REMEMBERING THE UNSPEAKABLE
An analysis of theatre as an alternative medium to help societies process human rights violations

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ABSTRACT

REMEMBERING THE UNSPEAKABLE
An analysis of theater as an alternative medium to help societies process human rights violations

A thesis presented to the Cultural Production Department

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Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

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How can cultural producers invite people to learn about human rights violations in ways that help them both to prevent future abuses and to strengthen relationships across differences?

Remembering the Unspeakable will provide support for the argument that constructive representations that can provide critical understanding about human rights violations require more space and time than is usually available in the mainstream media. The paper will study the importance of remembering the violations, analyzing theatre as an alternative medium to facilitate this process. This study focuses on the questions of how and how much to remember about atrocities of the past, considering the implications that remembering might have for the possibilities for reconciliation and coexistence.

In this study I will investigate the theatre company Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani from Peru. I will investigate the different approaches that this company has utilized (1) to reach their audiences, (2) to denounce crimes committed in their communities and (3) to
mediate the tension between remembering atrocities of the past and moving into the future.

The example to be analyzed is part of *Acting Together on the World Stage: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflicts*, an anthology about theatre and peacebuilding that is currently in progress. The anthology describes thirteen cases of international theatre artists living in conflict areas.
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Introduction

“There is no historical reality which is not human. There is no history without men¹ and no history for men; there is only history of men, made by men (…) if men produce social reality (…) then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for men”
(Freire: 1970, 51-125)

“It is as conscious beings that men² are not only in the world but with the world, together with other men. Only men, as open beings are able to achieve the complex operation of simultaneously transforming the world by their action and grasping and expressing the world’s reality in their creative language.”
(Freire: 1985, 68)

The Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire states that human beings are in the world and with the world, whereas animals are just in the world. The difference between animals and human beings is, as he argues, that the first do not have consciousness of their presence with the world. Animals are immersed in life, following their instincts; they live in order to keep the species going, without the consciousness necessary to progress. On the other hand, human beings are capable of positioning themselves with the world, having the capacity to envision their presence in the world.

Humans are rational and creative beings, having attributes necessary to desire and build a world as they want. However, even being rational and creative beings, humans, in the course of their history in and with the world, have proven that their ability to create

¹ The word “men” in Portuguese also means “human beings”; the latter is the meaning implied in this epitaph.
² Idem.
can be overshadowed by their ability to destroy. This paradox presented in human beings is the starting point for this paper.

This study focuses on the creative responses in communities where human rights violations have occurred. It will analyze the work of international theatre artists living in conflict areas and investigate the approaches that these artists have utilized (1) to reach their audiences, (2) to denounce crimes committed in their communities and (3) to mediate the tension between remembering atrocities of the past and moving into the future. It aims to validate the argument that theatre can help communities affected by crimes involving human rights violations to move on in the difficult process of facing history.

For the purposes of this study, the process of facing history involves fully understanding the causes of the conflicts, seeking accountability for perpetrators, and strengthening relationships between victims, bystanders, and perpetrators with the goal of sustainable coexistence. It follows Freire’s argument that human beings, only through conscientization of their social-cultural reality, through an educational process of re-evaluating the past, can create the conditions to transform their reality. The term “human rights violation” in this study refers to crimes of extreme violence that affect societies as a whole, such as genocide, mass murder, and ethnic cleansing.

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3 This study follows Coexistence International’s (CI) definition for the term coexistence that implies to “societies in which diversity is embraced for its positive potential, equality is actively pursued, interdependence between different groups is recognized, and the use of weapons to address conflicts is increasingly obsolete”. Coexistence International is a program based at Brandeis University’s International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life. CI facilitates the creation of coexistence networks, develops resources for practitioners, informs public policy, and promotes the use of a coexistence ‘lens’ in complementary fields such democracy-building, transitional justice, human rights and the arts. More information can be accessed at http://www.brandeis.edu/coexistence (accessed on 04/12/09)

4 Conscientization refers to the process in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the social-cultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality” (Editor's note, The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation, p.93)
My interest in memory and remembrance stems from my involvement with *Acting Together on the World Stage: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflicts*, a project currently in progress sponsored by Theatre without Borders and Brandeis University. The project consists of an anthology, a documentary, and a website, bringing together thirteen examples of contemporary theater artists, leaders of ritual, and peacebuilding practitioners who use their work to strengthen relationships and promote coexistence in the conflict regions in which they live. The anthology includes different types of performances, *e.g.* community-based theatre, rituals, professional theatre, applied in different types and stages of violence, *e.g.* in the aftermath of mass violence, in the midst of direct violence, and in context of structural violence. It includes both recent events and events that took place decades or centuries ago, and it highlights societies struggling with the problems of dislocation and inequality.

In this study, my analysis focuses on *Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani* from Peru, one of the anthology’s examples of theatre artists working in communities that have suffered severe human rights violations. I ask the question, “How can cultural producers invite people to learn about violations of human rights in ways that help them to prevent future abuses and to strengthen coexistence?” How can they help people to remember and how much should they help people to remember about the atrocities of the past considering the implications that remembering might have for the possibilities for reconciliation and coexistence? This study argues that, while the crimes of the past are often represented in the mainstream media, theatrical performances have the potential to represent those crimes in ways that are much more constructive and more conducive to helping people truly face history.
In chapter 1, I analyze the issue of memory and remembrance. It will follow the argument of scholars (Becker, 1995; Minow, 1995; Laub, 1995; Weine, 2006) who claim (1) that remembering about atrocities is a vital process in remaking the lives of those affected by the crimes and a necessary step for societies to acknowledge the crimes; (2) that the act of remembering is fundamental in order to avoid forgetfulness and the normalization of crimes which if not addressed in the present might be repeated in the future.

Testimonies, an essential element in the process of remembering, will also be addressed in chapter 1, with special emphasis on the importance of this act (1) for the victims who tell their stories and (2) for the communities who listen to them.

I finish this chapter by introducing Freire’s idea of conscientization and the notion that it is necessary for communities as a whole to participate in the process of revisiting the past after human rights violations have occurred, in order to create conditions to rebuild the present and to take responsibility for creating a better future.

In chapter 2, I investigate the way in which the mainstream media report human rights violations to local and international audiences and how these audiences tend to react to the news. Focusing on the medium of television, I follow Susan Moeller’s (1998) argument that media coverage does not provide enough space and time to analyze the crimes and the facts that led to them. Due to the lack of information about these crimes, combined with overexposure to violence and the media’s own dependence on making profits, audiences end up not having a deep understanding of the roots of violence and developing what Moeller calls “compassion fatigue.” Audiences of mainstream media feel alienated from what they are seeing, and they tend not to take effective action against
the crimes. I argue that venues other than the mainstream media must be considered for helping people to constructively remember and to take action against future crimes.

In chapter 3, I present the argument that theater can provide just such venues, acting as a facilitator in the difficult process of remembering atrocities from the past in ways that strengthen relationships across differences in the present and nurture sustainable coexistence for the future. It follows Augusto Boal’s belief that theater can liberate and break the silence of those living in an oppressive situation, creating a sense of collective belonging among participants. In this process, traumas can be bodily invoked, re-experienced and re-scripted, in a way that de-isolates the victims, allowing them to share, re-narrate their individual pain, and reintegrate themselves with their communities.

In this study, this reintegration will be analyzed, on one level, as an important element to bring victims back into society; this is the opportunity to help people transform from victims into survivors. On a second level, the process of reintegration will be analyzed as the delicate moment where society can learn from the facts of the past in order to re-think their collective memory in the present, and to work for a future that they will be responsible for.

I explain the necessity for the connection of body and mind in this process. I follow Johnson’s and Freire’s argument that this connection is necessary to evoke one’s experiences in the search for meaning and understanding about one’s reality. I finish the chapter introducing the idea that theatre, as a venue for conscientization, needs to be (1) done by people from the community, (2) done for the community, and (3) about issues that matter to the community, and can be facilitated by what Freire calls “organic
intellectuals,”—“theorists fused organically with the culture and practical activities of the oppressed” (Freire: 1985, xxiii).”

Finally, in chapter 4, I finish this study with the analysis of Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani. I investigate how this Peruvian theater company is connected to their community and how they adapted plays to address the personal stories of victims from the civil war that reached Peru in the middle of the 1990s. I will analyze their efforts to provide the conditions to help their audience (victims, bystanders, and perpetrators) to go through a process of personal-social healing, justice, and mutual coexistence.

The analysis of this example will be followed by a conclusion with further considerations resulting from this research. The primary sources for this study were the chapters of the anthology Acting Together on the World Stage: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflicts that mention Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, as well as interviews with the curators of the anthology, interviews with two members of Yuyachkani, Anna Correa and Augusto Casafranca, and the lectures and symposium that took place (and were recorded) at Brandeis University, in October of 2007, as part of the event Acting Together on the World Stage.

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5 Emphasis added.
6 For more information access http://www.brandeis.edu/coexistence/events/octarts.html
1- Memory as a Revolutionary Act

“We have an ethical and political obligation to remember, acknowledge constantly, and deal with the aftermath of traumatic events.”

(Walker 2004, xviii)

After mass atrocities, victims, perpetrator, and bystanders each require mutual acknowledgment of the crimes. However, it is necessary to find a balance that allows victims to tell their stories in a way that does not re-traumatize or alienate them, and that allows bystanders and perpetrator to be able to listen to them. This transitional process demands that societies struggle over how much to acknowledge, whether to punish, and how to recover. The treatment of the past through remembering and forgetting crucially shapes the present and future for individuals and entire societies. In the aftermath of violence, for memory to flourish, it requires integrity and moral commitment by all parts of society; it is not just remembering for the sake of seeking legal justice, but in order to really understand the roots of violence and consequently create change in the social structure that supported the consolidation of violence in the past.

I start this study with the argument that societies are obliged to remember about atrocities from the past and to become aware of the damage done to victims’ lives as a result of these atrocities. The act of remembering can also help bystanders to avoid

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7 The title of this chapter is a reference to the playwright Catherine Filloux in the lecture "Women and Gender in Culture and Society", headed by Professor Harleen Singh at Brandeis University on October 8, 2007. Catherine Filloux was one of the guest presenters and this sentence was extracted from her lecture as she was explaining the issues of memory and remembrance in her plays about victims of genocide in Cambodia.
emotional indifference and to take into account the necessity of mourning the losses and of moral reparations. Furthermore, the act of remembering can create pathways for perpetrators of violence to acknowledge their crimes, raising the possibilities for forgiveness and of social awareness that can prevent the repetition of the violence.

Still, what are the implications for victims, perpetrators, and society in the process of remembering the crimes committed? How can we ensure that remembering actually helps in the process of creating justice and coexistence?

The past must be revisited in order for people to truly understand the present. But, as the scholar Shoshana Felman (2002) argues, accepted history is usually based on the perspective of the victor; it is told in accordance with those who are in power, and it tends to be based on a dubious relation between truth and power. Real history is, on the contrary, a discrepancy between truth and power, where this discrepancy, according to Felman, “makes society unaware of the fact that remains in history a claim, a discourse that is not heard or seen (p.30).” This deafness and blindness provide openness to a distortion of facts. Because of these distortions, injustices are not legally, socially, and morally addressed, and thus they tend to be repeated in a vicious cycle of violence, contributing to an ever-growing debt of reparation to the oppressed.

Social memory is therefore an important counterpoint to “official” memories. Social memory is the set of common facts and circumstances (social, economic, political), as well as beliefs and values that shape the identity of individuals belonging to a community. Social memory is the understanding of the past that individuals from a given community share. Social memory can be forgotten or suppressed by the dominant
narratives, but it can also be recovered, revised, and reinvented to help people heal and become empowered.

In the process of facing history, social memory must be affirmed and called upon to provide knowledge of how facts and circumstances contributed to the creation of violence. Quoting the medical anthropologist Allan Feldman (2004), “we need here a socio-cultural history of anamnesis, a critical memory of memory in order to remember a future that moves beyond the pathogenesis of political terror and human rights abuse (p.20).” Feldman’s statement implies that this process of revisiting the past demands the participation of whole communities affected by atrocities, otherwise, this process can be compromised, creating new challenges to communities to understand the crimes of the past and to move on for social changes.

Indeed, victims that have been directly affected by violence need the crimes to be addressed at the social level. The acknowledgment of the crimes by society is extremely important in the process of individual healing. Psychologist David Becker (1995), from his work with families affected by the dictatorship that happened in Chile, argues that therapy is necessary and will help the recovery of extremely traumatized survivors, but that the mental health of the survivors is also directly related to “the willingness of society to deal with their issues” (p.109).” Becker also suggests that by telling their stories, victims can correct facts about the past that have been distorted and create possibilities for communities to understand that they are part of the victims’ past. Becker’s argument reinforces Feldman’s statement and stresses that in the aftermath of gross violations of human rights, all actors in the society need to be included in the delicate process of survivors’ recovery and of communal healing. If the social, cultural or political issues

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8 Emphasis added.
that led to the conflicts are not addressed, survivors’ recovery will be at risk and consequently the community’s recovery also will be compromised. By participating in the process of individual recovery, and remembering and acknowledging the crimes, the community is also healing itself.

Martha Minow (1998) in *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* analyzes the issue of memory and remembrance in the aftermath of grave human rights abuses, such as systematic rape, ethnic cleansing, oppressive regimes, and genocide, among others. Her analysis focuses on the problems of too much remembrance and of lack of remembrance in societies affected by such atrocities. Minow, like Becker, defends that it is necessary that all actors involved in the conflicts - victims, perpetrators, bystanders - participate in the process of remembering, where “the work must be for, but not only for, the victimized; about, but not preoccupied with, the perpetrator; and addressed to bystanders in order to convert them into actors, agents in their national worlds now and tomorrow (p.120, 121).”

