The Denied Happiness:
Stages of Violence, Terror and Repression in Colombia

Natascha Diaz Cardona

A thesis Submitted to

Auckland University of Technology

in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2019

Te Ara Poutama

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Abstract

This thesis analyses how acts of violence, terror, and repression in Colombia can be analysed as performances, that is for the way they are constructed to be viewed by the general public. To see these acts as events that have been prepared, rehearsed, follow a dramaturgical process, and are later restaged by the media, is to come to understand that the long cycle of violence is not the result of Colombian nature (which would mean it cannot be changed), but the product of a socio-political process that follows patterns, builds status relations, and frames ways of thinking individually and socially. In this thesis, I will be looking at the constituent parts of historical and theatrical events to see how they have been constructed in order to create an effect in their audiences. This thesis triangulates theoretically between the work of Victor Turner, Richard Schechner and Diana Taylor. Each informs my application of performance studies to the case studies and allows me to build a methodological approach that is both dramaturgical and theatrical.

I have selected four events as case studies. Considered chronologically from 1948 to 2008 from Colombian social history, they represent pivotal moments in the construction of violence in my country. In chapter one, I analyse the assassination of the political leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán. Chapter two examines the siege of the Palace of Justice in 1989 by the guerrilla group M-19 and how the counterattack by the army reinforced the use of violence as a method of repression. Chapter three studies the assassination of the journalist and comedian Jaime Garzón in 1999 by paramilitary forces, confirming a state of terror in which any citizen might be subject to annihilation. My final chapter begins with the case of the *Falsos Positivos* – the false positives case – which then leads to my conclusions.

In addition, I examine the theatrical response to each of the events and evaluate the ways theatre-makers have worked to represent these social circumstances. In

Chapter one, the play *1948: El Fracaso de una Utopía Popular* (2015) is a collective creation by a 1948 group of researchers from *Universidad del Valle*. *La Siempreviva* (1992) by Miguel Torres in Chapter two takes elements from the siege of the Palace of Justice and is part of Colombia's classic theatre repertoire. Chapter three analyses *Corruptour* (2015) by Verónica Ochoa who used postmodern theatrical devices to depict Garzon's life and activism. The last theatrical response, in my concluding chapter, is *Antígona: Tribunal de Mujeres* (2013), a collective creation by Tramaluna Teatro in which the cast includes women victims of the abuse of power from the state.

It is perhaps in the theatre that Colombians can create enough space to see themselves not as powerless and passive actors, but as active performers who can redress violence, terror and repression through social action. Then, Colombian society might start imagining a future with happiness more real than the present reality.

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is an excellent example of community work. As in theatre, it is not possible to stage a work oneself. The support and help of others are essential if one is to fulfil any desire to show a story. Each person in this thesis has been an essential part of making this research and the telling of this story possible. These people are all connected as in a machine in which each piece links to another makes the entire object work. I am very grateful to all the people who helped me during this long process. To my parents, Laura and Roberto, who believed in me even when I did not believe I could do it myself, thank you for your love, kindness, and generosity. Also, to my aunt and uncle, Maite and Jaime - you have made it possible for my kids and me to stay in our new home in New Zealand.

To cross the Pacific Ocean and get here, friends and family crowdsourced funding for me many years ago. I always promised to mention them in the acknowledgements of the thesis, not knowing with certainty that I would reach that point, but here I am. Thank you for giving me the first important impulse - Margarita Arboleda, Jessica and Juan Eduardo, Cristina De La Portilla, Vicky and Andre, Frank J. Torres, and Carlos Durán. So many things have happened for all of us during this time and yet a moment like this is a pause to remember that one day you planted a seed and now you can appreciate the tree that grew of it.

My siblings and their families, Paola, Felipe and Esteban, thank you for spoiling me so much, I love you and miss you. My colleague and friend Lauren and her family – together we created so many things by sharing the same passion. I am very fortunate to work with you; you have given me a sense of belonging. Thank you for looking after my children and me. My friends from here and overseas that have heard all *mis cuitas* during these years, Loren, Javier, Tucha, Pilola, Vivian, Verónica, Marina, Sandra, Mónica, Maye, Agustina, Dione, Claire and Biggi, you provided free therapy when

sometimes I thought I would lose my mind. Your friendship kept me strong. My village in Te Atatu Peninsula, you helped me to navigate the anguish of motherhood and provided my children with quality time when I could not be there - Isabelle, Michelle, Melissa and Carrie. To Marlon, thank you for beginning this journey with me and being an awesome father to our kids. Although our paths are now separated, I am grateful for what we built together and for your insistence on taking this leap of faith across the ocean to begin a new life.

This network of people behind me and this thesis contributed to keeping me functional and accountable for doing this work, but none of this would be possible if it was not for the guidance and wisdom of my supervisor, Professor Sharon Mazer. Thank you for walking with me during these years and opening the doors that I needed, to test and challenge my ideas. Your support is beyond measure, as you understood not only my topic but my personal circumstances that made this journey more demanding. I am profoundly grateful for all your teaching. Thank you also to my second supervisor, Professor Paul Moon, for the insightful observations he made that enhanced this work. To my colleagues in *Te Ara Poutama*, Jani, Diana, Mihalo and Elisa, thank you for your friendship and productive conversations about postgraduate research. To all the people in *MAI-ki-Aronui* for making this work about connection and belonging. To the colleagues in Colombia who gave some of their precious time to talk with me about this topic, Carlos Satizábal, Gabriel Uribe, Verónica Ochoa, Roberto Figueroa, Patricia Ariza and Fabio Rubiano, your insights enriched my argument and ideas.

To Glenn for patiently being part of this last stage of the journey and offering me a calming space where I could disconnect and recharge, I thank you. Finally, to my children, Sammy and Violeta; every moment of stress, every absence, every disconnection was there for us to reconnect and meet again. Every dream, every trip, every night talking about the future was there for seeing where our own work can take

us. This is the best example I can give you not to give up, not ever. This work is yours as much as it is mine. I love you.

Approval for the ethics application (15/326) for this was given on the 7 Sep. 2015. The images of the thesis are reprinted with permission.

Tyrants always fear art

because tyrants want to mystify while art tends to clarify.

Iris Murdoch

Introduction

> Using the tools of performance studies to analyse how calculated violence is employed in media-saturated society is not an insult to the memories of those who died, but an essential means of understanding the undeniably symbolic level at which global conflict is now being played out.
>
> John Bell (7)

I am from Colombia, a country that has compelled worldwide attention on multiple occasions due to its history of highly dramatic acts of violence, internal war, illegal drug trafficking, and state corruption. Colombia's long history of political violence has dragged on for many generations, including my own, in which the citizens have encountered the daily cyclical enactment of violence, terror, and repression. Throughout my youth, I came to understand that these social conflicts will be always a part of who I am. Colombian armed conflict and the social constructions of this conflict, formed my identity and led me to belong to its violence whether I wanted it or not. I do not consider myself a violent person; however, if I do not beat my children, shove strangers out of the way in the street, or bully those who disagree with me on social media, does this mean that I, as an individual, do not perform violence? I do not have to do these sorts of things to be violent, and nor does it mean that I am not part of its legitimisation. I do not have to approve of, or commit acts of violence and terror myself, as the outlaws and the government do. In order to live my life from one day to the next, I must accept that these acts occur, and to some degree, believe that there is nothing I can do to change them. I need to accept my powerlessness as a social actor and privilege the official account that the measures taken to change this violent condition are all that Colombians can do.

This thesis analyses how acts of violence, terror, and repression in Colombia can be seen "as a performance"[1] for the way they are constructed to be viewed by the general public. To see these acts as things that have been prepared, rehearsed, follow a dramaturgical process, and are later restaged by the media, implies that the long cycle of violence is not the result of our nature (which would mean it cannot be changed), but the product of a socio-political process that follows patterns, builds status relations, and frames ways of thinking. To develop this reasoning, I have selected four events from Colombian social history that portray pivotal moments in the construction of violence in my country. These case studies come from different decades between 1948 and 2016; however, they do not sum up the extended and complicated history of Colombian conflict. Many other examples could fit this analysis to identify the performance of violence, but I have chosen these four cases because they relate directly to my experience as a Colombian and the history education I received when I was young. In addition, I examine the theatrical response to each of the events and evaluate the ways theatre-makers have worked to represent these social circumstances. How do each of these plays invite the audience/readers to reflect on the staging of violence, terror and repression? How might Colombians expand their understanding of the theatre's potential to activate audiences towards social justice as a result?

As a Colombian citizen, a theatre practitioner, a mother, a woman and an academic, I want to understand why a country that ranks third as one of the happiest places on the planet according to The Happy Planet Index 2016 (HPI)[2] possesses at the

[1] Richard Schechner in his book *"Performance Studies: An Introduction"* outlines that "To treat any object, work, or product 'as' performance – […] means to investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other objects or beings, and how it relates to other objects or beings" (30). In addition, "What the 'as' says is that the object of study will be regarded 'from the perspective of' [...] 'interrogated by' a particular discipline of study" (42). In this thesis, that is performance studies.

[2] The Happy Planet Index (HPI) measures four variables in 150 countries. These are life expectancy, experience wellbeing, inequality of outcomes, and ecological footprint. After an extended survey and recollection of data from agencies such as the United Nations, a mathematical equation is used to obtain the results. For more information visit www.happyplanetindex.org

same time, 220,000 victims of the armed conflict between 1958 and 2012 (CNMH 31). How can I approach this incongruency? Does this mean that violence and happiness are not mutually exclusive? The array of violent acts in Colombia affects every single layer of the social structure: from the victims in the countryside of massacres and crossfire between guerrilla and paramilitary soldiers, and even to the National Army, to the pedestrian killed by someone stealing their mobile telephone. It is a feature of our daily narrative, the stories that we tell ourselves and that we have even come to capitalise on in Hollywood productions such as *Narcos*.

I feel the urgency of trying a different way to analyse this ongoing cycle of violence, terror and repression, the need to propose another approach to break it or at least ameliorate the social ills we have been suffering for so long. I believe that by analysing the Colombian situation in a performance studies frame, I can propose a different point of view on the construction of violence, and its normalisation in daily life. Rustom Bharucha explains in his book *Terror and Performance,* that thinking through theatre and performance studies enables him "to *see* and *engage* with terror" (40); I follow his example to recognise the patterns and strategies that allow seeing violence in Colombia as something natural to us. This notion has been constructed through time and commands the ways of performing in everyday life. Performance studies as a theoretical field attached to the praxis helps me to observe how this everyday doing "is inextricably linked to social action on a specific order and set of instructions" (Bharucha 41).[3]

Violence in Colombia has been analysed as a phenomenon, but the academic focus is on explaining how it manifests and what might cause it (Blair Jaramillo, "Aproximación teórica" 21). I draw on academic analyses of significant historical acts of violence in order to see how such acts have been represented in dramatic terms by the

[3] This thesis uses MLA as reference system.

media, and how those representations have subsequently been challenged in the theatre itself. Since the foundation of the Republic in 1819, acts of violence, terror, and repression have been performed in Colombia by those wanting to obtain and maintain power and control over its wealth. Colombia's abundant natural resources and land extensions attract powerful elites who want to dominate access to them, just as different outlaw groups desire it. The nineteenth century contains stories of how the *colonos* (settlers), after working for years in the wastelands and making them productive, were usurped by landowners who had the means to pay for the property titles (LeGrand 33-35). The land problem "may be considered one of the root causes of the conflict" even though Colombian social discord has evolved becoming more complex (Meertens and Zambrano 191). The country has problems with the concentration of the property in a few hands, the misuse of the land, and the deficiency in providing basic resources for the peasants, such as health, housing, and education ("El acceso a la tierra"). While this history provides rich material for analysis, my focus is on more recent events, largely because I want to argue that the dramatisation of violence has escalated appreciably since the middle of the twentieth century, starting with the assassination of the political leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán in 1948, which was followed by ten years of turbulence known as *La Violencia*, leading to the guerrilla warfare that still continues.[4]

For common citizens, the political and social situation can be perplexing, pushing them to overlook or normalise what otherwise might be seen as a disruption of social codes. For example, the acquisition of power and wealth through lawful and unlawful actions seems to establish a new order that benefits everyone in the social pyramid, having the effect of dampening the impulse to protest, and over time dimming the inclination toward critical thinking about current events. Many criminal groups have

4 During the presidency of Juan Manuel Santos and after four years of negotiation, the Colombian Government and the guerrilla FARC reached a peace agreement in 2016. However, the guerrilla group ELN (The National Liberation Army or *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*), until the day of this redaction, was still active. Currently negotiations are underway, but no agreement has been reached yet.

worked in favour of the private interests of government members and affluent families, benefiting both sides of the spectrum (elites and insurgents), while peasants and working-class are crushed in the middle.

Acts of violence, terror, and repression are socially or politically constructed rather than part of the Colombian nature. These acts are also highly performative, which means they are staged to be seen and framed to impose modes of thinking and behaviour. For example, "paramilitary violence was used systematically as an 'external muscle' to settle local feuds to the advantage of agroproducers" (Dufort 220) which means that many of the massacres executed in small towns in the countryside are aimed at displacing the region's peasants. Massacres are not random acts, but procedures that follow specific settings to effect specific outcomes, such as terror (Uribe Alarcón, *Antropología* 84). These procedures and settings may include theatrical conventions that build the violent act into something to be seen by those who do not experience it directly.

This thesis does not provide an extensive historical survey of political violence in Colombia, but each case study refers to the social and political background of the moment to locate the action and to offer the reader an understanding of the circumstances surrounding the event. Likewise, this thesis does not offer an historical survey of Colombian theatre, except insofar as it might provide a context for the case study. There are many interventions or performance practices such as street theatre, protests, and installations, that are also beyond the scope of the present research project. In considering the media's response to violent events, I look at the dramaturgical tropes that can be seen to be embedded in the popular culture of Colombian society, rather than undertaking a narratological or linguistic analysis. Each case study is situated in a different moment in Colombian history, so that the phenomenon of performed violence can be understood as part of an ongoing social and political evolution. In examining the

history and the landscape of violence in Colombia, my perspective is that of a theatre-maker and performance studies scholar, and not as an historian or sociologist.

That said, this thesis draws on analyses of violence, terror, and repression in Colombia in the social sciences, with a strong focus in sociology, law, and political science (Sánchez 26-28). In Colombia, this scholarship has been constructed often in a mutual effort between academics and government institutions, considering the prevalence of violence, identifying its sources and lead actors, and prescribing remedies. Although theatre scholarship in Colombia has produced interdisciplinary research between the performing arts and the social sciences in the last decade, there is still a tendency towards conventional frameworks such as surveys of significant plays and productions, descriptions of rehearsal processes, the semiotics of particular theatrical texts, and so on. Performance Studies is a relatively recent arrival in Colombia and Latin America.[5] The word "performance" itself is problematic as it "has not exact translation in Spanish" (Steuernagel and Taylor 5). Despite the difficulty of framing the diverse practices that can be embraced by the term, Performance Studies is a relevant field of study in Latin America, because "the deep historical connections between systems of validation of local embodied practices and the perceived epistemological superiority of colonial models are so acute" (Steuernagel and Taylor, 6). The production of articles that purport to address theatrical and performative responses to social conditions is in progress, with a lot of room to develop diverse discussions on politics, violence, and performance. Here I present, in summary, some of the key texts, histories and theories that inform my research. In this thesis, all the translations from sources in Spanish are mine unless I state otherwise.

[5] Diana Taylor's initiative "The Hemispheric Institute" started 20 years ago, becoming the first centre of research in Performance Studies in Latin America. See hemisphericinstitute.org/en/. In 2007 in Colombia, the Universidad Nacional – Bogotá opened the first interdisciplinary master programme in theatre and art with an emphasis on both research and creation. http://www.facartes.unal.edu.co/fa/maestrias/teatro-artes-vivas/

The historian Gonzálo Sanchéz Gómez, in the book *Pasado y Presente de la Violencia en Colombia,* divides the study of Colombian violence from 1970 onwards into three categories (28-35). The first one includes all the studies that analyse violence as "a phenomenon of political juncture that has structured the political and social apparatus of the country" (29). The second is related to studies that focus more on regional problems to understand the dynamic relations between the regions and the nation (30). The final category comprises an analysis of the violence that emerges from ideological, political and cultural factors (25). I follow Sanchéz's structure in organising the sources on violence that support my analysis. Sanchéz recognises the book *La Violencia en Colombia: Estudio de un Proceso Social* by Gérman Guzmán, Orlando Fals Borda, and Eduardo Umaña Luna, as the first systematic, scientific analysis of violence in Colombia. The book was published in 1962, and despite its "analytical weakness", violence became a subject of study in academia (26).

The historian Carlos Ortíz Sarmiento explains that the research conducted in *La Violencia en Colombia* opened discussions around the political violence perpetrated in Colombia during the period of *La Violencia*[6] (1948 to 1957), something that was concealed until that time (47). The book is the result of a commission to study violence in the country in 1958, with the launch of the *Frente Nacional* (National Front), a political alliance between the Conservative and Liberal Parties to stop the bipartisan war that was unleashed following the assassination of the presidential candidate Jorge Eliecer Gaitán. According to the sociologist Alberto Valencia Gutierrez, the political pact, *Frente Nacional*, was also an "implicit agreement to forgive and forget" (64) allowing the leaders of each party to disregard the acts of violence committed in their name in the previous years. This is crucial for my analysis, as it depicts how silence has

[6] The use of capital letters in *La Violencia* was established in the Colombian academy as a way to distinguish this historical period from the noun "violence".

been a component of the construction of violence. Once the book *La Violencia* became known, the political parties, the public opinion and academia could no longer ignore the history that is part of our identity.

Valencia Gutiérrez, in *Memoria y Violencia: A los cincuenta años de La Violencia en Colombia de monseñor Guzmán et al* tells us that *La Violencia* contributed to the social and political history of Colombia in three key aspects: as an academic achievement, a political testimony and "a fundamental link in the process of assimilation and construction of collective memory" (61). If the book links society to a collective memory, why is it that "Colombia has been unable to incorporate its territory within a unitary idea of the nation?" (Uribe Alarcón, 80). Of course, there are limitations to what a single book can do to offer comprehensive documentation on why Colombians killed each other so viciously. It also reveals how even today, conversations about this topic happen mainly in the academy, rather than in general dialogues between common citizens who have left behind this important reflection on the country's history. Is it possible then, that theatre at its best, becomes the medium through which to "understand the deep history and […] complexity of political situations"? - a platform on which the audience can "imagine what a world where violence is suspended might look like"? (Critchley).

Valencia Gutiérrez reports that the authors of *La Violencia* claim that what happened during that violent period was the responsibility of the entire Colombian society. From this view, the thesis seems to discount the responsibility of those directly involved in the events of violence and the members of each party that acted as agitators during the conflict. There is an ongoing debate among the Colombian academy about the social responsibility each citizen carries because "either by action or by omission" (Zuleta 57) society has adopted a routine in which those kinds of acts are accepted and normalised. The normalisation of violence is a topic that I discuss thoroughly in each

case study. I am especially interested in Valencia Gutierrez's observation about the importance of building a collective consciousness and memory, because as a theatre-maker, I know that the theatrical space is powerful enough to do this, as the plays analysed in this research show. Thanks to the book *La Violencia* and the work of Guzmán et al., Colombian society now has a rigorous historical study that seeks to make sense of the causes of the civil war, and even more importantly, preserves and makes accessible the stories, circumstances and lives of thousands of Colombian peasants that are part of our roots and heritage. This knowledge should provide a meaningful starting point from which to understand the current social and political situation in the country. But as I explain further, the majority of Colombia society has assumed a Manichean narrative to comprehend acts of violence.

A steady production of essays analysing *La Violencia* as a phenomenon occurred between 1963-75 (Sanchéz 26). Then in 1986, Sánchez and Ricardo Peñaranda compiled fifteen essays presented at the First International Symposium about Violence in 1984. The resulting book *Pasado y Presente de la Violencia en Colombia*, features new studies conducted by national and international researchers on the period of *La Violencia*. Each essay in Sánchez and Peñaranda's compilation falls into one of the categories proposed by Sánchez: violence as a phenomenon, regional violence, and ideological or political violence. Sánchez describes Colombia as "a permanent endemic war country" (19) due to the past two centuries of history. Although this statement can be read as accusatory, it is not too far from William Ospina's considerations when he argues that Colombia "is a country that has become accustomed to begging, and that means, it is a country that has renounced dignity" (5). Ospina's and Sánchez's claims are justified, as violence has been a long-standing mechanism to resolve conflicts not only of a political nature, but also now in everyday life. Violence is the first natural impulse every time a disagreement on the street with a stranger emerges, or when

personal views are challenged by someone else. How have the everyday social dynamics of Colombian citizens come to this?

Within Sánchez's second category of studies on violence, I find *Bandoleros, Gamonales y Campesinos* particularly useful. In this book, Sánchez Gómez and Meerters study "the armed association" of peasants (*bandoleros*), an organised group that executed crimes in favour of the Liberal or Conservative Parties (Ortiz Sarmiento 54). In this book, the authors expose the "relationships of power, the mythical dimensions [and] the social functionality" of these groups (Ortiz Sarmiento 54). This research contributes to explain "bandit theory", and specifically in the Colombian case, "political banditry" which is not an outcome of just one factor, but instead, the result of "a complex local environment of political bosses, anxious rural peoples, and a repressive state" (Sanders 391). *Bandoleros, Gamonales y Campesinos* delineates the idiosyncrasies of the rural habitats of *La Violencia* and how their mechanisms of terror and repression corresponded to, among other things, a strategy for survival.

This is pivotal to the understanding of our historical background. In the middle of the twentieth century, most of the Colombia population lived in the countryside. When the violence erupted, and the huge wave of families ran away from their homes to find a safer place in the urban centres, their past travelled with them. Each Colombian citizen has a connection with the violence of the 1950s, when our ancestors suffered or perpetrated acts of repression, brutality or terror; this knowledge forms part of our identity. How our ancestors survived and saw others as friends or enemies has shaped our worldview. An extensive work of testimonies that sheds light on the construction of the other, is Arturo Alape's book *El Bogotazo*, published in 1987. Alape's work gathers stories of the people close to Gaitán, and how they saw the rise and fall of the political leader and the actions taken after his assassination. It offers insights into what happened

next during *La Violencia* and challenges the narrative embedded in society, that the riots during *El Bogotazo* were solely the responsibility of the masses.

The violence in Colombia in the 1980s mutated into an intricate stage with different and new actors and dramaturgies. For example, the growing business of narcotics led by powerful drug lords initiated brutal confrontations between cartels and law enforcement agencies. Also, the ongoing attacks and extortion strategies from the guerrillas' groups against merchants and stockbreeders triggered the creation of paramilitary groups. The paramilitaries not only fought against the guerrillas, but also viciously attacked civil populations. In 1987, the Colombian Government invited academic experts in violence to be part of a new commission. The commission, popularly known as *Los Violentólogos* (The Violentologists), quickly produced *Colombia: Violencia y Democracia* (1987), a report that redefined the phenomenon of violence by looking at it not only from the point of view of political violence, but also as "socio-economic violence", "territorial violence" and "socio-cultural violence".

According to the 1987 report, violence was beginning to spread from the central, political conflict between the Government and insurgent groups, to an increasing number of ordinary forms of violence committed by everyday people and experienced in daily life (Arocha, et al.11). The inequality of social conditions, the unfairness of the justice system and the ongoing effects of racial and gender discrimination were, and still are, sources of violent actions. The work of *Los Violentólogos* opened the door for future studies on the ongoing transformation of the ways social violence is enacted and the implications of living in a violent society such as ours, by introducing this division of the types of violence in Colombia. The main limitation of the commission's diagnosis is that it relied on the Government to create policies that ameliorated these social problems, which did not happen. The types of violence identified by the

commission were framed by certain modes of seeing and performing violence, inhibited by the times and their political mandate.

In this thesis, I frame my analysis of the violence in dramaturgical terms; this is looking at the dramaturgy of violent acts. Dramaturgy was defined by Professor Marco De Marinis as: "[…] the set of techniques/theories governing the composition of signs/expressive means/actions which are woven together to create the texture of the performance […]" (100). In other words, I am looking at how public enactments of violence and their representations on stage and in the streets are structured with a set of characteristics that influence the way individuals come to act violently and experience violence in everyday life. The thesis considers how these acts are constructed as well as how the act planners imagine their audience's response.

In *Pasados y Presentes de la Violencia en Colombia: Estudios sobre las Comisiones de Investigación (1958-2011)*, the sociologist Jefferson Jaramillo Marín analyses the claim made by *Colombia: Violencia y Democracia* that there is a culture of violence in the country. This means, Jaramillo Marín writes, that "as a nation, the Colombians have been immersed in spirals of increasing violence from generation to generation" (203). This statement, Jaramillo Marín continues, cannot be seen in isolation from two proposals: first, "the culture of peace", which means that "the historical chain of violence may be broken in the present" and as such is not a hopeless cause; and second, "the new social pacts" which asserts that once "the chain is broken the future will be free of violence" (203-4). In other words, the 1987 commission suggested that educational programmes about democracy, civility and coexistence would lay the foundations to restructure Colombian society and rethink the solutions of its conflicts without violence. However, as Jaramillo Marin points out, these proposals sounded appropriate in the academic world of the 1980s but were difficult to apply in the real day-to-day world (208).

Even though the Colombian Government signed a peace agreement with the guerrilla group FARC in 2016,[7] violence keeps carrying its own logic forward, superseding formal settlements and declarations of peace. Thirty years after the *Los Violentólogos* report, it is clear that the violence in the country has not stopped or decreased; on the contrary, it has been mutating from the political into everyday acts in ways that are increasingly dramatic. The commission's idea of a "culture of violence" tells that we have an illness as a society, but it does not encourage taking action to ameliorate it; nor does it explain what to do. In this thesis, I argue that applying theatrical and dramaturgical thinking to see ourselves as performers, potentially empowers us to intervene and change the course of violence. If we look to violence as something performed rather than something that is natural, we can identify the theatricality of violence in everyday life, and then Colombians might begin to set strategies for staging redress and healing our broken society.

By 1990, the number of studies about the violence in Colombia increased exponentially and began to overrun the academy and libraries. Sánchez Gómez states that even for the expert, it is impossible "to keep a record and a cumulative balance of publications on the subject" (12). At the same time, Sánchez Gómez highlights the pitfall of this massive production as it can be "uncritical" and may lead to confusion instead of a "global understanding" of violence (12). In this array of books and essays, the selection of the following titles corresponds to my desire to include analysis of violence beyond political points of view and a discussion on the repercussions of violence in the citizens. Many other books could serve this purpose, but different factors such as the distance of the research, the sources available, and the previous knowledge of the authors, all helped as filters for this theoretical frame.

[7] *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* – Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces

Daniel Pécaut is a French sociologist and philosopher who has followed Colombian history closely and reflected many times on its situation of violence.[8] In his book, *Violencia y Política en Colombia: Elementos de Reflexión* (2003), Pécaut considers four features of Colombian socio-political conflict. The first one, he refers to as the "division friend-enemy" that distinguishes the kinds of disputes that occur, and which are no longer a matter of political viewpoints. The second feature connects with Hobbes' social contract and is explained as occurring when many regions lacking a state presence give the power to rule to illegal entities such as guerrillas, the paramilitary, or drug landlords, to try to bring a sense of order. The third engages with the political degradation performed by the actors of the conflict. Whether they are legal (politicians) or illegal (armed fighters, drug dealers), these actors have swapped their ideologies for power to control the money from the drug trafficking business and other natural resources.

Pécaut's book highlights that the studies on Colombian violence and war should not seek causes anymore; instead, a study of the characteristics of violence and war and the logic employed by the actors of the conflict is needed. He addresses the importance of "constructing a public space" where the discussion about peace and the restoration of trust in state institutions can be generated. I find Pécaut's reflection opportune because it supports my idea of the necessity of a dramaturgical analysis of Colombian violence. I believe that beyond the causes, the ongoing situation of violence forces everyone to be a player - a performer with agency of one sort of another - a social actor. If the citizens are able to unmask the theatrical conventions applied in violent actions, they should have the power to act and rectify what has been happening so far. Then, it may be possible to accomplish what Pécaut states as fundamental for the construction of public

[8] Daniel Pécaut has held Colombian citizenship since 2007.

space, which will occur when “Colombians can integrate their past and present experience into an accepted collective history” (160).

Memory, history and collective consciousness are matters considered frequently by Colombian scholars. Even with many books published about the horrors of *La Violencia,* Colombian society does not agree on a common narrative that prevents those acts from happening again. In fact, the competing narratives create further divisions, beginning with views regarding who has the right to use violence to solve the conflict. Most Colombian scholars referred to in this thesis concur that this division is a result of the unfinished chapter of *La Violencia* because the culprits of barbaric acts have never faced any legal or social punishment. The *Frente Nacional* strategically concealed any trace that could tarnish the legacy of the traditional parties; “it was a peaceful distribution of power […] the state was parity and millimetrically distributed with the exclusion of anyone who was not conservative or liberal” (Caballero 12:1). This means that the politicians took the action off-stage where redress could not be performed.

One of the issues with competing narratives about the conflict is that each group of players position itself at the centre, as protagonists facing off against evil antagonists. However, in the unacknowledged centre of this battle are civilians, who have been always those who are the targets, those for whom the violence is staged in order to produce extreme effects of terror, and as such, those who suffer the atrocious consequences. This is especially true for the inhabitants of the rural regions in Colombia. Their stories are frequently overlooked by urban citizens, who see their own drama as paramount as if the violence experienced in the countryside should not be seen in the same way as violence that happens in the cities. Although some characteristics may vary between one and another, whether in an urban or a rural setting, the construction of the performance of violence follows a relatively consistent dramaturgy.

As long as Colombians have such divided narratives, they blind themselves to their own roles and are prevented from redirecting the plot and taking active steps towards peace.

To support this theory, I study two works from the Colombian anthropologist María Victoría Uribe closely: *Antropologia de la Inhumanidad* (2004) and "Dismembering and Expelling: Semantics of Political Terror in Colombia" (2004). Through these works, Uribe identifies key features in the social environment that enabled acts of violence during *La Violencia* and how these evolved in the conflict between armed organisations. Some of these features are the narrative employed by the leaders of each party or group, the social isolation of the peasants and the use of informers (*sapos)* to identify the people for victimisation ("Dismembering" 84-85). Uribe analyses how neighbours are transformed into strangers and then victims. She identifies a use of language that imitates the terms of butchery, such that the bodies of the victims are first represented and then treated like cattle. Uribe shows how the perpetrators follow a script that first justifies and then displays brutality in ways that produce terror and generate the fear that leads to repression. Unlike Uribe's work, the case studies of this thesis do not include rural massacres and are focused mainly on urban political acts of violence; however, it is vital to understand this social context for building a theory of the performance of violence in Colombia. I turn to Uribe's book for the testimonials of victims, which help me to develop my dramaturgical analysis.

