INTEGRATING DRAMA AND HISTORICAL MEMORY IN COLOMBIAN
SCHOOLING:
A CLASSROOM COMMUNITY OF MEMORY AND DRAMA

by

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Integrating Drama and Historical Memory in Colombian Schooling: a classroom community of memory and drama

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Abstract

This is a research study that explores the kind of pedagogical possibilities that collective remembrance mediated by practices of drama in education, might offer to the work of memory. Under study is a drama-remembrance (an artistic and pedagogical project) that attempts to link significant historical learning with critical remembrance through the classroom drama praxis. Assuming the school as a terrain within which a community of memory is possible, this research is concerned with educational processes that facilitate the understanding of the ‘work of collective memory’. The hypothesis is that through the work of drama framed as a performative practice of remembrance, students can productively explore the work of memory; its functioning, implications and structures. In addition, by manipulating the elements of the art form, it is proposed that students also learn how drama works, its mechanisms and devices. I call this approach “Drama-Remembrance Praxis”, as it constitutes a particular application of theatre to the memory and remembrance framework. This dissertation provides an account of and analyzes key episodes of the research journey of a group of 16 students in a Grade 10 drama class, their drama teacher and myself -a drama artist, researcher and educator- as we collectively explored issues of historical memory through practices of process drama. The setting for this exploration was a project to initiate a drama classroom-based "community
of memory" with one class in the Normal-Distrital Maria Montessori School, in Bogotá, Colombia, South America. Participant-researchers worked through questions regarding the public remembrance of the story of the Colombian Afro-descendant Manuel Saturio Valencia, one of last prisoners to be executed by the State before capital punishment was eliminated from Colombia in 1910. As an Afro-descendant, the story of Saturio's life and subsequent execution remains little known in Colombia. Thus at stake in this project was the recovery of forgotten stories, the construction of a more inclusive public memory, and the formation of a critical historical consciousness.
DEDICATION

To my uncle, Jose Rosenberg Gallego, who awoke my passion for knowledge and to Anita Cañizares who first supported the dream of my doctoral project in Canada; both left this world without seeing the fruit of their advice and actions. To my mom’s courage, which has always been the inspiration to keep struggling and facing life’s vicissitudes; to them I am eternally grateful.

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EPISODE I: OVERTURE

How the Story Began

“Y nadie conocía, y yo personalmente no conocía, no sabia nada sobre eso, no sabia que Saturio había sido el último fusilado de Colombia, entonces a mi me pareció muy interesante saber la historia de el.”

(Final Interview, Amanda, 16 years old)

It was during the presidency of the Colombian-liberal politician Ernesto Samper Pizano (1994-1998) that I first heard the story of Saturio, the presumably last executed person in the Colombian territory. We, nationals, were experiencing one of the biggest narco-traffic scandals of all our history. Samper was accused by the opposition –the Conservative party– of having won the presidential elections with the support of the Cali-cartel’s money, one the most powerful Colombian drug-cartels of the time. President Samper proposed to the Colombian Congress to pass a law for the re-establishment of the death penalty, trying to divert the public debate to different political issues. This proposal generated a huge national debate about capital punishment coming from all kinds of groups arguing the pros and cons of the death penalty.

It was in this exacerbated socio-political context that I heard for the first time about Saturio. I remember one of the local newspapers published a very small note conjecturing who might have been the last executed person. It referred to the case of the Colombian Afro-descendant Manuel Saturio Valencia, who was accused and found guilty of the crime of arson and condemned to capital punishment on May 6, 1907. Like Amanda’s comments cited above, who had the feeling that not everyone actually knew

1 “And nobody knew, me personally didn’t know, didn’t know anything about that, I didn’t know Saturio was the last executed in Colombia. So, to me it was very interesting to know the story about him.”

2 The death penalty in Colombia was abolished in 1910, three years after Saturio’s execution. During those three years more executions could have taken place, but no official records have been documented.
about this story, I did not know Saturio had been the last executed in Colombia either. It seemed to me as well that this was an interesting historical story.

Saturio was a story that confronted and questioned my relationship to the past and my understanding of the present, taking into account the history and stories of whom have existed in the past. In a very special way, it was a sort of “touch of the past” (Roger Simon, 2004) that called my attention to ethical issues related to historical memory and collective remembrance that had been until that time, like Saturio’s story, ignored. It moved me to think, in a very different way, about social marginalization, oblivion, misrepresentation and historical erasure—all practices of colonial legacies (Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). It also put me in an awkward position, asking myself what to do with a Colombian story about Afro-descendants, as a white, privileged intellectual, middle-class researcher who, like every other academic of my generation, had inherited legacies of racism and colonialism through our sociocultural upbringing and education.

Given my theatre background, and my former research and academic experience, I designed a project to research the details of Saturio’s story and write a play about the last person executed in Colombia. I spent a considerable amount of time in the Colombian National Archive searching for historical evidence that documented Saturio’s case. I visited the town Saturio was executed. I interviewed historians and local people that could have known about Saturio’s life. I finally wrote a theatre script, documenting, and re-presenting Saturio’s story; in other words, I turned this ethnographic process into a performance text (Tara Goldstein, 2008). I thought of theatre as a powerful alternative to communicate and make visible this challenging story. The play won an award, but I continued to feel that I had not done enough for this significant story. Furthermore, some
ethical issues regarding historical re-presentation and dramatic othering (Kathleen Gallagher, 2008) remained unanswered.

A while later, in the context of my doctoral program, when I was taking my courses –drama in education, performing ethnography, historical memory, cultural knowledge and colonial education– I started visiting Indigenous communities and Latin-American archaeological sites in search of information and experiences that linked spiritual performative practices with historical memory and collective remembrance. Eduardo Restrepo (2004) states that memories exist not only in words but are manifested and experienced through places, bodies and objects. I visited Machu Picchu –the lost city of the Incas– a pre-Columbian site in Peru. I visited Tierradentro –a National archaeological park in Colombia– and some Indigenous communities by the Titicaca Lake, close to Bolivia. My purpose was to confront by direct experience both the new information I was receiving and my existing understandings of the past and beliefs about cultural performative practices of remembering.

In December, 2004 I went to Mexico with the specific purpose of visiting museums, archaeological sites, and aboriginal communities whose rituals, feasts, celebrations and theatrical performances were integral to cultural and spiritual practices of remembrance. During my stay in the Mexican state of Chiapas, by coincidence, I was invited to attend a ritual in the temple of San Juan Chamula, a Catholic church where some of the aboriginal Tzotzil Mayan people’s sacred ceremonies take place.\(^3\) What

\(^3\) The Tzotzil Mayan people is a Mexican Indigenous community inhabiting the central highlands of the Mexican state of Chiapas, one of the poorest states in Mexico and where the so-called guerrilla Zapatista Army of National Liberation was created for the most part with Tzotzil Mayan people. Its members are considered to be direct descendants of the Classic Mayan Civilization (Rus, Castillo, Mattiace, 2003). They barely speak Spanish and have kept for centuries their original dialects: Tzotzil one of the Mayan languages. Similar to other Spanish colonized groups, they have mixed in a powerful and creative syncretism, pre-conquest healing spiritual practices with a strong legacy of Catholicism.
impressed me the most about this ritual was the way the Tzotzil Mayan community, through highly theatrical sacred ceremonies and symbolic appropriation of religious places, keep resisting western legacies of colonization, recovering and preserving their ancestral memory from historical oblivion.

In the Catholic church of San Juan, Tzotzil Mayan people gather for special festivities and prayers venerate dressed-up wooden statues with mirrors hanging on their chests. The saints are not placed up on altars as Catholic churches traditionally do, but on the floor at the same level as the people. There are no pews for the congregation, the floor is covered with green pine boughs, and the entire place is filled with colourful candles that flicker through the thick smoke of copal resin incense. When the curanderos or healers of the Tzotzil community are required to heal the body and the spirit of their community, they pray in front of the saints and establish communication with both Catholic and native divinities.

While the healers intercede for their people facing the saints, they see themselves praying, and through their reflection in the saint’s mirror they get a reflective image of their praying or dialogue with the gods. They become immersed in a healing ceremony where they play the role of officiants, and at the same time being the spectators of their own ritual; like in the Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (1985), in the way participants have both involvement and distance, needed to gain awareness of what they are doing while they are doing it. A reflective-reflexive practice that I also related to Dorothy Heathcote’s awakening of the self-spectator (1984) which enables experiences of knowledge, awareness and transformation.
This form of praying has remained within the Tzotzil Mayan people for centuries, and has been a spiritual and cultural practice for community cohesion, identity and survival (Rus, Castillo, Mattiace, 2003). It can be read as well as a metaphor and to me as powerful allegory of a collective healing of the past. I see memory and remembrance very much intertwined here, within these performative spiritual practices. Every time the ritual takes place, they are not only healing the body of the sick members, but the spirit of the community –strengthening and preserving their ancestral traditions. For the purposes of the Tzotzil Mayan people, this reflective-reflexive praxis of remembering is tremendously empowering, because it is the recovery of their collective memory and the strengthening of their spiritual roots in the recurrent time of ritualistic gatherings. I also found this ceremonial practice as representative of what is at stake in the magical encounter of theatrical rituals, collective memory and public remembrance.

After these touching and revealing experiences, I decided to return to Saturio’s story. This time I wanted to explore a pedagogical-research idea that linked historical memory, collective remembrance, and drama practices. I thought about youth and theatre. I thought about working with a group of teenagers in the context of their drama class activities, creating a collective and collaborative drama-research space in order to encounter Saturio again, and work from new and different perspectives to further and deepen that history. To some extent, I was trying to parallel theatre to Tzotzil’s ritual, as a vehicle for recovering collective memory and primarily, as a form of resistance against historical oblivion. In addition, I was trying to deal with my historical responsibilities in terms of what to do with other people’s stories (Simon, 2004).
So clearly and deliberately, I was trying to pass that story on to others. Passing the story on to others however, was not simply sharing Saturio’s account. It was as well re-visiting my research-site experience. Going back to the research-site experience was not about knowing more about the story or collecting additional data. It was to challenge my former approach to the account and to confront what this collective memory story could say to young people and to me as their co-researcher. Unlike my former project, my choice for drama with youth was not to look for a final artistic product, like a dramatic text or theatrical representation. It was, instead, to employ the art form as a process, a medium to provide students with personal insights into the world of historical memory and collective remembrance.

Gallagher (2008) calls attention and questions assumptions in regard to the authority and ownership of a single researcher’s reading in the human scenarios, and particularly in collaborative research work. She advocates the principle of “polyvocality” that “challenges the primacy of any one researcher’s interpretation, resists the ‘closed’ interpretation, and undoubtedly guides the design of the methodology” (p.71). In a sense, I see my choice to design and undertake a collaborative project as an attempt in the direction of the principle of polyvocality. I mean, a research process oriented to multiple interpretations, reconfiguring not only my previous place and ground as the only researcher, but opening my previous interpretations to a dialogue, confrontation, and even further, a critical questioning by this choral society of the students’ voices.

This is a dissertation that tells the story and analyzes key episodes of the research journey of a group of 16 teenagers, students in a Grade 10 drama class, their drama teacher, and myself—a drama artist, researcher, and educator, who collectively explored
historical memory through practices of process drama. It was a drama class-based community of memory project implemented in the Normal-Distrital Maria Montessori School, in Bogotá, Colombia, South America, between April and November of the year 2006. Participant-researchers⁴ worked out the story of the Afro-descendant Manuel Saturio, whose story as many other Colombian minority groups’ historical accounts, still is struggling to overcome a legacy of oblivion and historical erasure (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). At stake in the research project was the work of memory (Zarecka, 1994), in terms of the recovering of forgotten stories, the construction of a more inclusive public memory, and the formation of a critical historical consciousness.

The objectives of the research study address institutional, thematic, artistic and pedagogical issues. Within the Colombian high school curriculum, the use of theatre for pedagogical purposes on the terms referred to here is not a well known praxis, nor is the use of process drama in conjunction with memory and remembrance practices. From an artistic and an educational point of view, the project attempts to offer alternative pedagogies: different ways of learning to make history and social studies curricula more relevant to students and educational institutions. From a thematic perspective, the study carries political implications by working with occluded stories, historical oblivion, and critical notions of historical memory and remembrance. Within the school environment, these objectives refer to pedagogical strategies and scenarios, where minority groups’ histories have a place to be recovered, remembered, and acknowledged.

This dissertation is written as a sequence of episodes that reveal crucial points in our research process, key moments where temporal human encounters took place in the

⁴ “Participant-researchers” alludes to the roles as well as to the horizontal research relations that took place within the project; an idea that is further developed in the methodology section.
context of a collaborative enterprise of discovering and the production of knowledge. They describe in chronological order the journey of a community of memory through the different steps that constituted our drama-remembrance process. Episode I, “How the Story Began”, by way of introduction, presents the background and the antecedents of the dissertation. Episode II, “Territories of Memory and Drama, sets up the theoretical framework of the dissertation. Episode III, “The Research Script”, introduces the setting, the participants, the methodology, and the research pre-text of the project. Episode IV, “How the Past Comes to Matter”, describes and analyses the procedures of drama as a method for the exploration of the past and the development of the work of memory. Episode V, “Touch of the Past”, analyses the experience of a community of memory by visiting the Colombian Historical Archive, searching for evidence from the past. Episode VI, “An Unexpected Episode”, discusses the final research-artistic outcomes that students created. This product-research event caused me to reflect on my entire project. Episode VII, “Final Reflections”, presents my conclusive thoughts about the entire research process.
EPISODE II: MEMORY AND DRAMA TERRITORIES

History, Memory, and Theatre

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, winner of the Nobel Prize (1982), and one of Colombian most important contemporary writers, entitled one of his last novels with the provocative name *Vivir para Contarla*\(^5\). This title suggests more than one level of interpretation regarding processes of recovering individual and social memory. As an autobiographical text written at an advanced age, while afflicted with a terminal illness, this work is a significant attempt to organize at the last minute, the relation between one’s past and the memory of it. The title possibly implies remembrance as an act of surviving, sort of a lucky fate that allows one to get to a privileged point that gives the time and the place to the re-telling of the more significant memories of our lives. It might imply as well a form of social responsibility regarding the lessons of the past, given the reality of having experienced or witnessed historical events and later on attempting to re-signify them publicly.

In one sense or another, Marquez’s novel seems to be a kind of public call for learning and remembrance in an active way. By active I mean the taking of responsibilities for moving memories and re-setting them and giving them new meanings. At the beginning of the book one finds an epigraph that states: “*La vida no es la que uno vivió sino la que uno recuerda y cómo la recuerda para contarla*”\(^6\) (Márquez, 2003, p. 7). These are poetic words that define life as what is left in our memories, rather than the real events that once took place in our existence. Life is then what we remember and the way one remembers. In *The Myths We Live By*, in a different time and different latitude,

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\(^5\) *Living To Tell The Tale*

\(^6\) “Life is not what one lived, but what one remembers and how one remembers it to tell it”
Samuel and Thompson also declared: “Literate or illiterate, we are our memories” (1990, p. 25).

Memory has many different meanings as well as profound and diverse implications in and for the lives of individuals and societies. Fentress and Wickham (1992) affirm that we are what we remember and underscore that our past determines our present and our future in so many and diverse aspects that memory becomes an essential element of our personal and social identity. When we remember, says Fentress and Wickham, we try to re-present ourselves to ourselves giving face and sense to our existence. And we do so, not only to ourselves in a very personal and intimate space, but to others in order to show to them, in social spheres, our personal and collective nature. “When we remember, we represent ourselves to ourselves and to those around us. To the extent that our ‘nature’ –that which we truly are– can be revealed in articulation, we are what we remember” (Fentress and Wickham, 1992, p. 7). As far as we have memory we reveal our individual and social selves intellectually, psychologically, culturally, and politically.

Memory and identity are tied inseparably as two sides of the same reality. Relations of memory and identity are common, frequent and prolific, for memory in all senses is a constant and dynamic search for existential and historical meaning. On such terms, Fentress and Wickham (1992) call for an awareness that through the study of memory it is that we produce the understanding of our identity: “A study of the way we remember –the way we present ourselves in our memories, the way we define our personal and collective identities through our memories, the way we order and structure
our ideas in our memories, and the way we transmit these memories to others— is the study of the way we are” (p. 7).

Public practices of remembrance are very much social rituals of collective memory but there are certain advantages to considering remembrance as a particular form of artistic performance. Its meaning becomes extended towards cultural and aesthetic frames. Perhaps not all remembrance is necessarily artistic, but there usually exists a performative character in its practice. It is quite common to find remembrance in artistic and performative forms. Some practices of remembrance utilize actors-performers and bear artistic elements that comprise diverse aesthetics. The performative character of remembrance brings practices of collective memory close to theatre and drama that attempts to address historical memory.

Besides remembrance as artistic performance there are other cultural contexts where the importance of memory is also acknowledged; that is cultural sites where acts of remembrance, what people remember, and the way remembrance take place matter significantly. Theatre is one of those sites and drama is considered a very old special form of memory. It has always represented an archive of historical memory and a cultural practice of articulation of the past. Marvin Carlson (2001) in his text *The Haunted Stage, The Theatre as Memory Machine* has analyzed the close relationship between theatre and memory. He declares that many societies (through many different fashions) have evidently recognised the profound and enriched relation between memory and drama: “The founding myths and legends of cultures around the world have been registered in their cultures by theatrical repetition, and, as modern nationalism arose to challenge the older religious faiths, national myths, legends and historical stories again utilized the
medium of theatre to present –or, rather, to represent, re-inscribe and reinforce –this new cultural construction” (p.3).

Theatre is not only a cultural but also an historical art form. It bears representations of significant individual and collective events passed through generations reinforcing particular interpretations of the past. In this sense drama has been a sort of specialized storage of history if we understand dramatic texts as spaces or repositories of historical events or cultural memory. As a cultural practice, theatre embodies a legacy of collective rituals of memory that are re-actualized and transformed every time theatrical performances take place. And drama, because of its nature, its performative mechanisms, and its particular way of functioning, presents a suitable space for this ongoing cultural praxis. As Carlson affirms, “There clearly seems to be something in the nature of dramatic presentation that makes it a particularly attractive repository for the storage and mechanism for the continued re-circulation of cultural memory.” (2001, p. 8) In a special sense, one might say that attending theatre as a form of ritualistic practice allows us to know and learn about our historical memory, while we exercise our capacity to remember.

Drama has been extensively recognized as an art form concerned with performative memory and remembering devices. Herbert Blau (1990) in The Audience affirms that “Theatre is, in whatever revisionist, futurist, or self-dissolving form – or in the most proleptic desire to forget the theatre – a function of remembrance; “Where memory is, theatre is” (p.47). And Carlson calls our attention to the sense of re-turning (2001) and the uncanny practice of revisiting that very much characterizes drama. His words refer basically to a strange dynamic audiences experience during theatrical
performances. That is, a particular sense one feels of visiting places or perceiving circumstances we already have attended in the past. Or, simultaneously, to have the rare impression of being re-visited by facts, images, situations, we have experienced before.

The idea of something that was already witnessed and something taking place in the past but being re-enacted in the present, transgressing time and place, refers as well to drama’s theatrical simultaneousness nature. Carlson (2001) believes that there is something particular in the very nature of theatrical experience that allows audience to experience “a simultaneous awareness” of something that though it occurred in the past, when displayed in the present, is perceived to be both the same and the different. (p.15) The perception of the same (past experience, something known, previous text) places us before something familiar that is witnessed again from a different perspective, filtered by the eyes and the reading of the here and now conditions. This particular awareness says Carlson, “can only be fully appreciated by a kind of doubleness of perception in the audience” (2001, p. 15).

Carlson describes this phenomenon in terms of a “ghostliness character” (2001). In this he is signifying the drama spectators’ impression as that of witnessing something witnessed previously. “All plays in general might be called ‘Ghosts’, since, as Herbert Blau has provocatively observed, one of the universals of performance, both East and West, is its ghostliness, its sense of return, the uncanny but inescapable impression imposed upon its spectators that ‘we are seeing what we saw before’” (2001, p.1). This notion of ghostliness has not only been used in theatre but also in social memory. Within a different theoretical discussion Fentress and Wickham (1992), talking about social memory as a source of knowledge, suggest that groups should be placed in relation to and
confronted with their traditions, as if they were ghosts and they might become a source of knowledge; “Social memory is a source of knowledge. This means that we must situate groups in relation to their own traditions, asking how they interpret their own ‘ghosts’, and how they use them as a source of knowledge” (Pg.26).

Theatre can be understood as a sophisticated art form of re-turning and memorial re-articulation, but this theatrical praxis is not something fixed and pre-established, repeated and reinforced over and over again without any significant change. Every re-enactment is as well a sort of re-setting of memories and re-interpretation of past performances that combines what comes from the past and what is added from the present. “While a performance embeds traces of other performances, it also produces an experience whose interpretation only partially depends on previous experience” (Diamond, 1998).

The main implication of this past-present performative interaction is that it opens the possibility of not only supplementing existing knowledge but, as well, challenging that which is understood about the past and transforming what is remembered. Thus drama can at times be that which “exceeds”, in Diamond’s terms, what we used to know, our familiar perspectives, and what we always see and regularly understand: “Every new performance carries the possibility of something that ‘exceeds’ our knowledge, which alters the shape of sites and imagines new unsuspected subject positions” (Diamond, 1998, p.2).

Drama, Remembrance and Pedagogy

In the introduction to the edited collection Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma (2000), Simon, Rosenberg and Eppert highlight the
importance of conceptualizing remembrance as pedagogical. In discussing the particularities of this conceptualization, they explain that remembrance is deeply involved in the constitution and regulation of perceptions, understandings, and meanings of the past, as well as “the imaginative projection of human limits and possibilities” (p.2).

In this sense, the nature of this pedagogy is based on two constitutive elements; a prospective dimension and a formative character. On the one hand, the practice of remembrance in itself bears a capacity to generate and shape formations of memory in terms of understanding and interpretations of the past. On the other, remembrance structures a prospective ground, a creative terrain for human futurity framed by its limits and possibilities. Both the formative character and the imaginative projection of remembering contextualize remembrance as a powerful pedagogical praxis that while intervening in the present brings forward traces of the past and structures the potentiality of a future.

In this respect certain conditions of drama praxis appear similar to practices of remembrance carrying analogous formative and prospective implications. Gallagher (2000) for example, commenting on an experience of Remembrance Day performance she directed in a classroom, comes to the conclusion that the interrelation of past and present events mediated by artistic means produces knowledge and structures a prospective pedagogy. She holds that “the arts can inform us about the past while allowing us to envision the future” (p.27). Her words basically point to a double educational flow as a result of the dynamics of “time-bound events” (2000) that constitute the pedagogical elements of learning processes in drama. Drama produces knowledge while structuring a ground for the imagination of a futurity.
Relevant here as well is Taylor’s idea of theatre as a praxis that might become a pedagogical medium for action, reflection, and transformation. His concern is for a theatre that could enable people to discover their own existential potentialities; “a theatre in which new modes of being can be encountered and new possibilities for human kind can be imagined” (2003, p. xxx). This pedagogical referent based on time-bound dynamics (past, present, and future interrelations) a prospective dimension (futurity, envisioning and imagination) and a formative character (knowledge and understanding) complements and might well constitute, along with remembrance’s formative and projective character, the communal and necessary educational horizon for practices of remembrance framed by drama contexts.

Dorothy Heathcote –cited by Taylor (2003)– states that; “Drama is not stories retold in action. Drama is human beings confronted by situations which change them because of what they must face in dealing with those challenges” (p.102). Change, challenge, and confrontation constitute the elements of a pedagogy that questions human beings’ current conditions of existence. Our own beliefs, understandings, frames of perception, knowledge, expectations, and the conditions of our lives become the subject of inquiry of such pedagogy.

Gallagher (2000) highlights the potential of drama to set up life as a terrain for change and struggle. She affirms that, “The point of drama education is not to transmit a particular ideology or to leave unchallenged the things we think we believe, but to see anew, understand ourselves more fully, expand our thinking, and understand how that thinking has been shaped by our social positions” (p. 82). And when Taylor affirms that drama is a pedagogical tool for action, reflection and transformation, his words point
precisely to the agency element of the art form that places people in confrontational situations where they construct/deconstruct aspects of their and other’s actions. “Applied theatre is committed to the power of the aesthetic form for raising awareness about how we are situated in this world and what we as individuals and as communities might do to make the world a better place” (2003, p. xx).

Concerning educational practices that imply dynamics of inquiring, confrontation and transformation, remembrance offers a theorized and contextualized field with those kinds of pedagogical implications. Simon, Rosenberg and Eppert (2000) have also discussed the idea of articulating remembrance as an opening movement into learning. A learning they say is characterized by a special sensitivity of our present to the dynamics of displacement and the rethinking of our schemes of perception, understanding, and accountabilities to the past, present and future. As Simon states, remembrance may be the grounds for “...an opening of the present in which the identities and identifications, the frames of certitude that ground our understandings of existence, and the responsibilities to history are displaced and rethought” (p. 7).

In this regard, Simon’s notion of “indeterminate critical pedagogy” (2003) is pertinent here too. Analyzing the special conditions of encounters with testamentary traces of historical events, he defines radical pedagogy as an indeterminate praxis, a sort of opening movement of a human’s social dimension to practices of becoming. As he states the “practice of social memoration, of remembrance, must be thought as a form of indeterminate critical pedagogy, a practice of inquiry and learning in which the logos interrelating one’s past, present and future social relations are subject to critique and reformation” (p. 2).
Critical pedagogy is an important notion for the terms of a project attempting to link drama and memory. It might constitute the necessary ground for the work of memory and the practice of remembrance taking place through drama praxis. For Simon (2003) critical pedagogy is a useful term only to the extent that it helps bring together people who share enough in the way of political commitments and educational perspectives to be able to learn together, refine their vision, and support their diverse efforts as educators: “The utility of the term ‘critical pedagogy’ is its reference to an ongoing project and certainly not a prescriptive set of practices” (p. xvi). This might be a pedagogical ground shared by drama and remembrance in terms of functioning as a referential (not prescriptive) terrain, flexible enough to be able to put together the political and educational elements of both disciplines.

Apart from the evident confrontational, transformative, and inquiring elements implicated in the notion of critical pedagogy, its indeterminate character, its opening dynamic and practice of becoming, structures a very specific form of remembrance-pedagogy. The notion of critical pedagogy as indeterminate practice potentially reconfigures a flexible pragmatic context that may well enable the performance of memory to be framed, shaped, and structured under new and non conventional conditions. In this sense, critical pedagogy’s implications let practices of social remembrance be understood as indeterminate/open pedagogies. These are open pedagogies whose functioning is based on inquiring/learning schemes, and it is this inquiring of learning that is very much the main concern of drama practices in critical educational contexts.
In the field of theatre-in-education, particularly in the context of addressing historical and social issues, the inquiring/learning schemes matter significantly when mediated by drama practices. Gallagher (2000) holds that, “Drama leads to inquiry and, in the best scenario, passionate inquiry” (p. 23). And Taylor (1998), examining the mode of process drama – a modality of theatre-in-education – finds that: “Not only do historical themes lend themselves to this mode of working but a range of contemporary issues, stances, and questions can be explored and interrogated through process drama” (p.16). Indeed drama in education, particularly process drama, has been characterized as a privileged pedagogical tool for social studies curriculum.