Minow shows us how, after atrocities, societies face a dilemma: the problems of too much memory and the problems of no memory at all. Minow’s analysis proposes that a balance must be struck in the act of remembering, and that the way people remember is as important as how much they remember. The way crimes are remembered or an excess of memory can open space for what is called by scholars “the victimhood identity,” where the crimes committed become an integral part of the survivor’s identity. This victimhood identity is per se a challenge in the process of healing because, for survivors, carrying this identity as part of their collective memory can negate their desire to move on with their lives and create a dependency on the notion of being ‘victims of the past’.
Anthropologist Carol A. Kidron (2004), in her article *Surviving a Distant Past: A Case Study of the Cultural Construction of Trauma Descendant Identity* analyzes the problem of victimhood identity producing eternally wounded survivors of a distant past. When analyzing a group of second generation Holocaust survivors, Kidron noticed that many of the children\(^9\) of survivors see their parents’ past traumas as a burden that they will have to carry and, in many of the cases, the children consciously admitted that their own children (the third generation) will have to carry this burden too. Kidron’s analysis also suggests that when the victimhood identity is so strong, the possibility for forgiveness is strongly compromised, and reintegration of victims into their communities becomes a challenge. It also implies this victimhood identity can come back to the present in more violent acts than those their ancestors have suffered.

In *The Human Condition*, philosopher Hannah Arendt (1958) argues that these kinds of crimes, which she classifies as “radical evil”, are unforgivable, therefore “men are unable to forgive what they cannot punish and . . . they are unable to punish what has turned out to be unforgivable (p. 241)”. Arendt’s argument implies a circular problem with no apparent solution, where the process of seeking for reparation for crimes involving human rights violations becomes impossible to achieve.

Comparing Arendt’s statement and Kidron’s analysis, one might begin to feel that it is impossible to build sustainable coexistence in societies in the aftermath of violence. In remembering the “unforgivable,” we face the risk of perpetuating a victimhood identity for generations, and of creating among the victims a ‘community apart.’ The act of remembering can also create a collective sensation of guilt among the bystanders and

\(^9\) In the article, the children’s age average was from 35 to 48 (p.519)
resistance among perpetrators, who may fear that reparation processes will lead to retribution instead of forgiveness.

But despite all of these risks of too much or the “wrong” kind of remembering, there are even greater risks for societies that remember too little. After a situation of extreme violence, societies tend to forget the crimes, and erase them from their social memory. Sociologist Françoise Vergès (1999) in her article *I am Not the Slave of Slavery: The Politics of Reparation* analyzes the march that slavery descendants from France and its colonies organized in 1998, in Paris. The demonstration, named *Negroes*, had the objective of asking for collective responsibility by the French government in the name of slave ancestors, and of questioning why slavery was not taught in French schools. Vergès’ article, calls the attention to the problem of erasing from history crimes committed in the past and the risks of the establishment of a structural forgetfulness. Structural forgetfulness is defined as the tendency of society to forget violent events from the past through a collective denial. This act is per se another crime where the victims are again violated by having their past modified and the possibility of a healing process threatened. Also for societies, by forgetting the past, any possibilities for social and moral reparations are annihilated.

Vergès’ example shows that the slavery descendants asked for recognition of the facts that were erased from history; the descendants looked for a historical inclusion of facts that describe both France’s history and the descendants’ history. The descendants do not want to assume a victimhood identity, but they want to have their collective memory preserved. The descendants are seeking an official acknowledgment by asking to have slavery taught to future generations. They ask for an end to the negation of their past; the
reparation, as Vergès argues, “should not be about carrying a moral burden, (…), but recognizing one’s debts (p.271).”

The examples above show that the process of remembering the crimes is indeed difficult. Too much memory can revive wounds that might be still too opened in the minds of victims; it can also bring a bitter sensation of guilt to bystanders; and perpetrators might never recognize that what they did in the past was wrong. However, if we do not remember, if the crimes are not addressed, societies place themselves at risk of considering violence as banal. What should be considered a crime against humanity might be accepted as a ‘mere error.’ Without acknowledging the true horror of the Holocaust, or slavery, or many dictatorial regimes, we will think that we ‘understand’ them, but never truly grapple with them, with our own complicity, with the forces that gave rise to them, in ways that make their repetition less likely.

In order to constructively face the past, I argue, societies need to understand the roots of the violence that affected them. In order to do this, they must simultaneously remember, rethink, and reevaluate the facts, in part by hearing the stories and experiences of victims, bystanders, and perpetrators. Stories can help the community begin to heal, allowing victims to be reintegrated into their communities and to move on with their lives, and providing conditions for communities to understand the crimes and to seek justice against perpetrators. Such testimonies become a vital and necessary step in the process of rebuilding the ‘social memory’.
Testimonies: The Hope in Telling and Receiving Stories

“The important point is that testimony is linked to hope for the future in families through the younger generation. Because we have hope for a better future, we give and receive testimonies. If there is no ground for hope, then there is little reason to submit to testimony.”

(Weine: 2006, 31)

In the process of addressing the crimes of the past, in trying to find a balance of how much to remember and how to remember, it is necessary to hear the victims’ stories and to mourn the losses as a vital and necessary step in the process of rebuilding the ‘social memory’. In mourning loses, people can create space to express their feelings, to allow the losses to be processed, and to regain a sense of community.

Testimonies are essential to the process of individual recovery, and society’s acknowledgment of the individual’s trauma is necessary for the process of healing and social reparation. By this argument, I suggest that the purpose of individual testimonies should be for the individual good, helping survivors in the process of healing and reintegration into society, and also for the collective good as societies seek social change.

The psychologist Doris Laub (1995), through his work about testimonies from victims of the Holocaust argues that “the act of telling their stories is the victims’ opportunity to move away from being victims to survivors (p.63).” He quotes the testimonies of survivors who revealed to him that they wanted to survive the Holocaust so that they could tell their stories. Telling their stories is necessary for the victims to survive. Laub states that telling about the atrocities is the process by which the survivor reclaims his/her position as a witness, that giving testimony is itself a form of action and a necessary step that the victim has to actually pass through, in order to continue and complete the process of survival.
Trauma studies suggest that people who have passed through traumatic events such as torture, rape, forced dislocation, or war, and have survived, carry with them a double sensation of guilt: (1) for having survived when others have died and (2) for not completing the logical order of the events of their torture, by which they should have died. (Laub, 1995; Caruth, 1995). This ‘mistake’ of being alive is reinforced by the fact that the traumatic event, even though it was real, does not fit within the parameters of ‘normal events’ and does not have the presence of sequence, time and space in the victim’s mind. This chronological absence turns the trauma into an element without logical reference within the survivor’s reality; it assumes the quality of “otherness, a salience, a timelessness and ubiquity that puts it outside the range of associatively linked experiences, outside the range of comprehension, of recounting and of mastery (Laub, 1992, p.69).” This characteristic of otherness turns the trauma into an independent element, it does not predict its reappearance and it does not measure its intensity in its return in the survivor’s live. The trauma is like an ‘error’ that keeps repeating uncontrollably in the survivors’ mind with neither a beginning nor an end.

For Laub, testimonies can help to undo this ‘error,’ where the survivors in telling their stories are actually constructing an ordered narrative, externalizing their traumas, creating a logic to what did not have one. This is similar to the process of mourning that one has to pass through when a loved one dies. In the case of survivors, they must mourn for the ‘I’ that died, providing space for the ‘I’ who has survived. Testimony is a reencounter of two worlds, the one that was destroyed and the one that is different and always will be. Testimonies can be the bridge for bringing back survivors to their communities, to restore their lives.
On the other hand, Weine (2006) in his book, *Testimony after Catastrophe: Narrating the Traumas of Political Violence*, questions the efficacy of testimonies from victims of the Holocaust in promoting changes in attitudes, opinions, and culture. He argues that “the fact that we have all these testimonies [from Holocaust survivors] does not make it clear how and for what purpose they should be used (p.45).” For not having a clear intention, Weine suggests that “Holocaust testimony has at times come under the pressures of professional institutions, and politicians who want to use testimony for specific purposes. At worst, they have blindly followed the dictate that retelling is healing and preventive and they have made *not forgetting a cottage industry*\(^\text{10}\) (p. 46).”

The argument suggested by Weine can be applied to all kinds of testimonies related to human rights violations and calls attention to the risks of having people exposing their pain, telling their stories, only to have them transformed by others into objects of manipulation. In order to avoid this, it is necessary to connect testimonies to a social context, where society - represented by official institutions, organizations and citizens - must be involved and responsible for an agenda with a real consciousness about the purpose of the testimonies and their real goal.

In order for testimonies to become the basis for a healing social action, the process must seek not just to uncover the names of perpetrators, but also to ask an entire nation about what was done in their name. Respect for the survivors is not just to listen to their stories, but rather to listen with real intentions for social reparation and in taking actions for social change. The process of listening and witnessing is vital to testimonies. The listener is a witness and also a participant in the process of revisiting the past.

\(^{10}\) Emphasis added.
Testimonies can help to promote dialogue and inquiry on social memory and collective identity.

**Social Memory, Collective Identity and the Historical Praxis**

“There is no humanistic dimension in oppression, nor is there dehumanization in true liberation. But liberation doesn’t (sic) take hold of people’s consciousness if they are isolated from the world. Liberation occurs in their historical praxis when it involves a critical consciousness of the implicit relationship of consciousness and world.”

(Freire: 1985, 113-114)

When dealing with human suffering as a consequence of human rights violations, trauma can only be understood with reference to the specific contexts in which it occurs, including cultural norms, political context, the nature of the event, and the organization of the community. It is also important to consider the cultural differences that each society presents that can differ in their way in dealing with memory. The efforts for acknowledgment of past crimes are facilitated by the recognition and acceptance of others’ differences.

According to Freire (1985), in the efforts for transforming an oppressed reality, one needs to take into consideration that true liberation implies a total recognition of one’s reality, which means understanding one’s identity and socio-cultural history. This is what he calls *conscientization*, which refers to the process in which one achieves a full awareness of the socio-cultural reality that constructs and defines his/her life. The “historical praxis” is when one, conscious of his/her reality and his/her relation to the world, is able to change his/her reality through individual action. The “implicit relationship of consciousness and world” is a further step in the process of *conscientization*. It is when one is able to identify his/her condition of human being living
in and with the world. But, as Freire argues, this liberation “does not take hold of people’s consciousness if they are isolated from the world,” which implies that human beings can only reach liberation from an oppressed reality when they are able to recognize that they live in and with the world, together with other human beings who also live in and with the world.

Linking Freire’s argument to the process of facing history it can be inferred that not only the transformation of one’s consciousness but also the necessity of collective action is crucial in the process of remembering traumatic collective memory. A dehumanized reality of the past needs to be denounced by the actors of that reality and in the process of denouncing comes together the announcement of a transformed reality, where communities, in a collective process can rewrite their collective memory.

The processes of remembering, of transforming one’s earlier perception of reality, and of building a more just and peaceful future is not an easy task. It can be painful and difficult to see our reality, and in some cases, in a process of consciousness awakening, instead of accepting reality, individuals and societies deny the facts from the past. While it is very complex to negotiate such a process so that the past can be acknowledged, without reinforcing a “victimhood” identity, and while the questions of how and how much to remember are difficult to answer, I would like to suggest that the German artists Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz provide a hopeful example of how these processes can be negotiated successfully with their Monument Against Fascism (Mahnmal gegen Faschismus).

In 1983, after several years of discussion, the German Council decided to erect a monument against fascism, and the commission was awarded to Jochen and Esther
Shaley-Gerz. The artists built a 12-meter-high obelisk in the commercial center of Harburg, a district of Hamburg, populated primarily by Turkish-guest workers and blue-collar German families (Young, 1994). The monument was placed in a shopping mall plaza, and it was created to disappear. With the monument there was the following message:

“We invite the citizens of Harburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here next to ours. In doing so, we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12-metre tall lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely, and the site of the Harburg Monument against Fascism will be empty. In the end it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice.”

The obelisk was built in such a way that the more people who signed their names, the faster it would lower into the ground. It had a mechanism that through the weight of people’s hands during the act of signing their names on the monument, it would facilitate the monument’s sinking. In addition, the artists built it in a way that after sinking completely into the ground, it would again come up from the ground until reach its original 12-meter-high. Between its inauguration in 1986 and its disappearance in 1993, the monument was lowered into the ground eight times. Today, in the place where the monument was, all that remains is the message quoted above, translated into seven languages, telling the history of the monument, along with the 70,000 signatures of those who ‘helped’ make it disappear.

The monument, representing the remembrance of an oppressive system (fascism) will remain in the collective memory. However, in disappearing gradually, the monument represents the possibility of breaking the cycle of violence, where the gradual process of

\[\text{Artist’s website:}\]
\[\text{http://www.gerz.fr/html/main.html?res_ident=5a9df42460494a34beea361e835953d8&art_ident=76fbd6702e151086198058d4e4b0b8fc} \text{ (accessed on 02/21/2009)}\]
healing is literally represented by people’s action (their signature). When the monument
totally disappeared, what remains is the emptiness of space and time that represents
society’s ultimate goal: a time when there is no need for physical representations of
atrocities. The obelisk, as a sort of anti-monument, gave form to the process of
remembering and taking responsibility, a constant process of action and reflection. Its
liveness represented by its presence and no-presence was a call for the citizens. It was a
reminder that our collective memory is based on our collective actions and that
individuals are responsible for the choices that they make.

The idea of the monument disappearing as more names were written affirms
Freire’s argument that the process of transforming one’s reality is an individual and
collective process combined. The monument also supports Minow’s argument that “art of
the unthinkable should disturb and also commemorate (p. 142)”. By disturbing, it evokes
our memory it calls for a constant exercise of how to find the balance between how much
to remember and how much to forget. The idea of repeating the disappearance of the
monument more than one time was the representation of this constant search for balance.