Further perspectives can be found in Elsa Blair Trujillo's book *Muertes Violentas: La Teatralización del Exceso* (2005); her work presents an analysis of the violence in theatrical terms. In *Muertes Violentas*, Blair Trujillo studies how the toll of deaths in Colombian history acquires meaning through theatrical devices in which the act of killing is first staged, then interpreted, publicised and ritualised. Violent deaths, Blair Trujillo explains, are the "extreme expression" of violence (XVII) and it is pivotal to understand its "symbolic dimension" as part of Colombian daily life. Blair Trujillo

lays down important tools for my analysis in her use of theatrical references in Colombian conflict and demonstrates that a dramaturgical approach does not trivialise the brutal situation of my country. On the contrary, it sheds light on a topic that has been discussed largely, but with limited positive outcomes.

In "Aproximación teórica al concepto de violencia: Avatares de una definición" (2009), Blair Trujillo looks at both international and Colombian conceptualisations to expand the definition of violence in the context of the country's own socio-historical conditions. Blair Trujillo concludes that to simplify violence to a singular meaning is not something possible or even desirable; however, to reflect on the use given to this word in different studies may open alternative inquiries that "transcend the anthropological, political and sociological description" of this phenomenon (32-33). In other words, Blair Trujillo invites scholars to look beyond traditional ideas of violence as something enacted between particular groups of people, and instead to look closer at the direct relationship between culture and violence. Her work considers the "subjectivities, the emotions and the bodies" as expressions and representations of the social conflict (29). Blair's approach aligns with Sánchez's claim about the absence of systematic studies of violence in, for example, daily life, or as a component of the storytelling world as in myths and legends, or in indigenous communities and many other unexplored aspects (Sánchez 37-38). It is in this gap where I position my research and join the developing conversation on the relationship between theatre and violence. I approach historical events to see them with theatrical lenses and perhaps find an understanding of why the Colombian cycle of violence keeps repeating without any end in sight.

It was only with the change of century that the studies about violence coming from alternative fields started to emerge into public view. The creation of the *Grupo de Memoria Histórica* (GMH, or Group of Historical Memory) in 2007 facilitated the

reconstruction of stories and narratives in the voices of the victims of the armed conflict, otherwise ignored by a nation accustomed to melodramatic reports in the evening television news. This group researched and analysed seventeen case studies about the conflict in Colombia and published a report for each of them. In 2011 the GMH became the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* (CNMH, or National Centre of Historical Memory) where it continues its work towards "the construction of the integral reparation and the right to the truth" for the victims and Colombian society.[9] Gonzalo Sánchez Gómez was the CNMH director until 2018. It is essential to explain that with the election of President Iván Duque that same year, the historical narrative about the armed conflict in the country is at stake. Iván Duque and his party Centro Democrático commanded by the ex-president Alvaro Uribe Velez, deny the narrative of the inner armed conflict. Instead, they privilege a narrative in which the state is in confrontation with terrorist groups as it was with the FARC before its demobilisation and the ELN. Then the victims of state power, paramilitary groups and army remained in limbo.[10] This situation depicts how fundamental it is for the state to maintain and control an official dramaturgy that enhances rather than shifts the performance of violence.

However, during Sánchez's direction of the CNMH, some steps forwards were taken to produce a close relationship between the performing and visual arts with the stories of the armed conflict as part of the reconstruction of the historical memory. For example, in 2010, the play *El Deber de Fenster*[11] was staged to tell the story of the massacre in the little town of Trujillo where 342 people were murdered between 1986 and 1994. The elaboration of the script was possible because of the report and research

[9] This is part of the CNMH's mission. For more information visit www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co where all the reports to date have free access.
[10] See more pacifista.tv/notas/implicaciones-historicas-decir-pais-no-hay-conflicto-armado-centro-memoria-historica/
[11] *El Deber de Fenster* written by Humberto Dorado y Matías Maldonado. Directed by Nicolás Montero and Laura Villegas and premiered on Sept. 28, 2010.

made by the GMH on the case of Trujillo (Jaramillo, "Las comisiones de Estudio" 163). While I do not look closely at this particular play in the thesis, it serves as a reminder of the intimate relationship between fiction and fact, theatre and reality – at least potentially – and the social dimensions of performance.

On June 2011, the Colombian Government produced Law 1448, the *Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras* (Law of Victims and Land Restitution). This act is not only aimed at economic compensation for victims, but most importantly for my research, it mandates symbolic reparations – that is, research and publications that analyse and propose redress for the past decades of violence ("La reparación de víctimas en Colombia"). Consequently, the Colombian Ministry of Culture, with the support of the CNMH, has started to publish books on the relationship between theatre and the armed conflict.[12] Of these, the two volumes of *Luchando contra el Olvido: Investigación sobre la Dramaturgia del Conflicto* (Struggling against Oblivion: Research on the Dramaturgy of the Conflict, 2012-2013) and the historical research *Teatro y Violencia en Dos Siglos de Historia de Colombia* (Theatre and Violence in Two Centuries of Colombian History, 2013-2015) are important resources for this thesis.

Both volumes of *Luchando Contra el Olvido* survey several plays and productions that explore the violence, the perpetrators, and the situation of the victims in the country since 1980. Theatre researcher Marina Lamus Obregón introduces the studies, highlighting common characteristics in the selected plays and explaining why theatre in Colombia may be the means of "the collective expression of pain" (1:17) and loss in a society that has not yet had a time of mourning for its dead. The theatre critic Enrique Pulecio Mariño follows the introduction with a discussion about the relationship between Greek tragedy and contemporary Colombian dramas that include

[12] See teatroycirco.mincultura.gov.co/Paginas/Publicaciones.aspx

such tragic components. In his analysis, Pulecio Mariño locates the plays into overlapped categories that go from classic drama structures to deconstructed and hybrid styles and aesthetics. He studies situations, characters, and the playwrights' intentions to expose the richness of Colombian theatre about the conflict and the subsequent manifestations of violence in society.

The three-volume study *Teatro y Violencia en Dos Siglos de Historia de Colombia* by the Colombian academic and playwright Carlos José Reyes, follows a similar pattern. Reyes goes further back in the past to survey plays that narrate violent episodes since the conquest, to today. Reyes provides a brief biography of each author and then reflects on the historical context in which the actions of the play take place. The recompilation becomes an alternative for learning Colombian history with the benefit of showing a human side in the stories of violence. As Reyes states, it is through theatre that we see the human condition better, and where are revealed "the premonitions, the emotions (and) dreams" (1:23) of a society that has lived in an ongoing cycle of horror. Reyes' reflection about ongoing Colombian violence points out that "we are responsible for violence not because we are its cause, but because we do not act to contain or eradicate it" (3:47). Here, Reyes considers the passive attitude of Colombian society in addressing the repetitive mechanisms that enable violence to be part of daily life. I agree with Reyes, that Colombian citizens must actively enact challenges to the normalisation of violence on stages. Embracing the collective and historical memory could be one step towards that aim.

The works of Pulecio Mariño and Reyes guide my research and open the field for analysis and reflection on theatre and violence. Both authors discuss the evolution of the Colombian theatre, the importance of the construction of memory and identity through the plays, and the language and symbols employed by playwrights to communicate and expose complicated Colombian social conflict. The historical

referents are presented during the studies, especially in Reyes' work, to explain to the reader the political and social circumstances that allowed the situations presented in the scripts. Pulecio Mariño and Reyes are models for my theatrical analyses, and lead me to consider, for example, reviews, audience perception, and the ensemble or groups in charge of the production.

One more key study that informs my analysis is the doctoral thesis of the director and playwright Sandro Romero Rey: *Género y Destino: La Tragedia Griega en Colombia* (2015). Romero assembles an extensive archive of tragic plays and performances by diverse groups since the modernisation of Colombian theatre in 1954.[13] He analyses why Greek tragedy is a relevant and powerful instrument for meditating and exploring "the violent reality" of the country, and discusses the tendency of Colombian theatre-makers to work the tragic genre (Romero 59). Romero proposes that Greek tragedy as a dramatic structure, might offer otherwise hidden solutions for understanding and mitigating Colombian social ills. I maintain a distance from that notion as, according to my analysis, the structure of tragedy used by the media in its dramatisation of violent acts, contributes directly to the promulgation and preservation of the idea that Colombia's ills are inevitable and irreparable. I discuss this point later in the introduction.

The works of Romero Rey, Pulecio Mariño, and Reyes, are some of the scholarly approaches to the violence in Colombia from theatrical or performative aspects. There is a risk of appearing less than serious when talking about violence, terror and repression in dramaturgical terms. However, the interdisciplinarity of performance studies, and in particular, the way it operates at the intersection between theatre and

[13] The arrival of television to Colombia demanded that actors have better preparation. The Government of General Rojas Pinilla employed the Japanese theatre director Seki Sano, trained in the Stanislavsky system. Seki Sano taught in the *Escuela Nacional de Arte Dramático* (ENAD, or National Theatre School) influencing the artists that led the Colombian theatre, such as Santiago García, Fausto Cabrera and Carlos José Reyes.

anthropology, offers me a way to navigate the complex manifestations of violence, terror and repression. This uses the tools provided by performance studies to see how violence, terror and repression are enacted following protocols or even a script. To see violent events in dramaturgical terms involves analysing the way participants and audience, on all sides of the conflict, identify themselves as performing roles, and how they reproduce theatrical structures and embody violence. The identification of these social performances may help to change the way Colombian society will see violence in the future.

My thesis relies on a theoretical triangle between Victor Turner, Richard Schechner and Diana Taylor. Each of these academics informs my application of performance studies and offer points for my methodological approach. Victor Turner's concept of social drama states that in any community, the social conflict's narrative follows a dramaturgical structure; in his words, social drama is "a spontaneous unit of social process and a fact of everyone's experience in every human society" (68). According to Turner, these processes "occur within groups bounded by shared values and interests of persons and having a real or alleged common history" (69). Each individual in society belongs to different groups directly or indirectly, such as a political group, religious group, favourite soccer team, or an area of work in a company - human resources or accounts - to name some examples. Each individual has a "star" group explained by Turner as a "group or groups to which we owe our deepest loyalty and whose fate is for us of the greatest personal concern" (69). In order words, Turner suggests that a person who considers her star group threatened, will stand and fight for it against other groups or even against members of the same group. This can be seen, for example, in the clash between the Colombian Government and guerrilla groups such as the FARC before they signed the peace treaty in 2016. For many citizens, the FARC was their star group because it represented their interests, as they felt left out and

oppressed by government policies. On the contrary, other citizens saw the guerrilla group as outlaws that threatened their well-being, and therefore, they supported the government with any kind of medium that might suppress them.

Turner identifies four phases in social dramas "breach, crisis, redress and either reintegration or recognition of schism" (69). The first phase, Turner describes as a "breach of a norm, the infraction of a rule of morality, law […] in some public arena" (70). Following this rupture comes to a crisis that Turner sees as "a momentous juncture or turning point in the relations between components of a social field". According to Turner, a crisis reveals the order of the conflict and the allies or enemies within the group. To contain the breach and its crisis comes in phase three, where Turner says that "certain adjustive and redressive mechanisms, informal and formal, are brought into operation by leading members of the disturbed group" (70). In the final phase, Turner explains, a "reintegration of the disturbed social group" may take place with some internal changes in the relationships within, or there is a "social recognition of irreparable breach between the contesting parties, sometimes leading to their spatial separation" (71). In the end, that is, a community or society either changes in response to what has happened, or it re-represses the experience of crisis and conflict to restore its previous ways of being and even denies the possibility of change.

The history of the formation of the FARC at the beginning of the 1960s in Colombia can be seen to fit Turner's formulation. The conflict between government and the peasants and indigenous people for the control and the right to farm the land was long-standing over centuries. This conflict burst into high relief after the assassination of Jorge Eliercer Gaitán in 1948, causing a breach to take place, and dividing the population into two groups: those who supported the Conservative Party, which was the force in power at that time, and the Liberal Party supporters. The crisis was expressed through acts of violence leaving behind victims from all sides of the conflict: the period

of *La Violencia*. The liberal armed forces were resistance groups that fought not only against the Government, but also against extra-official forces called "*Los pajaros*" and "*chulavitas*". During this stage, the liberals differentiated between "*limpios*" (clean) and "*comunes*" (common), those who followed the communist ideals. In the redressive phase, the Government tried to apply policies of re-integration for the armed groups and agrarian reforms that were never fully applied. In 1964, the army fought to take control of Marquetalia, one of the biggest settlements of the communist resistance. After several weeks of operations,[14] the army seized the territory. However, the guerrilla fighters had mobilised and camouflaged inside the wilderness. The birth of the guerrilla FARC, in Turner's terms, can be seen as the recognition of schism.

Turner seems to have proposed social drama as a singular, macro event, or at most, sequential in its manifestation. However, in Colombia, it is better to say that social drama is not singular. Rather, there have been a collation of micro social dramas, overlapping and circling, multiplying, and making it difficult to see an actual endpoint. That is, the fifty-two years of FARC history can be seen to be divided into many social dramas, at least until the peace treaty in 2016. It is possible that the social drama finishes with a reintegration marking the end of a cycle and, perhaps the beginning of something new. The path to resolution with the FARC was never straightforward. The 2016 Treaty was rejected for a slight majority in a plebiscite. Therefore, the Government applied some changes to it and had it approved through the Congress. In seeing FARC's social drama at a macro level, I may frame it as the breach that occurred after Gaitán´s assassination; the crisis extended over 52 years, with multiple efforts towards redress, until finally, the reintegration took place when the FARC started its demobilisation and surrender of weapons, and became a political party.

[14] This information is based in the twelve episodes report written by the sociologist and reporter Alfredo Molano Bravo in the newspaper *El Espectador* from May to July 2014.

In Turnerian terms, the Treaty of 2016 would look like a point of closure, and perhaps it is. However, all reintegration in social drama brings changes in the relationships between the actors of the conflict. Alongside the progressive demilitarisation of FARC, what has emerged is another macro social drama: the systematic killings of activists and social leaders assumed to be driven by powerful people in power and government, but shown as the outcome of social disputes. My thesis looks at these two macro social dramas by analysing case studies drawn from more the micro level.

The four phases of social drama correlate to "Aristotle's description of *tragedy* in the Poetics" (72) as Turner tells us. Aristotle's definition of tragedy is well-known: "Tragedy […] is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, […] in the form of action, not of narrative; effecting through pity and fear the proper purgation of these emotions" (61).[15] Aristotle's model for tragedy can also be seen to organise the complexities of a social group of people into a dramatic structure and provides an aesthetic for its representation. This representation in a way of imitation, is what makes humans learn and identify themselves as part of a whole. In Aristotle's words: "[…] the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness is that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, 'Ah, that is he."' (55). Since Greek tragedy, imitation processes have evolved in both directions, meaning that not only life affects what is on stage, but the stage interferes in life as well. For Turner, "[…] there is an interdependent, perhaps dialectic, relationship between social dramas and genres of cultural performance in perhaps all societies" (72).

[15]This research used the English translation of Poetics by Samuel H. Butcher with an introduction by Francis Ferguson (1961).

From Aristotle's time to our own, the social structures have diversified and evolved; however, their essence has stayed the same. Turner claims that "the drama remains to the last simple and ineradicable, a fact of everyone's social experience, and a significant node in the developmental cycle of all groups that aspire to continuance" (78). In other words, beyond stories of heroes and gods, the drama in everyday life is cyclic. Underlying Turner's theory of social drama is an understanding that just as theatre can be seen to reflect everyday life, so too, everyday life can be seen to partake of dramatic structures, tropes and perspectives. What then can we learn from analysing the ways violence, terror and repression are enacted in Colombian society? How might the perpetrators and witnesses be seen to be reshaping their lived experiences into dramatic arcs of action and reaction, and how might changing the way such actions are viewed help change the actions themselves in the future?

Turner's collaborator, Performance Studies founder, Richard Schechner, follows Turner's logic in building his own theories, but also indicates a concern that others might have when applying the concept of social drama to Colombian society. Schechner argues that applying social drama to such a conflict potentially "reduces and flattens out [the] events" (*Performance Studies* 76). For Schechner, Aristotle's model as mirrored in Turner's social drama is a Western aesthetic that leaves aside other non-Western genres and aesthetics that may be more helpful for analysing today's complex social conflicts. Colombian society is Westernised, but carries within it an indigenous heritage that may complicate my Turnerian analysis in ways that Schechner foreshadows.

While building on Turner's theories, in developing the field of Performance Studies, Schechner proposes his idea of "restored behaviour". He uses the analogy of a film director manipulating a strip of film. Each strip "can be rearranged or reconstructed" (*Between* 73) into infinite possibilities. Restored behaviour is '"me behaving as if I were someone else,' or 'as I am told to do,' or 'as I have learned."'

(*Performance Studies* 34). Schechner argues that this "is the main characteristic of performance" (*Between* 73) and we find it in every aspect of daily life, in our "habits, rituals, and routines […]" (*Performance Studies* 34). Everything that we know and seems familiar, according to Schechner, can be seen in the arrangements and rearrangements of these strips of behaviour in different contexts. Each individual has an enormous warehouse - or in Diana Taylor's terms, a repertoire - of bits of social conduct patterns, family traditions, personal preferences, and cultural trending that shape the way he or she performs in everyday life because restored behaviours can be "transmitted" and "transformed" (*Between* 73). Schechner thus proposes an analysis of social behaviour that not only looks to present actions, but also includes the past and, indeed, may modify, possibly for the better, the future. In Schechner's words "restored behavior offers to both individuals and groups the chance to rebecome what they once were -or even, and most often, to rebecome what they never were but wish to have been or wish to become" (*Between* 78).[16] It is possible, therefore, that Schechner's conceptualisation of restored behaviour might provide a model for imagining ourselves breaking the cycle of violence, terror and repression.

Turner's social drama and Schechner's restored behaviour, as cornerstones of performance studies, underlie my application of Diana Taylor's theories in her book *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (2003). Taylor proposes the concept of "scenarios" which are in her words: "meaning-making paradigms that structure social environments, behaviours, and potential outcomes" (28). That is, a scenario provides a way of understanding and making meaning from the interaction between the "archive", defined by Taylor as the "enduring materials" (19) – documents, texts, photos, etc. – and the "repertoire", explained by Taylor as the

[16] The quote uses American spelling.

enacting of "embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing […] The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning" (20).

For this thesis, the archive is contained in the records held by the Colombian Government and in the more academic surveys of the history. I will be creating and activating an archive of sorts through qualitative methods such as the case studies and interviews I have conducted. The repertoire at the heart of my thesis is drawn from records of theatrical and other events: from large-scale public dramas such as the assassination of political leaders to the more local, such as the murder of an activist, and from plays and performances that represent the Colombian conflict and its possible pathways to resolution.

Social dramas and restored behaviour inform the way Taylor constructs her theory of the archive and repertoire in the Latin American context. Taylor in her book, applies performance studies to propose a "rethinking [of] nineteenth-century disciplinary and national boundaries" (2) to have a better understanding of Latin American performance traditions and cultures. She positions and recognises herself as an academic working between her Latin and North American backgrounds. She says:

> […] it's been impossible for me to separate my scholarly and political commitments and conundrums from who I am […] By situating myself as one more social actor in the scenarios I analyse, I hope to position my personal and theoretical investment in the arguments. (xv-xvi)

I want to follow Taylor's lead in doing my part by analysing Colombian events of violence, terror and repression in order to rethink not just the causes, but also how these events interact with the people and how they have been embodied in the long history of my country. What can my thesis contribute to our understanding and potential for transforming the ongoing drama of the Colombian struggle for peace, for restoring our potential for happiness as individuals and as a society?

My approach is both dramaturgical and theatrical. I will be looking at the constituent parts of both historical and theatrical events to see how they have been constructed in order to create an effect in their audiences. I show through an example of a violent act, how a violent event can be seen as a performance, by identifying the elements of dramatic action at work. For this, I also turn to the ways the media in Colombia (and elsewhere) reconstruct and, in so doing, dramatise acts of violence. The media makes choices about what it shows, and what it keeps in the shadows, in its reportage, highlighting certain actions for dramatic effect while minimising or concealing elements that might be crucial to fully understanding what has happened and how we might change the conditions that give rise to violence. That is, the audience receives a version of the act that shapes or reassures the way we perceive our social context. By reanalysing these cases in an academic frame, utilising the models provided by Turner, Schechner and Taylor, we can perhaps look behind the curtain the media has drawn, to think more critically about the conditions that shape both our actions and our reactions to violent events, and perhaps propose new structures for acting in the future.

My family in Colombia belongs to the middle class. I had a comfortable upbringing in a social bubble that protected me from recognising the horror in different places of my country. Nevertheless, the threat that something bad could happen at any moment remained latent. I, as everybody else in Colombia, had to live in a constant state of alarm. This is terror, a feeling internalised deep in the body that forces anyone to give up any notion of control. Terror sets an atmosphere in which people do not control their own nervous system because it is already manipulated by those in power. Michael Taussig in his book *The Nervous System* (2012), shows how a state of emergency has governed in Colombia for decades, exploiting the social conflicts and chaos as a measure for normalising terror. Taussig claims that “Colombia has been defined as being in a state of chaos such that predictions of imminent revolution, a

bloodbath, or a military dictatorship have been made on an almost daily basis" (16). This means that to prevent or fight such cruel outcomes, it is necessary to apply violent actions for keeping the order. Taussig asks "what does it mean to define such a situation as exists in Colombia as *chaotic*, given that the chaos is every day, not a deviation from the norm, and in a strategically important political sense is a disordered order no less than it is an ordered disorder?" (17). This normalisation became repression. How long is it possible to live in terror? How do we act to feel integrated in the daily life of a "disordered order"? What dramaturgy have we created socially to accept function-dysfunction?

My story is one of many in Colombia. For the most part, I have been a spectator to violent events while feeling their effects, in particular the terror and repression that are the conditions of daily life in Colombia and reach me even here in New Zealand. To understand how an act of violence can be seen "as performance" and how it takes theatrical conventions to be presented and later, represented after the action, I analyse a violent event from the recent past: the case of the murder of a young man named Klaus Zapata in 2016. This example forms a baseline for the case studies in the chapters that follow. I chose this event because his was one of the many cases of assassination in Colombia in the first trimester of that year, just before the signing of the treaty.

On 6 Mar. 2016, a twenty-year-old boy named Klaus Zapata was shot dead just after he finished playing a friendly soccer match in his neighbourhood of Soacha. Zapata was an activist and a member of the Youth Communist Group (JUCO)[17] in Colombia. According to witnesses, a quarrel between the players took place after the game finished. Zapata was shot from behind, and the shooter fled the scene immediately afterwards. The first hypothesis presented by the authorities was that his killing was a response to a moment of "intolerance" between the players. ("*Intolerancia*" is the word

[17] In Spanish: *Juventud Comunista Colombiana*.

often used to describe the conflict in Colombian society; it refers not to racial or other social divides, but rather to a display of power, and who is the more macho.) However, this explanation does not even consider the fact that the morning of Zapata's death, he was with JUCO marching against mining in the Badlands, which means that his political activism may have brought on him some antagonists (*KienyKe*). For his family and friends, the primary suspects in his murder were the paramilitary groups[18] in his neighbourhood. These groups had been denounced by members of JUCO in ways that exposed them to the outlaw groups that control the zone.

The story of Zapata's death was not immediately seen as significant by the popular press, however, *KienyKe* (an internet magazine)[19] elaborated with a dramatic narrative lifting the story into a higher profile, giving it meaning and a certain notoriety. The article begins by describing Zapata as a young activist, taking part in an ordinary neighbourhood game:

> *Klaus, de 21 años, era estudiante de Comunicación Social […] Pero no solo era un estudiante, era un líder político, afiliado a las Juventudes Comunistas de Colombia (JUCO). […] En las horas de la tarde decidió ir con un grupo de amigos a jugar un partido de fútbol, sin pensar que ese sería el último.*
>
> Klaus, 21, was a student of Social Communication [...] But he was not just a student, he was a political leader, member of the Communist Youth of Colombia (JUCO). […] In the afternoon he [Zapata] decided to join a group of friends to play a soccer match. He never thought it would be the last.

The assassin, in contrast, is represented as:

[18] The former president Alvaro Uribe Velez (2002-2010) during his government instituted the negotiations with AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) to demobilise and surrender their weapons. Supposedly, this treaty ended with the paramilitary presence in Colombia.
[19] Interesting enough, "*KienyKe"* translates as "Who" and "What". The slogan of the digital magazine is '*El placer de saber mas*' [The pleasure of knowing more] and according to its website it focuses on chronicles and reports. The magazine probably highlights the "who" and "what" but mainly it leaves aside the "why".

> *Un hombre ansioso, que al parecer no era conocido por ninguno de los presentes, se sentó en las gradas de la cancha. Miraba el partido con atención, con actitud de espera, y siempre vigilante.*
>
> A restless man, unknown to the people present that day, sat on the court's steps. He looked the match with attention, lurking.

In this way, the language of drama was attached to an everyday event: "He never thought it would be the last" and "A restless man . . . lurking". The people involved become characters portraying the roles of victims and perpetrators. The article sets the elements of drama not only by describing the characters, but also by structuring the plot, or in other words, an arc of actions:

> *Llegaba la noche del domingo 6 de marzo mientras Klaus Zapata jugaba un partido de fútbol en una cancha ubicada en el barrio Ciudad Latina, en Soacha.*
>
> *La mañana del 6 de marzo la Juco participó activamente en una movilización […] Klaus apoyó esa marcha*
>
> *[…] cerca de las 7 de la noche, una pequeña riña se formó entre los jugadores. El extraño hombre aprovechó la confusión, se acercó silenciosamente y disparó en dos oportunidades contra la espalda de Klaus.*
>
> The Sunday night on March 6 was settling in while Klaus Zapata played a football game on a court located in the neighbourhood of Ciudad Latina, in Soacha.
>
> On the morning of March 6, JUCO actively participated in a demonstration [...] Klaus supported the march.
>
> [...] About 7 pm, a squabble between the players arose. The strange man took advantage of the confusion, walked up silently and shot twice against the back of Klaus.

This line of action leads to a tragic outcome:

> *El herido fue trasladado inmediatamente al Hospital Mario Gaitán Yanguas, a donde llegó sin signos vitales.*

> The injured was taken immediately to Hospital Mario Gaitán Yanguas, where he arrived without vital signs.

In Zapata's case, I can begin to identify key characteristics of the performance of violence: first, the target must be someone with social visibility; he (or she) must be recognisable as a target. As part of JUCO, Zapata handled the group's communications and media information, and in fact at the time was writing a thesis on social media. He was well known. He was visibly engaged with his community, a public figure known for his denunciations of micro-drug trafficking and corruption. Second, the narrative must use dramatic language, heightened by the contrast between the mundane and the tragic. "The strange man took advantage of the confusion, walked silently and shot twice against the back of Klaus".

The performance of violence is as much a matter of how it is subsequently represented as drama as of how it is given to be seen at the moment. The dramatisation of the event in the media is signalled by the headlines employed, for example, in *KienyKe*: *La Misteriosa Muerte del Activista de la JUCO en Soacha* (The Mysterious Death of the JUCO Activist in Soacha). While *Misteriosa Muerte* appears to echo the film/literature genre of murder mystery, and in heightening the dramatic import of the event it reaches also toward tragedy and melodrama. From the start, the magazine frames the event as something obscure and inexplicable, beyond everyday understanding, and as such, something we must accept as unresolvable.

In order to see this event in Turnerian terms, as a micro social drama that is part of Colombian macro social drama, the way the media omits key points of information in Zapata's case must be recognised. The *KienyKe* article does not seek to establish the cause of the breach. Moreover, the identification of the two groups in conflict is left ambiguous. On one side, Zapata is a member of JUCO; on the other, are only speculations about unnamed paramilitary groups. The killer's affiliation remains

unknown, even though the presumed murderer was found less than a month after Zapata's death[20] – a fast action by the police, given that most such cases remain unresolved. Why would the police have acted so definitively in this particular case? Were their actions provoked by the pressure of the media when coupled with the ongoing negotiations? This is impossible to determine. However, the arrest put the police in a position to affirm its original hypothesis that the death was the result of a moment of intolerance rather than something more directly social or political. To perform a Turnerian analysis we need to fill in some of the blanks by considering the social environment where the action took place.

Soacha is a small municipality on the southern fringes of Bogotá, the capital city. It is an impoverished zone that lacks many basic services. Zapata served as a role model for overcoming the hard circumstances of his community by studying and preparing himself for the future. If, as is alleged, paramilitary cells occupied the town, someone like Zapata would present a problem, because his activism would go against paramilitary dogma and financial interests. These cells control the micro-trafficking of illegal drugs, among other illicit activities. Their presence can be seen to set a bad example for youth who might be enticed to see a faster way to make money. The press does not address the social dynamics of youth in impoverished zones. The obvious point of conflict that could explain Zapata's murder was not mentioned by the police, nor analysed thoroughly by the media.

Seen as a micro social drama, local to Zapata's neighbourhood, his death can also be seen as a breach of the status quo. The boys were playing football – an ordinary, everyday activity. The peace was ruptured by a violent murder. A period of crisis emerged, during which time the press dramatised the event as the police sought the

[20] See http://www.periodismopublico.com/Capturado-presunto-asesino-de-Klaus-Zapata-estudiantede-Soacha and http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16552932 Web 25 Jun 2016.

criminal. Redress was enacted with the arrest of the murderer, and a return to the apparently peaceful status quo ante was announced. The logic of this reading of the event as a micro social drama only works if we blind ourselves to the other murders ongoing. Reading the event as part of the larger, macro social drama, gives us a very different idea of the performance of violence in the Colombian context, one that culminates, repeatedly, in a recognition of schism: that violence, terror and repression are, in fact, the status quo to which we are returned repeatedly. In this reading it is possible even to say that the arrest and conviction of the murderer could be seen as a kind of breach of the otherwise violent status quo. If so, it is also possible to imagine a reading of the Colombian social situation such that the peace treaty and demobilisation of the paramilitary are more likely to be experienced as breaches of the violent status quo rather than a return to a paradisical status quo ante in which we were not that.