Taylor (1998), defining the features of process drama, describes the artistry in terms of structured improvisational activity. Similar to Simon’s conceptualized critical pedagogy of remembrance, drama process structures a pragmatic pedagogical context characterised by a necessary level of indetermination, openness, and structural flexibility of the art form. These are features that are essential for drama to develop its intrinsic capacity to operate as a mediator between reality and fiction, and to transcend categories of time and place. Taylor holds that this improvisational activity is a contract between teachers and students to imagine a world that enables them to articulate a critical pedagogical framework for exploration, inquiry, and learning. By participating in an imagined world, by stepping into the shoes of someone else, we are provided with opportunities to transcend the ordinariness of our own lives as we contemplate what might be possible as we aspire for clarity and meaning” (1998, p.14).

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7 When I use the term ‘pragmatic’ I am referring mostly to its performative conditions, necessary conditions of manifestation. This is basically a notion borrowed from linguistic and psycho-linguistic fields.
Process Drama and Memory Work

John O’Toole and Margret Lepp (1996), discuss the meaning of theatre in community work and highlight the power of drama to convene people and motivate them to get involved in inquiring gatherings; “A drama is always in some way a special event that provides the motivation and the occasion for people to come together....it raises questions, makes analogies and permits people to explore implications and consequences of their lives and attitudes” (1996, p. 24). When by means of drama performances people are invited to come together to deal with memory, experience history, practice social remembrance, and confront their emotional and moral engagement with the past, an artistic and pedagogical call is made to engage in the process of memory work (Zarecka, 1994). I see in theatre education a potentiality to perform that call, to awake our sense of the past, and enliven willingness for undertaking the work of memory.

I also envision drama as a performative and artistic pedagogical means to initiate a transition from memory as a noun, to an active praxis: remembrance. In this sense, drama praxis could be understood as the exercise of an active pedagogy, or pedagogy for action, the action of remembrance. When our sense of the past becomes activated, memory becomes remembrance, states Zarecka (1994). I would say when memory – by means of drama – becomes performance (drama in action) remembrance takes place. The dramatic action I am referring to here, involves a double dimension: the enacting character typical of theatrical performances and the political consequences of such an enacting. I mean, a dramatic action empowered by its performative conditions as well as its social consequences. In this way, rather than just an abstract concept, drama appears as a practical, pedagogical, and political action.
The general hypothesis here is to situate theatre-in-education as a pedagogical context for the work of memory and drama praxis as a methodology and process useful for enacting remembrance and deepening one’s understanding of and relation to past events. In this sense, drama praxis is consistent with Zarecka’s notion of memory work (1994) as the way we construct our attachments with memory. Her analysis particularly points to those moral and emotional ties that we have built in regard to our individual and social memory. She remarks that one important way to understand how collective memory works is to look carefully into our personal engagements with the past. “To understand how collective memory works, we can not restrict our inquires to tracing the vicissitudes of historical knowledge or narratives. We must also attend to the construction of our emotional and moral engagement with the past. When looking at public discourse, this translates into questions about how the past is made to matter” (Pg.7).

Finding out how the past is made to matter requires an exploration of how our formations of memory have been shaped and what social, political, historical and pedagogical experiences have intervened in their formation. It is a search for the configuration of the past in terms of its structural, pragmatic, and formal elements. Basically said, the what, the why, the when, the how, the who, and the whom. “To trace how – and which – past is made to matter, we also need to ask: by whom, to whom, when, where, and why” (Zarecka, 1994, p. 8). There is also an inherent call here to look carefully at what is behind or constitutes formations of memory in terms of what is at stake for learning.

In the field of education, Simon, Rosenberg and Eppert (2000) also raise the same concerns when binding remembrance and pedagogy. They expound that, “In binding
remembrance and pedagogy, we are suggesting that all formations of memory carry implicit and/or explicit assumptions about what is to be remembered, how, by whom, for whom, and with what potential effects” (p. 2). Not ignoring the inherent ethical, political, and pedagogical elements of this analysis, the assumptions that are brought up here also articulate conditions, contexts, participants and ways of participating in the act of remembrance. Arguing that all formations of memory bear its own pedagogy is not only to remark on its educational implications but point to the pragmatic and performative elements that intervene in the act of remembering. If this is so, a practice of remembrance mediated by drama praxis might well articulate its own pedagogy constituted by the particularities of the work in drama practices as well as those of collective memory and remembrance.

Zarecka’s (1994) definition of memory work as a special attending to ‘the construction of moral and emotional engagements with the past’ could well be taken in the context of theatre education as the work to be done by processes of drama. It would be a performative attending to our social formation of memory and a public confrontation with the collective articulation of the past. The subject matter for drama praxis dealing with memory might be this public articulation of social memory. Drama-remembrance praxis might constitute a pedagogical context to undertake processes of deconstructing/reconstructing social memory and the re-articulation of the past. What might be interesting here is to consider drama-remembrance praxis as a work of memory in terms of tracing the ‘vicissitudes’ (borrowing Zarecka’s term) of formations of memory, and their ‘implicit and/or explicit’ (paraphrasing Simon’s words) pedagogical assumptions.
Johanna Maria Winter (2006), citing Walter Benjamin noted that language “shows clearly that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but its theatre. It is the medium of past experience, as the ground is the medium in which dead cities lie interred” (p.275). If memory is not an appropriate instrument for exploring the past, but its theatre as Benjamin affirms, and theatre because of its nature is a privileged exploratory medium for other worlds to emerge, as O’Neill (1996) states, memory and theatre together may well constitute an appealing scenario. This coming together of memory and theatre prefigures the pedagogical possibilities of scenarios where the lessons of the past as well as the lessons of drama are possible.
EPISODE III: THE RESEARCH SCRIPT

Setting: The Normal Distrital Maria Montessori School

John O’Toole (1992), states that drama not only happens in theatres but in educational settings, which are not precisely intended for the purposes of the dramatic activity. He designates this event space as the context of the setting which imposes particular conditions on the drama activity and its subsequent art form dynamics. O’Toole particularly stresses that the constraints from educational contexts “act upon the artistic purposes, entailing continuous renegotiation, not only of the elements of drama, but of the educational contexts and purposes themselves” (p.22). Schools because of their social, educational, geographical, cultural, and even physical features frame in a very specific way the activities that take place within their everyday learning routines. The setting for our drama-remembrance project was the Escuela Normal Distrital Maria Montessori.

I had previously visited four schools in Bogotá: Gimnasio Moderno (private school, high socioeconomic level), Gimnasio Sabio Caldas (public school in a very poor socioeconomic area), Nuestra Señora del Pilar (private and Catholic middle class school), and Escuela Normal Distrital Maria Montessori (art-based and teacher education oriented public school, with low socioeconomic level). I met principals, introduced the project to the teachers and students – explaining the purposes, methodology and objectives of the study – and attended classes and theatre activities, trying to become familiar with and understand the schools’ functioning, institutional rhythms, the drama curriculum, and the drama teacher’s pedagogical modus operandi. Ultimately, the Normal Superior Maria Montessori School was chosen as research location because of its art-based curriculum,
pedagogical emphasis, and teacher education orientation: all appropriate components for the basic interests of my research.

Gallagher (2000) affirms that contexts affect learning: “Each school and each classroom within a school has unique features that distinguish it from all other environments” (p.38). By the time I began my research project, Montessori School was going through an educational emergency, a time literally called ‘Pedagogy with no Roof’. Due to major structural repairs on the Montessori School building, students, teachers and staff were displaced to different locations and had to alter all their everyday educational routines. Much of the school’s rituals, symbolic referents, cultural practices, and traditional institutional events were temporarily modified or even suspended. This condition of displacement substantially affected Montessori’s educational agenda, and consequently the drama classes, as they took place either in open areas like public parks or inside private buildings borrowed temporarily.

‘Pedagogy with no Roof’ impacted and framed the implementation of the drama-remembrance research study, mainly at the beginning of the project. It took a lot of time for students to get to the designated place where each class was going to take place. Usually we had to wait around 20-30 minutes to have the whole group arrive. It was not possible to use theatrical material such as costumes, props, or scenery. We had to accommodate to the physical conditions of the space and work within and with the elements of the environment: park benches, logs, eucalyptus’ seeds and leaves. Basically, the eucalyptus forest became our drama classroom with relative, and sometimes little, privacy.
Seen from a different perspective, pedagogy with no roof positively forced all of us to be recursive and inventive. Working sessions at times were structured to take advantage of the physical conditions of the open park space, and most of the time our drama activities relied simply on the bodies, emotions, and the creativity of the participants. An extremely important research dynamic that took place because of the ‘Pedagogy with no Roof’ was collective walking conversations that took place after class. The drama teacher, students, and I would walk together to the place where there next class was going to be. These were precious moments to spontaneously reflect on what we had done collectively. These conversations provided feedback not only about the sessions and the progress of the work, but students’ perceptions of the research: something that became a significant part of my field research notes.

The Maria Montessori School – officially created in the 1950s – is situated at the south-west part of Bogotá, the capital of Colombia-South America, in a neighbourhood called Berna City. The school functions in two different buildings: in building A the pre-school section is held, while in building B the high school programs take place. The two buildings are divided by a main city river called Fucha, which close proximity to the school generates high levels of insecurity: robberies, sexual harassment as well as pollution (often causing respiratory diseases among students and teachers). The neighbourhoods surrounding the Montessori school combine residential areas with commercial establishments and leather manufacturers. These industrial-commercial districts are frequently visited by Montessori students attracted by its bars, gambling activities, drugs, and prostitution.

8 Montessori School official documents information.
The Escuela Normal Distrital Maria Montessori is an institution oriented to the formation of primary and pre-school teachers with a clear emphasis on artistic education. The theatre class curriculum and pedagogical practices are centred on drama games, theatre technical training, and the performance of final theatrical outcomes. In the initial interview, the drama class teacher characterized the theatre program as structured around students’ aesthetic interests in staging theatre plays and the creation of dramaturgical and theatrical games. The first two months of the course are devoted to acting and stage training, followed by a professional theatre working strategies process. The drama teacher explained it in the following terms: “then we go for the staging process, theatre improvisations, to end up with theatre outcomes to be shown to the school community (Drama Class Teacher, Initial interview, 2006). Topics like youth violence, moral double standards, and drug-traffic culture, along with students’ interests, are usually the thematic pretexts of the final theatre outcomes.

The students in the Grade 10 drama class attend the second, out of three, art-based courses that take place from Grade 9 to Grade 11 (the last academic level). Different options are offered to students in Grade 9 to undertake their art-based academic courses such as music, dance, painting, and theatre. Students can focus on one option during the whole cycle of the three courses, or try different choices alternatively according to their own performance and personal satisfaction. Students attending these courses come from different classes and backgrounds, which means that quite frequently some of them did not work together beforehand and might or might not have previous drama experience.
Participant-Researchers: The Montessori Grade 10 Drama Class

Participant-researcher, in methodological terms, means working together (Gallagher, 2008). Participant-researcher is an expression that refers to a research context of collective collaboration as well as collective reflection. It alludes to the roles as well as to the relations that are established among the participants and their relation to the research project. On the one hand, it refers to an active and participatory performance in the developing of the project and a commitment related to participation, observation, and reflection. On the other hand, it designates the net of methodological accountabilities and ethical relations, which in this case was intended to be as ‘equitable’ as possible.

My ethical methodological assumption was to put participants at the same level as the principal researcher. I overtly and clearly asked the students and drama teacher to be co-researchers in this project, sharing power, benefits, and responsibilities. From this perspective, I was inviting participant-researchers not only to work and create together in democratic conditions, but to be part of the intellectual property of the research; what Gallagher (2008) calls a “collective ownership” (p.70). This was also a way to take seriously the role of the participant-researchers of the project (Goldstein, 2008) respecting their creations, interpretations and words; an ethical methodological assumption that continues to guide my writing process as well.

“09 de Mayo de 2006: Este día hicimos una especie de ritual, muy bonito. Teníamos que escoger del bosque una semilla que nos llamara la atención y una hoja de la misma forma. Fueron la rectora y la coordinadora a participar con nosotros. Teníamos que colocar la hoja en la mano izquierda y la semilla en la derecha, y decir porque nos había llamado la atención. Luego el profe Jorge nos hizo elegir un papel que sacábamos de un canasto y decíamos que era lo que entendíamos. A mí me correspondió: EL OTRO-LO OTRO-LA OTREDAD HISTORICA. [sic] Luego de esto Jorge nos paso un canasto donde
Seeds and Leaves was a drama-ritual or ceremony of initiation, set up as a formal and metaphoric form to introduce students to the research project. The purpose of this ritual was to create a symbolic meaning – so characteristic of the ancient theatre and tribal sacred ceremonies – with which to start our drama-remembrance research project. The seeds and leaves ritual was designed taking into account the physical characteristics of the setting where our research project was going to take place: Saint Carlos forest, a public park full of huge eucalyptus trees with their seeds and leaves spread out all over the ground.

In the first part of the ritual, participants were instructed to search for eucalyptus’ seeds and leaves of their preference. They were to pick up a seed and a leaf justifying their choice either by individual identification, special empathy, or any other personal reason. Something from the seeds and leaves should call powerfully participants’ attention, moving them to make a specific selection. To some extent the ritual embodied the kind of research tasks our drama-remembering process was going to demand – reflection, feelings, senses and art form expression. The intended message was also to anticipate the character of the research study we were about to undertake: searching, exploration, questioning, creative imagination, and artistic collective work.

9 “09 May, 2006: This day we did a kind of ritual, a nice one. In the forest we had to choose a seed that called our attention and in the same way, a leaf. The principal and the coordinator came to participate with us. We had to put the leaf in the left hand and the seed in the right one, and explain why they had caught our attention. Then Jorge asked us to choose [and read] a piece of paper that we picked up from a basket and say what we understood from it. Mine was: OTHER-THE OTHER-HISTORICAL OTHERNESS. [sic] After this Jorge passed on a basket with a big red mask, with no mouth and holes in her eyes. As we did with the leaves and the seeds and the paper, we had to say what we thought about the mask.”
In the second part of the ritual, participants were asked to look into a small basket which contained a mask covered by a light veil, behind which there were tiny pieces of paper with research questions about history, drama and pedagogy written on them. The mask was a Comedia del Arte’s artifact that covered the face’s upper side and exposes the actor’s mouth, allowing the performer to change the expressions of the otherwise static mask. Participants had to take the veil off and pick up one of the pieces of paper under the mask. The purpose here was twofold; to put participants in contact with some issues of the research, and a way of ‘listening’ to students’ first reactions to key research statements. It was as well a very basic early survey into students’ sense of history, ideas and perceptions about the past.

Gallagher (2000) holds that in drama “we can begin nowhere else but from ‘ourselves’, where the personal and the cultural have a place” (p.37). Heathcote (1984) declares that the diagnostic potential of drama is extremely useful in educational environments. The reason for this resides in what is inherent in drama as a means to disclose the places and sites from where participants stand and project. Heathcote wisely warns us about the pedagogical implications of those places and projections as they constitute the human material teachers work with: “One of these is that you must accept you are going to use human material, not fancy ideas, not cool abstractions of facts. You are using the human condition of your students, their attitudes, their philosophy, their ideas, and you have got to use them as they really are” (1984, p.116).

Through the eucalyptus seeds and leaves participants formally introduced themselves and shared in public key aspects of their personalities by means of individual identification with the ritual elements. Students started bringing into the research context
their typical way of speaking, forms of perception, and metaphorical and sensitive interpretation of their worlds. In a particular sense, I interpret seeds and leaves as a theatrical ritual form in which students had the space and the collective opportunity to uncover and communicate from where they were standing and projecting their participation in the research. In the following section, I transcribe what students said as a way to introduce the participants of the project:

Tatiana, 15 years old: No former experience with drama. Parents are from Bogotá, She has been a Montessori student for nine years: “La semilla me pareció muy bonita porque la parte del centro es como una flor y es verde. Y esta hoja porque es roja y entonces me mostró así, como que esta sangrando.”

Research statement: The Other/Historical Otherness: “Entiendo por esta frase que cuando dice ‘el otro’, es porque existe otro, otras personas aparte de mí, y que cuando dice ‘lo otro y la otredad histórica’, es que lo del otro también es importante de algún modo y que no solo existe mi historia y lo que yo hago, sino que existen miles de historias y que el mundo y mi vida, de algún modo, los necesitan para existir.”

Harold, 14 years old: He is a Montessori student since Grade 2. He has been taking drama since Grade 7. His parents are from Bogotá: “Me gusto la hoja porque pues fue la única hoja pequeña que encontré. Pues se parece a mí por lo pequeña.”

Research statement: Memory/Memory Devices/ Memory Work: “Con lo que estamos trabajando acá, con todos nosotros, osea el grupo de teatro y pues con lo que cada uno recuerda de historias, de sus vivencias de cuando era pequeño.”

Doris, 16 years old: This is her second year in drama. Her parents are from Bogotá: “Me gusto la forma, el color, bueno se parece mucho a las otras semillas, pero en especial también por el sitio en que la encontré, después de tanto buscar esta fue la que me estaba esperando.”

Research statement: Theatre in Education/Pedagogical Process of

10 “I found the seed pretty nice because the centre is like a flower and is green. And this leaf because is red and showed me like it is bleeding.”
11 “I understand that when it says ‘the other’ it’s because there exists an-other, other people apart from me, and when it says ‘the other and historical otherness’ is that what comes from the other is in some way also important, and not only what I do and my story exists, but there exist thousands of stories, and in some way the world and my life need them for existing.”
12 “I liked the leaf because it was the only small leaf I found. So, it looks like me, because of its tiny size.”
13 “I relate this with what we are doing here, with all of us. I mean the drama class and with what every one remembers; stories and experiences from when we were kids.”
14 “I liked the shape and color; well it looks a lot like other seeds, but especially because of the site where I found it. After much searching this was what was waiting for me.”
Drama/Theatre a Pedagogical Tool: “Es para demostrar si en realidad el teatro, si puede haber alguna pedagogía.”

Humberto, 16 years old: He did not participate in the initial interview. “Las relacione [semillas] con la vida porque hay cosas que uno tiene que encajarlas bien en la vida de uno, entonces por eso es que escogí esta semilla. Y la hoja también la relacione con la vida porque, osea tiene como un color rosado y como el dicho que dice todo no es color de rosa.”

Montessori Principal: “Esta semilla tiene una forma de pirámide. La pirámide, es la creencia, da energía. Y esta hoja porque tiene un olor muy interesante, tiene el olor que esta ahí, y me encanta el olor.”

Research statement: Recovering Public Memory/Re-Writing History/Overcoming Historical Oblivion: “Hace un año, hace dos años celebramos 41 años [de existencia de la Normal Montessori] y el año pasado celebramos 51 años. Entonces eso porque no tenemos clara la recuperación de la historia. Entonces me parece que como hablamos de pública, la memoria publica, la Escuela Normal Maria Montessori es una institución pública, donde hay muchos imaginarios allí en ella, y tendríamos que re-escribirla, de escribir esa historia para poder recuperar lo que hemos olvidado de la historia de la Normal. Y hay muchas cosas que recuperar.”

Academic coordinator: Historical Oblivion/Historical Silence: “Tiene que ver con la impunidad por ejemplo. Se puede ubicar ahí, osea todo lo que ha pasado pero que intencionalmente ha sido, aunque esta presente intencionalmente ha sido borrada.”

Dario, 16 years old: He did not participate in the initial interview. “De la semilla me llamo la atención los colores así todos locos, como mi personalidad así todo loco.”

Research statement: Inclusive Public Memory: “Es como de lo que yo recuerde que haya pasado en lo publico, pero incluyéndome a mi. Algo importante.”

Mercedes, 16 years old: She did not participate in the initial interview. “De la semilla ustedes dirán: ‘Uy no, es muy fea’, pero es como la más viejita que encontré, es como la

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15 “It is actually to demonstrate if theatre, if there can be any pedagogy.”
16 “I related those [seeds] with life, cause there are things that one has to fit well in one’s life, so, that’s why I chose this seed. And I also related the leaf with life because it has like a rose color and, like people around saying; ‘not all in life is rose color.’”
17 “This seed has the form of a pyramid. Pyramid, is the belief, gives energy. I chose this leaf because has a very interesting smell, a smell that is right there, and I love that smell.”
18 “A year ago, two years ago, we commemorated 41 years [Montessori School’s existence] and last year we commemorated 51 years. That’s because we don’t have a clear idea of our history. So, it seems to me that as we talk about public, public memory, Maria Montessori School is a public institution with many imaginaries and we should re-write its history, write that history to be able to recover what we have forgotten from Montessori’s history. And there are many things to recover.”
19 “It has to do with impunity for example. It can be placed there, I mean all what has happened but has been erased intentionally.”
20 “What called my attention to the seed were its colors, like they’re all crazy like my personality that is all crazy.”
21 “It is like what I remember from what has happened in the public space but including me; something important.”
que mas ha vivido de todas. Osea, se nota que es la más grande como la más sobresaliente. [Sic] Es muy llamativa, y tiene muchas rupturas, osea se nota que todo no ha sido bueno. Y la hoja la escogí porque los colores son muy llamativos."

Research statement: **Historical Identity/Official Identity/Historical Representation:** “Yo lo asocio con mi vida, con lo que tiene que ver conmigo. Porque tiene que ver con mi historia. Osea, es lo que yo creo, no. Es como la historia de mi vida, lo que ha pasado, mi identidad, mi personalidad.”

Drama teacher: “Yo busqué un árbol grande porque de todas formas el árbol contiene una historia grande. Por eso quizás tomar una semilla de ese árbol. Y la hoja está un poco ajada, seca, partida y da cuenta de todas formas de una experiencia. [sic] Lo otro es que esto nos compromete con la investigación, con el tipo de trabajo que estamos haciendo. Es una cosa así como el anillo de bodas en los que se casan. Allí hay un símbolo.”

Fabiola, 16 years old: Her parents immigrated to Bogotá, She has been a Montessori student for five years. She has some previous experience with drama: “Escogí esta semilla porque parece un sombrerito. Y esta hoja porque me gustó la formita de adentro y es suavecita.”

Research statement: **How do we remember?/How do people remember us?/How do we imagine people will remember us?:** “Yo la asocio con que a veces cuando nos reunimos con un grupo de amigos y alguien dice, ay! se acuerda cuando hicimos tal cosa, o se acuerda cuando paso tal cosa. Como imaginamos que nos van a recordar? Yo creo que pues hay cierta característica que nos identifica, si por ejemplo que alguien es toda extrovertida.”

Alvaro, 16 years old: His parents are from Bogotá. He has been a Montessori student for nine years. He has been taking drama class since Grade 7: “La semilla por los colores, rojo, verde, blanco, y la hoja por el grabado que tiene en el centro. Entonces es muy vacano.”

Research statement: **Critical Pedagogy/Historical Remembrance/ Critical Historical Consciousness:** “Pues yo relaciono que hay palabras en común que son historia y critica. De lo que me hace pensar es que debemos mirar el mundo teniendo en

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22 “About the seed you can say, ‘Oh, no! It’s so ugly! But it was the oldest I could find, it is the one that like has lived longer than others. So, you notice that it is the biggest, like the most outstanding. [Sic] It is very attractive, and has many breaks; I mean you can see that not everything has been for good. And I chose the leaf because of its colors, very attractive.”

23 “I link this with my life, with what has to do with me because it has to do with my history. I mean, that’s what I think, right? It is like the story of my life, what has happened, my identity, my personality.”

24 “I looked for a big tree because anyway the tree contains a big history. So, that’s maybe the reason for taking a seed from that tree. And the leaf is a little wrinkled, dry, broken and testifies on behalf of an experience.[sic] Another thing is this commits us to the research, to the kind of work we’re doing here. It is like the wedding ring when one gets married. There’s a symbol.”

25 “I chose this seed cause it is like a little hat. And this leaf cause I liked its shape inside, and is soft.”

26 “I associate it to, that sometimes when we gather with friends and someone says, do you remember when we did such and such things? How do we imagine people will remember us? I think that there’s a specific characteristic that identifies us, right? For example someone is totally outgoing.”

27 “The seed because has red, green and white colors, and the leaf, because of the engraving in its centre, so it’s cool.”
cuenta el pasado, corrigiendo errores, y teniendo una forma crítica de nosotros mismos y de la sociedad.”

Juana, 17 years old: Her parents immigrated to Bogotá. She has been a Montessori school student for seven years. She has been taking drama for four years: “La semilla por la textura. La hoja la escogí por la forma, como navaja, esto lo represente como creatividad. Osea, me dio la idea de que era como sangre, como fuego, algo violento. No se, me dio esa idea.”

Research statement: Historical Memory/Official Memory: “Yo lo relacione con el pasado, la memoria, las experiencias escritas en narración. Porque es que la historia es como contar algo del pasado, y el escritor, el narrador se acuerda y trata, osea si tiene experiencia lo escribe.”

Jaime, 16 years old: He did not participate in the initial interview. “Esta semillita porque iba así como buscando, osea recogí muchas, y esta como que me llamó la atención, me dijo cójame y la cogí. La hoja como con una llama y alrededor es como verde, muy vacano.”

Research statement: My Memories/Others’ Memories/ My relation with the Past: “Osea, como recuerdos que hayan marcado, negativos, recuerdos negativos que hayan marcado mi vida. Mi relación con el pasado. Esta que dice, las memorias de los otros, que hayan afectado, osea como lo afectaron a el también me afectaron a mi, en un pasado.”

Beatriz, 15 years old: Her parents are from Bogotá. She has been a Montessori student for three years. She has no experience with drama: “Escogí esta hoja pues porque casi todas las hojas secas son totalmente amarillas y casi todas tienen alguna ruptura.”

Research statement: Drama Practices/Historical Remembrance: “Hago una conexión entre estas dos frases. Primero que, es que, prácticas de drama es como el dolor y todo eso. Y remembranza histórica pues debe ser como el dolor que ha existido a través de nuestra historia. Y pues como dice en casi todos los papeles, pues la historia es la historia y no es la historia solamente de uno, sino la historia de nuestra sociedad.”