In this chapter, I analyzed the importance of remembering and dealing with the
atrocities of the past, and I argued that only by acknowledging their own history
(individual and collective) can people identify the roots of violence. This identification
will lead to the recognition of the crimes and can facilitate the process of social and moral
reparation. I also followed Laub’s, Weine’s, and Becker’s arguments that the process of
giving testimony can help victims re-establish their position in society, give names to
perpetrators, and call a nation to think about what was done in their name. Testimonies, if
dealt with properly, can bring hope for a future in which “Never Again”—the vow of so
many societies that have faced atrocities and human rights violations in the past—can be fulfilled.
2- Fast-Food News: The Excess of Emptiness

“The influence of the media today has become close to the opposite of the usual view that through the media people acquire the information they need to serve their own interests and those of others they want to help.”

(Edelman 2001, 75)

“Television produces forgetfulness, not memory, flow, not history”

(Heath 1990, 279)

This chapter examines how human rights violations are reported to societies through mainstream media, specifically television. It is grounded in the premise that television relies on fast and incomplete coverage of sensationalistic events as one strategy to generate more profits for television corporations. It analyzes the way that television tends to select conflicts and how these conflicts tend to be delivered to audiences, generating a lack of information and critical understanding about the causes of the atrocities.

Television is a popular medium. Even considering the extraordinary expansion of the internet since 2007, only 23 percent of the world’s population has internet access, leaving television as the most far-reaching global medium (Thussu: 2007). Although print media remains active, this kind of medium faces subscription challenges as audiovisual media grows in use. Radio still maintains its strength as a more local and accessible medium, but for the purposes of this chapter, television will be the medium addressed due to its widespread global viewership.

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12 Emphasis added.
The idea of denouncing human rights violations through mainstream media is justified by some human rights organizations as a legitimate evidence of crimes that are committed without legal action from local governments, calling the attention of international organizations and audiences that can provide assistance, addressing the crimes in an international jurisprudence (McLagan, 2005).

On the other hand, the overwhelming utilization of sensationalistic images by mainstream media through short news stories can leave viewers with a lack of full awareness of the scope of the problem, generating misunderstanding about the origins of atrocities, and reinforcing, in some situations, prejudice and wrong judgment of those involved in conflicts (Gregory, 2005). This practice can also lead to what the scholar Susan Moeller (1998) calls “compassion fatigue,” wherein audiences, as a result for being exposed to an overwhelming series of isolated scenes, “lose or abdicate their ability to respond (…) to a situation (p. 23).”

The privatization of broadcasting across the globe and the deregulation of cross-media ownership have consolidated the ownership of the media into a relatively few transnational media corporations. These corporations are profit-driven and therefore they rely on high viewership to attract advertisers. As competition rules capitalist markets, TV programs have become more dependent on advertising as a way to sustain their production’s costs. In order to guarantee their profits, TV stations need marketing strategies that can guarantee the attention of their audience to advertisers.

Thus, news has become more of a commodity than an informative service, and TV stations have created basic strategies to cover events in a way that grabs the audience’s

For useful references and interesting accounts of the structure of multinationals and media owners, see Oliver Boyd-Barett, 1997; Hebert I. Schiller, 1991; Richard A. Gershon, 2005; Daya Kishan Thussu, 2000, 2007.
attention and optimizes viewing of advertisements. Showing violence has become one of these strategies.

In her book *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*, Moeller (1999) argues that the media have long known that suffering rather than good news sells, that watching and reading about suffering are a form of entertainment. Psychiatrist Arthur Kleinman (1997), in his book *Social Suffering*, reinforces Moeller’s statement saying that as “infotainment (…) images of victims are commercialized; they are taken up into process of global marketing and business competition (p. 1).” Following this argument, it can be inferred that when trying to win the marketing competition, journalists and their editors might tend toward sensational and stereotypical images of victims in order to gain the attention of their audience.

Another problem with mainstream media coverage is that editors tend to privilege certain crises and conflicts over others. They give more airtime to those crises that they believe their audience can easily understand, will have a faster identification with, and consequently will be more interested in. For example, one of the justifications put forth for the lack of coverage of the genocide in Rwanda by international media was that the complexity of the historical conflict between Tutsi and Hutus would be too difficult to explain to audiences in a short period of time (Girardet, 1996).

The political agendas of powerful governments and lobby groups also have a direct influence over which crises receive more, less, or no international coverage at all (Moeller, 1998; Hawkins, 2004; Rotberg & Weiss, Girardet, 1996; Thompson, 2007). Conflicts in Sri Lanka and the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, do not
receive the same amount of international coverage as do conflicts of greater concern to powerful governments like Israel and the US.

Another problematic element of television news coverage is the lack of time generally available to educate audiences about a crisis or conflict. In the case of TV news, time itself is a commodity that rules the programs, which are characterized by the sensation of constant presence and immediacy. This characteristic of uninterrupted broadcast is reaffirmed by television’s rigorous scheduling. The urgency of ‘real time’ in TV news programs suggests that the presupposed value of information is linked with time; where an endless stream of information is created to right after be destroyed to make room to the next stream of information. As a result, information becomes measurable, quantifiable, through its relation to temporality. The necessity of immediacy in broadcasting the information reinforces the lack of content about the stories.

In having time controlling information and dependence on immediacy, TV news programs tend to restrict the stories that are broadcasted by limiting duration. This immediacy makes the past be represented by brief moments. TV news’ structural emphasis on discontinuity and brevity promotes meager public memory and disregard for history. In focusing more on sensationalistic images than on the causes of crises, TV news delivers empty coverage that can generate to no accurate information about a conflict.

In addition, this timing in broadcasting the news is also related to the perception that audiences have started to lose interest in them. Here, the sensation of sameness generated by the saturation of a crisis in all possible ways (exhaustive repetition of same images in
a short period of time followed by sensationalistic and formulaic coverage), creates a lack of interest in the audience.

The selectivity of certain conflicts over others, the short time spent on facts, and the fear for lack of interest of the audience implies that TV news programs decide or ‘declare’ when a crisis, a war, or a catastrophe is over. Its elimination from current news by TV programs can create in the public the sensation that the crisis is over. Crises, Moller (1998) argues, “are over and done with within a week (p.313)”.

What is described is a paradoxical scenario: the audience is not receiving enough information but not because of lack of journalistic coverage. On the contrary, the excess of journalistic coverage is not providing any real understanding of the cultural and historical roots of crises and human right violations; instead of providing content, they are only providing sensationalistic images, magnified by intensive repetition in a short period of time. Instead of creating a sense of urgency or proximity in the viewer, these images (especially when they depict people in a far away place, with a visibly different culture) allow viewers to see the suffering as something “other,” something distant, something unrelated to their own “ordinary” reality. Thus, viewers feel no sense of guilt, no responsibility, and no demands. And they do not get involved. The superficial knowledge gleaned from the media isolates the viewers from any deeper involvement with the conflicts that could possibly generate constructive actions.

TV news coverage is too fast and insufficient to analyze complex events that involve human rights violations. Even a story twice the average length of the broadcast given to such stories could not provide much content or background on a complex societal
conflict. As it is, TV news programs are essentially a headline service, where most of the important context of a story and practically all thoughtful reflection on it is eliminated.

What we are getting in the mainstream media is what I define as “fast-food news.” Fast-food news is a good metaphor to describe this paradox: on one hand, you have an overwhelming presence of the product. It is prepared fast and delivered in minutes. On the other hand, if the product stays more than a minute on the shelf, then it is time to throw it out. As nobody wants to eat a cold hamburger, nobody is interested in yesterday news. Like a fast-food restaurant, TV news delivers “food” without “nutrition,” where the programs simply do not nourish the viewers. Audiences tend to just absorb and accept what is delivered. Thus, they become consumers of the suffering of others.

As a final example, I cite Kevin Carter’s photograph that won a Pulitzer Prize for the New York Times in 1994. The photo, illustrating Donatella Lorch’s article, and depicting a vulture beside a naked child, has often been interpreted as denouncing the famine that resulted from the civil war in Southern Sudan. I question whether the photograph did more to denounce the famine and war or to cooperate with and excuse the situation. The answer might be found on the unusual editorial note that was published four days after the first publication of the photo:

“A picture last Friday with an article about the Sudan showed a little Sudanese girl who had collapsed from hunger on the trail to a feeding center in Ayod. A vulture lurked behind her. Many readers have asked about the fate of the girl. The photographer reports that she recovered

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15 See Attachment I
enough to resume her trek after the vulture was chased away. It is not known whether she reached the center."

The editorial answer to the readers reinforced the lack of information about the very situation the photographs was supposedly raising awareness about. The photo created a voyeuristic curiosity in readers; they asked about the destiny of the girl. But the larger context of the war and the famine were completely lost—no one asked about the fate of the vulture. The photograph does not inspire critical analysis or questioning about the root causes of the situation. For the readers, it was enough just to know about the fate of the girl.

The editors, in three sentences, provided an answer to its readers and provided no further information about the conflict or the real conditions of the girl’s life, her community, her parents or neighbors. Nobody wanted to know the real conditions of how the photo was taken, where the photojournalist, Kevin Carter, waited behind a brush for twenty minutes for the vulture to spread its wings, so the photo could create more impact. The photo was taken while the child’s mother was trying to get food that was being distributed by a United Nation’s plane, the same plane that brought Carter and other photojournalists to take pictures of the place.

The way that we are receiving information about conflicts involving human rights violations collaborates to distort the reality we see. The superficial knowledge and the compassion fatigue that viewers are exposed to isolates them from any deeper involvement with the conflicts. This isolation makes them not have a total understanding of reality, and they absorb it as nothing.

18 Emphasis added.
In this chapter, I analyzed the way that human rights violations tend to be covered by the mainstream media, especially television. I argue that the excessive amount of information and lack of content do not provide conditions for audiences to understand the causes that led to the crimes. Linking to the questions and considerations addressed in chapter 1, it can be inferred that the mainstream media are not effective in inviting communities affected by human rights violations to revisit the past in ways that promote constructive processes of coexistence.
3- Art and Imagination: Nurturing Body and Mind

“Art invites reciprocity. It involves people in reciprocal relationships of sensitivity toward others (…) Art invites creativity. People tend to perceive the world through the categories of preexisting conceptual frameworks; artists, however, generally take the elements they apprehend in the world and bring them into relation in new ways. The ability to “see the world with fresh eyes”, or imagine new configurations of the elements, needs strengthening in virtually every society, especially in societies where the sense of possibility has been blunted by violence.”

(Cohen: 2005, 3)

“Without imagination, nothing in the world could be meaningful. Without imagination, we could never make sense of our own experience. Without imagination, we could never reason toward knowledge of reality.”

(Johnson: 1987, ix)

“Imagination is memory transformed by desire”

(Boal: 2006, 21)

In chapter 1, I argued that remembering is a vital step that societies that have experienced crimes involving human rights violations need to go through in order to rethink the present and imagine (individually and collectively) a future for which they will be responsible. This process of remembering and understanding the past follows Freire’s theory of conscientization, where people must become conscious of their own reality in order to change it.

I also argued in chapter 1 that the act of remembering is quite complex, and that it is extremely important to consider how communities will remember atrocities from the past, taking into consideration the risks involved in this process.
In chapter 2, I discussed the fact that the mainstream media do not provide the necessary conditions to remember atrocities from the past in a way that can create a full understanding of the causes of conflicts involving human rights violations. I argued that the media do not facilitate the creation of pathways that can disclose the collective traumas that are present in societies affected by these kinds of crimes. I also argued that TV news coverage tends to generate more misinformation than constructive action from the viewers, opening space for social forgetfulness in relation to the violence. I supported Moeller’s argument about the risks for the development of compassion fatigue, wherein audiences, due to the excess of empty coverage, simply absorb the news, without gaining the ability to respond to crises and abuses.

In this chapter, I argue that artistic representations are better suited than the mainstream media to the act of remembering crimes involving human rights violations, and that artistic representations create more constructive responses in viewers. It analyzes art as an alternative tool that can help to stimulate critical thinking in communities facing human rights violations, helping people to understand the violence, and opening the possibility of coexistence.

I analyze the importance of the connection of body and mind in the process of critical thinking and conscientization. The importance of connecting body and mind in the search for meaning and understanding is defended, in different ways, by the philosopher Mark Johnson and by the educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. I defend this connection as necessary for a complete understanding of one’s reality. I link this argument to peacebuilder John Paul Lederach’ theory of the “moral imagination,” which compares the process of artistic creation to the process of peacebuilding, and defends the importance of
creativity in helping people overcome violence and strengthen the possibility of coexistence. I intend to compare the ideas of these three theorists briefly in the first part of this chapter in order to support my claim that artistic forms are valuable in the process of creating change.

In the second part of this chapter, I follow Freire’s defense of a form of education that demands social conscientization, and I argue that art is an action that merges the language of critique and possibility.

I focus on theatre as a form of education and artistic representation of memory, and analyze how this form of art can recall atrocities from the past (the unspeakable), dignify victims and support a culture of accountability, and simultaneously avoid a culture of retribution and the trap of victimhood identity.

**Body and Mind: The Process for Conscientization**

“We human beings have bodies. We are "rational animals", but we are also "rational animals," which means that our rationality is embodied. Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interaction with objects. It is never merely a matter of abstract conceptualizations and propositional judgments."

(Johnson: 1985, xix)

The philosopher Mark Johnson (1985) in his book *The Body in Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*, opposes Objectivism’s argument that the body and imagination cannot contribute meaningfully to the process of thinking, given the prevalence of pure reason. He criticizes the fact that Objectivism has ignored the body in the process of thinking and has claimed that the body introduces subjective elements that are irrelevant to the objective nature of meaning. Objectivism has defined...
reason as being abstract and transcendent, where true knowledge cannot rely on senses, images, or things and is therefore not tied to any of the bodily aspects of human understanding.