This makes my thesis more quixotic than it might at first appear. I have been holding an illusion that somehow Colombian society can go back to a state in which everyday life was peaceful. As if there were a before and after, with violence, terror and repression taking up the middle period; in other words, I want to believe that maybe before, in a long ago, barely imaginable past, we were a viable society in which indigenous communities lived in harmony before the arrival of the Spanish conquerers. However, as I go deeper into my research and analysis, I realise that this illusion prevents me and my society from confronting our past in order to build a new present and future. To desire to go back to a time "when life was better" is unhelpful nostalgia. There is no going back because that breach point cannot be located on the history line of the country. It is from this present reality that we need to build strategies to think and imagine what is otherwise unknown to us.

The philosopher Simon Critchley in an interview in the *New York Times* states: "Violence is not an abstract concept for those subjected to it, but a lived reality which

has a concrete history". It has become a habit in Colombia (an elsewhere) to report acts of violence with an emphasis on loss and suffering, depicting victims and perpetrators without any context or platform for a more critical or constructive evaluation of the situation. The assassination of Zapata is portrayed as a football match that finished with a violent death because of intolerance. Reports suggest that maybe could be also a paramilitary act, but they imply a kind of resignation born of incuriosity: who knows for sure, and who wants to find out? The representation of this and other violent acts closes the door to further enquiry. The choice to remain ignorant of the many circumstances that are part of the staging of violence may be a response to fear and repression that the media manufactures and reinforces. As Critchley emphasises: "we have to understand the history of violence from which emerge" otherwise the discussion is "largely pointless".

The cyclical enactment and representation of violence can also be seen in Schechnerian terms as "restored behaviour" which he envisions, in part, as a kind of "film strip" (*Between* 73). That is, when the media organises and portrays the facts of violent acts they are privileging a side of a story in the same way as when a movie director manipulates strips of a film. As Schechner states, "any arrangement (of history) is conventionalised and conditioned by a particular world and/or political views" (*Between* 80). The audience of the stories of violence receive a script that is already familiar to them because they have seen it played repeatedly. An event like Zapata's murder does not become extraordinary because it fits a set of conventions and roles that have been transmitted through time. Good versus evil, vulnerability and powerlessness, and peaceful play disrupted by violence, are dramaturgical elements drawn from genres such as tragedy and melodrama to build the audience's perception that the ongoing cycle of violence is unbreakable.

This social cycle is "linked in a feedback loop" between the event and the action of individuals as Schechner explains (*Between* 77). In the case of Colombia, this means that the audience – in this case, the general public – receive the media reports as part of a narrative and performed arc of action; then they position themselves within the action as spectators, creating their own commentaries in keeping with previous experiences. The media then takes in its audience's responses and reports them back, thus creating a totalising dramatic structure. As Schechner claims, "history is not what happened but what is encoded and transmitted" (*Between* 98). Zapata is murdered. The media reports the event as a tragic death, with causes beyond the audience's ready understanding. The audience express their outrage and bewilderment at yet another eruption of violence. The media reports this in turn. The story goes around until it becomes old news, superseded by another tragic death, at which point the cycle begins anew. This loop makes it difficult to change our understanding about acts of violence, terror and repression, because what we think is a logical and natural outcome of our social narrative is more of a restored behaviour constructed over time.

The idea of "restored behaviour" can be extended to reflexive responses to actions, the way judgments are repeated in order to confirm the status quo and become core to cultural memory. From the title, *KienyKe* drags the reader's attention to two words: "*activista*" (activist) and "JUCO". These two words in the Colombian context are complicated because they relate forthright to someone being part of a subversion group. The connection wakes up animadvert feelings in the readers/audience who have codified for generations a rejection of anything that sounds close to communism. The dogma of anti-communism established by the American senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s was copied in Colombia by the government of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in 1954. Communism was declared illegal, allowing the persecution and condemnation of any sympathiser. Although years later this law was revoked by the *Frente Nacional*, the

prejudices towards people that somehow differ from the status quo, that organise workers around syndicates, that demand more inclusive policies, is still present. Zapata belonged to JUCO which designated him as someone that went against the norm, creating trouble. This trend of thought, this strip of behaviour, is so deeply embedded in Colombian society that we justify this kind of violent act, thinking out loud that the victim must be involved in some murky things for him to finish with a violent death.

In this, we see how both Turner's social drama and Schechner's "restored behaviour" underlie Taylor's analysis of social performance in terms of repertoire and scenario. To see Zapata's murder as a scenario within the Colombia repertoire of violence, terror and repression allows us to locate Zapata's case within the larger arc of Colombian history. For Taylor "cultural memory is shaped by ethnicity and gender" (86). Colombia, like all the countries in Latin America, has gone through a process of *mestizaje*. We are a mixed society produced by the crosses between indigenous peoples, and the descendants of European conquerors and African slaves. However, race does not necessarily define economic status in Colombia. As in any capitalist country, true power comes through money. Our cultural memory has been built through the stories of acquisitions, dispossessions, bribes and payments. Someone like Zapata, like other activists without lineage and power, becomes one more victim of the societal belief that these power imbalances are how things have always been and should always be.

In this thesis, I identify two genres, tragedy and melodrama, as predominant modes deployed by the media for reconstructing and transmitting ideas about violence in Colombia. To view an event such as Zapata's murder in tragic terms is to see forces at work beyond our understanding or control. How could such a thing happen? We are too small, too powerless to prevent such a fate. All we can do is pray and resign ourselves to the inevitable, the sure knowledge that sooner or later we too will be victims. To view this same event as melodrama adds both sentimentality and a silver

lining. We are saddened beyond measure, and because we can do more, we say “life goes on” in the hope that the evil eye will not be turned on us.

When the media inserts a tragic frame on everyday events, they restate the powerlessness of human beings to change their destiny. They lament the violence with its destructiveness behind it and invite the readers/viewers to feel along. They describe Zapata’s story as one of a young man, an example to his community, and a victim of murder under strange circumstances. Although there is no denying that this is a pitiful situation, the majority of responses from the public are reflexive, as they are used to such things. The media will not analyse the Zapata case in depth, because that might get everyone into trouble; it is better not to risk exposure to those same forces. Instead, being fearful themselves, they emphasise the horror and foment fear; horror because it has happened again and no one is doing anything to stop it, and fear that anyone, especially those engaged in activities like Zapata, might be the next victim.

In this, the media can be seen to take the role of a Greek Chorus. Like a Greek Chorus, the media does not intervene; rather they dwell on the hardness of the events. Their narratives provoke an everyday pity that goes hand in hand with increasing fear. Their portrayal of everyday events as tragedies thus reinforces the status quo. It removes the responsibility from those who rule and should take measures to avoid acts of violence. It inculcates passivity in the general public, enacting repression in signalling that those who may try to change things, face a faster death.

If tragedy works through pity and fear to reify the powerlessness of ordinary human beings, melodrama works through the mundane and not-extraordinary to produce a more comfortable and faster process of identification between the audience and the characters of the story. The theatre theorist, Patrice Pavis defines melodrama as “the unknowing parodic offspring of classical tragedy”. Pavis strongly asserts the cheapness of the genre because “[…] melodrama conveys social abstractions, conceals

the social conflicts of its time, and reduces contradictions to an atmosphere of central fear or utopic happiness" (208). An audience emotionally affected by the sufferings or triumphs of its hero will not necessarily analyse context or scenarios but will experience what Pavis calls a "'social catharsis' […] that discourages any kind of reflection and criticism"(209).

Melodrama is integral to Colombia popular culture, especially in soap operas. Its narrative tropes are easily identified because they are part of our daily repertoire. Most families get together to watch an evening soap opera after the television news has finished. That is, just after the news has informed us about the latest acts of violence, corruption and scandals in the country, the soap opera comes through to relieve the uneasy feelings of the audience by inviting them to immerse themselves in the ongoing dramas of familiar characters. In Zapata's case it is easy to correlate how the media depicts the story with characters that are good like Zapata: "[…] he was not only a student, he was a political leader […]" "(Zapata) denounced labour rights violations […]" and how they use a mundane and dramatic narrative to describe danger: […] In the afternoon he [Zapata] decided to join a group of friends to play a soccer match. He never thought it would be the last. The sinister characters are mysterious: "The strange man took advantage of the confusion, walked silently […]".

Tragedy and melodrama go together in the narrative framework of acts of violence, terror and repression in Colombia. There may be other genres to describe everyday events such as tragicomedy or theatre of the absurd, but for the purposes of this thesis, I focus only on these two. My thesis develops through four chapters, organised chronologically from 1948 to 2008. Each case study has had a profound impact on the composition of the Colombian identity. In chapter one, I analyse the assassination of the political leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán. The aftermath of his death triggered violent responses from the citizens and strong repressive strategies from the

Government. Chapter two examines the siege of the Palace of Justice in 1989 by the guerrilla group M-19 and how the counterattack by the army reinforced the use of violence as a method of repression. Chapter three studies the assassination of the journalist and comedian Jaime Garzón in 1999 by paramilitary forces, confirming a state of terror in which any citizen might be subject to annihilation. Chapter four begins with the case of the *Falsos Positivos* – the false positives case – which then leads to my conclusions. This case serves as an example of how theatrical devices have come to be part of an everyday scenario of violence. Between 2002 and 2008 the Colombian Army selected young men, lured them by promising work opportunities and then executed them in order to stage a scene in which the victims were wearing camouflage uniforms and weapons, so that the public would believe, falsely, that they were guerrilla soldiers killed in combat.

Each case study is attached to analyses of plays that were created directly in response to events. In Chapter one, the play *1948: El Fracaso de una Utopía Popular* (2015) is a collective creation by a 1948 group of researchers from *Universidad del Valle*. *La Siempreviva* (1992) by Miguel Torres in Chapter two takes elements from the siege of the Palace of Justice and is part of Colombia's classic theatre repertoire. Chapter three analyses *Corruptour* (2015) by Verónica Ochoa who used postmodern theatrical devices to depict Garzon's life and activism. The last theatrical response, in my concluding chapter, is *Antígona: Tribunal de Mujeres* (2013), a collective creation by Tramaluna Teatro in which the cast includes some of the mothers of the sons killed by the army in its extrajudicial executions.

My inquiry is informed by interviews with Colombian practitioners, directors and scholars, who offer their perspectives both on the plays and on Colombia's history of violence, terror and repression. These are my friends and colleagues, who have entrusted me with their work. This thesis makes use of the first person "I" throughout,

because I cannot detach myself from the story I am telling; nor can I deny my own complicity, passive though it may be, in the culture of violence that I am attempting to critique here. My own experiences as someone who grew up in Colombia and lived there until moving to New Zealand in 2013 are intertwined with the story I am telling. The distance provided by living in New Zealand has highlighted for me how immersed Colombian society is in the daily performance of violence and how difficult is to see it when inside the country. Colombians must see themselves not as powerless and passive actors, but as active performers who can redress violence, terror and repression through social action.

Chapter One: 1948 The Assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán

> Jorge Eliecer Gaitán fell around one o'clock in the afternoon. Ten minutes after being wounded, the head of liberalism was transferred in a taxi to the Central Clinic where, at two o'clock in the afternoon, his death was reported to the country. [...] as soon as the taxi left with the agonising body of the leader, the people began to shout, Gaitán was killed! Gaitán was killed! [...] At four in the afternoon Bogotá [...] was hell.
>
> Enrique Santos Molano (4)

It sounds dramatic to describe a city as hell. However, the legacy of that afternoon has endured in the history of Colombia. On the 9 Apr. 1948, the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, the liberal leader of the opposition and presidential candidate, smashed the gates that had somehow contained Colombia's undercurrents of violence and released an overwhelming force of hate and terror. Generation after generation, we have heard the stories around one of the most important political figures in Colombia and why, with his death, the history of the country changed for the worse. The memory of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán represents a utopia, and his story has become a legend: once upon a time there was a man who tried to change the social and political dramaturgy of the country; he was assassinated, and the people went mad with grief and rage. The image of an afternoon in hell prevails, obscuring any potential insights the story might hold. To find terms to deal with the horror of Gaitán's murder, we have reached for the comfort of conventional dramas that compensate for the limits of our ability to understand and act politically in the face of social violence and attribute instead, responsibility for our acts to mythical entities or circumstances. Analysing Gaitán's assassination as a performance sheds light on the cycle of Colombian violence, aids in

dismantling the mystification in acts of violence, terror and repression, and perhaps transforms the way we Colombians see the hellish realities of our social experience.

This chapter analyses the political figure of Gaitán as a critical element of Colombian history to understand the violence, terror and repression that unfolded after his death. I describe what it was that made Gaitán a target; the actions he took that were aimed at disrupting the dominant social-political structure, making him a direct threat to the status quo. I also look at the way Gaitán's assassination allowed the popular media to frame the event as an inescapable tragedy, developing a prevailing scenario that prevents us from critical thinking and imagining ourselves taking action to challenge this dramaturgy. I question popular information about Gaitán from a performance point of view; who was he? What did he represent in Colombia's political, arena – not merely to other politicians but to the wider public? I also create other questions that challenge the normativity of violent acts; for example, why kill Gaitán in daylight, on a public street? Why not in private, without witnesses? Alternatively, if witnesses were desired, why not on a political stage? Gaitán's assassination is an historical moment that 'set the entire country on fire' (Uribe Alarcón, *Antropología* 27); how did the dramaturgy of violence in Colombia start to be shaped from that moment? Through this case study I can start identifying the theatrical tropes taken by the media to firmly establish the Colombian people's social imaginary[21] that Gaitán's death was part of an inevitable tragedy. At the end of the chapter, I examine the theatrical response to Gaitán's assassination in *1948: El fracaso de una Utopia Popular*, a play devised, written and performed by graduate students from the Bachelor in Performing Arts at the *Universidad del Valle*.

There is a beginning for every story, social as well as personal. In the theatre, when the house lights are dimmed, and the curtains open, the first scene shows the

[21] I am using Charles Taylor's concept on *Modern Social Imaginaries*.

audience the foundations of the drama they will see. For example, in *Oedipus Rex*, the tragedy written by Sophocles that Aristotle took as his ideal, the play starts with Oedipus assuring the citizens of Thebes that he will find a solution to the plague affecting the city. From this moment, the audience is given to understand that there is a crisis that will drive the scene that follows. They can identify the central characters and their social-political agendas, begin to anticipate the conflicts that will emerge and play out, and imagine various possible strategies for resolution or the possibility that resolution is impossible.

If a Colombian violent scenario depicts as a tragedy, what would the first scene be in the drama of political violence in Colombia? Would we turn to the past, beginning with independence from Spain in 1819? Would we go even further back, to the first European invaders and their acts of colonisation? For this thesis, which is necessarily limited in scope, I begin in the modern period, with the event in the contemporary history of Colombia that is generally seen to have sparked the cycle of violence, terror and repression over the past 70 years: the murder of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán in 1948. What was the crisis that catalysed the shift in our society? Who were the central characters and character types, and how were these figures introduced into the social drama of my country? How did the dramaturgy of violence start to be constructed as a social norm as a result of that initial, very dramatic action? How, that is, did the crisis of one man's assassination evolve into a scenario in which, more than seven decades later, violence is now enacted in everyday life?

When I was a primary school student, I was told that the beginning of the history of violence, terror and repression in Colombia was the assassination of the liberal political leader and presidential candidate Jorge Eliecer Gaitán on 9 Apr. 1948. This act divided the history of the country into two epochs – before and after – and provoked a sequence of events that shaped the social-political landscape until the present day. Of

course, Gaitán's assassination was not an entirely singular event, even though it has come to be seen as such in Colombia. As in *Oedipus*, there is always more to the story. After sixteen years in power, in 1930, the Conservative Party lost the presidency, giving way to a hegemonic period of sixteen years commanded by the Liberal Party. The tension between the two parties grew stronger during this time, and when the power returned to the conservatives in 1946, a wave of systematic killings was triggered in the small towns of the countryside. It was against this background that Gaitán's assassination was staged and became the spark for an explosion of violence that until then had been at least marginally contained (Valencia Gutiérrez 63). Gaitán's murder was the beginning period of a crisis that so far has not reached a firm resolution. In the foreword of *El Bogotazo Memorias del Olvido* by Arturo Alape, Pedro Gómez Valderrama states "on 9 April a new time did not begin; it was the culmination of a sectarian process and the beginning of a new stage" (xii). In this reading, Gaitán's death can be seen as a hinge that opened the door to more complex uses of violence. In Turnerian terms, Gaitán's death constituted a breach that provoked a crisis – *La Violencia* – which in turn was set into a series of crises that can be seen now as a schism in the ongoing social drama.

While Gaitán's assassination can be seen as an "irreparable breach" it also fits into a larger dramatic arc of action, or three previous stages (Turner, *From Ritual* 71). For the purpose of this analysis, I locate the first stage of this larger social drama at the moment governmental power returned to the Conservative Party in 1946. According to Antonio Caballero in his book *Historia de Colombia y sus oligarquías (1498-2017),* the Archbishop of Bogotá chose all the conservative candidates for the presidency (9: 9). When the Liberal Party gained presidential power from 1930 to 1946, they enacted significant changes such as the separation of power between the Catholic Church and the state. The reform was a huge debacle for the Conservative Party as their ties with the

Church were crucial “belts of power” among the population (Hylton 16). During this period, the figure of Gaitán attained popularity as his work in different government positions marked a difference in the old-fashioned oligarchy. A crisis began to gather as to the conservatives took the Government back from the liberals and then worked to secure their power by systematically suppressing and murdering the opposition. For example, the conservative government cast the union movement as a threat to social stability, so that calls for strike action were seen to contribute to a period in which “the days [went] by under a great political and social tension with a marked tendency towards anarchy” (Guzmán et al. 28). The systematic killings of members of the opposition can be addressed as a kind of (perverse) redressive mechanism, the third stage of the social drama, as those in power tried to contain the social desire for change. The crisis was propelled to the point of no return with Gaitán’s assassination, which, for the Conservative Party, conveniently resolved the crisis presented by ongoing political opposition, but immediately created an even bigger breach in the social fabric by triggering the cycle of violence, terror and repression that continues to this day. What was being staged as an act of closure – bringing the curtain down definitively on the opposition – instead broke open the social contract in a way that has yet to be repaired.

If Gaitán’s death was part of a governmental strategy to suppress the growing force of the people identified with the Liberal Party he commanded – peasants, blue-collar workers, minorities and others in contrast to the merchant elite and aristocracy who were embedded in and benefitted from the power of the state – it implies that there was some dramatic imagination attached to the planning, elaboration and then staging of the assassination. Gaitán received three bullets while walking with four friends for lunch. The assassin walked towards him, showed his pistol, and triggered it in plain daylight. A few moments later was enough to provoke an uprising that changed the social-political landscape of the country. The decision of the perpetrators to enact their

violence on a political leader as he was going about an everyday activity – walking with friends to a café – can be seen as theatrical and performative beyond its efficacy as a murder accomplished. In fact, its success can be directly tied to its theatricality. Just as we must see Zapata's murder on a basketball court – not in his home, or at a political meeting or rally – as an action staged for onlookers for effect, so too I interpret the assassination of Gaitán as a performance intentionally done for the effects that are still being felt to this day. In both cases, the point being made is that violence can happen anywhere in our social environment; our response can only be fear as we go about our daily lives. It is our everyday sense of safety that is violated.

Gaitán: the political figure

Jorge Eliecer Gaitán's date of birth is not precisely known. Some sources state that he was born in 1898, others say 1903. The same is true of his birthplace, as it changes between the capital city, Bogotá, to a municipality near to it, Cucunubá. What is definite is that he had an upbringing in an educated lower-middle-class family. His father, a radical liberal, had a second-hand book shop, and his mother was a primary school teacher (Tahar 253). Gaitán was raised in an environment where critical thinking was practised during debates and his mother took him under her wing, providing him with readings and studies (Reyes, "La Voz" 116). In his early twenties, Gaitán tasted the excitement of leading an enraged crowd for the first time. According to Carlos José Reyes, in 1919, the tailors of Bogotá were protesting President Marco Fidel Suárez's decision to buy the army uniforms abroad. Intimidated by the increasing number of protesters, the presidential guard decided to shoot them, killing fifteen civilians. The protesters gathered after at the *Plaza de Bolivar* (the historical epicentre of Colombia, as this thesis will show) and Gaitán, upon the shoulders of a corpulent man, proclaimed a speech in favour of the defence of the people. Reyes describes Gaitán's action as the moment when he "became aware" that through powerful and sparkling oratory, the

people's energy could be motivated and encouraged to action (Reyes, "La Voz" 118). The future politician discovered that he could create a stage anywhere, in this case upon the shoulders of someone, to gain visibility, draw the attention of an audience and make them participants in his story. As an actor who prepares before coming on stage, Gaitán would prepare himself to perform and deliver effective discourses.

Gaitán graduated as a lawyer from the National University of Colombia in 1924 and then travelled to Italy where he received his doctorate in jurisprudence (Tahar 253). By this time, he had already acquired extensive experience in political activism as a member of the Liberal University Directorate; he had been a productive campaigner during election times using a platform where he refined his oratory skills and populist character (Sharpless 34-40). Despite his significant academic achievements after his return from Europe, Gaitán was denied access to the high spheres of politics mainly due to his lack of political and social linage. He needed a stage from which he could draw the attention of an audience eager for a fairer society and he found it debating the army's response to the United Fruit Company workers' strike[22] (Sharpless 53-54). The army's actions resulted in manslaughter where different versions claimed hundreds of people killed – although only nine deaths were officially recognised.[23] In Colombia, this episode is known as *La Masacre de las Bananeras* (The Banana Massacre). Gaitán, as a member of the House of Representatives, fiercely denounced the army's wrongdoing and the government's acquiescence. The presidential guards shooting civilians and the army shooting protesters in the Banana Massacre are clear examples of how people in power are conditioned to perform violence and avoid any other type of mediation.

[22] The workers were on strike for a month demanding proper contract legislation to United Fruit Company. On 6 December 1928 the military shot into the crowd of workers who were waiting at the train station for the state governor to negotiate their demands.

[23] See www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/asi-fue-la-masacre-de-las-bananeras-la-noche-de-la-verguenza-nacional-302386, and www.banrepcultural.org/biblioteca-virtual/credencial-historia/numero-117/masacre-de-las-bananeras-diciembre-6-de-1928.

The Banana Massacre brought Gaitán into the political spotlight as he demonstrated his skills as a persuasive social leader. By all accounts, he was not only passionate in his pursuit of justice; he was the first politician in Colombia to position himself as an actor would in the theatre. According to Sharpless, "He played to the sympathetic audience [the public, who were outraged by the army's assault] in a masterly performance designed to draw maximum attention to himself" (56). In his responses to the Banana Massacre, Gaitán applied a range of techniques, from a well-constructed and intelligent discourse to an exaggerated and passional speech (Sharpless 56) the same way that an actor does with dramatic methods.

Gaitán's public interventions weakened the already discredited conservative government and helped the Liberal Party to win the next presidential election (Reyes, "La Voz" 120). In the years following the Banana Massacre, Gaitán built a following by cultivating a theatrical relationship with his audiences of the sort that Marco de Marinis observes as the connection in which the audience can be manipulated by the performance (101). In "Dramaturgy of the Spectator", Marinis explains that "the performance seeks to induce in each spectator a range of definite transformations, both intellectual (cognitive) and affective (ideas, beliefs, emotions, fantasies, values, etc.)" (101). Marinis tells us that there are two approaches to this dramaturgy: one with an "objective sense" in which the audience is considered a "target for the actions of the […] performers"; and another with a "subjective sense" that takes into account the "receptive operations" effected by the audience like "perception, interpretation, aesthetic appreciation, memorisation, emotive and intellectual response, etc" (101). In this semiotic frame, Gaitán can be understood as a performer who imagined his audience as an audience.

He rehearsed his oratory for hours in front of the mirror (Braun 59), and in performance he was mindful of the audience's reception to his speeches as he went

along, ensuring that the masses would quickly identify with his values through his use of language and gestures.[24] It is important, perhaps, to understand that in Colombia before Gaitán, politicians presented themselves as oligarchs, with a vocabulary – posture, words and gestures – that deliberately distinguished them from the common people. Even Gaitán's body set him apart from the rest of the political class, as Herbert Braun describes the "obsession" by Bogotá's elite for the politician's features. His brown skin, his mouth and his "acute, incisors [and] canine [teeth]" that symbolise Gaitán's personality marked him as a strong opponent (58).

Actions of disruption – Gaitán's pathway towards the presidency

During the years following the Banana Massacre intervention, Gaitán continued with his work as leader of the House of Representatives. In the face of the presidency of Enrique Olaya Herrera, Gaitán appealed for a stronger social and political education in which the masses developed a "revolutionary consciousness" to favour debates and the resolution of collective problems (Sharpless 64-68). Although Gaitán was an active member of the Liberal Party, he was critical of the traditional way the liberals performed politically, which in his view was much the same as the conservatives. For Gaitán, both parties embodied an oligarchy (Sanchéz 27). Wishing to push the Liberal Party's vision toward more socialist policies, Gaitán decided to fund UNIR (*Union Nacional Izquierdista Revolucionaria,* or Revolutionary Leftist National Union) in 1933 – a move he hoped would break the bipartisanship monopoly. Whether due to financial problems or ideological division within the members, Gaitán terminated UNIR in 1935 and came back to the liberal ranks (Salazar Rodríguez 39).

Gaitán disrupted the political stage of that time with his speeches. Significantly, he also embodied the people at the bottom of the social pyramid, rather than at the top

[24] See Templo de los Dioses, Documental: Jorge Eliecer Gaitán "El Jefe" 17 Oct, 2011 www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFDFBwKkHgw&list=PLPC-XoneerPVZMD_yW05K5S6LNo4GwIZp&index=5&t=0s

as was typical of politicians then as now. His knowledge and eloquence contradicted the elite's social imagery in ways that challenged the status quo. William Ospina observes that the political voice and the use of language that articulated the colonial discourse to keep people amenable was the same instrument that through Gaitán, made them conscious of their rights and needs (109). This inversion of the use of political language – using it to free instead of supress – can also be seen as a theatrical device that reveals the backstage of a scene. If political violence applies theatricality to construct scenarios, theatre devices can also expose them as I discuss later in the theatrical response to Gaitán's assassination.

What if people like Gaitán could learn to be as bright as he was? One response was to diminish him by calling him "*el negro*" due to the dark colour of his skin. Despite the rejection, Gaitán did not disguise his heritage but capitalised on it by promoting his image to the masses (Braun 59). This performative act within the Colombian caste system invited citizens to revise our history of *mestizaje*. Taylor explains that "*mestizaje* refers to a concept of biological and/or cultural fusion. […] it has a history, it *tells* a history and it *embodies* a history" (*The Archive* 94). Gaitán symbolised that part of the history that the ruling class wanted to remain repressed because it represents Colombia's long record of conquest and colonisation. Even after its independence from Spain, the new lords – those with fair skin tone – would apply violent strategies to conquer land and properties. "*Mestizaje",* as Taylor clarifies "refers to the *both/and* rather than the neither/nor" (*The Archive* 96).

Gaitán was both indigenous and white, both educated and fierce. The overlooked aspect of Colombia's colonial ancestry plays an essential role in the enactment of violence. The different actors of the conflict consistently apply a segregated narrative – they and us – facilitating their control over people. Colombian society to this day keeps operating actively in grades of race, gender and economic status. It is fair to say that

Gaitán used this narrative as well; however, in telling the story of them - the oligarchy – versus us – the masses – he claimed to be on the side of the latter (Sharpless 104). That is, he positioned himself in opposition to the other political leaders, who were perhaps less convincing in marking the difference between both parties as if they were, felt and acted as common citizens.

After the UNIR failure and his return to the Liberal Party, Gaitán had to rebuild his image among his supporters, as they saw him as a class traitor (Sharpless 85). However, it took him only one year to be seen again as a high profile leader and to regain momentum in pursuing his political ascendance. During the first presidency of Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo (1934-38), Gaitán was appointed Mayor of Bogotá. This looked like a significant concession by the president, but there was an underlying agenda. According to Sharpless, Lopez Pumarejo felt that Gaitán was a threat even though they belonged to the same Liberal Party. Allowing Gaitán to administer the capital city was a manoeuvre to make him appear as an "inept administrator" which would diminish his political image (Sharpless 87). Perceiving the trick, Gaitán nonetheless took the opportunity and "implemented significant social reforms" that reinforced his qualities as a leader among the people (Tahar 255).

Even so, his tenure as mayor only lasted eight months due to a public-drivers' strike sparked by their rejection of wearing uniforms. There is, of course, a backdrop to the strike and its impact on Gaitán's image as an administrator. An element of the dramaturgy of violence in everyday life in Colombia is for those in power, to oversimplify facts and actions to establish a simple and appealing story to sell their agenda to the wider audience. For example, this incident with Gaitán and the public-drivers' strike involves more actors and political intentions that the public eye can see. Sharpless explains that Gaitán's work as mayor benefited mainly "the interests of the less affluent of the city's inhabitants" and to accomplish this, the city's collection of

taxes had to be “functioning effectively and efficiently” (89-90). In other words, the business people had to pay their fair share without exceptions and thus, of course, quickly grew resentful. The strike was the perfect excuse for the President to make Gaitán look incompetent and oust him from his post.

In addition, Gaitán’s opposition began composing a narrative that portrayed him as a communist and fascist, terms with apparently contradictory meanings yet provocative enough to create an image of the dangers of a politician outside of the norm. As a consequence of studying law in Italy during Mussolini’s era, Gaitán was represented by his detractors as an admirer of the fascist ideology. It is even possible that the extreme left joined those critiques as Gaitán was more successful in gathering the masses than the communist movement (Salazar Rodríguez 44). On the other hand, the oligarchy accused him of being a communist for his way of addressing the proletarian cause. Both accusations were openly discussed by Gaitán in his weekly meetings with the press and public in which he reflected on the failures of each ideology. It did not help, though, when he used Mussolini’s words during the swearing-in ceremony as Bogotá’s Mayor when he said: “If I advance, follow me. If I retreat, kill me. If I die, avenge me” (Salazar Rodríguez 45).