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28 “I link it to, in a way, that there are words in common like ‘history’ and ‘critical’. What makes me think that we should look at the world taking into account the past, correcting mistakes, and keep a critical attitude of ourselves and society.”
29 “I chose the seed because of its texture. The leaf because of its shape, like a knife, it represents like creativity. I mean, I got the idea that it was like blood, like fire, something violent. I don’t know? I just got that idea.”
30 “I related it with the past, memory, experiences written as narratives. Cause history is like to tell something of the past, and the writer, the narrator remembers and tries, I mean, if he has the expertise he writes it.”
31 “This seed because when I was looking, I mean I picked many, and this one called my attention, like it said to me pick me up! And I did it. The leaf looks like a flame and is green; kind of cool.”
32 “I think, like memories that have marked me, negative, negative memories that have marked my life and my relation with the past. This one that says, memories of others, that have affected..., I mean as they affected him they affected me too in the past.”
33 “I chose this leaf cause of its yellow color, I mean almost all dried up leaves are totally yellow and almost all have like a crack.”
34 “I make a connection with these two statements. First, a drama practice is like the pain and all that stuff. And historical remembrance should be like the pain that has existed through our history. And like it is said in almost all the papers, history is history and it is not only one’s history but the history of our society.”
Carlos, 16 years old: His parents immigrated to Bogotá. He has one year drama class experience: “Y escogí esta hoja por los colores, por lo que son llamativos, y como alegres. Como yo, a veces, todo risas.”

Research statement: **Overcoming Historical Oblivion:** “Yo principalmente la relaciono con la historia, lo que paso, para volverlo a vivir, a reconstruir.”

Jorge, Main Researcher: “Yo escogí esta semilla por esta ‘x’ o cruz que en algunas es mas cerrada y en otras es mas abierta. Y la hojita por las manchas que hablarían un poco del tiempo, las marcas que ha dejado, las huellas, la memoria. Este ritual que empieza así, fue escogido por dos razones; uno, porque esto es lo que está aquí en el bosque, que es donde nosotros empezamos esta investigación. Un ritual que cuente con las cosas del sitio en el cual estamos, entonces esta el eucalipto, están las semillas. Pero las semillas podrían tener una interpretación mayor, y es la de que toda semilla es la posibilidad de un gran árbol o de algo que fructifique. Y es la idea con esta investigación, que de cosas así muy pequeñitas, salgan cosas muy importantes. Como Uds. son investigadores-participantes de este proyecto, todo lo que Uds. aporten son semillas que pueden producir un conocimiento grandísimo en el mundo.”

Ritual masks carry symbolic, psychological, social and cultural meanings (Henry Pernet, 1992). Quite frequently they are the representation of something else which is not concretely present, but is evoked. A mask intrinsically carries the potential of multiple interpretations but an interpretation brought to a mask talks significantly about the given meaning. In relation to the mask that was used to present the research statements to the participants – in the second part of the ritual – it is interesting the images and ideas students associated with the mask’s features, or what it could have been representing in the seeds and leaves ceremony. Montessori students’ research diary notes coincided with...

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35 “And I chose this leaf because of its colors, for they are striking and joyful. Like me, sometimes just laughing.”

36 “Basically I relate it with history, what happened, for experiencing it again, to reconstruct it.”

37 “I chose this seed for this ‘x’ or cross that some times is more closed or more opened. And the leaf because of its patches that speak about time, traces, memory marks. This ritual that begins this way was chosen for two reasons: one, because this is what we have here in the woods, where we begin this research, a ritual taking into account the things of the setting where we are. So, there are eucalyptus trees, leaves and seeds. But the seeds might have a greater meaning, and it is that each seed is the possibility of a big tree or something that blooms. And that’s the idea with this research, that from such a little thing come out very important things. As you are participant-researchers of this project, all what you contribute here are seeds that can produce a great knowledge in the world.”
one meaning; the inability to speak. Tatiana and Doris for example registered in their diaries:

“Yo dije, que me parecía como que a una persona le quitaron el derecho de expresión, pues porque no tenía boca, no podía hablar, y tampoco tenia ojos, no podía ver.”38
(Tatiana, 15 years old).

“En el momento del ritual, la mayoría pensó que la mascara roja simbolizaba el silencio de las personas o su poca libertad de expresión... Precisamente, mi opinión la centre en que la mascara es un símbolo de silencio.”39 (Doris, 16 years old).

Physical characteristics of the mask certainly impressed the students and interestingly made them bring to light local social and political referents. These associations are not at all surprising in a country like Colombia, which at the time of the research was – and still is – undergoing a serious human rights crisis. Students were not isolated from these political events. On the other hand, the absence of speech and lack of vision associated by the participants to the mask was something quite related to the subject matter of our research. Indeed, the story of our drama-remembrance project had to do with untold stories, historical silence, and historical invisibility. It referred to those past events and historical characters that in a sense have not been able to speak or be visible.

Montessori students’ reactions to the mask revealed the utility and power of drama conventions of this kind for engagement with implicit research elements and for prefiguring or anticipating research issues and tasks. Mercedes, Dario, and Juana closed their diary research notes for this session in the following terms:

“Llegamos a la conclusión de que la mascara significaba una incógnita que resolver, una persona que no podía hablar, pues no tenia la parte del mentón, algo que vamos averiguar.”40 (Mercedes, 16 years old)

38 “I said, it looked to me like a person’s right for speaking was taken away, cause it [the mask] had no mouth, couldn’t talk, and no eyes, couldn’t see either.”
39 “In the ritual many [students] thought the red mask symbolized the silence of people or their limited freedom of expression. My opinion, precisely, was that the mask is a symbol of silence.”
David Booth (1994) suggests that teachers should learn to use the tools of theatre to help students to create their own learning environments and their own culture, a culture where their voices matter, their experiences matter and their questions matter. Participants’ introductions and comments about the seeds and leaves ritual, spoken out in a context where institutional participation was at stake, publicly acknowledged students’ voices and alerted me to students’ personal referents as valuable potential research frameworks to be taken into account in the research development. It was useful and important that from the very beginning all these factors were publicly introduced and collectively shared as a way of confirming endorsement and commitment to the project.

From process-drama theory perspective the seeds and leaves ritual-ceremony was an initial form of negotiation (O’Toole, 1992) between the Montessori school and the research project. On one side, the presence of the Montessori principal and academic coordinator was crucial in terms of symbolic support and institutional endorsement. On the other, from the participants’ side, it became the form in which each one inscribed...
individual conditions of participation in terms of knowledge, sensitivity, creativity and personality. Drama served us to symbolically and pragmatically define and acknowledge our research starting points, fantasies and realities, limits and possibilities.

There was a small group of students who initially were hesitant to participate in the project, but nevertheless became part of the research process at a different pace and under different circumstances. Jose for example (16 years old) attended class very infrequently although he remained with us until the end of the project. He did not volunteer for the initial and final interview either. Daria (16 years old) participated regularly and enthusiastically through all our drama class sessions despite her father’s disapproval of official participation. No interviews, diary or records were asked from this participant. Josefina (14 years old) and Amanda (16 years old) slowly became motivated with the project and participated in the research from within their own rhythms and personal dispositions. In summary, the Montessori Grade 10 drama class was a group of 16 members, 9 female and 7 male students between 14 to 17 years old, and its drama teacher.

Methodology: The Story behind the Story

“The story behind the story” is a suggestive subtitle Gallagher uses in her article, “The art of methodology: A collaborative science” (2008), to name one of the sections of the essay. Under this subtitle, she re-examines some of the methodological steps her research team went through, when developing an ethnographic study about the new security and surveillance policies after 9/11 events, in four schools in New York and Toronto. The re-examination accounts for the steps and decisions taken by the working team, in order to create a collective and collaborative ground that secured “multiple interpretations” of
“multiple researchers” framing contexts (p.70). In my view, this is also the re-telling of the story behind the final and visible outcomes, the recounting, in methodological terms, of the history of the events, procedures and decisions that lie behind the research findings.

I want to use the same subtitle to name this section, to try to describe the methodological procedures and research steps I designed for the implementation and development of the project. It was a research script to follow, a flexible and open methodological plan, initially based on my previous research practice, my theatre and teaching experience, and my liberal-humanistic education background. It also took into account the theory and knowledge I had acquired from my doctoral courses. In methodological terms it also represents the story behind the story of the Montessori drama-remembrance research experience, the description of the strategies, methods, and procedures, which in basic terms, drove the process to the final research outcomes.

Process drama – a group-centered dynamic – was the genre of theatre in education chosen to fit the memory exploratory requirements of this project. According to Taylor (1998) process drama is a strategy where participants from within a fictional-imagined world, provide pedagogical contexts for critical inquiry, dramatic action, and perspective changing. It is a structured improvisational activity characterized by “its concern with imagination and thematic development, reflecting learning and an emphasis on using the art form to assist students in confronting aspects of their lives and the world in which they live” (p.16). Quite frequently, he states, social problems, political issues, historical themes, and cultural topics are explored and questioned within this form of working. (1998, p.17)
From a more processual perspective, O’Neill (1995) defines process drama as a methodological praxis whose basic intention is to facilitate drama-fictional environments, an elsewhere, where participants’ ideas, questions, beliefs, and understandings can be worked out (p. xv). This pedagogical space is typified by identifiable processual elements needed to set up its characteristic modus operandi: it does not necessarily spring from a prewritten script, it is a collective rather than individual oriented practice, it develops through steps or episodes, it takes place over a significant time span, and no external audience is needed (O’Neill, 1995, p. xvi). In the Montessori school drama-remembrance project, this procedural structure very much guided the research process, with the exception or addition, of a final artistic outcome shown publicly; a theatre play assembled by the participant-researchers, and presented to the Montessori school community.

In conjunction with process drama, I decided to use the ideas of communities of memory developed by Simon and Eppert (1997), and Zarecka (1994). Communities of memory states Zarecka are formed and informed by collective actions of remembrance that open spaces for the telling and the articulation of the “reality of the past” (1994, p.15). Simon and Eppert refer to communities of memory as formalized sets of relationships through which people, in touch with events and stories of the past, work out the moral and ethical accountabilities of the social praxis of remembrance.

I thought about the possibility of the school – and particularly the drama class – as a terrain within which the formation of a community of memory was possible and a process of drama where the exploration of the past could take place. It would constitute a drama-based process for the work of memory, which, for the terms of this project, meant the recovery of forgotten stories, the articulation of a critical historical consciousness, and
the contribution to a more inclusive memory. It would also be a collective-collaborative research context in a pedagogical environment in which to work out the ethical accountabilities of the exploration of the past. The memory work I was particularly interested in is comprised of the social acknowledgement of previously forgotten histories and their contemporary re-articulation in specific social and political settings; the class, the school, and the community.

The inquiry set out here, would investigate if and how undertaking the work of memory through drama praxis, sets up pedagogical contexts that equip students to question mainstream historical accounts, and reinterpret traditional understandings of the past in the service of becoming more active subjects of history. This brings to the forum important research questions: How might communities of memory linked with process drama engage in a collective exploration of the past? What might be the educational force of an artistic-pedagogical experience that links theatre education with historical memory? To what extent does the inquiry into historical memory through process drama enrich the social practice of remembrance? In what way may drama-remembrance praxis be a vehicle for engagement with the past as well as a means to make history matter?

I thought as well of drama praxis as an alternative performative form of collective remembrance. The hypothesis is that through the work of drama framed as a performative practice of remembrance, students could productively explore the dynamics of remembrance: its functioning, implications and structures. In addition, by manipulating the elements of the art form, it was proposed that students also learn how drama works, including its mechanisms and devices. I call it drama-remembrance praxis, as it constitutes a very specific application of drama to memory and the collective
remembrance framework. It is a way to acknowledge the theoretical and instrumental features of the two disciplines, linked with pedagogical referents characterized by temporal connections, prospective elements, and knowledge production.

The historical source chosen for the process drama exploration was the story of Manuel Saturio Valencia, one of the last persons to be put to death by State execution in Colombia. The following historical documents that relate to Saturio’s case were provided during the class sessions, as entry points to support the drama-remembrance working process:

An official telegram, May 7, 1907: Introduces the story of the research study and puts participants in contact with historical archival documents. (Appendix 1)

Execution Minutes: It describes legal aspects of the trial as well as formal details of the ritual structuring Saturio’s execution.

Newspaper *Ecos del Choco*, May 10, 1907: An extensive report about Saturio’s case published three days after the execution (Appendix 1).

A Historical Essay about Death Penalty in Colombia: A text regarding the history of the legal executions carried out by the State between 1850 and 1910. This text was written by the Colombian historian Mario Aguilera and was provided to students to give them an historical context for the issue of the enactment and abolishment of capital punishment in Colombia.

Initial and final interviews were conducted with students, drama teachers, some parents, and the school principal. The interviews were structured based on three major topics: issues of drama class praxis, issues of historical memory and collective remembrance, and issues of pedagogical practices (see Appendix 3). Qualitative data was
collected through participants’ diary notes and audio-visual records of the class work. Students were asked to follow up their research participation with diary notes, commenting and reflecting on the drama strategies used, the memory-remembrance documents explored, and their personal experiences and learning of the discipline. Interviews, class sessions, and drama activities were audio and videotaped. Audio and video recording of the development of the research study was not only a way to save important data to be analyzed during later research steps, but constituted a memory document for students, school, teacher, and researcher.

**Manuel Saturio Valencia: The Tale**

Colombian official history, like the majority of Latin-American official histories, has been written under general patterns of social, economic, political, and cultural practices of Western colonialism. Like most of the mainstream accounts of the region, Colombian’s narrative history is told mainly from a hegemonic perspective, filtered by perceptions of ruling groups who have decided for centuries who and what is important to take into account in the writing of the official history. Latin American social memory and in particular Colombian collective memory is a landscape where minority groups like Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities have not yet been properly represented or in many cases their historical role has been minimized or distorted. Generally, what these communities learn from mainstream educational institutions is a formal history where they hardly see their past under the overwhelming protagonist role of dominant narratives and hegemonic figures.

Tuhiwai Smith (1999) analyzes tensions between Indigenous collective memory and legacies of Western colonialism. Referring to Edward Said’s ideas on the Western
discourse about the other she calls attention to the way Indigenous knowledge has been collected, classified, and later on represented back to the colonized, through the eyes of the West. She advocates a critical pedagogy of decolonization as a different way to come to know the Indigenous past. She affirms that Indigenous peoples all over the world have ‘other stories’ to tell and suggests that these other accounts might well serve as an alternative story (1999, p.2). Tuhiwai Smith names these alternative accounts as counter-stories and acknowledges their political value, considering them powerful forms of resistance.

Tuhiwai also understands Indigenous stories as a powerful basis of knowledge. She affirms that they are stories that carry the legacy of millennial information and ancestral wisdom, transmitted as history through generations (1999, p.34). The educational value of this other form of knowledge as she calls it, is the possibility of seeing things differently, telling the story from different perspectives, and perhaps writing an alternative history. “The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things. Transforming our colonised views of our own history (as written by the West), however, requires us to revisit, site by site, our history under Western eyes” (1999, p.34).

Tuhiwai’s call to re-visit history – site by site – bears an important message for changing inherited colonial views of the past as a struggle against hegemonic views of collective memory. Schooling is very much implicated in this process, affirms Tuhiwai, both ignoring the teaching of alternative stories – keeping them publicly untold and untaught and reinforcing instead a hegemonic view of history (1999, p.33). This is an important concern that calls attention and questions the school’s obligations, in terms of
facilitating empowering and critical pedagogical spaces for students’ education and the learning of historical responsibilities.

In Colombia there also exist other stories, different accounts, and alternative histories that are important enough to include in our collective memory. I refer to narratives, characters, and public events from our social past, which has not yet been properly acknowledged by national mainstream narratives. One example is the story and subject matter of the present dissertation. Saturio’s story is particularly important not only to Colombian national history and the history of the death penalty in Colombia but, for the collective memory of Colombian Afro-descendants. The story of Saturio’s execution marks him as one of the last victims of capital punishment exercised by the Colombia State and embodies the racial conflicts of the time (Claudia Leal, 2004).

Despite Saturio’s significance his name is not yet part of the Colombian official memory and it is not discussed or even properly taught in the current curriculum of our national history. This fact calls for a particular reflection of the history of the Colombian State and the invisibility of Colombian minority groups’ memories. Manuel Saturio Valencia’s story is the kind of alternative history that points to the specific erasures of Colombian collective memory and raises significant questions: Based on whose stories has our official history been written? What is missing from the history that is taught and has been transmitted to different generations by Colombian institutions? How might educators change this problematic history characterized by a significant absence of minority groups’ voices, and lack of appropriate acknowledgement of their past, their identity, and their historical contributions?
Manuel Saturio Valencia’s story is a history that has not yet been written; in a sense he is a public character still in search of historical identity. There is no one official account that accurately tells Saturio’s life, much less what really happened in Quibdó-Choco in the year of 1907. There exists a few texts that partially recount the story and others that, from a clearly biased perspective, attempt to give a particular historical shape to the events and the character of the seemingly last person executed by State decision in Colombia. Afro-descendant thinkers as well as white writers have offered accounts of Saturio and this includes ethnologists, folklorists, journalists, poets and of course ordinary people who have orally passed the story to new generations.

Saturio is believed to have been born in 1867 to a very poor family in Quibdó the capital of the Intendancy of Choco situated in the Colombian Pacific Lowlands. According to this date, he would be 40 years-old by the time of his execution. Popular versions of his story offer that he was first educated by Claretian priests in Quibdó. Later the priests sent him to Popayán, a near and predominantly white city, to study in a school where the white elite sent their youth. It is also believed that he fell in love with a white aristocratic woman with whom he had a baby, who was drowned in a river just days after being born. After this traumatic episode, Saturio wanted to marry a black woman, a childhood girlfriend, but in a seemingly ironic twist of fate, previously unbeknownst to him, she turned out to be his sister. Saturio must have been a somewhat prominent figure of his time, both among the white and black inhabitants of Quibdó. According to the Colombian historian Claudia Leal\(^\text{43}\) (2004), Saturio “exemplifies a group of successful

black and mulatto lowland urban dwellers who made money in mining, by setting up stores, or working in the state bureaucracy” (p.34).

On May 10, 1907, a local newspaper, *Ecos del Choco*, No 6, reported an arrest for an arson attempt that took place in the early morning of May 1, 1907. The entire issue covered the trial, verdict and subsequent execution of Manuel Saturio Valencia –also a former provincial judge – who was found guilty of the offense. The issue included articles by white journalists condemning the crime, a copy of the sentence and transcript excerpts of the trial, official telegrams from the government in Bogotá, a poem reproving the offense, Saturio’s public speech, and a detailed description of his last hours and final execution act.

The Intendant of the Intendancy – a politic-administrative authority – revealed in a telegram the proof that served to convict Saturio of committing the offense. He also indicated the efficiency of the local authorities which, according to the Intendant’s words, in just a few hours found the criminal and the evidence of the crime; “Un cinturón que se le cayó al criminal cuando se empinó sirvió para indicar a Valencia cuya responsabilidad quedó fuera de duda en el término de seis horas, pues se procedió con la actividad y el tino que las circunstancias exigían”. The Intendant also made clear that the arson attempt was a premeditated act with aggravating circumstances. He mentioned Saturio’s alleged confession, apparently affirming that arson was a natural consequence of the impunity that had been taking place in Choco, because similar acts had never before been punished. In the public speech before his execution, Saturio recognized that

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44 “A belt that the criminal dropped, served to incriminate Valencia whose responsibility was established beyond any doubt. At the end of six hours we proceeded with the work and wisdom that the circumstances demanded.”.
he was paying for his actions and those of his predecessors: “Today I have to pay the debt left by a few jackals, who having committed the same offense I did, and are today free”\textsuperscript{45}.

Another element against Saturio was the serious implications of the crime of arson. Chocó and surrounding areas had been subject repeatedly to arson in the late years of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and early years of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Jorge E. Diaz, another Ecos del Chocó white journalist, declared that it had been 54 years since the last execution motivated by an arson crime, and since then 20 fires attacks had taken place in that region. The Intendant took into account these previous fires as a reason to judge Saturio’s offense under a court-martial law. The final sentence highlighted that the “impunity allowed to all perpetrators of the previous fires that have afflicted Quibdó and Chocó in general and the need to establish a precedent as an exemplary lesson for the future, demands in this case a severe punishment to avoid similar attempts in the future.”\textsuperscript{46}

Quibdo’s white elite of the time saw Saturio as an insane human being as well as a very dangerous social threat, or at least this was how Gregorio Sanchez, a white reporter, depicted him in the Ecos del Choco’s issue specially dedicated to Saturio’s case. Additionally, in another telegram, the Intendant warned that Saturio endorsed socialist and anarchist theories. Saturio’s story conveys complex and sometimes contradictory personal, social, and racist elements. In the trial, Saturio’s lawyers asked for a merciful punishment considering that only arson that produced deaths carried the death penalty, and his crime did not leave victims. They also requested forgiveness from the President, who at that time had the authority to overturn death sentences. However there was no

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{45} Saturio’s last public speech published in the Ecos del Choco newspaper issue n.6
\textsuperscript{46} Ecos del Chocó
\end{flushright}
response to their request. Ironically in 1910, just three years after Saturio’s execution, capital punishment was abolished by the Colombian congress.\textsuperscript{47}

“El proceso en principio era aburrido, porque empezando llegamos con la idea de formar una obra de teatro grande, osea ya inventada, por ejemplo de Shakespeare, una obra de teatro ya formada. Y empezamos a leer los documentos y que la madrugadera y nosotros que pereza. Pero después ya fuimos averiguando que el ultimo fusilado, entonces a mi me pareció súper interesante”  
(Mercedes, 16 years old)

Awakening the Sense of the Past

Zarecka (1994) asks: “How relevant is the past? How much public presence should it have? How much presence does it have? (p.87), and adds that these questions are essential to the understanding of the dynamics of collective memory. According to Zarecka, understanding how collective memory works implies not only a systematic inquiry of narratives but, perhaps more significantly, tracing the formation of our moral and emotional attachments to the past. This tracing of people’s engagement with the past is extremely important as it translates into issues about how the past is made to matter. Zarecka’s argument is that the social construction of our feelings and connections to the past, explains how and why collective memory becomes so meaningful to individuals and collectivities alike.

From Zarecka’s point of view, the functioning of collective memory is based on a dialogical and complementary relation between the past and its social construction. In this sense, in order to understand the dynamics of collective memory, a doubled effort has to be made: recover and preserve the past, as well as the work done on it. The recovering and preservation of the past is extremely important, especially in public

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48 “The process at the beginning was boring, cause starting we came with the idea we were going to stage a big theatre play, already invented, like Shakespeare, a theatre play already written. And we started to read documents and coming to school really early and we were like, this is so boring!! But then, we were finding out about the last executed person and then, it became really interesting to me”.
commemorations, where issues of personal and social identity are at stake and contribute directly to the formation and strengthening of civil societies. Personal and social identity issues constitute as well a sensitive subject for theatre education, as drama is about taking up roles and positions, and explore the world they produce (Gallagher, 2006, p.63).

Zarecka (1994) describes the sense of the past as an act of curiosity, a particular engagement with the past: “when our sense of the past becomes ‘activated’ memory becomes remembrance. At those times we do pay attention; whether through a commemorative gesture, a heated discussion or simply a moment of reflection, we are engaged with the past” (1994, p.14). Two drama activities helped us to start off the drama class work, awake the sense of the past, and introduce students to the work of memory. Those activities were the circles of remembrance and the drama convention of writing-in-role. Both attempted to frame the class as a community of memory for collective exploration of school past events considered by students as significant or worthy of remembrance. They were used as drama strategies to motivate and involve students in the dynamics of remembrance, making students’ individual and collective school memories the subject matter of these initial drama-memory work sessions.

“El lugar: Bosque San Carlos. Actividad: El suceso que marco mi vida. Nos reunimos en la forma de mesa redonda (círculo) e hicimos una actividad muy interesante, donde cada uno tuvo la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre el suceso mas importante de la vida y el porque es el mas importante. Tuvimos el gustazo de escuchar, muchas historias, unas muy interesantes, tristes, de risa, de odio –pelea, de venganza, algo muy bonito, bueno desde mi punto vista porque es como volver al momento del hecho del suceso, de las acciones y las palabras que nos marco tanto y que por lo tanto nunca lo vamos a olvidar. En realidad esta actividad me gusto mucho, porque sentí muchas sensaciones de alegría, de vergüenza, no, indescriptible las emociones que sentí cuando acaricie los sucesos que me marcaron y que por lo tanto me lo hicieron recordar.”49 (Diary research notes. Juana, 17 years old)

49 “The Place: San Carlos Park. Activity, the event that marked out my life: We gathered in round-table shape (circle) and did a very interesting activity where each one had the opportunity to reflect on the most
“La clase, como tal, fue muy divertida, y no tanto esto, si no que nos pusieron a recordar, a realizar un tipo de retroceso en nuestra vida. Primero nos acostamos en el piso (lo cual fue muy relajante), luego después de un largo recorrido por nuestra vida, nos pusieron en un cuadro muy particular, pues según esto nos estábamos muriendo y debíamos dejar una carta a un ser muy especial.”

(= Diary research notes. Mercedes, 16 years old)

Writing a letter in the future about the past is a writing-in-role drama-remembrance convention where participants are encouraged to explore the past in search of memories –considered by them as worthy of becoming legacies for the future time. This drama convention functions as a future-past-present time-bound experience that combines fictional-prospective features with memory and remembrance elements. Participants are invited to imagine and experience alternatively the future and the past, establishing meaningful relations between them. The past seen from the future and the future imagined based on the past, thanks to the time-bound component of the drama convention. Essentially, participants are required to combine memory resources with the fictional means of the art form, setting up a place and a time for a momentum of reflective remembrance.

The first part of the exercise attempted to open students’ curiosity and sensitivity toward a basic sense of the past. Through a sort of remembrance journey that takes participants back to their past memories, students recall significant experiences of their
lives like the first day of the school, first teachers, the first friends, and so on. The second part of the dynamic asks participants to create a future fictional context from where they can see again the past, but this time in a retrospective-projective way. Students imagine themselves many years later – old and dying – writing a letter based on what they think now that they would be able to remember at that age, and therefore, would never forget. In addition, participants had to consider those memories as a potential gift, a valuable inheritance worthy of passing on to others. The letter should be addressed to someone especially important for students’ lives by the time of their fictional death, becoming both an evidence of the past as well as a legacy for the future time.

Tatiana, 15 years old. A Letter for the Future:

“A long time ago I had an experience, not a good one, but an experience that marked out my life, and made me reflect on the subject everybody thinks about; friendship. [sic., a personal event] What I only want you to know is there are always people in life that make the bad things and want in some way to manipulate you, but it can be overcome, they are just obstacles put by life in front of us but you, with intelligence, will know how to solve them, with clear mind and heart. Life’s difficulties can be always defeated”.