Johnson extends his criticism to Objectivism’s rejection of the imagination as an important element in the process of thinking. He argues that Objectivism tends to consider the imagination as non-rational and therefore unsuitable for serious cognitive undertakings, classifying it merely as an activity of ‘aesthetic’ or ‘artistic’ making.

Johnson’s defense of the importance of imagination in the process of thinking is based on ‘image-schemata,’ which he defines as elements that “are figurative, and analog and non-propositional in nature (xx).” Johnson states that image-schemata should not be seen as either rich, mental images (concrete pictures in the mind) or as abstract concepts or propositional structures. Rather, he says that image-schemata “operates at a level of mental organization that falls between abstract propositional structures, on the one side, and particular concrete images, on the other (p.29).” Johnson relies on “metaphor” to understand the way that image-schemata operate in the process of thinking. He argues that the way in which thought is organized is through “metaphorical elaborations of image-schemata” which “give rise to form and structure in our experience and understanding (p.73).”

Image-schemata is then the projection in the mind of the information sent, where our experiences, our movements, sensations, etc. provide stimulus to our mind that converts them into image-schemata and finally provides understanding of the information received. Image-schemata emerges from our experience and historical context, it is the
mental-images that we learn through our bodily interaction with the world. Our bodily movements (manipulating objects, or the touch coming from another person for example) and our perceptual interactions with these movements rely on image-schemata to create reason and meaning, and without them our experience would be incomplete and incomprehensible.

For Johnson, experience “involves everything that makes us human- our bodily, social, linguistic, and intellectual being combined in complex interactions that make up our understanding of our world (xvi).” His definition of understanding goes beyond a matter of reflection on some preexistent and determinate experience. For Johnson, understanding is the way we “have a world, the way we experience our world as a comprehensible reality. Such understanding, therefore, involves our whole being – our bodily capacities and skills, our values, our moods and attitudes, our entire cultural tradition, the way in which we are bound up with a linguistic community, our aesthetic sensibilities, and so forth (p. 102).”

With this argument, Johnson contradicts the foundations of Objectivism and calls for a form of thinking that integrates mind and body, arguing that imagination is the process that can unite these two elements. As he argues,

“(…) imagination is our capacity to organize mental representation into meaningful, coherent unities. (…) moreover, it is important to revive and enrich our notion of imagination if we are to overcome certain undesirable effects of a deeply rooted set of dichotomies that have dominated Western philosophy (mind/body, reason/imagination, science/art, cognition/emotion, fact/value, and on and on). We need to explore the role of imagination in meaning, understanding, reasoning, and communication. Only in this way can we
begin to understand how it is possible for us to have a world that we can make sense of and reason about (page 140).”

Johnson’s argument is based on the idea that our bodily experience provides elements that are essential for the formation of meaning and understanding in our mind. What he calls ‘the body in mind’ suggests that the abstracted and transcendental characteristics of reason alone are not enough to generate meaning and understanding. For Johnson, it is necessary to add imagination into this process, which brings our embodied understanding to information received, providing a complete understanding of our world.

From a pedagogical point of view, the educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1970, 1985) also argues that the learning process is not complete if it relies only on Objectivism. For Freire, the world and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction. As he poses, “we recognize the indisputable unity between subjectivity and objectivity in the act of knowing. Reality is never just simply the objective datum, the concrete fact, but it is also men’s perception of it (1985, p.51).” He goes on to say that “to deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naïve and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without men (sic) (1979, p. 35).”

Freire’s idea of transformation of one’s reality is based on what he calls ‘radicalization,’ which is the level when one has reached a critical view of his/her concrete reality and is able to transform it creatively. In Freire’s opinion, radicalization is the praxis after one has achieved the conscientization of his/her world. He is categorical

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18 Emphasis added.
about the necessity of having subjectivity and objectivity interacting in a constant dialectical relationship in order to provide the conditions for this radicalization. This interaction allows one to have a complete view of his/her condition or concrete reality rather than to deny it, which is the first step toward transcending and transforming it.

Freire argues that through the process of codification and de-codification\textsuperscript{19} of one’s concrete reality, it is possible for him/her to see reality differently. In his work with illiterate people (his methods have been used in Brazil, Chile, Angola, and Mozambique, among other countries), Freire utilized representations of typical situations affecting the lives of the people with whom he was working. These representations (usually a photograph or a drawing that the group could relate to, \textit{e.g.} a native hunting with bow and arrow, a farmer cultivating the soil, or a woman working in a factory) would function as challenges, as coded situation-problems, containing elements to be decoded by the groups through dialogue.

Discussions of these codifications would lead the groups toward a more critical consciousness, at the same time they begin to learn to read and write. This method, known as “the problem-posing concept,” transcends the idea of education as a pure transference of knowledge that describes reality. The learner, instead of only receiving information, is invited to analyze aspects of his/her own existential experiences represented in the object to be codified and de-codified.

Through this process where a situation is analyzed in its deeper structure, the codification represents a dimension of reality as the learner lives it, which creates

\textsuperscript{19} For examples of how this method is applied see Paulo Freire, 1973.
possibilities for the learner to have a whole sense of his/her reality. Instead of just memorizing facts and rules, the learner connects his/her own experience to the situation presented and from this new understanding of the situation, other new forms of understanding start to emerge and are connected to the learner’s reality. As Freire argues,

“In illuminating one of its facets and perceiving the interrelation of that facet with others, the learners tend to replace a fragmented vision of reality with a total vision. From the point of view of a theory of knowledge, this means that the dynamic between codification of existential situations and de-codification involves the learners in a constant reconstruction of their former ‘admiration’ of reality (p. 52).”

For Freire, the word “admiration” does not assume its usual meaning of a positive aesthetic or ethical view of an act or object. Instead the word takes on a meaning that includes objectification, a kind of false dichotomy between self and other that leads to misperceptions and that must be continually revised. As Freire explains,

“To admire is to objectify the ‘not I’ (...) to admire implies that man stands over against his ‘not I’ in order to understand it. For this reason, there is no act of knowing without admiration of the object to be known. If the act of knowing is a dynamic act – and no knowledge is ever complete – then in order to know, man not only admires the object, but must always be readmiring (sic) his former admiration. When we readmire our former admiration (always an admiration of), we are simultaneously admiring the act of admiring and the object admired, so that we can overcome the errors we made in our former admiration. This readmiration leads us to a perception of an anterior perception (p. 53)”

This relates to the meaning of “admiration” adopted by the scholar Irene J. Winter (2000) in her article The Eyes Have It. Winter breaks the word admiration apart into its Latin roots where the prefix ad (enhancement) plus the root mirâre (viewing/seeing)
means to improve/develop the act of seeing/viewing. Winter’s translation explains Freire’s use of this word during the process of codification and de-codification. Through the process of *improving the act of seeing*\(^{20}\), learners can change their former perceptions of themselves in relation to their reality and gradually change it with a more critical point of view. Freire encourages a process of “denunciation and annunciation (sic),” where the formerly admired perspective is denounced by the learner and then a new (transformed) perspective is announced, which will again be denounced and so on, as the act of admiring and re-admiring is constant in the learning process.

In relying on the analysis of a former perspective by relating it to one’s own experience, Freire is reaffirming his argument that no learning process is complete if objectivity and subjectivity are not interacting together in a dialectical relationship. It can be inferred that Freire’s idea of radicalization is related to Johnson’s idea of imagination, where our own experiences – which involve everything that makes us human: our senses, values, skills, attitudes, cultural tradition, beliefs – provide elements that are essential for the acquisition of knowledge, and therefore essential to the development of critical thought.

Johnson’s and Freire’s arguments can also bring understanding to the theory of the “moral imagination” proposed by the peacebuilder John Paul Lederach (2005). In his homonymous book, Lederach defines the moral imagination as:

> “the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of

\(^{20}\) Emphasis added.
the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence (p. 5).”

Lederach argues that all human beings have the capacity to apply the moral imagination in their lives, and he focuses in particular on its application to overcome violence. Acknowledging the complexities surrounding the coexistence and peacebuilding fields, Lederach sees the moral imagination as a way to embrace that complexity and to envision peacebuilding as a creative act. The ‘paradoxical curiosity’ he mentions—that is, the ability to refrain from reducing complex situations into dualistic polarities—is extremely important in his view of how peacebuilders can help people deal with intractable conflicts. People with paradoxical curiosity refuse to accept what is pre-determined and are driven in search of what is still unclear, never accepting first impressions as the conclusive answer.

Lederach challenges readers to see beyond what is in front of their eyes, using what he defines as ‘peripheral vision.’ By encouraging peripheral vision, Lederach suggests that the conclusions we make about a conflict based on our initial perceptions are often wrong; when one is attentive to things that are often ignored or —when we look out of the corners of our eyes—we can come to a deeper analysis of the situation. Lederach argues that one develops the capacity to make his/her way through the process of peacebuilding by constantly analyzing the signs received, by accepting what was not obvious or planned, and by adapting fast to the new signs, creating new approaches to meet an evolving understanding of the situation. In defending the use of peripheral vision

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21 Lederach defines dualistic polarities as the way that people and communities will respond to situations of conflict by seeing things in terms of two distinct, incompatible categories (e.g. we are right, they are wrong; we were violated, they are the violators; you are with us or against us; etc…)
and paradoxical curiosity, Lederach is saying that we all have inside ourselves the capacity to *amplify our senses and relearn through our own experiences*.

Lederach, in his defense of the moral imagination in the process of peacebuilding, compares the latter former to the process of artistic creation. In this comparison, Lederach is actually reinforcing the importance of imagination, which can provide a better understanding of the conflict and help to raise critical thought. He is reinforcing the importance of creativity in the process of thinking, as a kind of reason combined with senses, which allows for the unexpected to be absorbed and transformed into constructive changes.

In comparing Johnson’s, Freire’s, and Lederach’s arguments, I intended to argue for the importance of the integration of body and mind in the process of thinking. Furthermore, I intended to argue for the utilization of the arts to facilitate this connection of body and mind. Because the arts have a dialectic nature—emerging from human experience, and then shaping and giving expression and meaning to that experience, they stimulate the dialectical relationship between body and mind.

In addition, linking to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, when considering the difficulties of facing atrocities of the past, the arts can promote new forms of narrative and also be a facilitator in the process of understanding the roots of violent conflict.

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22 Emphasis added
Theatre for Social Change

“Theater is a social form, it is a platform for social discussion, it can gather people together to sit next to each other and reflect on difficult issues. So for those of us who believe that theater can move into these difficult questions, there is no other option but to continue our work as theater artists pressing into these difficult options and that is why we are a good partner for the coexistence work, I think. We are aligned in intention, we are not completely aligned in how to achieve the intention, but we are aligned in intention, and we are the individuals who can manipulate the social dialogue and who can create space for social dialogue within the larger society and not just those who are capable or even willing to negotiate peace.”

(Levitow\textsuperscript{23}: 2007)

“We must all do theater – to find out who we are, and to discover who we could become.”

(Boal: 2008, i)

Why rely on the arts to remember the past, especially in the aftermath of violence? In the introduction, I argued for the necessity to think of new forms of media to help a society to remember the causes of a specific conflict involving human rights violations that happened in the past. We have to consider media other than mainstream television that can lead communities to think creatively about their reality, in ways that can facilitate the possibilities to strength relationships and promote sustainable coexistence. In this chapter, I argue that artistic expressions can be an alternative form to remember atrocities from the past, focusing on the medium of theatre as an example of this.

Arts provoke our senses in ways that can facilitate the assimilation of the causes of a specific violent conflict; they can provide forms and create meaning to the

\textsuperscript{23} Roberta Levitow in non-published interview at Brandeis University. October 6\textsuperscript{th}, 2007.
unspeakable. Art is a balance in itself, a balance between rigidity and chaos, between tradition and innovation. Arts can help to develop a diverse range of languages where words can be translated to sounds, movements, smells, colors, drawings, and other creative forms of expression. Through the arts, in which the mind and body are engaged together, it is possible to gain a better perception of the past. This integration of body and mind, emotional and rational, I argue, is necessary for helping societies enter into the difficult task of facing history.

Arts can invite us to challenge our own fears and think creatively, allowing our body/mind to be opened and receptive to the new, letting the facts of the past have meaning, providing a better understanding of our reality. A work of art can invite us into aesthetic experiences, embody and engender the moral imagination, which is the capacity to break violence and to take risks towards the new, towards constructive changes (Cohen, 2005).

History needs to be remembered, but the “official” version of the facts is always incomplete. Artistic expressions can provide opportunities for those directly affected by the violence and oppression of the past to have their stories represented. In this way, ‘popular truths,’ versions of the past that are often suppressed or hidden, can be brought to light and compared with the official versions. Through this process, citizens can take part in the process of historical accounting.

Cynthia E. Milton (2003) in her article “At the Edge of the Peruvian Truth Commission: Alternative Paths to Recounting the Past,” describes some of the different
ways in which the past can be expressed apart from formal venues such as truth commissions and trials. Taking Peru as an example for her argument, Milton says:

“(…) truths are malleable and contradictory; they are sites of conflict and fissures both within affected communities and between civil society and the state. Yet despite the elusiveness of truth or of determining specific truth narratives, the pursuit for unofficial means of recounting the past is necessary for the writing of historical accounts of the past for the future. (p. 08).”

Theater can be a venue that can lead communities to express what Milton (2003) has called “popular truths”; it can provide voice and give form to versions of history that for diverse reasons (e.g. fear, trauma, oppression, shame, loneness) are presented in people’s body and mind but yet hidden from the collective acknowledgment.

Theatre, by interacting directly with the community, can be a vivid representation of the community’s condition and own history. Through its direct contact with its audience, where actors and audience share the same space, theatre provides a momentum, an aura that can create unexpected feelings, giving space for something new to emerge. Through plays, theatre can call communities to think about how they know their world, how they are in the world and what is possible in the world.