Gaitán’s persona was as both a politician and activist; both aligned with the state and challenging its status quo. His political progress was buoyed by his popularity and ability to sway the people to his side – something his colleagues in the Liberal Party wanted to exploit. At the same time, however, they were wary and envious of his stature and worked continually behind the scenes to exclude him from power. Due to this duality, Gaitán was kept in the political scene, but with more active control over expressing his political aspirations. After being dismissed from his post as mayor, Gaitán briefly held two other important positions, initially in 1940 as Minister of Education in the governments of Eduardo Santos, and then in 1943 as Minister of

Labour during the second term of Alfonso Lopez. As short as these appointments were, Gaitán's work consistently attempted to benefit the less privileged. In 1944, he launched his campaign for the presidency, claiming a place on the political stage is an ongoing performance that became part of the social status quo. This state of affairs escalated dramatically in 1946 when the presidential election was again contested. After four consecutive presidential periods, the Liberal Party was going through a profound crisis caused by internal division. Gaitán launched his candidacy in a movement called "*Gaitánista"* in 1944 and could not count on support from the liberals. Instead, the liberal directorate named Gabriel Turbay as its official candidate, on the basis that he had a more suitable profile and better fit their agenda (Alape 33-41). The Conservative Party, commanded by the far-right politician Laureano Gómez, saw an opportunity amid the polarisation and appointed Mariano Ospina Perez, nephew and grandson of two former presidents as their candidate. The divisiveness within the Liberal Party meant that the electorate split their votes between Turbay and Gaitán, giving the advantage to Ospina Perez who won the election. After sixteen years in power, the Liberal Party was reduced to the opposition.

The Mariano Ospina era started with outbreaks of violence in towns where mayors were conservative supporters. However, because the conservatives remained a minority in congress, they resorted to force against the populace in order to maintain power and, in Antonio Caballero's words: "soon life began to be worth nothing" (11: 2). Following the election, Gaitán stepped into the role of sole director of the Liberal Party and, as leader of the opposition, denounced the ongoing persecution against liberal supporters (Salazar Rodríguez 50). On 7 Feb. 1948, Gaitán called a massive march to protest the numerous deaths of peasants, traders and any follower of his party. The masses gathered in absolute silence, such that only their footsteps could be heard as they advanced toward the plaza. The March of Silence depicted a "calm ocean before the

storm erupted" (Alape 104) and demonstrated without question Gaitán's dramaturgical prowess and capacity to summon the masses. No one yelled, disturbed or forced a confrontation; the plaza was packed with red and black flags carried by an audience that quietly listened to Gaitán's speech. His challenge to the President is known as "*Oración por la Paz"* – a Prayer for Peace. It demanded the defence of human life and the end of violent acts. When he finished speaking, Gaitán sent the people home and they dispersed peacefully. Most historians agree that this act sealed Gaitán's fate, as no other politician had the power to control the people as he demonstrated that day.

Schechner observes that "when people go into the streets *en masse*, they are celebrating life's fertile possibilities" (*The Future of Ritual* 46). In the March of Silence, the participants took a step away from their ordinary lives and joined together in the streets to protest the violence that was beginning to dominate their daily experiences. They manifested their rage by suppressing its typical expression and enacting a performance that adhered to a code of silent unity in opposition to the increasing political polarisation and social stratification in their cities and towns. In Gaitán's staging of the March of Silence one can see his dramaturgical skill in orchestrating "role enactments, audience participation, and reception" (Schechner, *Future of Ritual* 51). Gaitán, at the head of this scene, appeared as a protagonist, not unlike Oedipus addressing the citizens of Thebes, that is, a (tragic) hero comforting and inspiring a people who are suffering under a powerful affliction. In delivering his speech he was clearly conscious of the magnitude of the performance and an audience beyond those in the plaza that included opponents, media and even observers outside the national borders. The March performed by organised civilians stated a fundamental principle of life, being present.[25] As in theatre, it is the presence of the actors – the people

[25] Diana Taylor discusses in her article "Presidential Address 2018 ¡ Presente!" the performative force and meaning of acts of presence in the political structures of México which may apply to all Latin American. There is more about her analysis in chapter four.

performing off stage as well as on – that give meaning to the event; the assembled protesters became an audience to Gaitán's speech, but in the way they entered and exited the plaza, and even as silent witnesses, they also claimed the right and capacity to be actors in the social drama. In this, the march also enacted a ritual of protest braided together with its own theatricality, reflecting the ongoing cycle between ritual and theatre, everyday life and performance. As Schechner avers: "this theatre is ritual because it is efficacious, intending to produce real effects by means of symbolic causes" (*Future of Ritual* 51). Following Taylor, the silence, the flags, and Gaitán's oratory can be seen as elements in a scenario of protest that came together into a performance of challenge to the people in power and the scenario of violence.

The staging: 9 April 1948

Two months after the March of Silence, Gaitán had almost secured a victory in the presidential elections of 1950. The support from the people grew by the day, and his populist technique acquired a perfection that was envied by the other politicians whose primary strategy was to accuse him of spreading dangerous socialist and communist ideologies. One more characteristic of the dramaturgy of violence is revealed: to discredit the opposition, transforming it into a stranger. While Gaitán was campaigning for president, as the leader of the opposition, he was also working as a lawyer, and in that role was not limited by his political inclinations – in particular, he was defending a client, the conservative Lieutenant Jesús María Cortés, who had been charged with murdering the journalist Eudoro Galarza Ossa. After a long court process, on the night before his assassination, Gaitán won the case provoking a euphoric celebration (Alape 203) and perhaps leading him to relax his guard in a way that made what happened next even more shocking and dramatic.

To analyse a catastrophic and catalytic event such as the assassination of Gaitán in theatrical terms, it is essential to look first at what we often call "the given

circumstances" – the backdrop against which the pivotal action occurs. First, Gaitán's political vision bridged the division between liberals and conservatives; his followers were on both sides of the spectrum (Alape 33) as is shown by defending a conservative supporter. This meant that he was not properly – in the eyes of the government – placed into a political category and operated outside their set scripts. Second, Gaitán's idea of a just and fair society was not only a cornerstone of his speeches, relegated to platitudes in the way of other politicians; he was also committed to breaking class barriers in ways that were demonstrated in both his persona and his actions. Third, he was a man who took his work seriously; having won his case and celebrated afterwards, this did not prevent him from going to his office only a few hours later. Unlike other politicians, an entourage or security guards did not surround him. He was just a man, a bit high on his own success, happy at having been congratulated on his accomplishments by his friends and followers following his incredible courtroom performance and left wide open to the violence that happened minutes later. My own theatrical imagination sees a man who is on his way to the presidency, defying all the laws of the elite, the oligarchy against whom he had pitted himself, and a country that was on his side, unsuspecting and vulnerable to ambush. He died. The country, violated by his murder, has never quite recovered.

It has never been clear if the assassin, Juan Roa Sierra, worked on his own, if he was part of a conspiracy against Gaitán, or was hired by unknown forces, but what is known is that on that Friday 9 Apr. 1948, just before 1:00 p.m., Gaitán was in his office in the Agustin Nieto building in downtown Bogotá. His friends Plinio Mendoza Niera, a liberal politician, the doctor Pedro Eliseo Cruz, the journalist Alejandro Vallejo, and the treasurer of the city, Jorge Padilla, were with him. Mendoza Niera invited Gaitán and the others to have lunch to carry on the celebrations of his recent triumph. The group of men left the office and took the lift. They split into two groups: at the front was

Mendoza Niera walking next to Gaitán; some steps back were Cruz, Vallejo and Padilla. As Mendoza Niera and Gaitán stepped into the street, the assassin appeared walking in the opposite direction towards Gaitán with a gun in his hand. He shot three times. The bullets reached Gaitán who instinctively tried to turn, raising his hands to protect his face. Mendoza Niera tried to take the gun from Roa Sierra, but he shot again puncturing Mendoza's hat. Then he ran away. Gaitán lay on the pathway bleeding (Alape 213).

In a matter of minutes, the city centre erupted in a frantic state. Gaitán was brought in a taxi to the Central Hospital, where he was declared dead at 1:45 p.m. The news of his demise lingered hidden from public knowledge until the liberal leaders decided what would be the course of action (Alape 19). Meanwhile, on the streets, the enraged people shouted "Gaitán was killed!". Two police officers apprehended the assassin, Roa Sierra, and forced him inside a drug store to keep him away from the crowd. The door only managed to keep out the crowd for a few minutes before the furious mob took Roa Sierra and lynched him on the street. They dragged his half-naked body to the presidential palace. For a brief moment at the drug store, the clerk asked Roa Sierra why he killed Gaitán, but he only replied "powerful things that I cannot tell you" (Alape, "El 9 de abril" 19).[26] No one else had the opportunity to discover the assassin's motivations. Roa Sierra's body received all the wrath and pain from Gaitán's followers, who suddenly felt the loss of their hero. The remains of Roa Sierra, his torn flesh, can be seen to have embodied a kind of testament to what came after in the country; that is, beyond Gaitán's murder, the brutal death of his assassin also was a symbol of what was going to happen in the following years as dehumanising the "other" became standard in the performance of violence.

[26] Enrique Santos Molano describes something different in his essay. He explains that Juan Roa Sierra identified himself to the retailer and the policemen and denied his participation in the crime. Roa Sierra stated that he was accused by someone on the street and instinctively ran because he was afraid. I decided to follow Alape's version, as his research is more extensive.

The streets became a battlefield. In a few hours, the fire consumed trams and buildings (Santos Molano 4). The masses armed themselves with any kind of weapon available: guns, machetes, knives, tools from hardware stores, and so on. Police members joined the uprising; giving arms to the protesters might have been a strategy to survive, or it might have been because some of them were genuinely Gaitán followers. The multitudes attacked everything that represented the system. The presidential palace soldiers fought back; they repressed the angry mob brutally securing the proximities of the site, but the surroundings were still controlled by the teeming masses who milled around with no direction, as even the liberal and conservative politicians were still deciding what to do (Braun, "Mundos del 9 de Abril" 238-40). This scenario of destruction has been carved into the minds of Colombians as the tragedy of Gaitán's assassination.

Even Gaitán toyed with idea of himself as a tragic hero, playing a role in an inevitable destiny "when he refused to use personal bodyguards, saying that his enemies would not dare kill him because they feared what would follow […]" (Sharpless 175). It may be that the controlled presence of the masses during the March of Silence convinced Gaitán's enemies that the people's passive nature would not lead them to action. But perhaps this outcome – the riots, the destruction of public civility and rise of despair – is exactly what the plotters against Gaitán were looking for. As in the *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*[27] the multitudes did as Gaitán predicted: they broke into liquor stores and got drunk to continue the wave of destruction; churches and convents were attacked, and Molotov bombs were prepared to ravage any symbols of the oligarchy (Braun, "Mundos del 9 de Abril" 243-45). When two army tanks arrived, the masses thought for a moment that they were allies who would help to overthrow the

[27] This is the title of one of Gabriel García Márquez's novels. The plot has nothing to do with the events of 9 Apr. 1948.

Government. They were wrong. The tanks shot against the people. “Hundreds of corpses were intertwined in the Plaza Bolivar” describes Alape (“El 9 de abril” 24). This was the cost of underestimating an enraged mob, and also the prelude to all that followed. In this event, we see a violent action by forces in alignment with the Government and the equally violent reaction of the people, followed by repression and despair at the impossibility of change.

The aftermath and media frame

Both events – Gaitán’s assassination and the uprising of 9 Apr. or “*El Bogotazo*”, as it is known, have come together to form the primal stage in the 20th century of the performance of violence in Colombia. For the mass media, the violence done to Gaitán that day was superseded by (and was therefore less significant than) the actions of the people in response. Braun states that, even years later, the media continued condemning the “barbaric acts” of the multitudes (“Mundos del 9 de Abril” 230). To some extent, it was ideal for politicians and opinion leaders to use the ignorant and low social level masses as a scapegoat: the masses sow terror, not the ruling class; the outraged, chaotic and dangerous masses almost destroyed the country.

This is the official scenario that dominates the public consciousness even now. In the dramaturgy of the state and its enablers, terror was performed by a brainless furious mob, not by a multitude that has been neglected for decades, humiliated and exploited by politicians who always looked down on them. While my anger is visible here, I am not justifying the violence performed by the people in the streets that day. Rather I am attempting to put a frame around the way violence has been re-presented to us as citizens over the years in order to cast such collective social performances of protest and revolt as a constant object of suspicion rather than give the people their due. Terror is “the name of an affect” as Bharucha (following Spivak) proposes in *Terror and Performance* (30). This means that the way the agent of acts of terror is identified

fluctuates depending on the perceptions and objectives of those who name them. The popular press was complicit. They condemned the public uprising without acknowledging the reasons behind it, in particular ignoring the systematic killings of liberals before Gaitán's death. In this, they conformed to the Government's scenario and contributed directly to the repertoire of violence, terror and repression.

Once the mass protests subsided, a kind of fatalism seems to have taken over, and a sense of powerlessness among the citizens especially, as the Government had used violence to repress demonstrations and with that, to suppress political analysis of the devastating event of losing a highly visible political leader. The focus shifted from the horror of the assassination to the terror of the mass uprising, which was escalated by the Government's violence in response. In the country's collective imaginary, 9 Apr. is a day when tragedy struck the daily lives of the people, as if a punishment from the gods was sent to subdue them. Inculcating the futility of any attempt to shape, or even to understand, the social and political aspects of everyday life is a perpetual dramaturgical mechanism in the performance of violence. *El Bogotazo* was not a punishment from the gods; nor was it destined or foreordained. In fact, one can consider the control and manipulation behind the assassination and the following uprising as a demonstration of the people's powerlessness – its theatricalisation in which the people, having played a role, were then forced into a tragic recognition and reversal, from social actors to victims thereafter.

The dramatisation of the event and its position within the dominant culture is evidenced by a large font uppercase headline in the front page of the newspaper *El Tiempo* on 12 Apr. 1948,[28] that said "*Bogotá está semidestruida*" -Bogotá is half-destroyed.[29] Under it, a heading in an uppercase smaller font stated "*Cobardemente*

[28] There was no circulation of newspapers in Bogotá on 10 and 11 Apr. due to the acts of vandalism.
[29] These newspapers have no digital versions and are not available on the internet. I took screenshots from Luis Angel Arango's library archive

Asesinado el Dr Gaitán" – Cowardly Murder [of] Dr Gaitán. Seven small headshots from representatives of both parties and an army general follow below, presumably to identify those managing the crisis. Under the photos, in the same font size of the first heading but in bold uppercase style, the second heading said "*Seguirá en Bogotá la Conferencia*" – The Conference in Bogotá will continue.[30] Finally, a medium-size photo of Gaitán's dead body, covered up to the neck with a white sheet surrounded by hospital staff and other people aligned to the left was displayed. At first sight, the story told by the three headings in order were: the city is half-destroyed; Gaitán was killed, but we will persevere; the Ninth Inter-American Conference led by the United States will continue its course. It almost seems like the destruction of the city was a cause and not the consequence of Gaitán's assassination.

The staging of the news incorporates dramatic elements to compose a familiar scene to an audience who are, in response, expected to identify with the story in ways that are calculated to uphold the status quo. The objective underlying such dramatisations is to repress any sense of urgency or agency in the spectator by eliciting their fear of meeting the same, dreadful fate. From Greek tragedy to its present, more ordinary descendent, melodrama, the journey of the hero is shaped to instruct the audience about the calamities or rewards (if that is the intention of the story) of his assumptions and actions. Gaitán, as a tragic hero, appears too daring and ambitious for wanting a social-political revolution. Like Oedipus on his quest to find the truth about Laius, Gaitán's pursuit of justice and social change put him on a path that could only end in his destruction.

[30] El Bogotazo occurred when the city was holding the Ninth Inter-American Conference led by the United States where representatives from countries of the western hemisphere were discussing economic and social strategies and the increasing communist threat during Cold War times (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, the dramatic structure of tragedy has become embedded in Western culture. Its underlying logic transcends the theatrical stage and is embodied in everyday life. Bharucha explains how "narrative plays a key role [in the production of news]" as the juxtaposition of "autobiography, testimony, and anecdote" becomes itself a "performance" (54). The portrayal of Gaitán's assassination appears natural but is a construct, the consequence of a dramaturgical default that works for the system while "what gets *invisibilised*" is kept out of reach for critical evaluation (Bharucha 40). Moreover, the conscious staging of the performance of violence with dramatic devices seduces the audience such that, according to Bharucha, the imagination of terror produces a people who are "more participatory and complicit […] stimulating a torrent of interpretations, which, in the final analysis, would seem to take us farther and farther away from the actual political content of the images" (38-39).

For example, a brief (one minute, seventeen seconds) video of the British Pathé archive entitled "Rioters Sack Bogotá" frames the information of 9 April's event for a foreign audience as follows.[31] The video presents footage in black and white of the riots in Bogotá. Like many newsreels of the time, it begins with a highly dramatic musical fanfare, trumpets and trombones, mixed with stringed instruments and drums, not unlike what can be heard in gladiator movies or war dramas then, as now. A British announcer, with a heightened sense of urgency in his tone, narrates what happened after Gaitán's assassination. The opening sentence prompts the audience to see a devastating outcome "first pictures from Bogotá revealed the capital of Colombia in a grip of unrestricted anarchy" committed by mobs "armed with guns and machetes". The footage shows crowded streets dominated by men raising their arms, some carrying rifles, protesting. Briefly one sees three men dragging Roa Sierra's body and followed by a multitude to

[31] British Pathé. "Rioters Sack Bogotá." *British Pathé*, www.britishpathe.com/video/rioters-sack-bogota/query/rioters+sack

the presidential palace as the music rises in volume and tempo to a climax as if a gladiator is entering the arena for a fight to the death.

The video mirrors the music by depicting different moments of the uprising, for example, people on the street walking faster, waving flags, and sheets of paper thrown from the windows. The narrator adds “the mob destroys one government building after another” and condemns the act by saying “the Bogotáns got their city in an orgy of senseless destruction”. At the closure of the story, like the third act of a stage play, the brass instruments, strings and drums again climax, break, and start up again; the footage presents buildings and cars on fire and scattered bodies on the ground. “Five hundred people are killed” the voiceover proclaims, as the video displays images of the aftermath with building debris and empty streets. The pace of the film, including the narration and the musical score, seem designed to escalate a sense of emergency that serves to excite and upset the audience while avoiding the production of critical questions. Finally, a kind of reassurance is offered: “under a new coalition Government which blames external influence for the disorders; the rioting is quelled”. The audience is reassured. The order has been restored. The Government is again secure. Nothing further need be said or done. End video. End revolution.

Seven decades later

What happened in the aftermath of that day in April has stayed in the collective imagination but in a simplistic way, without in-depth thinking or ambition for proper understanding. This is a result of decades of neglecting, probably on purpose, to teach history with critical lenses. According to Sven Schuster, the Colombian education system teaches social history in an “uncritical and shallow way”. As a primary school student, I only recall the teaching of *La Violencia* as the period when Colombians killed each other due to religious differences. Schuster tells us that “the elites took advantage of their close ties with the mass press to spread their versions about *La Violencia*” and

to otherwise impose a kind of silence, or memory repression of what actually happened and what it might mean for Colombians now (32). What remained in my memory from my schooling years was the motto "*La violencia trae más violencia*" (violence brings more violence) to explain the escalation of horror produced by the outpouring of public displays of fury in Bogotá and other major cities. While a motto may be designed to inculcate behaviour – in this case, do not be violent because it will only provoke more of the same – it also has the potential to turn back on itself. In this case, it is possible that repeatedly saying, "*La violencia trae más violencia*" has had the effect over time of building an impression of Colombia as an intrinsically violent state. In Schechnerian terms, this sort of schooling might be seen to have set the stage for violence and the repression of critical thinking in its wake as a kind of cyclical restored behaviour.

There is a commemorative plaque on the site where Gaitán was murdered. There is also a McDonald's restaurant. The irony of the way the rupture of political violence has been absorbed into and marginalised by the current capitalist environment is inescapable. Gaitán's image overlooks the street as a kind of graffiti god, a reminder for those who might recall his name. From 2012, 9 Apr. became a National Day of Memory and Solidarity with the victims. Every year the government honours the victims from the armed conflict and performs symbolic reparations to them. Which victims and which armed conflict is being commemorated is not specified; there is an implied idea and a blunt generalisation that conflict is the accustomed state of affairs. The official Government website states that through the symbolic act of planting trees a new life project begins for the victims ("Siembra vida, siembra paz"). What the website does not specify, is what is involved in this new life; how it is possible to maintain it and how the government guarantees the right to life.

From generation to generation, the learnt pattern of suppressing recognition of our role in maintaining the conditions that license the violence has been naturalised and

reinforced in everyday life from politicians, soldiers and outlaws to the media and common citizens. From the assassination of Gaitán to the murder of a social leader such as Zapata, the performance of violence relies on polarisation – the casting of the other as an enemy requiring elimination, and ourselves unthinkingly as the virtuous victims, and never the perpetrators. How can we learn to be better social actors? What are the tools that can transform us into citizens who analyse the circumstances, the objectives and the strategies behind the backdrop of the dominant dramaturgy? We need to think theatrically to understand how each of us, like characters in a play, can be seen to pursue (consciously and not) objectives against obstacles according to social scenarios that we affirm in our daily performances. In a play, performing a role acquires a certain inevitability, because the script is (generally) fixed. Ironically, the practice of thinking through options within the framework of a dramatic action in the theatre can translate into analysis of options for action in life: a "rehearsal for life" if not for the revolution in Boalian terms (Boal 123).

Figure 1: Bogotá city centre - Calle 7 Cra. 11 McDonalds. Jan 2019.

Figure 2: Gaitán's graffiti at the place he was shot.

Figure 3: 1948: El Fracaso de una Utopia Popular - Scene two

Theatrical Response - *1948: El Fracaso de una Utopia Popular*

In 2013, the *Universidad del Valle*, where I received my degree in performing arts, called for funding applications. The academics Gabriel Uribe and Mauricio Domenici won with their project *1948: El Fracaso de una Utopia Popular* -The Failure of a Popular Utopia. They aimed to create a script and stage a story about Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, and the events triggered by his assassination. Uribe cast a group of eight actors,

all either undergraduates or recent graduates, and worked together for almost a year to develop the play. The approach to the project was under the tradition of *creación colectiva* (collective creation), a form of theatrical production that emerged in Latin America during the '60s and '70s that critiques the traditional bourgeois form of production (Esquivel 43). This tradition marked the evolution of Colombian theatre as seen in the iconic groups *La Candelaria*, under the direction of Santiago García, and *Teatro Experimental de Cali* (TEC), founded by Enrique Buenaventura. Having trained with Buenaventura, Uribe reproduced the foundations of *creación colectiva* in exploring Gaitán's history and coming to decide which part of his story to stage.

The group focused their production on the hours and days after Gaitán's assassination (Doménici and Cuervo 10). The final script has twelve scenes that depict "a mosaic of situations anchored in three main themes" rather than trying to explain the political motivations of the assassination (14). This final outcome came from the research conducted by each member of the group. They read a diverse range of literature, both fiction and non-fiction, and watched other artistic productions such as documentaries, fictional films, and photographic exhibitions. The latter was very important for the construction of the aesthetics of the performance. To create a theatre script based on a historical event required in-depth research and study, in particular, to allow different voices and points of view to permeate the story. This commitment to providing a platform for diverse voices and perspectives is dramatically different from the approach taken by the mass media, which only highlights those voices that support the story they wanted to sell. One of the findings made by Uribe's group was that the official version of the events of 9 Apr. 1948 focused mainly on describing the barbarism of the riot rather than the desire to accomplish a social revolution aborted by government-sanctioned violence (Doménici and Cuervo10).

The producers took a metatheatrical approach. Their fictional space was a real rehearsal room; in the play, a group of university students, which is what they were, is preparing a play in honour of Gaitán. By using metatheatre to tell the story of Gaitán's assassination and the aftermath, Uribe makes a space for the actors (performing as acting students) to reflect upon the social-political frictions of public education in an institution such as *Universidad del Valle*. Metatheatre, as explained by Pavis, is a theatre that "speaks" and "represents" itself (210). In this modality, "the stage is not confined to telling a story but reflects on theatre […]'" (Pavis 211). Showing the theatrical event for what it is, refuses the suspension of disbelief and insists that spectators remain conscious of the process of constructing and telling a story. The first scene of the script is entitled *En el Teatro* (In the Theatre). The first dialogue happens between an actor rehearsing a speech by Gaitán and a technician setting the props before the start of the rehearsal. The discussion between them revolves around two subjects. One is the inability to have a final version of the script even though opening night is fast approaching (9 Apr. of that year). The second subject is about the tension in the University due to the labour union's annual congress to be held on the same date as the opening. The characters discuss the existence of *la mano negra (*dark forces) behind all of the political crimes in Colombia. The director -or the actor that plays the director- enters the scene and starts the rehearsal. The scene has many metatheatrical references to the habits or conditions of rehearsals and universities, such as the lateness of the other actors or the use of slang specific to students of public universities.

As a graduate of the same programme, I can easily catch the different comments or subtexts of the script that refer to the way the university's theatre productions work. The use of metatheatre allows this space of discussion about the precarious conditions of making theatre in a tropical city such as Cali even when there is funding available. The script then navigates between two stories: university students during the rehearsals

of the play about Gaitán and assorted characters (performed by the same actors) interacting during the aftermath of Gaitán's assassination. These two stories provide the actors with the possibility of constantly reflecting on the meaning of Gaitán's history, his actual relevance, and reflecting critically on whether his ideals were convenient or not for the people. Uribe explains that these conversations permeate and become part of the script.

The use of video projection to show archival images from *El Bogotazo* serves to refresh the spectators' knowledge about that day; for many in the audience, who were too young to remember themselves, the information would be entirely new. The second scene begins with a video where the body of Gaitán's killer Juan Roa, is dragged on the street by the mob and then shifts to live action: a lawyer trying to guide and control the angry citizens unsuccessfully. A man replies fiercely advocating for violent action and downplaying the lawyer's warning that the Government will respond with strong-armed repression. A shot is heard, and one person from the riot falls to the ground. The lawyer is then guided by a student to the National Radio station where a revolutionary mob is congregating. This replays what happened during the first hours of the riot on 9 Apr. 1948, when the National Radio station was besieged by a group of liberals who took command of the announcements and encouraged the people to arm themselves for fighting against the Government (Alape 315-22). This moment is crucial for the play because it is where the performance group's theory about the possibility of a social revolution is enacted. For them, a social transformation was meant to happen due to Gaitán's assassination, but it failed not only because of the repression performed by the Government but also due to the lack of cohesion among the liberal leaders.

Scene three, *La Emisora* (The Radio Station), attempts to reproduce what happened inside the radio station. Three actors performing as students and a union worker take turns to proclaim their views. In this scene the metatheatrical references

come back in sight; the theatre technician is setting up props while the actors perform their parts. Another performer is a narrator who employs an omniscient voice to explain to the audience a simplified version of the history. It is important to remember that this pivotal event in Colombian history is disregarded completely in high school classrooms, producing, as a result, students who believe what the establishment offers them without criticism. A third metatheatrical device further pushes the audience to consider the complexity of the history in contrast to what they may think they already know; a recording of Gaitán's voice and a radio broadcast from the time are played over the speakers. The narrator explains to the audience that the students took the lead in guiding the masses and were then joined by union workers and people from all levels of society. These students, performed by the actors in the theatre, are then seen issuing pronouncements through microphones, but the information they provide is seen to be misleading, for example, saying that Gaitán was killed by the police or declaring that the President's body was hanging by his tongue at Plaza Bolívar. "*¡Pueblo a la carga!*" (masses take charge!) is repeated by the students, imitating a phrase coined by Gaitán (Doménici and Cuervo 33). The lawyer arrives at the radio station; he again calls for calm and reflection and warns that speculating and inciting the masses will carry terrible consequences. Other intellectuals and political leaders arrive at the radio station; everyone wants to talk and command. Everything is more chaotic than before. The narrator tells the audience at the end of the scene that some army members will join this group and hours later forcibly evacuate them under threat of arms. The scene thus mixes what is known of the event and what is imagined in ways that show how the history has been constructed. In fact, the students who spoke on the radio were actually accused of inciting the masses, pursued, and prosecuted.

In scene four, *El Interrogatorio* (The Interrogation), a poet is held as a suspect in a small dark room by a detective who is questioning him. The poet talks sarcastically

about "the epic theatre" that took place on 7th street where Gaitán was shot. In referring to the event as theatre, the wordplay invites the audience to see the construction behind the act of violence. The detective wants to know if the poet was part of the group of people at the radio station who instigated the mob. In the context of a public university, where this play was performed, this set-up would have had a strong relevance among students who would be conscious of the excessive use of force by official agents against anyone, including students, who they decide to cast as rebels. In Colombia, public universities are well known for performing protests regularly. Most of the time these are called because of education policies that reduce the budget, making it harder for the institutions to efficiently maintain the quality of their programmes or to preserve students' access to them. The protests sometimes turn into riots when special forces intervene with harsh methods of repression.[32] Therefore a re-enactment of an interrogation where the accused looks "visibly tired" (as the stage direction indicates) not only depicts a possible moment in 1948, but also shows its audience something familiar: a situation where students and teachers, mainly from public institutions, are cast over and over as insurgents or communists.

Thomas G. Rosenmeyer explains that "in metatheater, the characters show themselves to be aware of being on a stage; they are self-conscious, both about themselves as characters and about their status as actors playing characters […]'" (88). The decision by the performance group was to represent both university students and assorted characters during the aftermath of Gaitán's assassination as *actans* – a kind of figuration instead of characterisation. *Actans* "exist only on a theoretical and logical plane within a logical system of action or narrativity" (Pavis 7). This means the story does not rely on traces of psychology in the characters, but rather it is the political and

[32] In Colombia the special forces are the ESMAD – National Mobile Anti-Riot Squad - who have operated since 1999 using violent methods to repress students and protesters. See for example https://peoplesdispatch.org/2019/09/28/colombian-riot-police-continue-violent-repression-of-students/

social vision that moves the action forward. In the fourth scene, the poet can be seen to be constructed as a reflection of the real Colombian poet and journalist Jorge Zalamea, but the audience never loses sight of the layers of performance; there is a student, who is performing the role of a student who is performing the role of a poet. The role of the poet is constructed to resemble a real poet but can be seen to be like any other poet that lives on the fringe of Colombian society. So too, is the student in the role of a student.