Mercedes, 16 years old, A Letter for the Future:

“What I remember the most, and what I recall every time I think about my life, and why I’m so relaxed, so sharp when people hurt me, when I’m in trouble, it always comes to my mind a time in my life [sic., a personal event] I only write this to make you understand that when you do something, you’re not just...”
Josefina, 14 years old, A Letter for the Future:

“Querida Sandra: Hoy en este momento tan definitivo para todos los que me rodean, te quiero contar que yo decidí ser profesora por como fueron mis profesoras conmigo. Y te digo esto porque tu siempre me cuestionaste por que profesora? Porque no otra cosa, y yo te contesto aquí y ahora, por que era con lo que yo me sentía bien y que lo que hicieron conmigo hacerlo con otros niños y tanta era tu inquietud y tan inexacta mi respuesta que no sabia ni que decirte, porque siempre me contabas que cada vez el maestro iba a sufrir mas, y nunca te creí, y muero creyendo que no es así, porque es tan bonito como me enseñaron pequeñas cosas que en ese momento me parecían tontas, pero ahora se que fueron muy importantes para mi y las pude transmitir en otras generaciones.”

Almost all the students’ letters brought to the stage those very first life experiences when humans begin to be caught up in the collective net of social relationships. Topics like friendship, loyalty, trust, love, truth and lies, betrayal and forgiveness strongly shaped students’ memory-legacies. Memory, in this case, was related to a foundational teaching, or had to do with opening events that significantly marked students’ lives. In other words, the stories that helped students not only to understand the others, but socially and symbolically, inscribe themselves in the dynamics of the public life. Once these experiences were located within drama and remembrance contexts, they revealed their own pedagogical component.

Beatriz, 15 years old, A Letter for the Future:

“Que lo único que quiero dejarte es una reflexión y un suceso que es muy importante en mi vida que cambio mi forma de pensar y de vivir, y de actuar. Tenlo presente y cuando affecting one single person but affecting all around you, don’t let life be finished simply for acting without thinking and for not thinking before acting. Remember life’s hits teach you, but if you’re not strong they beat you”.

53 “Dear Sandra: Today, at this very ultimate moment for all around me, I want to tell you that I decided to become a teacher cause of the way my teachers treated me. I tell you this cause you always questioned me as to why I wanted to be a teacher? Why not something different? And I reply to you here and now that because it was what I felt good about, and what they did to me I want to do for other kids, and as your uncertainty grew and my answer was so vague, I didn’t know what to say, cause you always told me that teachers were going to suffer more and more, and I never believed you, and I die thinking that it is not like that, because it is so beautiful, how they taught me simple things that seemed to me so stupid at that time, but now I know they were very important things for me and for passing them on to other generations”.
Writing in role for the future about the past’ helped us also to read memories as valuable gifts to pass on, and the act of remembrance as a meaningful story-sharing act. To remember as an act of sharing implies the condition of human sociality, opening our memories to others for the benefit of learning the lessons of others’ past. The human sociality that as Simon (2003) holds, prepares us to welcome the stories, messages and legacies from other places, other people and other times. The event and reflection Beatriz is leaving her recipient with is not a minor one as those facts have changed “mi forma de pensar y de vivir”55. Not only that, but now those memories became valuable stories to remember, worth passing on, with the hope that they will be useful for something, “ojalá que esta historia te halla servido para algo.”56 I think that this something, this hope, here as well as in many other students’ letter-legacies has to do with the implicit, yet unnamed, term pedagogy.

One key element of the letter-writing to the future about the past drama convention was the possibility of recovering students’ past experiences, exploring them, and translating these memories into a legacy for the times to come. The writing-in-role drama strategy put participants in a remembrance-prospective situation where they are required to appraise, order, and frame their memories, giving them a shape and a particular meaning when writing about them. Passing on those memories-letters to

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54 “The only thing I want to leave you with is a reflection and an event that is very important in my life, and changed my way of thinking and living. Have it in mind and when necessary, remember it for one or another reason. But never forget it because it will be useful for the rest of your life. [sic., a personal event] Hopefully this story has been useful for something, to think more”.
55 “my way of thinking and living”
56 “hopefully this story has been useful for something”
someone else was also a way to preserve the past from oblivion, creating memory letter-documents that talk about the past addressing the future. Writing in role for the future about the past, gave space to students to touch, explore, and share their past, or what for them became significant and pedagogical events. In doing so, in expressing and sharing their pedagogical events, they implied that remembrance is essentially a pedagogical act.

In circles of remembrance dynamic, Juana’s comments reveal interesting ideas about students’ understandings of memory and particularly remembrance. In her research diary notes what calls my attention is the perception of remembrance as returning, a going back journey, re-visiting places, times, and even situations that were experienced as unforgettable, “algo muy bonito, bueno desde mi punto vista porque es como volver al momento del hecho del suceso, de las acciones y las palabras que nos marco tanto y que por lo tanto nunca la vamos a olvidar.”57 The beauty of remembrance from this point of view seems to be the possibility of going back, re-turning – transgressing time and space zones – to look at the scenery of memory and witness again from the present how the traces of the past taught us something meaningful.

The action of remembrance here is understood not only in archeological terms as a sort of passive visit to a site of memory, but rather as a re-encounter with facts which have left significant marks in students’ lives; what we will not ever forget is what “nos marco tanto.”58 Juana’s reflection shows a particular awareness of what is implied in a re-visiting of the past, witnessing crucial facts as well as the traces of significant experiences that remind us how we learned and how events taught us something important. This particular awareness of the implications of revisiting the past seems to be

57 “Something beautiful, well from my point of view, cause it is like going back to the moment of the event, to the actions and words that marked us out so much, and therefore we’ll never forget”.
58 “marked us out so much”
useful too, not only to recover events from oblivion but to bear a reassurance of remembrance; “y que por lo tanto nunca la vamos a olvidar.”

It seems to me that in her personal way of understanding why the past should be remembered Juana values the lessons –traces- of memory and their attribute as an evocative force. The sense of returning locates us before something familiar that is witnessed again from a different perspective – the perspective of the present time – filtered by the eyes and the reading of the here and now conditions. In this way, the performative elements of remembrance and theatre facilitate a re-actualization of memory through a pedagogical experience; a re-encounter with memory in order to see the past differently. An experience that Juana reported in her notes as unforgettable.

A Drama Class Community of Memory

In the Colombian drama teaching context, the introductory sessions are typically shaped by warm up games followed by collective discussions of the authors and theatre texts the group may be performing for public presentation at the end of the academic year. A final official performance and class curricular needs have a major influence on that discussion. The final class agreement as to what to perform comes out as a negotiation of those factors plus the students’ theatrical preferences. The overall process ends up as a cultural event, a formal theatre presentation that summarizes the class outcomes with students reciting the lines of a drama-character and illustrating a particular theatrical genre chosen for the purpose of the concluding show.

In our case, drama class sessions began in a slightly different way; curricular needs and introductory sessions were linked to the specificities and dynamics of the

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59 “and therefore we will never forget”
drama-historical memory project. In that sense we started off with drama-remembrance activities exploring students’ individual and social school memories. In this context, I attempted to frame the drama class as a community of memory and its pedagogical praxis as a collective exploration of the past. In other words, instead of privileging authors, theatrical genres or performative needs, I placed the conditions of the research as the ground and the context of the course, making the drama-remembrance process the point of departure and subject matter of the drama work.

Simon (2000) holds that communities of memory are moments of social life where practices of remembrance take place triggered by the value or the meaning of what is collectively remembered: “moments of social life wherein practices of remembrance are contested, shaped, and deepened by consideration of the shared significance of what has been heard, seen, or read” (p.186). Similarly, Zarecka (1994) states that communities of memory are created by collective actions of remembrance which give special meaning to memories of past events and stresses that it is precisely this meaning rather than the fact itself that creates a community of memory: “All that is needed is active remembrance, communally shared and deemed important for the community’s self definition” (p.57).

A community of memory is a location where the ethical responsibilities of remembrance can be worked out. Simon and Eppert suggest that the context for that social and public memory work may involve – apart from traditional remembrance celebrations – informal adult study groups, university settings and school classrooms (1997, p.186). These considerations give space to introduce the notion of classroom-based communities of memory where gatherings of remembrance ground its praxis
within a curricular and pedagogical terrain. They also open up interesting questions when these remembrance gatherings take place in the drama class setting. How might a drama class-based community of memory articulate the pedagogical context needed for both learning and understanding of drama process work and the dynamics of the work of memory?

In a community of memory, Simon and Eppert argue, the practice of remembrance carries ethical accountabilities concerning the past that is being recalled and the existential conditions of those who exercise the practice of remembrance. In the first place, we should not forget the consideration of how and in what terms people encounter stories and images from the past in a way that questions our present and our future. Secondly, we should work for the recognition and acknowledgement of memories of past events in a way that these memories may well be carried to different spaces and times, where others can also meet this past. Thirdly, an attentiveness issue in the practice of remembrance should be taken into account as an indication of the form in which a community of memory engages the acknowledgment, remembering and practical consequences of memory practices (1997, 187).

Framing our drama class as a community of memory and its praxis as a collective drama-exploration of the historical past was an attempt to articulate a pedagogical context where we could explore the possibility and implications of a classroom-based critical and ethical remembrance mediated by practices of drama. In more pragmatic terms, the aim was to articulate a drama framework – O’Neill’s drama world or experimental setting – and an aesthetic dramatic practice (Gallagher, 2007) that facilitated the telling of social memory and a critical articulation of the reality of the past (Zarecka, 1994). In the
process of collective drama-exploration of the past, this aesthetic praxis and dramatic framework could give the space not only for the learning and understanding of the work of drama and memory but provide the ground for an ethical practice of remembrance where its moral accountabilities and practical responsibilities could be, as Simon and Eppert suggest, worked out. (1997)

**Historical Archive Documents: Process-drama Pre-texts**

“*Terminando la cortina de gestos [juego de drama] pasamos a la otra etapa del ritual, donde consistía en reunirnos, opinar, ponernos de acuerdo en el grupo para elegir a nuestro representante, para cumplir la misión de escoger el objeto y lo cual pensábamos que este nos tenía algún mensaje. Cuando nos llegó la sorpresa de un telegrama.*”

(Juana, 17 years old, Research Diary notes)

To put in motion the weaving of the process drama text, you need a theatrical excuse, a dramatic reason for generating the worlds which may shape the process of drama. O’Neill calls this excuse-reason for dramatic work the process drama pre-text, and underlines that “it is the pre-text that will provide a firm base for the dramatic encounter of process drama” (1995, p.19). Rich drama process pre-texts bear intrinsically the capacity of initiating dramatic actions and drama worlds, and can be as simple as an image, a song, a word, an object, an idea, and as complex as a character, story or a play script. In the field of drama in education, pre-texts are seen as both source and impulse. As a source, pre-texts hold valuable thematic reasons for undertaking the work of drama. As an impulse, pre-texts carry the required motivation and theatrical insights needed for initiating the process of drama.

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60 “Finishing the curtain of gestures [drama game] we changed to the other part of the ritual, where we got together to give opinions and make agreements in choosing our representative for a mission of picking up something which we thought had some message for us, when we got the surprise of a telegram.”
In role as the custodian of antique and forgotten documents, seated in the middle of San Carlos park with a mask on and a wicker basket in my hands, I asked the students to work in small groups and discuss which member of the team would be the most suitable emissary to be sent to my territory, land of the past, and pick up an important message that was reserved for them. I told the students that the emissary should have exceptional qualities like curiosity, interest in weird adventures, and a strong desire to explore unknown places and events of a remote past. These emissaries once in my territory should look carefully inside the basket, remove the time veil and grab a telegram that they should take immediately with them. After the emissaries had accomplished the mission and returned to their groups, students should read the telegram, and report to the whole class their impressions and, perhaps more important, their questions.

A teacher role-taking drama strategy was employed to theatrically introduce the telegram – our process drama pre-text – and consequently Saturio, the main character of the remembrance project. In the field of theatre in education teacher role-taking technique is a common drama convention where the teacher depicts a fictional character in order to establish a drama working environment. O’Neill (1995) states that the main purpose of teacher role-taking technique is both to create a theatre atmosphere and invite students to step into dramatic-fictional worlds within which they are challenged to move and creatively respond. This teacher role-taking strategy served to structure a fictional context where the presence of other worlds and other times could take place. Metaphorically speaking, it was a theatrical way to convene the past and invite Saturio into our drama class, formally starting a process of historical remembrance, and the exploration of memory.
Peter Seixas (2000) states that the past is distant and the way we construct interpretations of it is by means of textual reminders. Ruth Sandwell (2003) talks about primary documents and defines them as historical evidence, records or traces left over preserved up to the present, which provide us with the evidence we need to understand the past. Sandwell highlights the importance of primary documents in terms of both the information they offer as a first hand information source and as a source of inferences about the past we can make based on that unique and testimonial information.

Primary documents are not seen frequently in school environments and much less in drama class. Apart from their evidential record, they bear a pedagogical potential for historical memory exploration and consequently, for meaningful learning in process drama work. The first primary document we worked with was the official 1907 telegram, which informed the Colombian president about Saturio’s execution. It was our drama pre-text, the theatrical excuse-reason for the initiation of the weaving of our drama-remembrance praxis’ latent text. As such, the telegram was intended to bring about a process of drama-historical remembrance through the activation of dramatic worlds (O’Neill, 1995) and in that way facilitate the drama class community of memory to undertake the exploration of the past.

The 1907 telegram (appendix 1) was a manuscript report written on official paper with the typical format and hand letter-style of the institutional communications of the time. Though we started working with a photocopy of the original document, its formal and stylistic features remained visible and eye-catching provoking students’ curiosity. These were elements that Harold, a 14 years old student, did not let go unnoticed in his early research diary notes;
An inevitable preliminary task for the students was then to become familiar with the writing style of the text and try to translate the content of the telegram in order to understand the message of the archival document. Peter Seixas (2000) states that documents of history require not only interpretation in terms of the information they bear but the analysis of the conditions of their production, the ways in which they have been used over time, and their discursive organization. Trying to understand the writing style and formal elements of the telegram or, using Harold’s words the way people used to write or express themselves a century ago, offered students the possibility of exploring, discovering, and to start learning how to read some of the signs of the past; a pedagogical activity that recalls at a more complex level, the work historians and archivists do when identifying and classifying new historical archival material.

A first analysis of the Montessori students’ diary notes regarding the telegram, as historical evidence and as a trace left over for them to be encountered through drama strategies, helps to understand how differently participants might have been experiencing their first encounter with the signals of the past. Participants’ reactions go from formal and stylistic comments, through drama class methodological insights, to very personal inquiries. From a drama-memory work process perspective, some of the participants’ reflections reveal a special concern in regard to what this encounter could be demanding of them. Some of the questions, for instance, suggest a specific inquiry in regard to the

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61 “What impacted me most of that reading [reading of the telegram] was the way people used to write at that time, because some words were difficult to understand and that made us get lost in their reading”.
possible drama-work actions to be followed, and the implications – personal and collective – of this initial contact with social memory traces.

“The telegram, as we all were asking, what is this for? What does it have to do with us? Why a telegram? Since we started the research I said to myself: this research is going to focus on historical stuff, and the [initial] interview confirmed that, and of course the very famous telegram, but a telegram, what for? What does it have to do with us?”

Juana, 17 years old)

Roger Simon (2003) discusses historical attentiveness as a way of welcoming “documentary words and images as initiating the question of how images and stories from other times and places may (as Levinas might say) ‘face’ us and what historical obligations might we owe them” (p.6). Students’ attempt to find out the meaning and the purpose of the telegram made me wonder to what extent their questions could be related to a sort of an openness to the past or an anticipated call for a particular historical attentiveness in Simon’s terms; initiating an inquiry of how collective memory, the past, could face us and what historical obligations could result from this encounter.

In the comments cited above, the participant stresses her awareness of the historical character of the research and makes evident the logical link with the telegram:

“Desde que empezamos la investigación dije dentro de mi: esta investigación se va a centrar en lo histórico y me lo confirmo la entrevista y por supuesto poco después el famosísimo telegrama. But a telegram what for? What does it have to do with us?”

However the student keeps asking “pero para que el telegrama? Que tiene que ver con nosotros?” I think that, to some extent, the students’ first reactions to documents of the past become a question not only of searching for

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62 “The telegram like we all were asking, what is this for? What does it have to do with us? Why a telegram? Since we started the research I said to myself: this research is going to focus on historical stuff, and the [initial] interview confirmed that, and of course the very famous telegram, but a telegram, what for? What does it have to do with us?”

63 “Since we started the research I said to myself: this research is going to focus on historical stuff, and the [initial] interview confirmed that, and of course the very famous telegram”.

64 “but a telegram what for? What does it have to do with us?”
personal responsibilities and drama class subsequent actions, but might well compromise eventual participants’ concerns about what stories from other times and places could be demanding from them in this research; what is the relevance of this history for the students today?

It seems to me that the *que*[^65] and the *nosotros*[^66] represent the key terms of the equation as they implicate the subject and the matter of the inquiry. The *nosotros*[^67] of the question addresses them not only as participant-researchers, but at a very personal level. The *que*[^68] could be implicated in an opening to a potential (if there is any) link between the students’ present and the evidence of the past: the telegram. In a pedagogical sense, these questions are very significant starting points for the research into the meaning of the past, if we take into account that the answers of those questions can not be given in advance, as predetermined principles, but will have to be found by the students themselves through the research process.

What the telegram might have to do with them will have to be articulated all the way through the students’ research participation and their subsequent accountabilities both, as drama class researcher-participants and, taking Simon’s words, in regard to their individual and collective historical obligations. The pedagogical value of this moment is precisely that these concerns/questions are already present at this stage of the process anticipating potential learning developments and educational effects. Later in the drama-remembrance process the same student wrote in her research diary:

[^65]: “what”
[^66]: “us”
[^67]: “us”
[^68]: “what”
“Entramos en conversaciones interesantes como por ejemplo: Jorge que nos comentó lo del ‘silencio histórico’ cuando relacionamos el ayer y el hoy. Miles de ideas se me vinieron a la mente tal vez contradictiendo lo que dijeron mis compañeros. Solo pensaba en que el telegrama tenía que ver con la cultura, y conmigo y los demás, ya que por medio de estos podemos aprender a indagar del otro, a indagar e investigar por cualquier medio sobre las situaciones que se nos presenta. Tal vez la idea central del telegrama era eso, preguntar, responder, comparar entre un momento y una situación, con otro instante de tiempo y lugar. El aprender históricamente que la sentencia de muerte en su mayor caso era injusta e innecesaria, en que aunque no tenemos en la actualidad esa clase de pena, todavía se mata y se destruye muchas vidas. Y es en donde me pregunto, que diferencia hay entre una época donde se sentencia a la gente por un delito, a una época donde cualquier delincuente mata a miles de personas, ya sea con bombas, secuestrándola, violando sus derechos y que sin embargo no hay nada ni nadie que lo pueda detener ni escapar?.”

(Juana, 17 years old)

Kathleen Gallagher (2000) states that drama “leads to inquiry and, in the best scenario, passionate inquiry” (p.23) and observes that, “the ‘social issues’ of some urgency to adolescents often include questions of ‘freedom’, ‘oppression’, and ‘relationships’.” (p.45) She remarks that teenagers are frequently attracted by events and situations that invite them to explore their own and other’s identity and individuality. Looking at the preliminary participants’ questions about the dramaturgical features of the telegram, calls attention to the kind of initial approach or positioning the students were undertaking in regard to the information the historical document provides. In their research diary notes, almost all students’ questions touched the idea of finding out the historical identity and socio-cultural background of the telegram’s main character.

69 “We got into interesting conversations, like for example; Jorge told us about ‘historical silence’ when we related the past and the present. Thousands of ideas came to my mind [sic] I just thought that the telegram had to do with culture, with me and others, because through this we can learn to find out about the other, to find out and search about the situations we face. Maybe the main idea of the telegram was that, questioning, answering, and comparing a situation and a moment with another moment in another time and place. To learn historically that the death penalty was mostly unfair and unnecessary, and although we don’t have that kind of sentence any more, people still kill and destroy many lives. And here is where I ask; what’s the difference between a time when people were sentenced because of a crime, and a time where any criminal kills thousands of people with bombs, kidnapping them, violating their rights and no one can stop him”.
Students were concerned with Saturio’s ethnic characteristics, social environment of his time, personal motivations behind his arson act, and even more specifically, details in relation to the events that took him to the death sentence:

“Quien era Manuel Saturio Valencia? Era blanco o negro? Tenia familia? Porque incendio la casa de Perea?” (Harold, 14 years old)

“Que color de piel tenia Saturio? Era casado o soltero? Tenia algún amor en ese momento? Debido a que se le cayo el cinturón? Que religión predicaba?” (Amanda, 16 years old)

“Saturio era negro o blanco? Como era Saturio? Que pensaba? Porque [el telegrama] era dirigido al presidente? Porque Saturio tenia los pantalones abajo? Que fue lo que paso?” (Tatiana, 15 years old)

“Hay hechos como el del cinturón, que son muy confusos. Cual era la posición social de Saturio?” (Josefina, 14 years old)

In theatre terms students were trying to figure out the look of the character –his social, physical and psychological features – and the causes and circumstances that produced the character’s final fatal end; who was Saturio? What might have happened? On historical terms they were searching for causes of events, contextual time referents, antecedents of the story, and details of everyday life of the time. This is a different pedagogy when contrasted with traditional methods of social studies learning based on knowledge memorization processes. Instead of passively receiving historical knowledge and simply accepting a pre-shaped identity from outside and above, students began to work from inside and below, building that identity up through the enquiry of the

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70 “Who was Manuel Saturio Valencia? Was he white or black? Did he have a family? Why did he burn Perea’s house?”
71 “What was Saturio’s skin colour? Was he married or single? Did he have a lover at that time? Why did his belt fall off? Which religion did he profess?”
72 “Saturio was black or white? What did Saturio look like, what did he think? Why was it [the telegram] addressed to the [Colombian] president? Why did Saturio have his pants down? What happened?”
73 “There are facts like the belt that are very confusing. What was Saturio’s social status?”
information that was just being received. In a pedagogical sense, this also meant students beginning to take control over the information and the subject of learning.

Ruth Sandwell (2003) claims that “the teaching of history through the analysis of primary documents emphasizes history as a type of knowledge, as a kind of enquiry, a way of thinking about the world” (p.169). Exploring, analyzing, and working out primary documents in a classroom, she affirms, contributes significantly to the understanding that history is not a finished product to be consumed and memorized, but a dynamic process of critical inquiry for students to be a part of. Sandwell believes that the study of historical evidence in educational environments like classrooms is perhaps one of the most privileged curricular spaces where the students can “practice the types of critical thinking needed by citizens in a pluralistic egalitarian democracy” (2003, p.184).

Reading historical archival documents as potential drama pre-texts translated into a motivating and challenging link between collective memory, theatre, and pedagogy. On the one hand, archival documents present dramaturgical features, like characters, settings, dramatic situations, tensions, dilemmas, as rich theatrical material for the structuring of the drama-classroom improvisational work. On the other hand, it constitutes a sensitive input or initiation into the learning-exploration of the evidences of the past. It represents a different pedagogical approach to the study and understanding of historical memory, through the means and possibilities of educational drama.

Drama-Historical Memory Exploration Work

“Remontarnos a la antigüedad y crear papeles y un drama dando cabida a la historia, al teatro, y en si a esa época, donde todo era diferente a comparación de hoy en día, es
divertido, agradable e interesante pues tratamos de interpretar el pasado y eso es increíble.” (Diary notes. Doris, 16 years old)

In the article “The Community of Inquiry as a Basis for Knowledge and Learning: The case of History”, Seixas (1993) suggests that history learning could be structured as a classroom-based community of enquiry around students’ questioning of their own culture and experiences. According to this point of view, learning in a community of inquiry would translate into a collective activity, a social process based on the interaction between members that actively make knowledge of their own. Such an approach would allow students to understand history as a meaning-making activity, learning historical strategies that are so familiar to the community of enquiry of historians (p.315).

Drama in education or process drama is a way to invite the aesthetic into the classroom states Gallagher (2007, p.22), an experience that facilitates the realization and inquiring of participants’ poetic worlds. Gallagher remarks that drama provides a framework where participants can deepen their understandings of the social formations that shape their thinking, perceptions and representations about life by the dramatic means of dynamics of deconstruction-reconstruction. This dramatic frame Gallagher points out, provides the necessary distance or alienation participants require to engage aesthetically in critical reflection and inquiry (2007, p.162). Through drama-improvisations we, the drama class community of memory, began to question the information provided by the telegram in an effort to drive the research forward. This exploratory step was, of course, less interested in looking for theatrical outcomes but rather focused on finding out more substantial research data.

74 “Going back to the antiquity and to create roles and a drama giving space to history, to theatre, to that epoch where everything was so different in comparison with today, is funny, cool and interesting, cause we’re trying to interpret the past and that’s incredible”.
“Clase 01/08/06. La clase de hoy me pareció súper interesante, analizamos un telegrama sobre un personaje llamado Saturio Valencia a quien lo condenaron por incendiar la casa de la familia Perea y pasan cantidad de sucesos. Estos sucesos los pusimos en escena, me pareció súper chévere, porque cuando hacemos esto nos danos cuenta que cada persona tiene una percepción diferente de lo que lee. Además también nos cuestionamos algunas cosas. Me parece muy bueno cuestionarse sobre estos sucesos porque nos dan pasos para seguir investigando.”

(Diary notes. Tatiana, 15 years old)

To stage events, framing facts in dramatic terms, was a positive research approach according to Tatiana’s diary notes, as that allowed students to see other’s points of view, different perceptions, and “nos cuestionamos algunas cosas”. I read this reflection as a clear reference to the capacity of drama as a pedagogical tool, for the examination of the events of the world – in this case the past – as well as the understanding of the kind of collective and individual responses that drama inquiry generates. Drama is about collective negotiation of meaning (Gallagher, 2007), based on the multiplicity of perspectives and voices that a group of individuals provide. Tatiana’s insight points to the drama’s ability to realize that there are multiple realities in a classroom; it is a space of multiple identities and readings that implies that there will be not just one particular way to experience the story.

Tatiana realizes too that questioning is “ok” as a matter of research strategy, or a methodological practice that provides curiosity and motivation for a positive engagement with the research work: “Me parece muy bueno cuestionarse sobre estos sucesos porque nos dan pasos para seguir investigando.” It is also the case that in drama, ‘questions’ is an extremely useful pedagogical tool to work collectively with participants. Jonothan

75 “Class 01/08/06: Today’s class was super interesting, we analyzed a telegram about a character called Saturio Valencia who was condemned for burning down Perea family’s house and loads of events happened. We put these events on stage; it was super cool, cause when we do this we realize that every single person has a different perception of what everyone reads. Besides, we also questioned some things. I think it is ok to question these facts because they give us steps to keep searching”.