The theatre director Augusto Boal (2006) in his book The Aesthetics of the Oppressed defines theatre as essential for producing new understandings, helping the audience to feel, and through the senses, not just the reason, to understand their social reality. As he argues, theatre “embraces more than simple perception; it aims at enabling fuller knowledge and placing in front of the person any ethical decisions to be made. It seeks to produce emotional and intellectual stimuli, encapsulating the symbolic language
of the word and the signalétique\textsuperscript{24} language of the senses (p. 36).” He goes on to say that “theatre is the most natural form of learning, and the most primal, since the child learns to live by means of theatre, playing, acting characters (p.37).”

Theatre as an artistic form of representation of human rights violations should help a new generation to think critically; as Freire argues, it should help to raise conscientization, where people will understand their condition and together can liberate themselves and change their own reality.

The crucial thing about theatre that intends to question crimes committed in communities that involved human rights violations is the importance of making theatre a vivid process in educating society, instead of focusing on frozen representation of history, where the past is accepted and not questioned. It is necessary, if a change is desired, to combine these two elements – one’s experience and social memory - in order to honor those who have suffered with the violence and to educate those who will continue in the future.

That being said, it seems important to consider the facts and circumstances, as well as beliefs and values that shape the identity of a community as elements that can be utilized in the plays to help in the process of remembering in a way that can add to the process of individual healing, and also public acknowledgment of the damages caused. In addition, the plays need to be connected to the idea of utilizing the present as the moment when one can reach understanding of the cultural and historical aspects that have contributed for the violence that took place in the past.

\textsuperscript{24} “There is no English word for this French adjective, part of the lexicon of semiotics, referring to nonverbal sign-based communication” (Editor’s note, The Aesthetic of the Oppressed, p.53)
This model of theatre that creates plays that are connected to the needs of communities turns artists into mediators, who stimulate the dialogue among their audiences. Furthermore, the artists who utilize theatre as this alternative forum, in assuming this role of mediators, understand that their role has the goal to invite their audiences to become protagonists of their own stories. In this participatory theatre, artists and audience are actors, who have the potentiality to transform a reality that is being questioned, where all participants are essential for this transformation be possible.

**Theatre and the organic intellectual**

“Critical consciousness is brought about, not through an intellectual effort alone, but through praxis, through the authentic union of action and reflection”

(Freire: 1985, 87)

Referring to the model of ancient western theatre in Greece, Boal (1979) argues that theatre should return to its roots, when people would gather in public spaces and watch the performance of narratives that would help them to discuss the societal problems that needed to be addressed. Through performance, communities could participate in the process of reevaluating social structures.

Theater artists have often taken the role of asking the difficult questions that societies are afraid to ask. If done with the appropriate attention to the processes of remembering and healing, theater can help communities to see their own reality more clearly by expressing what the community has experienced in a work of art. This

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25 This idea is a reference to Peruvian actor Augusto Casafranca, member of Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani in non-published interview at Brandeis University, October 8th, 2007, when explaining the goal of Yuyachkani in having a theatre able to create participatory audiences.
sensitively crafted theater can put into practice Freire’s notion of “action and reflection,” by raising critical consciousness and constructive action among the community.

According to Freire, the “action and reflection” is the analysis of a collective situation, where a group reflects on their conditions to understand what they need and want to change, allowing them to then imagine a transformation and take action. Through action and reflection an entire community can participate in the process of social change, and those who have been dehumanized by traumatic events such as human rights violations can be brought back into the condition of being human.

As Freire (1985) argues, human beings have a “conscious body, capable of acting and perceiving, of knowing and re-creating, if they were not conscious of themselves and the world, the idea of conscientization would make no sense (p.89).” The conscious body, according to Freire, can lead to radicalization which is the transformative act. The transformative act is dynamic rather than static; tends to life rather than death and envision the future as a challenge to one’s creativity, rather than the repetition of the past. The suffering must not be allowed to continue, and the need to never forget needs to be transformed into an ongoing process, a vital aspect of the very nature of human life.

Through theatre, traumatic events can be re-presented in a way that reconnects audiences with their reality that was brutally interrupted, that will never be the same again, and inspires a collective reaction that can lead to social change. In this model, theatre becomes a medium through which societies can acknowledge crimes from the past, envision a net of relationships that includes victims, bystanders and perpetrators,
and move toward a future of sustainable coexistence. Performers become the mediators of this complex process.

For theater to work in this way, performers must assume the role of what Freire (1985) defines as the “organic intellectual,” “who can learn with groups while simultaneously helping them to foster modes of self-education and struggle against various forms of oppression, they are theorists fused organically with the culture and practical activities of the oppressed.”

As addressed in this study, Freire believes that all human beings have the capacity to change their own reality; because of this, he redefines the idea of the intellectual, claiming that all human beings are intellectuals. He introduces the idea of the “organic intellectual” as someone who facilitates the process of action and reflection, of conscientization, among others. Instead of causally representing their reality, the organic intellectual fuses with the oppressed in order to make and remake the conditions necessary for social change.

In order for theater artists to be organic intellectuals, their work must be (1) done by people from the community, (2) for the community, and (3) about issues that matter to the community. This kind of theater is humanistic, where the assumption is that all people can participate in the aesthetic process, that all participants understand and know by experience, and that, through experience, all people can expand their capacity to learn and to transform.

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26 Emphasis added.
27 Idem.
Such theater is what Freire (1985) called a “revolutionary act,” a commitment to the hope for transformation after a people have been dehumanized by oppression and silence. In this engagement against oppressive and dehumanizing structures, revolutionary acts “must suit their action to historical conditions, taking advantage of the real and unique possibilities that exist, their role is to seek the most efficient and viable means of helping the people move from levels of semi-intransitive or naïve transitive consciousness to the level of critical consciousness” (Freire: 1985, p.83).

For theater artists who are able to achieve such revolutionary acts, the desire for social change, for transformation, must be implied in their attitude toward their audience. They propose in their work possibilities for learning, for action, and for transformation, and they commit to using their talents ongoingly to pursue these goals. The revolutionary act, after all, is only successful when it becomes a continuous event.

As a continuous event, the idea of the moral imagination that Lederach defends becomes implied in this process, where theatre artists and audiences exercise constantly creativity in the search for possibilities to break the violence, to not accept oppression and to imagine a future where coexistence is possible.

In this chapter, I analyzed the importance of considering artistic forms as a way of remembering and dealing with atrocities involving human rights violations. I proposed that these forms can promote a better understanding of the past than can the mainstream media, in part because the arts promote a connection between the body and mind in the process of thinking. I followed Johnson’s and Freire’s arguments about how a dialectical

28 Emphasis added.
relationship between body and mind is necessary for creating meaning, developing critical thought, and understanding one’s reality, connecting their argument to Lederach’s idea of the moral imagination who defends that creativity is essential to imagine possibilities to overcome violence and promote peace. I suggested that theatre has the potential to help people remember atrocities in a way that brings about conscientization, and consequently opens up possibilities for social change and sustainable coexistence.
4- Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani: The Complete Cycle

“¿Qué queremos ser, activists políticos o artistas? ¿Qué queremos ser? Mejores seres humanos”

(Correa\(^{29}\) : 2007)

In this final chapter, I stress the importance of remembering atrocities involving human rights violations in a way that promotes conscientization and transformation, and I discuss the work of Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani from Peru as an example of theater artists who have successfully enacted this kind of remembering.\(^{30}\)

In the first part of this chapter, I describe Yuyachkani’s artistic trajectory from their formation in the early 1970s until their work during the public hearings of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2001. I then analyze the plays that the group performed during the public hearings, briefly touching on two plays—Adios Ayacucho and Antígona—and then moving on to an in-depth analysis of a third play—Rosa Cochillo.

I dedicate the second part of this chapter to Rosa Cochillo, examining the ways in which this play responds to the questions proposed in the introduction of this study: how have these artists used theater (1) to reach audiences, (2) to denounce crimes committed in the artists’ communities, and (3) to mediate the tension between remembering

\(^{29}\)“What do we want to be, political activists or artists? What do we want to be? Better human beings.” Ana Correa in non-published interview at Brandeis University. October 8th, 2007. (Author’s translation)

\(^{30}\)I have come to know Yuyachkani’s work through my participation in the project Acting Together on the World Stage. See Attachment II for an overview of the cases in the anthology-in-progress.
atrocities of the past and moving into the future. This analysis will be based on the ideas presented in the former chapters of this study. I finish this chapter by comparing Yuyachkani’s work with the main arguments proposed in this study.

The Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani is a theatre company from Peru which for the last thirty-five years has been performing plays that evoke human rights and social justice issues. Social memory is Yuyachkani’s main theme. The name of the group, a Quechua word that means “I am remembering, I am thinking,” represents Yuyachkani’s intention of creating plays that memorialize the social traumas of a population that for centuries has lived under the repression of a colonialist system. Verbs in present progressive tense describe actions in progress and the translation of the group’s Quechua name implies the group’s philosophy of an ongoing process of reflecting on the present by revisiting the past.

The group is a pioneer in Peru’s theatrical history in that their work mirrors the country’s national history, focusing on the social, economical, and political facts that have shaped the development of the country. In adopting this focus, Yuyachkani manifests the collective consciousness of Peru; Yuyachkani asks their audience to revisit the past with the hope of changing the future, the future that will be remembered. They acknowledge the cyclic nature of history and they continually raise questions for their audience to consider. Through this cyclic process, Yuyachkani gives form to its own translation: a constant action of remembering and thinking.

This unification of past, present, and future which Yuyachkani was able to establish in their work - where each moment in time is inextricably linked - is the result

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32 Quechua is an Amerindian language spoken across the Central Andes in South America by some 10 million people in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile and Argentina. It is the most widely spoken language of the indigenous peoples of the Americas
of the constant reevaluation the group has demanded of itself through over thirty-five years of collective commitment. As Miguel Rubio Zapata, the founder and director of the group has said, Yuyachkani’s trajectory has been an intensive transformation from their founding in 1971 as an activist and political theatre to their humanistic style of today. The group had to experience this transformation collectively until they reached a balance that respects all of their individual opinions and utilizes each member’s talents to improve the group as a whole.

The group is based in Lima, Peru’s Capital, and its ten members (Amiel Cayo, Augusto Casafranca, Ana Correa, Débora Correa, Fidel Melquiades, Rebeca Ralli, Teresa Ralli, Miguel Rubio Zapata, Alejandro Siles Vallejos, and Julian Vargas) are a mix of Quechua native, European-blooded Criollos, European and Native blooded Mestizos, and Afro-Peruvian. This non-intentional composition represents all the major ethnic groups present in Peru (Varea, 2008).

At their beginning, following the revolutionary desire for a communist or socialist system that was in vogue in most of Latin America during the late 60’s and the early 70’s, Yuyachkani was characterized as an activist and political theater company. Ana Correa explains that after several years of doing this kind of theater, they realized that in adopting an aggressive style of denouncing the injustices of the country, they were actually not doing theater but being like any other activist group that would go to the streets to protest against the government’s politics.

As she states, “the kind of theatre that we were doing was political, leftist, where everything was already said. If we wanted to speak about the USA, we would take an
American flag and burn it, things that one could do in a political demonstration. Yuyachkani realized that it was necessary to evolve and to rethink their role as artists. They wound up redefining their goal in a humanistic way, so that instead of looking for ways to become better artists or political activists, the group aimed to do theater that would transform them into better people.

With this goal in mind, Yuyachkani focused their work on their country’s history. In 1977, they launched the play Allpa Rayku (For the Land), where the main protagonists are the campesinos, with the story focusing on their struggle to get their land back from the landowners. It was the first time in Peruvian theater that campesinos were major characters, instead of their usual minor role of servants. It was the first time that the public could have a sense of campesinos’ lives, because instead of the silent roles that they had previously played - never questioning the boss and staying quiet in the kitchen - the characters were able to speak and tell their stories to an urban audience that was ignorant of them. With this play, Yuyachkani changed their political theatre and started their journey towards the humanistic theatre they do today.

In his article “Fire in the Memory,” the theatre director Roberto Varea (2008) explains that Yuyachkani’s plays combine characteristics of Bertolt Brecht’s political theatre and Augusto Boal’s theatre of the oppressed. They also draw on myths, legends, masks, music, costumes, and dances from the country’s native cultures, particularly the Andean culture, as they are committed to preserving and reaffirming this part of the country’s identity.

33 Ana Correa in non-published interview at Brandeis University. October 8th, 2007. (Author’s translation)
34 Campesinos is the Spanish word that describes people that live in the countryside, isolated and far away from the urban cities.
35 Non-published. This article is part of the project currently in progress named “Acting Together on the World Stage: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflicts”
Throughout the last centuries, this identity has been oppressed by the rigidness of a colonialism system that undermined the cultural roots of its own people. More recently, Peru was hit by a civil war in the central and southern Andes between the government and the extremist Maoist groups Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru (MRTA). This war resulted in the assassination and ‘disappearance’ of more than 70,000 people (primarily Quechua-speaking peasant farmers) between the years of 1980 and 2000. Most of the victims were innocent people, caught in the crossfire, whose families suffered immensely and whose communities were often destroyed (Taylor, 2004; Varea, 2008; A’ness, 2004).

In trying to rediscover the country’s social memory through their plays, Yuyachkani has itself rediscovered its own identity. They realized that in order to represent with dignity their own country’s history, they had to be deeply connected to the people whose stories they wanted to represent, especially the Native-Peruvians and the campesinos. They have had to think creatively about ways to strengthen their connection to their audience, knowing that the people they want to reach are not in the traditional theatres and performance spaces. Thus, the group has adapted their plays so that they can be performed in opened spaces like plazas, streets, and open markets. They also rigorously researched and adapted for their plays Native Peruvian myths and legends, and they avoid the utilization of too many props and difficult scenes that might distract the audience’s attention from the content of the plays. Yuyachkani’s plays rely on the actors’ main instruments of performance: their bodies.
After the Truth and Reconciliation Commission\textsuperscript{36} (TRC) was formed in Peru during Alberto Fujimori’s regime in 2001, \textit{Yuyachkani} decided to search for the truth about the war, traveling to the communities and hearing the stories of victims most affected by the civil war. They were able to do this by traveling with \textit{Servicios Educativos Rurales}\textsuperscript{37} (SER- Rural Educational Services), a non-governmental organization whose mission is to contribute to the exercise of citizenship rights in rural areas and to improve living standards of the rural population. The theatre group joined SER and started to travel around the country. During this time, the group reached a verbal agreement with the TRC to perform outreach work in the communities where public hearings were to be held for the collection of testimonies (Varea, 2008).

