN CENTRE. The volume to the 10. anniversary of foundation* (2002), and *DUNCAN. Special 20th Anniversary Issue of the Founding of Duncan Centre Conservatory* (2012).

I concentrate on the beginnings of the Czech Duncanism, and then on the portraits of the three most important personalities in the Czech Duncanist sphere, three generations, who encouraged the development of the modern and contemporary dance scene, and established the basis for dance education on both a societal and a professional level.

1. 1. Thought Background and Formation of Czech Duncanism

Isadora Duncan introduced herself to the Czech audience for the first and last time in 1902, after her appearance in Budapest and Vienna, where she achieved great success and her solo performances transferred from the aristocratic and intellectual salons into the public halls and theatres. Isadora performed in three spa towns – Franzensbad (Františkovy Lázně), Marienbad (Mariánské Lázně) and Karlsbad (Karlovy Vary) – nevertheless, these events did not receive much press and public interest. In her study, Dorota Gremlicová discovers that only the local German journals write about Isadora, they name her *Illusions-Tänzerin* or *Tanz-Poetin*.² The reactions to the encounter with a new form of dance vary “[...] from enthusiasm over surprise,

² More about Isadora Duncan's Czech performances in Gremlicová, D. (2002). *Isadora in Bohemian Spas (Forgotten Events)*. In *Remembering – Isadora Duncan – Emlékkönyv*. Budapest: Orkesztika Alapítvány kiadványa, pp. 63-69.

through an attempt to understand until rejection.” (Gremlicová, 2002, p. 64) Dorota Gremlicová explains, that the fact the Czech press does not mention Isadora Duncan’s visit at all, was a result of the increased tension between the Czech and German populations in Bohemia at the time (the spa towns were predominantly German). Another encounter with Isadora Duncan’s thoughts came indirectly, via guest performances of Olga Vladimirovna Gzovska, a Russian actress, practicing a Duncanist style of movement, and performing at dance soirées during which she combined the words and physical movement. (Kloubková, 1989, pp. 4-5). Also, the Czech dancers Ervína Kupferová and Věra Vratislava were both inspired by the dance reform of Isadora Duncan and they acquainted the Prague audience with expressive movement tendencies, they both referred to Isadora in their efforts at the renaissance of dance art. (Siblík, 1929, p. 234)

The Czech environment was imbued with the ideas of the body cultivation and healthy physical education, disseminated by the Sokol movement – the largest Czech national gymnastic organization. The Sokol was founded in 1862 by Miroslav Tyrš and Jindřich Fügner, who, inspired by the ancient Greek ideal of *kalokagathia*, created a system of physical training, emphasizing the patriotism, and the spiritual heritage of the Czech nation.³ Before the First World War, the Sokol was trying to improve women’s physical training and rhythmic dance, and with these efforts, Sokol prepared a supportive climate for the adoption of the modern dance’s new ideas. The representative of the Sokol movement, Augustin Očenášek introduced the method of Émile-Jaques Dalcroze after visiting his school in Hellerau.⁴ Thus, Dalcroze’s thoughts penetrated the Czech lands a little earlier than the Duncanism; the Association of Jaques-Dalcroze Rhythmic Gymnastics (*Spolek Jaques-Dalcrozovy rytmické gymnastiky*) was founded in Prague in 1912, organizing the courses for children and young people – Anna Dubská, one of the first graduates of the Hellerau school, become the main pedagogues in Prague. (Siblík, 1937b, p. 134) The first generation of Czech modern dancers and choreographers (mostly women) studied at the Prague Dalcroze School, some of them also trained with Helena Vojáčková, who practiced Bess Mensedieck’s system of gymnastics (Vojáčková studied at Mensedieck School in Berlin). At the same time, the dancers travelled

³ Later, in 1869, the women’s branch of Sokol was established in Prague, and gradually in other smaller towns. The first female trainer of Sokol was Klementina Hanušová (1845-1918). See Pohlová, *Počátky ženského sokolského tělocviku*, in *SOKOL – Vzdělávatelské listy*, 2019, number 2, p. 3.

⁴ Klement, *Na cestě k sokolskému rytmickému tělocviku*, in *SOKOL – Vzdělávatelské listy*, 2019, number 2, p. 8.

to supplement their knowledge at the vocational schools abroad. (Kloubková, 1989, p. 5) After the First World War, the interest in modern dance education and expressive dance increased even more, in the mid-1920s, the pioneer modern dancers opened their own courses and founded small dance groups and companies.⁵

The beginnings of Duncanism in Czechia are connected with the already mentioned Sokol organization. The dance theorist Emanuel Siblík states that the aesthetic or artistic potential of the physical training practised by Sokol was restrained by the conservative members, and therefore the Sokol movement remained on the purely gymnastic level. (Siblík, 1937b, p. 120) The Sokol sought to refine the women's exercise process, and it was the Duncanist philosophy that seemed to them to be a suitable tool for this emancipation. It is important to realize, that the first Czech Duncanist dancers emerged from the female members of the Sokol. (Vangeli, in Petišková, 1998, p. 33) Eva Blažíčková describes the cultural milieu, which was so important for the expansion of the Czech Duncanism: "The identical ideals, referring to ancient Greece, the desire for the return of human psychosomatic unity, the philosophical currents following the same direction, the atmosphere of the First Republic, the desire for the renaissance of society, the wide-open windows to the new impulses... A whole large group of (we are speaking about the 20s and 30s of the 20th century) scholars, art historians, artists, architects, philosophers created a sufficiently strong background for this impulse." (from the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A)

A group of the Prague intellectuals played a key role in the penetration of the Duncanist thoughts into the Czech environment; Jiří Václav Klíma (1874-1948) was a pedagogue, translator from German and English, a researcher in comeniology⁶ and issues of the aesthetic

⁵ Three most significant pedagogues and choreographers of that time represent Jarmila Kröschlová, Milča Mayerová and Jarmila Jeřábková. Jarmila Kröschlová (1893-1983), a student of Dalcroze School in Hellerau, created her works based on the expression of movement, mime aspects of dance, inner emotions, and theatricality – this approach predestined her for cooperation with the theatre directors: Jiří Frejka, Jindřich Honzl, E. F. Burian. (Kloubková, 1989, p. 20-24) Milča Mayerová (1901-1977), a student of the Dalcroze School in Prague and Hellerau, from where she went to Laban's school in Hamburg and Berlin (she received a choreographic diploma there). Mayerová was the main representative of Laban's method in Czechia and she worked in a close relationship with the Prague avant-garde. (Kloubková, 1989, pp. 25-29) About Jarmila Jeřábková and her development of Czech Duncanism, I will write in detail in chapter 1. 2. 2.

⁶ Comeniology is a scientific discipline devoted to the research of the work and thoughts of John Amos Comenius (Jan Amos Komenský, 1592-1670), Czech philosopher, pedagogue, theologian, and the last bishop of Unitas Fratrum. Comenius is considered to be one of the founders of modern education science.

education. Karel Weigner (1874-1937) was a physician and anatomist who studied topographic anatomy, kinesiology, and anatomy in relation to physical training, he was also an active member of the Sokol and director of the State Physical Education Courses. Another member of the group was Ladislav Vavruch (1895-1967), a lawyer, and great enthusiast of Duncanism, he also practiced dance and was writing about the Duncanism. In 1929, this group of men invited the Elizabeth Duncan School to perform in Prague. (Lajnerová in Petišková, 1998, p. 25) The reform endeavors of the Duncan sisters found a strong resonance in the Czech environment and also aroused curiosity. On the initiatives of Augustin Očenášek in 1929, the directorate of the State Physical Education Courses sent twenty-four girls and young women, the Sokol members, to the summer courses at the Elizabeth Duncan School at château Klessheim near Salzburg – to learn the principles of Duncanism and bring the new knowledge to Czechia. (Siblík, 1937b, pp. 117-118) Jarmila Jeřábková at age of seventeen took part in this first expedition to Klessheim, she was immediately discovered by Elizabeth Duncan for her extraordinary talent and received the full scholarship to continue her studies at the Duncan school. Ladislav Vavruch accompanied the Czech group to Klessheim and he captured his impressions of the Elizabeth Duncan School in a poetic-philosophical text. He perceives the soulful harmonious movement, realized in Klessheim, as almost metaphysical experience. It is interesting to read Vavruch's testimony and have in mind that Vavruch himself also practiced Duncanism – one of a few, in the sphere, which was predominated by women:

“True dance is a manifestation of the soul, a bridge towards the body, a path toward harmony lost since Hellenic times. When a human floats in effortless jumps, carried by the rhythm of music, his breasts are full of air and melody, he is a whole being, living and rejoicing in his way, as a flower, a butterfly, enjoys his full being. He creates his own world in dance. He sees a blossom more beautiful than which was ever born, he sees a star brighter than which has ever shone in the sky, he experiences a desire more powerful and pure than which could ever be born in the dust of everyday life. In front of him, he sees Plato's ideas in a perfect form, from which the phenomena and desires of everyday life are derived. And when he returns from the transformed reality, from the dance, into everyday life, he finds it irradiated by the reflection of the viewed ideas. He goes through it as a whole being and tries to transform his dispersed matter into images close to the seen ideas. He brings the rhythm of dance into the life and finds

the strength not to get lost in a thousand phenomena of everyday life, but to cherish the life as a masterpiece on which he cooperates.” Vavruch, 1929, p. 3⁷

In the multicultural environment of Klessheim, the official languages were English, French, and German. Yvonne Berge, a French dancer and a former Elizabeth Duncan student describes the usual daily routine at Klessheim School.⁸ The schedule consisted of morning training session with gymnastic and preparatory movement exercises, and afternoon language and music lessons, where the students practiced e. g. sight-reading, or score reading. The lessons of dance and improvisation were held in the evening from five to seven o'clock. In additional drawing lessons, they explored expressionism, kinetism, graphic musical and rhythmic expression and composition. Yvonne Berge characterizes her experience of this holistic education as *enriching* and *stimulating*: “Music, painting, dance, theatre and literature all came together to form a perfect whole.” (Robinson, 1997, p. 54)

After returning from the Klessheim courses in 1930, the Czech students appeared in a performance, which presented the program and philosophy of the Duncan school, Gertrud Drück was leading the dance part, an introductory speech and lecture was given by Karel Weigner and Jiří Václav Klíma. Emanuel Siblík claims that for Prague, this event was a kind of enlightenment, a discovery of unknown world of natural movement and new type of dance; Siblík regrets that the Sokol movement in its beginnings did not have such mentors, who could enhance the gymnastic education with the impulses of Duncanism. (Siblík, 1937b, p. 118) However, he also mentions that the Czech Sokol members in Klessheim were distinct with their sense of rhythm, and spontaneity, not suppressed by the rationalism of modern education, therefore, the Czech students attracted attention of Elizabeth Duncan and Max

⁷ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Skutečný tanec jest projevem duše, mostem k tělu, cestou k harmonii od Hellenských dob ztracené. Vznáší-li se člověk v lehkých skocích nesen rytmem hudby, prsa plná vzduchu a melodie, jest bytostí ucelenou, žijící a radující se po svém způsobu, jako vyžívá plnou svou bytostí květina, motýl. V tanci vytváří si svůj vlastní svět. Vidí květ krásnější, než jaký se kdy zrodil, vidí hvězdu jasnější, než jaká kdy svítila na obloze, prožívá touhu mocnější a čistší, než jaká by se mohla kdy zrodit v prachu každodenního ruchu. Vidí před sebou v dokonalé formě Platonovy *idee*, od kterých jsou odvozeny jevy a touhy každodenního života. A když se vrátí ze skutečnosti vidinou přetvořenou, z tance, v každodenní život, nalézá jej ozářený odleskem zřených *ideí*. Jde jím jako ucelená bytost a snaží se přehnutí jeho roztěkanou hmotu v obrazy blízké zřeným *ideám*. Vnáší v něj rytmus tance a nachází sílu, aby se neztratil v tisíci jevech každodenního života, ale měl jej rád jako dílo, na kterém spolupracuje.” (Vavruch, 1929, p. 3) The unpublished text can be found in the archive of Eva Blažičková.

⁸ From a letter of Yvonne Berge to Jacqueline Robinson, dated 1986. In Robinson, 1997, pp. 53-54.

Merz.⁹ The number of the Czech women who have attended the Duncan courses in Klessheim over the years is expected to be fifty-four. (Lajnerová, in Petišková, 1998, p. 22)

For the winter season, the Elizabeth Duncan School moved from Klessheim to Dresden, and to the Paris suburb of Ville d'Avray. In the years 1931-1933, the winter courses of the Duncan School moved to Prague (Lajnerová, in Petišková, 1998, pp. 27, 28), and were led by Elizabeth Duncan herself – her influence on the formation of the Czech Duncan dancers was crucial. Also, Gertrud Drück¹⁰, the main pedagogue in Klessheim and an important assistant of Elizabeth Duncan, was teaching in the Prague courses, Siblík describes Drück's classes: "Gertrud emphasizes the spatial guidance of each movement, and its elongation into the atmosphere, highlights the oppositions of lines, and she demonstrates their mutual harmony." (Siblík, 1937, p. 119-120)¹¹ The image of the movement arises inside of the soul before it is embodied in the dance expression,¹² and unlike in Sokol gymnastics, the muscles are relaxed, yet active, and accompanied by the breathing exercises.¹³ The group of Prague intellectuals and enthusiasts (Karel Weigner, Jiří Václav Klíma, Augustin Očenášek, Emanuel Siblík, and Ladislav Vavruch) founded the Elizabeth Duncan Society (1932) to support the school and other dance activities of the students. In 1933, Elizabeth and her school had to leave Austria for the political reasons, therefore they relocated all the courses to Prague. (Lajnerová, in

⁹ "A few years ago, the first Czech Sokol members appeared among the pupils of the school at Klessheim chateaux near Salzburg, and Elizabeth Duncan, just like him [Max Merz], were surprised by the pupils' rhythmic sense, experiencing music smoothly with a kind of vigorous intertwaving and with spontaneity, which both dance pedagogues did not find in German, or English, or French students. In the following years, this observation was repeated in other Czech women, so they became convinced that the life of the Czechs is probably not yet shouted by the rationalism of modern education, that the oppression of machines has not yet dominated their nervous system, that they can still experience instinctual powers." Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. „Před několika léty objevily se mezi žačkami školy na zámku Klessheimském u Salzburku první Češky-sokolky a Alžběta Duncanová stejně jako on [Max Merz] byli překvapeni jejich rytmickým smyslem, prožívajícím plasticky hudbu s jakousi živelnou prolínávaností a spontánností, které oba taneční pedagogové nenalezli ani u Němek, ani u Angličanek, ani u Francouzek. Toto pozorování se v následujících letech u dalších Češek opakovalo, takže nabyli přesvědčení, že u Čechů život srdce není patrně dosud zakřiknut racionalismem moderní výchovy, že útlak strojů dosud neopanoval nervové jejich soustavy, že se u nich mohou ještě uplatnit pudové mohutnosti.“ (Siblík, 1937b, p. 119)

¹⁰ Gertrud Drück (1895-1968) was a former student of German branch, who was moved to America during the World War I., and became a teacher at Duncan School in New York. Gertrud devoted her entire life to the pedagogical side of Duncanism, she led the school in Europe until 1968. (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 13)

¹¹ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. "Než Gertruda klade zároveň důraz na prostorové vedení každého pohybu, ozřejmuje jeho ladnost a prodlužování do atmosféry, vyzdvihuje protiklady linií, sama předvádí jejich vzájemnou harmonii." (Siblík, 1937b, p. 119-120)

¹² Siblík, 1937b, p. 119.

¹³ Ibid, p. 120.

Petišková, 1998, p. 24) Jarmila Jeřábková became Elizabeth Duncan's assistant, she took over the leadership of the school in 1934, and a year later the entire Prague school was entrusted to her. Elizabeth Duncan also appointed Jeřábková as the head of the Czech Duncan branch.

Jarmila Jeřábková aimed to develop the original Duncanist teaching further, from the first years, she began to build the methodology of Duncanist dance, which would reflect the current progress of modern dance technique. Gertrud Drück, who had been the head teacher and assistant for years, maintained the authentic method and taught the students the original Isadora Duncan's repertoire. Marie Vavruchová remembers that Gertrud Drück was not very fond of the innovations made by Jeřábková, there was a tension between these two women and their different conceptions of Duncanist work. (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 13-14)

The Duncanist summer courses were transferred from Klessheim to the Moravian château Velké Opatovice, from 1935 to 1937. The photographs capture an idyllic atmosphere of the women moving in the open air, with natural beauty and spontaneity. They still clearly evoke Isadora Duncan's Greek inspiration – *the ancient beauty manifested through the modern sensibility* as Emanuel Siblík defines the Duncanist dance. (Siblík, 1937a, p. 89) Nina Vangeli mentions an interesting fact, that in its beginnings, Czech Duncanism was a collective matter, the women at that time rather practiced dancing in a group than solo dancing, also because they were familiar with the collective training from Sokol. (Vangeli, in Petišková, 1998, p. 33)

Jarmila Jeřábková remained in the contact with Elizabeth Duncan, who was invited to the commissions for the final exams, and occasionally commuted to Prague for the next years. (Lajnerová, in Petišková, 1998, p. 29) The graduates of the Prague Duncan School were founding the branches in other Czech regions, the Elizabeth Duncan Society helped the newly established pedagogues and their local schools: Růžena Pluhařová in Semily, Maryna Hradilová in Hradec Králové, and Stáza Volmutová in Klatovy. (Siblík, 1937a, p. 96) With the individual approaches of the dancers and pedagogues, the growing branch of Czech Duncanism began to create a new original and independent dance movement, however always referencing back to its original Duncanist source.

1. 2. Development of Czech Duncanism Over Three Generations

Duncanism is not based on dance technique, but charismatic personalities, (Vangeli, in Petišková, 1998, p. 36) I consider this sentence to be the very core of Czech Duncanism – the dance knowledge is transferred in a dialogue between the student and her or his “guru”. The personality of the teacher, his signature in creating the method, and a constant opening of a space for growth – are the aspects of the dynamic evolution of Duncanism in the Czech Republic. I look closer at three personalities – Elizabeth Duncan, Jarmila Jeřábková, and Eva Blažíčková – the representatives of three generations of distinctive pedagogues, who established the Czech Duncanist movement.

1. 2. 1. Elizabeth Duncan

The eldest sister of the Duncan’s siblings, Elizabeth Duncan (1871 – 1948), implemented the reformative ideas of modern dance education into the practice. Her lifelong pedagogical efforts sometimes seem overshadowed by her more acclaimed sister and great dancer Isadora, nonetheless, Elizabeth figures as the main pedagogue of the Duncanist method from the beginning. “Isadora knew how to dance to express what she wanted to say. Elizabeth did not dance, but she knew how to get people to dance so that they could express themselves.”¹⁴ The first dance school of the Duncan sisters was founded in 1904 in Berlin-Grunewald, and the children could study and live in the school for free. Initially, Isadora and Elizabeth worked without a proper methodology, dependant on their intuition, the ideas about a holistic dance and musical education of children were very progressive at that time. (Lajnerová, in Petišková, 1998, p. 18) During its existence, the school has constantly changed its location; Elizabeth relocated the school to Marienhöhe near Darmstadt in 1911, and three years later she sent her six oldest students (Anna, Irma, Lisa, Maria Theresa, Margot, Gretl), to become teachers at the school’s new branch in Paris, housed in a former hotel Bellevue¹⁵, renamed by Isadora to *Dionysion*. During the First World War, the Duncan sisters left Europe and moved with their German and French students to New York. (Lajnerová, 1998b, p. 12) After returning to Europe,

¹⁴ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Isadora věděla, jak tančit, aby vyjádřila to, co chtěla říct. Elisabeth netančila, ale věděla, jak lidi k tanci přivést, aby se dovedli vyjádřit.” (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 20)

¹⁵ Seroff, 1972, pp. 225-228.

the school was searching for a new building, which was found firstly in Potsdam (1921-1924), and later at château Klessheim near Salzburg (1925-1933).¹⁶ Elizabeth constantly developed her teaching methods as a chief pedagogue at all the Duncan schools, Isadora devoted herself to teaching rather rarely, with more advanced students, and then, in post-revolutionary Russia. The pupils learned the movement preparation and technique from Elizabeth, and subsequently, they were formed in artistic expression by Isadora. (Lajnerová, in Petišková, 1998, str. 17) After the death of Isadora Duncan, the curriculum paid more attention to educational goals, and the interest in pupils' stage practice gradually decreased, Elizabeth and her colleagues considered the environment of the theatres as a harmful factor for the development of the child's character. Later, the stage form of Duncanism was raised again by Jarmila Jeřábková and the Czech branch. (Lajnerová, in Petišková, 1998, p. 23) Amongst the friends of Elizabeth Duncan were philosophers and scientists, Elizabeth was influenced by professor Alexander Truslit (1889-1971), music pedagogue and researcher, who created his own holistic technique and method based on movement exercises, developing the physical disposition and connected musical shaping with kinaesthetic perceptions. For his method, he also invented graphic notation in form of curved lines.¹⁷ Truslit researched the artistic music playing, according to Marie Vavruchová, he was also a devotee of Duncanism and close friend of Elizabeth. (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 15) The musician, music pedagogue, and school director Max Merz (1874-1964) supported Elizabeth with the school organization, and especially, in the courses – he accompanied all dance lessons with exquisite piano improvisations, and composed the original works for the dancers, fulfilling the requirements of practiced movement. He had also written the theoretical papers dealing with physical education and Duncanism. (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 7)

In 1931-1933, the courses were held in Prague, where Elizabeth Duncan taught until 1935. Elizabeth's pedagogical work in Prague was an important beginning of Czech Duncanism, as Marie Vavruchová writes, she and her peers have never seen Isadora Duncan dance live – except Emanuel Siblík, who witnessed Isadora's performances in Paris and conveyed her thoughts about dance in his extensive publications (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 1), but the authentic experience of Elizabeth Duncan's teaching became a great impetus for Prague to continue

¹⁶ Lajnerová, 1998, str. 22.

¹⁷ More about Alexander Truslit at www.alexander-truslit.de.

with the Duncanist conception of dance. The Vavruch family from Prague attended the private lessons at Elizabeth Duncan (they called her *Tanta*), and became her close friends. Marie Vavruchová helped Elizabeth in the dance courses with the language and communication in Czech. Vavruchová remembers, that Elizabeth spoke a very original language, a mixture of English, and German, sometimes adorned with French words.¹⁸

According to Vavruchová, Elizabeth as a very energetic teacher was able to motivate and bring each student to the edge of her movement and expressive possibilities. She paid special attention to the correct body posture, straight, yet relaxed torso, and lightness – her line was always pointing upwards – the people in Prague were saying that the Duncan dancers can be recognized on the street by their body posture and gait.¹⁹ For Elizabeth, the involvement of the student's imagination in the learning process was crucial, all the dance movements began in evoking the inner images: "She always tried her best to get the most out of the student. She provoked in unexpected ways. But first of all, in the basic spirit of Duncan's dance – by imagination. Countless evocations of various moods, from nature, from human emotion, mental state of joy, surprise, amazement and ceremonial festivity."²⁰ She activated the dancer's body to make every single movement *impact, speak, and act*. The main aspect of the movement was its experience (the movement arises as a result of this experience).²¹ Elizabeth detested the emptiness in dance expression, and emptiness in a human, she revived the dancer to the highest activity and vigilance.²²

After Elizabeth Duncan appointed Jarmila Jeřábková the holder of Duncan legacy, in the following years, she was traveling to Prague for further inspections. Every visit of Elizabeth Duncan was meant to have a strong impact on the Czech dancers – Marie Vavruchová quotes an excerpt from her husband Ladislav Vavruch's letter to Elizabeth: "The time you have been here must be full of new impressions and thrill for Jarmila and advanced students who can

¹⁸ Vavruchová speaks about a kind of Duncanist slang, in Czech *duncanovština*. (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 2)

¹⁹ Vavruchová, 1986, p. 28.