76 “to question certain things”

77 “I think it is ok to question these facts because they give us steps to keep searching”.
Neelands (2006) sees questions as a way to find “the sense participants are making of the dramatic experience” (p.44). I asked students to have in mind three elements when working with archival documents; information the text provides, theatrical possibilities like images, structures, characters that this information generates, and questions the document provokes them to ask. When thinking in questions, I suggested to them to consider the relevance of the document to the circumstances of the present time, collectively, and in personal terms.

“El ejercicio 2, consistía en traer el hecho de hace casi un siglo, que cuentan en el telegrama, al presente y contar con escenas, como se castigaría al “reo” ahora. En mi grupo quisimos empezar a contar un hecho similar mediante un medio de comunicación como el noticiero. Con un suceso similar a la realidad como con las FARC y en vez de un incendio con un trapo, estaría más adecuado para la época un paquete bomba a un alto funcionario del estado así como “Perea” en esa época. Para esta representación decidimos que sería el presidente de la nación. La intención de la escena era hacer la reflexión de cómo sería castigado ahora el terrorista y comentábamos con Jorge y con el grupo sobre que en ese tiempo el incendiar una casa estaba en el orden para ser castigada con pena de muerte, pero, todavía no era terrorismo, era mejor como ‘criminalismo’.” (Group work report. Josefina, 14 years old)

“In these improvisations we could see different scenes, images and characters that were useful as well as others that didn’t work. Images should not only come from Saturio’s time but from our time with problems like forced disappearance. These improvisations generated questions like; in what other contexts can we put this murder theme? To what other characters can we relate Saturio? Why did we choose Saturio’s story instead of having chosen another character as the protagonist of our project?”

“En estas improvisaciones se pudieron ver distintas escenas, imágenes y personajes que sirvieron, como otras que no. Las imágenes no solo debían ser de la época de Saturio sino también de nuestra época con problemáticas como la desaparición forzada. Estas improvisaciones me generaron preguntas como; en que otros contextos se puede poner el tema del asesinato como tal? Con que otros personajes se puede relacionar Saturio? Porque escogimos la historia de Saturio en lugar de haber escogido otro personaje como protagonista de nuestro proyecto?” (Group work report, Harold, 14 years old)
“Drama itself happens, and never accidentally; it is a dynamic event which is always part of its context”, states O’Toole (1992 Pg.1). As Harold declares in his group work report, drama-improvisations provided the theatrical material – scenes, images and characters – to connect Saturio’s time with students’ social and political context: “nuestra época con problemáticas como la desaparición forzada”. Similarly, Josefina’s report gives an account of the way improvisational drama lends itself to allow participants to work out their concerns in regard to the realities of the past, and the way they would be interpreted in the present time; how people today might read and judge Saturio’s offence.

Drama improvisations related to the telegram were very much influenced by the everyday Colombian sociopolitical context. Josefina’s account is one example that represents the kind of sensitive issues students brought to the stage and connected with Saturio’s events referred to in the telegram. Students worked out scenes of torture, violence, arrests, political activism, insurgency, and related Saturio to revolutionary Latino-American figures like Ernesto Che Guevara. Josefina’s account is particularly revealing not only by the thematic content of the improvisation, but because of the negotiation of the dramatic elements the students used to explore the relations between the past and the present of Colombian history.

On a practical level, process drama has generally been defined as the negotiation of the elements of the art form, in terms of the context and purposes of the participants. O’Toole (1992) develops a quite useful model to make clear the key elements that configure the dynamics of the drama negotiation process. He establishes four interdependent contexts within this model: the real context, the context of the setting, the context of the medium, and the dramatic-fictional context. The real context determined

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80 “our time with problems like forced disappearance”.

by the main purposes of the drama activity, is defined as the participants’ reality and what is brought into the drama experience. From the real context the fictional context emerges as a consequence of the make-believe or agreement to believe in of the drama activity. It is created by fictionalized situations, places, characters, and their relationships. The context of the setting comprises the where of the drama event and the context of the medium implicates the participants; the makers of the drama (p.49).

Among the different contexts, diverse and intricate negotiations take place influenced by the nature and conditions of each particular context. In the TV news improvisation, the fictional context materializes the contextual negotiation between the facts of the past and the events of the present time: a cloth is replaced by a bomb, the arson crime becomes terrorism, FARC occupies Saturio’s place, and the Choco’s aristocracy is represented by the President of the Nation. The purpose of the drama makers is to find out how Saturio’s crime would be punished today, in contrast to the capital punishment of a century ago. An obvious but important fact is to emphasize that this drama process negotiation takes place in an educational setting, the Montessori school’s drama class, which means a pedagogical context for the social laboratory that is theatre.

The role of the media in the improvisation is that of making public the facts, as well as searching for the possible causes and motivations that could stand behind the events. A journalist is shown interviewing the different characters that take part in the story, witnesses, victims and the alleged culprit, interrogating reasons, motivations and consequences of the terrorist attack. Media is used by the students in this sense as a way of analyzing the situation through different points of view and as a form of presenting
(re-presenting) the story of “el hecho de hace casi un siglo, que cuentan en el telegrama.” In these terms, media and the telegram appear interestingly connected, as two forms of transmitting, understanding, and communicating the story: the latest as an evidential testimony of the past—an archival document—and the former as a proof of the technologies and media communications of the present.

In *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, a book edited by Peter Seixas (2004), Christian Laville advocates for the development of a pedagogy of historical thinking, based on skills and behaviours that people might need in the exercise of their civic responsibilities (p.166). This author relates those qualities to the critical faculties so common among historians: “–the ability to isolate a problem, analyze its component parts, and offer an interpretation –” (166). Cited by O’Toole (1992), Rosen notes that drama provides “a particularly efficient laboratory for the analysis of social contexts [through] its conventions of form that allow us to break the context down so that its constituent elements can be recognised and understood” (p.64).

One element quite evident in this improvisational drama is the historical dimension of the participants’ real context that they brought to the forum. Saturio and FARC are two very uncomfortable stories for past and present Colombian history. They are difficult accounts related in many ways to a history of discrimination, social and economic injustice, and political exclusion. They are realities of the past and realities of the present not easy to include in the Colombian official history. However, the students were able to reflect on the delicate and complex work that Colombian society has to go through, in order to process, understand, and write a history about these and other difficult stories. Their reflections provide challenges to the notion of a inclusive public

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81 “a one century old event referred to in the telegram”.
memory, that does not reproduce the legacies of a colonial writing, perpetuating misrepresentation, historical erasure and social oblivion, legacies that are also at the root of our current sociopolitical violence.

Neelands (2006) asserts that drama offers the means for participants to enter into the intricate knots and entanglements that compose a story. At the heart of the drama work is the possibility of undertaking that enterprise, by taking up roles and imagining ourselves in different times, conflicts, and situations. By taking up roles, we behave as if we were inside the stories, confronting similar issues, threats, and dilemmas. Behaving in drama as well as in the world is the key term. The learning to behave as ‘if’ in drama teaches us a great deal about behaving in the world (p.91).

I think that the Grade 10 drama class community of memory (through the improvisational drama work regarding the telegram) were experiencing history, both personally and collectively, rather than just hearing about the past. They were exercising the politics of a pedagogical praxis. This is a politics-pedagogy that combines the creative tensions between behaviour and learning in drama, and the exercise of historical thinking, in the sense Seixas (2004) understands it: “based on skills and behaviours that people might need in the exercise of their civic responsibilities” (p.166). I think that at this point in the work, the Montessori Grade 10 drama class community of memory moved forward a process drama that was already weaving a net of complex relationships between the behaviours for the class of drama –behaving as ‘if’ needed in theatre – and the behaviours of the class, as a social group or collectivity. In the class, students were not only developing technical and intellectual skills, but were somehow exercising their civic
responsibilities. At school—the context of the setting—, participants were facing the Colombians’ past and present realities, which are also the realities of these students:

Beatriz (15 years old): “Yo creo que Saturio de alguna manera fue fusilado injustamente. Dentro de lo que él le decía al comandante cuando lo llamó. Saturio le decía que si otras personas iban a ser igual de juzgadas como él lo estaban juzgando aun cometiendo el mismo delito. Saturio dice que escarmiento para la humanidad, eso es como clave para saber que lo que Saturio está haciendo es algo que el dejó para la humanidad. De alguna manera él está mostrando una problemática de ese momento. De una injusticia, de algo que paso ahí. Desde el momento en que leímos el telegrama ya partíamos de que el podía ser culpable o no culpable.”

Juana (17 years old): “Hay una parte que dice en el texto, concluyo yo, que Saturio a pesar de todo lo que hizo él no se mostró culpable. Solo que él hizo caso a lo que decía la ley. Él se sintió como resignado, como que esto me toca y yo tengo que asumir la responsabilidad.”

Doris (16 years old): “As Beatriz said we can’t be sure that he is guilty or actually that he did something, I mean, I think the execution is unjust. I think that what we can see is that Saturio wanted to take revenge and thought it was right, that he was doing ok. But he knew he was going to be condemned. He thought that causing damage to that family he was benefiting the town or some other people for some reason. I mean for something that family had done to Saturio.”

Juana (17 years old): “También dice que, algo así como que “si alguien cometiera igual delito al que Saturio cometió, sería justo cumplirle a la ley, mandarlo a ser juzgado, entonces Saturio dijo que si, porque así es la ley.”

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82 “I think that somehow Saturio was executed unjustly. For what he said to the Commander when he called him, Saturio asked him if other people were going to be equally judged as he was being judged committing even the same crime. Saturio said that as a warning to humanity, that’s like the key to know that what Saturio is doing is something he left for humanity to judge. Somehow he’s showing a problem of the time, an injustice, something that happened there. Since the moment we read the telegram we thought that he could be guilty or not guilty”.

83 “There’s a section in the text, I conclude, that says that Saturio despite everything he did, didn’t show himself to be guilty. Just that he followed what the law said. He felt kind of resigned, like this happened to me and I have to assume responsibility”.

84 “As Beatriz said we can’t be sure that he is guilty or actually that he did something, I mean, I think the execution is unjust. I think that what we can see is that Saturio wanted to take revenge and thought it was right, that he was doing ok. But he knew he was going to be condemned. He thought that causing damage to that family he was benefiting the town or some other people for some reason. I mean for something that family had done to Saturio”.

85 “It [telegram] also says something like if someone committed the same crime Saturio committed, it would be fair to follow the law, send him to be tried, so Saturio said yes, cause that’s the law”.

Josefina (14 years old): “para nosotros que no sabemos bien como fue la historia, el telegrama es como una prueba de que Saturio si fue culpable. Pero me estoy acordando de que dijimos que no sabemos hasta donde lo que dice el telegrama es cierto. Y que el que lo escribió estaba hundiendo a Saturio. Pero no sabemos de verdad como pasaron las cosas. El General lo cuenta para verse beneficiado el, y entre comillas para hacer justicia. Pero no sabemos hasta que punto todo lo que dice en el telegrama es cierto. Puede que también Saturio sea inocente.”

Carlos (16 years old): “El documento del telegrama pues, yo me imagine toda la historia, como cogían a Valencia y lo sentenciaban. Me lo imagine todo. Y como dijo Josefina, en el telegrama todo lo que dice ahí no es cierto, o no sabemos si es cierto o es verdad.”

Gallagher (2007) believes in the capacity of drama to provide youth with the social laboratory in which they can explore, question, and work at making meaning of their present circumstances. She advocates the space of drama class as a privileged scenario where young people can work through what they perceive, learn, and know in their bodies, “but seldom find reflected in their textbooks” (p.171). I see through this drama-memory exploration work that youth also find in drama, a challenging medium for the meaning-making of their historical circumstances, and the social rehearsal of their civic responsibilities in public life. Unfortunately, this practice is something not frequently reflected in many history textbooks.

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86 “For us that we don’t know well how the story was, the telegram is like a proof that Saturio was really guilty. But I’m recalling we said we don’t know if all what the telegram says is true and if, who wrote it was putting Saturio down. We don’t really know how things happened. The Commander General wrote it to benefit himself and to “exercise justice”. But we don’t know how much of what the telegram says is true. It could be that Saturio is innocent too”.

87 “When we read the telegram-document I imagined the whole story, how they took Saturio and sentenced him. I imagined everything. And as Josefina said, in the telegram everything that is said there, is not true or we don’t know whether it is true or not”.

Investigador: *Que significó la visita al Archivo Histórico Colombiano?*[^88]  
Estudiante: “La verdad, yo como no fui, yo creo que debe ser un lugar en donde se guardan los documentos de las historias que pudieron haber pasado en nuestro país.”  
(Harold, Final Interview)[^89]

The Colombian National Historical Archive Visit

“Ser el turno de uno/to be one’s turn”, “relacionarse con/be related to”, “hacerse el cabello/do one’s hair”, “tocar de cerca/to affect closely”, “llegar a conocer/to come to know”, “tocar en lo vivo/to wound to the quick”, and “tocar a la puerta/to knock at the door”, are few of the many uses and meanings regular Spanish-English dictionaries, give to the word “touch/tocar”. “Play”, “blow”, “contact”, “perform”, “pat” “stroke”, “feel”, “handle”, “finger”, “tap”, “lay a hand on”, are some of the synonyms that normal English language dictionaries, give to the word “touch”. Both, English and Spanish dictionaries coincide in the meaning “crazy” and “greatly moved” for the adjective “touched” or “tocado” for its translation in Spanish. In the latest sense to be touched by someone or something apart from its physical contact reference, translates as well into a deep emotional reaction.

Montessori students’ Colombian Historical Archive visit would seem to be related to some of the Spanish meanings and English synonyms of the expression “touch/tocar”, as they used –in one sense or another – similar words to describe and explain their awkward experience of discovering and in a particular way being “tocados-touched” by a place that preserves history, memory, and identity. More significantly, Montessori

[^88]: “What was the meaning of the Colombian National Archive visit?”
[^89]: “To tell the truth, I did not go. So I think it must be a place where the documents about histories that could have happened in our country are kept”.
students’ reflections on the personal impact of the National Archive visit, could describe
an interesting trajectory of the touch of the past through some of the Spanish uses and
meanings mentioned earlier; from feeling and being affected closely, passing to coming
to know, and be related to, ending up into be one’s turn.

The Montessori Grade 10 drama class’ Colombian National Archive visit became
a greatly moving pedagogical experience for all who participated in this expedition. The
journey taught us a great deal about the history of Colombia, the work done on
documents of memory, and left a deep touch of the past not only on each person that took
part in the visit, but surprisingly in our drama-remembrance process. It became an
important methodological turning point in the project’s development as subsequent
research steps and the final artistic outcome were decided after this tour through the
archival work of memory. Important history and disciplinary learning, powerful
encounters with traces of the past, and deep individual and collective involvement
constituted the main pedagogical components of the experience. Alvaro, 16 years old,
and Beatriz, 15 years old, commented:

“For me it was a big step, to go outside the classroom, outside of the four walls and explore other
possibilities and see the original document. It was a big step for the research”.

“For me it meant like, making evident the importance of history, right? And, I mean, history is through
archives, and how the State tries to keep, I mean, the way archives are systematized. That was very
From a methodological perspective, the Historical National Archive visit was originally intended as part of our drama-remembrance project to facilitate participants gaining direct contact with archival documents, particularly the telegram announcing Saturio’s execution, our drama process pre-text. It was a research step that I thought could give students a more vivid sense of the reality of the past. I have to recognize at this point that as researcher, I was skeptical about the enjoyment, and even more critical, about the usefulness of this out of classroom activity. My skepticism was reinforced by the fact that taking students out of the school represented quite a complex institutional process in terms of administrative and legal procedures: more letters to be signed, additional parents’ permissions, and Montessori school-National Archive schedules to be synchronized to make the visit a reality.

In the article titled “Lessons on Teaching and Learning in History from Paul’s Pen” (2000), Gaea Leinhardt introduces the notion of educational opportunity as a mix of significant learning experiences. Inquiring about what might be taught and learned in classrooms, and what might be the best way to go through in reaching a really fruitful history instruction at school, she opens up an important discussion upon issues of meaningful pedagogical experiences. As a history teacher, Leinhardt is interested in looking for productive combinations of educational processes, textual analysis, and performance-events that students could be involved in, so teachers can get the best instructional benefit. In the practice of teaching history she pursues the question: “Instructionally, what are the richest mixes of educational processes, such as physical experiences (field trips, films), textual analysis and integration (reading and writing from

satisfying for me. And to find things like the Independence Act for example, those are things that I never imagined, and the fact of seeing let’s say documents like the telegram, it is like very indescribable”.
historical sources), and performance (debates, theatre) in which students should engage?” (Leinhardt, 2000, p.224).

Educational opportunity (2000) in Leinhardt’s terms calls our attention to the potential value and meaning of the so-called informal learning instruction. As she mentions, reflecting on the in-classroom teaching-learning praxis, there are many other spaces where educational experiences and significant learning can take place; “there are other venues where more informal learning of history occurs, such as museums and the media, which we need to start to explore in systematic ways” (2000, Pg.243). She refers to the venues of museums and mass media, to cite one or two examples, but Historical National Archives visits could be included in the list as well, as a resourceful venue for history learning involving rewarding pedagogical strategies. Josefina, 14 years old, made it evident when answering a final interview question about what students liked most of the Colombian National Archive visit:

“What I liked most was that we didn’t learn in the traditional way but through new experiences; like going to the National Archive, watching documents of almost a century ago, realizing that history is part of my life. That was like the most beautiful”.

In its most general sense to be touched by someone or something normally implies a special encounter, a connection, a relationship that leaves in us traces of a meaningful interaction. In these terms, to be touched by the past could mean a significant contact, special interface, or particular communication with memories, people, and stories from other places and times. Roger Simon (2004) observes that in its most common characterization the human connectedness of being touched by the past reflects some

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92 “What I liked most was that we didn’t learn in the traditional way but through new experiences; like going to the National Archive, watching documents of almost a century ago, realizing that history is part of my life. That was like the most beautiful”.
form of empathic response; “It is commonly used as a synonym for those occasions when one is ‘moved,’ where one begins to feel a range of possible psychic states in response to another’s story: sorrow, shock, elation, rage” (p.8).

Montessori students’ touch of the past experience seems to have been mediated by factors that comprise both sensorial and cognitive elements. The physical experience of the past, sensory contact was as important as the conceptual learning about the past. Even more interrelated, the sensory experience as a way of discovering the past permeated and affected the cognitive experience of learning about the past. In reading some of the Montessori students’ comments related to the fact of seeing and even more vividly touching the telegram, it is interesting to notice how participants’ sensory reactions translated into insights and reflections in regard to the reality of the past. In the final interviews, I asked the students about the personal terms and meanings of the National Archive visit and two of them declared:

Jaime, 16 years old: “El haber podido tocar, ver el telegrama que marco la vida de este hombre negro, fue muy, osea como que Uy, fue muy vacano poderlo tocar y ver. Fue muy impactante.”

Fabiola, 16 years old: “Pues en primer lugar saber que existía, no tenía ni idea que existía. Al ver tantos documentos que hay allá, y tantas cosas que uno puede digamos pedir, cosas que fueron antiguas y que uno las puede tener en la mano, pues es una sensación muy chévere. Pues porque saber que ese fue un papel de hace mucho tiempo, a uno le da como mariposas en el estomago.”

To touch the traces of memory and feel directly the reality of the past is certainly not a minor episode, at least not in Fabiola’s experience, holding a one hundred year old

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93 “To have been able to touch the telegram, see the telegram that marked out the life of this black man, was so, I mean like it was super cool to be able to touch it and watch it. It was very impressive”.

94 “Well, in the first place to know that it [The Colombian National Archive] existed, I had no idea at all. Seeing so many documents as there are there, and so many things that one can, let’s say, ask for, things that are old and one can hold them in the hands, it is a very cool sensation. Cause to know that it [the telegram] was a very old paper, one feels like butterflies inside the stomach”.
document that made her feel “mariposas” in her stomach. I acknowledge that it was not only for a teenager that of seeing, and even more powerfully, touching a hundred-year-old document was a significant experience. This is even more telling, considering the fact that this was the first time Montessori Grade 10 students saw a real archive document and not just photocopies. Oddly enough, it also happened to me few years ago when I first became interested in finding out about the last legal execution in my country and ended up discovering the original Saturio’s execution telegram. In the past, as well as students now in their present, I found myself in the same way greatly moved by the exceptional fact of seeing and touching the actual, one hundred-year-old document.

Feeling the touch of the past in this way seems to have left Montessori students with an extraordinary experience in regard to how concrete, factual and real the past can be. This is of course one trajectory among other possible itineraries that an encounter with stories and images of the past can take. Other students certainly took a different path:

Josefina, 14 years old: “Encontrar que la historia de Saturio fue real, yo todavía no creía bien que fuera real, todavía tenía como un pensamiento de que fuera algo imaginario, o algo que se habían inventado, una historia, sí? Pero no estaba segura de que fuera real, de que si hubiera sucedido, y lo que hicimos en el archivo, o por lo menos lo que hice fue confirmar que fue real.”

Carlos, 16 years old: “¿Que nos ayudo a la investigación. Saber que si existía, que si era verdad, que gracias a eso ya no teníamos unas dudas de que era mentira.”

Mercedes, 16 years old: “Significo demasiado porque tener la oportunidad de tener ahí en las manos el telegrama fue muy extraño. Porque nunca pensamos que podíamos tener

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95 “butterflies”
96 “Finding out that Saturio’s story was real, I still did not believe at all that it was real, I still had like a thought that it was something imagined, or something that was invented, … a story, right? But I wasn’t sure that it was real, that it had happened, and what we did at the National Archive or at least what I did was to confirm that it was real”.
97 “It helped us with the research. To know that it [the telegram] existed, that it was true, that thanks to it [the telegram] we had no more doubts that it wasn’t the truth”.
It is significant the way in which these students experienced the touch of the past. Josefina declares that seeing the telegram was a confirmation that Saturio’s story was real because until that point she, like other students, still thought it was an invented story, “algo imaginario”\textsuperscript{99}. In Josefina’s case the touch of the past becomes more a substantiation, an evidential rather than a sensory experience. The reality of the past is revealed here through a personal and factual contact with a proof from the past that talks about concrete events taking place in specific times and places. In these terms, to see the telegram translates into a validation of Saturio’s account, proof for the students that Saturio’s life really took place in a space and time. I suggest interpreting this turn as an acceptance of Saturio’s historical existence, that his life was part of the social time of the human, and more specifically part of our collective past.

Similarly, Mercedes remarks that they did not even believe the telegram existed, but instead it was made up. Carlos recalls that clearing up doubts about the existence and truth of our drama-remembrance process pre-text helped the research. Both students highlight the positive consequence of this discovery in the development of their research.

\textsuperscript{98} “It meant so much cause to have the opportunity to take in our hands the telegram was so strange, cause we never thought we could have the telegram like that, we always saw it in photocopies and you gave it to us but we never had it right there in our hands, we never thought like holding it, to tell the truth. Simply we thought it was just a photocopy and that’s it. And most of us didn’t believe that it was written by someone, instead that it was just invented. To tell the truth we didn’t even think the telegram was real. When we could see it and everything at the National Archive, well it was different because we then took more seriously the research and everything. It was like a big advance”.

\textsuperscript{99} “something imaginary”
It helped to move the project on; “fue como un gran avance”\textsuperscript{100}. It is telling to realize that at this level, at this point of the research, after all our previous drama exploration work, they did not yet believe the telegram and Saturio’s story happened and hence had historical existence.

Reflecting on this, I think that for students to confirm that the telegram and Saturio’s story were historically real was important in terms of the formation of a public memory consciousness. As has been said throughout this dissertation, one of the main concerns of the present study is the reality of the historical silence and the necessity of a social acknowledgment of forgotten stories. In other words, to acknowledge that stories like Saturio existed and took place in our collective past though still they are not part of our social memory. Finding out that Saturio was real, that his story and life events took place in a specific location and time span of our collective memory, was important not only as meaningful historical knowledge but in terms of the historical awareness this knowledge generates. This is an important point in regard to the work of memory understood in terms of recovering of the past, overcoming historical oblivion and the formation of a critical historical consciousness; “nos tomamos mas en serio toda la investigación”.\textsuperscript{101}

There were other trajectories within which the Montessori students experienced the touch of the past during their visit to the Colombian Historical Archive. Other participants took different directions, different routes in their encounter with the paths of the past: learning through the past. Learning through the past is a pedagogical experience that involves both the learning of the past and the learning from the past. We learn about

\textsuperscript{100} “it was like a big advance”\textsuperscript{100}
\textsuperscript{101} “we then took more seriously the research”
the past when we get to know the events of the past and when we pay attention to the
telling of the past. But learning from the past can have a different meaning. We learn
from the past when it brings us awareness of the reality of the past in terms of a
modification of our certainties, our beliefs, and our disbeliefs. Perhaps traditional history
offers much in regard to teaching us about the past, but not so much in guiding us in
learning from and through the past.

“Por un comienzo me sentí conforme al saber que el edificio en su construcción física
tenía un fin, el saber del porque de la entrada, el porque de la figura en el piso (la rosa
de los vientos) todo en general, pero los momentos mas chéveres fue cuando vimos a las
personas del archivo trabajando, el momento en que nos comento que había un
laboratorio químico, cuando tenian la escritura de la primeras constituciones, la
dictadura, pero el momento en que mas me lleno de emoción aunque muchos no lo crean,
el telegrama original, verlo sobre la mesa fue un encuentro muy bonito, y aproveche ver
las letras de otros documentos y me pareció muy interesante. Esta visita fue muy
interesante y seria chévere visitarlo a menudo para nuestra investigación.”102 (Juana, 17
years old, diary notes)

Juana apart from describing a beautiful encounter with the telegram, writes about
discovering, seeing, knowing and perhaps more meaningful, learning. Her primary
comments privilege the importance of discovering-learning the intention of the edifice
and the “porqué”103 of a place dedicated to history and memory. She also records her
feelings hearing about a chemistry laboratory and seeing the people of the National
Archive working for the past. These are insights and emotional reactions that I think

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102 “At first I felt cool knowing that the building [Colombian National Archive Edifice] in its physical
structure had a purpose; learning the why of the entrance, the why of the figure on the floor [the wind rose]
everything in general. But the really cool moments were when we saw the people of the National Archive
working, when they commented that there was a chemistry laboratory, or when they said they had the first
Constitutional Charter writings, dictatorship, but the moment that really filled me up with emotion, though
people would not believe me, [was] the original telegram. To see it on the table was a beautiful encounter
and I took advantage and saw the writing style of different documents, and it was so interesting. This was a
very interesting experience and would be cool to visit it frequently for our research”.

103 “whys”
positively talk about the pedagogical effects students began to experience through the visit.

These comments about learning the whys and the intentions of places for history and memory made me recall the preliminaries of the visit. We started the tour outside of the edifice, with an official guide welcoming the group and saying that the wind rose we were seeing on the floor was chosen as the symbolic representation of the Colombian National Archive. The reason for this, had to do with the meaning –orientation- the wind rose had for mariners when they travel through the sea. The why of the entrance he also explained had to do with the place the building was purposely constructed on; it faces the intersection of two very close mountains, which for aboriginals that first inhabited Bogotá represented the encounter of the past and the future.