Through their plays, the group carried out the difficult task of helping people to reconstruct and remember the traumas of the war. The group adapted three plays from their repertoire: \textit{Antigona}, \textit{Adios Ayacucho}, and \textit{Rosa Cuhillo}, developed a series of workshops, and prepared a number of specific interventions and street-art installations.

Primarily, it was hoped that \textit{Yuyachkani} would bring awareness about the TRC’s work and help encourage people to tell their stories at public hearings. Secondly, and most importantly, the group hoped that the power of theatre, when combined with traditional rituals, would help in the process of bringing together a country that had been devastated by the atrocities of war. Specifically, they hoped their theatre would dignify victims, honor the dead and disappeared, and call its citizen to engage in the reconstruction of the country’s memory (Varea: 2008).

\textsuperscript{36} For a detailed description of the work performed by Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the final report, see its official website at \url{http://www.cverdad.org.pe}
\textsuperscript{37} For more information about SER’s activities see \url{http://www.ser.org.pe}
Yuyachkani’s search into the violence and its effects, and their attempts to creatively embody them, have led them to the creation of an impressive and finely-crafted repertoire of original plays that retells Peru’s passage through the dark years of the civil war and its effects on its main victims: the campesinos. The plays have characters representing (1) those who have seen the atrocities - the bystanders (e.g Antigona), (2) those who have lost their loved ones – the mothers and wives (e.g Rosa Cuhillo) and (3) those who have themselves disappeared – the victims (e.g Adios Ayacucho). One common characteristic from this repertoire is the presence of characters that have the power to transcend the barrier of time and space, life and death, and engage in activist interventions of their own, where the stage (always open spaces) becomes the embodiment of these multiple temporalities.

In Adios Ayacucho (Good-Bye Ayacucho), the group utilizes the myths and legends from the Andean culture to tell the story of Augusto Cánepa, a farmer who was killed by the Peruvian army in Ayacucho, one of the cities most affected by the civil war. Cánepa returns from the world of the dead to go to Lima, Peru’s capital, to ask for his bones and to have them buried properly in order to rest in peace. The play is an adaptation of the homonymous tale written by Peruvian writer Julio Ortega and is performed by Augusto Casafranca with music by Ana Correa. Because he does not have his body, Cánepa asks the help of a Qolla (a comic Andean dancer) to lend him his body and his voice so that he can tell his story. Through the journey to Lima, the character recalls what happened to him and other farmers who were killed by the army and had their bodies mutilated.
The play is performed around a platform draped with pieces of clothing, representing the way that Andeans mourn their beloved ones. According to Andean customs, as a last farewell ritual, relatives and friends lay down on the floor the deceased’s clothes surrounded by candles and flowers, symbolizing his/her body. This representation of the deceased’s body stays untouched for eight days, which for the Andeans is the time the deceased needs to go from this world to the world of the dead. During the civil war in Peru this ritual has been transformed as the only way that the families had to mourn the farmers who were killed and had their bodies disappear (A’Ness, 2004).

In the play, Augusto Cánepa arrives in Lima and is able to read a letter to the new president. In this letter, Canépa becomes the spokesman of all the disappeared and demands his bones for the government. He also affirms that he and all the others who were killed were victims of a system that has utilized violence to silence those who were innocents. What Canépa asks is the recognition from the state of its past actions.

Yuyachkani also performed, during this period, the play Antigona, adapted from the Greek tragedy written by Sophocles more than two thousand years ago. The play tells the story of Ismena, the sister of Antigona and Polyneices, who failed to act in defense of her siblings. The play, adapted by the Peruvian poet José Watanabe draws on testimonies of the families of the disappeared. Ismene represents the witnesses who were unable to act in the face of atrocities of war and stayed in silence.

In the play, Ismene faces the past and acknowledges her inability to act in favor of her brother as Antigona did, and she decides to redeem her fears. She ritualistically buries Polyneices’s body who was accused as a traitor by the city of Thebes. Through the burial
ritual, Ismene asks forgiveness from her brother for not being able to bury him in the traditional form.

The play, in an honorable way, offers hope to those witnesses and participants of the civil war in the country. Ismene’s attitude invites those witnesses to redeem their absence in the past by taking action in the present; the play seems to say that a first step toward relieving the burden of guilt is to honor those who died and to acknowledge the damages and losses that the country has produced.

Ismene, the only person from her family who survived the war, realizes that she needs to speak up about what she has witnessed. In Antígona, the character reminds its audiences that not only the artist but also the whole community should have an active role in restoring collective memory.

Rosa Cuchillo: a theatre of respect and hope

"And because of that I came here, to dance, to flourish
And because of that I will dance for you,
And memory can flourish."

Taking the example of the play Rosa Cuchillo it is possible to understand how Yuyachkani has reached their audiences and denounced the crimes in the communities where this play was performed. In addition, the play illustrates Yuyachkani’s respect for individual and collective memory and how Andean rituals and mythical legends are utilized to facilitate the process of (1) mourning the loss of loved ones (2) healing the victims and (3) creating ways to imagine a better future.

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38 In: Rosa Cuchillo. See Attachment II – script of the play
Rosa Cuchillo, an adaptation of a novel with the same name by Peruvian novelist Oscar Colchado Lucio, represents the stories of the mothers of the disappeared and their suffering for the loss of their children.

In this play, Rosa invites the mothers in the audience to remember about their sons and daughters. She is a voice for the mothers; she is herself the mothers’ collective memories. Rosa was violated, humiliated and “morrer de pena” for seeing all the atrocities that were happening in her country. Before dying, she promised that she will not stop her search for her son, even when she is dead. Eventually, in the world of the dead, she is able to find Liborio, her son; yet she decided to come back to the world of the living to tell her story to other mothers who are still searching for their sons and daughters. As Rosa returns, time and space are no longer precise, past and present are mixed in her story. Dressed all in white, her body does not exist, she is a ‘living soul’,

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39 Rosa Cuchillo is inspired by the real-life story of indigenous community human rights activist Angélica Mendoza, whose son Arquímedes Ascarsa Mendoza was disappeared during the civil war. Mendoza, like Rosa Cuchillo, has continually searched for her son, becoming, in the process, not just an advocate for her own missing son but for all disappeared Peruvians. Her persistence in this search, which gradually gained nationwide prominence, has raised her to the status of president of the National Association of Families of the Kidnapped, Detained, and Disappeared of Peru. Many of her words and speeches became part of the text that Correa in the play Rosa Cuchillo (A’Ness, 2004).

40 During her interview at Brandeis University Ana Correa, who plays the role of Rosa Cuchillo, suggests that Rosa Cuchillo might have been raped by the army while searching for her son. Ana said that after the performances of Rosa Cuchillo when accompanying the TRC, the mothers would come to her and tell their stories. Most of them were where violated, and they didn’t want to tell this to the Commission. They were ashamed to tell what happened to them and they put it as a minor suffering when comparing to the lost of their sons and daughters. Another fact that suggests that Rosa was violated is that in the beginning of the play, while telling her story, Rosa explains to the audience that when she was young, men (relatives and neighbors) from her village would insistently try to abuse her. In one of this tentative, when a neighbor was trying to abuse her, she got a knife (cuchillo) and threats him with the weapon. After that, she became known as Rosa Cuchillo and no other man tried to approach her. I suggest that this explanation is also another reference to the cultural and social condition that the Andean women have to face in their villages.

41 “Morrer de pena” (died of pity, died of sadness) is a metaphoric expression that describes a feeling of sadness in face of another person’s trouble or suffering. In the play, Rosa literally died of pity while digging a mass grave, surrounded by corpses of children, elders, women and other mother’s sons and daughters.

42 Rosa Cuchillo wears the traditional dress of an Andean woman—full skirt, shawl, brimmed hat, and sandals.
or a sculpture, as a mother told Ana Correa, after a performance. But above all, she is a mother and this is enough to evoke a feeling of connection with other mothers. In identifying with her story, mothers who saw Correa perform started to disclose secrets that were hidden, things they couldn’t tell anyone but another mother. Rosa is able to give them voice; through Rosa Cuchillo, mothers can have their memory back.

The play draws on Andean beliefs about the afterlife as a way to facilitate healing. Through myths and legends from Andean culture, Rosa Cuchillo intends to unify the living and the dead and their parallel searches for truth. In her journey through the world of the dead, Rosa describes her search for her son, giving form to her emotional journey, revisiting her trauma over the loss of her son. Her pain is symbolically described through the myth of her journey. For example, in crossing Wañuy Mayu, the rough river of black waters that separate the living from the dead, and in entering the Ukhu Pacha, a place from which it is impossible to return, Rosa is actually facing her traumas. In facing her loss, she chooses to remember in order to move on. Rosa is dead, but her desire to overcome her trauma breaks the rules of time and space. She has died in order to free herself.

In the play, Rosa’s death symbolizes the death of her suffering. In ‘killing’ her trauma, Rosa make peace with her past. With her son Liborio alive in her memory, and without the pain of remembering him, Rosa can live as a free spirit. This process of liberation begins, I suggest, when Rosa crosses Koyllur Mayu, the river of white and milky waters, which ascends into the sky. As she tells the audience, “In the middle of the river I felt joyfulness, looking at myself, and I saw myself as you are looking at me...”

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43 Ana Correa in non-published interview at Brandeis University. October 8th, 2007. (Author’s translation)
now. Her enlightenment of overcoming her trauma is represented by this process of self-purification and her encounter with her son reinforces this. When she reaches Janaq Paacha, the highest world, she observes a white pigeon flying over the horizon, symbolizing Gran GápaJ, the God of Creation; and from His breast came Liborio. “Just in that moment,” as Rosa explains, “I could embrace and kiss him with infinite happiness.”

The anthropologist Michal Kenny (1999), in his article “A Place for Memory: The Interface between Individual and Collective History,” states that “trauma cannot be laid to rest until the trauma has been addressed mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually” (p. 434); he goes on to say that “(…) a trauma untold is a trauma unresolved. Unresolved trauma occurs when a child or adult is not given the opportunity to release emotions or when emotions are blocked (p. 433, 434).” Rosa’s journey illustrates Kenny’s argument. She literally addresses her trauma mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and only after her journey is she able to rest.

After her journey, she feels compelled to visit the living world and help other mothers like her to heal. The fact that she is a spirit does not stop her from the journey to the real world to share her story with other mothers. As she says in her return: “Now, I come back because this is the time. I am crossing villages, towns, fairs, those places where people meet. I want to say to you, that my people are still sick with sorrow and being forgotten.”

With these words, Rosa addresses the mothers who are still sick with sorrow and their lost sons and daughters who society has forgotten. She also recognizes that their
stories are not being told, that the mothers are suffering for not having found a way to address their memories, and for that reason, their lives are compromised. This is also a reference to the political situation in Peru and the necessity to create a safe place for the victims of an oppressed regime to testify. In visiting the villages as a spirit, Rosa emphasizes the necessity of the witnesses and survivors telling their stories. Rosa is testifying that she was able to overcome all her internal pain and reach internal peace. She is also saying that the country needs to listen to its people’s stories, preventing them from being forgotten by society. The country needs to remember and confront their past (human rights violations).

Diana Taylor (2003), in her book *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, argues that *Yuyachkani* insists on creating a community of witnesses by and through performance: “(…) they teach communities not to look away (…) for *Yuayachkani*, performance is not about going back, but about keeping alive (p.208, 211).” She goes on to say that the performances “enter into a dialogue with a history of trauma without themselves being traumatic. These are carefully crafted works that create a critical distance for claiming experience and enabling, as opposed to collapsing, witnessing (p.210).”

Taylor’s argument is reinforced by the way that *Rosa Cuchillo* ends. After telling her story and having her compelling encounter with her son, Rosa offers a dance for the mothers.

The dance, through the character’s expressions, movements and elements utilized in the scene, assumes characteristics of a ritual of passage, and symbolizes Rosa’s journey in search for her son after her death. The dance embodies Rosa’s fight with the darkness of
the underworld (inferring her traumas) and expresses the obstacles that she had to overcome in order to meet her son. The encounter of mother and son is symbolized by Rosa carrying an imaginary baby on her arms. This gesture is accompanied by a shamanic song, where a vessel containing water and red and white rose petals is brought to the stage and Rosa throws drops of the water in the audience. Through this act, rose’s essence emerges on the air and symbolically, Rosa purifies the mothers and all who are present in the audience.

*Rosa Cuchillo* provides a safe environment for the mothers to remember their traumas, without remaining stuck in a victimhood identity. Based on Andean traditions, the play creates the language necessary to make sure the mothers do not forget their stories and can make peace with their past and consequently their present. The play also provides hope for the mothers, suggesting that their sons and daughters are not dead, but are alive in spirit and the mothers should look for them in the spiritual world as a necessary process to recover from their suffering. Rosa shows that this search is possible. Her mission is to help the mothers in this search. She is a model for the mothers to speak out.

The play also helps connect mothers to their community. Through the myths and legends, the play honors the mothers’ culture and their identity as Andean and Peruvian. This process strengthens the idea of belonging to a group. As suggested by Das and Kleinnan (2001), “storytelling, ritual and possession – all symbolic means embedded in folk religions – provide ways by which the traumatized continue to find meaning in their suffering, to exist and to rebuild their relationship with their community (p.14).” It also
reinforces Laub’s argument of testimony as an important element in the process of remembering, where victims can recall their position in society.