²⁰ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. "Všemi prostředky se vždy snažila dostat z žáka co nejvíc. Provokovala neočekávanými způsoby. Ovšem předně v základním duchu duncanovského tance představitost. Nespočetné vyvolání nejrůznějších nálad, z přírody, z lidského citu, duševního rozpoložení při radosti, překvapení, úžasu i vážné slavnostnosti." (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 21)

²¹ Ibid, 1986, p. 21.

²² Ibid, 1986, p. 22.

already appreciate the value of your presence, which distinguishes them from ordinary life as something very beautiful, new, colourful. As an experience... it must only act as a shock that brings new paths, new inspiration.”²³ Elizabeth Duncan laid the foundations of Duncanism as a direction, transferred her sister’s ideas to the Czech environment, and inspired with her pedagogical approach. The further step and mission for her successor Jarmila Jeřábková was to elaborate the methodical system based on the Duncanist principles; she created a specific Czech interpretation of Duncanism, connected to the classical music of Czech composers and to the folklore tradition.

1. 2. 2. Jarmila Jeřábková

Jarmila Jeřábková (born Mikulíková, 1912-1989) came from a remarkable artistic family,²⁴ her exceptional musicality permeates all Jeřábková’s dance, choreographic and pedagogical work. Jarmila Jeřábková attended the Sokol physical training from an early age. In 1929, at the age of seventeen, she was selected for the summer courses of the Elizabeth Duncan School in Klessheim. Her motional and artistic talent was soon discovered, and Jeřábková received an offer directly from Elizabeth Duncan to study the professional three-year courses (1929-1932).²⁵ In the inspiring environment of Klessheim and later in the Paris school, she understood how to guide the movement not as a change from one position to another, but as a flow reviving freely the dancer’s body in a dialogue with the musical current. (Pilková, 1989, p. 11) The Duncan school in Paris organized an exhibition of the drawings and paintings in the Vaudemont Gallery, and the attention of the visitors attracted the sensitive movement sketches of Jarmila Jeřáková. (Siblík, 1937b, p. 118) She was a dancer of lyrical, cultivated expression, noble movement, and innate musical sensitivity. (Kloubková, 1989, p. 20) At the beginning of her dance career, she took part at Riunione Internazionale Di Danza Florence

²³ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Doba, po kterou zde jste, musí být pro Jarmilu a pokročilé žákyně, které již mohou posoudit cenu Vaší přítomnosti, plna nových dojmů a napětí, které je od běžného, obvyklého života jako něco velmi krásného, nového, barevného odlišuje. Jako zážitek... Pobyt... Musí působit jenom jako šok, který přináší nové cesty, novou inspiraci.” (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 27)

²⁴ Her father František Jeřábek was a violin virtuoso, concertmaster at the National Theatre in Prague, and a member of the Symphonic Orchestra in Minneapolis. Jeřábková’s mother Anna studied fine arts at the University of Munich, she was also a pianist, and student of the Czech composer Bedřich Smetana. Jeřábková’s aunt Gabriela Roubalová was a world-famous opera singer, performing under name *La Boema*, she was a member of the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, and the director of the Sydney Opera House. The biographical information retrieved from www.ceskyhudebnislovník.cz.

²⁵ See duncaninstitut.cz/en/festival/about-new-europe-festival/Jarmila-jezabkova/.

(1931), the Congress of Artistic Dance in Warsaw (1932), and at the Congres d'Education Physique in Paris, where she won first prize (1937).²⁶

Jarmila Jeřábková was supported by the intellectual Prague environment, already mentioned Ladislav Vavruch, Jiří Václav Klíma, and Karel Weigner, who applied the reformative ideas to the physical experience, and practiced these ideas by themselves.²⁷ In Czechoslovakia, Jarmila Jeřábková completed her studies in the state courses, and at the same time, she began teaching at the music school in Slaný (1932-1934), and at the Prague school of Elizabeth Duncan (from 1934 on), which changed its name and location several times during its existence. The main school residence was at the palace Metro at National Street (*Národní třída*), from 1937 under the name *Jarmila Jeřábková School of Artistic Dance founded under the Personal Direction of Elizabeth Duncan*.²⁸ Eva Blažíčková mentions that the movement morphology of Duncanism already changed at that time, at the beginning of Jarmila Jeřábková's pedagogical career, it experienced a natural shift to the contemporary time.²⁹ The painters, and visual artists, who were fascinated by the beauty of natural movement, often visited the dance atelier Metro and participated visually on the created choreographies: Karel Svoboda, Antonín Landa, Olga Frejková, who herself was a student of Jeřábková's courses for years, Emanuel Frinta, Josef Soukup, Jarmila Havlíková.

In 1935, Jarmila Jeřábková founded her own dance group, composed of her students³⁰, the choreographies were focused on the chamber group dance. The greatest choreographic success of Jarmila Jeřábková was *Slavonic Dances (Slovanské tance, 1940)* to the music of Antonín Dvořák. Jeřábková did research for this piece for two years, when she studied various sources, mainly the studies by Vratislav Vycpálek.³¹ She based the suite of dances only on the music itself, without adding any plot elements, she created a stylistically unified, natural choreography, filled with deep emotionality and unrestrained joy. (Kloubková, 1989, str. 20)

²⁶ Pilková, 1989, p. 13.

²⁷ From the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A.

²⁸ See duncaninstitut.cz/en/festival/about-new-europe-festival/jarmila-jerabkova/.

²⁹ From the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A.

³⁰ Elvíra Mařatková, Jarina Smoláková, Marta Horová (who also studied for two years at the Munich Duncan School), Dagmar Bittnerová, Dana Bořkovcová, Onta Jankovská, Běla Dintrová.

³¹ Vratislav Vycpálek (1892-1962), Czech music theorist, composer, folklorist. He was a son of Josef Vycpálek (1842-1922), the collector of folkloric songs.

Slavonic dances, accompanied live by the Prague Symphony Orchestra, with the conductors Václav Smetáček and František Škvor, were performed in the large Prague halls (Vinohrady Theatre, Lucerna Palace, Smetanova Hall), and thus transferred modern dance from experimental dance studios in front of the wide audience. (Pilková, in Petišková, 1998, p. 12-13) *Slavonic dances* had several reruns not only in Prague but also in other Czech regions. In the atmosphere of the protectorate, each performance with Czech music was a national manifestation against the German occupiers, the dancers brought encouragement and belief to the people. Jarmila Jeřábková deepened the original lyricism and emotionality of Duncanist expression, she brought the Czech and Slavonic elements and a completely original elaboration of the rhythm component. She enriched the path of natural movement outlined by Isadora and Elizabeth Duncan with the tradition of Czech folklore dance. In her choreographic work, Jeřábková concentrated on the Czech composers – Antonín Dvořák, Vítězslav Novák, Josef Suk, and Otokar Zich.³²

After the communist putsch in 1948, the Czech dance scene was divided into an official area, narrowed down to ballet and folklore dance, and perceived by the cultural authorities as *professional*, therefore financially secured, and an unofficial area, which included modern dance and successors of interwar avant-garde. Artistic freedom was suppressed by the communist regime, which was adopting the ideas dictated by the Soviet Union. The individualistic and open-minded Czech Duncanism was stopped in its promising development and had to retreat to the artistic underground. Zdeňka Pilková (in Petišková, 1998, p. 14) talks about the tragedy of Czech national culture, which is mismanaging its talents – the choreographic potential of Jarmila Jeřábková was stopped at the beginning. Jeřábková had to resign from her own performative and choreographic work, and she devoted herself entirely to the pedagogical activities – often under difficult operating and economic conditions and forcibly cut off from contact with the world current of modern art. (Petišková, 2002, p. 9) Despite her private studio being taken over by the state in 1955, she continued giving the courses to children, students at universities, dance teachers, primary and secondary teachers, Sokol instructors, and gymnasts – her life-long pedagogical experience was enormous.³³

³² Jeřábková's choreographies: Antonín Dvořák – *Moravské dvojzpěvy*, Vítězslav Novák – *Balady*, Josef Suk – *Dvojzpěvy*, Otokar Zich – *Polka jede*.

³³ Jeřábková taught dance at the Institut of Physical Training of Charles University in Prague (from 1938) and at the Institut of Physical Training of the pedagogical faculty of Palacký University in Olomouc (from 1949). She

Jarmila Jeřábková struggled against the uniformity of the official dance pedagogy, she proclaimed the return to nature, to the physical laws, and argued that it is not possible for the movement of different people to be the same, because everyone has different dispositions. She enriched the children's education with the creative approach, which develops the child's imagination, and emotions, and leads towards a versatile open-minded personality.

Jeřábková returned to her choreographic work in the end of 1950s, when she created a dance performance for the group of children from her courses.³⁴ Jeřábková also reconstructed and performed Isadora's original works in the film *How Isadora Duncan Danced (Jak tančila Isadora Duncanová, 1958)*.³⁵ In the 1960s, the talented adult students gathered around Jarmila Jeřábková, and renewed the Jeřábková's dance group – they gave rise to *the new wave* of Czech Duncanism.³⁶ Jeřábková's studio was very progressive in Czechoslovakia at that time, they practiced dance improvisation, intuitively, and without a connection to dance development abroad, they searched for the new movement and expressive possibilities.³⁷ According to Eva Blažíčková, the very fact that they were improvising in the studio was considered an oddity at that time. This was changed when the first dancers from California came to Czechoslovakia, and suddenly, all the dancers across the dance spectrum discovered the improvisation techniques and began to promote it.³⁸

Jarmila Jeřábková's Dance Group II worked in unfavorable conditions, the dancers were young women, often mothers of one or more children, who attended courses in their spare time

created a method of dance education for children with visual impairments (1945-1955) and cooperated with the State Research Pedagogical Institute in Prague to examine the correct body posture and alignment (1954-1956). From the second half of the 1950s, the interest in modern dance began to partly revive; the dance pedagogue Jarmila Kröschlová invited Jeřábková to cooperate on new curricula of physical training for the primary schools and of dance education for the music schools. In the 1960s, she worked in the field of psycho-gymnastics at a psychiatric clinic in Prague. She also taught at the summer courses of the Isadora Duncan International Society in Gmunden, Austria. See duncaninstitut.cz/en/festival/about-new-europe-festival/Jarmila-jezabkova/.

³⁴ The performance *From Spring till Winter (Od jara do zimy, 1958)*, choreography Jarmila Jeřábková and Elvíra Mařatková, music collaboration Jiří Ruml, based on the story of Anna Jurásková and drawings by Karel Svobinský.

³⁵ In 1970s, Jeřábková worked for the film and television; she choreographed the dance parts for the film adaptation of Julius Zeyer's fairy-tale *Radúz a Mahulena* (1970), directed by Petr Weigl, and danced by the members of Jeřábková's group and the dancers of the Army Artistic Ensemble. Together with Czechoslovak Television, Jeřábková also created a series for pre-school and school children *From Spring till Winter (Od jara do zimy)*, *Play with us (Hrajte si s námi, 1971)*, and *Rhymes* by Leoš Janáček (*Říkadla, 1973*).

³⁶ This new wave represented Eva Blažíčková, Živana Bonušová, Ljuba Eremiášová, Helena Metličková, Nea Nováková, Zdenka Pilková, Hana Pivcová and Libuše Šváblová.

³⁷ Filipová, *Spanilé břemeno poslání*, in *Taneční listy*, 1993, year 31, number 3, p. 12-13.

³⁸ Ibid.

after work or after school. The first public performance took place on June 27, 1968 at the opening of the Emanuel Frinta's exhibition in the Metro studio in Prague. The new wave brought a new music dramaturgy – Jarmila Jeřábková left her beloved classical music composers (Antonín Dvořák, Josef Suk, Bedřich Smetana), and influenced by her students, she concentrated on Czech contemporary composers – Petr Eben, Vladimír Sommer, Klement Slavický, Miloslav Kabeláč, Zdeněk Lukáš, Jarmil Burghauser. The choreographies were often created collectively by the students, solo pieces were created by the performer herself with the choreographic supervision of Jarmila Jeřábková. Also the connection to world Duncanism and the opportunity to share experiences was renewed; Jeřábková and her students received an invitation to perform at the Academy of Raymond Duncan in Paris (1968), and at the celebration of Isadora Duncan's 90 anniversary in Esslingen near Stuttgart, organized by Duncan Gesellschaft (1969).³⁹ The group organized *The Evenings of Movement and Dance Studies*, which took place in 1969, 1970 and 1972 in Prague, the programme was always composed of several choreographic studies and etudes.⁴⁰ The most remarkable ones included the compositions *The Lover's Magic Spell (Starodávné čarování milému)* with the music by Petr Eben⁴¹, and *Overture to Antigone*, with the music by Vladimír Sommer. This choreography reflected the struggle with trauma suffered by the Czech nation after the Russian occupation in 1968.

Jarmila Jeřábková, as the only student of the original Duncan circuit, reshaped this Duncanist direction so that it does not become a historical subject, it preserves its liveliness and keeps pace with other directions of modern dance. She also raised a new generation of her successors, thus ensuring continuity of Czech Duncanism.⁴² On the occasion of her 60th birthday, Jarmila Jeřábková passed the legacy of the Czech Duncan branch to her student Eva Blažíčková, who continues to develop the methodology, true to Duncan's principles. Nina Vangeli mentions, that with Eva Blažíčková, the Czech Duncanism leaves the national revival, its lyricism, and folkloric trace.⁴³ The next stage of Duncanism is the gradual individualization

³⁹ See duncaninstitut.cz/en/festival/about-new-europe-festival/Jarmila-jezabkova/.

⁴⁰ Divišková, 1973, p. 6.

⁴¹ More about *The Lover's Magic Spell* in Chapter 2. 4.

⁴² The successors of Jarmila Jeřábková: Eva Blažíčková, Živana Vajsarová, Hana Pivcová, Jarka Hojtašová, Marcela Látalová, Marie Bučaiiová, Milada Černá, Luba Eremiášová, Olga Fejková, Jarka Hojtašová, Marta Horová, Jana Hroudová, Lea Janečková, Míla Košnářová, Libuše Kurková.

⁴³ Vangeli, in Petišková, 1998, pp. 35-36.

of expression and the artistic paths of its representatives. In honor of her great teacher, Eva Blažíčková founded the international choreographic competition Jarmila Jeřábková Award (in 1998), a competition for the original dance works in contemporary dance and dance theatre, and to the music of Czech composers of the 20th century (Bohuslav Martinů, Miroslav Kabeláč, Petr Eben, and others).

1. 2. 3. Eva Blažíčková

Contemporary Duncanism has its main representative in Eva Blažíčková (born Bártová, 1943), dancer, choreographer, pedagogue, founder of the Duncan Centre Conservatory (1992) and Chevalier of *Ordre des Palmes académiques* (France, 2003).

The Duncanist thoughts were already present in Eva Blažíčková's family, her grandfather František Daneš was a friend of Jiří Václav Klíma, who stood in close contact to Czech Duncanist branch in its beginnings. Blažíčková's mother Eva Bártová (Danešová) visited as one of the selected students the Elizabeth Duncan courses in Klessheim, where she met Jarmila Jeřábková, later the leading pedagogue of Prague Duncan school.⁴⁴ From age of six, Eva Blažíčková attended the courses of Jeřábková, whose influence was determining for Blažíčková's future paths. In the 1960s, she continued as a dancer in Jeřábková's dance group, representing the new wave of Czech Duncanism. Blažíčková wanted to study the contemporary dance on a professional level, however, in Czechoslovakia at that time, the state conservatories provided only classical ballet as the main subject.⁴⁵ Blažíčková was interested in natural movement, physicality and mechanics of the body, therefore, she decided for the studies in physiotherapy and therapeutic gymnastics, supplemented by the study of dance pedagogy at the Dance Department within the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (HAMU).

Blažíčková remained in close contact with Jarmila Jeřábková and her dance group, at the same time, she was searching, and exploring to find her own approach – to deepen and innovate

⁴⁴ Kaňková, *Jdu cestou pokorného hledání*, interview with Eva Blažíčková, in *Taneční zóna*, Summer 2009, year 13, p. 74-79.

⁴⁵ Expressive or modern dance styles were taught only in the private studios.

the principles and values discovered by Isadora Duncan and Jarmila Jeřábková and make them accessible to the young generation. (Blažíčková, in Petišková, 2012, p. 12) In 1972, Eva Blažíčková was appointed by Jarmila Jeřábková as the head of the Czech Duncanist branch, and three years later, Blažíčková founded her own ensemble Studio of Chamber Dance, composed of former Jeřábková's students.⁴⁶ Eva Blažíčková, in cooperation with musicologist, dramaturgist, and director Zdeňka Pilková developed inventive musical dramaturgy, which included the most important authors of Czech contemporary music, who often were not allowed to be performed: Miloslav Kabeláč, Petr Eben, Marek Kopelent, Jaroslav Krček, Iša Krejčí.⁴⁷ In the music of modern composers, Blažíčková found above all a resonance of ideas that reflected the restlessness and tragic contradictions of the time. Studio of Chamber Dance belonged to a few ensembles of that time that developed modern dance and provided an alternative to a unified view on dance presented in the theatre companies – the musical invention, the need to constantly search for new means of movement expression, poetics and protest character of some works.⁴⁸ In the program for the performance in 1977, the group was characterized by the following text, almost a manifestation of their understanding of dance as part of life:

“In our group the joy of dance merges with the desire to find a clear tone of artistic and personal truth within the rich symphony of modern life. We are looking for natural feelings and harmony. We want to conquer them and give them back to life. Dance is a necessity for us. We want to create dance which gives a statement about us; dance pays us back by creating us. We come from different backgrounds, we are of different age but we belong together. Our children grow among us.” From the program to the performance *Confession*, 1977.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Studio of Chamber Dance I. operated in the years 1975-1989, followed by the Studio of Chamber Dance II, operating in the years 1990-1992.

⁴⁷ Miloslav Kabeláč (*Eight Inventions for Percussions* 1979, 1985, 1986, *Eufemias mysterion*, 1986, *Reflections*, 1986, 1987), Petr Eben (*The Lover's Magic Spell*, 1973, *Songs for Lute*, 1979), Marek Kopelent (*Black and White Tears*, 1979, *Dawn*, 1989, 1992), Jaroslav Krček (*Incantation of the Beloved*, 1983, *Raab the Harlot*, 1986), Iša Krejčí (*Divertimento*, 1979). (Petišková, 2002, p. 12)

⁴⁸ Eva Blažíčková with the Chamber Dance Studio won several awards: Main award at the National Exhibition of Modern and Stage Dance 1983, 1981, 1979, Prize for the best solo performance (National Exhibition of Modern and Stage Dance) 1985, Magazine Dance Lettres Prize (Studio komorního tance) 1987, First Prize in National round of Competition of Folk Art Schools, 1988, 1985.

⁴⁹ In Justl, The speech given at the opening of the Duncan Centre Conservatory, 10. 11. 1992. Printed in Petišková, 2012, p. 64.

In the 1980s, the Studio of Chamber Dance under the name *The Isadora Dance Group* gained recognition abroad; in Great Britain, the group took part at the festival of Czech arts in King's Lynn, Norfolk (1988).⁵⁰ The performances at the Fermoy Centre Theatre received a favorable review in the *Eastern Daily Press*: "With the Isadora Duncan Group we quickly realised that it shows dance art and technique at a considerably high level. The outstanding feature of this small ensemble is the fluency of, and the perfect control over, movements, mirror movements and impressive gestures masterly performed."⁵¹ The talented young people from the Chamber Dance Studio were confronted with the same situation as before Eva Blažíčková was – they wanted to study contemporary dance, but the traditional state conservatories rather ignored any alternative modern approaches.⁵² The invitation to the America Dance Festival in 1989 was a moment of revelation for Eva Blažíčková; in Czechoslovakia, she struggled to uphold the principles of modern dance into the dance education, but she faced a lack of understanding from the official authorities. In America, she witnessed that the principles of modern and contemporary dance are commonly acknowledged and developed. (Bartoš, 2017a, 4 October) The American experience and the enthusiasm of her young students was the motivation for Blažíčková to realize her dream, and establish a professional school of contemporary dance in Prague.

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, new possibilities in the cultural sphere appeared, and finally, Blažíčková's idea of the school for contemporary dancers found support at the Ministry of Culture and Education. The Duncan Centre Conservatory was opened in 1992, exactly 90 years after the performances of Isadora Duncan in West Bohemia. Eva Blažíčková became the founder and director of the Duncan Centre,⁵³ which is so far the only state conservatory in the Czech Republic devoted exclusively to the contemporary dance and choreography, which is the main subject. (Bartoš, 2017b, p. 3) The core of the six-year study lies in the Duncan teaching method, which includes the dance technique and improvisation – Duncan technique does not understand movement as a result, but as a mean of his own search for what lies

⁵⁰ Eva Blažíčková led the seminars at the Norfolk College of Arts and Technology. She met a British representative of Czech Duncanism Ljuba Eremiášová Giles, a former student of Jarmila Jeřábková, who lived and worked in King's Lynn.

⁵¹ See Petišková, 2002, p. 11.

⁵² Návratová, an interview with Eva Blažíčková, in Petišková, 2002, p. 15.

⁵³ Eva Blažíčková was a director of the Duncan Centre Conservatory until 2009.

behind the technique. (Petišková, 2002, p. 17) The improvisation in the approach of Blažičková, calls for the spontaneous movement without the speculative phases,⁵⁴ bodily spontaneity leads to the bodily thinking and releases the source of dance creativity. (Vangeli, 2012, p. 44)⁵⁵ The school gradually expanded into an incubator of young choreographers and dance creators, Nina Vangeli writes about the next stage of emancipation of Czech Duncanism – the new generation of creators, strong individualities, whose first authorship is the authorship of the body. (Vangeli, 1998, p. 38)

Lenka Flory (1966), the daughter of Eva Blažičková, was one of the first pedagogues at the Duncan Centre Conservatory. She danced in *Ultima Vez*, the dance company founded by Wim Vandeykeybus. After her return to Prague, Flory organized the *Progressive European Dance Theatre Project*, which later became the International Festival Confrontations, presenting the best of experimental and alternative works in contemporary dance and dance theatre genres. The performances took place in the Theatre of Duncan Centre, which became a culture centre connecting the school with the theatre and festival activities.⁵⁶ The graduates of Duncan Centre became the distinctive choreographers, artists, and creators: Lea Švejdová-Čapková, Kristýna Lhotáková, Barbora Látalová, Kristýna Liška Boková, Veronika Šváblová, Petra Hauerová, Adéla Laštovková Stodolová, Marta Trpišovská, Kristýna Celbová, Lenka Bartůňková, Dora Sulženko Hoštová, Kateřina Stupecká, Jana Vrána, Tereza Lenerová. From the Duncan Centre came also a new generation of male performers and choreographers: Jan Beneš, Petr Opavský, Jan Malík, Michal Záhora, who later became a director of the Duncan Centre, and Jiří Bartovanec (a choreographer and dancer in a group of Sasha Waltz). Blažičková led the courses and seminars of the Duncan method all around the world,⁵⁷ her research and

⁵⁴ In the tradition of Duncan, the movements are not *invented* but *revealed*. More about this topic in chapter 2. 3.