In *1948* it is possible to distinguish the influence of Bertold Brecht and his proposal of "Epic Theatre" and *Verfremdungseffekt* (Alienation effect).[33] Brecht states that he created the idea of *Verfremdungseffekt* in order "to make of the spectator an active critic of society" and the actors have a "standpoint" where "emotions are subordinated to the criticism which the spectator makes of them" (431-32). As will be shown later on, Brecht's legacy impacts the plays analysed in this thesis in different ways. In *1948,* the employment of *actans*, a metatheatrical approach and an alienation effect, forces the audience to see beyond the catastrophe caused by Gaitán's death. By revealing the mechanism of the theatre, the violent and repressive mechanisms that suppress the desire to change the status quo are also exposed. Moreover, the audience may reflect on how these mechanisms still operate 70 years later. A play such as *1948* contributes to the understanding that our present moment is not a single result of bad luck or even of bad politicians but the result of a failure to build a collective consciousness.

The politics that appear in the fifth scene are drawn from the real liberal leaders after Gaitán: Darío Echandía, Plinio Mendoza Niera y Carlos Lleras Restrepo. Their names are not used in the script, but described as Politician One, Two or Three – enough to represent the moments of anguish in the hospital where Gaitán's death was

[33] Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956) was a German theatre artist and theorist influenced by Marxist thought and was a tough critic of Nazism.

officially declared. In the script, the masses crowd outside the hospital and demand to see Gaitán. The three politicians are discussing what to do next – perhaps talk to the President in hopes of pressing him to resign or organise a coup. They cannot agree. In that moment the stage goes dark. The sounds of a helicopter hovering over the campus are heard. A security guard enters with a torch announcing that the university must be evacuated because the army may come inside (a common situation in the *Universidad del Valle*). Despite the warning, the director (who is of course also an actor) decides that the rehearsal must continue and decides to take advantage of the dark to perform the autopsy scene using torches and candles in place of the lights.

The group recreates the moment when a doctor examines Gaitán's body in order to complete the death certificate. An actor playing a reporter takes up the role of narrator and speaks directly to the audience. The doctor and the reporter describe bit by bit the facts around the assassination: the numbers of bullets shot and the places where they pierced Gaitán's body. This account puts in doubt the official version of the lone killer Juan Roa Sierra. The narrator says: "[He] never shot a weapon before, and that day without any reason kills Gaitán in a fit of madness. No one believes that except those interested in hiding the truth". This performs the building of a case to the audience who are not only witnesses but also judges of the event. In this reconstruction, the audience can see how political violence empowers theatrical elements that create the official scenario for the public eye. As the play keeps the two lines of the story active – the university world during the rehearsal and the reconstruction of *El Bogotazo* in the following days – the audience can consider how these constructed scenarios are part of daily life.

This is even more evident when the director proposes to the actors that they need to add the known versions about the assassination to the scene. First is the official version in which Juan Roa Sierra acted by himself. The second version, however,

involves two more people conspiring with Roa, in which one of them is said to have shot Gaitán from another angle, while the other disarmed Roa and turned him over to a police officer. The actors pantomime both versions. The director notes that the second version is more in line with reality. On 9 April 2013, Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza, a writer and son of Plinio Mendoza Neira, who was walking next to Gaitán the day of his assassination, published an article in *El Tiempo* revealing what was confessed to him by his father. Mendoza Niera told his son that after Roa Sierra shot Gaitán and was slowly retreating, he saw a man come out of a café, calmly take away Roa's gun and signal to nearby policemen to apprehend the shooter. Mendoza Niera found out days later that that man was Pablo Emilio Potes, a detective who organised *Los Pajaros*, a paramilitary group of that time. Mendoza Niera died with the conviction that someone else was behind Gaitán's death, and decades later his son Apuleyo Mendoza received an email from an officer telling him that an acquaintance was with Potes on his deathbed, where he confessed to having killed Gaitán (Apuleyo). The different versions of the story of Gaitán's assassination serve as obfuscation; if the facts cannot be secured, then any attempt to understand the real social-political motivations behind this act will be futile. The alternative is more comfortable: to see the event as a tragic moment of Colombian story where a hero was lost; his memory might be a treasure, but his legacy comes with the burden of the destruction of our ability even to recount history with confidence in its factuality. In the play, Actor 2 says: "everyone's daily life carries their own urgencies and challenges". He implies that this will not keep anyone awake. It may be that this *actan* is right, but in seeing this, we are offered a chance to understand how the mechanisms by which political violence is normalised and removed from critical analysis. Perhaps the play can awaken our consciences in a way that everyday debates about the violence cannot.

The last six scenes of the script bring the performance to an end in a speedy way. The acceleration of the pace itself, leaving little time for the audience to think about what is happening, serves as a metaphor for how President Ospina and the liberal leaders negotiated the end of the revolution. In the script, Politicians One and Three receive a call from the presidential palace to invite them to a dialogue; they accept. The following scene depicts a brief monologue by Gaitán's widow, whose name was Amparo Jaramillo; in the script the *actan* is only described as "Widow". The actor performing Widow, informs the audience that she took Gaitán's body out of the hospital with the help of Pedro Eliseo Cruz and will not return the body until President Ospina resigns. In reality, as Braun explains, this action brought many complications for the liberals who wanted to negotiate with the Government. Braun continues that, in addition, the leaders of the party had to think carefully about where to bury Gaitán, as the site could potentially become a place for future protests, but the problem was also that he could not be buried in anonymity as that would make him a martyr (Braun, "El cuerpo de Gaitán" 35).

In scene eight, Politicians One and Three are crossing the looted and dangerous streets of the city centre toward the presidential palace discussing how they feel now that Gaitán is dead. They criticise Gaitán's narcissistic and totalitarian character and say that the base of his movement was, in the end, from the lower class of society. They think they must reconstruct the nation. As the sound of shooting intensifies, the politicians look for shelter inside a theatre. There, a group of amateurs rehearses the play *Coriolanus* by Shakespeare. The metatheatrical layers keep building up as the actors now perform as amateur actors performing Shakespeare characters. The plot of *Coriolanus* which may be unknown for the audience, is abruptly summed-up to the politicians by a spectator: "A shitty aristocrat who hates the masses" (Doménici and Cuervo 60). The politicians are seeing a scene from *Coriolanus*; they are at the same

time being looked at by the audience of the overall performance. The scene within this scene within the scene is between an aristocrat, Menenius, and a Roman citizen. Menenius states that the Senate and its members always take care of the interests of the masses, that this time of famine is a product of the gods and not of the ruling class. The Roman citizen disagrees; he points out the greediness of the rich who consume the labour and lives of the poor. The Shakespearean performance is interrupted by a spectator yelling that the army is coming, and everyone has to run. This then ends scene eight.

By juxtapositioning a Shakespearean play set in Roman times over an event in Colombia in 1948 and, in the last layer, setting these over a play as it is being performed in 2014, Uribe's group takes a big risk to show an endless loop between representation and reality in the way described by Turner and Schechner. For the students and their teachers in making this play, putting the audience in contact with Shakespeare's play about power and class in ancient Rome allows them to create space for thinking about more contemporary struggles and to demonstrate that theatre, however briefly, interrupts the auto-pilot mode of living in the scenarios that dominate the Colombian experience. They lift the curtain on the backstage machinations by which the powerful retain a hold on the people.

In scene nine, the actors take the roles of the President, the President's wife who carries a gun in her belt, and three army generals. The generals report to the president about the riot and the measures taken to control the mob. An actor performing as a soldier becomes the narrator and tells the audience how army tanks shot against the people on the street. The president wants to control the rumours about the fall of the Government. He says "It is a war of nerves. No-one is going to recognise fiction from reality" (Doménici and Cuervo 68). The generals propose a Military Board, but the President rejects the idea and assures them that he will keep control of the institutions.

Then Politicians One and Three arrive at the presidential palace. The President emphasises quickly that he did not extend an invitation to them; the scene thus reflects a historical misunderstanding that was never clarified completely, as the initiative to start a dialogue between both parties was part of the power strategies each group wanted to execute during *El Bogotazo*. The liberals suggest to the President that the best thing for the country is for him to resign, but the President indicates that that solution could bring civil war. He counter offers a National Union cabinet giving the Liberal Party the control of some ministries. Politician One and Three accept and also ask for the head of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (this was Laureano Gómez, the political rival of Gaitán). Both parties reach an agreement. The narrator finishes the scene by telling the audience that the revolution that was started on 9 Apr. 1948, has come to an end: The army took control of those police stations that joined the riot; the labour union leaders were apprehended, and Ospina and his National Union rescued the establishment, but it was also the first step in initiating the following devastating period of *La Violencia*.

Scene nine sum-ups the failure of a popular utopian vision. Without a proper voice in command, without fitting leaders and politicians, without cohesion and an agreement between the different groups participating in the riot, these students, union workers and common citizens and all those hours of violence and terror only help to reaffirm the dominant power structure. In the script, Uribe's group depicted the resolution of the crisis with President Ospina negotiating first with the army and then the liberals who briefly request to rule out Gómez from power. Alape, in his essay *El 9 de abril: muerte y desesperanza*, helps

compare how the solution to the uprising was historically executed. According to Alape, Ospina negotiated first with the liberals, then with the army, and finally with Laureano Gómez who was also the chief of the Conservative Party and exerted a large influence over his followers (27). Gómez's exit of the negotiations allowed Ospina to reach an

agreement with the liberals easily, taking the first step towards what becomes the *Frente Nacional* (Alape 33). When compared with the historical account, Uribe's group can be seen to have done well to condense the story without oversimplifying it.

The final short interventions in the production begin with the actor performing as the poet talking metaphorically to the audience about the rivers of blood that were born that day. Then it is the widow's turn; she explains that she buried Gaitán in his home, outside the city centre and beyond the official memory of the country. The play inside the play – the actors performing as assorted roles during *El Bogotazo* – finishes. In scene twelve, the actor playing the director, congratulates the cast and proceeds to organise the final bow when sounds of explosions are heard. An actor playing a security guard announces that the army has besieged the campus. An army captain (played by another actor) enters and apprehends the director. The overall play finishes. This end provokes many readings. One is how the group plays intentionally with the limits between pretending versus reality. The play performed in a university where soldiers have in fact entered the campus: then that quick moment between the captain and the director forces the audience to recognise the continuous state of alert they must live. Second, the repression enacted against the director may be seen as a mechanism applied to those -cast as an insurgent or provoker- who defy the system.

The social meaning of Gaitán has been inspected indirectly in other plays that depict family celebrations interrupted drastically when *El Bogotazo* started (Reyes, *Tomo II* 657). Theatre makers appear most commonly to resolve their suspicion of Gaitán by keeping him offstage. In a personal interview with Gabriel Uribe and one of the actors, Roberto Garcés Figueroa, Uribe states that Colombian theatre has an ongoing outstanding debt with Gaitán, whose role as a political figure has not been explored in depth. Uribe explains that a kind of bewilderment prevails about Gaitán. The question of whether he was a socialist, communist or fascist has made theatre creators ambivalent

because their militancy is predominately leftist and they do not recognise in him a leader that represents their ideologies. In deciding to work around Gaitán and the events after his death, Uribe's group's motivation was to contribute to the historical memory of the country. In *1948,* also, Gaitán does not appear as a character. However, the script exposes the historical action by having Gaitán in the background. Uribe's group clearly aimed to create a political play with a pedagogic nature that used the assassination as a starting point for rescuing the facts of what followed chronologically after his murder from oblivion and showing how these events are a fundamental part of the social-political life that Colombians have now.

In saying this, I am not arguing that all plays about historical figures or moments must have a pedagogical component or even that they be politically progressive. The approaches can be as diverse as the emerging conversations provoked by the performance. Where my analysis is taking me is to highlight the process involved behind the reconstruction of the story. First, each participant of this process looks critically at the construction of the official history, planting a seed that can be spread through the creative process in conversation with any number of other people. Second, research and creative processes like those used to create *1948* actively uphold the responsibility of the academy to support complex artistic works that can contribute effectively to social and political debates.

Uribe's project was itself the culmination of a long history. Colombian university theatre in the1950s had strengthened the country's theatre movement, more generally establishing a space for discussion about social-political problems by experimenting with new dramaturgies and acting methods (Aldana 192-95). Uribe's project builds on those origins and offers a platform where students can reflect on their prospective profession not only as performers but as social actors too. Finally, the chain of action involved in a play like Uribe's can be seen to invite critical thinking at all

stages: from the process undertaken by the directors/playwrights to the work of the performers and finally to the spectators. The spectators become witnesses and then judges whose role in the course of such performances is to analyse and even judge the information given to them in the representation. Ideally, they will reflect on their own social and political ideals and compare them with the current state of affairs. This process might be seen as intangible and unmeasurable, but I firmly believe, as do many of my colleagues, that this theatre work carries a seed for social transformation.

This idea of theatre sowing the seeds of social transformation is not quite the same as saying that theatre should act as a societal saviour. Such attitudes, Uribe says, constricted the theatre in the 1970s and made it an outlet of political propaganda. The theatre cannot tell its audience what to think and do, but only open the platform to questioning and thinking through history. In Uribe's view, once theatre creators let go of their propagandistic impulses, the rich language of the stage came to life in ways that allowed for more effective expressivity without leaving aside a political commitment.[34] Staged in a university setting as a process of theatrical enquiry, leaving the performance in the rough instead of smoothing it into something that could be viewed as "professional" offered both the company and its audience a different dynamic engagement. *1948* performs the recognition of the ongoing social schism; it is not going to change Colombia's status quo, but it contributes to bringing to light a dramaturgy overlooked by the mass media. The play also serves as a reminder of "the futility of so many dead" after the political agreement during *El Bogotazo*, and as Arturo Alape condones "as always, the masses offered their lives for ideals that were sown in the shadows of brutal oblivion" ("El 9 de abril" 33).

This chapter has analysed the first case study of the scenario of violence in Colombia. Gaitán's assassination displays how those in power control the official

[34] Uribe, Gabriel. Interview. By Natascha Diaz. 19 Jan. 2017.

dramaturgy first by discrediting whoever represents a threat to their influence. Second, by redirecting the audience's points of attention to details that weaken the alternative discourses like highlighting Gaitán's physical features. Third, by putting the responsibility of the havoc on the masses, they justified the repression that came after. These strategies are designed to insert into the general audience, the idea that outbreaks of violence are something spontaneous that do not follow political interests but personal ones, as Roa Sierra went crazy and killed Gaitán without justification. The performance group of *University del Valle* under Gabriel Uribe's direction challenged the official theatricality creating a space where the audience has to evaluate whether the measures taken by the Government after Gaitán's assassination were in benefit of the society or for the few in power within the traditional parties.

Chapter Two: 1985 The Siege of the Palace of Justice

> What happened at the Palace of Justice was nothing more than an exact replay of what has been happening in the towns and villages of the Colombian provinces since the fifties. […] Suddenly, this war that no one wants to acknowledge even exists was all over the nation's television screens. For the first time, a Colombian government has come face to face with the consequences of its own complicity.
>
> Ana Carrigan (284)

On the morning of 6 Nov. 1985, Bogotá's city centre was once more the stage for the display of violence, terror and repression in Colombia. Seven militants from the guerrilla group M-19,[35] dressed as civilians, accessed the Palace of Justice to carry out an armed attack against the Government.[36] Some minutes later, around 11:30 am, the militants were accompanied by the rest of the platoon: twenty-eight fighters who carried armaments (rifles, grenades and revolvers) and entered the building by force in three vehicles through the basement gate. They took over the building and held 350 people as hostages. The response from the army and the police did not take long. The crossfire between the government forces and the insurgents quickly became an intense episode of bloodshed that carried on for twenty-seven hours. The staff, the visitors and the judges hid in their offices until they were either discovered by guerrillas, who took them as hostages, or they (the lucky few) were rescued. The intervention of the Colombian Army to resolve the situation led to a terrible catastrophe. Ninety-five people were killed, among them civilians, soldiers and eleven supreme court justices. In addition, twelve people disappeared; some of their remains have been identified and discovered

[35] Movimiento 19 de Abril (19 of Apr. Movement).
[36] The Palace of Justice is the building where the Supreme Court operates. It is located at the Plaza Bolivar in the centre of the capital city.

in common graves. The death toll and terror unleashed as a result makes this episode a decisive scenario of violence in Colombia, and one that has shaped us as a society in the thirty-four years since.

This chapter analyses the siege of the Palace of Justice as an event that changed the Manichaean dramaturgy of good versus evil. The analysis reveals a more complicated ethos in Colombian society than is otherwise assumed. In particular, the role of the villain can be seen to occupy a broader spectrum of the population that includes not only those outside the system but also those who belong to it – those who might otherwise be considered the heroes of the story. The siege of the Palace of Justice demonstrates how complex the performance of violence, terror and repression is in Colombia and perhaps elsewhere. At the centre of my analysis in this chapter will be the use of key dramatic devices by the government and the army; first choose a target - the army had a long dispute with M-19 which cast the guerrillas quickly as villains; then generate a smokescreen to create the suspension of reality in which the government, heroically, has restored order and everything is, as a consequence, now all right; and finally, establish new dominant narratives to ensure that everyone remembers who the heroes are, who the villains are, and how necessary the violence has been to ensure that we can all be happy in the continued status quo.

My analysis is directed toward the mediatic (re)presentations of facts and the cultivation of these stories into a scenario that normalises repeated acts of violence perpetrated by the government as well as opposing entities. I approach The Siege of the Palace of Justice event as if it were a script in which the study of characters, given circumstances and the story arc, provide vital information that reveals the nuances of the drama. This process allows me to see the forces at work in the event and to discern the intentions of the actors involved in the conflict. I begin with common theatrical terms such as “heroes” and “villains” to later show how the meaning of these overlapped in

violent events such as in this case. This incident had repercussions that still carry on due to its many enigmas yet unresolved. Because it was such an enormous event, this chapter will necessarily focus on the broader actions of the different groups involved – the Government, the Army, the guerrilla and the hostages – rather than describing every detail of the siege.[37] The actions that day have unconsciously marked Colombian society with the acceptance of daily violence by disregarding it, enabling this social drama to repeat over and over. To counteract the social apathy, Miguel Torres put on stage *La Siempreviva,* in which the normal life of a mother and her tenants is interrupted by the actions taken in the Palace of Justice. I analyse this theatrical response and compare how the script humanises the life of the victims that were neglected in the official scenario of violence in the country.

In the aftermath of Gaitán's assassination and the subsequent violent actions of *El Bogotazo*, the Colombian social and political landscape turned toward a Manichaean narrative: the government and its official agencies represented the light; every oppositional group or force represented the dark. This is the story the government tells about itself; its primary objective is to maintain order in the face of opposition, with force as needed, in order to sustain the country's economic and social viability. According to this logic, any action taken by the government to redress conflict and crisis must be seen to represent the best interests of the people. Those in opposition, by this logic, lose the status of "people". Gaitán's assassination marked the end of the first stage of *La Violencia* (1946 – 1964) characterised by partisan warfare. The second stage was "a predominantly economic and depoliticised conflict" (Schuster 31). In 1958, following the military regime by Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-57), the leaders of the liberal and conservative parties developed a strategy to contain the bloodshed by

[37] More details about the Palace of Justice siege are available from *Noche de Lobos* by Ramón Jimeno (2005), *Noches de Humo* by Olga Behar (1988), *La Tragedia del Palacio de Justicia: cúmulo de errores y abusos* by Enrique González Parejo (2010) and *The Palace of Justice: a Colombian Tragedy* by Ana Carrigan (1993).

agreeing to take turns holding power every four years. That is how the *Frente Nacional* (1958-74) – arose to power. In the early 1960s, the last stage of *La Violencia* was principally marked by the activity of *bandoleros*, culminating with the formation of the guerrilla group known as FARC, in 1964.

Although I do not analyse the scenarios of *La Violencia* directly, it is essential to consider the repeated behaviours inherited from that time that have been perpetuated in different acts of violence of which the siege of the Palace of Justice offers a most vivid example. The period known as *La Violencia* "stands out in terms of its magnitude, its fratricidal character, and the impunity that surrounded the atrocious crimes committed [during this conflict]" (Uribe Alarcón 82). Even so its significance and potential to provoke a process of social reflection and reconstruction yielded to the common interest of the ruling class, suppressed by the *Frente Nacional's* "implicit agreement to forgive and forget" (Valencia Gutierrez 64). The prevailing ideology meant that the "200,000 victims, the millions of [internal] refugees and the incalculable material damage" (Schuster 31) did not matter. The official version, the story told about *La Violencia*, is aimed toward reinforcing the idea that it was a period of disasters enacted by a barbarous and uneducated mass. The construction of the drama here masks the possibility of a clear identification of the perpetrators of the violence. To locate the sources of the conflict and crisis with the masses, who are not (by definition) nameable or embodied individually or politically, is to mystify the event. The act of generalisation – of perpetrators and causes – is an important mechanism in the performance of violence and can be effective in maintaining the dominant order for a time.

The next stage then is to identify a plausible villain (or set of villains) around which the repressive scenarios of the government can be constructed and enacted. Enter the guerrilla groups FARC, ELN and later on, M-19, as antagonists newly cast into the evolving dramaturgy of conflict without resolution. Where *La Violencia* took its

virulence from obscuration, with the siege of the Palace of Justice came a clarification of the forces at play. The heroes were army officers who were engaged in combat with the villains: the guerrillas. This new dramaturgical construct was justified by a familiar trope; times of war demand harsh actions. However, the siege was not so simple as that. What happens when the drama moves beyond the dramaturgical conventions of good versus evil when it proves more difficult than expected to identify the heroes and the villains in the performance of violence?

Who - The characters involved in the siege

In this scenario, there were two primary groups of protagonists and antagonists or in other words, heroes and villains. Who the protagonists were and who the antagonists were, of course, depends on the side taken by the spectators. For the purposes of this chapter, I will follow the common understanding and grant the army, its officials and its soldiers, the status of heroes. Opposing them were the members of the guerrilla group M-19, who initiated the action and provoked the tragic drama that followed. In the middle, were two sets of tritagonists, persons less important perhaps but no less implicated in the action; inside the palace, the court magistrates and other civilians were held hostage or in hiding; outside, were the President and his cabinet.

Heroes

General Jesus Arias Cabrales, Commander of the XIII Army Brigade, directed the counter-attack and staged the *retoma* (the taking back) of the palace. He kept up continuous communication with the Minister of Defence, General Miguel Vega Uribe, who remained safely outside the action as a kind of *deus-ex-machina* or, perhaps less grandly, the puppet-master. Following orders from Arias Cabrales was Colonel Alfonso Plazas Vegas, who was also the son-in-law of Minister Vega Uribe. Plazas Vegas situated his platoon (with nine battle tanks) in front of the Palace of Justice. The *retoma* employed about two thousand fighters; among them, were explosives experts, counter-

guerrilla units and the police (Jimeno 110). The vastness of the army's operation and the number of fighters involved was in sharp contrast to the thirty-five guerrilla fighters inside the building. For both the army and the guerrillas, most of the defensive and offensive strategies executed during the event followed patterns established previously, through planning, training and rehearsal. That is, the conflict was performed; it enacted restored behaviour. Schechner explains that restored behaviour "is not free and easy"; it is "generated by rules that govern the outcomes" ("Performers and Spectators*"* 84). The heroes of this drama, the army, entered into the performance of the siege of the Palace of Justice following the scripts they had learnt during the decades of violence since Gaitán's assassination. They played their objectives (in acting terms), pursuing the vilification and elimination of the opposing force.

Villains

Formed in 1974, the M-19 first appeared as part of the conservative, nationalist movement led by Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. In retrospect, however, their place on the convoluted Colombian political stage was more ambivalent than is generally thought. Its founders claimed that the presidential election on Apr. 19, 1970, which had been won by the conservative Misael Pastrana Borrero, was fraudulent, and that democracy in Colombia was weak. Pastrana Borrero's competitor was the former military dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who launched his party ANAPO[38] after being ousted from the presidency in 1957. In other words, Rojas Pinilla transitioned from a conservative military structure to the creation of a political agenda with left-wing policies that threated the bipartisanship of the National Front. The drama of his ongoing challenge to the status quo was in the challenge itself, not the particular side he was seen to be on. The founders of M-19, the first urban guerrilla group in Colombia, were followers of Rojas Pinilla, professionals from different backgrounds and former followers of

[38] *Alianza Nacional Popular* – The National Popular Alliance.

ANAPO, whose diverse claims to authenticity were focused and energised by the fact of the oppositionality itself. Before the siege of the Palace of Justice, the M-19 performed prominent military actions with a high level of spectacle that became central to the way we see them even now. In their first symbolic act of rebellion, M-19 stole the sword of the liberator Simón Bolivar from a museum in 1974. In 1978, they became notorious for their dramatic strike against the army when they dug a tunnel into the army base and made off with five thousand weapons.[39] Then, in 1980, sixteen members of M-19 besieged the Dominican Republic Embassy, taking sixty people (including fourteen ambassadors) hostage for sixty-one days. Being in the city, these spectacles staged by M-19 were more visible than actions by other opposition groups, both because of M-19's theatrical calculations and because media access was simpler in the urban environment.

It is possible that the planners of the siege of the Palace of Justice believed they would have the same results as with the takeover of the Dominican Republic Embassy, which ended after peaceful negotiations (Jimeno 138), but the Colombian Armed Forces decided to take charge of the dramatic action, displacing M-19 from centrestage. To construct themselves as the heroes, they had to turn M-19 into villains and re-frame the audacity of M-19 as the obstacle to peaceful dialogue. M-19's role in public discourse was something that fluctuated; their actions often intentionally, and successfully, had courted the sympathy of the people. The sociologist Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez explains that during the presidency of Julio César Turbay Ayala (1978-82) "[…] the M-19 symbolised resistance against a civil-military government that sought to crush any hint of social or political opposition" (400). The M-19 social and political demands resonated among the common people who were tired of the excessive use of force by

[39] This act was a direct attack on the army who, in retaliation, began a nasty persecution of members of the group (Narváez Jaimes 87).

government agencies. The group also made an impact on the cultural and artistic movement of the country (Narváez Jaimes 20) as many of its members belonged to groups with desires to subvert the official aesthetics and norms both in art as in politics (León Palacios 218). The M-19 did not adopt communist ideals but nationalist desires, which distinguished them from the other guerrilla's groups such as FARC or ELN (Barros).

M-19 named their siege of the Palace of Justice *Operación Antonio Nariño por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos* (Antonio Nariño Operation for the Defence of Human Rights). By choosing the Palace of Justice as their target, the setting facilitated M-19's theatrical display on two levels. First, the show of force itself; they were sure that they could militarily resist the army's counterattack. Second, having the life of the justices at stake, they believed both that the Government would be forced to negotiate, and that they could enlist the justices in a staged trial against the President of Colombia, Belisario Betancur, for betraying the truce signed in Aug 1984. In this drama within the larger drama of the siege, M-19 clearly intended to cast itself as the heroes, while the army and the government were working outside the palace to position them as the villains. In the end, the dominant forces' dramaturgy superseded that of the guerrillas.

Tritagonists

In every drama, the main characters move forward, their actions supported by secondary characters that may not take the central stage but are still important in the dramaturgical development. In this case, the president became like a figurative entity, which means his presence was recognised but the execution of his power and authority vanished. The magistrates and other hostages acted according to what the extreme circumstances gave them, making memorable their petitions for a cease of fire. Without these two groups of tritagonists, the siege of the Palace of Justice would not represent what it means today to the history of violence in Colombia.

From the moment of his election, President Belisario Betancur promised Colombian society that he would stop the bloodshed of the armed conflict. His government later initiated a peace process and invited the insurgent groups to look for a nonviolent resolution. The previous government, under the command of Turbay Ayala, stood out for the extensive power granted to the army due to a National Security Statute, whereas Betancur, on the other hand, went in the opposite direction; in 1982, he created a peace commission to start a dialogue with the guerrillas. However, according to the political analyst Juan Manuel López Caballero, Betancur's public stance, his declaration that his goal was to bring about peace and his assertion that he had a plan for how to achieve it, was hollow; there never was a real purpose (*Noche de Lobos* 20). His irresolution meant that he was primarily relegated to be another spectator of the drama as it unfolded.

In the year leading up to the siege, M-19 and the Government had signed a ceasefire, but it did not hold, and just a few weeks later, they again found themselves in conflict. In words of the historian Dario Villamizar, "the [1984] truce with M-19 was born practically dead" (*Historia del M-19, Youtube*). Through theatrical lenses, this failed truce was part of the ongoing tactics of display performed by the government and the guerrillas. The guerrillas accused the army of harassment; the army argued legitimate defence; in the middle of the dramaturgical crossfire, the spectators had to choose whose performances were more persuasive. In the end, the less important thing was to reach a common goal that would benefit Colombian society as a whole but to construct and perform social scenarios that could command the attention of the people. Instead of stepping up into the role of protagonist and hero, when the M-19 took up its position inside the Palace of Justice, Betancur sidelined himself by approving the military intervention and forestalling dialogue with the guerrillas.

There were other actors in this drama who might seem to have been central but were, in fact, incidental, and almost supernumerary: the people inside the palace, who were cast into two groups of hostages. First, the justices and other dignitaries, who were named as victims and, being named, were given status whether they lived or died. Second, the other hostages, the nameless secretaries, cafeteria workers, janitors and others, who were more like extras in the popular media retelling, were ultimately disposable. The Supreme Court Chief, Alfonso Reyes Echandía, the President's brother Jaime Betancur, and the wife of the Minister of Government Clara Forero de Castro, were for the M-19, the golden tickets of the siege. Having them secure would guarantee a negotiation in which the M-19 could demand the allegedly wrong proceed of President Betancur during the truce.

The given circumstances

The chain of actions that climaxed with the siege of the Palace of Justice shows how violence is reflexively performed. Every violent act provokes a violent reaction in Colombian society, and thus each violent act supplants and in some way breaks and negates our ability to see cause and effect clearly. The pieces of the story cease to cohere into a narrative beyond that of ourselves as violent people. This only partially recalled past even so forms the "given circumstances" of the drama of the siege of the Palace of Justice. It is critical to analyse how Colombians imagined this scenario, thus it "structures our understanding" of the circumstances that set the stage for the siege (Taylor, *The Archive* 28). How we fill in the gaps now responds to the assumptions in which we have been embedded for decades. To recall this scenario allows us to "recognise the areas of resistance and tension" (30) and therefore we may revise how our perception has been constructed through the effect of the event's dramaturgy and theatricality.