The way that *Rosa Cuchillo* is performed enables the mothers to embark on their own journeys. Through their experiences, they become the protagonists of their own reality. *Rosa Chuchillo* provides support for them to mourn their losses and to transform a reality of pain to a reality of hope.

The play brings understanding to Johnson’s, Freire’s, and Lederach’s arguments of the necessity of both body and mind in the development of critical thought. *Rosa Chuchillo* was able to give expression and meaning to the mothers’ experience, stimulating the dialectical relationship between body and mind. The play evokes the mothers’ experiences by representing their reality and invites them to see it in a different way, proposing possibilities for healing and constructive changes. Instead of focusing on frozen representations of the past, *Rosa Cuchillo* uses history in a dynamic way, honoring victims and educating those who will shape the future.

**Yuyachkani as the Organic Intellectual: Between the Liminal and the Liminoid**

“To look at itself a society must cut out a piece of itself for inspection. To do this it must set up a frame within which images and symbols of what has been sectioned off can be scrutinized, assessed, and, if need be, remodeled and rearranged.”

(Turner: 1979, 468)

“(…) performance is often a critique, direct or veiled, of the social life it grows out of, an evaluation of the way society handles history (…) they do this with “magic mirrors” which make ugly or beautiful events or relationships which cannot be recognized as such in the continuous flow of quotidian life in which we are embedded.”

(Turner: 1986, 22)
It is important to explain here, that I am classifying Yuyachkani’s plays as rituals that were necessary for helping communities to restructure after being devastated by violence. That is, their performances function as ‘social rituals.’ Additionally, I see these rituals as having characteristics of both liminoid and liminal phenomena, as defined by Victor Turner (1979):

“Liminal phenomena (…) are collective, concerned with calendrical, biological, and social structural cycles; they are integrated into the total social process, they reflect the collective experience of a community over time; and they may be said to be functional or eufunctional47.

Liminoid phenomena (…) unlike liminal phenomena, tend to develop apart from central political and economic processes (…) where people voluntarily enter into relationships instead of being born into them, (…) they are plural, fragmentary and often experimental in character (p.492, 494).”

Adopting the term “liminal” from the folklorist Arnold van Gennep,48 Turner (1979) argues that liminal phenomena tend to be presented in tribal and early agrarian societies, while liminoid phenomena prevail in societies of more complex structures. He also states that “liminal genres put much more stress on social frames, plural reflexivity, and mass flow, shared flow, while liminoid genres emphasize idiosyncratic framing, individual reflexivity, subjective flow, and see the social as problem not datum (p.468).”

47 eufunction, eufunctional A eufunctional activity (from the Greek eu meaning ‘well’) is one which contributes to the maintenance or survival of another social activity or of the social system as a whole. The term is now largely obsolete, having been replaced by the simple reference to an activity being functional or having a particular function, the implication being that the objective consequence of the activity in question for the wider social system is indeed positive, in the sense of contributing to the maintenance of social order and stability. The contrast, in the cases of both the older and modern terminology, is with the concept of dysfunction—a term applied in functionalist sociology to activities which are deemed to contribute to the disturbance of existing social patterns and structures. The distinction between functions (or eufunctions) and dysfunctions should not be confused with that between manifest and latent functions: it is possible, at least in principle, to distinguish manifest and latent functions and manifest and latent dysfunctions. In: A Dictionary of Sociology, originally published by Oxford University Press 1998.

48 Arnold van Gennep has classified rites of passage into three phases: separation, liminality, and re-incorporation, defining ritual of passage as a ritual that represents a change of status in a person’s life, such as birth, puberty, marriage and death.
I would like to argue that one of the strengths of Yuyachkani’s work is that they navigate in between the liminal and the liminoid; they are hybrids of functional ritual and experimental art. As liminal phenomena, they draw on deeply rooted cultural forms in order to address problems (social, political, or cultural) that need to be addressed in order to bring balance to the community as a whole. As liminoid phenomena, they are produced apart from the central processes of the community by people who have chosen to engage.

Yuyachkani’s performances can be seen as rituals in that they frame and intervene in specific problems within their society that need to be examined and in that they reflect the collective experience of the communities. Their plays are characterized by Van Gennep’s structure of ritual, wherein the audiences are separated from their ordinary lives, to be reintegrated again in an alternated state of consciousness. All the plays are functional to their communities by showing the violence of the past in a creative way, by depicting a problem and not denying it, and by trying to create conditions for a different view of their reality. The plays become the liminality, where transformations can happen, where risks are taken, where audiences can move beyond what exists into something new and unexpected.

As rituals, the plays reveal values at their deepest level and become key to the understanding of the social environment in which they operate. The plays act as examples for constructive change; they are not simply art to be “admired” for their aesthetic values. On the contrary, they utilize aesthetics values to invite their audiences to reevaluate the social structure in which they live, and to call for collective and constructive change.

And yet, Yuyachkani’s plays are art. They are liminoid in their ability to create individual reflexivity and in the way that they re-imagine (as opposed to simply enacting)
traditional cultural forms. They pay as much attention to innovation as they do to
tradition. It is in this sense that I believe Yuyachkani is a hybrid. They use the medium of
theatre to actively create contemporary social rituals, in order to help those who were and
are victims of a dysfunctional social system. The work takes risks with the goal of ending
oppression and creating sustainable coexistence. Their plays call their audiences to
exercise their citizenship, to participate in a process of social change. As Diane Taylor
(2003), explains,

“Yuyachkani, attempts to make visible a multilingual, multiethnic praxis
and epistemology in a country that pits nationality against ethnicity,
literacy against orality, the archive against the repertoire of embodied
knowledge. (...)Yuyachkani by its very name, introduces itself as a
product of a history of ethnic coexistence. Its self-naming is a
performative declarative announcing its belief that social memory links
and implicates communities in the transitive mode of subject formation49
(p. 192).”

The three plays performed in communities where public hearings occurred
illustrate Yuyachkani’s determination in creating a theater of social memory. The plays
were specially designed to be performed on the streets, bringing typically hidden stories
into the public. They prevent the country from being in denial and open space to (re)-
build relationships that were broken. Yuyachkani’s performances become a channel
through which Peruvian society can acknowledge the damages caused in the lives of
survivors and the families of those who were killed.

The group has intentionally crafted their work for this goal of supporting their
audience in revisiting their memories. They have adopted a relationship of respect with
the poor and native people (who represent 80% of the country’s population) who were

49 Emphasis added.
discriminated against and marginalized. They have done this by creating plays in which these people are the protagonists and their stories can be seen.

It is an intensive process of commitment and trust with the audiences that they represent, where the inspiration for the stories is collected through months of collaborative interaction with the communities. Through workshops and other activities that were developed by the company, *Yuyachkani* provides space for the communities to tell their stories.

With respect and humbleness, the group accepts the stories that were told as a gift of trust and gives back to the communities the plays like those performed during the Truth Commission public hearings. The plays, even based on former texts or novels, has adapted the testimonies that victims form the civil war have provided to the group. The plays, through their content, are able to provide awareness about what was done in the past, and through their context, are able to provide a safe environment for audiences to question the present.

This balance is achieved by the way that *Yuyachkani* has blended some of the characteristics of western theatre with traditional rituals. The group rescues the roots of western theater which, in its beginning, was performed in public spaces where actors would represent aspects of their daily lives that needed to be discussed with the communities. Like open forums, theatre was a way to bring people together to rethink their problems together and to find solutions for their community together.

By utilizing myths, legends and compelling narratives, the group connects their audience to their own history, the group is rescuing the country from cultural forgetfulness, dignifying the countries’ identity and supporting its people. In addition,
because of the aesthetic qualities of their work, which honor European theatre conventions and styles as well as indigenous performances traditions, *Yuyachkani* reaches out to audiences in Lima as well as in the indigenous communities. The group utilizes their plays to strengthen the acceptance of the cultural differences of Peru and to support these differences. Through their plays, the group evokes that each individual can add to a community with his/her own identity, that the differences can enrich a nation and make it stronger by all the new possibilities that can emerge through the interaction of these different cultures.

The actor is a facilitator, a mediator in this process of bringing to the surface the problems that needed to be addressed (Boal, 1979). This facilitator can be seen in the characters created by *Yuyachkani*. Rosa Cuchillo, Augusto Capéna, Ismena, among many others, are able to reach their communities because they themselves are part of those communities.

For *Yuyachkani*, the inspiration for their work is the issues that matter for their community. There is no imposition of ideas or artistic style, the group recognizes that the audience is capable to process their own ideas, and they seek for the construction of a participative audience, that is able to be the protagonist of their own stories.

It can be inferred that the members of *Yuyachkani* fit into Freire’s definition of the organic intellectual, where by connecting with communities, and learning from and with them, they are able to adapt creatively two different forms of representation: theater and ritual. Their theater becomes transformative because they as actors and as part of the community are open to transform. There is a learning process in the creation of their
plays. Specifically there is an exchange of roles, the group went to their audience, learned with them, listened to their stories and created something that matters for them.

The excellence of their work is demonstrated by the way that the group respects their audiences. By adopting a humanistic theatre, the group assumes that they are mediators that can provide resources for their community to improve. The uniqueness of Yuyachkani is that the group realized that the resources are their community, that their audiences are the vital element that they need to consider in order to develop their work. It is a symbiosis process where the group learns with their community and gives back what they learned in form of art.

*Yuyachkani’s* humanistic theatre can bring to historical narratives better meaning, and understanding of how individuals and communities remember what took place in Peru. However, their plays imply that these social memories are not isolated in the past, but are actively lived in the present. Rather than memories that once were forgotten or buried deep in the individual or collective unconscious, their plays evoke memories that were waiting for an opportune forum and social opening for expression.

In *Yuyachkani’s* plays, only in the present can the past be experienced and the future imagined. The present is, in the words of Miguel Rubio (the group’s permanent director), “the space where the waters of the past and the future flow turbulently together (A’Ness: 2004, p.402).” In the present, memories are collected, organized and sense is provided, to then, be able to proceed ahead, shaping the future. The stage, then, becomes a living canvas where past can be re-presented, acknowledged and assessed from new perspectives, and where futures can be imagined, envisioned, and rehearsed.

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50 Emphasis added.
For the bystanders, *Yuyachkani* creates the conditions to acknowledge the facts of the past and how these facts affected their communities. Their plays invite their communities to rethink in the present the causes of the conflicts and provide hope for a social restructure. Their characters call their audience to take part in this process and to transform their passive condition to active roles that can redefine their own history. It is an educational process that combines cognitive and emotional learning, which has the capacity of penetrating the audience’s mind and body and allows them to become aware of their importance in their communities. The acknowledgment that their attitude matters facilitates the process of social action.

For the victims, *Yuyachkani* is actually embodying a narrative that could not be told with words alone. It is what Laub and Felman (1992) describe as the process of constructing a narrative of traumas, which is necessary to allow victims to have the conditions to create sense of the trauma by re-externalizing it to another outside and then taking it back again, transformed.

Anna Correa recognizes her role in this healing process because of the relationship of trust that was created, where she is able to lend her body to all the women and embody their suffering. This representation, as she argues, cannot be false; like a ritual, in the moment of performance she lives the traumas of her characters. The integrity of her work is recognized by the response of the audiences, where women frequently would come back to Anna and support her to keep telling their stories; “their trust in me was the strength and the protection that allowed my body to revive their pain.”

The testimonies that victims provided to the group - prior to the work that the group has developed to accompany the TRC in 2001 - and the public hearings themselves

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51 Ana Correa in non-published interview at Brandeis University. October 8th, 2007. (Author’s translation)
were the final outcome of this process. They were the example that victims wanted to re-narrate their past, in order to honor their individual memory and bring sense to their collective memory. In recognition of the group’s history and quality of socially engaged work, Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani was awarded the Peruvian National Human Rights Award in the year 2000.

Yuyachkani’s own history shows that to reach this excellence demands time and dedication. In the group’s case this excellence was reached through a constant evaluation of their work as a group and as individual. The self-criticism was always accepted as a way to improve and to make their work better.

They reached the conclusion that by working to become better human beings, they could make their theatre better for their audience. For Yuyachkani, the “I” is connected to the other; the individual development is directly connected to the collective development. On this sense, Yuyachkani puts in practice Freire’s concept of “problem-posing” education, where teacher-student and student-teacher interact in a mutual process in which all grow.

As organic intellectuals, by knowing their culture, and being part of that culture, the mutual process of exchanging experience through dialogue becomes complete. The idea of organic intellectual gives space for respecting differences, where by understanding your own culture, people are able to accept other cultures.

Their work defends the idea that diversity is the bases for coexistence: In respecting people’s identity, the interaction will be more possible, where no society or culture has the dominant model or the perfect one; where each society can respect, learn and translate from other cultures what they judge better for themselves.
5- Conclusion

“To risk is to step into the unknown without any guarantee of success or even safety. Risk by its very nature is mysterious. It is mystery lived, for it ventures into lands that are not controlled or charted. (...) Violence is known, peace is the mystery. By its very nature, therefore peacebuilding requires a journey guided by the imagination of risk.”

(Lederach: 2005, 39)

In this study, I posed the question of how cultural producers could invite people to learn about violations of human rights in ways that help them to prevent future violence and promote coexistence. I argued for the necessity of remembering atrocities in order to avoid the risks of collective forgetfulness of crimes, and most importantly, in order to prevent a vicious cycle of violence. I explained the importance of testimonies in this process of revisiting the past with the goal of creating new possibilities to end violence, strengthen relationships, and promote coexistence.

I then questioned the efficacy of mainstream media in promoting these goals, focusing on television broadcast of conflicts involving human rights violations. I showed that television is not structured to allow its audiences to understand the roots of conflicts, and it furthermore does not transform audiences from observers to actors of change. I argued that constructive ways to present the conflicts requires more time and space than are available with this medium.