⁵⁵ In addition to the Duncan method, the curriculum of the school includes various dance techniques, specialized workshops, work with professional choreographers, and the students also have a possibility of internship abroad.

⁵⁶ After 1989, the Theatre of Duncan Centre (Eva Blažičková, Lenka Flory) and the Prague Dance Festival (Yvonna Kreuzmannová) were two main institutions, which promoted the contemporary dance and contributed to its dynamic progression. In 1997, Lenka Flory co-founded the magazine *Dance Zone* (Taneční zóna), which focuses on the Czech dance scene across the genres, and reflects its themes, infrastructure and cultural-political context. Flory with her partner Simone Sandroni founded the international ensemble *Déjà Donné*, which moved from Prague to Italy in 2006.

⁵⁷ Munchen 1992, Slovakia 2009, Turkey 2008-2009, Hungary 2007, 2005, 2004, 2002, Tchaiwan 2005, Portugal 2004, 2002, Great Britain 2002, 2001, 1987, Finland 2003, 1990, France 1992, 1990, Germany 1987, 1986, 1984, 1983, Belgium 1988, Italy 1988, 1987, China 2001, 1998, 1989, USA 1989.

pedagogical activities were conducted in cooperation with Charles University in Prague and the Ministry of Education. The life-long theme of Eva Blažíčková is the dance in education. She is the co-founding member of the informal group Dance Vision (*Vize tance*), composed of dance publicists, pedagogues, organizers, and curators of dance festivals, who form the program for the future development of Czech contemporary dance. Blažíčková in cooperation with the Dance Vision worked on the promotion of dance and movement education in basic education, this program was successful, and from 2010, dance education has been incorporated into the Framework educational programs for the Czech primary schools. Blažíčková introduces the program as follows:

“The characteristics of the subject Dance and Movement Education were therefore developed on the philosophical basis of Duncanism. The program should thus become a path to individual awareness, research, and rediscovery of the wisdom and information that is hidden in the human body. The dance understood and taught in this way provides tools for the development of the individual potential of each child in its entirety – it does not offer ready-made solutions, ready-made form. It provides a secure foundation, on which it is possible to build bodily intelligence aimed at developing a natural, organic movement, dependent on the individual anatomical, physiological, and psychological prerequisites of the student. Such a conception of dance is avoiding conveying a certain type of dance to pupils, whether in terms of genre, trend, style, or a specific, determining morphology. It also does not work with the principle of mechanical repetition and drill. Teaching dance is a long-term process conditioned by will, intelligence, intention, and amount of talent. This makes it a possibility for every child.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ From the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A. Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Charakteristika předmětu Taneční a pohybová výchova byla tedy díky tomu vypracována na filosofickém základu duncanismu. Program by se tak měl stát cestou k individuálnímu uvědomění, zkoumání a znovuobjevování moudrosti a informací, které jsou skryty v lidském těle. Takto chápaný a vyučovaný tanec zprostředkuje nástroje pro rozvoj individuálního potenciálu každého dítěte v celé šíři – nenabízí hotová řešení, hotovou formu. Poskytuje bezpečný základ, na kterém lze budovat tělesnou inteligenci směřující k rozvíjení přirozeného, organického pohybu, závislého na individuálních anatomických, fyziologických a psychologických předpokladech žáka. Takové pojetí tance se vyvaruje toho, aby žákům zprostředkovalo určitý druh tance, ať už ve smyslu žánru, trendu, stylu nebo konkrétního, určeného tvarosloví. Také nepracuje s principem mechanických opakování a drilu. Výuka tance je dlouhodobým procesem podmíněným vůlí, inteligencí, záměrem a mírou nadání. Tím se stává možností pro každé dítě.”

The program of dance teaching in basic education is built on four domains: 1/ Seeking one's own place through her/his corporeality, 2/ Promoting authenticity, 3/ Developing body intelligence, and 4/ Belonging – Creating community.⁵⁹ Dance is understood primarily as a value, which connects intellectual and emotional stimuli with physical; increased kinetic sensitivity leads to critical consciousness and self-discipline. (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 9) The search for truthfulness, beauty, and harmony of natural movement is the legacy of Jarmila Jeřábková. For Blažíčková, Duncanism is above all an ever-changing organism, a philosophy of life and dance, which opens the people to inner strength, and freedom. Currently, Eva Blažíčková endeavors to equalize all the artistic disciplines within the education; the aim is that each primary school would have a choice of three out of five artistic subjects into its school curriculum: Drama, Music, Dance, Arts, and Audio-Visual Arts. It would be another step in the emancipation and equalization of Dance and its values in education, in the culture sphere, and Czech society. Eva Blažíčková brought up new generations of professional artists, connected spiritually to Duncanism, which has expanded its philosophy on many different levels. Furthermore, Eva Blažíčková embodies the visions of Isadora Duncan – to bring the dance close to the lives of the people – the Duncanist thoughts are penetrating to the basic education, and thus, the tradition of Czech Duncanism has its continuation.

1. 3. Interpretations of Duncanism: Question of Legacy

I think that anyone who follows the footsteps of Isadora Duncan and her successors who endeavor to develop her legacy, is first confronted with the question of what actually forms the very essence of Duncanism – there is no such thing as a unified view of its form, and I think that the diversity of opinions ensure the liveliness of Duncanism. In the Czech environment, Duncanism has acquired a very specific form, which detaches itself from the task of reconstructing or re-enacting the movement material in the intentions of Isadora Duncan, it leaves the repertoire of this exceptional dancer aside, and tries to move Duncanism to the present time. Blažíčková emphasizes the philosophical and pedagogical values of Duncanism that are timeless: “[...] we do not see our path in preserving the choreographic legacy of Isadora Duncan, but in the values, which she discovered in dance for us. Only her sister

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Elizabeth had time to develop them for teaching future generations. The principles of Duncanism, based on the study of natural movement, not only do not age but they seem to be more and more relevant.”⁶⁰ Czech environment uses the Duncanist principles as a starting point for one’s own movement research and creates original works in the wide context of contemporary dance. This departure from the traditional understanding of Isadora Duncan’s legacy has its justification, it would be a mistake to think that Czech Duncanism uses the name *Duncan* only as a prestigious brand that provides its representatives with some attention. There is a much deeper belief that sees the legacy of Duncanism primarily in its responsibility to develop and nurture a free-spirited and independent creative personality:

“Duncanism in dance is a kind of world-view, or rather a life feeling. It is described as a dance style but there is more to it: it has the ability to provide the artist with another way of feeling and thinking, with a certain spiritual order which allows one to grow and develop in its own right, like a real artist grows, from one’s own self, from one’s own anxiety, from one’s own sensual and spiritual call, from one’s imagination. This ability of duncanism could only arise from its essence – its clear deep human simplicity and naturalness, its spiritual universality. Such values were never foreign to the Czech spiritual and artistic genius – at any time, in any scientific or artistic field. Here I see the connection between duncanism and the Czech dance efforts represented by you and your group. It is a universal life feeling of a dancing artist, which cannot be trained but which one can acquire as one’s own like a creed.”⁶¹

It is also important to point out that the Czech Duncanism was not developed only by women – there is a significant amount of male representatives of the Czech Duncanism – from the group of the Prague intellectuals to the dancers of the Chamber Studio of Dance, till the new generation of the artists graduated from the Duncan Centre Conservatory.

To summarize the concept of Czech Duncansim, I came to seven definitions, which can characterize this phenomenon and its broad content:

⁶⁰ From the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A.

⁶¹ An excerpt from Jan Drda’s letter to Jarmila Jeřábková from 26. 10. 1943 (Petišková, 2012, p. 9).

PHILOSOPHY: Czech Duncanism is understood as a philosophy of dance, or more broadly as a philosophy of life, which interconnects the physical and spiritual forces. This philosophy is embodied through the individuality of a human and the personality of the artist. Dance represents a natural part of human life, as well as the creative potential, which should be constantly developed.

INSTITUTION: During its existence, Czech Duncanism developed from the underground sphere into an institution, which represents a unique place among other world schools of Duncanism. The Duncan Centre Conservatory educates the future professional choreographers and artists and is the only Czech state secondary school with higher education, which is devoted exclusively to choreography and creation.

METHOD: Czech Duncanism prefers to speak about a Duncanist *method* than a *technique*,⁶² it is called a *living method*⁶³ or an *artistic method*, based on a holistic philosophy, and leading to dance authorship.⁶⁴ The specially conducted improvisation creates the core of the Duncan method,⁶⁵ which includes also the Duncan technique – *an inarticulate yet undeniable and functional system*.⁶⁶ The technique develops the natural movement, and respects the peculiarity of each person.

ABSENCE OF STYLE: Czech Duncanism refuses to characterize itself as a dance style. The individual representatives of Duncanism create their authorial style but do not canonize it as a dogma. Nevertheless, I would like to research the kinaesthetic memory of Duncanism to find out if there exists such a thing as signature movement, which subconsciously returns across generations and appears in altered forms in this shared memory.⁶⁷

ORGANISM: The Duncanist conception of dance is based on universal principles, independent of time. The movement morphology of Duncanism is constantly changing and evolving with a

⁶² From the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A.

⁶³ Nina Vangeli in Magdová, 2017, June 6.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ From the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A.

⁶⁶ Blažíčková, recorded by Návrátová, in Petišková, 2002, p. 19.

⁶⁷ I will deal with this topic in more detail in Chapter 2.

particular artist and a changing society.⁶⁸ The Czech Duncanism can be perceived as an unfinished process, a live organism reflecting the present.

IDENTITY: Although the contemporary artists enrooted in Czech Duncanism differ in individual approaches, they are connected by a Duncanist view of life, and they form a spiritually connected community. The individual identity and collective identity encounter each other.

SHARED CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE: Czech Duncanism expands the art of dance throughout society, crossing the boundaries of art into life as a psychosociological fact.⁶⁹ The Duncanist conception of dance education concentrates on the spiritual values of dance and transfers the ethical and humanistic dimension of dance.

2. ELEMENTS OF (CZECH) DUNCANISM

What I find particularly fascinating about Czech Duncanism is that this movement is extended beyond the sphere of dance in its conception – I would like to follow an open and listening attitude with which Duncanism absorbs the stimuli across various disciplines and uses them to support and develop its philosophy. At the same time, however, it seems that this boundlessness makes Duncanism a difficult medium to grasp – which arises a question for me: it is possible to identify clearly what kind of movement belongs to Duncanism and what does not? I observe that there is a certain expectation or even mythology associated with Duncanism, an anchored portrait of a liberal-minded Woman with a lyrical–heroic range of the bodily movement; this widespread image anticipates and assumes what movement in a manner of Duncanism *should* look like or what *can* be considered as a Duncanist dance. Nonetheless, any fixed or stereotypical idea is standing in opposition to the philosophy of Duncanism, whose main premise is to reflect on the current development of dance knowledge while being faithful to the principles defined by the founder Isadora Duncan – another question occurs to me – what kind of forms and transformations the individual principles have achieved? How has the content changed and what does remain? The word “style” is almost forbidden in the Czech Duncanist environment – the *style* from the perspective of

⁶⁸ Michal Záhora, in Magdová, 2017, June 6.

⁶⁹ Petišková, 2003, p. 102.

contemporary Duncanists refers necessarily to a certain codification, with perhaps a historicizing tendency – and the Czech branch of Duncanism vehemently resists any conservation. Thus, rather than style, I would like to examine the *kinaesthetic memory* of Duncanism to understand what is retained from this shared memory and in what forms.

For this chapter, I came from the following thematic areas:

Primarily, I utilize the collection of the essays written by Isadora Duncan (published in *The Art of the Dance*, New York: Theatre Arts Books, 2nd edition, 1969), where the most important thoughts of Duncanism have their origin.

Another thematic area is represented by the reception on Isadora Duncan's work, I refer to the following scholars: Deborah Jowitt and her analysis of Isadora Duncan's dance movement; Carrie J. Preston on Duncan's Delsartean inheritance; and Kimerer L. LaMothe and her concept of spirituality and its kinaesthetic dimension in Duncan's work.

The subject of my research is to find out how is the thought essence verified and applied in the unique context of Czech Duncanism. The theoretical basis for my research is built upon the methodologies of Jarmila Jeřábková and Eva Blažíčková (see chapter 2. 1.).

The last thematic area, which supports my research, is more diverse and contains authors from the different scientific backgrounds: the theatre anthropologists Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, and their concept of *pre-expression* state; Czech scholar Bohumil Nuska and his studies of rhythm; and Czech theatre and dance theorist Nina Vangeli – on the symbolism of the movement elements seen from the perspective of theatre anthropology.

A special area of my interest lies in the video recording of the choreographies from the archive of Eva Blažíčková. The records document a specific time period of Czech Duncanism (the end of 20th century) and provide me a valuable source of kinaesthetic information: *The Lover's Magic Spell (Starodávné čarování milému)*, *Singing of Hair (Zpěv vlasů)*, *Dawn (Svítání)*, *For Three (Pro tři)*, *Raab the Harlot (Nevěstka Raab)*, *The ChapBook (Špalíček)* – all of these works were created in the tradition of Duncanist thought, yet they are very diverse in nature.

I would like to move between the different types of materials to decipher the elements of Duncanism, and then, how these elements are embodied in Czech Duncanism. I imagine this chapter as a process leading to an imaginary fluid map of the elements, with which I can navigate myself in the contexts intertwining the intentions, wills, methods, and movement explorations. In my theoretical research, I would like to concentrate on the route by which Duncanism is communicated; who is involved in this kinaesthetic communication, what is transmitted, and by what kinetic transfers? I am particularly interested in the moments that intersect with my practice, the transferable qualities with which I can identify, and from which I can continue to draw as an artist, a dancer, a pedagogue.

2. 1. Methodical Approaches Based on Philosophy of Duncanism

“Let the child dance as a child: don’t impose on him the attitudes and the gestures of an epoch which had nothing in common with simple Living and true humanity...”

Isadora Duncan, *Youth and the Dance*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 97-98.

Czech Duncanism is not perceived as a strictly codified dance technique, yet it consciously works with movement principles that are passed from a teacher to a student. The representatives of Czech Duncanism, Jarmila Jeřábková and Eva Blažíčková created the methodological systems, concentrating the Duncanist essence in the dance education of children and youth dancers. I will try to place both methodologies in a mutual dialogue here. Jarmila Jeřábková elaborated her lifelong pedagogical experience in the book *Taneční průprava (Dance Education)*, first published in 1979, SPN in Prague); this publication is of great importance for the Czech dance pedagogy because until then the Duncan technique was not systematically written. However, as Jeřábková herself says in the introduction to the book, other dance pedagogues who had the opportunity to encounter Jeřábková’s work were very inspired by her, and so many of her principles and initiatives in dance education generalized and was published without specifying the source. (Jeřábková, 2004, p. 5) The publication is conceived as a rich collection of movement exercises, dance games, and themes for the improvisation, supplemented by the illustrations by Jarmila Havlíková, which form an integral part of the work. Eva Blažíčková as a direct successor of Jeřábková summarized her findings in the book *Metodika a didaktika taneční výchovy (Methodology and Didactics of Dance*

Education, published in 2005 by the Duncan Centre Conservatory); the publication is a handbook or a manual for the dance teachers, outlining the most important pedagogical principles and goals, each chapter is introduced by a quote and the keywords, followed by the definition of the specific movement and its methodological procedure, ending with an example of practical exercises. From my personal experience with the publications, I can say that both methodologies leave enough space for the individuality of the reader – pedagogue, the authors are not dogmatic in their instructions, they count with further distinctive inventions and interpretations; with both approaches, I perceive a strong resonance of Isadora Duncan’s ideas, the emphasis lays on cultivating natural movement and respecting anatomical and physiological laws of the body.

The technical side of both methods intersects, focusing on a proper body alignment – static and kinetic – and understanding of bodily topography, where each part has its own meaning and function; the development of central movement is emphasized, the center of the body represents the intersection of the physical and mental sides of the movement. The crucial aspect is to realize the centre of gravity, from where all the movement spring outside. The preparatory exercises are focused on training the major muscle groups and mastering the basic types of movement: sustained movement, swinging and pendulum movement, falls, waves, various types of curves, spine rotation, spirals, hanging over, stretching, extension, and release. The correct circulation of energy flow and the awareness of the center of gravity and secondary centers of gravity (seven points – limbs and head) ensure the harmonious and coordinated movement; the paths spreading the movement are guided by a clear visualized idea,⁷⁰ the body working out must not happen at the expense of inner revival, at the expense of experience.⁷¹

Eva Blažíčková remembers the time, when she attended the courses of Jarmila Jeřábková and describes her lessons: “The warm-up was guided by Mrs. Jarmila. Each lesson started differently, so it was an expectation from the very beginning, not a routine. Also, the exercises themselves always required absolute concentration and full commitment to the maximum of individual possibilities. The whole lesson always happened as one unit – it had peaks, and quiet

⁷⁰ In Blažíčková, 2005, p. 16.

⁷¹ In Jeřábková, 2004, p. 9

areas and ended with improvisation, which of course resulted from the content of the lesson. The class ended again in a concentrated calmness and connection to Mrs. Jarmila. Simply, each lesson was an experience mediated by an exceptional pedagogue.”⁷² One of the specifics of the Czech Duncanism in its early phase is a strong connection to the folklore as a source of inspiration, the fusion of the Duncanist principles and the Czech and Moravian folklore dances appear in the movement elements in space, in the form of various jumps, hops, waltz, polka, and mazurka steps. But even more than the kinetic vocabulary itself, Duncanism adopts the deep emotionality of folklore dance and music as the component, which is close to children’s expression in its authenticity. Eva Blažíčková says about this connection: “Duncanism as such is always inspired by folklore. Not because it wants to imitate, but because it is part of a shared culture of the nation. If you want to work with young children, you must use it. Imagine that you want to bring up your children to some cultural level and you don’t tell them fairy-tales, you don’t sing for them and you don’t teach them nursery rhymes. Folklore contains a lot of emotional wealth in itself.”⁷³ Jeřábková uses folkloric inspiration in the children’s creative work, motivated by the connection with nature, and the annual traditions, customs, and songs. Jeřábková also describes a great amount of non-narrative movement tasks playing with different objects (jump rope, hoop, plastic circles, ribbons, and scarves), and exploring the movement elements and principles creatively. Musical accompaniment organically permeates each lesson – recorded music is not considered emotionally full, therefore the pedagogue works together with a live musician (pianist, percussionist), an inventive improviser, who can react to the content, course, dynamic and spatial aspect of the exercises. The most important duty of a teacher, as Eva Blažíčková writes, is to stimulate pupils’ initiative (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 20); the improvisation and creative work is a key component of every lesson, in addition, the improvisation gives the teacher important feedback and transfer information about the state of the student’s movement knowledge.⁷⁴ In the essay *A Child Dancing* Isadora Duncan professes her convictions, almost a manifesto about children’s movement expression, to which the ideas of the Czech Duncanism are deeply related:

“The child must not be taught to make movements, but her soul, as it grows to maturity must be guided and instructed; in other words, the body must be taught to express

⁷² From the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A.

⁷³ From an interview with Eva Blažíčková, prepared by Markéta Kaňková, *My Way Is a Humble Search*, in *Dance Zone*, Summer 2009 year 13. Printed in Petišková, 2012, pp. 27-33.

⁷⁴ Blažíčková, 2005, p. 58.

itself by means of the motions which are natural to it. We do not allow the child to make a single movement unless it knows why it makes it. I do not mean to say that the meaning of every motion must be explained to the child in words, but that the motion must be of such a nature that the child feels the reason for it in every fibre. In this way the child will become versed in the simple language of the gestures.”

Isadora Duncan, *A Child Dancing* (1906), in *The Art of The Dance*, p. 75.

I understand the orientation in the simple language of gestures as the child's ability to accept dance as a part of him and use the movement as a communicative and creative means for his own research and self-expression. The emotional expression of dance should be based on the personal experience because the child can give shape only to that what it knows. (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 61) Eva Blažíčková distinguishes three levels of dance cognition in the development of a child's dance; the first level is strongly sensorial, the spontaneous joy from the movement prevails, the movements are untrained and free, released physical and emotional energy. In the second degree, the child is aware of the movement forms' sources and its effects, the experience deepens, the children reveal an increased interest in technique and ingenuity in the search for form; their expression becomes more controlled, more distinctive, and more expressive. The third-level dancers master the technique and can arrange the movement according to their intentions – they search for means of expression and create forms, using their creative capacity to convey emotional experiences.⁷⁵

At the Duncan Center Conservatory in Prague, the educational program includes the subject called Duncan technique – the term *technique* is not usual in the context of the Czech Duncanism, nevertheless, the utilization of this word refers to a special quality, which is systematically developed here; the Duncan technique as an open system cultivates the bodily intelligence, which leads to creative thinking, artistic independence, and creation of dancer's own movement morphology. In connection to the Duncan technique, Eva Blažíčková talks about the formulation of bodily contexts,⁷⁶ and further states that “[...] the teacher does not only share with the student some sort of pre-conceived shapes and finite results; rather the teacher offers her pupils the possibility to look for essences, recognize a discovery when it is

⁷⁵ Blažíčková, 2005, p. 61.

⁷⁶ Blažíčková, recorded by Návratová, in Petišková, 2002, p. 19.

made, and handle it in a creative manner.”⁷⁷ From my experience, I know how important it is to get the students in a smooth way to a state in which they get rid of their habits and stereotypes and are able to think through the body without being burdened by the inscribed movement structures. In free improvisation, most dancers tend to incorporate a quality of movement in which they feel comfortable and safe – sometimes, I observe a very thin line between distinctive style and personal mannerism, or self-repetition. Therefore, I often try to guide the dancer’s scheme with the right motivation, imagery, and inner awareness, and at the same time, I learn to recognize the quality on which the dancer can build further. Eva Blažíčková states that “The most valuable moment of improvisation is when we find ourselves as if out of time and space, out of backward control mechanisms, in a state from which we can go anywhere.” (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 59)⁷⁸ The search for the movement potential is the essential element of the Duncanist pedagogical method, which encourages the student to learn the movement through its constant exploration, discovering the possibilities and nourishing the individual paths from the very beginning. Jarmila Jeřábková’s pedagogical legacy is to find the balance between technical readiness and spontaneous dance expression of children, Czech Duncanist dance education refuses to lead to a certain unifying style, and at the same time does not focus on educating a priori professional dancer, rather it serves for full personality development.⁷⁹ Eva Blažíčková explains this open conception: “The assumption that dance education is teaching dance movements or steps in any style is harmful especially to children. Equally harmful is the idea that dance education is intended exclusively for dancers.” (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 13)⁸⁰ In the current “mainstream” of Czech dance education, I perceive a strong tendency to lead the children, individuals, and groups, to fast results, as evidenced by a large number of dance competitions, shows, and performances. In this situation, the natural movement, which does not necessarily contain performance

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 23.

⁷⁸ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Nejcennější okamžik improvizace je ten, kdy se ocitáme jakoby mimo čas a prostor, mimo zpětné kontrolní mechanismy, ve stavu, odkud se můžeme vydat kamkoli.” (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 59)

⁷⁹ Isadora Duncan states: “[...] I want to teach your children and create beautiful bodies with harmoniously developed souls who, when they grow up, will show their worth in everything they do, whatever their chosen profession. It is wrong to predetermine the future profession of a child, too young to either discuss it, or choose it. I want to teach all children, but not to make them into dancers. A free spirit can exist only in a free body, and I want to free these children’s bodies.” (Seroff, 1972, p. 306)

⁸⁰ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Domněnka, že taneční výchova je výuka tanečním pohybům nebo krokům v kterémkoli stylu, je škodlivá především dětem. Stejně tak škodlivá je představa, že taneční výchova je určena výhradně tanečnickům.” (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 13)

measures, finds itself a little out of fashion. Duncanism takes a clear position, dance belongs to human life, it is a driving force with an unmistakable social value, this accessibility and openness is its essential need and wealth. From this perspective, Duncanism deserves greater recognition for its approach to developing physical knowledge and bodily thinking from an early age of children.