Most of these given circumstances are overlooked or only briefly mentioned in the mass media for the sake of maintaining the official narrative of good (the government and army) versus evil (any insurgent group). The official narrative overlooks, for example, the fact that, during the siege, Betancur's (Conservative) Government actually looked for an alternative solution to the guerrilla problem, but its inclination toward peace and away from violence was repudiated by the Army, which was accustomed by previous administrations to acting with impunity. For example, the brutal repression during the previous administration of the liberal President Turbay Ayala included "the assault on thousands in the cities targeted as 'subversives' by the army, police, intelligence services, and a growing number of paramilitary organisations. Those arrested were tortured, imprisoned, or 'disappeared"' (Hylton 63). The army had targeted and jailed mainly the M-19 members, but then when he came to power, Betancur "declared an amnesty and freed over a thousand guerrillas and political activists imprisoned under Turbay's draconian 'Security Statute"' (Hylton 70). This move was not popular among the army's high ranks who felt betrayed by the president's intentions of negotiating with the guerrillas and rewarding them with positions inside the political establishment (Jimeno 239-40).

In Turner's terms, the peace process initiated by Betancur's administration might be seen as a redressive stage in the ongoing Colombian social drama. However, this redressive strategy had opponents within that same government. According to journalist Ramón Jimeno, Betancur's negotiation endeavours not only upset the army, starting with his first Minister of Defence Fernando Landazábal, who quit to be later replaced by Vega Uribe, but also many politicians who saw their interests threatened, because the bipartisan hegemony could end (237). That this pattern was repeated during the 2016 peace process with the FARC, demonstrates once more how dominant forces fight to maintain the status quo. Even after the M-19 demobilisation in 1990, the

dramaturgy of violence supersedes any intention to redress the social and political conflict.

That Betancur did not have the support of the army was a critical component of the circumstances that gave rise to the siege and its bloody conclusion. Even though they have to follow the orders of the president by law, the army's performance set them against their assigned role in the drama. Jimeno states that the army's reason for not complying with Betancur's plan for peace was that they were continuing to pursue their objectives against the M-19; that is, their dramatic arc of action – to defeat the M-19 – was still ongoing. The army positioned themselves as heroes, but in taking the offence against the rule of law and the orders of their president, they were acting as villains. Another complicating factor is that Minister of Defence, Miguel Vega Uribe, had been accused by the Supreme Court of torture in advance of the siege (Jimeno 238). In addition, Vega Uribe was the commander of the XIII Army Brigade when the M-19 stole weapons from the army base in 1978 (Jimeno 105). Having the opportunity to issue the orders and direct the action of the army in the retake of the Palace of Justice, Vega Uribe took advantage of his position playing to his favour, while turning attention away from his own corruption.

The Palace of Justice was the perfect place for M-19 to display their political and military force. By having what is supposed to be the leverage of holding hostages, their assumption was that they could carry off their demands against the government. Their plan backfired when the army showed up in record time, making it impossible for the M-19 to proceed according to their scenario. From an attacking position, they were immediately pushed into a defensive position, losing the (imagined) control of their operation. The fast reaction of the army and the police was not a struck of luck. Three weeks before the siege, army intelligence operatives found the blueprints revealing M-19's intentions. This news was published in different media in advance of the attack

(Jimeno 71), but later denied by the Minister of Defence, Vega Uribe (González Parejo 30). In other words, the army was aware of M-19's plan and decided, in spite of (or because of) the prospect of devastating consequences, to ambush the guerrillas in order to finish them off (González Parejo 35).

As I work to describe the given circumstances of the siege in performance terms, ever more details arise, which make it impossible for me to represent the dramaturgy of the event with the kind of clarity one might expect to find in the theatre. In fact, even now, new accounts of the "facts" of the event arise, contradicting the official history (or histories) while sparking momentary interest of a new version of the drama that still fails to find resolution. The facts themselves, that is, appear to continue to be so unstable that a single scenario cannot be gleaned from the competing, highly dramatised tellings of what happened. The chaos of these dramatisations can be seen as a series of melodramas that excite our interest, temporarily offer us the comfort of a right-versus-wrong dramaturgical framework, and an easy identification with the "good guys" whomever they happen to be in the latest version of the story. The serial-melodramatic structuring of historical accounting serves to distract us, taking away any possibility of genuine understanding of the socio-institutional backdrop against which violence is performed. As a result, the official version never fully stabilises or coheres in ways that might sustain critical analysis in support of progressive social change. Instead, we citizens become excitable but ultimately passive spectators who get swept up into the latest theories about who were the bad guys and who were the good guys, without ever being put in a position to insist on accountability: whether of the state, of the guerrillas, or ourselves in the circumstances that made the siege possible.

Even the who's who of the event – the cast of characters and their objectives – is not as settled as it might first appear. For example, there is a theory that members of the *Cartel de Medellín* led by the drug dealer Pablo Escobar, financed M-19 to stage the

attack on the palace; in this version of the circumstances that gave rise to the event, Escobar wanted M-19 to force the Supreme Court to rule out the extradition law which would send the *narcos* to serve sentences in the United States of America (USA). Recasting the protagonist in this way widens the spectrum of the given circumstances. It confuses any attempt to attribute blame, making the drama about evil forces in play in ways that alibi those who were actually enacting the violence on the day. Such a melodrama construction takes up the space in the collective imaginary that might otherwise be directed toward deeper socio-historical analysis[40].

While we still refer to the siege as a tragedy, the tropes of melodrama have predominated increasingly over time, deployed to maintain the status of the army as the heroic actors in defence of justice. Much of this effect can be traced to the apparently abrupt eruption of violence on the day and how quickly the army intervened. Gallegher explains "the melodramatic hero is forced into danger […] by a villain who presents obstacles of an evil nature" (218) and since the hero's involvement in the drama "is forced" the audience ignores any moral dilemma or motivation that the hero might have. The only important thing here is that "the hero's actions are actually reactions against a force which interrupts his normal and good life" (Gallegher 219). That is to say, M-19 initiated a vile and violent action that compelled the Colombian Army to defend their citizens. Confronted by violent perpetrators, they did what they could. They reacted and defended as a hero should. Outside the palace, we were to see ourselves reflected in the images of those hostages who died at the hands of both the army and M-19. We were (and remain) the true innocents, our safety under threat, of necessity reliant on the heroes of the day to defend us against evil. Even subsequent re-tellings of this story that point toward the corruption of the Minister of Defence, or toward the weakness of the

[40] There are many more details to include in the given circumstances, as for example, the withdrawal of the special measures to secure the building the day before the attack. I decided to exclude some information in order to keep the analysis clear for the reader.

President in permitting the Army to strike in the way it did, are pointed toward supporting the scenario in which, without them, we are essentially helpless and always at risk of further victimisation.

A drama in three acts

Once the siege started, the unfolding of the drama during those twenty-seven hours can be divided into three acts.

Act I: A group of seven M-19 members dressed in elegant civilian clothing was the first platoon to infiltrate the Palace of Justice. Once they verified the conditions to proceed with the plan, three vehicles entered the building by force through the basement gate, transporting the other twenty-eight combatants. By 11:30 am, the sound of gunfire was heard inside and outside the building. A terrible mistake in communication impeded the last platoon of seven members to access the building through the main entrance and to later secure it (Behar 137; Jimeno 89). Instead of the original planned forty-two, that is, thirty-five guerrillas stormed the Palace of Justice, killing the guards standing at the basement gate. The M-19 had its first wounded and dead in the crossfire with the magistrate's bodyguards and building security, followed by indiscriminate shooting coming through the windows from the police outside in the Plaza Bolivar. The guerrillas had to adapt quickly to shifting circumstances: fewer combatants, no communication devices (they were left behind in the garage) and an unforeseen fireback. Nevertheless, one hour after initiating the siege, the M-19 seized the first floor, secured the basement and started the inspection in the offices, taking as hostages the people in the building. Two of the commanders looked specifically for the Supreme Court Chief, Alfonso Reyes Echandía, so that they could make their case to him directly.

President Betancourt was informed about the seriousness of the situation, but the army had already taken action; they did not wait for official orders to proceed (Jimeno

100). Betancourt called for a cabinet meeting and despatched the troops of the presidential guard to the Palace of Justice: “the first and only direct military order given […] during the course of the next twenty seven hours” (Carrigan 114). General Arias, blessed by Minister of Defence Vega Uribe, organised the counter-attack operation with nine battle tanks under the command of Colonel Plaza Vega. From the beginning, their operation was revealed as simple and clear; “consisted essentially in the massive and indiscriminate use of firepower” (Carrigan 115). They became at that moment, the biggest threat to the hostages’ lives, as the random firing limited the possibilities of being safe anywhere in the building.

The M-19 combats were divided into two groups. One entrenched across the northwest bathrooms between the first and fourth floor holding nearly sixty hostages. The second group upheld their positions in the fourth-floor offices with the Chief Justice, Reyes Echandía, other magisters, and nearly thirty more people. The locations of both groups were diametrically opposite, preventing any possibility of communication between them. By two o’clock in the afternoon, the first armoured tank entered the steel door of the palace. The army quickly took control of the first floor. They continued shooting towards the offices of the upper floors. Reyes Echandía, joined by the M-19 Commander Luis Otero, called President Betancur to try talking to him. Betancur, supported by his cabinet, decided not to answer the call, making the guerrillas’ attempts to negotiate impossible.

A telephone call from a radio station passed through. Reyes Echandía talked to a journalist, explaining the situation and the need to cease the fire in order to negotiate with the guerrillas. This telephone call was broadcast live; all the people who were following the action in the Palace of Justice heard the plea of the Chief Justice. The strident sound of gunfire and explosions was in the background interrupting the flow of the conversation. The M-19 second in command Alfonso Jacquin, snatched the

headphone from Reyes Echandia and declared firmly that “the president of the republic has not talked to the president of the Supreme Court and he is going to die […] This is unbelievable! The M-19 has not sieged the Palace of Justice, it is the army tanks which have done it […] When they get to this floor, we are all going to die, know this!” (Behar 173; Alarcón, sec.1). The Minister of Communication then intervened and banned all the broadcasts and radio news about the siege. An order was given to broadcast a football match of the national championship live instead.

Act II: The Chief Judge, Reyes Echandia, talked with different people close to President Betancur, explaining the dangerous situation he and the other judges were in at that moment. He waited for the return call from the President hoping to find a solution that would allow the hostages to leave the building alive. All the interlocutors assured him that they were doing their best to ensure the safety of the hostages; however, history shows the opposite. The army cut the building’s power and started to use gas to force the guerrillas to move and reveal their hiding places. Around 4:30 pm, five hours after the siege started, the *Comando of Fuerzas Especiales* (Police Special Forces) dynamited the metal gate in the roof to access the fourth level of the palace. Through a telephone call, police Director General Victor Delgado Mallarino asked M-19 first in command Luis Otero to surrender. He declined emphatically.

The extensive use of bombs, grenades, rockets and machine guns by both parties, precipitated a fire. President Betancur and his cabinet continued to receive partial information from army subordinates of the action at the Palace of Justice (Jimeno 125). Once the special forces agents reached the fourth floor, a crossfire took place between them, the guerrillas and army soldiers. The fierce interchange occurred in darkness; no one could tell who was the enemy, who the ally, or who the hostage in the conflagration. The M-19 and hostages trapped on the fourth floor were breathing the smoke produced by the constant firing, detonations and flames. The fight lasted more

than two hours, producing causalities on all sides. Finally, the special forces and army started to evacuate, fleeing the fire. The guerrilla and hostages on the fourth floor were without an exit route and perished there.

Act III: The final act was executed by the army; it was named *Operación rastrillo* (Rake operation), after the rake used to gather grass clippings after a lawn has been mowed. They went "from door to door, from house to house, shooting first and asking who's there later" (Carrigan 195). The army retreated only when the fire made it impossible to continue, leaving the flames to consume the bodies of the magistrates and guerrillas on the fourth floor. The next day, the army began again to sweep the building. President Betancur began five hours of deliberation about whether to allow the Red Cross to attend to the civilians that were injured. Meanwhile, the last eight guerrillas and sixty hostages, having survived the fire, remained hidden inside a bathroom located between the second and third level. Having lost any possibility for a ceasefire with the army, the guerrillas thought that their only chance of leaving that building alive was keeping the remaining hostages with them. M-19 still had a strong defence in a machine gun that prevented the army from reaching the staircase close to them. The hostages convinced their captors to send an emissary to request a ceasefire and to communicate to the President that the guerrilla wanted a dialogue. Judge Reinaldo Arciniegas was elected as an emissary and carried a piece of paper with the names of all the hostages and their pleas. Once intercepted by the army, Arciniegas handed General Arias Cabrales the paper and was sent home without being permitted to speak with a delegate of the government or the Red Cross. This meant that any understanding of the circumstances faced by the hostages and the guerrillas remained limited.

Instead of leading to a peaceful conclusion, Arciniegas' information gave the army knowledge of the exact location of the guerrillas, their numbers, and how low they were running in ammunition. The army conducted a final attack on the bathroom,

without regard for the lives of the hostages. To annihilate the remaining M-19 combatants, they used explosives to crack the thick structure that so far had provided safe shelter to the people in that room. The guerrillas held out until the explosives opened a hole in one wall. The blast killed some of the hostages and injured others. The guerrillas released the women and injured hostages – an action that allowed two guerrilla females to camouflage themselves as part of the group evacuated from the palace. Finally, at 2:00 pm, the army claimed the victory and the success of its operation. The six remaining members of the guerrilla were killed along with many civilians who could not escape the bullets.

From the moment the army knew the location of the resistance, they sped up their mission, resisting the pressure for a ceasefire that was coming not only from the executive branch of the government, but also from society. When President Betancur finally decided to send the Director-General of the Colombian Red Cross as his emissary, the army stalled his entrance to the palace. This was after they withheld the information brought by Judge Arciniegas from the president, which might have tipped the debate toward a peaceful resolution.

The outcomes of the violence

"*Mantener la Democracia, maestro*" (to preserve the democracy, master). These were the words of Colonel Alfonso Plazas Vega, one of the officers in command of the operation, when a reporter asked him about the stance of the army toward the siege of the Palace of Justice (Alarcón, sec.1). The phrase is so memorable and catchy, it earned a place in the collective memory of the country. It sums up, in a nutshell, the ongoing use of violence. A display of violence like the siege, makes a significant contribution to our tolerance for what became over time, ordinary acts of violence in our daily lives. The line between victim and perpetrator is increasingly blurred. It not only informs the way we, Colombians, respond when others are violent; it becomes even easier for us to

justify doing whatever it takes to protect our own interests. Colombian scholar Elsa Blair Trujillo analyses Colombian violence as it results from political conflict, including the "terror and cruelty generated by […] intimidation" and those that go beyond the physical harm and affect "the subjectivity of the individual and the society" (31). Colombians occupy positions on a violent spectrum, take roles for themselves and cast others into oppositions that justify their behaviour towards them. Their daily life actions are set into scenarios of conflict as a result.

To some extent, Colombians have learnt to repeat words, symbols and behaviours that have been derived from social conflicts, often without remembering where such words, symbols and behaviours originated, or seeing how they have evolved and entrenched themselves in Colombians everyday experiences. The debates in the Colombian academy about the culture of violence have many detractors,[41] but Peter Waldmann argues that "[…] the general view of what is desirable, worthwhile, and normatively accepted" maybe is "[…] responsible for the difficulties of putting a stop to escalating violence" (594). In saying we desire to put an end to the violence perpetrated by bad people "by any means necessary," we bring violence back into the equation. We license violent acts differently if they were the state's army, or outlaw groups or ordinary citizens, so that see ourselves as individuals inescapably along a violent continuum.

In this way, the siege of the Palace of Justice episode did not finish when the Army declared its victory. When the soldiers penetrated the building with their tanks, they rescued many of the hostages and conducted them immediately to *La Casa del Florero* (the Museum of Independence) located on the east corner of the palace. There, General Arias Cabrales had installed the base of his operations, and that is where the rescued were interrogated by B-2, the Army Intelligence Division, to find out if they

[41] See Blair, Elsa. "La Violencia Frente a Los Nuevos Lugares Y/O Los" Otros" De La Cultura."

were in fact victims or perpetrators. Those that seemed suspicious were cast by the army as supporters, or guerrilla members in disguise, and transported to an army depot never to be seen again. Twelve people disappeared; eight were workers in the palace cafeteria, three were visitors, and one was one of the two female guerrillas who walked out of the palace with the hostages.

After the siege, the families of the cafeteria workers tried to find their location, and whether they were alive or dead. No one answered their questions. In the army's logic, the cafeteria workers were suspects; this was and remains part of the dramaturgy of violence that feeds the idea of them versus us. The Army denied any wrongdoing, any forced disappearance. Twenty years had to pass with censure, pressure and death threats before the government started to investigate what happened to those who disappeared from the Palace of Justice. The remains of four have come to light in different burial sites; the others have been named but are still missing.

The M-19 stormed the Palace of Justice to execute an armed demand against the Colombian Government. After 27 hours of confrontation and with the M-19 defeated, this time the army stormed once again what was left of the building to erase, wash, move, and remove any evidence that could reveal the truth of what had happened during those hours. They moved the calcined bodies of the magistrates of the fourth floor; they washed the blood from the enemies and allies alike. They did not wait for experts to study and collect samples from the scene; the dead bodies were stacked in ways that made the identification process difficult once they were at the morgue. Ninety-five violent deaths among magistrates, civilians, soldiers and guerrillas were the result of this operation (Jimeno 217). In the end, they were all the same to the Army – more or less anonymous, as likely to be the enemy as not.

Media response

Even though the Minister of Communication had banned any broadcasts informing the public about the drama unfolding in the Palace of Justice, a number of reporters and radio stations continued having contact by telephone with the guerrillas and hostages in the interior of the building. The dialogues were not transmitted to the general audience at that time but became part of the eventual archive helping to reconstruct the facts of the siege. The print press, on the other hand, on the morning of Nov 7, 1985, highlighted the bloodshed occurring in the building without identifying the perpetrators. The newspaper *El Tiempo* used as its heading "*No Negociaremos: El Gobierno*" (We won't negotiate). They decided to cast the Government in the role of the event's protagonist, giving the impression that Betancur and his cabinet were in control, when we know now, and possibly did then, that the president did not steer the wheel, but had side-lined himself from the action. *El Tiempo's* headline on the day presents a story that makes it appear that dialogue had been offered to the subversive group, but their intransigence and brutal use of violence had forced the Government to deny their demands for dialogue. This account overlooks the fact that the Army's immediate retaliation precluded any possibility of negotiation.

The headline on the front page of *El Espectador* was "*A Sangre y Fuego*" (With blood and fire) (in uppercase) with the subheading "*Arrasado Palacio de Justicia en toma subversiva*" (Ravaged Palace of Justice in subversive takeover). The exclusion of a subject in the headlines may imply neutrality, putting M-19 on a par with the government, as everyone watches violence overtake the palace. The decision not to name the actors appears to take away the responsibility of who is carrying out the action. However, given the circumstances surrounding the event, the implication for the readers at large was more likely to be that M-19 were the antagonists, and as such solely responsible for the lives of the hostages. The conventional strategies for informing the

audience about the event supported the fabrication of a "truth" to fill the gaps in the onlookers' knowledge of what was happening; that is, if the media, in particular, the print press, can be seen to have dramatised the event for the general public, their "audience", then their dramaturgical strategies centred in large part on activating the existing social imagery, the "scenario" or ongoing social drama, fitting the facts into a readily accessible arc of performance. The use of dramatic tropes such as "with blood and fire" or a blunt assertion of "no negotiation" from a brave and fair hero, comforts society by reinforcing the belief that this drama will find resolution in the restoration of the status quo.

Those in power dominate both official and popular versions of the drama by casting heroes and villains and scripting a melodrama "to ameliorate the suffering" caused by the lived experience (Zarzosa 237). We are promised a happy ending as a reward for our virtuous acceptance of our lot in the present tense, but this ending is always just beyond our reach. In the meantime, we have the (dubious) pleasure of getting caught up in the stories of the day. The heightened language used to describe the event, the combination of excitement – how else to sell newspapers? – and reassurance that the government is retaining control, serves to perpetuate a kind of pleasurable loop for the audience, like a successful evening watching a melodrama on stage or watching one's favourite soap opera in the comfort of one's home. At the end of the siege, the newspapers reaffirmed this by headlining on the day "*Terminó el drama*" (The drama finished), or "*Holocausto en la Justicia*" (Holocaust in Justice), giving just enough space to their audience to grieve for the victims and bemoan what had happened but forestalling any critical thinking about the causes and consequences of acts of this magnitude. The siege was not a random, singular incident, but a link, a micro-drama in the macro arc of action that belongs to Colombia's ongoing social drama. The relationship between the micro and the macro creates an effect of overlapping, and as a

result, irreparable breaches, that create ever-bigger distances between citizens and polarities in our positions that are beyond resolution. The repeated spikes in the drama animate us as spectators. We energetically debate the veracity of the varying accounts and, like drama critics, we evaluate the effectiveness of the different performers. Paradoxically, our engagement in the drama positions us, as if by default, as complicit in its construction. The displacement of our energies into dramaturgical analysis, ironically, distances and disempowers us from actual activism. In this, I may sound as if I am taking a stand against the theatre, but rather, I am trying to make visible the ways the dramatisation of political violence prevails against the possibility of critical analysis. Only in the theatre can we take the time to expose the machinations of violence, terror and repression for what they are, to look without fear, and propose solutions.

Three decades of the aftermath

Betancur's government established a Special Commission of Inquiry which published a report seven months after the siege, supporting the Army and Government's version, in which the guerrillas were responsible for the civilians' deaths, and there were no disappearances of people. In 1989, four years later under President Virgilio Barco, M-19 negotiated their amnesty and demobilised to start their political party legally. Their leader, Carlos Pizarro Leongómez, was working in 1990 on his presidential candidacy, when he was assassinated during a domestic flight. Eduardo Umaña, the first lawyer who took the case of the disappearances from the Palace of Justice, was assassinated in his office in 1998. The siege and its disappearances and Pizarro and Umaña's assassinations are examples of further acts of repression. Fear creates silence, and disconnects the dots of history so that we can no longer construct a coherent narrative. However, what has been impossible to erase is the pain left in all the relatives who are still waiting for an answer about their missing people. This pain has become what Taylor describes as the "engine for cultural change" (*The Archive* 168), transmitted

from one generation to another by those who persist in using their "traumatic memory" to "animate their political activism" (165). The son and daughters of those who disappeared from the siege of the Palace of Justice continue to pursue the truth. They are working to construct a coherent narrative, pieced together with emerging facts, including evidence of torture to some of the hostages. They have expanded, grounded and activated the archive of the event by looking at the videos of the hostages exiting the palace in order to identify their relatives leaving the palace alive; they retrieve and document dental and DNA records, and photographs, among other resources. They have also created a repertoire of remembrance and protest: an annual performance on Nov. 6 at *La Plaza de Bolivar* in which they recall the memories of their missing loved ones. Where are they? They demand the truth and call to account the government and army.

This repertoire includes the podcast *Radio Ambulante* produced in 2018: two episodes about the siege and the story of how the remains of one worker from the cafeteria (Hector Jaime Beltrán) appeared in the grave of the assistant magistrate, Julio César Andrade. Andrade's daughter was not satisfied with the official version – that her father was identified by his undamaged identity card over his burned body – and asked for an exhumation and DNA test. The identification of Andrade meant that for one family, the wait of more of thirty years was finally over, but for the other, after thirty years, a new crisis was ignited. Where is the assistant magistrate? Is he dead or alive?

The siege of the Palace of Justice, with its many layers of drama, can be seen to conform to the scenario of the performance of violence in Colombia. Its heroes and villains are ambivalently cast in the shifting dramaturgy of the event. The ways of performing in the crisis established behaviours that could be modified and repeated in other social frames. The way we watched the siege set a pattern of spectatorship that could be carried into everyday life. The violence performed during the event raised our tolerance; it has become accepted and normalised as spectacle and we, as spectators, are

more interested in the melodrama than in pursuing answers or change. Interest in the phantasmagorical search for the truth of the Siege is excited and sustained only insofar as it keeps us looking away from more present threats. In 2010, the Supreme Court published a report written by a commission whose investigation took five years. Unfortunately, their findings do not have any legal value. The authors aimed at least to establish a precedent in which Colombian society learns to deal with conflict differently and rejects violence as the foremost strategy (Gómez, Herrera and Pinilla 19). In 2014, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights condemned the Colombian Government for the forced disappearance of twelve people. The president at that time, Juan Manuel Santos, had to perform a public act recognising the responsibility of the state for the actions taken that day. Most recently, in 2019, the government of Iván Duque Márquez and the General Prosecutor office, announced that there were no forced disappearances in the siege of the Palace of Justice but instead, faulty identifications of the bodies generated confusion around giving the remains of the dead to their relatives. The announcement opposes the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' sentence and once more rewrites the official story to benefit those in power.

In her book *The Palace of Justice: a Colombian tragedy,* Ana Carrigan details the circumstances of the siege of the Palace of Justice. She presents her account in theatrical terms, observing that the event was staged according to a dramaturgy designed to absolve the Government and Army of culpability. In Carrigan's words, "the fact that throughout the two days that the battle lasted, these real events had all taken place under the glare of the television lights and the cameras, created a special challenge to the scriptwriters of the official scenario" (13). Although Carrigan may not be using "scenario" in the way that Taylor does, it is important to see how intrinsic the theatrical imagination is to the way we think of the violence in Colombia. Carrigan's reflection demonstrates the way dramatic underpinnings of the siege of the Palace of Justice

scenario have been almost taken for granted in the way we now tell the story. More importantly, this dramatic event set the terms for the construction of patterns and behaviours in daily life, the scenarios that have become an unquestioned part of our social repertoire. In Carrigan's words: "if you annihilate the Palace of Justice and all of its innocent inhabitants, and reward the butchers, it must of necessity follow that the entire country will be condemned to become a slaughterhouse" (Carrigan 20).

I agree with Carrigan on her accounts about the Siege; however, the use of tragedy in her title reinforces my argument that invoking "tragedy" produces and reinforces the idea that political violence performed in the siege stems from forces beyond our control. The dramatic tropes used by the media to structure our reception of hideous acts of violence and terror reifies the idea that tragedy is waiting for us too, just around the corner, and it is better to not upset the gods, lest we receive their merciless punishment. The siege was a devastating act with sorrowful consequences, but it was within human control and comprehension: a series of actions that had been planned by the military and the M-19 and can be explained in social terms. It was not a cruel play of fate. I can accept Pavis's conceptualisation of a collective subconscious based on the tragic sense of life, and that this notion of the tragic can be colloquial in ways that go beyond the formal definitions of Greek tragedy. But even this more everyday idea of the tragic prevents us from seeing our complicity. It leaves us standing on the sidelines while we mourn and cry for the dead, without positioning us to perform any real action that might ameliorate this chronic social condition.

The case of "The Siege of the Palace of Justice" sets a scenario in which we have learnt to belong to the violence, and this condition is what makes us part of Colombian society. The Government and the Army acted to protect themselves as institutions, but they told us they were protecting us as citizens. Therefore, we were, in the end, all of us, affected, implicated and infected. The violence did not end when the

visible drama finished. Instead, the event set the stage for escalation: military actions, protests, show trials, and so on. With every action, our tolerance for such acts was lifted. We have not stopped being shocked, perhaps, but we have come to pride ourselves by adapting, carrying on, and being a happy country. Our coping strategies contain seeds of violence as well, scaled down to the micro performances of violence in the community meeting hall or social media interactions. Not to think in these ways becomes unthinkable, because it would mean we have to step outside our society and stop belonging to it. Or at least, that it is what is implied if we force ourselves to see beyond the dramatisation of violence and unveil the theatrical devices employed in those scenarios. If theatrical mechanisms can be seen used to construct this daily life dramaturgy, they are equally effective to reveal and present with an enriched perspective, the social violence of the country. The theatrical response to the siege of the Justice of Palace reminds us as society that we continue to be pawns in the cycle of violence, terror and repression unless we decide to take action, and change from having a passive to an active social role.

Theatrical response – *La Siempreviva*

La Siempreviva by Miguel Torres was written in 1992 and had its opening season in Bogotá in 1994, before touring widely. The play was performed more than a thousand times over twenty years with the cast of Torres' theatre group "*El Local"* under his direction, becoming a classic of the Colombian theatre (Durán Ayala 10). Torres has an extensive background as a fiction writer; his novel *El Crimen del Siglo* is the first part of his trilogy about *El Bogotazo* and Gaitán's assassination. To Torres, Gaitán's assassination breaks the history of the country in two. The second pivotal moment for Torres is the siege of the Palace of Justice. For Torres, the military action "left no stone unturned", and from there the country went downhill with unstoppable violence (*La*

Siempreviva: Entrevista a Miguel Torres (Parte I)). *Colcultura*[42] (the Government's culture agency at that time) awarded Torres funding to develop the story which allowed him to do comprehensive archive work and gather all the information available at the time to create the piece. The question of how such a potentially explosive fact-centred drama was not only allowed to go forward, but was funded by the Government, is perhaps indicative of how little regard those in power have for the theatre and its political efficacy.

La Siempreviva depicts the story of Julieta who lives with her mother Lucía and her brother Humberto in a big old house in Bogotá's city centre, a few blocks away from the Palace of Justice. Lucía rents the other rooms of the house to a couple, Sergio and Victoria, and Carlos, a single man who runs a pawnshop in a cellar next to his room. Espitia is the last character and comes to visit from time to time. He is a lawyer as well as Julieta's teacher and wants to marry her even though he is considerably older. At first sight, the play represents the typical low-middle class struggles of people looking to make ends meet every day. For example, the play centres on the character of Julieta as she studies hard to finish her bachelor's degree in law, while works to help her mother. Julieta wants to thrive in life, but opportunities are scarce, and therefore she has constant pressure from her mother to accept Espitia's propositions of marriage. The house is the only inheritance from her late father; it has a huge mortgage as it was the only way to pay for Julieta's study fees. The debt is in the hands of Carlos as it was he who requested the loan from the bank. As the play progresses, the reader/spectator comes to see the complexity of the relationships happening at that place. In the author's words, "the house is a microcosm of the country" inhabited by "characters with contradictions and disputes" (Torres, *La Siempreviva*).

[42] In 1997 *Colcultura* was transformed into the Ministry of Culture.