I proposed that it is necessary to consider alternative forms for representing the atrocities of the past. I suggested that theatre can have a better approach and provide

52 Emphasis added.
better responses to the act of remembering conflicts involving human rights violation than television does. I argued that theatre can be an alternative medium that can present most of the elements that I justified being necessary to the process of promoting awareness of crimes.

Theatre was described as a venue that in the aftermath of violence can provide a second version of a past that did not have the opportunity to be expressed or manifested by communities for fear of repression.

I focused my study on the analysis of theatre as a facilitator of bringing community into conversations. I based my argument on Paulo Freire’s idea of conscientization as the necessary element that needs to emerge in communities affected by crimes against humanity, which can lead them to a constructive change of their reality.

Based on this argument, I analyzed the example of Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani from Peru. I suggested that Yuyachkani embodies Freire’s idea of the revolutionary act; their plays promote the conscientization of their audience, envisioning a change on a social structure through praxis, encouraging their audiences to become the actors of this transformation.

In comparing Yuyachkani’s theatre with the way TV news programs operate, it becomes clear that television’s space and time do not allow a broader understanding of the context and specifics of cases of human rights violations. On the other hand, the format adopted by Yuyachkani’s performances allows for a slow processing of information, leading to a broader understanding of the events.
Yuyachkani’s organic theatre takes into account all the important ingredients that are necessary for nourishing their audiences, while the fast food news delivered on television has an excess of empty calories and does not feed viewers.

That being said, this study, through the example of Yuyachkani, proved the potentiality of creative approaches to address atrocities from the past and to stimulate audiences to recognize their ability to transform their social reality.

Finally, this study finishes by inviting cultural producers to recognize the power of penetration that television has, as well as other audiovisual media like internet and cinema, to consider this advantage of reaching large audiences, and to think of possibilities to amplify the positive responses that theatre has in addressing crimes from the past into these media. It invites cultural producers to think creatively in ways that the answers found can promote and stimulate the capacity to transform our reality for the good.

How could Yuyachkani’s work, for example, be applied to an audiovisual format? How could their work be translated into another culture, into a broader audience? How could this work be measured, considering that the bodily presence would be mediated by another medium like internet, or television, or cinema? How would the problem of space and time be addressed in this new format of representation?

It is necessary to study further how mainstream media might be utilized to promote exchange of experiences from one culture to another; where the idea of education needs to transcend the unilateral transference of knowledge, and information could help to promote critical consciousness in audiences.
How can we combine the nourishment of the theatre with the accessibility of television and other broadcast media? Can television be re-imagine to connect the body and the mind? To answer these questions, we need to practice the discipline of paradoxical curiosity and John Lederach’s advice to take the risk to step into the unknown, believing that the creativity that is presents in all human beings can guide us in the construction of answers to the questions. After all, bearing in mind Paulo Freire’s philosophy, by living in and with the world, human beings produce social reality; therefore, to transform reality is a task for human beings.


____________. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York : Continuum, c1970


Girardet, Edward R. “Reporting Humanitarianism: Are the New Eletronic Media Making a Difference?” *From Massacres to Genocide: The Media, Public Policy, and Humanitarian


Attachment I

“The Vulture Photo”
Pulitzer Prize Winner for Feature Photography in 1994

Village of Ayod, Southern Sudan, 1993

Photo: Kevin Carter
Attachment II

Acting Together on the World Stage
Brief description of the Cases

Holding Fast to the Feet of the Rising Condor: Performance In the Aftermath of Mass Violence and Gross Violations of Human Rights includes examples of performances that address the legacies of intense violence, including both recent events, and events that took place in decades and centuries past. Theatrical performances and ritual acts both embody and seek truth-telling, justice and reconciliation.

- **Memories of Fire: Truth and Justice Through Theater in Argentina and Peru**, Roberto Varea compares the legacy of recent (and to some extent, on-going) violence in two South American countries, and the theatrical responses of Peru’s Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani and the Argentinian movement Teatro X Identidad. This case study opens the door to consider the relationship between personal and societal transformation, and how different conceptions of justice and of healing animate performances of all kinds.

- **Creating a New Story: Ritual, Ceremony and Conflict Transformation between Indigenous and Settler Peoples** by Dr. Polly Walker, illustrates how indigenous rituals and cosmologies, once outlawed by the institutions of settler peoples, offer resources for reconciliation between members of indigenous communities and descendants of settlers. With examples from both Australia and the United States, this chapter explores the concept of ‘epistemic violence,’ the injury to whole systems of knowledge and belief, and how relationships restored through constructing and performing rituals can contribute to local and society-wide transformations.

- **Alive on Stage: Time, Histories and Bodies**, by Catherine Filloux, illustrates how, in the aftermath of genocide, and in the absence of formal trials or truth commissions, performances created opportunities for acknowledgement, reflection and communication across generations. The case draws on works by the author and her students and colleagues in Cambodia.

- **Hidden Fires: Artistic Responses to Hindu/Muslim Ethnic Violence and Oppression in India**, by Naveen Kishore and Ruth Margraff, Documents and assesses the work of the Seagull Foundation in Gujarat, India in the aftermath of the 2002 genocide, and, in particular, its efforts to affect attitudes and values, and enhance critical thinking by young people through engagement with theatre artists and performance experiences.
**Singing in the Dark Times: Performance In the Midst of Violence and Oppression**, document the efforts of theatre artists and cultural workers to non-violently resist violence, and to confront governmental abuses of power in the context of war. Examples from Serbia, Uganda, Palestine, and Sri Lanka illustrate how courage and creativity can restore agency to people and contribute to social justice, even in the face of exploitation and repression.

- In *Theatre as a Way of Knowing*, Dijana Milosevic documents performative acts of resistance in Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well moments of healing and intergroup relationship-building in the aftermath of ethnic violence. At a time when talk about the violent excesses of the Serbian government was forbidden, Dah theatre discovered that its commitment to artistic integrity created a measure of safety for them to counteract the silence and denial that pervaded public life.

- *Theatre, War, and Peace in Uganda* by Charles Mulekwa, documents the paradoxes inherent in the National Theatre of Uganda, which celebrated traditional expressive forms even as it imposed European cultural standards, and created spaces for expression and coded truth-telling, even in periods of extreme political repression. The chapter focuses on two plays: Alex Mukulu’s *Thirty Years of Bananas*, and Sam Okello’s *Forged in Fire*, which addresses the consequences of the war in Northern Uganda.

- *Creating Space for Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka through Performance*, by Madhawa Palihapitiya, contrasts the performative approaches of two Sri Lankan artists. Kandasamy Sithamparanathan, a Tamil artist who founded the Theatre Action Group, engages members of the grassroots communities of northern Sri Lanka in a variety of performance experience, including healing rituals, educational workshops and political demonstrations. The Sinhala theatre director Dharmasiri Bandaranaike directs classical productions designed to engage people from all of the communities in Sri Lanka in respecting each other’s cultures and empathizing with each other’s suffering.

- *Theatre and Non-violent Resistance in Palestine* by Abeer Musleh. Explores the possibilities of and constraints on engaging the resources of theatre to stimulate cultural awareness, arouse artistic sensibilities, non-violently resist occupation, and restore capacities required to imagine and work towards a new future. Examples include the Al-Rowwad Youth Theatre in the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem, and Ashtar Theatre Production and Training Center in Ramallah.
Weaving a Relationship is Like Embroidering Silk: Performances Giving Voice, Creating Bridges, Engaging Conflicts and Preventing Violence in Diverse Societies, the third set of case studies, document performances that strengthen intercommunal relationships in and across societies struggling with the dynamics of racism, dislocation and inequality.

- Weaving Relationships, Embroidering Dialogues: Strengthening Coexistence in Israel through Performance, by Aida Nasrallah and Lee Perlman, documents and reflects upon two projects: 1) the Hebrew-Arab Theatre in Jaffa, Israel, in which a Jewish company and an Arab company collaborate on many projects, including the staging of an Israeli Truth and Reconciliation commission; and 2) the performance art of Palestinian-Israeli artist Aida Nasrallah, whose feminist works have created contexts for unexpected relationships across political and cultural divides.

- Performing Cross-Cultural Conversations: Creating New Kinships Through Community Theatre, by Eugene van Erven and Kate Gardner, illustrates the power of narrative-based performances to break through stereotypes and facilitate relationships of understanding. Community theatre productions involving Muslim and Christian men in The Netherlands, and an innovative international soap opera co-created by diverse communities in New York City and Kisumu, Kenya facilitate relationships across boundaries of culture, economic circumstance and geography.

- Youth LeadingYouth: Hip Hop and HipLife Theatre in Ghana and South Africa, by Dr. Daniel Banks, describes the non-violent roots of Hip Hop culture and partial appropriation by the recording industry, and illustrates how community-based hip hop theatre contributes to a culture of peace in Africa by empowering youth to articulate and address their social and political concerns.

- Change the World as We Know It: Peace, Youth, and Performance, by Dr. Mary Ann Hunter, describes and assesses several youth performance projects that, in their creation, rehearsal, presentation, and processing, provide opportunities for conflicts between Australians of indigenous, immigrant, refugee and settler communities to be surfaced and productively engaged.

- Do You Smell Something Stinky? Notes from Conversations about making Art in Racist, Imperial America in the 21st Century, by John O’Neal, offers a retrospective and critical review of performative approaches to addressing racism in the United States, including reflections on Free Southern Theater, Junebug and contemporary theatrical responses to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
(MUSIC - Rosa walks among the audience until reach the small stage. She seats in a small stool and starts to talk)

ROSA
When I was alive, people called me Rosa Huanca. My parents died because there was an earthquake when I was very young and men came to molest me. Then I said to myself: “It will be the best to live up in the mountain, in my small plot (chacrita). I have heard that if someone draws a cross in the ground, and “plants” a knife, it will help to protect you from the bad spirits, and wishes…. the wishes of men. So, I did it. But the same …the same, one night one of my master’s sons had come to abuse me. I took a knife, I defended myself…and he ran, plenty of fear… he went out.
“Jay, jay, jay…” When he was drunk in the chicheria he talked with others, and because of that, never more I was called Rosa Huanca …I was named “Rosa Cuchillo (knife)” After a year, I met a good and working man, he is Dionisio. I had had a beautiful and strong, healthy, baby. Liborio was his name. But when my Liborio was young ….the war has begun, mamita (little sister).

(Rosa turns to the audience and asks them)

ROSA
“Papa, you know of it? And you sir? …..and you miss, madam? One day the trupakunas, the soldiers came into our village, and took all young men and women, accusing them. When we returned to our village we ran to the police station. And they said: “Mana (sister), no we don’t know anything. The sinchis…” Running we went to the sinchis… “Mana, no that was not ours…” Then we said to ourselves: Let’s go to the military quarters. During four… five days, we were crying, standing up in front of the bars of the quarters. Finally, a young captain came, and looking to me, he said: “Terrorist!! Your son surely must be a terrorist, a terruco. Get out of here or you will be shot, too!” When someone said to us that there are bodies of young personas thrown on the road, dead, and nobody …because of fear…rescued them. With other mothers of the village we went to observe, looking for our children….and without any money to pay a place in a truck to return home….crossing the mountains we came. And I was walking saying to myself: “Probably my Liborio escaped, probably my Liborio is injured in some place, and I began to call him: “Liborio, Liborio…” The echo of the mountains answered me.
Once a day, someone told me…. “To the Infiernillo (hell) must go”. And when we came there… Ay, ay ay, ay… mamita!!! Men and women bodies, death, very young among them, with their small hands, tied at their backs, children, babies, guaguas. …and turning up their bodies I began to die, de pena (for pity).….saying to myself that even dead, I would continue looking for my son. Suddenly, “shasssss” …I appeared in the highest placer of my village, and I understood everything. Putting my hand on my breast……to the soil, and I kissed it, lovingly, saying: goodbye happiness (joyfulness) and….goodbye…. In that instant I heard a voice calling me: “Rosa, Rosa Chuchillo!”. Looking back me I saw my allhuchay, my little dog Huayra, that I cared for when I was a little girl. A puma (lion) killed him to eat one of my sheep.

(Dialogue between Rosa and her pet)

ROSA

“Huayra”

HUAYRA

“Don’t be afraid Rosa, I came for you”, he said.

ROSA

“Have you seen my Liborio?”

HUAYRA

“Yes. He crossed this road before you. Come on, we have to cross the Wañuy Mayu, the rough river of black waters that separate the living from the death.

ROSA

I hugged my Huayra, and went into the river. We crossed to the other side and a Punku (door) was open in front of us. It was the entrance to the Uku Pacha the underworld, a place that will be open to every one in a particular way, a place impossible to return from. There I found men and women, half human, half animals. I asked them for my Liborio. I helped some of them, others help me, and others make me run scared. After we came before the Hatun Rumi, the Great Lord of the Mountains an bowing I said to him: “Great Lord, for my Liborio, I’m asking.” “He is before you Rosa”, he said to me. “Now you must continue. You must cross the Koyllur Mayu, the river of white and milky waters that cross the stars and the luceros. And that we did it. In the middle of the river I felt joyfulness, looking at myself, and I saw myself as you are looking me now. When I came to the other side of the river, another Punku was open to me. It was the door of the Janaq Paacha, the Highest of earth (world), and I observed a white pigeon flying over the horizon. From deep inside came a very white light….white one. Then I saw the Gran
Gápaj, the God of Creation, coming toward me, with his arms open and from his breast came my Liborio coming out, and just in that moment I could embrace and kiss him with infinite happiness. Now, I come back because is the time. I am crossing (visiting) villages, towns, fairs, those places where people meet. I want to say to you, that my people are still sick with sorrow and being forgotten. And because of that I came here, to dance, to flourish so the memory may flourish. And because of that I will dance for you. So the memory can flourish.

(Rosa stands up and starts to dance)