There is an interesting parallel between the methodical approach of Jarmila Jeřábková and Yvonne Berge, Swiss-French Duncanist dancer and pedagogue, who summarized her dance method in the book *Vivre son corps (pour une pédagogie du mouvement)*, 1975.⁸¹ Yvonne Berge was also a student of Elizabeth Duncan in Klessheim, she directed the Isadora Duncan Memorial School in Paris, and later she founded her own dance school. Initially, Jeřábková and Berge did not know about each other, they created their methodologies independently, but on the same base of Duncanist philosophy. Both methods emphasize the psychosomatic approach; it is interesting to observe the similarities in these two methods – above all, the spiritual and bodily *tuning* (see chapter 2. 3.) and the work with the centre of gravity – *hara*, which is considered to be the centre of instinctive life, a universal principle, and powerful source for creating the movement. The analysis of the relation between the method of Jeřábková and Berge would be an interesting point for further research.

2. 2. Wave, Rhythm, Return to Nature and Natural Movement

“All freedom and spontaneity were lost in a maze of intricate artifice.”

Isadora Duncan, *Movement is Life* (1909), in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 79.

The very first remembrance of my dance beginnings at the Prague Duncan School is the image of a large bright hall and children running around as if their bodies, with whom I passed the space across, were flying. This memory is unfolding in front of me as an impressionistic film, along with the feeling that I have carried with me ever since, that movement is part of myself, it comes from inside of my body, and is a source of great inner freedom. The Prague school of Duncanism passed on to me as a child the essential thought of Isadora Duncan – a request for

⁸¹ I would like to thank Eva Blažičková for pointing me out the possible connection between Jarmila Jeřábková and Yvonne Berge.

cultivating the simple natural movement, which is realized through the human body in the form of the waves, curves, circles, and half-circles. In her essays, Isadora Duncan describes the efforts to purge the dance from all the artificiality, and “sterile” style, and the perception of dance from the expectations of virtuoso technique; the only possible source of *true* dance, according to her, is natural movement, which is derived from the forces and harmony of nature. As Jan Rey mentions, the return to nature can be observed in most of the art reformers as a pursuit of greater expression and gaining a new strength to the art form, which has weakened over time. (Rey, 1947, p. 82). The wave motion, especially the motion of the sea, the flood, and the ebb, the elementary principle of which is the rhythm,⁸² can be seen as an embodied manifestation of Duncanism in its search for the laws of the natural body movement.

“All the movements of the earth follow the lines of wave motion. Both sound and light travel in waves. The motion of water, winds, trees and plants progresses in waves. The flight of a bird and the movements of all animals follow lines like undulating waves. If then one seeks a point of physical beginning for the movement of the human body, there is a clue in the undulating motion of the wave. It is one of the elemental facts of nature, and out of such elementals the child, the dancer, absorbs something basic to dancing.” (Duncan, 1909, *Movement is Life*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 78)

The embodying of the undulating motion generates specific movement dynamics and fluency; as a dancer, I transfer this idea often into my dance, the kinaesthetic sensation of the wave motion stimulates an immediate response in the body, there is something archetypal about the undulation in the dance, furthermore, the elementary idea of the waves and ripples enables to explore in the endless variations the impulses and reverberations, pulsation, and

⁸² Isadora mentions a “dancing” philosopher Plato (Duncan, *The Great Source*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 103), a notion of *rhythm* was established by the Greek philosophers; Plato in *Nomoi (Laws)* evaluated the rhythm as a social phenomenon; the order of the sound (harmony) and the order of the movement (rhythm) are part of the human nature, he considered the sense of rhythm to be a hereditary trait. In *Philebos*, Plato derived rhythmicity from bodily movements, from the somatic side. Also, Aristotle claimed that rhythm, by its existence, corresponds to human nature, he mentioned the instinctive pleasure from the production and perception of the rhythm (Nuska, 2013, pp. 53-57). The etymological origin of the word *Ho rhythmos* is connected with the idea of flow, motion in time – the movement quality of Duncan dance is thus inscribed in the very core of the word *rhythm*; the ancient Greek word in the various contexts also means *dimension, proportion, symmetry, order, harmony, measure, time, flow, stream*. (Nuska, 2013, pp. 148-149)

rising or falling, caused by the gravity. Nina Vangeli points out that the necessity to wave in motion (the waving arms in the ballet, the wave of spine in the modern techniques, the waving hips in the Latin-American dances) is deeply and instinctively encoded in the human body, across the different cultures – predominantly, we perceive the waves and the undulating shapes as aesthetically beautiful. (Vangeli, 1998, pp. 2-3)

The pulse, the simplest form of the rhythm, can be graphically symbolized as a wavy line or a morphologically identical sinusoid, which is a symbolization of the essence in time, and also an image of rotation, oscillation, or any other periodic motion. (Nuska, 2013, p. 69) Bohumil Nuska, a Czech philosopher, art historian, and cultural anthropologist, established in the 1980s and 1990s a new scientific field of *symbolonics*, which deals with the study of the reflections of rhythm and rhythm-derived qualities contained in human activity, particularly in human creativity (Nuska, 2013, p. 11-12), Nuska proposes that the rhythm is the core of all our existence, we are surrounded and permeated by the rhythms that affect and determine all our lives (Nuska, 2013, p. 17). Isadora believes that through the rhythm it is possible to teach a child to perceive beauty and understand a poem as well as to understand the mathematical equation,⁸³ this assumption can be supported by Nuska's theory that the rhythm is present not only in the basis of our thinking and our language, moreover, the rhythm probably forms the soul, and shapes our view of the world. (Nuska, 2013, p. 46) The power of the rhythm can cause hypnosis, or a trance, induce a sedative effect, the feeling of safety or anxiety; the rhythm in dance usually has a unifying effect, yet it also seems that different types of rhythm affect each individual differently. In understanding rhythm, the Duncan school stays in direct opposition to Dalcroze's rhythmic gymnastics, although both methods refer to the ancient Greek conception of the rhythm, they fundamentally differ in its realization.⁸⁴ The followers of Duncanism criticized the approach of Dalcroze for emphasizing the formal side of the musical rhythm and thus setting the limits on fluid continuity, important for bodily movement. The method of Dalcroze tries to physically materialize an independently standing rhythm of

⁸³ Eva Le Gallienne in her memories of Isadora Duncan, in *Isadora Remembered*, 1968, *The Art of the Dance*, pp. 41-2.

⁸⁴ Siblík associates Duncan with the horizontal perception of music (according to Plato's concept of rhythm as an arrangement of movement and the spatial rhythm of melody), while Dalcroze is associated with the vertical perception of music (according to the concept of Aristoxenos – rhythm as an order of temporal durations). (Siblík, 1937b, p. 132-133)

music, while the movement rhythm of Duncan does not come from the music, but from the natural dynamics of the body itself; the solar plexus, the heartbeat, and the breathing are the triggers for the rhythmic flow. The dance movement is thus governed by the rhythm of the body and guided by the arc of the melody – the Duncanists do not dance *to* the music, but *the* music, the content. (Heim, 1988, pp. 79-82) In one part of her essay, Isadora considers the only movement principle to be a continuous wave motion and the rhythmic unity that permeates all the manifestations of nature.⁸⁵ Similarly, Gino Dorflies introduces the concept of *panrhythm*, which embraces all the human creativity and activity, explaining *panrhythm* as “the rhythm that we do not realize, but into which we are constantly thrown, in which we move, breathe, think, and create artistically.” (Dorflies, 1976, p. 47)⁸⁶ I perceive the definition of *panrhythm* clearly connected to Isadora Duncan’s thought, where she describes the dancer as a human medium through which the movement of the universe is realized: “It is a prayer, this dance; each movement reaches in long undulations to the heavens and becomes a part of the eternal rhythm of the spheres.” (Duncan, *The Dance of the Future*, 1909, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 57) Regardless of how euphoric this formulation may sound, it declares that the rhythm encoded in the very essence of our being represents the key element of the philosophy of Duncanism.⁸⁷

I want to concentrate now on the meaning of natural movement, and take a closer look at two choreographies by Eva Blažíčková, both created in 1991 for the group of children and juveniles from the Chamber Dance Studio. *Singing of Hair (Zpěv vlasů)* is a five-minute piece for an eight-member girl group to the music of Chick Corea; the main motif, long loose hair fluttering in the waves, immediately evokes the portrait of Isadora Duncan as a modern bacchant, for whom hair is the manifestation of female freedom. The opening moment has quasi surreal character, the dancers in short white dresses are leaning forward with their loose hair covering

⁸⁵ Duncan, I., *The Great Source*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 102.

⁸⁶ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. „Můžeme tedy připustit, že existuje i mnohem širší, velebnější rytmus, který si neuvědomujeme, do něhož jsme však neustále vrháni, v němž se pohybujeme, dýcháme, myslíme a umělecky tvoříme.“ (Dorflies, 1976, p. 47)

⁸⁷ The rhythm as a part of the microcosm and the macrocosm directly affects our body and its activities – among ultradian biorhythms, ie. the rhythms shorter than one day (the shortest period is in milliseconds) are the biorhythms associated with the nerve activity, the periods in the seconds represent the heart rate, the minute periods are for the respiration, the hourly periods for glandular activity. In the periods longer than one day, the intradian rhythm periods take place at the level of the whole organism or the entire population. More in Nuska, 2013, p. 44.

the faces, shaking the heads, and after a few of the fleeting hand gestures emerging through the hair veil, they unite in one gesture, in which the elbows lift their hair resembling the raven wings. The kinaesthetic vocabulary consists of the swing throwing quality, where the hair is the initiator of the moving and expanding into the space – the weight of the head/hair falls into the curves, circles, torsion, rotations, and turns in the standing position and on the ground. The hands pull the hair diagonally upwards, which causes the body to experiment off balance. The Duncan-like reference can be recognized in the various types of jumps, e. g. a jump with one foot thrown to the back attitude, skipping from side to side, a jump to the side with the leg open in the air and closed to a parallel position, then jumping with the knees raised high and ended to the bend forward. The impulse for the jump arrives from hair sent into the direction of the motion, the viewer perceives hair literally *singing* the triggers of the bodily explorations. At the end of the piece, the dancers return to a cluster of loose hair pulled over their faces – this moment reminds me of the mysterious poetics of the Czech painter Toyen (1902-1980) and her dreamlike, sometimes nightmarish images of the girls. In this choreography, I find the affinities to Duncan's kinesthetics, which is carried in the spirit of the natural movement – the waves, gravity, physical rhythm – and acquiring a playful, imaginative character.

The next choreography that I would like to analyze from the perspective of kinaesthetic understanding of naturality, is called *Dawn (Svítání)*, accompanied by the music of the Czech composer Marek Kopelent (1932). The minimalism of the utilized movement material deals with internal tension and examines the expression of the body, as well as the expression of the group. The dancers are crouched and turned with their backs in the darker part of the stage, hiding their faces from the light; they begin to slowly turn diagonally forward to the source of light, carefully stepping over, fluctuating between the feeling of fear and curiosity. The individual dancers tread attentively, approaching the light, they dare to leave the group and immediately retreat back again; in the movement prevails the simple steps, small jumps, the gestures of the trembling palms, and the balancing on one leg. The attention is dedicated mainly to the inner experience, which is concentrated in the very presence of the body on stage; time seems to have its color, smell, and taste, the group is hypnotized by the light, slowly advances into the unknown, their bodies straighten. One of the dancers stays in the dimness, the group leaves her behind, another dancer turns alternately to the forgotten

person, and to light, she remains indecisively somewhere halfway; the group welcomes the light, the dawn by raising and lowering the arms. The music supports the call of light, hesitation, restlessness, volatility, the philosophy of natural movement acquires an expressive and at the same time contemplative character, the dancers' bodies are permeated by savagery and a vulnerability at the same time. In a review of the choreography *Dawn*, playwright and critic Sergei Machonin wrote that "It is an awakening that unveils our forgotten origins." (Machonin, 1991, p. 8.)

Without knowledge of the context, this piece would not be easy to immediately identify as *Duncanistic*, but on closer examination, the interconnectedness of thought is evident; in both choreographies, the kinaesthetic memory of the natural movement is a matter of momentary exploration, as if movement was originating directly on stage, here and now.

2. 3. Inner Motor, Sharpening Perception, and Opening up Sources of Creativity

"The dance, to be an art for us, must be born out of ourselves, out of the emotions and the life of our times."

Isadora Duncan, *Fragments and Thoughts*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 139.

One of the fundamental pillars of Duncanism is the belief of learning dance as enjoyment or experience, the teaching does not focus only on the movement itself, it is a process associated with emotions.⁸⁸ I was intrigued that Isadora Duncan often speaks in her essays about the soul, which in her conception is not an abstract notion belonging to the spiritual realm, but as Kimerer L. LaMothe mentions, Duncan uses the word *soul* to tell us something about the body.⁸⁹ In ancient cultures, the body was often metaphorically compared to percussion instruments, while the soul represented beat, vibration, and rhythm, a constant flow of living energy. (Barba, 2000, p. 56) This idea creates coherence between the concept of the soul and the theme of rhythm and waves from the previous chapter; the ancient Romans had two

⁸⁸ For the comparison, Margaret Duncan asserts about Isadora: "Dancing was always an experience to her, not merely a performance, and never movement for its own sake." (Duncan, M., 1969, p. 22), Blažíčková continues in this attitude: "The primary task is to teach dance as an experience that becomes part of the life philosophy and lifestyle." (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 10)

⁸⁹ More on Duncan's conception of soul and spirituality in LaMothe, 2005, p. 261.

goddesses to distinguish the energy of sea motion – *Venilia* was the goddess of waves crashing ashore and *Selacia*, the goddess of the waves returning to the open sea, the dance of two goddesses represented two opposite and complementary features of energy, soft energy *anima*, and hard energy *animus*.⁹⁰ It is very important to realize that according to Duncan, the soul expresses a certain state of the physical consciousness, so it is a kind of element that enlivens our bodily being and at the same time is realized through the body. “*Soul* then appears as a function of a body whose senses are trained and tuned, people come to know *soul* in and through their own bodily movement.” (LaMothe, 2005, p. 261).

The method of Blažíčková emphasizes the necessity to orientate self in the morphological topography of the body, which is associated with physical and *spiritual tuning* and *sharpening perception*,⁹¹ which are two important terms associated with the Duncanist understanding of the soul; the activity of tuning could be epitomized by three verbs – to *breathe*, to *vibrate*, to *feel*.⁹² According to Blažíčková, the pedagogue has to bring the student into a state of aware SELF, sharpening the body and the soul (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 59), it is indispensable to open one’s sensory perception and kinaesthetic sensitivity, to prepare the potential of the ingenuity even before we enter the improvisational or creative work itself. *Bodily tuning* appears in each introductory part of the lesson (see 2. 2), Blažíčková describes two exercises on the principle of tuning in her methodology; the first of them deals with the idea of continuous energy flow, which the dancer imaginatively absorbs from the ground through the whole body like a stream of water, letting the flow circulate and revive the bodily and spatial sensation. The second exercise is based on the awareness of the dancer’s sensation of the bodily interior, the dancer is laying on the ground and observing the breath, begins to slowly change the position, and then explores the new situation, the internal process, and spatial change. (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 15-16) In addition, the tuning is an interplay of many details that do not allow the student or the teacher to become commonplace.⁹³ In my artistic practice, I work with the awareness that the body is better able to deal with the creative tasks if this creative muscle or ability is

⁹⁰ In this case, the *anima* and *animus* do not refer to Jungian archetypes but represent the pre-expressive polarity embodied by the theatrical or dance performer. See in Barba, 2000, p. 56.

⁹¹ More Blažíčková, recorded by Návratová in Petišková, 2002, p. 20.

⁹² “Let us first teach little children to breathe, to vibrate, to feel, and to become one with the general harmony and movement of nature.” (Duncan, *Movement is Life* 1909, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 77).

⁹³ In the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A.

firstly reheated and activated. For me personally, the state of awakening corresponds to the process of concentrating and visualizing, this deepening of the conscious self is mediated by various tasks or evocations. In my training inspired by the Duncanist thought, I often begin with a simple visualization of my body seen from the outside view, to become aware of my belonging to space. After observing the relations and distances with the outer eye, I return to the sensation of the inside of my body, trying to minimize the muscle tension and breathing consciously. Not physically moving yet, I visualize a constant rhythm traveling through my body, and accumulating the potential that can unleash the kinetic energy – it is a phase of *tuning*, preparing the body for creative kinaesthetic thinking. Looking back to Isadora Duncan, the pre-creative state serves as a warm-up, characteristic for the Duncanist open training method; Isadora Duncan poetically described such an idea of tuning the body in her essay:

“Listen to the music with *your soul*. Now, while you are listening, do you not feel an inner self awakening deep within you – that it is by its strength that your head is lifted, that your arms are raised, that you are walking slowly toward the light? This awakening is the first step in dancing, as I understand it.”

Duncan, I., *The philosopher's Stone of Dancing*, in *The Art of the Dance* p. 52.

In this case, the initiator of the kinaesthetic tuning is music, in addition to the existence of many other methods that bring us in a state of increased sensitivity and readiness for the creative tasks, in Isadora Duncan the connection with music prevails over others. I am intrigued by the observation of Japanese farmer Masanobu Fukuoka, who claims that even before young children learn music, they should learn to listen to the natural sounds of the wind, river, birds, or forest – according to Fukuoka, one should first open one's perception to the sounds that surround him, and only then he can appreciate the music as an art form with greater pleasure.⁹⁴ To warm up the *motor in the soul* is another expression Isadora Duncan uses in connection with the pre-creative state; Russian director Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) mentions that he encountered Duncan and her approach of the awakening of the soul when he was searching for the similar pre-creative method for his actors at the same time

⁹⁴ Masanobu Fukuoka, 2020 p. 56.

(Seroff, 1971, p. 124)⁹⁵ In his system, Stanislavski describes the exercises that focus on the inner feelings, reviving the physical expression of the movement; the intention of the so-called *plastika*, a soulful movement, is to realize the flow of energy channeling through the muscles (he gave an example of exercise with the visualizing imaginary mercury flowing through the body), and improving the awareness of the movement as a driving force or energy running through the body.⁹⁶ Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese define the level of the *pre-expression*, which represents a practice that aims to access and activate the energy of an actor or a dancer, this process is leading to an intensive presence on stage, the readiness to perform. Various theatrical techniques are dealing with the pre-expressive state, Barba and Savarese assume that there exists certain trans-cultural physiology, which aims to strengthen the energy and liveliness of the performer to achieve an absolute, utter stage presence. In this context, the technique of *acculturation* can also be entered and used to modify the naturalness and spontaneity into the energy quality, prepared for the performative and stylized expression.⁹⁷

Creativity is encoded in the body of a Duncanist dancer, for whom Isadora Duncan finds a reference in Nietzsche's Dionysian conception of art: "Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art [...]" (Nietzsche, 2014, p. 34), this key sentence is further clarified by Kazimierz Braun in *Druhá divadelní reforma*: "[...] under the influence of Apollo, man becomes an artist, under the influence of Dionysus, man himself is a work of art."⁹⁸ (Braun, 1993 str. 32) Improvisation and a call for the thinking body forms the very core of Duncan's pedagogical strategy, the children who came to the one of the Duncan schools were left to explore their own movements in the first months, and later their intuitive movements were gradually adapted to the principles of Isadora's movement aesthetics.⁹⁹ I find interesting how the relationship between the originality of the dancer and the aesthetics in which she or he is

⁹⁵ Victor Seroff about Isadora Duncan and Stanislavski: "She complained to Stanislavsky about the visitors who came to see her in her dressing room during intermission. „I cannot dance that way“, she said to him. "Before I go out on the stage, I must place a *motor* in my soul. When that begins to work, my legs and arms and my whole body will move independently of my own will. But if I do not get time to put the *motor* in my soul, I cannot dance." At that time, I was in search of that very creative motor, which the actor must learn to put in his soul before he comes on stage." (Seroff, 1971, p. 123)

⁹⁶ Stanislavski devoted one whole chapter to the concept of the *plastika*, in *Moje výchova k herectví*, part 2, 1953, pp. 55-61.

⁹⁷ In Barba, Savarese, 2000, pp. 174-176.

⁹⁸ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. „[...] pod vlivem Apollona se člověk stává umělcem, pod vlivem Dionýsa je člověk sám uměleckým dílem.“ (Braun, 1993 str. 32).

⁹⁹ More in Lajnerová, 1998, pp. 18, 20.

brought up can merge; it induces a question how much a certain aesthetic sense of the pedagogue can be reflected in the work of the students, and to what extent students adopt (either subconsciously or consciously) the style of movement of their mentor. Isadora makes her opinion clear: “[...] I shall not teach the children to imitate my movements, but to make their own.” (Duncan, *The Dance of the Future*, in *The Art of the Dance* p. 61). Nevertheless, I think that the problem can be more complex; especially in the beginnings of Duncanism, the students’ movement was adapted to a unifying aesthetic, necessarily linked to the time of the origin, and imbued with frequent references to ancient-greek aesthetics.

Here, I perceive a significant shift and contribution of the Czech Duncanism in the individualization of movement expression, and the pedagogical approach leading to variety and the absence of uniformity. The representative of the second generation of Czech Duncanism, Eva Blažíčková, rejects the aesthetic standards that would lead students to something like a common signature movement style – each dancer has the own and unique aesthetics. For Duncan, the intuitive approach to improvisation characterizes the creative process, not inventing movements, but revealing them,¹⁰⁰ similarly, in Czech Duncanism, the embodied intuition is methodically developed: “Improvisation allows us to immerse ourselves in layers of experiences, perceptions, qualities, and feelings that we usually just miss or even suppress. Through improvisation, we can penetrate deeper and deeper into our subconscious, into moments that are constantly expanding, changing, continuing.”¹⁰¹ As Nina Vangeli underlines, the improvisation as a seeming non-technique becomes, if continually practiced, a technique sui generis – especially in the methodology of Czech Duncanists.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Siblík, 1937a, p. 54.

¹⁰¹ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Improvizace nám umožňuje ponořit se až do vrstev zkušeností, vjemů, vlastností a pocitů, které obyčejně jenom proběhneme nebo dokonce potlačíme. Prostřednictvím improvizace můžeme pronikat stále hlouběji do našeho podvědomí, do okamžiků, které se stále rozpínají, mění, pokračují.” (Blažíčková, 2005, p. 59)

¹⁰² More Vangeli, in Petišková, 1998, p. 38.

2. 4. Kinaesthetic and Expressive Movement Qualities

“The dance should simply be, then, the natural gravitation of this will of the individual, which in the end is no more nor less than a human translation of the gravitation of the universe.”

Isadora Duncan, *The Dance of the Future*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 55.