Torres begins the script by describing the set in detail. The spectators see Julieta's and Lucia's room through two big windows centre stage left and Sergio's and Victoria's smaller room on the right through one window. A corridor connects both rooms; downstage is the inner courtyard with a laundry sink and a clothesline. Every space of the house has ornaments and details depicting a classic colonial Bogotán house. Torres and *El Local* performed their first seasons of the play in a real house, also the group's headquarters, in the traditional neighbourhood of *La Candelaria*, which is where the Palace of Justice is located. According to the historian Carlos José Reyes, the audience was situated along the corridors surrounding the courtyard; the action inside the bedrooms could be seen through the big windows. The performance's impact was increased by the proximity of the house to the Palace of Justice (Reyes vol 3, 838). Adding this element of reality to the representation of the fictional story, forced the audience to look beyond the play's theatricality. They were put in a position to recognise the suffering and pain left in all the families affected by the actions of the siege, and to come to understand how all of us as part of a society that has preferred to diminish the brutal consequences of political violence, might bear some responsibility. In unmasking what has happened to us as a society, like other playwrights of the conflict, Torres employs, as Pulecio Mariño explains: "reason, impeccable logic and persuasive dramatic construction" (1:74).

La Siempreviva is considered a realistic play that follows Aristotelian concepts of mimesis. Its development is linear, and the actions occur in the same place. Torres divides the script into three parts. The first contains nine scenes in a melodramatic or soap opera style, introducing the reader/spectator to the characters, their dreams, and the frustrations and conflicts between them. The pace of the play and its use of colloquial language build an instant familiarity with the Colombian middle class and its reflexive desire to improve its daily life. The script opens with Lucia's birthday celebration.

Sergio hands around wine glasses in his uniform, as he is ready to leave to work in his casual job as a waiter in an upper-class club. Once Sergio leaves, Carlos makes a move on Victoria, which she discreetly rejects. Lucia complains to Julieta for not inviting her teacher Mr Espitia, whom Humberto despises for his intentions towards Julieta. The gathering finishes with an altercation, leaving Julieta and Victoria to tidy up. The first signs of conflict the reader/spectator can perceive, are the tensions building up between Julieta and Lucia due to Mr Espitia and Carlos taking advantage of Victoria when she is by herself.

In the second scene, Torres draws another two lines of conflict between the characters. Firstly, Carlos reminds Lucia that she is three months behind on her mortgage interest payments. Secondly, the financial difficulties of Sergio and Victoria are discussed. Sergio, now dressed as a clown, is about to go to work for a restaurant, hawking the menu on the footpath – a common practice in popular Colombian neighbourhoods. While he performs his clown act, he notices a bag with groceries – the essentials that Julieta gave to Victoria a moment ago. Carried away by his pride, Sergio orders Victoria to return the bag. The situation escalates until Julieta intervenes. Until this moment there are two aspects pushing the characters of the house out of balance. One is the romantic, as it is possible to see in the triangle between Julieta, Espitia, and Lucia, and the another is among Sergio, Victoria, and Carlos. The other aspect is the financial stress on some of the characters, as is the case for Lucia, Sergio and Victoria, in opposition to Carlos who earns power by being the most solvent of all.

The following six scenes depict the complex evolution of these two aspects. Lucia asks Espitia for a loan, but he disregards her request, as his only interest is to convince Julieta to accept him as a lover. Lucia charges Sergio the three months' rent he owes. To pay, Sergio pawns his television to Carlos, who gives him some money for it. Sergio pays Lucia and just after that, Carlos charges Lucia with the mortgage interest.

The money returns to him with the addition of the television. Julieta loses her office job. Lucia sees an opportunity to convince her daughter to accept Espitia's proposals, but the conversation finishes with the two women clashing. The next day Lucia finds a job for Julieta in the Palace of Justice, replacing a cafeteria worker who is on leave. Julieta is not convinced, because she will soon graduate as a lawyer, but the position is only for one month, and the money would come handy for their situation. Sergio makes a scene with Victoria as he gets jealous over her proximity with Humberto. In each scene the reader/spectator sees the domestic violence suffered by Victoria; although Sergio has nothing to offer her, she decides to stay by his side no matter what. Julieta meets someone in the Palace of Justice and starts dating. This character is never seen, but only described. Espitia's intentions towards Julieta shatters now that she has met someone. Sergio steals a clock from Carlos' pawned merchandise and Carlos keeps manifesting his lascivious desires towards Maria.

Scene nine finishes part one of the script with the enactment of Julieta's graduation party. She is finally a lawyer. The atmosphere is festive and happy; everyone is celebrating, and all the characters are a little tipsy. This moment for Julieta is precious as it represents a change that will improve not only her life but her mother's and brother's as well. The illusion of having a better job and therefore a higher wage means that the debt to Carlos will end and Lucia will probably not need to rent the rooms anymore. Julieta has already a job offer from her university and a new love in sight; she will finish her work at the cafeteria on Nov. 5, the day before the siege. Everything seems to be as she always wanted. At the end of the scene Julieta is dancing by herself while the music blends with shooting sounds. The stage goes dark with only one light pointing on the radio in the inner courtyard of the house.

Throughout this first part, different radio news bulletins are heard in chronological order, about Betancur's peace process with the guerrilla groups. Torres'

characters represent opposing political positions in society. On the one hand is Carlos, the conservative, a traditionalist who sees an armed resolution as the best way to deal with subversion. On the other hand, the young generation (Julieta and Humberto) endorse dialogue and finding alternative ways to resolve conflict. It is just for a moment that this discussion takes place in the house, but the radio news continues between the scenes. Torres employs authentic archival news bulletins of the time, further mixing his fictional world with real national moments. In one way, it is a strategy to keep the reader/spectator awake from the theatrical illusion, to expose her/him to the social circumstances that might be overlooked in daily life as the intensity of living in a survival mode forces citizens to act by reflex instead of conducting a reflective process. The life of the characters in the house imitates that survival mode while the radio news keeps informing the characters and the audience of the reality taking place beyond those walls and affecting everyone there one way or another.

The fourth wall is not broken during the play's representation even though the space is not a conventional proscenium but the real corridors, rooms and inner courtyard of a house. Using a real house close to the Palace of Justice where the events of the siege were performed can be seen as Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt.* Brecht's vision became a foundation for staging the stories of Colombia and Latin America as he "stimulated new ways of thinking about production and performance" (Gökdağ 528). Through Brecht's epic theatre approach, Colombian playwrights found a way to reveal and discuss political and social violence while enhancing the theatrical devices of the field such as language, image and staging. Although in *La Siempreviva* the actors are always in character, unlike the other theatrical responses analysed in this thesis, the alienation effect takes place in the use of the space and the radio news. Victor Viviescas, Colombian director and academic, calls this form of representation inherited from Brecht "Epic-Critic", because the play "pierces reality with a scrutinising look to

give rise to its inner sense" (21). The social consequences and traumatic memory that arose from the siege of the Palace of Justice cannot be grasped at first sight without a proper reflective and critical work; *La Siempreviva* offers one of many possibilities to understand the violence before and after the event from an everyday life point of view.

The second part of the script begins with ongoing shooting sounds coming from outside the house. It is the day after Julieta's graduation party, and she has left to hand her position back to the cafeteria's worker. Victoria and Lucia run into the courtyard trying to work out where the sounds are coming from. Hearing the gunshots, Victoria wonders if someone has been killed, recalling that in the last week, two neighbours were shot on the same day. Victoria's comments illustrate the normalisation of this sort of situation; shootings are not extraordinary, but rather are daily, commonplace events. Carlos enters in a hurry with his little radio; he announces the news he has been hearing, that the M-19 has besieged the Palace of Justice. Lucia desperately begins to worry about Julieta. She tries to call the cafeteria, but there is no answer. She then gets her coat and decides to go to the *Plaza de Bolivar*. Victoria, Sergio and Carlos try to convince her that there is no point in doing that, but this does not change her mind. The radio bulletin announces that M-19 has sent a cassette recording of their manifesto to the media stating that their operation on the Palace of Justice is called "*Antonio Nariño* in defence of human rights". The scene finishes again just with a spotlight on the radio.

During the five scenes of this second part of the script, Torres depicts the siege in contrast to the intensity of the military action. Outside the house the sounds of shooting and a helicopter overhead are heard, as inside the house, the men are sitting with long faces having discovered that Julieta is working in the Palace of Justice. The radio bulletins continue to be heard, as the characters follow the action of the siege. The radio announces that a large number of hostages has been released and they now being interrogated by the police at the museum. This news gives hope to Julieta's family.

Then they hear Alfonso Reyes Echandía, the Chief of Justice, begging for a ceasefire. A big rumble shakes the house, bringing sounds of rockets, guns machines and sirens. The face of hope in the characters is replaced by one of terror.

Following the factual sequence of the siege, Torres continues his script with the fire that took place in the palace. Encouraged by the news that several hostages have been released, Humberto and Sergio go out to find out about Julieta, but they return without any news of her. They report that the way to the museum is blocked, and the flames from the palace make the whole area like a kind of hell. Humberto says that people are gossiping about the army starting the fire to burn everyone inside. Sergio criticises the devastating actions of the army while Carlos defends their procedure. "The president shit in the pants of fear and couldn't stop the army. That is what it happened" hollers Sergio outraged (Torres, *La Siempreviva* 34). The radio sums up the siege in four points. First, the flames have ceased, and half of the building has been destroyed. Second, there are a number of magistrates still held hostage by the guerrillas. Third, the Government will not negotiate with M-19. Fourth, the Government guarantees the guerrillas' lives and promises a fair trial in exchange for surrender.

That Torres finishes the scene with that last radio statement echoes what happened the next day in reality, as the Army's actions negated the Government's assurances. When the M-19's few survivors tried to negotiate using the Red Cross as an intermediary, the Army increased its military action to annihilate the guerrillas once and for all. This is how the fourth scene begins. Sergio accuses the Army of not allowing the Red Cross to enter the building. Carlos argues with him, explaining that the guerrilla only understands in terms of "blood and fire" (35). Espita, now present in the house, gives a third point of view not heard before; the M-19 miscalculated that "the jurisdictional branch is the one of lesser importance in the government" (35). This statement is echoed by Carrigan who, writing after the play was first produced, argues

that M-19 miscalculated their plan; they had assumed that the response would be similar to what had happened at the Dominican Embassy in 1980, where they held hostage foreign diplomats including ambassadors from the USA, Switzerland, Israel, Austria and others, in contrast to what happened at the siege of the Palace of Justice, where government judges and magistrates were treated with "disguised indifference" (177). Carrigan continues: "it was only the presence of North American and European diplomats with the Embassy which, in that occasion, had averted the same savage military response […]" (177). In *La Siempreviva*, the inhabitants of the house recognise that if a magistrate's life is not worth saving, what value has a common citizen?

Carlos tags Sergio as a communist, to which Sergio replies that even communism has driven the country to catastrophe. In this short dialogue, Torres smartly exposes the repeated behaviours and dogmas of Colombian society; being in opposition to the official forces indicates automatically that one is a subversive or communist or a *mamerto* - a pejorative word used often towards people with leftist tendencies, who commonly work or study in public universities or make claims for human rights. Such attitudes are reflected here when Sergio's right to protest against the Army's actions is shamed by Carlos who does not question if the violent response is necessary; for him, the Army must be respected without question as the official institution. These antagonistic positions have "decisively influenced official practices" as Reyes states (843). Humberto comforts Lucia asking her to rest so that Julieta will find her well when she comes back. From this moment Torres plants in the reader/spectator's mind, Lucia's illusion of seeing her daughter again, and how she holds to that primal need to know where she is, and what has happened to her.

The last scene of the second part is the day after the siege has finished. It is night. Lucia paces desperately due to the lack of information about Julieta. Her name is not on the list of victims, but no one has said she is alive either. Humberto tries to calm

Lucia down when a telephone call from Espitia comes through saying to Humberto that some soldiers saw someone with Julieta's description inside the museum. Lucia, Victoria, Sergio and Humberto leave the house to go towards the museum. A blackout on stage is followed by light on the radio, as we hear a news bulletin announce the lahars produced by a small eruption of volcano Nevado de Ruiz, which buried the town of Armero killing 25,000 people. Although this fact is an independent event that brought more misery and despair to Colombian society, the connection with the siege of the Palace of Justice has to do with the missing people. One week after the siege, on Nov. 13, 1985, most citizens of Armero were buried under the mudflow from the volcano. Hundreds of injured people were transported to Bogotá and when they died, their bodies were put together in the same mass grave where those unidentified from the Palace of Justice were buried (Jimeno 198). This disorganisation of the bodies has been a main issue complicating any unveiling of the facts around the disappearances from the cafeteria.

Torres based the character of Julieta on Cristina Guarín Cortez, a 26-year-old professional with a bachelor's degree in history and geography. Through the lawyer Eduardo Umaña, Torres contacted her family when he was writing the script, and their testimonies helped him shape the character in *La Siempreviva.* The author used the facts of Guarín's story in the play, such as the job she found at the Palace of Justice cafeteria thanks to her mother, and that the last day at work was meant to be a brief hand-over to the woman she was replacing. In real life, the co-worker could not arrive on time, as she encountered a problem with her newborn baby, and by the time she arrived at the palace, the siege had already started. Torres takes the elements of Guarín's life and inserts them in the world of this house, building a melodramatic situation that hooks the audience, provoking an easy identification with everyday life situations. What is the difference between the way a play such as *La Siempreviva* can be seen to use

melodramatic tropes to provoke political recognition and the way the media dramatises real events in order to distract citizens from critical thinking? Torres' script generates its dramatic effect not by reconstructing violent events on stage, but rather, through the reporting of events and the responses of the people listening to the radio and each other. In this, it appears to follow the Aristotlean model of tragedy, but its focus on people like us keeps the gods out of it. The presence of the radio with its heightened, omnipresent voice of the official account, opens that version of events to question. In the mass media, the use of melodramatic tropes to reconstruct the performance of violence tends to oversimplify the given circumstances, purposes and context of the event to comfort readers/spectators and distract them from a deep analysis. In the theatre it is possible to construct a space for attending to the complications and contradictions that can be seen in representations of diverse individual experiences of the catastrophic reality. Writing about contemporary novels, Camila Segura shows how the tropes of melodrama invite a search for morality in a desacralised world (59). This is true also of the theatre. Colombian society, as individuals and together, has lost its moral compass and assimilated the reflexive use of violence into everyday consciousness. The melodramatic frame in *La Siempreviva* makes the violence personal; the catastrophe that falls on the house of Julieta is experienced in the theatre as if that home were our own.

Having set the everyday struggles of his characters into a melodramatic frame in the first part of his play, Torres shifts to a factual and realistic style in the second part: the crucial moments of the siege and news of the military's retaking of the palace. The facts of the situation are filtered through the response of Julieta's family as they go from having hope of seeing her again to radical despair charged with questions that no one answers. The play then aligns the siege of the Palace of Justice temporally with the

natural disaster of the volcano which happened a week later. In the play, the volcanic eruption is tragic; the man-made cataclysm of the siege is not.

The last part of the script is divided into thirteen short scenes depicting how the uncertainty about Julieta's fate sickens everyone in the house. Humberto and Espitia talk to Lucia explaining to her that they have not found any evidence that reveals where Julieta is. Lucia is devastated but determined to know what happened to her daughter. Espita foretells dark times as all the expected procedures related to the disappearances of the cafeteria workers have been violated. In scene two, Torres refers to the telephone calls that in reality the family of some of those who disappeared received from anonymous tipsters, to say that their relatives were in captivity in a military base. In the script, the inhabitants of the house are discussing a caller who said that Julieta was at the *Cantón Norte* of the army. They debate whether the call is trustworthy. Lucia persists in feeling that her daughter is alive: *siempreviva.*

From scene three, the reader/spectator witnesses the decline of Lucia's mental health. She is singing a lullaby when Julieta's voice joins in. Dressed as a little girl, Julieta asks her mother to wash her hair in the laundry sink, but Lucia says that the water is too cold to do that. The appearance vanishes, leaving Lucia in tears. The next scene jumps ahead six months, as Espitia explains to Humberto that the only resource they have now is to demand redressive action from the state. Lucia interrupts when Humberto is enthusiastic over the idea of monetary compensation. To Lucia, compensation means accepting Julieta's death, and for her, she is not. For Lucia, the world has stopped, but for the others, life continues its course and Carlos is demanding payment for the mortgage, again, and threatens to evict everyone from the house. The cycle repeats once more. Humberto charges Sergio the rent for the room, forcing him to pawn his waiter's uniform to Carlos. Carlos gives money to Sergio; Sergio pays

Humberto; Humberto pays Carlos, receiving from him just one more month to pay the debt.

In a recent interview,[43] Torres said that after the siege of the Palace of Justice the country rapidly went downhill. In his play, we see that Torres has used the quick, unpleasant deterioration of life in the house to reflect social reality. Sergio has an opportunity to take a shift as a waiter but cannot do it until he recovers his uniform from Carlos' pawnshop. Sergio asks Victoria to talk to Carlos in his favour, to which she agrees. Minutes later, Victoria gives the uniform back to Sergio. Lucia is attending different meetings with the family of those who disappeared and carries a banner with her. She rejects Espitia's draft demand for compensation. Humberto, disappointed in the attitude of his mother, explodes in a rage saying that Julieta must be dead and buried in the mass grave along with all the bodies from the city of Armero. At night, Lucia sees the spectre of Julieta again; this time she is wearing a white robe. Julieta puts her head in the laundry sink; Lucia approaches her and starts rinsing her hair. The water goes red and stains Julieta's white robe. After Julieta's exit, Lucia again weeps. In the theatricalisation of Julieta's death, Torres offers the audience a kind of closure while showing us what it is to have lost a loved one without even a body to bury - a familiar, repeated story, in the Colombian performance of violence.

In scene nine of part three, Sergio returns early due to the cancellation of his shift and finds Victoria in Carlos' room. Victoria runs half-naked to lock herself up in the bathroom. Mayhem breaks out as Sergio loses control and tries to set fire to the house. Humberto tries to stop him and then confronts Carlos who is carrying a gun. Lucia has hallucinations of the siege of the Palace of Justice, as the fire, the screams and sounds, transport her back to that day. At the end of the script, Lucia has lost all touch

[43] Revista La Caída, *"La Siempreviva: Entrevista a Miguel Torres (Parte I)*". *YouTube*, 28, Oct. 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2eOK3CyymE&t=5s

with reality. She keeps waiting for Julieta to visit her every night. The house ownership passes to the hands of Carlos. Victoria leaves the house as Sergio falls into a depressive state. Humberto gives up on helping his mother and becomes an alcoholic.

Throughout the third part of the script, the radio continues broadcasting bulletins related to the Palace of Justice case and its aftermath. Torres employs this device also to announce the news of what has happened in Julieta's house. The tone is increasingly sensationalist: Carlos has been killed at the pawnshop with a cold weapon. The motivation of the crime was apparently personal revenge. Lucia, having gone fully mad, does not accept Julieta's death. The play ends with the image of Julieta flickering in the window as if lit by a candle, which she extinguishes.

Torres' theatrical reconstruction of the siege of the Palace of Justice, and of the violence performed during and after it, challenges the dominant culture's dramaturgical status quo. It also, importantly, adds the perspective of the common citizen who has to navigate the consequences. His theatrical strategy begins with relocating his drama away from the real place and actors of the siege (the army, M-19 guerrillas and hostages) into a house inhabited by characters with different backgrounds and points of view. By selecting a house – a real house – as the place where the story occurs, Torres links the national drama directly to the domestic experience; he shows his audience how the social precariousness of the country is enacted within the microcosm of a family. According to Durán, the smallest unit of society is a family; in *La Siempreviva*, the destruction of the house represents the dismemberment of the family and the society it represents (24). As Durán states, this analogy serves to show that "violence is not exclusive of armed combat zones but exists in the most intimate spaces of society and the individual: the house and consciousness" (24). The invitation to the reader/spectator to reflect on the siege from the differing perspectives of people like us, opens up the possibility of building a social consciousness, even for a brief moment, about violence

and the daily practices used in the intimate spaces that reify its use. If the readers/spectators see themselves as accomplices of such violent strategies, they can then decide to take a more social active role to change them.

The media plays a role through the radio bulletins that act as a kind of window for hearing the outside world and what is happening in it. The bulletins are chronological and condensed telling the story of the siege. In other words, as the bulletins transmit the social drama of the siege to the family, they make the role of the media in dramatising the siege apparent to the reader/spectator. The theatrical effect is one of distantiation; it exposes both the way the social drama is constructed and the habits of listening to that reify the scenario of violence. In part one of the script, the bulletins inform about the increase of violence and the crisis of Betancur's peace process. M-19 enacts the breach by invading the Palace of Justice, which provokes the crisis of the hostage-taking. There are multiple attempts at redress: by the Army, by the Government, by M-19. This increasingly violent stage of social drama is at the heart of the second part of the play. There is no closure in reality, but the third part of Torres' play performs recognition of the ongoing schism caused by the siege. The deterioration of Lucia's mental health can be seen as a metaphor for the socio-political state of the country after the devasting destruction of its Palace of Justice. The deaths of the magistrates and judges, alongside the civilians during the siege, represent a rupture in the Colombian justice system which has never been healed. The failure to account for everyone who was there on the day leaves the wound open and festering. Just as Lucia will not be the same person ever again, and the house will not be the family place it used to be, so too it is for Colombian society.

La Siempreviva also maintains a certain distance from the way the siege was dramatised by the media. In the play, Torres does not appoint heroes or villains. Sergio and Carlos are both oppressors and victims. Lucia and Victoria are in control of their

choices. Torres makes visible those who disappeared, in the character of Julieta, whose fate cannot be dramatised because it is not known. Highlighting this part of the event and giving voice to this side of the story is one of the greatest achievements of Torres' script. The siege did not finish with the death of M-19 combatants; it scarred the people that lost their relatives, and that scar is not only theirs but a social one. The theatre has an advantage, as a poorly subsidised, relatively marginal social practice. Media outlets have to follow the principles dictated by its owners, who benefit from the official narrative. A theatre audience can be actively engaged in making sense of the story presented to them. It is between them and theatre-makers that a "collective notion" emerges "explaining the reality that is part of our identity as a nation" (Pulecio Mariño; 2:20). To interrogate scenarios of violence theatrically might be one of the few ways to maintain memory and repair the social fabric, that is so fragile now, in Colombia. In Torres' words: "power always does what is possible to make things forget. Artists do the opposite. We want things to be rescued from oblivion and communicate them to people so that there is a process of memory" (*La Siempreviva: Entrevista a Miguel Torres (Parte II)*).

This chapter has analysed the siege of the Palace of Justice to demonstrate how the scenario of violence in Colombia has progressed. The Government and media have highlighted the M-19's actions to minimise the fatal strategies by the Army. The bloodshed inside the palace could have been avoided but instead, it prevailed on the Army's desire to decide who deserves to live or die. This action closed any possibility for dialogue and even after the siege, stopped any active repairation to the families of those who disappeared as they, according to the Army and Government's narrative, must be seen as villains. The M-19 initiated the sieged with an eye to the general audience, so their claim to the Government could be witnessed by thousands. The Army crushed that desire and staged the re-take to alert everyone that repression measures

would be taken in a heartbeat. The media reaffirmed the futility to understand in-depth the social and political aspects of everyday life. The general audience subdues itself and moves on. The theatrical response *La Siempreviva* exhorts society that is not possible to move on if recognition of the stories of the victims does not take place.

Chapter Three: 1999 The Assassination of Jaime Garzón

> [...] Bogotá wept but still did not believe. Many people interrupted their bath, breakfast and their commuting to think or sob a little. Others went, with rage, to the place to confirm that vileness and intolerance had been reified by his death. Children in the kindergarten watched in terror, dozens of people grouped, anger is in the air […]
>
> Fabián Cristancho Ossa (24)

Those are the words of the journalist describing the morning when Colombian society woke up to the news that Jaime Garzón, a well-known media star and activist, had been killed. Garzón's murder by two *sicarios* (hitmen) occurred Aug. 13, 1999, while he was driving to his work at a radio station. It was a Friday at 5:45 am. The sun was minutes away from rising. The street was mainly empty of pedestrians and cars. Garzón was waiting at a traffic light when the two hitmen approached on a motorbike. They shot at him five times and raced away. Garzón's car moved slowly without control until crashing against a lighting post.

This chapter analyses the assassination of Garzón as a decisive point in the scenario of violence in Colombia. Unlike Gaitán, Garzón was not a politician but a journalist and comedian, who through the use of humour revealed the theatricality in the official dramaturgy. Garzón's farewell from his viewers was a heartfelt response underscoring how powerful his social message was. I describe how this assassination made Garzón an iconic victim of the continuing performance of violence. How could someone who was not a politician, in challenging and reassuring Colombians that they could be thoughtful about their place in society, have met the same fate as Gaitán's? Garzón's murder shifted the perception of who can be a victim, in Colombia's violent conflict. I explain first who Garzón was and how his use of humour as social pedagogy

made him an important actor on the Colombian political stage. Next, I explain why Garzón became a threat to the status quo, then analyse his assassination and the subsequent mediatisation of the event. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the theatrical response to Garzón's death, *Corruptour,* by Verónica Ochoa.

Performances of violence including assassinations on the street are an everyday occurrence in Colombia as Victoria, the character in *La Siempreviva*, signals at the beginning of the second part of the play. However, the people's response to Garzón's death was different. On this occasion, they did not perform to the customary scenario of acceptance and resignation, but instead, their performances were expressive of outrage and repudiation. People from all layers of society went to the *Plaza de Bolivar* the next day, the same square where the Palace of Justice burnt in 1985, to mourn and farewell Garzón, whose body lay in the National Capitol.[44] The screenwriter and journalist, Antonio Morales Riviera, who worked with Garzón, states that "The main avenues became human rivers that prevented the hearse from moving forward. Such was the human tide that at one point, a pedestrian bridge collapsed killing three people" (20).

As terrible and absurd as the three fatalities caused by the collapsed bridge may seem, they depict the scale of the mourning. The added deaths of ordinary people magnified the grief and made the pervasiveness of violence irrefutable. After decades of armed conflict, Colombian citizens could no longer repress the anger, pain, and sadness accumulated after excessive human losses, even as three more deaths were added to the daily toll. In becoming protesters, the mourners overcame their fear, temporarily, to demonstrate their disavowal of the cycle of violence. Garzón's death had moved Colombian citizens to a degree well beyond their response to the death of any other public figure who had been killed in pursuit of vital social changes since Gaitán,

[44] See "Y Garzón se fue." *El Tiempo*, 15 Aug. 1999, www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-897675.

including the presidential candidates Jaime Pardo Leal (assassinated in 1987), Luis Carlos Galán (assassinated in 1989), and Carlos Pizarro Leongómez (assassinated in 1990). Garzón's loss served as a reminder of how barbaric and indiscriminate the Colombian conflict was and still is.

The target: who was Garzón?

Jaime Garzón was born in Bogotá in 1960. He was the third of four siblings, who said that he was always a curious and gifted child.[45] His brother Jorge describes Garzón as a generous and compassionate person, an intelligent student, and a quick learner. Nevertheless, as Jorge explains, Garzón also had many behaviour problems at school due to the lack of respect he showed to the teachers (Garzón, Jorge). His irreverence towards authority figures was actually idealistic, leading to his determination as an adult to enhance education, as from his perspective, this was the path to social change. Garzón had a clear vision of how Colombian society could coexist in harmony. His sister, Marisol, explains this vision as "a pedagogic construction of the country that is practised and not, simply and passively, taught or received" (Garzón, Marisol). Garzón's political activism was always pedagogical. His brother Alfredo says: "humour became his most powerful pedagogical tool to spread his ideals" (Garzón, Alfredo). As a student, Garzón began studies in physics and aircraft mechanics, but gave this up and later enrolled in a bachelor's degree in law. Garzón did not often attend classes, which made him constantly fail, as the lecturers Camilo Borrero and Ricardo Sanchez from the National University recall ("Garzón vive"). Instead, he was an active participant in different groups of study and discussion. During his time at university, Garzón militated briefly in the guerrilla group ELN, but his character was not the one of a fighter, and he

[45] Garzón's family designed a website in his honour to keep his legacy. See www.jaimegarzonforero.com Accessed 10 September 2018.

soon quit (Cristancho Ossa 21). After his death, however, Garzón was awarded a law degree in honour of his humanitarian and social work.

Looking for opportunities to perform public service, Garzón became involved in Andrés Pastrana's campaign for the mayor's office of Bogotá in 1988. After winning the mayoralty, Pastrana offered Garzón the position of local mayor of Sumapaz, an impoverished rural locality near Bogotá. Pastrana later became president (1998-2002); he was, in fact, the occupant of that high office when Garzón was murdered. Sumapaz, where Garzón was the Mayor from 1988 to 1990, was a region under the power of the FARC. It was there where Garzón started to mediate at a small scale between the town's inhabitants and the guerrilla leaders who dominated everyday life. He worked there for two years, making important improvements in the locality, such as constructing a medical centre and primary school (Cristancho Ossa 22).

Garzón's irreverence and way of doing things differently made him stand out from Pastrana's staff. When the secretary of government at that time requested information about the authorised brothels in the zone, Garzón replied "regrettably, the only whores here are the FARC" ("Garzón vive"). It was this, among other such incidents of violating political etiquette, that cost Garzón his post. From the moment Garzón took the political stage as a social actor for collective redress he was trying to provoke change in the habitual, or in Schechnerian terms, the restored behaviour of the politicians he faced. Garzón wanted to rewrite and reorganise the pattern of political performance. In Colombian society, the scenario of performance in public office is one of corruption enacted by persons in positions of power, whose roles were none-the-less idealised. Garzón wanted to expose the hypocrisy and restore a narrative of positive public service. Garzón saw that, because politics and corruption go hand in hand in Colombia, an honest politician would be seen to endanger the normative social structure. In response, the dominant forces of the status quo discredited and diminished

him as a contrary actor. Garzón was, in effect, estranged from the community he was hired to lead when he attempted to act according to his ideals, so he was removed from the scene. This established a pattern that was repeated nine years later when Garzón was again targeted for his social activism.

Humour as pedagogy: Garzón's performance

Garzón's work in television started in 1990 with the show "ZOOciedad", which was formatted like a magazine, with separate sections for comedy, political commentary, news and so on. The use of the English word "zoo" was intentional, to refer to how Colombian society (*Sociedad*) might be seen as a park with animals. The concept of "ZOOciedad" came from Paula Arenas who gathered a team of creatives -Rafael Chaparro, Karl Troller and Eduardo Arias- to propose the format and find a star. Arias knew of Garzón's ability to make impressions of politicians and invited him to be a co-presenter along with Elvia Lucía Avila (Gómez Correal 14). A team of talented people supported Garzón to conduct this successful format and to write the scripts and research the facts that then became material for satire and social commentary. ZOOciedad was broadcast weekly for thirty minutes.