This was new information for me too. I visited the National Archive so many times researching the details and context of Saturio’s life and his execution by the State. As busy as I was tracing his narrative, I never asked myself about the whys or the intentions of the building itself. I recall that I was also impressed by the architectural magnificence of the construction but I never thought about the whys or the intentions of the construction. Re-visiting the National archive with Montessori students placed me in confrontation with my own previous learning of history and memory and made me realize that there is always something more to discover about the past:

“El pasado siempre te enseña algo. Es cuestión de re-visitarlo de tiempo en tiempo, o quizás de golpear suavemente a su puerta. Y fue grandioso abrir esta puerta con un grupo de adolescentes, aunque ellos no se dan cuenta de todo lo que estoy aprendiendo con ellos.”

104 (Colombian Archive Visit Researcher’s notes)

104 “The past always teaches you something. It is just a matter of re-visiting it time to time, or perhaps, a matter of knocking gently on its door. And it was great to open that door again with a bunch of teenagers, yet they don’t get to realize all what I’m learning with them”.
Seeing the visit as a tour of continuous displacements and orientation movements through different sites of the edifice and through different epochs of the Colombian’s history, the tour presented important confrontations with students’ previous ideas about history and the past. In terms of learning about social memory and how collective memory works, the Archive visit offered important clues to the Montessori students’ former knowledge and understandings. My interpretation is that students’ comments reflect an interesting confrontation with perceptions and images of the past that comes out of unusual encounter with what they as students do not see very often: a place and the people who are dedicated to work for the past and preservation of memory. Amanda 16 years old supports and complements this idea:

“VISITA AL ARCHIVO GENERAL DE LA NACION: Esta visita me pareció muy interesante debido a todos los documentos que existen allí y como se pudieron recuperar debido a las circunstancias de aseo, humedad y que muchos de estos están muy deteriorados, hojas y libros completamente destruidos. El solo hecho de recuperar tanto patrimonio cultural es un avance muy grande y también que este establecimiento tenga un laboratorio de química para crear líquidos para la reestructuración de todos aquellos documentos, pero mas impresionante es que a todos estos libros los protejan de cualquier otro microorganismo que quiera vivir allí, pero gracias a los químicos que se le aplican no es posible que ese organismo viva, y así se pueda conservar por mucho mas tiempo.”¹⁰⁵ (Amanda, 16 years old, Diary notes)

Reading Amanda’s notes, I recall as well that the chemistry laboratory was introduced to us, as a first aid area in the National Historical Archive. I remember again our tour guide using the metaphor of clinical emergencies with documents that are sent out to the National Archive clinic. He said that quite often they receive patients in very

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¹⁰⁵ “GENERAL NATIONAL ARCHIVE VISIT: This was a very interesting visit because of all those documents that exist there and the way they were recovered taking into account hygiene conditions, humidity, and that many of them are very much deteriorated, papers and books completely destroyed. Just the fact of recovering so much cultural heritage is a huge progress and also that this Institution had a chemistry laboratory to create liquids for the reconstruction of all those documents. But most impressive is that all these books are protected from any other micro organism that wants to live in them, but thanks to the chemicals that are applied it is not possible for that organism to live, and then it is possible to preserve them [documents] for longer time”.
critical condition and showed us through a big glass window National Archive’s employees dressed up with white coats manipulating papers and chemicals. He remarked that the purpose of the chemical process was to keep documents of the past alive, to assure their existence in the present, and to preserve them for the future. For me, the important fact was that right there we began to understand and learn how to preserve the past and make it exist longer, or in other words, how to prevent memory and history from falling into oblivion and disappearance.

I believe these images and words touched and left a significant effect on students’ knowledge, awareness and attitudes towards history and the past. These images of an archive-hospital where documents come for repair and preservation created a powerful environment, a learning context for the understanding of memory and the work done on memory: a pedagogical referent that helps to understand why Amanda was so impressed by liquids and chemical processes for the “restructuración de todos esos documentos” and the meaning of images linked with the life and death of archival texts. To me, Amanda’s detailed reflection on micro-organisms living in books, and chemicals protecting documents from destruction is another way to talk about the reconstruction of the past. It is a powerful metaphor that evokes the struggles against historical oblivion.

In their own particular way, Juana and Amanda are pointing to the meanings or the ‘whys’ of the Historical National Archive as a place not only to keep historical documents, but as a place that offers a way of understanding the work needed to preserve memory. In this respect, I think students understood the historical meaning of their enterprise; we were also working with the past in order for its memory to survive. If something was being done at the National Archive clinic, to recover the past and fighting

106 “reconstruction of all those documents”
against its oblivion, students were doing something useful in the classroom too. I wondered how much of that impression influenced students and motivated them to take the research more seriously. It seemed to me that after this step in our research process, the past no longer was distant and abstract, but instead, it had a face, a body, and an identity – Manuel Saturio Valencia. It was a past that should and could be revived and looked after.

The Reality of the Past

Humberto, 16 years old: “Me significo miedo porque existía como una intriga que uno va a estar viendo una carta, osea me la imaginaba así como sangrienta, como maltratada, no tan decente como la vimos al presente. Uno de joven lleva las cosas al extremo. Cosas que estamos viviendo ahorita en el presente, osea lo mismo que uno ve se lo imagina como si fuera de antes. Entonces como que la hoja era muy decente, la letra era perfecta. Entonces no se imaginaba uno eso. Entonces era como intriga, como miedo, como suspense”.

In his article “History, Memory, and Historical Distance” (2004) Mark Salber Philips discusses contemporary museum projects and states that the contemporary museum invites us to imagine the past as a field of experience rather than as an object of study. (p.93). Salber’s idea of imagining the past as a field of experience suggests a possible perspective for understanding Montessori students’ reactions to the Colombian National Archive expedition. While analyzing Humberto’s comments cited above, some important questions arise in regard to the way Montessori students could have been imagining-experiencing the past at the very moment of the visit. What is, for instance, the meaning of his statement: “Cosas que estamos viviendo ahorita en el presente, osea lo mismo que

107 “To me it meant fear cause there existed like an intrigue that one was seeing a letter. I mean, I imagined it like bloody, like crappy, not as decent as we saw it before [photocopy]. As a youth, one takes things to the extreme. Things that we are experiencing now in the present, I mean same things we see now we imagine them as if they were of the past. So, the paper was like pretty much decent, the writing was perfect. So, I didn’t imagine that. So, it was like an intrigue, like fear, like suspense.”
uno ve se lo imagina como si fuera de antes.”

What are the terms of this experiencing the past through conditions of the present? How does this past look like based on the things students see now?”? What does this present, Humberto is referring to, look like? What are those things they are seeing now?

In Humberto’s comments, it is the terms employed to configure the imagined past that compels us to reflect on students’ present conditions. To understand the prospective elaboration of Humberto’s imagined past, we are required to ask what might be his present or the things students are seeing now. Those things, according to Humberto’s words, are imagined as belonging to a former time; “como si fueran del pasado.”

According to this, the words crappy and bloody used to describe the document are not only an imagined representation of the past, but a sort of symbolic representation of the present. This past-present interpretation in turn, serves as the reflexive context for the prospective elaboration of the past. This is precisely the pedagogical reflective-reflexive dimension of past-present time bound formations. We are compelled to ask about Humberto’s representations of the present, because of the way he imagines the past based on the things he sees now.

Roger Simon states that public memory “bears responsibility for the past to the present, re-opening the present in terms demanded by just hearing of the past” (2004, p.198). Hearing Humberto’s comments about the Colombian National Archive visit made me ask about the present, the things students were seeing at the time the research was taking place. As it is publicly known Colombia has been experiencing one of the worst human rights crises of its history under the government of an extreme right wing

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108 “Things that we are experiencing now in the present, I mean, the same things we see now we imagine them as if they were of the past”.
109 “as if they were of the past”
president. News about massacres, assassinations, kidnappings and death threats committed by guerrillas and paramilitaries in collusion with the Colombian army were the every day content of all Colombian mass media communications. Frightening social and political environments have been surrounding the lives of the Colombian citizens for quite a long time. In these terms, expressions like crappy and bloody were not strange in a context of fear and violence. I heard them in a rather metaphoric representation of the crude Colombian reality. And I read Humberto’s fear, intrigue, and suspense of confronting a document of the past, as the emotional component of the actual confrontation of our present.

There were a few students who could not go to the Colombian National Archive. Some parents simply did not let them go. In the final interview when I asked them about the personal meanings of the visit, their answers came from what they had heard from their classmates. This made me think of another trajectory for the past. Their comments interested me mainly because of the implications of their words:

“La verdad, yo como nunca fui, yo creo que debe ser un lugar en donde se guardan los documentos de las historias que pudieron haber pasado en nuestro país.”¹¹⁰ (Harold, 14 years old, Final Interview)

Many documents in the National Archive, like Saturio’s telegram, bear the stories that could have happened in Colombia but the majority of the Colombian people don’t know about them yet. According to the National Archive representative who guided our visit, there are tons of official documents waiting for technical registration and archival classification process. It seems to me that if there is a place for the history that could have

¹¹⁰ “To tell the truth, I did not go. I think it [Colombian National Archive] must be a place where the documents about histories that could have happened in our country are kept”.
happened in our country but people still ignore, it is the Colombian National Archive: a place of untold and still unnamed histories.

Harold’s voice was not the only one who guessed about the implications of the National Archive visit. Tatiana also wrote in her diary what she heard from her classmates referring to the Colombian National Archive visit;

“31 agosto/06: Ese día mis compañeros de clase fueron al Archivo General de la Nación, ellos me contaron que la edificación en un punto une los dos cerros de Bogotá. Que los documentos antes de ser archivados, se someten a un proceso químico, que los hace perdurar, que existen documentos hasta de 200 años. Que si uno quiere mirarlos, lo puede hacer, que puede sacar copia. También que sacaron el Documento de Manuel Saturio Valencia, y lo vieron original.”111. (Diary notes)

Tatiana’s diary notes make me think about the subject of her notes. Who might have been the one of her reflections? Who could have been the subject of her comment: “Que si uno quiere mirarlos, lo puede hacer, que puede sacar copia”,112 and her statement of capability; “uno puede”113. Tatiana did not go to the Colombian National Archive but because of the drama-remembrance process, she heard-learned that there exists a very special place for memory and remembrance –a place where traces of the past can be seen and photocopied. I see in this seemingly naïve conclusion, not only a technological reference, but the possibility of active remembrance. To photocopy documents of the past could mean as well to take them home, share them with others, and replicate them and disseminate a past so far unknown.

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111 “31 Augst/06: That day my classmates went to the General National Archive, they told me that the edifice joins the two Bogota’s hills; and that documents before being archived are subject to a chemistry process that makes them endure, and there are even documents 200 years old; and that if one wants to see them, one can see them, and one can make a photocopy. Also, they [classmates] found Manuel Saturio Valencia’s document, and they saw the original one”.
112 “if one wants to see them, one can see them”
113 “one can”
It seems to me that Tatiana’s “uno”\textsuperscript{114} is a one full of possibilities, because it is everyone –you or me – with the capacity to remember. The ‘one’ that can go to the Colombian National Archive, and the ‘one’ that can see the past through documents, as Beatriz, 15 years old, put it: “\textit{la historia esta a través de los archivos}.”\textsuperscript{115} But perhaps more exciting, she is alluding to the ‘one’ that can make photocopies and in doing so, initiating a significant remembrance action.

\textsuperscript{114}“one”
\textsuperscript{115}“history is through archives, right?”
Investigador: *Que pasa cuando el presente y el pasado se juntan?*  
Estudiante: *Se forma una obra de teatro. Se arma una obra de teatro!*  
(Jaime, 16 years old, final interview)

**A Theatre Play: Performing Research Outcomes?**

After the Colombian National Archive visit, few classes were left for working together with the students. These last sessions were invested basically in commenting and analyzing the meaning of the encounter with the telegram. I then took some time and distance from the school and the research participants. The purpose of this methodological step was to give a pause, some space for all of us who participated in the project, and to think and reflect on the entire research process. This step took place before the final interviews, which were intended to be the very last step of the project. It was during this time that the Grade 10 drama class decided to structure, to rehearse, and commit to presenting a theatre play to the Montessori School community.

The Montessori students’ play was an artistic outcome neither demanded nor projected in the initial design of the research. Rather it became the final drama class project, agreed upon, and developed without my direct intervention. When I knew that the participants were planning to stage a theatre play based on the material and results of the research, I had ambivalent feelings regarding this turning point of the process. On the one hand, I felt pleased with the initiative because it was a way for the participant-researchers to perform and disseminate their research experience and outcomes, what Tara Goldstein refers as “performed ethnography” (2003). On the other, I worried about

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116 “Researcher: What happens when the past and the present get together? Student: A theatre play pops up! A theatre play takes shape”.
117 See the transcription of the play in appendix 2.
the extent that the project had taken quite a different direction, one that I was not necessarily looking for and I had not purposely worked towards. In other words, I was concerned that the traditional Montessori drama class pedagogical praxis, with its emphasis in final products rather than processes had not been effectively challenged. And clearly, my research investment was about drama as a process and not as a product.

Additionally, there was another personal dilemma I faced as researcher and as an educator sensitive and committed to the practice of a critical drama-pedagogy. Once I knew the play and rehearsals were a reality, with time and place set up for a formal presentation, I was confronted by the interesting choice of either keeping myself totally out of this final enterprise, or finding a way to join participants and help them out as they had helped me with the implementation of my research project. In a sense, I was facing an interesting tension between my instrumental position as researcher and my drama teaching orientation committed to the understanding of students’ drama worlds (O’Neill, 1995). Even more challenging, the new situation seemed to be re-structuring our previous roles and responsibilities, as it was the drama class who was now leading the process.

I ended up involved in the students’ project in a more compromised way than I had planned. First, I attended not only the presentation of the play but the after-show forum, a very interesting conversation between students and the Montessori school community, which was a step not considered either in the original research script. Secondly, I edited some audiovisual material I had collected previously from the research process – working sessions, initial interviews, and group discussions – adding it to the play with the consent of the class. This resulted in two short video-clips that were shown at the beginning and at the end of the performance. This was my contribution to the
students’ final presentation in aesthetic, as well as in research, terms. And thirdly, I filmed the school event responding to a collective desire of the participants to keep a visual record of the final presentation. This audiovisual material later became additional valuable research data.

Goldstein (2008) establishes an interesting parallel between the quandaries that drive the writing of ethnographic texts and the basic demands of a research design. She points out that in both cases, quite often research is compelled by questions of theory and knowledge production, what she names the scholarly plot, but some times the research design or the ethnographic text, is driven by the interests of the research participants, characters, who bring to the study “their own social and political agenda” (p.92). I have to confess also that I had no intention of including the play in my research analysis, as I considered that I did not have any explicit participation in its creation, and I really did not properly witness its production. However, in virtue of the ethnographic character of the play, the former research relations and traditional school theatre mode it confronts, and the sociopolitical agenda it carries, I see myself driven by the participants of the research –the characters– to include their performed research outcomes as a new, complementary, and significant part of the research data.

**Dramaturgical Structure, Memory Work and Performed Ethnography Elements in the Play**

**Escena I: (La Escuela. Tiempo Presente)**

*ESTUDIANTE 1:* Hola como estas? Imaginate que me dejaron una tarea sobre la pena de muerte? Tu sabes algo?
*ESTUDIANTE 2:* Ay, si. Yo me se la historia del ultimo fusilado en Colombia. Era un negro!
*ESTUDIANTE 1:* Y porque lo fusilaron?
ESTUDIANTE 2: Por quemar unos ranchos.
ESTUDIANTE 1: Por quemar unos ranchos?
ESTUDIANTE 2: Pues sí, aquí en Colombia en 1907 la pena de muerte se daba por tres aspectos; ya sea por parricidio que es matar a un cura, por traición a la patria o por incendio. Y el incendio la calle primera del Choco.
ESTUDIANTE 1: Pero cuéntame sobre el negro.
ESTUDIANTE 2: Mira, mira, este periódico trata sobre el. Acá hay hasta una foto y todo.
(Luces se apagan y Saturio aparece al otro lado del escenario para ser ejecutado)

Escena II: (El Patíbulo. Tiempo Histórico)

MILITAR: Bueno, hoy 7 de mayo de 1907 nos encontramos acá presentes para el fusilamiento de esta rata, Manuel Saturio Valencia. Prosiga pregonero!
PREGONERO: Manuel Saturio Valencia, natural de Quibdo y reo del delito de incendio ha sido condenado a la pena de muerte que va a ejecutarse. Si alguno levantare la voz pidiendo gracia o de cualquier otra manera ilegal tratará de impedirlo será castigado con arreglo a las leyes!
MILITAR: Soldados! Atención! A discreción! Firmes! Atención! Preparen! Apunten!
(Luces se apagan)

Escena III: (La Escuela. Tiempo Presente)

ESTUDIANTE 1: Pero el que hacia? Me imagino que era un vago!
ESTUDIANTE 2: Pues no. Imaginate que el era un juez. El aunque era negro pudo alcanzar la ciudadanía.
ESTUDIANTE 1: Como así la ciudadanía? Acaso todos no somos ciudadanos desde que nacemos?
ESTUDIANTE 2: Ahora. Pero en 1907 para alcanzar la ciudadanía teníamos que aprender a leer y a escribir.
(Luces se apagan y Saturio vestido de juez emerge al otro lado del escenario).118

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118 “SCENE I: (The school. Present time)
STUDENT 1: Hey, how are you? Guess what? I’ve got to do homework about death penalty. Do you know something?
STUDENT 2: Oh, yeah! I know the story of the last person executed in Colombia. It was a black guy!
STUDENT 1: Why was he executed?
STUDENT 2: For burning some huts!
STUDENT 1: For burning huts?
STUDENT 2: Yeah! Here in Colombia in 1907 death penalty was applied for one of three reasons; parricide that means killing a priest, betrayal to the mother country and arson. And he burnt the ‘first street’ of the city of Choco!
STUDENT 1: Tell me more about this black guy!
STUDENT 2: Look! Look! This newspaper is about him! There is a picture and everything!
(Lights fade and Saturio appears on the other side of the stage to be executed)

SCENE II: (The scaffold death. Historical time)
SERGEANT: Ok. Today May 7 of 1907, we’re here for the execution of this rat Manuel Saturio Valencia. Go ahead town crier!
The Montessori school Grade 10 drama class’ theatre play tells the story of two teenagers –Montessori students– having a casual conversation about their school homework related to the capital punishment. In this context, the two characters bring to the stage the story of Manuel Saturio Valencia, one of the last persons to be executed by the Colombian State. The play unfolds through two parallel although interconnected narratives that on one hand display important events and life episodes of the historical character and on the other hand describes the journey of the two Montessori students discussing, searching, and analyzing historical information that could help them accomplish their school assignment. The play starts and ends with two short video-clips that show students’ participation in drama class dynamics, research activities, and theatre rehearsals.

The dramaturgical structure of the play sets up a fictional-representational space where the present of the Montessori-students characters, and the past of the historical character, Saturio, meet in a transitional and complementary way. Scenes run alternatively from Montessori students’ present world to Saturio’s time, where past events and character’s memories come alive through performative means. One scene calls the other through a continuous past-present time-bound dramatic dynamic. The present time of Montessori students inaugurates the play’s time-bound conversation, bringing to

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**TOWN CRIER:** Manuel Saturio Valencia, born in Quibdó and convicted of the arson crime has been condemned to death penalty that will take place now. If anyone raises her voice asking for forgiveness or in whatever other illegal way attempted to stop this, it’ll be punished according to law!

**SERGEANT:** Soldiers!! Attention! Ready!! Aim....!!

(Lights fade)

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**SCENE III:** (The school. Present time)

**STUDENT 1:** But what did he do? I guess he was a slacker!

**STUDENT 2:** Well... no. Can you imagine that he was a judge!! He, being black, got his citizenship!!

**STUDENT 1:** What you mean by citizenship? Isn’t it that we’re citizens since we are born?

**STUDENT 2:** Well, that’s now, but in 1907 to get your citizenship we had to learn how to write and read!!

(Lights fade and Saturio dressed up as Judge emerges on the other side of the stage)"
the stage a school homework assignment, after which the historical past will be persistently called up to the stage to assist students’ dramatic inquiry.

This dramaturgical time-bound device along with the posing-answering questions dynamic of the play marked the theatrical development of the entire performance. As the script’s transcription shows, at the end of the Montessori students’ scenes there is frequently a question left for historical characters to explore through dramatic means in the following scenes. Sometimes scenes that portray the past and embody a historical time demand comments and reflections from Montessori-students characters, that consequently impersonate the present time. Sometimes, Montessori-students characters reflect on the previous scene performed as an answer to their continuing investigation and introduce new questions to the story.

In general terms, the Montessori’s final performance was a theatre education event where conditions of the art form framed and contextualized the practice of collective remembrance. The elements of drama – characters, fictional spaces, craft, and stage – were all employed to represent not only a story but the process of exploration of that story. The presentation was strongly marked by pedagogical purposes as participants did know an unknown history, and shared with the audience their former research process of learning and reflection. Enacting both history and research memories the students set up a drama-pedagogical framework from within which to approach historical memories while reflecting on the way that approach takes place. In doing so, they put forward an interesting strategy in the practice of drama-remembrance; they turned historical remembrance into performative memory and drama into a collective-social inquiry of the past.
In the article “Performed ethnography; possibilities, multiple commitments, and the pursuit of rigor” Tara Goldstein (2008) defines performed ethnography—or performance ethnography—as a form of writing and as a way of disseminating research. In this sense, she characterizes performed ethnography as those methodological approaches that turn educational ethnographic data into dramatic texts. Ethnographies, she reminds, are hybrid texts that combine scientific, political, artistic, and memory elements. The hybridity of performed ethnography texts addresses two different audiences’ interests and loyalties (theatre and research) and consequently struggles to satisfy the social science demands of ethnography and the aesthetic demands of drama (p.98). The hybrid mode of ethnographic performance—drama and ethnography—generates texts that interweave these rudiments and provide the researcher a creative way of engaging in the political and cultural dilemmas of research production.

The richness of these arts-based practices, Goldstein explains, springs from the combination of powerful elements such as the act of reading or the performance of the play, the discussion-forum that comes after a representation, and the previous research that produced the final text. It is precisely from those resources that researchers get input about the outcomes of a research, allowing further and deeper analysis of these findings. Additionally, the involvement of an audience in the examination of the research outcomes, brings “more ethical relationships between researchers, their research participants, and the communities to which the research participants belong” (2008, p.85).

Cecily O’Neill (1995) defines the dramatic text as “that which lends itself to a fiction, and it is capable of being translated into a possible world” (p.19). From a
dramaturgical perspective, a text in theatre is a rich source of performative possibilities, a
dramatic potentiality for the “performance-text” (p.20) that will be bred on the stage. The
performance-text that is generated on the stage includes all the signs, elements and
dynamics of the representation; actors’ movements and lines, scenery, music and
audience-performers interaction. During the theatrical representation the performance-
text emerges from the interactive weaving of all these elements, and after the
representation, the performance-text becomes the proof, dramatic evidence, or the
performative memory of the theatre event.

A dramatic text is also understood as a virtual working device, a creative process
guideline that motivates and leads the subsequent collective drama-work development.
O’Neill recalls that the word text was primarily associated with the expression “weaving
together” (p.19), drawing attention to its processual and collective character. She suggests
that in the understanding of the process drama, it is particularly useful to consider the text
as the weave of the event; “Instead of regarding it as a linear set of directions, it is
possible to perceive the text as a design for action, a kind of net or web woven tightly or
loosely and organizing the material of which it is made” (1995, p.19). In this sense, the
dramatic text can be interpreted as a latent fictional world, a device for drama work, and
the weave of the event.

Goldstein’s definition of performed ethnography as a form of writing and a way
of disseminating research, associated with O’Neill’s ideas of the weaving of the
performance-text, suggests an interesting framework of analysis as these perspectives
involve a text-production process, a research methodology, and an interaction with a
designated audience. When a performed ethnography text is read aloud or represented to
an audience, the putting in motion of these elements produces a representational fact and an ethnographic experience that, like the dramatic events, generates a text of its own performance. In this way, the performed ethnography text, representing research data, lends itself to a performance-text that comes into being by the interaction of a dramatic happening and an ethnographic episode. It is in these terms that I see Montessori’s theatrical performance.

I think, Montessori students’ play moves between the methodological mode of performed ethnography (Goldstein, 2008) and the drama dynamics of the weaving of the performance-text (O’Neill, 1995). Clearly, the play came out of a former research process, a performative event took place, and a forum with Montessori school community followed the final show. But beyond these obvious elements, there are other facts that, from a performing ethnography and performance-text production perspective, suggest this approach. I am basically referring to the students’ role in the performance as the weavers of the script’s plot and the development of the event, the time-bound questioning dramaturgical structure of the play, and the research relations the performance re-structures.

Given that the drama class was structured through an exploration of the story of Saturio’s execution, it is not surprising that the theme of the concluding presentation was about the death penalty and Saturio’s account. I mean that students were going to portray Saturio’s story, or perhaps, what participants considered worthy to stage and communicate from this account to the audience. This would probably have been what a traditional final theatre school presentation would have looked like. What was less predictable was the fact that students were going to include a parallel story, the story of
Montessori students involved in the historical exploration of the past. This narrative line corresponds to Montessori students in a drama-remembrance project –the story behind the story– which refers also to the history of the research methodological process, a history that keeps being written through the students’ performance in the dramatic event and in the after play forum.

In dramaturgical terms Montessori-students characters weave the development of the script’s plot through a questioning-answering strategy in a time-bound framework; an important research means used previously in the process drama exploration of the past. Through this dramaturgical structure students bridge one scene to another and establish narrative connections between Saturio’s and Montessori students’ storylines, along with their consequent past-present relations. Using this research strategy as a dramaturgical tool is, I think, an interesting performed ethnography turn, which satisfies not only the demands of the art form, but facilitates the framework for participants and audience to engage in the development of the drama-remembrance ethnographic event.

The play as ethnographic text was organized in a way that facilitated the students’ purposes and agenda. Apart from giving participants the necessary dramatic context for a collective exploration of the past, it recovered the process, used research instruments and strategies as dramatic performative tools, and gave participant-researchers room for exercising multiple roles and identities: academic, artistic, personal, social, and political. This seems to me a way to bring together the social, the political, the artistic and the pedagogical aspects of drama. This became the difference between traditional final course presentations and the actual one; between former drama pedagogies and this
project. It was basically a form to include an educational ethnographic component that changed and re-contextualized the happening of the traditional school theatre event.