Isadora Duncan's concept of gravity as the embodiment of the will, or the will as the movement of the universe, which occurs in the concentrated forces in a human, has its prefigure in the thoughts of Arthur Schopenhauer, whose theory of the metaphysical nature of music as an immediate reflection of the will Isadora transferred on her theories about dance and movement – as Ladislava Petišková writes the influence of Schopenhauer became a kind of metaphysical spine of Isadora's dance.¹⁰³ Schopenhauer on the connection between music and the will elucidated that music does not represent the ideas or degrees of the objectified will, but the will itself, thus acting directly on the will – the feelings and affects of the listener – by rapidly increasing or re-tuning these affects. (Schopenhauer, 1944, p. 63) Isadora associates the principle of gravity with the idea of the wave and wave motion (see chapter 2. 2.), which is embodied in the specific kinaesthetic qualities – resembling high tide and low tide, rising and falling, attaining the strength and decreasing, plasticity and fluidity, wave pulsation.¹⁰⁴ Simultaneously, the idea of a central source of motion is developed; the centre of the body is the beginning of motor power and spiritual expression, which travels in the channels through the whole body and initiates a chain of the subsequent movements as an unconscious reaction to this source.¹⁰⁵ Isadora's motivation for the dance movement stimulated by the inner emotions was possibly inspired by the widespread movement of Delsartism¹⁰⁶; which as Carrie J. Preston says, influenced the kinesthetics of modern dance by the technique based on the transitions and fluctuations between the static attitudes and fluid motion.¹⁰⁷ Isadora Duncan worked with the semiology of gestures on an abstract and

¹⁰³ More in Petišková, 2003, p. 101.

¹⁰⁴ “All movement on earth is governed by the law of gravitation, by attraction and repulsion, resistance and yielding; it is that which makes up the rhythm of the dance. To discover this rhythm, we must listen to the pulsations of the earth.” (Duncan, *Terpsichore*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 90).

¹⁰⁵ For instance in Duncan, *Fragments and Thoughts*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁶ Founded by French theorist of acting François Delsarte (1811-71), whose system of the movement expression was promoted in America by Genevieve Stebbins.

¹⁰⁷ More in Preston, 2009, pp. 213-233.

mythological-narrative level, and like Delsarte, she connected bodily expression with its spiritual source in the soul, the solar plexus.¹⁰⁸

The gravity awareness reflects the evolution of Duncanist thought – as Deborah Jowitt notes, Isadora works to overcome gravity. (Jowitt, 1985-86, p. 28) In period photographs, it is perceivable that Isadora's whole orientation flows upwards, emphasizing weight relief as if she remains with the kinaesthetic feeling of the classical dance, which works purposefully on the illusion of lightness and divine weightlessness.¹⁰⁹ The drawing by Jules Grandjouan (1875-1968) portrays Isadora in a fluid motion of intersecting energies, with a step on relevé she is shifting the center of gravity to the right, falls to the side, and simultaneously, the body and the arms are reaching out diagonally upwards in the opposite direction.¹¹⁰ The moment of the struggle between the fall and the raise is a transit step, torn from the time sequence, which provokes the viewer's kinaesthetic anticipation of movement. Isadora professes the concept of the pure body in the sense that the body as such should be forgotten,¹¹¹ the dancer should strive for the transparent quality, and the body is to become simply a luminous manifestation of its soul.¹¹² Thus, the body denies its corporeality, consciously trying to suppress the connection with the ground, it is a free medium or a fluid, sensitively transmitting the impulses of the soul. Although Duncan's body is almost naked, it does not express sensuality and desire, as Ann Daly mentions, the body is elevated from the physical sphere to the aesthetic (Daly, 1994, p. 14), the aesthetics is necessarily associated with a certain epoch and its ideals – therefore, I would like to leave it aside and concentrate on the expressiveness of bodily gravity itself from the kinaesthetic perspective.

The Czech Duncanism made a natural progression, abandoning the established aesthetics of Duncanism, and starting to develop Isadora's idea of accepting gravity further, in the context of the overall development of modern and contemporary dance. The basic principle of natural movement is ensured by the center of gravity, an imaginary point in the pelvis suspended on

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 223.

¹⁰⁹ Margherita Duncan also characterizes Isadora's gestures as free, open, and the rhythmic line of her dance as advancing upward. (Margherita Duncan, 1969, *Isadora*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 19).

¹¹⁰ An exhibition called *Isadora Duncan and Jules Grandjouan* took place in 2003, in Patro Gallery, Olomouc (Czech Republic). There were included the pastels from 1903 to 1913.

¹¹¹ As she writes in several places, e. g. Duncan, *Beauty and Exercise*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 81-82.

¹¹² Duncan, *The philosopher's Stone of Dancing*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 51-52.

the main vertical, and the initiator of the body momentum. In the Czech Duncanism, the centre of gravity appears as a space of our roots, connection with the Earth, or a space of power, which releases the energy, and enlivens the dynamic spectrum of movement – through grounding in the centre of gravity, the dancer is anchored in the space. The new Duncanist body acknowledges more its material essence, weight, and connection with the ground, it incorporates a fall to the floor and the grounded motion. This evolution is well noticeable in the choreography of Eva Blažíčková *For Three (Pro tři, 1991)*¹¹³ with the music of Steve Reich; in this piece, I can recognize a pure work with the physicality and the centre of gravity, adopting the gravity releases the charge of motion dynamics. In the beginning, the dancers are throwing themselves with the powerful jumps into the distance and to the ground, it seems to me that their bodies fly diagonally or even horizontally. The choreography works with movement motifs that return and repeat in the flow of energy just like Reich's music: the falls to the ground, turning over the back and on the knees, series of backward rolls, the transitions from the ground to the suspension, dynamic runs and jumps bounced off the wall. The dancers make maximum use of the support of the floor and the support within each other – they explore the principles of contact improvisation, experimenting with transferring the weight to their partner, with pulls and countermoves, sometimes including acrobatic elements, throwing the other dancers into space. The dynamic passages alternate with the moments of calmness and concentration – emotionality is expressed by the difficulty of the movement elements and the physical work of the bodies permeated by animus energy, they transmit waves of danger, risk, trust, and relaxation. In the end, the choreography returns to the introductory motive of the jump, by which the dancer is thrown into the void. The body of the Duncanist dancer no longer represents fluid in a weightless state, it is interesting to observe the change in the concept of corporeality and gravity; an etheric body is replaced by an athletic body, a working body.

Despite the claim that Duncanism is not a style or a technique, I observe some characteristic bodily gestures appearing in the shared kinaesthetic memory, signature movements that have a symbolic level and that appear in different forms at different periods. I will look at one such area of the jumps, in which I can notice certain kinaesthetic similarities in the execution; for

¹¹³ The choreography was created for three dancers from the third generation of the Chamber Dance Studio.

example, one skip originally taken from the gymnastics, where the leg swings back behind the body and then swings forward; there are different variations of the jump with the swinging limbs and sending the body in the direction of movement, sometimes with spiral inclination. Isadora Duncan describes the sensation in the jumps as “[...] in the leaping figures with bent knees, one senses that the movement goes on: there is in this movement an eternal element [...]” (Isadora Duncan, *Terpsichore*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 91) For another type of the jump, a kind of trot with high raised knees, Nina Vangeli finds an interesting parallel – she recalls her early childhood in the Czech Sokol and the composition *Little Horses (Koničci)*, in which this trot was a basic movement element, reminiscent of the ancient-like leap of Isadora Duncan, captured in the drawings and photographs, then she notices the same element in the choreographic compositions of Eva Blažíčková created for the Chamber Dance Group.¹¹⁴ André Dunoyer de Segonzac (1884-1974) captured Isadora in a sketch called *Glück, Dance of the Scythians* (1910), where he managed to concentrate the character of the movement into a clear and sharp gesture.¹¹⁵ The motif of the raised knee is also described by Marie Vavruchová in her memories of Elizabeth Duncan’s lessons. (Vavruchová, 1986, p. 21) Nina Vangeli proposes an interesting thought that if the symbol of the academic dance could be the Apollinian principle embodied in the arabesque, the emblem of dance in the intentions of Duncanism could be this Dionysian leap with a knee drawn high to the chest; both elements, arabesque and leap then express a desire for freedom.¹¹⁶ In her essay, Isadora Duncan characterizes Dionysian dance by immersing herself in the very rhythmic movement of the body, while she attributes the Apollinian principle to the ability to narrate through dance, to communicate the spiritual side of dance.¹¹⁷

Now, I would like to focus in detail on the expressive movement qualities in two Duncanist choreographies for two significant female performers. The first is *The Lover’s Magic Spell (Starodávné čarování milému)*, 1970) on a vocal composition of the Czech composer Petr Eben (1929-2007), where Eva Blažíčková danced a solo part in her own choreography. The young

¹¹⁴ More in Vangeli, 1998, str. 35-36.

¹¹⁵ Siblík mentions that Isadora initially disagreed with Dunoyer de Segonzac’s style, which she considered exaggerated and caricature. (Siblík, 1930, p. 258)

¹¹⁶ Vangeli, 1998, str. 35-36.

¹¹⁷ “One can throw oneself into the spirit of the dance, and dance the thing itself: Dionysus. Or one can contemplate the spirit of the dance – and dance as one who relates a story: Apollo.” (Duncan, *Fragments and Thoughts*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 140)

girl casts a spell to see her lover, kneels on the ground, her movements are focused on the sensitive articulation of the arms and torso; the group of the dancers enters – a girls' choir coming from two sides – their very existence on stage has a sublime and ceremonial character, attention is paid on the detail to the individual hand gestures. The choir takes the girl's hands, lifts her up and they begin to run together, the movement language consists of the step variations and airy run, with the lightweight center of gravity and frequent walking on relevé, the tension of the chest and the arms pointing upwards. The sculptural character and fluid plasticity, as well as a slight tilting of the heads, evoke the reference of the ancient figures, the arms are guided gently, and the gestures flow, they do not stop in position, but breathe and progress. The detail of gripping and intertwining hands is precise in a subtle touch on the fingertips – the motif of intertwined posture can be considered a characteristic element in Czech Duncanism and often appears in choreographic compositions. The soloist is a medium, a source, her emotions, prayer, and desire are supported by the whole group; at the end, the young girl walks forward with her arms lifted, raising her heels, and stops at the moment of fragile balance, her gaze fixed in anticipation to the distance. The overall atmosphere of the image radiates with purity, even sacredness, and at the same time mysterious event in which the community of women is involved; a vocal poetic text (solo and choir) forms the basis of the choreographic expression, the voice, and the movement coexist closely here. In the sculptural quality of the dancers, I find an interesting parallel between the evocation of the aesthetics of ancient Greece and the aesthetics of ancient Slavic – as if the two cultures intersect in the final character.

The second choreography of a completely different nature, but also paying homage to womanhood, is the solo *Raab the Harlot (Nevěstka Raab)*, created by Eva Blažičková in 1985 for her daughter Lenka Flory. The choreography was based on music from the electroacoustic opera by Jaroslav Krček (1939), the libretto of which derives from the Old Testament legend of the demolition of the city of Jericho. The author of the libretto, Zdeněk Barborka (1938-1994), invented a fictional language, the so-called *para-language*, in which he worked with the emotionality and sound imagination of words; the expressiveness and exaltation of the vocal score were reflected directly in the movement. Raab bends in deep arches, diving into the ground, throwing the body into the dynamic overturns on the ground, propelling herself into the jumping turns in space, swinging the limbs, and graduating in ecstatically whirling.

The bend is another element encoded in the kinaesthetic memory of Duncanism, it is a wave of the dorsal spine backward, a deep bend is a sign of dance virtuosity, but it can also be a signal of hysteria.¹¹⁸ Isadora Duncan describes “A simple turning backward of the head – made with Passion, sends a Bacchic frenzy running through us, of joy or heroism or desire [...]”¹¹⁹, similarly, Siblík mentions the Dionysian cult from Thrace, whose Bacchant’s dancers, performed with animalistic exuberance, including the head sharply moving backward and whirling on the spot with the hands clasped over the head¹²⁰ – it is interesting to observe these Bacchic references in the choreography of *Raab the Harlot*. The idea that Isadora Duncan represents the desire of the female body for an authentic being (Vangeli, 1998, p. 32) is fully realized in the environment of Czech Duncanism and acquires a completely new dimension here. In *Raab the Harlot*, the space is filled with the psychological drama of a female body rebellion, which is tensed with raw emotions, passion, despair, hysteria, and madness, to the very edge of the affect, almost trance experience. The choreographies mentioned – *The Lover’s Magic Spell* and *Raab the Harlot* – represent two expressive aspects, a polarity that I associate with the idea of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles. The *Lover’s Magic Spell* was created at the time of Blažíčková’s close connection to Jarmila Jeřábková, who often took part in the rehearsals and her influence in the choreography is well noticeable. The second choreography was created fifteen years later; on two generations of Duncanist dancers, I can observe a great shift and change in the exploration of the new forms and kinaesthetic expression, yet it is possible to read a certain interconnectedness, not in style, but the passion for the cause, and in attachment to musical emotion; both choreographies create a certain intersection or permeation of the essences.

2. 5. Individuality and Community

“To dance is not a diversion but a religion, an expression of live.”

Isadora Duncan, *Fragments and Thoughts*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 142.

¹¹⁸ Vangeli notes that a bend, especially a deep bridge, is the most difficult type of wave in dance, and the significance of this element is from an anthropological point of view unclear. (Vangeli, 1998, p. 3)

¹¹⁹ Duncan, I., *The Great Source*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 103.

¹²⁰ Siblík, 1937a, p. 48.

Social responsibility and spiritual content of dance are deeply encoded in Duncanism, dance for Isadora Duncan is a faith, a prayer, a spiritual act, art is supposed to elevate the audience, it also has the function of a certain purification of the spirit. Religious language is present not only in Isadora's reflections on the spiritual dimension of dance but also in the manner of her artistic self-presentation, as well as in the perception of her art¹²¹; it should be clarified that this language does not necessarily refer to any of traditional religions, it has a symbolic dimension, hiding a strong belief in cultivating bodily consciousness. Isadora herself presents her dance of the future as a return to highly religious art, as was the case with the Greeks¹²²; the effort to bring dance closer to the ancient chorus and thus restore the soul of tragedy may be related to the need to acknowledge dance its importance, and social recognition. In her essay, Duncan surprisingly claims that she never conceived her dances as solos, but instead, she regarded herself as the embodiment of an ancient chorus that expresses metaphysical themes that transcend the destiny of man as an individual.¹²³ Duncanism in its ethical dimension outlines a utopian vision of the world dancing; in this sense, dance becomes a society-wide phenomenon, a lost memory of the body that must be restored. Duncan has found support for her ideas in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche – she resonates with his theme of self-improvement, as well as the theme of Dionysian emotion by applying it to dance, Isadora's dancer of the future should become the embodiment of *the highest intelligence in the freest body*.¹²⁴ Kimerer L. LaMothe, who analyses the work of Duncan as a reader of Nietzsche's philosophy, says that for both, dance is an alternative sensory training, or important development of physical consciousness and specific kind of experiencing the world, furthermore, dance is understood as a creative force, the cultivation of which is a moral responsibility – dance supports awareness of the human physicality, bringing new values that enrich life.¹²⁵

¹²¹ In Germany, Isadora was called *die Göttliche* – goddess-like, and *die Heilige* – sacred (Seroff, 1972, p. 63), Emanuel Siblík and Jan Rey talk about her apostolic zeal for dance (Siblík, 1937a, p. 9, 11, 16, Rey, 1947, p. 76), Nina Vangeli calls her a martyr who brought a sacrifice of her body (Vangeli, 1998, p. 31-32), Isadora's brother Raymond Duncan calls her a prophet and her life a reflection of the calvary of the world (Duncan, *Isadora's Last Dance*, p. 13).

¹²² Duncan, *The Dance of the Future*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 62.

¹²³ Duncan, *The Dance of the Greeks*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 96.

¹²⁴ Duncan, *The Dance of the Future*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 63.

¹²⁵ "Dance, for Duncan, was *the* activity capable of exercising and educating the medium through which women and men live in ways that would help them develop the physical consciousness needed to generate values that nourish and affirm life." (LaMothe, 2005, p. 260)

Duncan's demand for a common psychophysical experience of performers and spectators is very visionary, the idea of a participating audience, considering the *dance of the future* as a common language, not an unattainable ideal, brings Isadora Duncan closer to the tendencies of the second half of the 20th century, which was interested about the theatre of ritual as a source of the new theatricality and expressiveness.¹²⁶ As Duncan herself asserts: "[...] one should work toward a theatre in which the public would take part more and more in the performance [...]" (Duncan, 1969, p. 112), and further, she specifies her idea of the theater in which the audience reacts to the dancer's physical invocation with the bodily response, getting up, simple movements, or gestures.¹²⁷ For these kinetic transmissions that interact between all participants in the performance, I find a connection to John Martin's term *metakinesis*¹²⁸, identified as one of the key moments in modern dance, it is emotional and aesthetic information transmitted through kinaesthetic sympathy from the dancer's consciousness to the viewer through movement. "Her dance practice is about learning to sense, desire, and enact the god/desses dancing through me.", says Kimerer L. LaMothe about Isadora's dance (LaMothe, 2005, p. 260) It is this perception and rhythmical feeling *through* the body, personal experience with movement, that takes the viewer's understanding of dance to another level – the difference between the artist and the recipient are blurred, communication based on kinaesthetic sensitivity and rhythmic bodily movement is activated.

In this chapter, I observe Duncanism in its activist dimension, awakening the modern human, who lost contact with his own body¹²⁹, and demanding the importance of expanding movement diversity. John Martin says that it is impossible that everyone would be taught the

¹²⁶ See in Petišková, sborník, str. 3-4. And more: "Duncan's desire for absolute art, the identity of woman and artist, her conception of nature as divinity and God as forces of nature, inadvertently recalls more substantive tendencies in art, seeking to bring to the theater a ritual the source of suggestive psychophysical experience of actors and spectators [...]" (Petišková, 2003, p. 100) Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. "Touha Duncanové po absolutním umění, identitě ženy a umělkyně, její pojetí přírody jako božství a Boha jako přírodní síly, mimoděk připomene věcnější tendence v umění, hledající v přiblížení divadlu rituálu zdroje sugestivního psychofyzického prožitku aktérů i diváků [...]" (Petišková, 2003, p. 100).

¹²⁷ „I have dreamed of more complete dance expression on the part of the audience, at a theatre in the form of an amphitheatre, where there would be no reason why, at certain times, the public should not arise and, by different gestures of dance, participate in my invocation. [...] I had always hoped that the day would come when we could have such a temple where the public, participating in different ways with me in my dance, would arrive at a much fuller enjoyment than they ever will experience by simply sitting as spectators.“ Duncan, *Dancing in Relation to Religion and Love*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 123.

¹²⁸ Martin, 1983, pp. 23-25.

¹²⁹ "The number of physical movements that most people make through life is extremely limited." Duncan, *Dancing in Relation to Religion and Love*, in *The Art of the Dance*, p. 122.

same type of movement because the codified and stereotyped movement is only able to express the stereotypical concept of emotion, his idea that „The ideal dance education, therefore, is that which trains the student to find his own type of movement.“ (Martin, 1983, pp. 23-25) resonates strongly with Czech Duncanism, and its principle of individual approach to stimulate movement, attained through creativity. The relationship between individuality and community, I perceive as another key element of Duncanism, which is not excluding anyone from the shared movement experience and the possibility to expand the bodily kinaesthetic knowledge. Isadora Duncan’s vision of a dancing community is sometimes viewed critically as unrealistic, but in the Czech Duncanist environment, this idea resonates and it is acquiring clear outlines here. The lifelong mission of Eva Blažíčková is concerned with the necessity to include the sphere of dance in the educational programme of primary schools; according to her, dance represents the most complex medium for the development of a whole personality, because integrates the absolute physical involvement with the emotional, intellectual and spiritual side, and develops the qualities, which cannot be obtained by any other activity:

“By seeking our own place through our corporeality we understand the activities through which we search for the space of our body and get to know it, those mediating and visualizing the idea of its physical interconnection with a place, space, environment. The feeling of cognizance and awareness of our body in the context of space leads to the realization of our uniqueness in the framework of our union with a complete entity – our connection to an order of things. This recognition is accompanied by respect, humility, and freedom.” Blažíčková, 2012, p. 15.

The art-pedagogical project called *The ChapBook* (*Špalíček*, 2008-2009)¹³⁰ concentrates all the efforts of Czech Duncanism to expand dance as a societal phenomenon. The project was initiated by the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation, whose director Aleš Březina invited Eva Blažíčková to create a full-length performance connecting the professional dancers with the children still untouched by contemporary dance and classical music.¹³¹ The inspiration for

¹³⁰ The official web page of the project: www.spalicek.eu

¹³¹ *Špalíček* was part of the broader context called “Martinů Revisited”, on the 50th anniversary of the death of the composer and great music innovator Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959); in the project were involved The Prague Philharmonic Orchestra with conductor Jakub Hrůša and the Bambini di Praga Choir, choreographer and director

these endeavors came from the socio-artistic project of the Berliner Philharmoniker, with Sir Simon Rattle and choreographer Royston Maldoom, who integrated 250 children from Berlin's disadvantaged neighborhoods and staged Igor Stravinsky's ballet *Rite of Spring*.¹³² In the Czech project were involved professional Duncanist dancers¹³³, with the students of the Duncan Centre Conservatory and the pupils of the Studio of the Duncan Center, who supported one hundred and fifty children aged 6 to 15 from the primary schools in Prague, partly immigrants and socially disadvantaged children without previous dance training and motivation to the artistic activities. The children often lack even the very basic movement skills – they do not know how to control their own body as if it does not belong to them; Eva Blažíčková says in the documentary that the children are constantly pushed by the official school education only for the intellectual performance, not for the physical and emotional ones. The core of both projects in Germany, as well as in Czechia, is the incredible transformation of children's behaviour, concentration, and spirituality, which is achieved by the encounter with classical music, experiencing dance, and developing the kinaesthetic sensation.

The *ChapBook* (1931-1932, *Špalíček*)¹³⁴ was composed by Bohuslav Martinů as a vocal ballet, based on the folkloric children's texts, games, and rhymes from various collections, and inspired by the folkloric tradition, and theatre. Eva Blažíčková transfers the ballet libretto and folkloric reference into a more universal dimension in the sense of *a spiritual return, not a transcription* of folkloric form. The choreographic composition consists of four parts, each of them is built for a certain age; the first part entitled *Games (Hry)* is inspired by the text of sung rhymes with the spring theme, the basis of children's games, and folkloric customs such as

Eva Blažíčková, costume designer Kateřina Štefková, architect and stage designer Ivan Adam. The creative crew of pedagogues were working with the children since February 2008, the project ended with two performances, which took place in June 2009 at the Congress Center in Prague. The whole process is documented in Olga Sommerová's film *Keep the Rhythm!* The document was made in collaboration with the Institut of Arts and the Theatre Institut and won several awards, including the Vision 97 Dagmar a Václava Havlových at MTF Zlatá Praha (October 2010).

¹³² The project is captured in the award-winning documentary *Rhythm is it!* (2004) by Thomas Grube and Enrique Sánchez Lansch.

¹³³ J. Březina, L. Čapková-Švejsová, D. Hořtová, J. Hudečková, D. Chaloupková, V. Kaciánová, E. Kašparová, J. Malík, P. Půčková, V. Rinowski, H. Rubková, Z. Sýkorová, M. Záhora.

¹³⁴ The word *špalíček* in Czech means a small thick book, usually, a folk reading, a songbook, a collection of fairy tales, or a prayer book, in architectural terminology, *špalíček* refers to a group of connected buildings, standing in the middle of the square, usually of the medieval origin; in another sense, *špalíček* means a piece of wood. Martinů's composition is translated into English as *The ChapBook*.

taking out the death, or the procession of the poor queen, the embodiment of spring. The second and third part belongs to the theme of strong and virtue women; *The Legend of St. Dorothy (Legenda o svaté Dorotě)* expresses the story of a saint who is executed for her faith in Christ (one of the most popular legends of the Czech Middle Ages, preserved in religious songs and in folk theatre), and *Romance from Dandelions (Romance z pampelišek)*, a separate cantata about lovelorn love and forgiving, danced by a choir of young girls led by a soloist. The last part called *World of People (Svět lidí)* includes several scenes (*Acrobats March, At the Gates of Heaven, At the Gates of Hell*), and ends with a wedding, a symbolic farewell to home, and childhood. The choreography is based on natural movement, for the children, the most important is to perform the simple steps through embodying the rhythm, tempo, and melody; running, walking, jumping, turning, acrobatic elements, and elements in the pairs are utilized in many variations.

I perceive the greatest power of *Chapbook* in its simplicity, and the idea of the choir of almost two hundred dancers as a polyphonic organism, permeated by a unifying rhythm and harmony – which leads me back to chapter 2.2., where I describe Duncanist key element of *panrhythm* encoded in the very essence of our being. I consider *Chapbook* as the embodiment of the Duncanist efforts in the 21st century; all explored elements find their application here: natural movement realized through the bodily rhythm, cultivation of the soul as a physical consciousness, development of kinaesthetic sensitivity, which brings us closer in mutual understanding.

In 1929, Siblík reflected the evolution of Duncanist movement: “Duncanism itself has evolved naturally and is evolving further. Relying at the beginning on an irrational intuition, so eminently personal and therefore ephemeral, it admitted the sudden intervention of the creative will, which, subjecting the emotions to a certain formal rule, ensures its duration in the work of art. Duncanism has even become rationally constructive for some leaders. Here again, a new danger arises that it will dry up in mere formulas from which all life has vanished, formulas unable to speak to the heart.” (Siblík, 1929, p. 169)¹³⁵ I perceive the core contribution

¹³⁵ “Duncanismus sám přirozeně evoluoval a vyvíjí se dále. Spočíval-li s počátku na iracionální intuici, tak eminentně osobní a tudíž pomíjející, připouštěl poněkud zasahování tvůrčí vůle, která podrobujíc emoci určité formální zákonitosti, zajišťuje jí v uměleckém díle trvání. Duncanismus se stal dokonce u některých představitelů

of Czech Duncanism in its living approach, which refuses to enclose itself. The dance methodologies created in the Czech environment are the open systems, which preserve the principles of the Duncanist philosophy, simultaneously, their constant search for new paths could be their leitmotif; the elements of Duncanism are the living qualities, a real and an authentic process for the future generations of the dancers. The credo of Duncanism develops individuality, while placing dance in the realm of a democratic ideal that does not discriminate against the dance practitioners according to their abilities or talents, and does not preserve kinetic intelligence as an exclusive value only to professional artists, but has a desire to convey and disseminate its knowledge as widely as possible. It expands the sphere of dance and enlivens the attitude of Isadora Duncan: "For me, the dance is not only the art that gives expression to the human soul through movement but also the foundation of a complete conception of life, more free, more harmonious, more natural." (Duncan, 1969, p. 101)

Chapter 3: LANDSCAPE AS LIVING ARCHIVE: BODY, PLACE, EMOTION

In this chapter, I present another thematic unit that is essential to my research: the memory of the landscape, which I encounter practically in the area of the former town of Lauterbach, which no longer exists. I perceive this place as a living archive, which physical traces I would like to rediscover and interpret through my movement knowledge. The theme of landscape memory represents an interdisciplinary field, standing between memory studies and landscape studies, between social and natural sciences, drawing the attention of e. g. anthropologists, geographers, historians, and architects. I approach the memory of the landscape from the position of a performer/dancer and concentrate on the embodied memory and research based on my personal experience. I structure this chapter into a few parts – firstly, I would like to support my physical research with theoretical insight into the topic of the landscape memory and understand how the memory of the landscape shaped is, and which forms of forgetting and remembering are its influential forces. Particularly, I am interested in the landscape, in which memory has been erased, forgotten, or veiled, and I want to observe this topic in the context of the Sudetenland as a specific geographical and cultural area of the Czech borderland. I situate my movement explorations to the landscape of a

racionalně konstruktivním. Tu vystává opět nové nebezpečí, že totiž seschne v pouhé formule, z nichž vyprchal všechen život, formule neschopné mluvit k srdci." (Siblík, 1929, p. 169)

defunct town and ask how to find a physical relationship to a place that no longer exists? For me, it is important to gain a complex idea of the historical and cultural context of the place and to reach the layers that are hidden deep in its memory.

In my creative process, I would like to apply the movement principles of Duncanism as a tool for revealing the physical and emotional dimensions of the landscape. Thus, I intend to intersect two themes in my artistic practice, the philosophy of Duncanism, from which I draw some of the movement elements introduced in chapter 2, and the memory of landscape, which I study physically in the area of Lauterbach. I describe my approach as an open concept of bodily imprint and movement reminiscent of the place, which would emerge into a collection of physical scores based on my personal experience.

For the third chapter dealing with the memory of landscape, I refer to the following authors: I came from Karolína Pauknerová, a Czech anthropologist, archaeologist, and researcher in landscape studies and cultural geography, who applies the postphenomenological approach to analyze the processes of memory and forgetting, sedimented into the landscape. From the perspective of existential phenomenology, I follow Csaba Szaló, who examines remembrance and memory of places as a phenomenon of cultural sociology, which is primarily a matter of the body, rather than an act of thought. Further, I refer to the work of Aleida Assmann (*Prostory vzpomínání: Podoby a proměny kulturní paměti* – from the original *Erinnerungsräume. Formen and Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*); Assman examines the transformations of cultural memory and considers the memory to be an act, a process, or a performance – I am interested in her thoughts about the dynamics of remembrance and forgetting and how our relation to the space/place of memory emerges.

For my practical research of embodying the landscape, I was influenced by the philosophy of Gaston Bachelard and his interest in researching the poetic thinking, dreaming, and imagining in opposition to the scientific rationalism; in his *Poetics of Space*, revealing the intimate spaces of inhabiting and phenomenology of the poetic image, I find great inspiration for my movement explorations. I also relate to the work of a scholar and performer Layla Zami and her concept of PerforMemory, which she analyzes in the work of contemporary dance-

makers, based on the transmission of cultural memory through the dancing body and dealing with the historical trauma and different geohistorical timelines.

The general information about Lauterbach, I draw from the publication about the cultural heritage of the Sokolov region (Falkenau) by Vladimír Prokop and Lukáš Smola. The association Terra incognita develops research activities on the site of the former Lauterbach and in the mining landscape of the Slavkov forest; on their website, they are mapping the Lauterbach area, describing the history, collecting photographs and memories of the witnesses. One of the founders of Terra Incognita is an archeologist and researcher Filip Prekop, who is continually striving to protect the historical and cultural heritage of Lauterbach and to revive the place with the annual encounters. Prekop lead detailed archeological research of the relicts in the former built-up area of Lauterbach (published in 2015). Thanks to Mr. Prekop, I could draw the information from the memorial book of the former Lauterbach's inhabitants: *Ba u(n)s dahamm... Heimatbuch der Bergstadt Lauterbach im Kaiserwald* (1992, Josef Gareis, Herwig Schimmer, issued at their own expense), which represents a valuable source of the authentic memories.

3. 1. Embodied Memory of Landscape

I am interested in the landscape as an ever-changing organism with its own living memory, which is a reflection of the people who pass through it. A pilgrim or an artist walking through the landscape gives testimony about the state of the soul – the landscape mirrors her/his inner world, they could merge into oneness. The body, overcoming a diverse terrain, puts on the skin of a landscape, in which the memory of water, plants, and animals, traces of cultivation or destruction by human activity is inscribed. The landscape as a metaphor for the human soul creates an integral part of our lives and cultures. The memory of landscape represents a very complex topic, spanning many spheres, I draw from the concept of Karolína Pauknerová (2019), who understands landscape memory as a process of sedimentation of elapsed time in the landscape:

“The landscape is a kind of interface that arises from the tension between us and the world, through this interface we see and understand the world. We live in the

landscape, but we are not alone in it, there are many agents in the landscape. The events that take place in the landscape, or in its memory, are diverse, some are very long, others seem episodic from a human perspective. The scale of these processes ranges from global geological, climatic, and other processes to local activities of agents of various sizes – from cities to bacteria. All these events have their time, which gradually sediments into the landscape, into its physical and symbolic plane.”¹³⁶

The landscape might act as a recording medium and archive,¹³⁷ it represents both a text and a context,¹³⁸ which meaning relies upon the reader or interpreter; another conception considers landscape as an *expressive poetics of spacing*, which involves the capacity and energy for the change, abrupt, non-linear, and non-accumulative.¹³⁹ The landscape of memory becomes *imaginative geography*, or a *relational space*, where actions, people, things, and feelings contribute to the totality of this social phenomenon;¹⁴⁰ or it expresses the *emotional geography of self*,¹⁴¹ where we encounter ourselves and transform mere remembrance into a new creative state.¹⁴²

From my perspective, I perceive the landscape to be “sculpted” by movement, or by the layers of many movements that overlap each other and create a multidimensional and fluid structure – landscape as a network of movements. To decipher the processes happening between my body and the specific place in landscape where my movement is situated, I absorb the information of diverse character, engaging my physicality, and imagination, with my lived presence, I endeavor to reveal the layers of memory and recognize the deeper context of the landscape. As a dancer, there is a variety of ways how I sense the connection of the words

¹³⁶ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Krajina je jakýmsi rozhraním, které vzniká z napětí mezi námi a světem, skrze toto rozhraní svět vidíme a rozumíme mu. V krajině bydlíme, ale nejsme v ní sami, aktérů je v krajině mnoho. Děje, které se odehrávají v krajině, respektive v její paměti, jsou rozmanité, některé jsou velice dlouhé, jiné se z perspektivy člověka zdají být epizodické. Škála těchto dějů sahá od globálních geologických, klimatických a jiných procesů až po lokální aktivity aktérů nejrůznější velikosti – od měst po bakterie. Všechny tyto děje mají svůj čas, který se postupně sedimentuje do krajiny, do její fyzické i symbolické roviny.” (Pauknerová, 2019, p. 154)

¹³⁷ Bastian, 2014, p. 57.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Crouch, 2010, p. 7.

¹⁴⁰ Maus, 2015, p. 222.

¹⁴¹ Jones, 2007.

¹⁴² “Clearly remembering being-in-place, and perhaps remembering through place, through emotions of remembered place are powerful elements of emotional geographies of the self.” (Jones, 2007, p. 210)

landscape and memory: through observing the traces of inscribed movement, reading the changes and transformations in time, and visualizing my body as a medium of the living archive – instead of to *enter* the landscape, I try to *become* the landscape.¹⁴³ Merleau-Ponty observes that we do not see the space in its outer case, but we experience it from the inside because we are immersed in it.¹⁴⁴ I preserve the dynamic experience of the landscape, and as its extension, I evoke the imprint of the places and landscapes in my kinaesthetic memory. “When I dynamically relive the path that went uphill, I am sure that the path itself had the muscles and the counter-muscles.” (2009, Bachelard, p. 36)¹⁴⁵ In the creative process, this is an interesting starting point for generating movement – to transfer and re-live the experience from terrain in the neutral space, e. g. in a dance studio. Elizabeth Duncan writes to her sister Isadora: “Children dance in the woods among the trees. I lecture them in the open air. I tell them that they must always imagine when they dance on stage that they are in the open air that they must not feel between the four walls, but try to ascend to the tops of trees and heavens.”¹⁴⁶ What is more involved in the dancer’s response my imagination, or the memory itself, or is imagination an integral part of the memory? I move and my movement necessarily relates to the environment, at every moment, I shape the space that surrounds me based on my inner vision.

A specific part of the cultural landscape is concentrated in the *places of memory* – I look at the term itself in the conceptions of three authors. Pierre Nora describes the transformation from *milieux de mémoire* to *lieux de mémoire*¹⁴⁷, the real and imaginative sites of memory, which

¹⁴³ “To feel landscape in the expressive poetics of spacing is a way to imagine one’s place in the world. The individual can feel so connected with space that s/he no longer is aware, momentarily, of being (merely) human; we may become the event, become the landscape.” (Crouch, 2010, p. 14)

¹⁴⁴ In Merleau-Ponty, 1971, p. 23. Also, Merleau-Ponty mentions Cézanne, who claims that nature exists within us; quality, light, colour, depth are around us, because they evoke the resonance in our body, which accepts them. (Merleau-Ponty, 1971, p. 11)

¹⁴⁵ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Když dynamicky znovuprožívám cestu, která stoupala do kopce, jsem si jistý, že sama cesta měla svaly a protisvaly.”

¹⁴⁶ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Děti tančí v lese mezi stromy. Přednáším jim na volném vzduchu. Říkám jim, že si musí vždy představovat, když tančí na jevišti, že jsou ve volném vzduchu, že se nesmějí cítit mezi čtyřmi stěnami, nýbrž se snažit, aby se povznesly až k vrcholům stromů a nebes.” (Siblík, 1929, p. 306)

¹⁴⁷ Nora defines *lieux de mémoire* as: “[...] fundamentally remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it. They make their appearance by virtue of the deritualization of our world – producing, manifesting, establishing constructing, decreeing, and maintaining by artifice and by will a society deeply absorbed in its own transformation and renewal, one that inherently values the new over the ancient, the young over the old, the future over the past. Museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaires, treaties, depositions, monuments,

embody the collective memory of the nation and its identity. (Nora, 1989, p. 7) *Lieux de mémoire* might be represented by e. g. archive, monument, textbook, testament, or minute of silence, and *always* include three aspects – material, symbolic, and functional. From a different perspective, Karolína Pauknerová utilizes the term *place of memory* as a representation of places in the real landscape – monuments, memorials, chapels, and crosses by the road, which were built to commemorate something, however, it is no longer possible to identify the exact reason for their origin; she accentuates the moment of forgetting rather than remembering. (Pauknerová, 2019, p. 18) Assmann describes the cultural sites of memory as a *contact zone* for encounters with the past, the contemporary successors to ancient sacred sites that allowed connections with gods, spirits, or supernatural forces.¹⁴⁸ The places anchor the memory locally and embody a continuity of duration that goes beyond the short-term memory of individuals, epochs, and cultures.¹⁴⁹ Further, Assmann asks how our relations to certain places of remembrance arise – the relation might be created through family ties, reminders of events, feelings of reverence, trauma, or scientific interest.¹⁵⁰ The first contact with the place of memory evokes the affect, which is the initial impression, pre-cognitive and pre-thought experience, connected with the bodily experience. (2019, Pauknerová, p. 51) The very initial impression of the place and its atmosphere is engraved in my memory, and even after a long time it suddenly emerges with novel intensity – simultaneously, I observe how memory can manipulate this reminiscence as if the image of the original place became more an image of my inner self. Assmann states that the affect has an ambivalent nature, and can be considered a sign of authenticity, as well as a perpetrator of deception.¹⁵¹

In my research, I replace the *place of memory* with what I call the *memory of place*, and I concentrate on the concrete place in the landscape. I search for the essence of *the* place – I endeavour to embody its memory with my movement, considering its physicality, spatial arrangement, atmosphere, social function, emotional, and spiritual dimension. From my point of view, any place might be contemplated as a living memory – I am enabled to encounter the

sanctuaries, fraternal orders – there are the boundary stones of another age, illusions of eternity.” (Nora, 1989, p. 12)

¹⁴⁸ Assmannová, 2018, p. 379.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 336.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 379.

¹⁵¹ Assman further states that the memory of a very strong experience of negative nature becomes a trauma, an experience encapsulated in the body, which prevents conscious evocation. (2018, Assmannová, p. 22)

memory everywhere, in the places pulsating with the movement of everyday life, or in the inconspicuous, and disregarded places. I relate to the space that surrounds me, and I endeavor to understand the network of pasts with which a particular space was formed. The question is, what can I share from this memory of the space? The echoes of the footsteps in the old passage, quick breathing as I climbed the hill, dizziness that captivates me when I look deep into the abyss – these are the tracks that can bring me closer to the previous inhabitants of the landscape, the tracks that I can experience and share with my being. In chapter 3. 3. 1., I deal with the problem of how physical experience anchored in a particular space can be the starting material for reviving something long-defunct, a forgotten memory with which I have no direct experience. I become a bearer of traces of such experiences that I could not share with others in past.¹⁵²

3. 2. Silenced, Erased, Veiled, Memory of Landscape

In the process of thinking about the landscape, and how to approach it as a performer, I want to take a closer look at the structure of the landscape's memory and how it is transformed, thus I concentrate in more detail on the various forms of memory, forgetting and remembering. Lauterbach, the place where my research is situated, represents part of the Sudetenland – the borderland of the Czech Republic with a turbulent past; the Sudetenland bears the stigma of an uprooted, deserted landscape that has lost its cultural and social memory – it might be even perceived as a mysterious, inaccessible space. The relatively recent events, displacement of the Czech and Jewish minority after 1938, and displacement of the Czech Germans after World War II., resulted in an almost total population exchange (Kučerová, 2012, p. 174), which had a fatal impact on the Czech borderland and its future development – destruction of relationships, the liquidation of the localities, and disregard of the cultural heritage: “Along with the original residents, the memory of the local landscape was also transferred.” (Kučerová, 2012, p. 174) The words from the title of the chapter – *silenced, erased, veiled* – refer to a landscape in which the memory has been disrupted, it evokes both a physical place as well as the various mentalities and cultural continuity that has been broken. It is a

¹⁵² Szaló, 2017, p. 76.

landscape, where I have to move cautiously, not defining, but listening, revealing, absorbing, and asking with increased sensitivity.

The Sudetenland oscillates between a *memorial site* and a *traumatic place*; according to Assmann (2018, p. 370), the memorial site associated with suffering (persecution, humiliation, defeat, and death), is stabilized through the recollections and stories that are told about it, while the story of the traumatic place cannot be expressed, because of the psychological pressure or social taboos that block the narration. During the so-called Wild Transfer in 1945, several hundred thousand ethnic Germans were forced to leave their homes, they were killed in massacres, and forced marches, or they died from malnourishment, and diseases as consequence, or committed suicide. (Glassheim, 2006, p. 68-69) The communist regime, coming to power in 1948, deliberately neglected the history of the Sudeten Germans, which had a devastating effect on the landscape; urban and rural landscapes were liquidated – from thousands of villages, convents, churches, chapels, and pilgrimage sites, to the subtle network of the roads, paths, and alleys of trees. (Říha, 2008, pp. 5, 7) The agriculture was collectivized and industrialized, landscape close to the state borders was transformed into the military areas, and strictly guarded zones, impeding any free movement outside the borders. (Kučerová, 2012, p. 175) Initially, the new settlers lacked the connection to the land and its memory, the Sudetenland became known as the landscape without a farmer or the landscape of a bad conscience.¹⁵³ The physical and symbolical landscape of Sudetenland is permeated by nostalgic images, in which an autobiographical identity and lost continuity can be restored. The experience of a lingering bond between a person and the place emerges in nostalgia as a specific form of remembrance; from the *genuine nostalgia*, linked to a loss of home, and personal past, inscribed in the body, to the *ersatz nostalgia*, which represents the longing for past, rather than a conscious reflection of it.¹⁵⁴ Further, nostalgia might epitomize a form of

¹⁵³ Lapka, in Říha, 2008, p. 14.

¹⁵⁴ “In the case of the so-called genuine nostalgia, lost home is its subject, an inaccessible, but once a real place and a truly experienced, elapsed time belonging to it. In the second case, the past is mediated in various ways, and therefore I call referring to it an ersatz nostalgia, it is a dream of the past, a dwelling in the thoughts of the past, which is someone else’s past, with which there is no direct contact.” (2019, Pauknerová, p. 61-62) Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “V případě tzv. pravé nostalgie je jejím předmětem ztracený domov, nedostupné, ale kdysi skutečné místo a k němu přináležející skutečně zažitý, uplynulý čas. V druhém případě je minulost různým způsobem zprostředkovaná, a proto vztahování se k ní nazývám snovou nostalgií, jedná se o snění o minulosti, dlení v myšlenkách na minulost, která je ale minulostí někoho jiného, s níž není bezprostřední kontakt.” (2019, Pauknerová, p. 61-62)

collective sharing of a relationship with the past,¹⁵⁵ but also, it can idealize or manipulate the reality for political or ideological purposes. In addition to remembering, also the forgetting acts as an important force in this landscape, Pauknerová mentions different processes of forgetting – from the erosion of the material traces, the disappearance of the whole villages, and the disappearance of a certain activity, which was connected to the place, to the vanishing of the original context. (Pauknerová, 2019, pp. 167-168) The recontextualization of the objects and an overlaying of the various aspects of the place might be another form of forgetting – the excessive attempts to remind often lead to obscuring and overlaying what was to be reminded.¹⁵⁶ On the contrary, the absence (of the places, memory, life, movement), so evident and ubiquitous in the Sudetenland, might not be perceived only as a sign of total destruction: “Sometimes absence or loss evokes memory more strongly than those present. Sometimes absence is what reminds the most. Such as the ruins of churches or workrooms on the border are the greatest reminder of that defunct and the absence of villages is their greatest memorial.” (2019, Pauknerová, p. 159-160)¹⁵⁷ Thus, the absence is reflecting the own dynamics of the environment,¹⁵⁸ including a physical trace of what has been seemingly erased.

The veiled memory of the landscape might be enlivened in the *reanimation*, which arises from the interaction between the visitors, pilgrims, tourists, and the physically experienced places. From this point of view, the remembering is not passive, but a productive act of new perceiving – the imaginative remembering ensures the liveliness and presence of the forgotten landscape.¹⁵⁹ In searching for ways how to approach the memory of landscape, I found inspiration in Assmann’s concept of *anamnésis* (Assmannová, 2018, p. 120), which might be interesting in the context of recollecting something that one cannot personally recollect. *Anamnésis*, a remembrance containing the imaginary potential, is characterized by passivity, receptivity, and mysticism; the mystical state of the soul is induced in the several phases: from the abolition of the gravity and transition to another state of consciousness,

¹⁵⁵ Szaló, 2017, p. 91.

¹⁵⁶ In Pauknerová, 2019, p. 177. Elsewhere, she states that the reconciliation cannot be achieved by the accumulation of all elements, but rather by a selection of which layers of the memory accentuate, and which not. (Pauknerová, 2019, 167-169)

¹⁵⁷ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Někdy absence či ztráta evokují paměť silněji než přítomné. Někdy je absence to, co připomene nejvíce. Jako jsou ruiny kostelů nebo provozů v pohraničí tou největší připomínkou zaniklého a absence vesnic je jejich největším památníkem.”

¹⁵⁸ Pauknerová, 2019, pp. 169-170.