In terms of the research relations that the performance re-structures, it is also significant to the tasks and functions I ended up involved with. The play gave me an unexpected opportunity to confront my initial researcher assumptions with what students anticipated when performing the research outcomes. In this sense, the performance of the play became an artistic evidence of what the research meant to participants as well as an early way of disseminating research. This was something that contrasted to my original research plans that were to obtain and disseminate results after my research transcription and data analysis process. The participatory role assigned to the audience –Montessori school community– in the disseminating and discussion of the research outcomes, gave to the performance an additional valuable ethnographic quality.

This was not just a theatre presentation similar to those that normally take place in a school’s artistic activities. I see the concluding performance as a practice of drama-remembrance, or in better terms, as a negotiation between the art form and memory work elements. The performers, the audience, and the setting were specific elements of a somehow re-contextualized drama event. The audience was a very specific group of people formed by Montessori School’s community members. Additionally, Montessori Grade 10 students were not solely performing a regular final drama course theatre play, displaying artistic skills or theatrical capabilities. When passing on to their parents, teachers, and classmates their drama-remembrance research outcomes, they were also performing something else; a more complex action that I think comprises deeper social, educative and political levels. I am referring to an artistic school public memory event,
where relations between history, public life and pedagogy were confronted and to some extent re-formulated; something that I would call a ‘theatre for public times’.

**Youth-Theatre for Public Times**

(Students’ voices heard while the opening Video-clip is screened at the beginning of the Play)

“Voz de Juana: El querer la libertad traía muchas consecuencias, sociales, ya sean de violencia, no se, hay muchas cosas que intervienen ahí.
Voz de Tatiana: ya no es la guerra por un territorio, sino la guerra por un país, por la gente, por la economía y la política. Entonces yo creo que en esta época somos más carnívoros que en la otra época. Porque ahórrita torturan gente, matan.
Voz de Josefina: Y los medios de comunicación nos dan una versión que nosotros creemos. Digamos. Y lo que realmente pasa no lo sabemos. Y es que un periodista no cuenta lo que, por decir, el campesino que lo vivió. Y la víctima no ve lo mismo que el que lo ataco.
Voz del Investigador: Y las experiencias de tu vida, las cosas que tienen que ver con tu historia, tienen que ver con las clases?
Voz de Harold: eh, pues, a veces, de vez en cuanto.
Voz del Investigador: Que es remembranza histórica?
Voz de Harold: Pues, es como una sesión donde, pues que participan para recordar ciertos hechos importantes en la historia.”

At the beginning and at the end of the performance, the Montessori Grade 10 drama class students’ and teacher’s voices are heard along with the visual screening of two short video clips. In images, participants are shown taking part in research activities like drama-history exploration, collective drama-memory work, theatre games, and drama

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119 “Juana’s Voice: the desire for freedom brought many consequences; social ones, violence, I don’t know, there are many things that intervene there!
Tatiana’s Voice: There is now no more war for a territory but for a country, for people, for the economy and the politics. So, I think that in this time we are more ‘carnivorous’ than before. Because now, they torture people, they kill people!
Josefina’s Voice: and mass media gives us a ‘version’ that we just believe, so to speak. And we don’t know what really happened. A journalist does not tell what, let’s say, what the peasant really went through. And the victim does not perceive the same as the one who attacked him!
Researcher’s Voice: And your life’s experiences, stuff related with your own history, do they have something to do with your classes?
Harold’s Voice: Well…, some times!
Researcher’s Voice: What is the meaning of historical remembrance?
Harold’s Voice: It is like a session where people participate to remember some important history events”.
improvisations. The dynamics of this visual reception is particularly enriched by a random selection of participants’ comments recorded during the drama-remembrance work process. Both video clips communicated to the audience key moments of the research process students went through in order to arrive at the final artistic outcome. They were intended to provide a general background, a sense of the participants’ research involvement and a basic idea of the path that students chose to structure the final theatre presentation.

Initially, videotaping some sessions of the drama-remembering project had mainly data research purposes. We recorded our drama rituals, working sessions, group discussions and final interviews, to provide an invaluable record of significant aspects of the research development. In the Montessori performance however, to have showed publicly some of the internal events of the research and have shared in the public domain some of our drama class work, meant an opening to remember in a different and unexpected sense. It became a collective remembrance gesture with deep ethical implications. Two parents commented:

“El video que nos presentaron me pareció, fue como haberle resumido a los padres, mire; desde que empezamos hicimos esto, esto, entonces a mi me dio la visión que, mire lo que iban a hacer al bosque de San Carlos, mire lo que estaban haciendo en el salón, mire este pedacito que estábamos haciendo acá. Entonces es como ver poquito a poco todo el trabajo.”

(Final Interview, Montessori Student’s parent)

“The video that was shown to us seemed to me like a summing up for parents; since we began we did this, and this. Then the video gave me the picture like, look what they [students] were doing when they went to San Carlos Park, see what they were doing in the classroom, look this little piece of work we were doing here. So it is like seeing little by little the entire work.”

“Madre: al principio fue desconfianza. Lo discutimos acá, porque nosotros acá, en la casa, en nuestro hogar discutimos todo, y al principio sentimos un poco de desconfianza. Porque de todas maneras vivimos en una sociedad muy...
Padre: Sí, hay que tener en cuenta el país en el que vivimos; es un país que tiene un conflicto armado.

120 “The video that was shown to us seemed to me like a summing up for parents; since we began we did this, and this. Then the video gave me the picture like, look what they [students] were doing when they went to San Carlos Park, see what they were doing in the classroom, look this little piece of work we were doing here. So it is like seeing little by little the entire work.”
Madre: Violencia.
Padre: Que tiene mucha violencia. Entonces lo discutimos y en un comienzo nos dio cierta...
Madre: desconfianza
Padre: desconfianza por lo de los permisos, las grabaciones, todo eso, porque uno no sabe que pueda contener eso.
Madre: Sí, los problemas sociales son los que nos dan desconfianza”
(Final Interview, Montessori Student’s parents)

Video-clips became of enormous importance in regard to the initial uncertainties, and final confidence, some parents had in relation to allowing their children to participate in the project. The video, as parents named it, testified on behalf of the entire research team. To me, it became the research group’s voice letting the audience know about our ethics, research methodology, and pedagogical approach of the project. I think it spoke in return to the parents’ confidence they had put on us and particularly on me as the principal researcher. For students the videos were a way to look back at their research memories, listen to their own voices, and realize the meaning of their participation in the project; Fabiola, 16 years old commented:

“El proceso fue, en principio como aburridor porque no estábamos acostumbrados a leer tantos documentos y eso, pero ya después de ver el video como que uno ve todo lo que uno ha hecho y ve todos esos esfuerzos ahí plantados.”

Montessori students’ voices and research memories became the main components of the Montessori’s artistic presentation. In a broader understanding they were the

121 “Mother: at the beginning I was distrustful. We discussed it first because here, at home, we discuss everything, and at the beginning we were distrustful. Any way we live in a society very much...
Father: yes, we have to keep in mind the kind of country we live in. It is a country with an armed conflict.
Mother: Violence.
Father: Too much violence. We discussed it and at the beginning we felt kind of...
Mother: Distrustful.
Father: Distrustful for permission of videotaping, because one does not know what that might mean.
Mother: Yes, social problems make us distrustful”.

122 “The process was boring at the beginning, cause we weren’t use to read so many documents, but after watching the video, like one realizes all what one has done and sees all the efforts set there”
characters, the medium and the context of a theatre-memory work event. From the audiovisual beginning to the after play-forum, voices, history and research memories continually set up the pedagogical context and community time required for a social practice of remembrance. In a sense, they set up the ground for the advent and constitution of what Cornelius Castoriadis (1991) refers to as the public time; “a dimension where the collectivity can inspect its own past as a result of its own actions, and where an indeterminate future opens up a domain for its activities” (p.113).

In “World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imaginations”, Cornelius Castoriadis (1997) advocates social time as an imaginary time, a time gifted and capable of communal significance. There is no impartial time, there is no time “instituted as a pure neutral medium” affirms Castoriadis, but rather time is “endowed with meaning” (p.386). Imaginary time as relational time is the collectivities’ time of and for social signification: the holder of emblematic marks and bounds, vessel of feasts and rituals, symbolic conventions with which societies tie their communal time. “There is the time of the perpetually recurring return of the ancestors; of the innerworldly avatars of human souls; the time of fall, Trial, and Salvation; or, as in modern societies, the time of ‘indefinite progress’” (1997, p.386). And I would add, the time and the social occasion of and for a theatre of the public performed by youth.

Simon (2003) defines public time as a social moment, community occasion for collective learning, personal questioning and testamentary acceptance. It is the time that he differentiates from the time of clocks or time zones, but designates as “a time of meeting, a time of inheritance, and as such the arrival of an indeterminate legacy” (p.12). The pedagogical experience that takes place in a public time Simon points out, implicates
not only the achievement of unknown information but fundamentally the openness to and acceptance of their telling of someone else’s historical memories. At first instance, this gesture of openness to and acceptance of, Simon claims, implicitly questions the viable substance of ‘human sociality in terms of people’s capacity to connect with events and stories from other times and other places.

The advent of this testamentary legacy is also considered by Simon as a difficult gift, unexpected present, a heritage that in its unanticipated arrival and a call for non indifference, demanding attention and reflection as to the way we perceive and relate with our own past-present world (2003). Commenting on the terms and conditions of the testamentary legacy, he highlights the reflexivity and ‘non reciprocal’ character of the endowment of inheritance. Simon stresses that the only possibility of returning this difficult gift is by giving it and its lesson to someone else. “One gives back the gift of testament by speaking it to others, as well as speaking specifically of its teaching: speaking specifically so as to teach others what it has taught” (Simon, 2003, p12).

Montessori’s final artistic presentation and the public forum that followed the theatrical performance carry elements of public time in its structural and performative conditions. It was a community theatre event, a social occasion for people to come together (O’Toole, 1992), to share an evening of collective re-vision and reflection on Colombia’s history and its past-current sociopolitical issues. In a communal time within a theatrical frame, participants were recovering a story implicated in our national identity, passing it on to Montessori community members, and in doing so challenging the collectivity’s capacity to relate to an event from a different time and a different place. In
the after play forum, a guest principal from another school, a Montessori student’s parent and the Montessori school principal commented:

“Más allá de la historia, como decía la señora, que es bastante interesante si se quiere. Lo mantiene a uno como público supremamente atento. Le invita a recordar parte de la historia, pero más allá de eso, la misma puesta en escena, como expresaba también la señora, ver a los estudiantes, vinculados a un trabajo que fundamentalmente es de goce. Por que es eso. Lo veíamos antes de iniciar el trabajo de ellos, en la proyección, como nos mostraban parte de ese proceso, de esa preparación, que nos lleva a hacer una indagación. Es que acá se trabajan si se quiere, a nivel pedagógico, todas las áreas. Pero también es apropiación de nuestra historia, de los conflictos, aparece si se quiere la lucha de clases. Lo importante de ver a un grupo de estudiantes de 10 vinculados a un trabajo artístico, es la posibilidad de acercarse por medio del arte a la apropiación de la historia, de nosotros mismos.”

“Es bien interesante ver como la justicia o las leyes se han desarrollado a través de la historia. Osea, en esa época se manejaba de una manera, hoy en día se maneja de otra. Osea ha evolucionado. Pero se sigue manejando igual. Están las leyes pero escritas muy bien escritas. Pero son igual que en esa época.” (After play public forum, a guest school principal)

“Pues es evidente lo que sucedió en esa época, pero también es mostrar una serie de dudas que puede generar y que le queda en la mente de las personas que observan así, si fue cierto, o que fue lo que paso ahí. Que elementos de la justicia, de las leyes, y de los contextos hicieron que se actuara de esa manera. La experiencia para los estudiantes es una experiencia muy importante. [sic] Siento que deben seguir adelante y que además tuvieron que aprender que la historia hay que leerla y mirarla mucho más allá del hecho mismo, sino que hay que profundizar para ver que paso con los personajes, que paso con esos protagonistas. Y que pasa hoy si traemos la historia de 1907 a hoy, como la podemos comparar.” (After play public forum, Montessori student’s parent)

123 “Beyond the story that is very interesting, as a parent said, and keeps you as audience extremely alert, this is an invitation to remember part of the history. [sic] We saw it at the beginning in the screening, when they showed part of this process, part of that groundwork that pushes us to carry out a personal search. [sic] But it is also an appropriation of our history, conflicts, and even social class’ struggles so to speak. The importance of seeing a group of grade 10 students involved in an artistic work, it is also the possibility to approach, through art, the appropriation of history, of ourselves”.

124 “It is very interesting to see how justice and law have been developed through history. I mean, at that time they were handled in one way, today they are managed in a ‘different’ one. [sic] But they are being handled in the ‘same’ way. The law exists, written, very well written, but they are the same like in that time”.

125 “Well, it is clear what happened at that time but it is also a way to show a series of doubts the story can generate –if it was true or what happened there- that remain in the minds of the people that saw the play. What were the elements of justice, law, and context that made people behave in that way? This experience is a very important one for you kids. [sic] I think you should move forward, and besides, you had to learn that history has to be read and looked beyond the fact itself, and we need to go deeper to see what happened with the characters, what happened with those protagonists. And what happens today if we bring the 1907’s story up to the present, how we can compare it”.

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In the performative theatrical time the arrival of the inquiry into the forgotten story of Saturio’s execution became the legacy that the students passed on to Montessori community. This theatrical initiative explicitly underscored the significance of the practice of remembering and questioning previous historical erasures, given Saturio’s invisibility in main stream Colombian history. In this sense, the Montessori performance contributed significantly to the formation of a more inclusive public memory, and the participant-researchers played an important agential role in terms of the social and historical acknowledgment of Saturio’s history. Beatriz, 15 years old, highlighted these implications when we were analyzing the meaning of the play as a form of an artistic struggle against historical oblivion:

“Osea recordar la historia de Manuel Saturio Valencia que no es algo que sea como la historia de Simón Bolívar, pienso que se hizo algo contra ese olvido histórico.” (Final Interview, Beatriz, 15 years old)

To bring Manuel Saturio Valencia’s story up to Montessori community’s present, the performance carried a pedagogical commitment that students tried to work out, throughout the show and during the after play forum. This pedagogical commitment implied both the transmission of a particular narrative as well as the provocation of memory work on the part of community members present. As a provocation to memory work, the performance involved audience and students in a joint exploration of issues of collective remembrance. As a history teaching, the play offered a previously unknown narrative that confronted the community with the insufficiency of the established knowledge of Colombian history. In these terms, by drama means, Saturio’s story arrives

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126 “Overcoming historical oblivion, I think in relation to the fact that we remembered. I mean remembering the story of Manuel Saturio Valencia that is not like Simon Bolivar’s story. I think we did something against that historical oblivion”.

127 Simon Bolivar was the most prominent hero of the nineteen century Colombian’s independence wars.
as a sudden learning, unexpected difficult gift (Simon 2003), that questions the terms and extension of the audience’s former social memory and past-present relational understandings. In the final interview, a parent commented:

Parent: “La historia es una historia muy importante. Anexo que es importante porque fue el último fusilamiento que hubo en Colombia. Porque la historia nunca lo dice? Entonces uno se pone a pensar, así habrá miles y canti­dades de historias que construyeron como el futuro de una ciudad, como el de un pueblo y uno nunca sabe. Solo hasta que alguien la transmíte, solo hasta que alguien la da a conocer es que se puede llegar uno a enterar. Me imagino no. No solo aquí en Bogotá sino en tantas ciudades tantas historias tan importantes que hay uno nunca las conoce porque o no salen a la luz publica, o no hay nadie que la pueda llevar a que otras personas la vean. Pudieron haber sido historias que de un momento a otro dirigieron un país, dirigieron una ciudad, dirigieron una comunidad. No se.” (Final Interview, Montessori student’s parent)

In the enactment of public memory Simon observes that special attention must be paid not only to the story that arrives and the legacy it bears, but the place in which one might be willing to deliver them; “the world into which you will carry and teach its teachings” (2003, p.13). He refers to a context, a space that is socially, historically and culturally determined by its members and the kind of relations within which such members interact. In the case of the Montessori school final presentation this means a world with specific pedagogical, social, and cultural conditions. What made this teaching particularly meaningful was seeing students passing on to parents, teachers, classmates, and Montessori’s staff this significant lesson. Two students were very aware of this pedagogical dimension:

“Que fue una enseñanza tanto para nosotros como para el público. Pero pienso que no fue en vano el trabajo sino que fue bastante educativo para las personas que no tenían

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128 “The story is a very important story, important because it was the last execution that happened in Colombia. Why does our history never say it? Then one starts to think; in the same way there will be thousands of stories that built like the future of a city, of a town, and you never know. Only until someone passes it on, only until someone brings it to light, it is that you can get to know. I guess, right? Not just here in Bogotá, but in many cities, so many stories, so important and you never know because either not come to light, or there is no one who can bring them for other people to be seen. Stories that could have been at any time leading a country, leading a city, a community. I don’t know”.
conciencia de lo que hubiera pasado en esa época. Entonces fue satisfactorio que uno de joven enseñe a las personas que como que deberían enseñarle a uno.‖129 (Final Interview, Umberto, 16 years old)

“No solo en los estudiantes que estuvimos en el proceso, sino que yo creo que en esas personitas que vieron la obra, que eso fue lo que mas queríamos nosotros, el objetivo, que pensaran lo que pasaba, que hicieran como un entre paréntesis entre la época de Saturio y la época actual. Lo que pasaba. Es mas, la parte étnica también queríamos hacer como caer en cuenta, que el racismo, que los negros. Ese era nuestro objetivo, que pensaran algo.”130 (Juana, 17 years old, final interview)

In analyzing the pedagogical features of drama when applied to contexts different from the one specific to the art form, Taylor (2003) concludes that theatre turns into means of reflection, action and transformation; “a theatre in which new modes of being can be encountered and new possibilities for humankind can be imagined” (Pg.xxx). His words point to the agency of drama that places participants in confrontational situations where they are provoked to deconstruct and reconstruct aspects of theirs and other’s actions, discovering and acknowledging subsequent responsibilities. The central transformative principle, from which applied theatre operates, states Taylor, is to raise awareness of social issues and how we relate to them: “Applied theatre is committed to the power of the aesthetic form for raising awareness about how we are situated in this world and what we as individuals and as communities might do to make the world a better place” (2003, p.xx). Reflecting on this, I think Alvaro, 16 years old, made an interesting comment when he pointed out:

― Pues en si la experiencia de montar esta obra y de consultar tanto sobre el ultimo fusilado en Colombia, mas que información, mas que lectura, mas que aprendizaje, fue

129 “The play was a lesson for us and for the audience. I think the work we did was not in vain but very much educational for people that did not have awareness of what could have happened at that time. Then, it was satisfactory that one as a teenager teaches those people that, like, should teach us”.

130 “Not only in the students that took part in the process but I believe in those people that saw the play. Our objective, what we wanted most, was that they [Montessori audience] thought about what was happening; people making a connection between Saturio’s time and the present time. What was going on? Even more, we wanted the ethnic side to be taken into account; racism, blacks. That was our goal, make people think something”.


como esa experiencia que nos dejó y las vivencias, y como ese mensaje que nos deja de que la justicia en este país está perdida para muchas de las personas. [sic] Tenemos que pensar que hay muchas cosas mal en este país y que nosotros estamos haciendo esto y estamos montando obras y aprendiendo, es por sacar adelante este país. Porque muchas de las cosas que suceden acá, no están bien. Y nuestro objetivo y el mensaje que queremos dar acá es que todos colaboremos para que mejoremos, para que este país, pues este país no puede ser perfecto, desde luego ninguno lo es, pero que sea mucho mejor de lo que es ahora.”

(After play public forum. Alvaro, 16 years old)

In my opinion these statements bear quite complex pedagogical implications and to some extent duties of sociopolitical accountability. On the one hand, the understanding of a theatre play as a lesson recalls the learning dimension of applied theatre as an instrument for educational purposes. It reflects the student’s point of view, which acknowledges the pedagogical value of a historical learning reached through drama; “para las personas que no tenian conciencia de lo que hubiera pasado en esa época”.

On the other hand, there is not only a direct political request to Montessori’s community; “colaboremos para que mejoremos, para que este país [sic] sea mucho mejor de lo que es ahora.”, but an invitation that begins in a clear call for social and historical awareness: “Tenemos que pensar que hay muchas cosas mal en este país.”

A spontaneous renewed confidence in the sociopolitical function of the arts resonates in Alvaro’s comments; “que nosotros estamos haciendo esto y estamos montando obras y aprendiendo, es por sacar adelante este país.”

His words are a

131 “Well, the experience itself of staging this play and searching so much about the last executed in Colombia, rather than information, reading or learning, was like that understanding left in us, and like the message that justice in this country is lost for many people. And we have to think beyond the limits imposed by our society. [sic] We have to think that there are many things wrong in this country, and if we are doing this, and staging plays, and learning, it is for moving this country forward, because many things that happen here are not right. And our purpose and the message we want to give here is let’s work together to get better, to make this country, this one can not be perfect, of course none is, but make this country much better than what it is now”.

132 “for the people that did not have awareness of what could have happened at that time”.

133 “let’s work together to get better, to make this country [sic] much better than what it is now”.

134 “We have to think that there are many things wrong in this country”.

135 “we are doing this, and staging plays and learning, for moving this country forward”.
reminder of the political dimension of theatre in its relation to collective and social action. Declaring that they are doing this artistic presentation, learning collectively, and doing theatre for moving this country forward constitutes, I think, their responsible way of dealing with their historical accountability. Indeed, it seems to me, that the play was actually the students’ major act of historical responsibility. Taking action through theatre was their choice. They were very aware that their choice for drama matters, but in this case, I think it refers to a drama linked with transformative learning and social, historical and political content.
To start writing this conclusive episode, I spent some time trying to summarize the most meaningful moments of the Montessori school drama-remembrance project and wondering what could have been the real impact and true results of the research. I read my research notes over and over again, as well as the students’ final comments about the research experience, searching for the big picture faithful enough to what really happened. I pondered questions like, what did we accomplish? What did these students get from this? What did we all learn? Did we actually recover from oblivion, Saturio’s memories? Did we do something against historical erasure? Did we contribute to a more inclusive public memory in schools? Did we challenge traditional drama-pedagogy practices? In the end, what is the true value of all this effort? What did we really change?

There were important goals to be accomplished by the research project in terms of historical remembrance in its pedagogical dimension, and drama as educational praxis. These objectives involved the questioning of school’s formal practices of remembrance, traditional understandings of theatre in education, and conventional pedagogies in the teaching of social studies in the Colombian high school curriculum. The purposes were also related to the idea of the drama class understood as a community of memory,

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136 “Researcher: Why do you think we chose Saturio, among many other stories, to be explored and recovered through drama practices? Student: Because this country is going for that path of indifference, of intolerance, for that reason. Because everyone lives these problems and taking a character like Saturio we all get deeper into the country’s problems”.

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exploring the past and collectively undertaking the work of memory (Zarecka, 1994). It was a drama-memory work enterprise that attempted to recover stories from historical oblivion, assisted in the formation of a critical historical consciousness, and contributed to a more inclusive public memory in the school environment.

A first main characteristic of the Grade 10 drama class drama-remembrance experience was its strong collective and collaborative dimension. As a community of drama and remembrance, the work of memory and the practice of educational drama involved participant-researchers in a learning process of working together. It was not only that we collectively took responsibility for the research development, but we improvised drama together and we explored the past together. The main consequence of this drama-remembrance pedagogy, I think, is the realization that drama, as well as remembrance, makes much more sense when understood as a collective collaborative praxis. Humberto, 16 years old, described it concisely:

“Lo que mas me gusto fue como trabajamos en grupo porque nunca como que habíamos trabajado así como tan unidos, como que todo el mundo daba ideas. Y más con las personas que estábamos en el grupo porque habia unas personas que eran como indisciplinadas, que como que no metían la ficha y eso. Pero esta vez como que se vio mas el trabajo en grupo. Claro que al principio se noto que el tema como que no gustaba. Pero ya uno viendo y experimentando y analizando, entonces ya uno le fue cogiendo como el hilo y ya el grupo fue trabajando y pues logramos hacer la obra”

(Humberto, 16 years old, Final Interview)

A second main characteristic of the research project was its social and political implications. The final outcomes of the research transcended the limits of the classroom and implicated the Montessori school community: teachers, principal, students’ friends

137 “What I liked most was the way we worked as a group, because like we never had worked so together, with everybody giving ideas. Even with those people in the group that were like undisciplined, and didn’t work hard. But this time like we saw more the work in group. Though at the beginning it was like we didn’t like the theme but later seeing and experimenting, and analyzing, it was like we were picking up the thread and then the group started working and we could make the play”.

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and parents. What was traditionally a final course theatre presentation became a public school event for collective exploration of the past and social remembrance. Through drama means—in the public time of a social assembly—the community brought to the present forgotten stories of its collective memory and in a post-show public forum, reflected on the social and political meaning of the remembrance gathering. This political and historical awareness meant also the exercise of the community’s civic responsibilities.

A third important element of this drama-historical memory journey was learning; personal and collective learning in different forms and at different stages. Because of the intertwining connections established between the process of drama and historical remembrance, this individual and collective learning compromised a complex pedagogical process of negotiation between different levels of learning; drama learning, historical learning, personal learning, and social learning. In general we learned from the art form, from Saturio, from each other, and from the relationships the research process established among all these elements. In this sense, Alvaro and Harold expressed their insights in regard to the close connections the process generated between the art form and the story:

“Me pareció muy chévere, aprendimos varias cosas como la historia de Saturio que fue muy importante porque nos dejó un mensaje y porque pudimos dar la opinión sobre él y muchas cosas sobre cómo se hace una historia, que hay que hacer para construir un personaje y pues mirar sus cualidades y sus aspectos”138 (Final Interview, Harold, 14 years old)

“Fue un proceso que vivió cada uno en la elaboración de sus propios personajes, en la elaboración de sus monólogos. Pues en términos generales el proceso fue como una forma de ver nuestro país teatralmente, y de incluirnos nosotros mismos como

138 “It was cool, we learned many things, like Saturio’s story that was very important because it left a message in us, and because we could give our opinion about him, and on how to make a story, what you have to do to create a character and look at its qualities and aspects”.
These last statements make evident the learning and awareness students gained from the experience, in terms of the powerful links that take place between theatre and society. In this case, taking Alvaro’s theatrical metaphor, drama became the lens that enabled participants to look into the Colombian reality and the medium through which they could figure out their relationship to that same reality. This drama-memory way of working, this “forma de ver nuestro país teatralmente”, following his closing reflections, became also the social laboratory where students came across with a sense of social inclusion, civic identity and community belonging; “y de incluirnos nosotros mismos como ciudadanos y como personas que hacemos parte de esta sociedad.”