¹⁵⁹ Assmannová, 2018, p. 118.

through the relaxation and expansion of the inner self, to the complete calming, followed by the re-connection with nature, a divine intrusion into the soul. (Assmannová, 2018, p. 121) This kind of mediation within the memory might reveal a healing power, contemplation of the relationships in the landscape, the absence, and inner vision of its values. Another important influence, I found in the concept of the PerforMemory, invented by Layla Zami (*Contemporary PerforMemory. Dancing through Spacetime, Historical Trauma, and Diaspora in the 21st Century*, 2020) – which moves between memory and dance studies. Zami uses the perforMemory as a compass, a moving cartography,¹⁶⁰ or *a corporeal alternative to conventional instruments of historiography*.¹⁶¹ The dance might become a medium for transmitting cultural memory and overcoming historical trauma:

“The living body, moving through space, becomes a diasporic memory transmitted to the audience, at the intertwinings of history, corporeality, geography and culture. Not only is the dancing body a home, it is the materiality of perforMemory and the tool or kinesthetic software used by the artists to change the program of hegemonic memory.” (Zami, 2020, p. 138)

The dancing body is recollecting and re-imagining the fragments of memories, facts, and emotions, and through the idea of PerforMemory, it connects all these aspects in the confluence of movement. (Zami, 2020, p. 83) I find interesting that the perforMemory also deals with the absence by embodying and performing presence (2020, Zami, p. 54), and endeavors to create new non-linear spacetimes.

In the next chapter, I will concentrate on the memory of a defunct town in the borderland, representing a multihistoric heritage.¹⁶² I am interested in how to approach and transfer the memory through my bodily experience, to support the healing process and restoration of the relationship with this landscape, which might become a place of reconciliation and comprehension.

¹⁶⁰ Zami, 2020, p. 137.

¹⁶¹ Zami, 2020, p. 19.

¹⁶² Kučerová, 2012, p. 181.

3. 3. Reading the Landscape: Lauterbach

When I visited the area of former Lauterbach, the tree alley, the forest, and the bushes around the crossroads were the first what I saw, there was nothing much to indicate that there used to be a town full of life, and with a long tradition. The cars and motorcycles pass through this place without stopping or slowing their speed down, at first sight, the memory of the landscape is very well hidden and inaccessible to most people passing by... The defunct town of Lauterbach is located in western Bohemia, in the central part of the Protected Landscape Area of Slavkov Forrest (Kaiserwald / Slavkovský les).¹⁶³ The location of Lauterbach occupied an amphitheatrically modeled high plateau sloping to the south into the wet meadows, forming the watershed of the Lobežský and Komáří streams. (Kuča, 1996, p. 605) There are few versions explaining the origin of the name Lauterbach – one derives the name from *Mittelhochdeutsch Luterbach* (luter – rein, klar, sauber), which means “clear stream” (it was quite frequent name for the villages built on the water streams), another version disputes this claim, because there did not exist a significant watercourse inside Lauterbach, therefore the name might refer to an older expression, which meaning is no more known, the last version attributes the name of the town to the tin, a silver metal, which was mined in Lauterbach.¹⁶⁴ In the landscape around Lauterbach are the underground mines, the Jeroným mine is situated a few hundred meters west of the town area, in the past, the mine and the town formed one residential area. (Prekop, 2015, p. 521)

Lauterbach had a long history dating back to the Middle Ages, despite the town does not exist anymore, many layers of memory sedimented to the landscape. Originally, Lauterbach was built as a German colonization village, firstly recorded in 1370, when the tin was already mined here.¹⁶⁵ In 1551, king Ferdinand I of Habsburg confirmed the earlier rights and elevated Lauterbach to the royal mining town. During the re-catholicization of Czech lands, a large number of Lutheran German miners emigrated to Saxony, the mining began to decline as well as the importance of the town itself. (Kuča, 1996, p. 605) Lauterbach endured a catastrophe in 1772 when almost the entire built-up area was devastated by a huge fire, the ancient

¹⁶³ The area of Lauterbach is situated at the intersection of roads 208 and 210, close to the village Krásno, and about 10 km from the town Loket (Elbogen).

¹⁶⁴ More in Gareis, Schimmer, 1992, p. 12, p. 39.

¹⁶⁵ The peak of tin mining occurred in the first half of the 16th century.

character of the town disappeared, also, all the written documents were destroyed. From the original half-timbered houses remained only two – *Beim Keferl* and *Simon Haus* – the rest of the houses had to be rebuilt with a more simple construction. (Prokop, Smola, 2014, p. 614) The core of the town represented a church of St. Michael Archangel, located on a large rectangular square, from which an orthogonal network of the streets diverged.¹⁶⁶ A simple late Baroque church by Wenzel Hausmann (1727-1808), replaced the earlier church, which was burned down. Another religious architecture represented the Baroque Chapel of St. John the Baptist, and Ölbergkapelle from the 17th century, it is interesting that both chapels disappeared and after the beginning of the 20th century, nothing was known about their existence. (Kuča, 1996, p. 605)

The last mines were definitely closed in 1825, after then, the former mining town had a character of rather a village. (Gareis, Schimmer, 1992, p. 10) The inhabitants of Lauterbach were mainly engaged in wood processing – cooperage, carpentry, and logging, but also cattle breeding, flax cultivation, production of linseed oil, production of tin goods, lacemaking or hop trading. Due to its location, the town was a busy road junction connecting the eastern and western foothills of the Slavkov Forrest.¹⁶⁷ Lauterbach reached its maximum in the second half of the 19th century – the town had 274 houses and more than two thousand inhabitants (all of the German nationality).¹⁶⁸ In a time of its highest prosperity, the town possessed a town hall, a school, a town water supply, a spa, a tin smelter, a town brewery, a malthouse, a slaughterhouse, several mills, four sawmills, a wood wool production, and brick factory.¹⁶⁹ Also, in the second half of the 19th century, a post office, telegraph station, and gas and electric lighting of public streets were established here.¹⁷⁰ The whole region of Egerland was very

¹⁶⁶ The new Baroque church was probably built in 1774-1775. The longitudinal nave had rounded corners, and the architecturally unrhythmic walls were penetrated by rectangular and semicircular arched windows. Later, the church was supplemented by a massive prismatic tower on the main axis of the church behind the presbytery. The interior of the church was captured in the photographs made by Anton Gnirs. The main altar and two baroque statues of the saints were transferred to the chapel of St. Anna at the chateau in Osečany in the Sedlčany region. One of the church bells is now in the church of St. Petr and St. Paul in Krajková village. (Prokop, Smola, 2014, p. 611-613)

¹⁶⁷ Prokop, 2015, p. 522.

¹⁶⁸ Kuča, 1996, p. 604.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

musical, in each family, there were singers and musicians,¹⁷¹ the people in Lauterbach organized two choirs, and a theatre troupe, also the folkloric dance and music played an important role in the social life in Lauterbach. At the end of September, they celebrated with music and dance, the day of St. Michael, the patron of the church, and on the 22nd of November, the day of St. Cecilia, who was a patron of Lauterbach's musicians. (Gareis, Schimmer, 1992, p. 193, 195) The Lauterbach's Heimatbuch (1992, p. 185) describes a traditional folklore custom that lasted until the 20th century – it was *Maitanz*, or *D Moia*, May dance. It began with the decoration of the tallest and most beautiful tree that was cut down and built on the main square (May tree – *Moia*, in Czech *májka*) – this tradition is known in various interpretations throughout many parts of Europe. Specifically in Lauterbach, they danced *Roia* in the pairs (*Roia* is mentioned without further explanation there), followed by a theatrical scene containing the dialogues and gestures, which escalated with a food fight and throwing the dumplings at each other. The whole merriment was ended again by dancing in pairs; then, with the decorated top of the tree, they went to the town hall and danced again. There is mentioned another dance practiced in Lauterbach – *D' Pölsterltanz* (*Der Pölsterltanz*)¹⁷², the pillow "invitation" dance, which is based on a rule that the dancer throw a pillow at another dancer, with whom he wants to dance, other specifics of the dance are not described, but it could include the steps of polka or waltz – which the people learned to dance in the pubs, and in the workshops.

At beginning of the 20th century, Lauterbach remained by side of the industrial development, and also, the population gradually decreased. After the foundation of Czechoslovakia (1918), the name was changed from German *Lauterbach* to Czech *Litrbachy*. Sculptor and a significant artist of the Sokolov region, Willy Russ (1888-1974) created a monument devoted to more than 70 Lauterbach's victims fallen in the Great War (built in 1925), it was a massive square pylon with a pyramidal tip, equipped with four figural reliefs, the monument was situated in

¹⁷¹ Joseph Gerschon (1887-1960), was a musician born in Lauterbach; he studied at the Conservatory in Leipzig and became the first player of French horn in Alten Stadttheater in Leipzig. Then, he worked in Vienna, where he met R. Strauss, A. Schönberg, and B. Bartók, later he became a conductor in the orchestra in Karlsbad. He also composed the songs in Egerland language. (Gareis, Schimmer, 1992, p. 91) Gustav Hahn (1888-?) was a musician, a chamber virtuoso (French horn), and composer, born in Lauterbach. He played in many European orchestras – in Vienna, Romania, Italy, Prague (Deutsche Landestheater), Marienbad, Dessau. He composed the musical fairy-tales and wrote music to the texts of Heinrich Heine, or Nikolaus Lenau. (Gareis, Schimmer, 1992, p. 92)

¹⁷² In Gareis, Schimmer, 1992, p. 187.

the square near the church. (Prokop, Smola, 2014, p. 614) In 1930, the population was around 1192 inhabitants (9 Czechs, 1170 Germans, 5 Jews).¹⁷³ The Rosenbaums were the only Jewish family living in Lauterbach at that time; after their house burned down, they moved to Pilsen in 1938 – their decision to leave Lauterbach was probably not voluntary. In 1942, the family was deported to Terezín, where they were separated – father Ota was deported to the Majdanek concentration camp, and mother Erna with her daughters Helena (15) and Charlota (6) to the Sobibok concentration camp, none of the family survived.¹⁷⁴ Shortly before the end of World War II, the inhabitants witnessed one of the most tragic event there, in the second half of April 1945, a forced march from the concentration camp in Gross-Rosen were passing through Lauterbach and stayed there for one night. The event is remembered in the Heimatbuch¹⁷⁵ by a man, who was at that time a young boy; he was horrified that the women were in such bad condition, ill-treatment, and beaten. Annemarie Pimpl, at that time a little girl, with her grandmother, secretly brought bread to the prisoners, despite they were threatened with shooting for that.¹⁷⁶ Twelve women died during the night because they did not survive outside in the snow and low temperature. The SS commander refused to bury the women's bodies at the cemetery but placed them near the knackery outside of the town. After the war, the German inhabitants were forced to dig up the remains of the bodies with their bare hands and place them in a new grave. In 2003, the place was reverently restored to commemorate the Jewish sacrifices. When I visited this place of painful memory, I felt the sacred atmosphere of the place embraced by the forest, it was emotionally one of the strongest experiences I have had in the landscape.

The demise of the town relates to the violent displacement of the vast majority of the German population living in the Czech borderland – after 1945, the Germans from several thousand settlements in Sudetenland were forced from their homes. Annemarie Pimpl was the age of five when she had to leave Lauterbach with her grandparents. She recalls that all Germans were transported in the wagons, imprisoned in unhygienic conditions, and with no place to sit down, many people died during the journey.¹⁷⁷ The area of Lauterbach and neighboring

¹⁷³ Kuča, 1996, p. 604.

¹⁷⁴ <https://lauterbach.terra-incognita.cz/zastaveni.html#!6-Rosenbaumovi>.

¹⁷⁵ Gareis, Schimmer, 1992, p. 342-344.

¹⁷⁶ https://lauterbach.terra-incognita.cz/zastaveni.html#!10-Robert_a_Maria_Pimplovi.

¹⁷⁷ https://lauterbach.terra-incognita.cz/zastaveni.html#!10-Robert_a_Maria_Pimplovi.

settlements Horní, Střední a Dolní Erlich (Chalupy) was firstly closed and then transformed into the military district and training camp Prameny, established in 1946 and disposed of in 1954. (Kuča, 1996, p. 605) The abandoned city became the backdrop for the practice of offensive military action in the built-up area. (Prekop, 2015, p. 523) In the years 1947–1948, the Czechoslovak army filmed an instructional document for the soldiers here, which contains the authentic footage of the liquidation of Lauterbach, using the buildings and area of the town for the military training.¹⁷⁸ Watching the footage was disturbing for me; despite that the film showed “mere” exercise, not real fighting, I felt anxious to observe the devastation of the buildings – all that had left from the abandoned town was misused for the manifestation of power without the slightest sense of respect for the memory of the place. The town renamed Čistá (*Clear*) was completely erased from the landscape by heavy equipment between the years 1949 and 1954. Significant interventions continued even after this liquidation of the town, e. g. digging of silage pits, and ignoring the historical solutions across significant relics of houses. (Prekop, 2015, p. 531) Today, except for the several artifacts – as the tourist information boards, a tourist signpost, and a stone monument in the place where the centre of the town was located – not much more indicates the existence of the town of Lauterbach.

An association Terra incognita was founded in 2011, with an aim to protect and promote the history of Lauterbach and the Egerland region and to lead an open discussion on the issue of Czech-German relations in the 19th and 20th centuries.¹⁷⁹ Each year, the association organizes a pilgrimage of St. Michael Archangel, the patron of the former church in Lauterbach – the happening becomes a medium of an encounter of the inhabitants of the survived villages in the region, as well as a place of remembrance of the former inhabitants of Lauterbach and their descendants. During the pilgrimage, the area of the church serves as an open-air lecture space, the encounter concludes with a tradition of lighting the place of the church with candles. Terra incognita significantly contributes to a deeper understanding of the history of Lauterbach and its cultural heritage. In 2014 and 2015, Filip Prekop and the archeological team of the National Heritage Institute in Loket led very detailed archeological research of the defunct town of Lauterbach, using all kinds of methods.¹⁸⁰ In the surface research, they

¹⁷⁸ *Výcvik boje o osadu a v osadě (Fight Training for the Settlement and in the Settlement)*. The document available on https://youtu.be/_nZuS_KmffQ.

¹⁷⁹ Official website: <https://www.terra-incognita.cz>

¹⁸⁰ Prekop, 2015.

discovered the preserved relics of houses and identified 36 basements, half of them fully accessible, then the significant town water system of the adjoining ponds in the southeast part.¹⁸¹ The archeological excavations localized the church in the area of the square, with the main nave paved with trachyte slabs.¹⁸² The dendrological research (led by Kateřina Gazdová) discovered that the tree species were very well preserved, especially, the ash and chestnut alleys, and other solitaire trees which were not devastated.¹⁸³ The researchers endeavor to redefine the heritage protection of Lauterbach as a landscape monument zone, which could help to secure the area against illegal activities. Simultaneously, they call for a suitable study, which becomes a mediator in dealing with the unhealed and still quite taboo events of the mid-20th century in the Czech borderland.

Assmann claims that *recollecting is not possible without knowledge*.¹⁸⁴ For me, it is necessary to realize that Lauterbach was historically an important town, intersecting many cultural identities, with its architecture, social life, folklore, personal memories, memorial and traumatic places – it is disturbing all the more to compare it with the current state of this landscape. I realize this huge difference, the current presence of absence, which, for me, is not empty, but rather contains invisible traces of past destinies.

3. 3. 1. Memory of Landscape as Body Experience in Process of Creation

I have started my practical research from the physical place – from the landscape area of Lauterbach, where its whole existence was forcibly interrupted and erased. From the beginning, I was interested in embodying the vanished memory; the absence as an essential element of this site represents for me an impetus to look for the traces, and lost continuity. Initially, I worked with the idea of site-specific performance in the former built-up area of Lauterbach and the surrounding landscape – I intended the performance to become a re-animation of the place, which could bring new life and draw the attention to the landscape. During my creative process, my approach to this landscape gradually changed. As I dived deeper under the surface of the landscape memory, I realized that it is uneasy to present my

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p. 525.

¹⁸² Ibid, p. 526.

¹⁸³ Ibid, p. 531.

¹⁸⁴ Assmannová, 2018, p. 423.

movement explorations directly in Lauterbach. I was emotionally moved by the story of this place, and my process became more intimate and focused more on my inner vision of the place. I started to reconsider and re-imagine the seemingly ideal format of site-specific and searched for other ways to transfer the memory of the site. I came to the idea of an “imprint” of the landscape in my body and transferring the experience of place to a “neutral” environment, e. g. in a studio space. Thus, this process evokes *site-specific upside down*, the bodily memory revives Lauterbach while being outside of it – I aim to pass on a dynamic image of the landscape, becoming the elongation of the landscape memory. During my practical explorations, I asked myself the following questions:

How can a dancer become a medium that transmits information about the defunct town?

Which traces of memory are transferable and how?

How does the missing, lost, or disappeared body/place/emotion become visible?

In parallel with my interest in the landscape, I explore the movement elements inspired by Duncanism in my practical research; I am searching for the points of contact connecting Duncanism and the site memory of Lauterbach. The philosophy of Duncanism is based on the idea of natural movement, and the relationship between humans and nature is always present as an original source of inspiration. Eva Blažíčková says about this relationship: “I think that nature affects me with kind of its hidden mysterious power from which I draw. I tried and try to lead my students to that. To free oneself from all the deposits acquired during one’s life and to connect one’s center of gravity to the ground, to find one’s vertical, to place it in space, to gain strength in one’s own the bodily support system... I perceive the nature intensively within myself, in this simple, common ground.”¹⁸⁵ Applying the principles of Duncanism to my dance practice, I understand as a return to my dance roots, getting rid of the techniques and styles I have learned and focusing on the simplicity of movement, looking for the truthfulness in sense of the universalism of Duncanist philosophy. In my interpretation of Duncanism, I concentrate particularly on the certain elements:

- physical and spiritual tuning

¹⁸⁵ From the interview with Eva Blažíčková, see Appendix A.

- sharpening the perception
- phenomenon of waves and undulation in motion
- experimenting with the center of gravity
- embodying the idea of the ancient choir

These elements or motifs appear in five physical scores (3. 3. 2.), documenting my creative process that combines Duncanist movement reference with my landscape research.

My bodily experience plays a pivotal role in the process of uncovering the memory of the landscape; I have to ask whether it is possible to “remember” places that are not part of my immediate experience and do not shape my own past. “The memory of places is a memory that belongs more to the world of which we are a part than to us.” (2017, Szaló, p. 12)¹⁸⁶ As I wrote earlier in this thesis, I perceive the Sudetenland as a landscape where one has to move carefully, more listen than actively reshape the space. In this sense, I consider the ephemerality of dance to be an advantage in how to unfold the memory of the site and leave behind not material but an intangible trail. In relation to the landscape of Lauterbach, I am interested in the motif of absence, which, for me, is not equal to emptiness, on the contrary, I perceive absence in landscape more as a certain vacuum filled with intersecting images – the transformation of the landscape, the traces of past architecture, significant events, people’s destinies, customs, gestures, and movements in space. The absence is an activator of my imagination, which, together with the knowledge I have about the place, creates an image of Lauterbach, moving somewhere between a physical place, a memory (anamnesis), and a poetic image of the landscape. I stimulate my physical remembering in empty space beyond the geographical boundaries and I endeavour to let the memory of landscape become my own. “The audience experiences memory as a space to be inhabited and traversed.” (2020, Zami, p. 107) I believe that thinking about the movement and embodiment might bring another perspective to the landscape, the performer’s body offers another kind of reading.

While exploring the characteristic aspects of the defunct town, I engage my imaginary state, bridging the gaps and lost memories. “[...] I dream the world, so the world exists as I dream

¹⁸⁶ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. “Paměť míst je paměť, která patří spíše světu, jehož jsme součástí, než nám.” (2017, Szaló, p. 12)

it.”¹⁸⁷ In relation to Gaston Bachelard, I develop the idea of the poetics of space that can be explored as the beginning of new consciousness, the past resonating in the poetic image has its own existence and dynamics. (Bachelard, 2009, p. 8) An important role in my creative process represents the drawing; the crafted eye-hand connection of spatial and kinaesthetic memory brings me different quality than if I would make the drawings in a digital program. My hand can think, imagine, and discover the relationships, proportions, or the emotional and symbolic layer of space. The drawing often helps me to formulate what my bodily explorations feel like, it suggests and visualizes the movement diagrams of experienced phases of my search.

In the next chapter, I give examples of the physical scores, which provide me a structure and transcription of the kinaesthetic imprints, based on my experience from the landscape memory of Lauterbach.

3. 3. 2. Movement Reminiscence of Defunct Town: Physical Scores

The following five physical scores represent an imaginary walk through the spacetime of Lauterbach, which connects my lived experience of the place, reflecting the preserved fragments of the former town, accepting absence as a potential for the imaginative recollection, and revealing the individual layers of memory. The scores are not finished products, but a record of a living and yet unfinished process of embodying the landscape in the performer’s body. Within my landscape movement research, I explore the principles of Duncanism and endeavor to apply them creatively in my practice.

¹⁸⁷ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová: “[...] sním svět, tedy svět existuje, jak jej sním.” (Bachelard, 2010, p. 149)

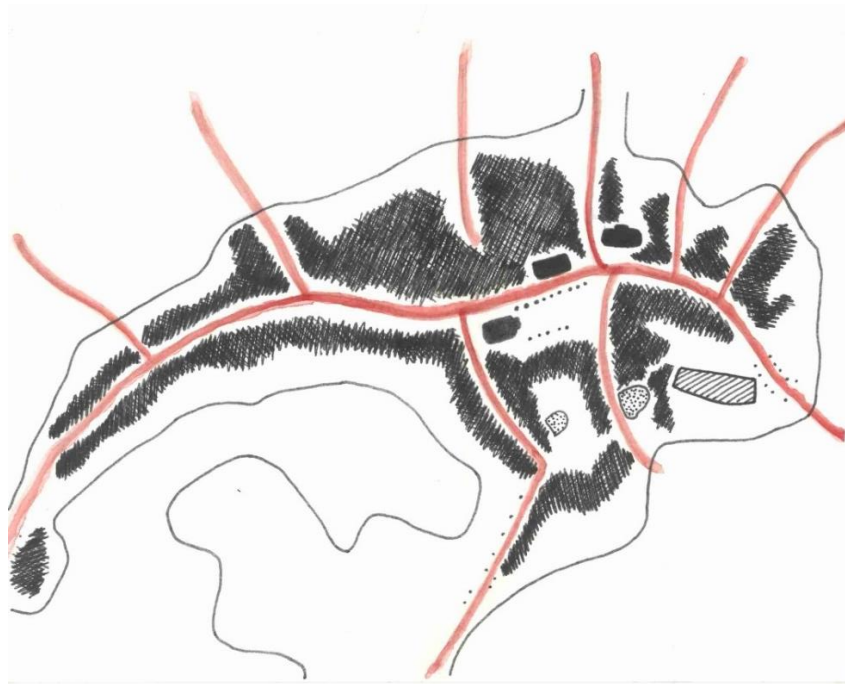


Figure 1. "Situation of Lauterbach". Daniela Hanelová.

SITUATION

Keywords: landscape relief, built-up area, paths and movements, active and passive zones.

Element: the centre of gravity – body momentum.

Memory: I observe the relationship of the town and the landscape as a network of movement – mapping the traces of inscribed movement and reading the changes in dynamics, I reveal the significant features, the forgotten paths, the meeting places, the open and closed areas, and the active and passive zones.

Bodily imprint: I imagine my diagram of the inscribed movements in the town/landscape as a score for the different pedestrian walk and run patterns. I engage the centre of gravity as initiation of body momentum, and also the secondary centres of gravity to explore the intersecting forces in the landscape. I create a spatial miniature of the situation and dynamic movement, which happened on a larger scale: I search for the central space, and in the points of intersection, I include the turns, rotation, and spirals. I observe the distance in the landscape and imagine – can I see the top of the church from the place where I am standing? I map the physical traces – any un conspicuous, or disregarded place might become a place of memory.

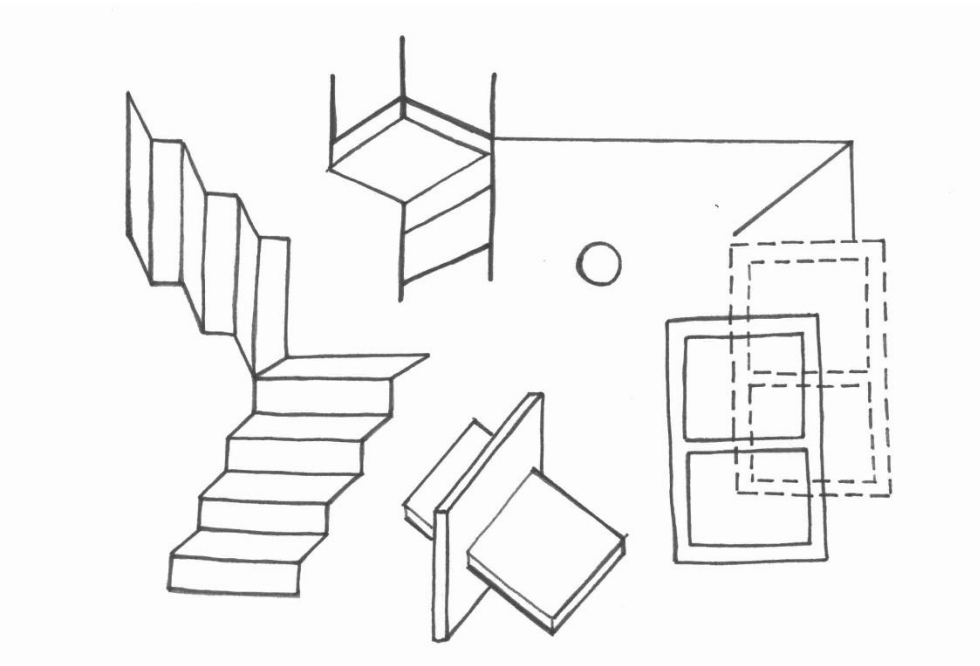


Figure 2. "Inhabiting the place". Daniela Hanelová.

INHABITING THE PLACE

Keywords: placement – displacement, rooting – uprooting, growing – overgrowing.

Element: sharpening the perception.

Memory: I carry the initial image of a "house" and "home" physically and despite different timescapes: "Our native home inscribed a hierarchy of various inhabiting functions into us. We are a diagram of the functions of inhabiting this house and all other houses are just variations of the basic theme." (Bachelard, 2009, p. 39)¹⁸⁸ My imaginary inhabiting the house in Lauterbach is characterized by the cycle of emergence and extinction, placement and displacement, rooting and uprooting, growing and overgrowing. The "house" was decomposed into fragments that have been scattered until they completely merged with nature. I imagine the people who used to live there, their behaviour, habits, and their intersecting narratives.

Bodily imprint: I enter the space with the idea of "anamnesis-remembering" the place of inhabiting, my recollection of the non-existing house in Lauterbach. I scan the spatial

¹⁸⁸ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. "Rodný dům do nás zkrátka vepsal hierarchii různých funkcí obývání. Jsme diagramem funkcí obývání tohoto domu a všechny ostatní domy jsou jen variacemi základního tématu." (Bachelard, 2009, p. 39)

relationships of the house with different parts of my body. I work with the physical feeling of displacement and uprooting: I want to come back to my routine and habits connected to this particular house: to sit, lie down, open the door, to take a glass of water from the table. But I cannot reach the space, every movement that I execute is missing its target: instead of opening the door, I pass through it, instead of taking the glass my hand slides away. I act as a ghost in my own house as if I and the space around me were from different materialities. I perceive the absence of touch as the space that surrounds me is hardly able to be touched or grasped. I embody the house by deconstructing the place of inhabiting, I search for the fragments, and I negotiate how to find the stability and anchorage in space.

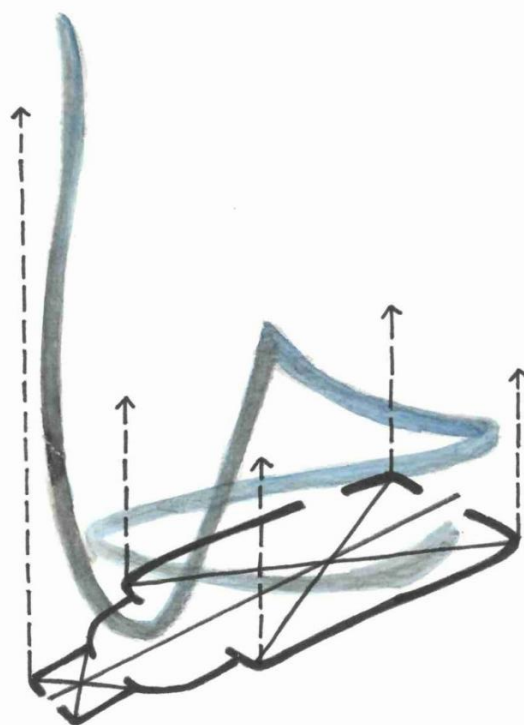


Figure 3. "Church – geometry of echoes." Daniela Hanelová.

CHURCH

Keywords: spirituality, concentration, sanctuary, the geometry of echoes.

Element: bodily and spiritual tuning.

Memory: My idea for the church is based on Gaston Bachelard, who characterizes the house of the past as the geometry of the echoes.¹⁸⁹ The church in Lauterbach was the spiritual core

¹⁸⁹ Bachelard, 2009, p. 78.

of the town, it was a place where the movement of the different people was concentrated. I imagine that the space itself was formed by the sounds – bells, organs, singing, whispering of the prayers. In a silenced and physically non-existing church, I am searching for the echoes to re-create and resound the space.

Bodily imprint: I focus on the physical and spiritual tuning, which aim is to open the kinaesthetic sensibility. For a moment, I just observe my breath and deepen it. With exhale, I send my voice and movement to the space, visualizing them as a spatial diagram. Through the echoes, I get to know the vertical, horizontal, sagittal planes, diagonals, and curves creating the space of the church. I experiment with the possibilities of sound and movement traveling in spirals, lines, and pulsation. I pay attention to the time aspect of echoes, the moment when the movement has finished and is fading out. My body becomes an acoustic membrane, and I embody the space of the church by the echoes of my body-voice explorations.

12 WOMEN

Keywords: traumatic place, prayer, silence, meditation.

Element: ancient chorus.

Memory: I think about this score as a movement prayer for twelve Jewish women, who died in Lauterbach during the forced march (1945). This prayer should open a quiet meditation, healing the painful memory.

Bodily imprint: I adopt Isadora Duncan's idea of a dancer embodying the ancient chorus, and I explore how to express the plurality within my own body, how to become twelve women, one breathing organism. I follow the rhythm of my breathing and I observe how my kinaesthetic sensation changes with applying the idea of the choir: my perception widens, and the energy of the gestures grows stronger. I simplify the movement to not lose the connection to the extended self. I contemplate the place.



Figure 4. "Chestnut Alley." Daniela Hanelová.

CHESTNUT ALLEY

Keywords: rhythm, communication, continuity, recovery.

Element: wave motion, the motor in the soul.

Memory: The chestnut alley represents the most preserved part of the liquidated town, I perceive it as a place through which Lauterbach is still living, breathing, and healing itself. The chestnut trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) are about 120 years old and their average life expectancy is about 200 years.¹⁹⁰ A busy road runs along the alley – in past, there was a public square, where the people meet and talk. I imagine the alley as a source of energy, a place of communication, and continuation.

Bodily imprint: I begin with activating the "motor in my soul" and I initiate a little wave motion pulsating through my body. I gradually transform into the image of a continuous wave, being never stopped in motion. I imagine the space of the alley in the different temporalities – the

¹⁹⁰ https://lauterbach.terra-incognita.cz/zastaveni.html#!12-Jirovcova_alej.

people, cars, bicycles, and horses passing by – and I try to follow their dynamics, speed, and energy in my body. It is not about copying their movement but adopting their dynamic trajectories into my wave continuum.

"[...] how strong is one who can give pain passage, which would shake through the whole body like the wind through the branches of aspen. The motion stiff in a convulsive manifestation of pain will ripple into the rhythm of the dance; the pain that sits inwardly like a rock weighing to the bottom rises with a wave culminating in a rise higher than a sober life would bear, but descent from the top of the wave in a valley of calm follows, as one approaches the deepest layers of one's self and draws new strength and faith from untainted springs. The sharply rising wave fluctuations turn into waves, like the wind playing with a reed."¹⁹¹

CONCLUSION

In my thesis, I focused on two themes – the movement of the Czech Duncanism and the embodied memory of the landscape – to explore and find the connecting points between these two spheres through my artistic practice.

In the first part, I introduced the paths by which the Duncanist philosophy penetrated the Czech environment, and I pointed out the specific artistic and pedagogical values developed by the Czech representatives of Duncanism Jarmila Jeřábková and Eva Blažičková. I followed the gradual professionalization of Duncanism, and simultaneously its expansion to the dance education on an extensive scale. I asked a question about how is the legacy originating from Isadora and Elizabeth Duncan understood, and which characteristics form the very essence of the Czech Duncanist approach. I identified Czech Duncanism in its wideness as a philosophy of dance, institution, method, organism, identity, and shared cultural knowledge.

¹⁹¹ Translated from Czech by Daniela Hanelová. "[...] jak silný je ten, kdo dovede dát bolesti průchod, by prochvěla celým tělem, jako vítr větvemi osiky. V křečovitý projev bolesti strnulý pohyb zvlní se v rytmus tance; bolest, která zasedla v nitru jako kámen tížící ke dnu, vzepne se vlnou vrcholící vzepjetím vyšším, než nesl by střízlivý život, následuje však sestup z vrcholu vlny v údolí klidu, kdy člověk přiblíží se nejhlubším vrstvám svého já a čerpá z nezkalených pramenů novou sílu a víru. Prudce vzedmuté výkyvy vln změní se ve vlnění, jako když vítr pohrává s rákosem." (Vavruch, 1929, p. 2-3)

In the second part, I analysed the kinaesthetic memory of the Czech Duncanism – I aimed to articulate the Duncanist elements, which I could further apply to my dance practice. The various materials guided me to explore the natural movement and the phenomenon of the wave and rhythm. I concentrated on the cornerstone of the Duncan method – the improvisation related to the sharpening of perception and bodily and spiritual tuning, which leads to the opening of the sources of creativity. I traced the kinaesthetic and expressive movement qualities on the examples of the recorded choreographies of the Studio of Chamber Dance. I searched for the relation between individuality and community, the cultivation of the kinaesthetic sensibility, and the principle of teaching dance as an experience. I came to the understanding that Czech Duncanism is an open and unfinished process, which is constantly searching for new artistic and pedagogical paths.

In the third part, I opened the topic of memory of landscape, from the perspective of a dancer and a performer, I realized that entering the landscape is not a matter of course, but a gift, an opportunity to uncover different layers of memory. Whether I move on its physical or imaginary plane, the memory of landscape can be concretized through the response of my body. I learned to listen more attentively and more intensely and to read the traces that shape the memory of the landscape. I concentrated on the silenced, erased, or veiled memory of the places and I situated my practical research in Sudetenland, the area of the Czech borderland – the defunct town of Lauterbach, with a long history, which was interrupted and destroyed in the half of the 20th century. In the final part of my thesis, I processed the movement principles of Duncanism with my lived experience from the landscape of Lauterbach. I intended to embody the vanished memory, and the topic of absence emerged as a potential for revealing the networks of movement intersecting in the landscape. I searched for a movement imprint of the defunct town, and I presented my explorations in the physical scores, which became a tool for how to approach the multi-layered memory of landscape as body experience. The theoretical basis in Czech Duncanism and memory of landscape studies provided me with significant support for my artistic practice, in which I found the beginning for further development.

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Appendix A: Interview with Eva Blažíčková

1. The Czech Duncanism is often characterized as a philosophy of dance, more broadly as a philosophy of life. At the same time, it is worldwide unique in that it perceives dance through the eyes of the present, and thus constantly develops its view of dance. What is your opinion on why Duncanism developed into such a unique form right in the Czech Republic? And are there any other specifics that distinguish Czech Duncanism from the international one?

I think that Duncanism had a successful beginning in the Czech Republic. Its thought background – if you want the philosophy of Duncanism, fell on the fertile and well-prepared ground in the Czech lands at the right time, most of all thanks to the SOKOL organization. The identical ideals, referring to ancient Greece, the desire for the return of human psychosomatic unity, the philosophical currents following the same direction, the atmosphere of the First Republic, the desire for the renaissance of society, the wide-open windows to the new impulses... A whole large group of (we are speaking about the 20s and 30s of the 20th century) scholars, art historians, artists, architects, and philosophers created a sufficiently strong background for this impulse. SOKOL organization then sent the first specific scouts – a group of girls and young women – to the Duncan school in Austrian Klessheim, led by Isadora's sister Elizabeth. Jarmila Jeřábková was exceptionally talented, perceptive, and musical in the group. She was invited to the professional training, received a scholarship from the school, and arrived. After her return to Prague, this strong personality was formed by a group of intellectuals and artists who even practiced the discovery ideas applied to bodily experience, themselves.

In the Czech conditions, they thought over the new stimuli and, while maintaining all the principles, they conceived them for the environment and needs of the newly formed republic. From the photographs, it is evident that the morphology already experienced a natural shift in time.

Today, Duncanism in the Czech Republic represents one of the branches of contemporary dance. The Duncan Centre Conservatory Prague, which could have been established for

understandable reasons only after political changes in 1992, uses this method to train professional dancers, choreographers and teachers.

Unlike abroad, especially in the United States, we do not see our path in preserving the choreographic legacy of Isadora Duncan, but in the values, which she discovered in dance for us. Her sister Elizabeth had time to develop them for teaching future generations. The principles of Duncanism, based on the study of natural movement, not only do not age but seem to become more and more relevant.

2. One of Isadora Duncan's goals was spiritual tuning, the so-called warming up of the motor in the soul. How did Mrs. Jarmila Jeřábková work with the principle of *tuning* in her lessons? And how do you apply this principle?

In the Duncanist work, it has never been, and I hope that also in the future it will not be just about the secular significance of the exercise. That is crucial. And then the "tuning" is an interplay of many details that do not allow the student or the teacher to become commonplace. It is primarily a matter of difficulty. It is based on the premise that everything a person touches, the people s/he interacts with, and the environment in which s/he works affects a person without realizing it.

The studio was a kind of shrine for us. No one entered without being asked. No one lay around, flitted, shouted, put the clothes off after sweating, or drank water there. We were dressed so that we could be corrected to the finest detail. Mrs. Jarmila came to the dressing room for us, we stood in a small group with her and the connection was established. The warm-up was guided by Mrs. Jarmila. Each lesson started differently, so it was an expectation from the very beginning, not a routine. Also, the exercises themselves always required absolute concentration and full commitment to the maximum of individual possibilities. The whole lesson always happened as one unit – it had peaks, and quiet areas and ended with improvisation, which of courses resulted from the content of the lesson. The class ended again in a concentrated calmness and connection to Mrs. Jarmila. Simply, each lesson was an experience mediated by an exceptional pedagogue. Live high-quality piano accompaniment was a matter of course.

And me? I consider this method of guidance to be functional, so I follow it, albeit at a different time, in a different context, and conditions. The essence has not changed. Difficulty. I am

convinced that the path to dance does not lead to mindless body training accompanied by trivial rhythmic music from the recording. From the very beginning, it is necessary to develop in the pupils the spiritual dimension that Dance carries within itself.

3. How important role does improvisation play in the dance education for Czech Duncanism?

Improvisation has been an integral part of the Duncan Method from the very beginning. Through targeted improvisation, a lot of mental processes are developed – such as deepened perception, increased physical sensitivity to contact with space, sharpened imagery – and thus the release of creative abilities.

Improvisation goes through several phases, which do not happen linearly but are constantly intertwined. This includes, above all, the preparatory phase, which is the warming up of the organism (not only physical but also mental – Isadora Duncan: “warm up the motor in your soul”), deep concentration on the particular problematics, directing perception to the intention, and stimulating the senses. The second phase follows, in which the preparation accumulates and deepens, perception deepens, the body is “boiling”. In the third phase, this dive gives birth to an idea without the participation of the conscious mind, only based on unconsciousness. An original, authentic movement expression arises. The fourth phase is verification, evaluation of the implementation of the idea. The emotional quality of an idea then influences other ideas and they are remembered and fixed as the basis of choreographic work.

Ideally, existing morphology is discovered and preserved. The individual paths leading to improvisation are constantly intertwined, follow each other, deepen and return in various forms and approaches.

4. Can you recall the creative process of the choreographies *The Lover's Magic Spell (Starodávné čarování milému)* and *Raab The Harlot (Nevěstka Raab)*?

I don't remember the details anymore, but the *The Lover's Magic Spell* (music by Petr Eben) was created at a time when I was still fully dancing and Mrs. Jeřábková entrusted me not only her courses in the studio Metro at Národní třída, but she also trusted to me our whole work such Elizabeth to Mrs. Jarmila before.

The Lover's Magic Spell thus arose at the time of my close connection with Mrs. Jeřábková, and in cooperation with the group. I think the great influence of my teacher on me is evident in the piece. Besides the fact that Mrs. Jarmila took part in the rehearsals very often.

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Raab The Harlot was created at the time when my daughter Lenka Flory decided to pursue a career as a dancer and choreographer and danced fully in my Chamber Dance Studio II. Although I chose the music and the title, I think Lenka's big share in the final form of this work is obvious. There is a difference of one generation between these two choreographies.

5. Could the current Duncan technique find an application as a training method in the daily regime of a professional dance ensemble? Do you think there is potential for developing the technique for this purpose?

I don't like to talk about the Duncan technique. I use the term Duncan Method, which of courses includes the Duncan technique, but an integral part of the dancer's training is also specially conducted improvisation. It teaches students an immersion, in which it is possible to draw on existing morphology. Choreographic creation follows and is often based on these original discoveries. For us, the preparation for the pedagogical work in the field is a very important part of the education of a dancer and choreographer. All of this is closely related to the formation of the dancer. Graduates of the Duncan Centre Conservatory are already employed in professional ensembles not only in the Czech Republic; as an example, I mention the Forman Brothers' Theatre, which collaborates almost exclusively with our graduates, but the students dance in various ensembles throughout Europe and overseas. Their professional readiness stands from a technical point of view, moreover, their great advantage is the creativity and truthfulness of the stage presentation.

There are no conditions in the Czech Republic for the existence of a professional ensemble of contemporary dance. Unfortunately, the ballet ensembles of the theaters still hold this area in their strong arms. The proclaimed transformation of theatres somehow did not happen. All

contemporary dance groups work from grant to grant, hiring dancers for each project, who suit their current choreographic intent.

I am convinced that all this is at the expense of the quality of the final work. A strong, long-term cooperating team – the choreographer and his ensemble – does not yet exist in the Czech Republic and the conditions for this are not prepared. But it will happen, because there is no other way, it will happen at the moment, when our society starts to mind the current state of mundaneness, average and tasteless.

I am convinced that in such a case, even among the creators working with the Duncan Method, there will be a sufficiently strong and brave personality ready for such work.

6. Part of my research is movement in connection with the memory of the place and the memory of the landscape. To what extent was the memory of the place/landscape important to you in your work (artistic or pedagogical)?

I don't think that a particular landscape, or a specific place, fundamentally influenced me, unless it was exclusively a site-specific performance. This happened, for example, when I was invited by the B. Martinů Foundation and Institut to choreograph the *Bouquet (Kytice)*. The specific place there was crucial. We situated the *Bouquet* in the area of the Lesser Town Cemetery, an old beautifully neglected area at the time, full of baroque tombstones and old trees, all overgrown with ivy. The choreography had great success, the planned two performances swelled to six, and a film was made. But I could not comply with the request to transfer the choreography to other places in the republic. The *Bouquet* with the Malostranský cemetery simply grew so large that it could not be transferred to another cemetery.

I think that nature affects me with kind of its hidden mysterious power from which I draw. I tried and try to lead my students to do that.

To free oneself from all deposits acquired during one's life and to connect one's center of gravity to the ground, to find one's vertical, to place it in space, to gain strength in one's own bodily support system...

I perceive nature intensively within myself, in this simple, common ground.

7. You have been working for a long time on the program of incorporating the field of dance into primary school education. How is this idea accepted by school representatives and by

those who decide on the inclusion of the program? What do you see as the biggest obstacles to implementing this program? Is there any hope of early implementation?

In the 1990s, a group of respected contemporary dance personalities (dance publicists, organizers of dance festivals, curators, and dance pedagogues) founded the Dance Vision and shaped its progressive program. It strives to seize the opportunity and support the development of contemporary dance, which has become an “internal force” after regime change and a strong movement, despite having been silenced and expelled from culture for fifty years. Part of the program was the promotion of dance education in primary education, to which I was invited by the Vision of Dance.

The subject of Contemporary Dance was then approved under the title “Dance and Movement Education” by a decision of the Minister of Education and included as a subject belonging to the field of Arts and Culture in the Framework Educational programs for Basic Education in 2010. This is essential.

The characteristics of the subject Dance and Movement Education were therefore developed on the philosophical basis of Duncanism. The program should thus become a path to individual awareness, research, and rediscovery of the wisdom and information that is hidden in the human body. The dance understood and taught in this way provides tools for the development of the individual potential of each child in its entirety – it does not offer ready-made solutions, ready-made form. It provides a secure foundation on which it is possible to build bodily intelligence aimed at developing a natural, organic movement, dependent on the individual anatomical, physiological, and psychological prerequisites of the student. Such a conception of dance is avoiding conveying a certain type of dance to pupils, whether in terms of genre, trend, style, or a specific, determining morphology. It also does not work with the principle of mechanical repetition and drill. Teaching dance is a long-term process conditioned by will, intelligence, intention, and amount of talent. This makes it a possibility for every child.

Dance is not understood here as a practical question but as the valuable one. That is crucial. The program is based on four domains, which determine the focus of teaching:

1/ Space – Placement

2/ Supporting authenticity

3/ Body intelligence

4/ Belonging

In this sense, the subject of Dance and Movement Education creates a space for the formation and development of other competencies, especially social, personnel, communicative and civic competencies. At the same time, it contributes to achieving the goals of primary education.

The problem so far is that awareness of contemporary dance in the Czech Republic is relatively poor. This is due to the circumstances mentioned above – political decisions have kept the contemporary dance silenced and displaced from the cultural community for fifty years. It seems incomprehensible at the moment but it has been so. In the young generation, the situation is much better, but inertia and habit are against us in this case. The media do not contribute to improving the general awareness of the values of contemporary dance either, specifically, Czech Television has special immobility, numbness, bad taste, and kitsch in this artistic field.

It will take some time until the awareness of what contemporary dance is and what values it has for education spreads to the general consciousness, but we are on the way and fundamental things have already happened. We are currently discussing under the umbrella of the National Pedagogical Institute the equal rights of art subjects within the field of Art and Culture. Ideally, each school would choose three out of five arts subjects for its School Curriculum: Drama, Music, Dance, Fine Arts, and Audio-Visual Arts. This would equal the rights of all artistic disciplines and dance would cease to be on the edge of interest.

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich eidesstattlich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig und ohne fremde Hilfe verfasst habe. Alle Stellen oder Passagen der vorliegenden Arbeit, die anderen Quellen im Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen wurden, sind durch Angaben der Herkunft kenntlich gemacht. Dies gilt auch für die Reproduktion von Noten, grafische Darstellungen und andere analoge oder digitale Materialien.

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