I think these are serious reflections about extremely sensitive issues for both Colombian reality and young people. On the one hand, these are major concerns in regard to the intellectual, social and psychological factors that intervene in the growth and development of the personality of teenagers. On the other, identity belonging and inclusion are also the civic and political basics necessary for young people in the process of becoming “ciudadanos” and “personas”. These elements become particularly relevant in a country like Colombia, where intolerance, socio-economic exclusion, political radicalization, and ethnic discrimination, permeate citizen relations. This social-

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139 “It was a process experienced by each one through the elaboration of our own characters, monologues. It was like a way to look at our country theatrically, and include ourselves as citizens and as personas that belong to this society”.  
140 “way to look at our Country theatrically”  
141 “and include ourselves as citizens, and as personas that belong to this society”  
142 “citizens”  
143 “personas”
educational environment consequentially generates a negative learning that reinforces a systematic negation of the other.

In this regard, the experience and teachings that emerged in Montessori’s community of drama and remembrance, where its members learned to carry out the work of memory together, learn from each other, because of the other and thanks to the other, was crucial. A community of drama and remembrance –like any other community – is constituted of individuals with different ideas, histories and identities. Different perspectives, opinions and voices were heard and taken into account in the process of exploring the past, personal and collective. The collective exercise of listening to other’s stories, to the history of others, to what has happened to others, translated into the social learning of recognizing and respecting the voice of the other, the other’s word, the other’s being. This respect and acknowledgment is obviously a fundamental aspect of learning for democracy and is necessary in order for democratic societies to emerge:

“Fue un proceso largo, y divertido, que aprendimos mucho, aprendimos a escucharnos entre todos, lo que opinaba el uno, lo que opinaba el otro. Entonces fue un proceso muy, como le digo, muy llenante para una persona, que te llena, que te llena de ideas, y que te llena de las cosas que las demás personas piensan.”

(Final Interview, Juana 17 years old)

“We learned a lot, we learned to listen to all, the one’s opinion and other’s opinion. So, it was a process, how to say, fulfilling for a person, that fills you up with ideas and fills you up with things from what other people think”.

“It was good cause we learned a lot of things. Besides we interacted among all of us, cause we didn’t know each other before. So, yeah, as we were moving forward we were all learning from all of us. No matter how little each one knew we learned a lot. Besides, the research we did about Manuel Saturio was
Learning to listen to the voice of the other in the Montessori drama-remembrance research meant as well to learn from the past and of course from the historical other. I agree with Mercedes that we learned a lot, knowing about and exploring Saturio’s account and, I would add, from the meaning and realities of the past we created together. Saturio meant many different things to many different actors, as well as to different components and levels of the research process. One important level was students’ historical learning and relation to the past. The historical learning that took place in our community of drama and remembrance was not only about stories and events previously ignored, but about the meaning and consequences of the past in the present time:

“Lo que más me gusto fue conocer la historia de Manuel Saturio Valencia, porque no es solo como la historia conocerla en sí, sino saber que hay cosas que uno no sabe, y que son cosas que pueden decidir el destino de toda una sociedad. Y de todas formas uno se da cuenta de muchas cosas como que las esconden y ahí como que uno esta muy limitado en cuanto a la información.”146 (Final Interview, Beatriz, 15 years old)

“Para muchos fue un antes y un después. Antes de conocer a un alguien que lucho por su raza y por su gente, a después de saber que uno puede hacer lo mismo que él sin necesidad de utilizar la violencia, sin necesidad de utilizar armas o fuego, solo haciendo teatro.”147 (Final Interview: Alvaro, 16 years old)

“Cuando uno empieza a estudiar la vida de alguien, su historia, me pasa que me pido a si ellos harán lo mismo conmigo.”148 (Final Interview, Doris 16 years old)

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146 “What I liked most was to know about Manuel Saturio Valencia, because it is not like knowing about the history itself but to know that there are things that one does not know, and are things that can change the destiny of a whole society. And in many ways one realizes that there are many things hidden and then like one feels limited because of the information”.

147 “For many of us it was a ‘before’ and an ‘after’. Before knowing someone who fought for his race and for his people, and an ‘after’, knowing that one can do the same he did, without any need to use violence, without needing to use weapons or fire, just doing theatre”.

148 “When one starts studying someone else’s life, her history, I ask myself; will they do the same with me?”
“Comenzando el proceso nunca imaginamos que íbamos a llegar a un final, siempre como que había la duda de bueno vamos a terminar aquí, o van a seguir, o que van a hacer, que vamos a hacer. Entonces nunca como que tuvimos la idea clara de si llegar al final. Entonces cuando llegamos ya a la obra y que ah, todo el mundo aplaudió, fue algo muy emocionante.”

(Juana, 17 years old, Drama-Remembrance Project, 2006)

“At the beginning of the process we never imagined we were going to get to an end, always like there was a doubt if we were going to stop or keep going, or what to do. So, like we never had a clear idea of getting to an end. Then, when we came up with the play and everybody clapped, it was so emotional.”

(Dorothy Heathcote, Collected Writing on Education and Drama, 1984)

“Entonces al principio no es que no le estuviera dando importancia sino que no era como muy trascendental. Y ahorita pues yo veo lo importante que fue y como las cosas tan vitales y los elementos que me ha dado el proceso. Como que me han enriquecido mucho como persona. Y entonces si lo hace como reflexionar a uno de que es lo que estoy haciendo yo aquí, que es lo que quiero hacer, que es como lo que quiero dejar para no se, mi familia, el legado”

(Beatriz, 15 years old, Drama-Remembrance Project, 2006)

“At the beginning it was not that I wasn’t giving it [the process] any meaning, but it wasn’t like so transcendental. And now I see how important it [the process] was and like the things so meaningful that the process has given me. Like, it has enriched me a lot as a person. And then, it [the process] really makes you think about what I am doing here, what I want to do, what is it, like what I want to pass to, I don’t know, to my family, the legacy.”


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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Archive Documents

An official telegram, May 7, 1907
ANARQUISMO

Cuando aún removemos en nuestra acción los disparos que destruyen, tú marcarás en la piedra de los paños el azote subversivo de los derechos humanos. En el corazón del pueblo de los trabajadores.

Revolucionarios, hagamos de la anarquía un espejo de lucha, de lucha que nos libere de la esclavitud del capitalismo.

Hermanos, hagamos de la anarquía un espejo de lucha, de lucha que nos libere de la esclavitud del capitalismo.
Appendix 2: The Play

(Opening Video-clip: Montessori Grade 10 drama class students’ and teacher’s voices are heard along with the visual screening of research pictures. In images, participants are shown taking part in the drama-remembrance process)

Participants Voices:

Juana’s Voice: The desire for freedom brought many consequences; social ones, violence, I don’t know, there are many things that intervene there!

Tatiana’s Voice: There is now no more war for a territory but for a country, for people, for the economy and the politics. So, I think that in this time we are more ‘carnivorous’ than before. Because now, they torture people, they kill people!

Josefina’s Voice: and mass media gives us a ‘version’ that we just believe, so to speak. And we don’t know what really happened. A journalist does not tell what, let’s say, what the peasant really went through. And the victim does not perceive the same as the one who attacked him!

Researcher’s Voice: And your life’s experiences, stuff related with your own history, do they have something to do with your classes?

Harold’s Voice: Well…, some times!

Researcher’s Voice: What is the meaning of historical remembrance?

Harold’s Voice: It is like a session where people participate to remember some important history events!

Drama Teacher’s Voice: One might begin a movie, or a play, when Saturio is just about to be executed. Pum! When he’s facing the execution platoon as a point of departure and then, theatrically, you tell the entire story, different versions of it. And the movie, or the play, closes when… Pum! They shoot him. As if at a certain point in the middle of the “ready, aim, fire” instruction, there was kind of a big opening to remember just in seconds what happened when Saturio started the fire, when he was drunk, he was seducing, in the mine, or when he was on trial…”

(End of the opening video-clip)
SCENE I
(Lights on. Two Montessori-students on the stage)

STUDENT 1: Hey, how are you? Guess what? I’ve got to do homework about death penalty. Do you know something?
STUDENT 2: Oh, yeah! I know the story of the last person executed in Colombia. It was a black guy!
STUDENT 1: Why was he executed?
STUDENT 2: For burning some huts!
STUDENT 1: For burning huts?
STUDENT 2: Yeah! Here in Colombia in 1907 death penalty was applied for one of three reasons; parricide that means killing a priest, betrayal to the mother country and arson. And he burnt the ‘first street’ of the city of Choco!
STUDENT 1: Tell me more about this black guy!
STUDENT 2: Look! Look! This newspaper is about him! There is a picture and everything!
(Lights fade and Saturio appears on the other side of the stage to be executed)

SCENE II
(Saturio faces the shooting platoon)

SERGEANT: Ok. Today May 7 of 1907, we’re here for the execution of this rat Manuel Saturio Valencia. Go ahead town crier!
TOWN CRIER: Manuel Saturio Valencia, born in Quibdó and convict of the arson crime has been condemned to death penalty that will take place now. If anyone raises her voice asking for forgiveness or in whatever other illegal way attempted to stop this, it’ll be punished according to law!
SERGEANT: Soldiers!! Attention! Ready!! Aim....!!
(Lights fade)
SCENE III
(Lights on Montessori-students characters)

STUDENT 1: But what did he do? I guess he was a slacker!
STUDENT 2: Well… no. Can you imagine that he was a judge!! He, being black, got his citizenship!!
STUDENT 1: What you mean by citizenship? Isn’t it that we’re citizens since we are born?
STUDENT 2: Well, that’s now, but in 1907 to get your citizenship we had to learn how to write and read!!
(Lights fade and Saturio dressed up as Judge emerges on the other side of the stage)

SCENE IV
(Saturio as a judge)

SATURIO: Next please!
WOMAN 1: This is my baby!
WOMAN 2: No! That’s my baby!
WOMAN 1: Please! It’s mine!
SATURIO: Ok. Ok. Please more respect in this public space! Soldier, introduce the case!
SOLDIER: Ok. We’re here because Mrs. Usnaby claims to be the mother of the baby, but Mrs. Milagros claims too to be the mother!
SATURIO: Mrs. Usnaby, please!
Mrs. USNABY: This baby is mine! I have proofs and I have witnesses!
SATURIO: Did you finish?
Mrs. USNABY: Yes!
SATURIO: Mrs. Milagros, please!
Mrs. MILAGROS: Look honorable Judge. I swear that baby is mine! Blood of my blood! Please give me the custody over her! I swear I’m going to look after her!
Mrs. USNABY: She’s lying!
Mrs. MILAGROS: You’re the liar!
SATURIO: Ok. Ok. Soldier! Put the baby on the floor! And cut her in two!
Mrs. USNABY: Yes! Neither for her nor for me!
SATURIO: I’m going to give each one, a half!
Mrs. MILAGROS: No! Please! Don’t kill the baby! She can keep the baby! Please!
SATURIO: Soldier! Stop! After hearing what she said, give the baby to Mrs. Milagros and take Mrs. Usnaby to jail for prevaricator!
(Lights fade and we return to Montessori-students characters)

SCENE V
(Lights on Montessori-students)

STUDENT 1: I want to tell you something!
STUDENT 2: What?
STUDENT 1: Well, Saturio apart from being a judge he was like a revolutionary! He wanted whites and blacks to have the same rights! He wanted equal social classes! And anybody could think he was socially resented!
STUDENT 2: How come? So, apart from being a judge he was socially resented?
(Lights fade)

SCENE VI
(Saturio’s Monologue)

SATURIO: Men! Women! Children! And everybody that is hearing my voice! We must give a war cry guys! Because the black race can not continue holding so many martyrdoms, so many humiliations! Black race has to win! The black race is pure guys! Black is the only one that is pure and is not combined with whites. The black race must win guys! That’s why we have to give a war cry! Yes, we can!
(Lights fade and we go back to Montessori-Students Characters)
ESCENA VII

(Lights on)

**STUDENT 1:** But tell me more. Did he have family, affairs, someone special?
**STUDENT 2:** Well, in fact he was like a flirtatious! He had two great loves in his life!
**STUDENT 1:** Which ones?
**STUDENT 2:** A white woman. But with her, he had many problems and their relationship was stormy because blacks and whites could not mix.

(Lights fade)

SCENE VIII

(Lights on a rich white family house)

**SATURIO:** Felisa, today I want to tell you, with the moonlight as a company, with the stars as witness, and because of the time we have lived together, and for so many things we have gone through, I want to say Felisa, do you want to marry me!
**WHITE WOMAN:** Felisa! Felisa! It’s time for tea! Felisa where are you?
**SATURIO:** Felisa, please, I beg you, don’t go!
**WHITE WOMAN:** Felisa! Where are you?
**FELISA:** I’m coming! Just a moment! (To Saturio) Sorry, I got to go!
**WHITE WOMAN 2:** But what’s wrong with this little girl?
**FELISA:** Sorry. I was reading!
**WHITE WOMAN 2:** Definitely we were born to be rich!
**WHITE WOMAN 1:** Of course!
**WHITE WOMAN 2:** Imagine that my husband has bought 100 bushels of land and there and we plan to build a luxuriant mansion!
**WHITE WOMAN 1:** But that’s too much work, isn’t it? And it would take so much time!
**WHITE WOMAN 2:** Absolutely not. Don’t worry. We have those animals for that job! They don’t know anything else!
**WHITE WOMAN 1:** Sure. They just know how to work!
FELISA: Animals?
WHITE WOMAN 1: Yes! The unclean race ones! Blacks!
WHITE WOMAN 2: Of course!
WHITE WOMAN 1: (Looking at Felisa’s hands) I can’t believe it Felisa! What a
beautiful ring!
WHITE WOMAN 2: Felisa! You have a secret that you don’t want to tell!
FELISA: A secret? You know that in this family there are no secrets!
WOMAN 1: Are you engaged?
FELISA: Yes!
WHITE WOMAN 2: Felisa! Don’t worry! Tell us that we’ll never betray you!
FELISA: He is a man who has no equal! I really can not find words to describe him.
He’s won my heart with each of his incredible details. He is a man who has no equal! I
am really in love with him!
WHITE WOMAN 1: Tell us who he is?
WHITE WOMAN 2: What’s his name?
FELISA: Manuel Valencia Saturio!
WHITE WOMAN 1: Manuel Valencia Saturio?
FELISA: Manuel Saturio Valencia! The judge!
WHITE WOMAN 2: What? That black rebel?
WHITE WOMAN 1: A black?
FELISA: Yes!
(Lights fade)

SCENE IX
(Lights on Montessori-students Characters)

STUDENT 1: You mentioned two women but just talked about one!
STUDENT 2: Hold on! Wait that I have not even finished! The other woman in his life
was Elvia. But he didn’t know she was his sister, and he fell in love without knowing it!
STUDENT 1: Poor guy! And how come that he didn’t know she was her sister?
STUDENT 2: Well it was like she was his step father sister! And happened to be that he just met her in a bar!

(Lights fade)

SCENE X

(Lights on a bar. Saturio kisses a woman)

PROSTITUTE: Wait a minute! Aren’t they brothers? Yes they’re brothers! Hum! This woman is a really hooker! (Separating Saturio and Elvia) Hey! What’s a matter with you guys? (To Saturio) She’s your sister!

SATURIO: She’s my sister?

ELVIA: No! We aren’t!

PROSTITUTE: Yes! (To Elvia) You’re a bitch! You’re always fucking everybody! He’s your brother!

SATURIO: Brother? Someone once said she resembled to me! Ah! No! She’s so sweet! Oh god helps me! My god! Sister? She can’t be my sister!

(Lights fade)

SCENE XI

(Lights on Montessori-students Characters)

STUDENT 1: Well, but if he was in a bar, it was because he was a drinker!

STUDENT 2: Well, yes! In fact in Quibdó he was known for being an alcoholic! And when he committed the arson crime it seemed that he was kind of drank!

(Lights fade)

SCENE XII

(Lights go on and off, screams everywhere, people running all over the stage crying fire, fire. Saturio was drank and pissed and scratch a match on a wall. He starts a fire and run away. He lets his belt fall on the floor)
SCENE XIII
(Lights on Montessori-students characters)

STUDENT 1: Ok. And after all this I’ve told you, what do you think? Saturio is guilty or not?
STUDENT 2: Well first, you could think that he was guilty or that he was socially resented. But, he could’ve had strong reasons for all that stuff with his sister!
(Lights fade)

SCENE IV
(Lights on the whole stage. Saturio and hooded figures move around and alternatively address the audience with a short monologue)

FIGURE 1: Discrimination! This town is discriminatory by nature! How is it possible that my skin color makes me undeserved of my rights! Rights that legally belong to me! If I were white I wouldn’t be here for sure! I wanted to fight! Combat! Do something meaningful against all this!

FIGURE 2: Blame? Please! Nobody talk to me about blame! It’s always people’s blame! Since long time ago people has judged Socrates for being too smart! Jesus for willing to liberate people! And to me, simply by willing to liberate my race! What’s this? This is not blame! Agreeing or not, this is rich people’s blame! That small mass that are taking us! Whites! That’s why we’re oppressed! They enslave us every day! What ignorance!

FIGURE 3: Power! What the hell they do with power! All they do is to use it to enslave us! To enslave my race! Black people! I’m tired, fed up they keep us enslaved, using their power for evil! For building boundaries to separate us yet we’re equal! If power were for deservers and not for heirs, we all would be equal!

FIGURE 4: Justice? We speak of justice when so many people are starving? Justice when they all are in jail for not having anything against them? Justice when evidence accuses just innocents? That’s not justice! If wasn’t in this position I was doing justice!
**SATURIO:** Revenge? I laugh in white people’s faces! For they judged me when I tried revenge! Revenge may sound to some as hate, suffering, perhaps violence! But no, revenge for me was the only way I found to liberate my people. Black race!  
(Lights fade)

**SCENE XV**
(Lights on Montessori-students characters)

**STUDENT 1:** But there’s one thing that I don’t understand? How did they condemn and judge Saturio? Or better, how did they know Saturio was the one who commit the crime?  
**STUDENT 2:** Well, you remember I told you he had let fall a belt when starting the fire?  
**STUDENT 1:** Yes!  
**STUDENT 2:** Well, that was the key evidence!  
(Lights fade)

**SCENE XVI**
(Saturio and a Priest)

**SATURIO:** Father, the blessing!  
**PRIEST:** God has you in his holy glory! Now my son, tell me what happened? Why you’re here?  
**SATURIO:** Father..  
(A figure impersonating Saturio’s consciousness appears)  
**FIGURE:** (Laughter). How am I doing? What did happen to me? Isn’t it logical? How do you dare to ask me so? Ah? What’s a matter with you? Isn’t it logical? I’m locked in here in between these four walls! I can’t do anything! It’s not my fault to have a drug addict. I have not the fault of a prostitute mother, nor the fault for having almost married my sister! I have no fault of having fallen in love with a white woman! I have no fault for absolutely anything! And I’m locked up! Just for willing to liberate my people? Seems logical? No, it’s not logical! Because I do not deserve it! I would prefer to be out and fight! And yet, you one sent by God to earth to fight for people, you should fight for me!
Instead of being apologizing and asking stupid things! I don’t know how you dare to ask me that?

**Saturio:** Father, I swear, I know nothing! That day two friends took me from home and I drank few drinks! Father, I swear, I did nothing, believe me please!

**Priest:** I believe you, my son! But they don’t! You have to prove that this is the truth! You have to get evidences! Fight to prove your innocence! Now God will forgive you!

See you later!

(Lights fade)

**Scene XVII**

(Lights on Montessori-students characters)

**Student 1:** And what did he do before dying? I understand that they could claim clemency for their lives?

**Student 2:** And they did it! And many for Saturio! But a telegram was delayed!

**Student 1:** A telegram?

**Student 2:** This one! Look! The one which was sent to the president Reyes for the request! So, because it came late the General Enrique Palacio Medina executed him!

**Student 1:** And while the telegram came what did he do?

**Student 2:** Well, he sat down to write and right there was when he said a sentence: “man towards his destiny blindly moves”!

(Lights fade)

**Scene XVIII**

(Lights on and we go back to the first scene where Saturio is just about to be executed)

**Sergeant:** Today, May 7 of 1907, we are here to witness the execution of this rat Manuel Saturio Valencia. Finally justice will be done through the evidence found; this belt and this jar of ethylic alcohol! Town crier, go ahead!

**Town Crier:** Manuel Saturio Valencia, born in Quibdó and convict of the arson crime has been condemned to death penalty that will take place now. If anyone raises her
voice asking for forgiveness or in whatever other illegal way attempted to stop this, it’ll be punished according to law!

SERGEANT: Soldiers! Attention! Ready! Aim!
FELISA: No! Please! Don’t kill him! Is that you don’t realize what de does?
CROWD: Felisa! Felisa!
FELISA: Please! Don’t do it! Please stop it!
SERGEANT: Attention! Ready! Aim! Fire!
CROWD: Guilty!!
(Lights fade)

FINAL VIDEO-CLIP
(Again, Montessori Grade 10th drama class students’ and teacher’s voices are heard along with the visual screening of research scenes)

CARLOS’ voice: Well, I imagined the whole story, you know! How Saturio was caught, when the judge condemned him, I imagined everything!
JOSEFINA’S voice: that we do not know if what’s said in the telegram is true, and who ever wrote it, was putting down Manuel Saturio! But we don’t really know how things happened! We don’t know to what extent what’s said in the telegram is true! Could it be as well that Saturio is innocent!
BEATRIZ’ voice: Somewhat he was unfairly executed; because what Saturio said to the Commander when he called him, Saturio said that if other people were going to be judged as he was being judged, doing what he had done! Since we read the telegram we already, or I assumed, that he could be guilty or not guilty.
JUANA’S voice: Saturio didn’t show guilt despite what he did. Just that he obeyed what the law said! He felt resigned, like this what happened to me and I have to take responsibility!
DORIS’ voice: Saturio wanted to take revenge and thought that it was ok. I mean that what he was doing was ok. But he knew that they were going to condemn him!
DRAMA CLASS TEACHER’S voice: This document that is official and signed by four people, gives us new information. However, as official record is one version of what
really happened! I mean, therein there’s a contained truth! So, it just pushes us a bit to find out the facts behind it!

(End of the final vide-clip. Black out. End of the play)
Appendix 3: Guidelines for Initial and Final Interviews

Initial Interview

Personal History
1. Name
2. Place of birth
3. Age
4. Parents’ place of birth
5. Time living in this city (Bogotá the capital)
6. Reasons for emigrating to the capital (if applicable)

Schooling History
1. Time studying in this school
2. Reasons to study in this school
3. Information/knowledge about this school (history and institutional features)
4. Personal opinion about this school
5. Perception about the school as a place of memory

Drama Class
1. Previous experiences with drama class
2. Themes/issues worked before in the drama class
3. General functioning, dynamics and techniques used in the drama class
4. Reasons for choosing drama class
5. Differences/similitude between drama class and other classes
6. Auto perception of the students in the drama class compared with other classes
7. Students’ life experiences (cultural/personal) brought into the drama class
8. Personal opinion about the drama class

Information/Knowledge of Individual and Collective Experiences with Memory and Historical Remembrance
1. Ideas/Opinions/Knowledge about memory, social memory and remembrance
2. Perceptions/Opinions about public acts of historical remembrance
3. Memory (recount) of important public acts of historical remembrance
4. Personal participation in public acts of historical remembrance
Memory and Historical Remembrance at School

1. Memory (recount) of historical remembrance events that take place at school
2. Personal participation within the school’s remembrance celebrations
3. Perceptions/Opinions about historical remembrance celebrations at school
4. The most significant collective remembrance celebrations at school
5. Historical remembrance celebrations at school using theatre or drama practices

Social Studies Curriculum (Particularly History)

1. Curriculum contents and pedagogical practices of history class
2. Perceptions/Opinions about history class
3. Previous experiences with drama in history class
4. Alternative, non traditional pedagogic dynamics used (if applicable) in history class

Final Interview

THEATRE/DRAMA PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about the “process drama” undertaken by the group?
2. What did you like most and what did you like least of the whole experience?
3. Would the process had been different if we had had worked as a single sex group? What about only women? What about only men?
4. What might be the most important learning gained through the process?
5. How did you perceive yourself in our drama process comparing with the way you perceive yourself within other classes?
6. Was there any personal issues brought into the drama class?
7. Do you see any difference between the way you used to perceive yourself at the beginning of our “process drama”, and the way you perceive yourself today? Did the process somehow influence the change, if any?
8. Did our “drama process” make you think in any way about your historicity, being here and now, in terms of gender, class, and race?
9. Do you think students, after having being co-researchers of this “research process”, carry any responsibility for their own learning and education?
10. What kind of differences do you find between the things students did in drama class before and the things we did in our research process?

11. What is your opinion on “drama conventions”?

12. Which ones were more convenient for history/drama work?

13. What’s your opinion about the play you, the students, showed to the school and the parents?

14. What’s not in the play that you would’ve liked to include?

15. If you were to give a name to the play, what might it be?

16. Do you think performing the play before students and parents was a “collective remembrance” exercise?

17. Do you think the play that came out of the research process has a “collective historical meaning” given by the students to our work?

18. After our research process, do you think theatre is a particular form of “collective remembrance”?

19. Could it be, that theatre is, a good means to “re-call the past” and become engaged with history in order to give it new meanings?

20. What did you learn about “theatre in education”?

MEMORY AND HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE

1. What was the meaning of the National Archive visit to your everyday life?

2. What might have been the meaning for students to have brought Saturio’s case to drama class?

3. What was the meaning of Saturio in your present life?

4. Do you have any idea why we chose Saturio’s account among many other historical accounts to be explored by means of drama/memory work?

5. Do you believe that by the means of our “process drama” we gave order and meaning to the past?

6. Did we re-write history?

7. If you were going to re-write Saturio’s account what would you change?

8. After our “drama process” do you think there are mechanisms of memory as well as mechanisms for historical oblivion? How might they work?
9. Did we do memory work? I mean historical recovering, overcoming historical oblivion, and gaining critical historical awareness?

10. Do you think our “drama/remembrance process” assumed the “school” and particularly “drama classroom” as “memory terrains” and “collective public remembrance” spaces?

11. Did the “drama/remembrance process” allow you to be touched by “other memories”? In this case, Saturio’s memories?

12. Would you like your memories to touch others’ lives? In which ways?

13. After our research process what do you think about marginal/minority group’s memories?

14. Do you think these marginal/minority’s memories, found a place in the classroom?

15. After our research what do you think “blacks/Afro-descendants” have to do with you? With our Country’s history?

16. After our drama/remembrance process what might be the meaning of “collective memory”, “historical silence”, “historical responsibility”, and “untaught history”?

17. What is your opinion of the death penalty?

18. Would you agree that the death penalty should be re-established in Colombia?

19. Did this process contribute to build an inclusive collective memory?

20. What do you think about learning history in this way?

21. Was your life in any way confronted by our drama/remembrance process?

22. Do you want to add something else?