The audience never saw Garzón as himself. Instead, he played a wide range of characters, beginning with his performance of the co-host Louis. As Louis, he would cut to a "reporter", Emerson de Francisco, and interact with his co-host, Avila, who performed her role as a character called Pili. All this was presented at a fast pace, with short interventions and a lot of wordplays. The anthropologist Diana Gómez Correal observes Garzón's performances were built on *figuras retoricas* [rhetorical figures, or devices] such as "satire, parody, irony and caricature" (ix). Such devices are dramatic as well as rhetorical, and as such, they contribute to the composition of social scenarios. Colombian citizens were accustomed to a dominant dramaturgy about the violence that limited them to a daily tragic sense of life. A script that reinforces the notions of fate

and destiny as if we, the citizens, cannot have control over the bad things that happen in the society because they are meant to be; we need to yield and continue. Garzón's television experiments offered an alternative way to be thoughtful about Colombian social and political dynamics.

Starting with *ZOOciedad*, Garzón found a way to change, for a moment, the dominant dramaturgy and reminded the audience of the repeated actions of politicians which were rehearsed and prepared, and not the result of fate. For example, Gómez Correal cites a section of the show called *Lo Mismo de Antes* (The same as before), a video in which images from past presidents were juxtaposed with a very well-known tango, *Volver* (to return), sung by Carlos Gardel (11-12). The video was shown during the presidential elections of 1990, making a subtle but clear mockery of the false promise of politicians to institute change and social improvement.

ZOOciedad was a breakthrough in Colombian television. Mario José Rodríguez, its producer, states "[…] *ZOOciedad* changed paradigms in television and started to make humour, really humour" ("Garzón vive"). The programme was groundbreaking in the use of humour to awaken audiences to the irony of Colombian everyday situations. Gomez Correal explains why *lo cómico* (the comical) is a cultural product that "gathers the participants [of a group] around a subject" allowing recognition of the social identity of its group as well its "defects and faults" (52). The comical, Gomez Correal continues, invites the viewers to observe everyday political and social situations from another perspective. This process creates a distance that confronts viewers with their own perceptions of reality. Gomez Correal states that the comical allows "the construction of options" in the audience because their understanding of reality will not be "automatic" anymore (58).

Gomez Correal's analysis might be echoing the Brechtian concept of *Verfremdungseffekt*. In Brecht's theatre, "the actor put himself at a distance from the

role he played and showed dramatic situations at such an angle of vision that they were bound to become the object of the spectator's criticism" (425). Brecht further imagined a political, socially alert epic theatre, in which the performers did not disappear into their characters, in direct opposition to Stanislavski's more psychologically oriented acting system.[46] That is, in Brecht-influenced theatres, the performers do not try to become someone else; they remain visible as actors who are bringing forward the character's actions to be discussed and analysed. In Garzón's case, his impressions of political figures and social types were constructed as demonstrations rather than as realism; in so doing, he rejected any idea of immutable truth in favour of critical engagement. His exaggerated presentation of these public figures allowed him to introduce commentaries on their actions aimed at provoking the viewers to consider whether these actions were socially responsible or not.

Lo cómico, the use of humour, serves to incite laughter, and also to invite the audience to a dialogue about actions they have seen and thought about but have never been able to talk about directly. Paul Paolucci and Margaret Richardson show that the "critical role" of humour "lies in poking a hole through often undiscussed but official versions of everyday reality, exposing their contradictions and the arbitrary basis of their social power" (334). If a theatrical action is alienated, in Brechtian terms, that action may be seen more clearly within a shared frame of problems or situations lived by the audience in daily life. In the case of *ZOOciedad*, Garzón's audience started to gather around topics they had not acknowledged or discussed before. For example, they came to be more critical about displays of privilege and power by the upper classes. Paolucci and Richardson state that "humor allows us to create, exchange, and sustain various interpretive commentaries on social life by mobilizing shared frames" (335).

[46] Konstantin Stanislavski (1863 – 1938) was a Russian theatre practitioner who developed a training system for actor based on the explorations of inner truth and motivations to build a realistic character.

The audience of *ZOOciedad* and Garzón's next television projects began to connect on a different level, through *lo cómico*, in ways that went beyond reflexive responses to the violence and stream of tragic news.

Although Garzón was not the first Colombian performer to do political humour, he was the first one to do it on national television. Political humour was then and now produced mainly by cartoonists. Garzón's performances on television were aligned in perfect timing with important national events. Jon James Orozco, *ZOOciedad*'s editor, describes the rise of the programme as emerging from "a historical moment [that] does not repeat easily. It was a young president; it was the president of an [economic] opening and a new constitution" ("Garzón vive"). The 1990s in Colombia had opened with the violent loss of three presidential candidates: Jaime Pardo Leal (1987), Luis Carlos Galán (1989) and Carlos Pizarro Leongómez (1990). The favourite to win, Luis Carlos Galán, was killed under the orders of the drug lord Pablo Escobar. Cesar Gaviria Trujillo took Galán's place in the campaign and won the presidency. Gaviria introduced neoliberal policies that drastically changed the country's economy and crystallised the national desire to change the Colombian constitution (of 1886) through a constitutional assembly. The new 1991 constitution aimed to build a fairer society. In theory, it offered democratic mechanisms and laws to protect and guarantee the wellbeing of Colombians. In daily life, however, it was difficult to put into practice.

Beyond his television work, Garzón's commitment to promulgate the values of the constitution to every citizen, motivated him to become part of a team of indigenous language translators and to work as a communications advisor more generally. At the same time, he was performing impressions of Gaviria and mocking his policies; even so, it seemed they had a good working and friendly relationship (*El Espectador* 2018). He was especially successful in imitating Gaviria's voice. There is a famous joke that Garzón played on the Colombian writer and Nobel prize winner Gabriel García

Márquez (Corral). Garzón impersonating Gaviria, talked over the phone with García Márquez and asked for his help to support the current dialogues he was having with guerrilla groups (FARC, ELN and EPL). García Márquez accepted without vacillation. The journalist Enrique Santos who was with Garzón at the time, witnessed the hoax and told to García Márquez the truth. García Márquez took offence at being pranked, forcing Garzón to beg his forgiveness. This exemplifies how Garzón was likeable, not only to his audience, but also to important political figures who did not take his jokes to heart, but on the contrary, learnt to accept the critique behind Garzón's humour. Or at least, that is what it seemed at that moment. The audience loved his audacity; the politicians went along as their closeness to him rendered a positive image, especially as Garzón's direct work in the community projected an image of him as the true voice of the people.

Performance in action: a ZOOciedad episode

To analyse the alienation effect, the use of humour, the creation of shared social frames and Garzón's audacity in his performances, I take an episode from *ZOOciedad* that is available on *YouTube*.[47] It was staged in 1992 when Colombia had an energy crisis due to the long drought in the country caused by the weather phenomenon, *El Niño*. Gaviria's policy to counteract the situation was to ration the daily use of energy with long blackouts. In the television show, Pili and Louis, the hosts, were attending a high-class gathering. Louis was uneasy mingling with people that he described as "bootlickers". Then in one of the sections of the show *Porque usted lo ha pedido* (Because you have asked for it), an unseen narrator with a booming voice said that "Colombia is rich in water resources" enough to supply abundance of energy but "the incompetence of the ex-directors of the energy sector" dragged us to that situation

[47] See www.youtube.com/watch?v=2387Fa9vi_k and www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeESM072dUI

because they had wanted it. All this was underscored by on a montage of river and ocean images accompanied by folkloric music.

The show continued with more clips of Louis and Pili at the gathering while discussing the social arbitrariness of the country upper-class. The humour in *ZOOciedad* was completely current and confrontational. For this episode, the setting was a high-class gathering with a minimalistic set of just a hanging frame of a window as decoration. The backdrop was a pine green wall, and the floor was made with white and black tiles, like a chessboard. The chessboard-like floor was significant. It made a statement on how the gathering of the ruling and business classes was a strategy game where such people were making decisions about the course of the country while the rest of us (the pawns) were sacrificed. Louis and Pili, wearing *traje etiqueta* (formal wear), arrived at the gathering while voices over were played in the background to give the ambient sound of a crowded place. These others remained largely unseen, aside from when some extras appeared dancing or talking in front of the hosts. The extras wore casual clothes (jeans and T-shirts) in contrast to what is expected in that type of occasion. This detail may seem like something overlooked in the production. Even as a child when I first saw the episode (compared with looking at it now as a theatre professional), my first response was to think of the failure to dress the extras appropriately for a fancy party as a mistake rather than as something calculated by the artists; however, by playing with such discrepancies, the show was highlighting that the people were out of place in high society, and even Louis and Pili, although they were dressed up, could be seen not to belong there.

It is true that the production of *ZOOciedad*, in general, was low budget. The set changed for every episode depending on the storyline. One episode was on the surface of the moon, for example, another inside a big aquarium, and one during a wake. The video I analyse here is of low quality, and the lighting looks opaque and poor. This

precariousness, in its appearance and reality behind the scenes, however, played in favour of the show, as it identified the company with the people it most wanted to represent and reach. The do-it-yourself aesthetic, in contrast to the more polished private-sponsored shows, can also be seen to support the idea of their offering unmasked criticism of the government and society by setting the performers against the rich and powerful.

Scenes from the blackout episode were staged as a through line that alternated with different segments of the show. These segments used montages of images underscored by songs that contradicted or provided alternative interpretations of the social circumstances depicted in the blackout sketch. Louis criticised the hypocrisy of the (fictional) people around them while Pili tried to fit in and felt proud of being there. It is ironic, perhaps, that the script itself is not funny. It explicitly exposes the arbitrariness of government policies and social norms in ways that confront the audience's expectations of *lo cómico*.

To see the show representing the reality of the blackout situation as a consequence of "the incompetence" (the phrase actually used by the performers) of the public servers and not as a result of being a third world country was exhilarating for those of us watching. The show acknowledged what we knew to be true: Colombia, with all its natural resources, could provide better well-being to its citizens; the inequality comes from corrupt policymakers, not angry mother-nature. Through their personae, the performers spoke truth to power while managing to take enough of the edge off so that the programme was not shut down, and Garzon was not (yet) made a target. Garzón and his team tried to change the dominant dramaturgical tropes of "we are like this", "this is how it works", and "it is in our nature", for one that invited more critical thinking on the social and political situations of the moment. They took everyday situations and staged them in a way that disrupted the normalisation of social

dysfunction with humour. Even as a child, when I saw *ZOOciedad*, I remember thinking that I was hearing something that I would not hear in any other place or see in any other show. Someone was finally telling me the story differently.

Real news: the platform for Garzón's characters

ZOOciedad stopped broadcasting in 1993. In 1995, *¡Quac! El Noticero* picked up where the first show left off. "*¡Quac!*" in Spanish, as in English, is the sound a duck makes, perhaps used here as a reference to the nonsense spouted by sanctioned news programmes in Colombia.[48] "*Noticero*" is another wordplay in Spanish meaning zero news ("*noticero*" instead of "*noticiero*"). *¡Quac!* was a parody of a television news programme; its concept came from Garzón in collaboration with the journalist and screenwriter, Antonio Morales, and it was directed by Claudia Gómez. The mockery both of television news and of the social situation was on display from the beginning, when the actor Diego León Hoyos was cast as the female co-host, Maria Leona Santodomingo. Hoyos, a short and unattractive man, performed in drag costumed in a short skirt, red wig, and high heels. His performance was an important component of the parody, carrying with it a critique of the rise of beautiful women hired to present the news without any journalistic background. Garzón, on the other hand, performed as himself or, perhaps better explained as that he performed under his own name, parodying himself as he might have appeared as a "straight" newscaster. Both hosts created other characters with which they interacted in different segments: impressions of politicians and celebrities. It is here when Garzón's now-famous cast of characters started to be familiar to the audience, for example: the cook of the presidential palace, Dioselina Tibana; the security guard Nestor Elí; the upper-class journalist Inti de la Oz; the student leader from the public university Jhon Lenín; and the ultra-right

[48] In English, of course, a quack is also a fraudalent doctor. It is not clear though, whether Garzón intended to make this connection.

conservative Godofredo Ciníco Caspa. Through these characters, Garzón gave voice to many of the different viewpoints in Colombian society, and in so doing. performed a distinctive, fresh yet familiar way to see and analyse the country's political realities.

¡Quac! started broadcasting in the wake of the new government led by President Ernesto Samper Pizano. Samper's presidency was marked from the beginning by the scandal of the "narco-cassettes": tape recordings of members of his (liberal) party having conversations with a man speaking on behalf of the Cali Cartel, the drug trafficking enterprise from southern Colombia, in negotiations to finance Samper's campaign. The defeated opponent, Andrés Pastrana, who received the recordings from an anonymous source, uncovered the scandal. The narco-cassettes gave rise to what was known in the country as "*Proceso 8000*" (Process 8000). Alfonso Valdivieso Sarmiento, the Prosecutor General, led an investigation that further exposed the ties between numerous politicians and the drug cartel. The process ended in 1996 with mixed results. President Samper was found neither guilty nor innocent; however, many others involved in the case had to pay for their roles in the scandal with jail sentences. The USA removed Samper's visa and decertified the country during his government.

This was the already vivid political backdrop against which Garzón and *¡Quac!*'s team came to enact their numerous archetypical characters. *¡Quac!* was more direct and aggressive than *ZOOciedad* in exposing the political incongruities that were increasingly normalised and accepted in Colombia. While the show focused on criticising the power practised by different groups, it did not discriminate between the various ideologies of its targets. Whether the Conservative Party or Liberal, the armed forces, communist groups or the ultra-right, all sectors were subject to critical examination and mockery. In the words of the screenwriter, Antonio Morales, talking at the time: "[we] are clear that Colombia's problem, as in the rest of the world, is power, and power in all its manifestations is bullshit" (qtd. in García Correal 21). Morales

states that Garzón and the rest of the creative team aimed to demystify these figures of power in order to provoke a sense of scepticism in the audience. Only by distancing themselves from the dominant mythologies, could spectators begin to imagine an alternative dramaturgy.

As a parody of television news programmes, *¡Quac!* featured characters in typical newscaster roles and relationships, and used a language rich in puns, double meanings and bold statements. For example, in episode one (available on YouTube[49]), we see the news hosts, "Maria Leona Santodomingo" and "Jaime Garzón", welcome themselves (not the audience) and then carry on with "words from the president", Ernesto Samper, who is represented by a picture into which his mouth can be seen, cartoon-like, moving as someone imitates his voice (surely Garzón). The scene culminates with Maria Elvira's conclusion: the president understands that "one of his duties is to entertain the public opinion" (my emphasis). By making explicit the expectation that a president entertains his audience, the performers point the spectators toward the smokescreens and side stories that were then being staged by those in power and the media to divert our attention from what was truly important: the corruption of a government that was affiliated with the drug cartels.

Garzón and his team had plenty of material to work with, beginning with The Process 8,000 in which Samper was being accused of running his campaign on drug money, and all that was coming to light without, Garzón's show aside, being addressed directly as a social problem. Later in the episode, Garzón performs as a reporter presenting information about the results on the certification by the USA. He reads from a paper as if it is a report card from a school: on a scale from one to ten, Colombia has scored 9.5 in vocational understood as *narco-cultivo* (illegal crops), 9.5 in manual labour – *sicariato* (hitmen work) and 9 in music, due to our ability to "direct crime"

[49] See Quac El Noticiero Jaime Garzón www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Y3PoelHoWY

(*concierto para delinquir)*, referring to the crimes of kidnapping, extortion and terrorism. It is a remarkably offensive sequence, even in retrospect, insulting to the Colombian Government, to the USA for its absurd pretence to paternalist oversight, and to the media, that was complicit by not challenging to the status quo and rather maintaining it in this way.

Although the Government was subject to constant mockery, the show was non-sectarian in its attacks. It always acknowledged, critically, that different groups held control over the population. In episode one, for example, while the company references the true willingness of the guerrillas to make peace, they also criticise the habit of bodyguards or drug dealers (*mafiosos*), of invading the public space and assaulting pedestrians with their big armoured cars, and through Dioselina's sketch they parody how to present to the public that the establishment is decent. Dioselina follows the recipe to cook *pacto a la naranja*, a wordplay that sounds like *pato a la naraja* - orange duck. The ingredients include a chopped national budget and liberal oil, the one used to grease the machines, which in Colombia means the buying of votes. The mass media helps to give flavour and present a perfect plate appealing for those looking at it. To some extent this is what the media applied to Garzón's murder, which will be reviewed further in the thesis. The media repeats tropes to construct a dramaturgy in which the event is dramatised, the victim is re-victimised, and the audience's emotions are manipulated.

In *¡Quac!* the fast pace of the sketches, beginning in this first episode, forced the audience to stay alert. Many things might pass unnoticed if the viewers were not aware of the socio-political situation of the moment. The sharpness of the social comments in the show was incredibly accurate, and they still apply even today, more than twenty years later, as they describe in a nutshell how politics works in Colombia. For example,

in episode number fifty-two,[50] Garzón's character, Godofredo Cínico Caspa, complains about the restructures the Government wanted to apply to *La Caja Agraria* (the state entity in charge of giving credit to farmers).[51] In his argument, Godofredo describes the economy cycle of war: "Without *Caja Agraria* how will the guerrilla survive? If there are not guerrillas, what are the militaries going to live on? If there are not militaries, who is going to defend the decent people? If there are not decent people, who are we going to be at the mercy of?" After the biggest guerrilla group FARC demobilised in 2016, the economy embedded in the cycle of war was supposed to change, but the people that benefited by acquiring cheap land and property during decades of violence were not pleased to see it end. This group, represented by business people, bankers, and ranchers, continues to be opposed fiercely to policies that try to reinstate land to the victims of the conflict. Through Godofredo, Garzón implied that the violence perpetrated for the guerrillas was necessary to keep the regular Colombian state of affairs.

In *¡Quac!* Garzón's work evolved; it became polished and censorious. Speaking through his characters, he dared to say things that others were fearful of expressing as can be seen in the example with Godofredo. His imitation skills provided him with a wide range of voice tones and physical manners that gave credibility to his performances. The production values, format and staging of *¡Quac!* were also more refined than they had been in *ZOOciedad*. The television news set had a modern look, brighter colours and lightning. The characters performed in their own purpose-built environments. Dioselina, the cook of the presidential palace, for example, acted in her kitchen. The kitchen, however, was far from being an up-to-date and high-class place; instead, it portrayed a kitchen like those from middle-class houses in the countryside.

[50] See Quac El Noticero capítulo 52 www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8TNFziOmGE
[51] La Caja Agraria suffered from many cases of corruption and deviation of money. It transformed into a bank – Banco Agrario – in 1999

Saucepans, skillets, and baskets were hung from the walls. The place was crowded with objects; some of them were a metaphor for the condition of the country. In episode one, for example, there was a lectern with Colombia's coat of arms upside down, and the kitchen bench was full of wads of dollars which were an ingredient for the recipe Dioselina was preparing while she was talking to the camera.

Another example was in the character of Nestor Elí, whose set was the front desk and foyer of *Edificio Colombia*, a building that represented the socio-political hierarchy of the country. Nestor Elí was a security guard; he talked through the telephone with an unseen character giving information to the audience about who was at the end of the line. It could be the President, the prosecutor, or a lawyer. His desk sometimes displayed props related to the conversation. The surroundings could be seen to be untidy or chaotic depending on the political situation of the time. The sketch always finished with Nestor Eli opening the door to an unseen reporter that knocked at the door looking for fresh news. The guard would stop the reporter from crossing the threshold and give a short commentary. After closing the door, he would deliver a final punch line through the blind of the window.

¡Quac! was more obviously political than *ZOOciedad* in its dramaturgical structure, using fewer montages of images underscored by songs and focusing more directly on the connection between the political and everyday life (Gómez Correal 40). The sketches portrayed a global view of the current situation depending on the distinctive perspective of whichever character was performing. All the characters were daring with their statements, but some could shock more than others because of their political affiliation. For example, Garzón performing Godofredo, referred to Álvaro Uribe Velez, then Governor of the Department of Antioquia, as "a leader who boosts […] peaceful self-defence organisations" – alluding to the CONVIVIR,[52] an armed

[52] *Cooperativas de vigilancia y seguridad privada* - Cooperative vigilance and private security

neighbourhood watch with ties with paramilitary groups – and went on to say: "Uribe Velez is the dictator the country needs".[53] Godofredo was the character that represented the ultra-right thinking of Colombian society. Garzón's character was not only reflecting on the self-defence aggrupation that benefited the business people (or *gente de bien* as Godofredo calls them) but was also revealing how embedded in society was the idea that CONVIVIR was the necessary counter-insurgency tactic to fight the guerrillas. This has been Uribe Velez's political strategy since the beginning, to perpetuate a dramaturgy in which the state is the "good guy" and the rebel movements are the "evil guys" like in the siege of the Palace of Justice. Garzón was issuing a public warning in recognising the dangers of Uribe Velez's[54] rise to power as a potential dictator and in doing so, he exposed himself to danger.

The political commentary performed by Garzón as Godofredo was delivered through satirical devices that were also used repeatedly in his presentation of other characters. Paradoxically, the sketches were also a way of measuring the popularity, or at least the relative fame, of public figures. In Garzón's words: "It is like if you are not there [on *¡Quac!*] you are not trendy [. …] We receive calls from people requesting that we talk about them and there are also those who ask me not to say bad things about them".[55] In my teen years, I never thought that Garzón was putting himself at risk because of his jokes, but I also did not understand the deeper meanings hidden in his satires. Even so, I did learn about politicians and important people every time they were mentioned on *¡Quac!* The knowledge and learning that the show provides, even

[53] See Godofredo cinico caspa (jaime garzon) hablando sobre uribe www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgnpj8LlUe0.
[54] Since then, Uribe Velez was president (2002-2006/2006-2010) for two terms, and he is now a senator and the men behind the current president Ivan Duque. Uribe Velez has been accused of having connections with the paramilitaries and is under criminal investigation in at least fourteen cases for his involvement in massacres, the assassination of social leaders and deviation of the course of justice. For some information see https://thebogotapost.com/2018/02/20/alvaro-uribe-trial-supreme-court/ http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/alvaro-uribe-desautorizo-anular-investigaciones-de-la-corte-en-su-contra-225654
[55] See "Garzón vive" www.youtu.be/7-YxV6PsMOg.

currently when I access its archive, casts light on the repeated behaviours, the personae, and scenarios of Colombian society.

While the names of certain individuals and groups now may be different from those of the past, the ways violence, terror and repression are performed in the country have not changed substantially since the show finished. In retrospect, Garzón's mention of Uribe Velez as a sort of prophecy makes me wonder how upsetting Garzón's comedy was for those with power, regardless of their public response. I wonder also how Garzón's pedagogy through humour did, in fact, interfere with the status quo. That Garzón was murdered seems to answer the first question definitively. The second is more my own desire to see the possibility of social change through theatrical action. For me, Garzón's murder seems to mark the last time those in power took such a radical step towards silencing a popular critical voice. The public backlash was perhaps so vehement in making him a martyr that, instead of murdering a person who challenges the status quo, what happens today is a concerted casting of aspersions, destroying of reputations and sidelining from media and other stages. This is true for well-known and recognised figures; it is not the case for social leaders whose lives are less visible and whose social anonymity means they can be murdered with relative impunity.

<u>The critique view of a shoeshine man.</u>

¡Quac! stopped broadcasting in May 1997. Garzón continued working in a new show called *Lechuza*. The show aired briefly, for only four months, but it is here where, in collaboration with Morales, Garzón created his most endearing and final character: "Heriberto de la Calle". Heriberto was a shoeshine man from humble origins who enchanted the audience with his charisma and bold conversations. The character was created on a day when Garzón took out his dental prosthesis. He had only one real tooth and there, looking toothless, he improvised, talking like a boy that lives on the street (known in Colombia as a *gamín*). Morales was watching, and together they developed

the character of Heriberto (Morales qtd. in García Correal 35). On *Lechuza*, Heriberto shone shoes while he talked to the camera, itself a stand-in for other unseen characters, his customers, who were represented by their shoes as, for example, politicians, military men, and priests, among others. After *Lechuza,* Garzón took Heriberto to real television news sets, first *CM&*[56] and then *Caracol Noticias*. There, Garzón performed as Heriberto, but this time, interviewing real people. Heriberto looked innocent enough to be in the same space as actual political leaders and high-class personalities, but he was critical, incisive, and even provocative with his guests, giving rise to the awkward feeling of truth in the midst of a supposedly fictional performance. In crossing over from the fiction to the "real" news, it is possible that Garzón's performances became more dangerous, and no longer possible to respond to with amused tolerance.

Why did the public find Garzón's performance as Heriberto so charming and irresistible? Why were his guests, celebrities and especially politicians, so evidently willing to expose themselves to an improvised moment with him, to risk making fools of themselves when ordinarily they were very reliant on scripts and protocols to protect their images? According to Garzón's friend, the Senator Antonio Navarro Wolf: "[…] it was so important to have the shoes shined by Jaime Garzón that at the end no one was able to say no to him" ("Garzón vive"). This view was not without ambivalence, as Wolf went on: "However, all the politicians were scared […] about the things he would say to them".[57] Again, as it happened with *¡Quac!*, being imitated or interviewed by Garzón was great publicity, a way of being seen by the common people. The philosopher Jorge Salazar Isaza says that with Heriberto, Garzón could represent all the popular knowledge from humble people, so that during his interviews, Heriberto spoke "from a position of not knowing that [gave] him authority" (111). In other words, he

[56] *CM&* is a Colombian television programme established in 1992
[57] See "Garzón vive" www.youtu.be/7-YxV6PsMOg.

could appear to be asking innocent questions, which were actually well-grounded in reality and as such, incisive ways of compelling public figures to answer for issues that affected ordinary Colombian citizens.

As Heriberto, Garzón put all the theatrical devices he had developed with his previous creations to work. Salazar Isaza has listed these devices, beginning with "the use of language". Heriberto could use street slang or speak with good manners. Further devices, Salazar Isaza notes, were "the way he addresses his guest" using common practice from the countryside; "his accent"; his physicality both in "how he greets or shines the shoe" (because Garzón did shine the interviewee's shoe, doing a quality job that surprised his guests); and the most important of all, his toothless smile because "no one can resist it". A second after a confrontational moment, Heriberto's smile would restore a sense of comfort with the guest, while audiences could take away some of the truth that had been recognised. For example, in an interview with Nestor Humberto Martínez then Minister of the Interior and currently the General Prosecutor (who has been involved in a corruption case),[58] when the interview was about to begin, and the cameras were already recording Garzón performing, Heriberto said to him: "You can't say crap. You need to be smart" and he showed the toothless smile while started to shine the Minister's shoe. Martinez laughed slightly. At the end of the dialogue, Garzón asked Martinez if he were the son of a famous Colombian comedian. Martinez confirmed the kinship, to which Garzón replied "*Alma bendita*" (Blessed soul), referring to the comedian; "q*uién iba a saber que le iba a salir un hijo asi de cafre?*" (who was

[58] Néstor Humberto Martínez as Colombian General Prosecutor must investigate one of the biggest scandal of corruption where the Brazilian construction company Odebrecht paid millions in bribes to get contracts from the government. Odebrecht was associated with the Colombian company Corficolombia own by the richest man in the country Luis Carlos Sarmiento. Martínez was in that time Sarmiento's lawyer and adviser. It is presumed that he knew everything about the bribes but now as General Prosecutor has used its influences to hinder the investigation. More here: https://www.ft.com/content/c6b34048-fa09-11e8-af46-2022a0b02a6c and here http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/todos-los-investigados-en-el-caso-odebrecht-en-colombia-NM9718528. Web 04 Jan. 2019.

going to know that he was going to have a son so *cafre?*) (*Cuando Jaime Garzón entrevistó a Néstor Humberto Martínez*). The closest translation in English that holds the spirit of the word *cafre* is a combination of "spineless and opportunistic turncoat".[59] Garzón did not laugh this time; Martínez laughed briefly, then his face reflected consternation at the offence. The people at the set behind the cameras laughed. Garzón dismissed Martínez. Garzón's aversion towards the Minister was evident, but he manifested his critical stance through performance and play. It was an act of insurrection without violence. Today, twenty years later, Colombian society has seen the true impact of Martínez as General Prosecutor. Garzón's description of Martínez as *cafre* was on point.

Garzón created a liminal space with his performance of Heriberto interviewing his guests. The concept of liminality is closely connected by Victor Turner to his theory of social drama. For Turner "in liminality, profane social relations may be discontinued, former rights and obligations are suspended, the social order may seem to have been turned upside down […]'" (*Ritual to Theatre* 27). Garzón approached the interviewee from the position of a low-status character who set the terms of the encounter none-the-less. This is an inversion of social customs because the disadvantaged person, the poor shoeshine man, is, in fact, the one with power in comparison to the wealthy celebrities and politicians who sat (literally) on a high chair. Turner adds that "in liminality people 'play' with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them. Novelty emerges from unprecedented combinations of familiar elements" (27). In Garzón's performance, the theatrical devices named by Salazar Izasa – language, accent, customs and physicality – served this purpose. The performance of the familiar by Garzón brought the interviewee into a space that looked welcoming but operated with contrary rules. Anything could happen while Garzón interrogated and shined the shoes. When he caught the guests

[59] Thank you to @EnglishMatsuri for this definition.

saying pleasant things to hear but opposite to what reality depicted, Garzón hit them quickly on their knees with the shoe brush. This action, of course, went against what would have been permitted outside the television studio, in a definitively hierarchical social environment in which unpleasant consequences would have immediately followed for a real shoeshine man.

The liminal space of the television studio offered Garzón and his audiences a way of suspending reality. Schechner explains that the performers train to "act in between identities" and not as people may erroneously think "on making one person into another" (*Between* 84). In this, Schechner perhaps echoes Brecht's theories of distanciation, in that in Brechtian theatre, the performers remain visible as actors, that is, "in between" the every day and the performance. Following Schechner's reasoning, Garzón might have been viewed not as a shoeshine named "Heriberto" but also not-not Heriberto. Heriberto existed through Garzón's unique performance supported by costume, make-up, setting, props (shoe polish, shoe brush, rags) and his physicality. Garzón could get away with things by being Heriberto that would probably put him in trouble if he were not in character. This could be seen when Heriberto used double entendre to make offensive sexual references to models and actresses. As Heriberto looked innocent, just a poor man trying to flirt with a beautiful woman out of his league, the approach seemed (at the time) childish and unharmful. Similarly, when he said to a senator that he needed to secure all his shoe polishes against theft because of frequent visits from politicians, he could insinuate that all people like his guest steal and are dishonest without directly saying so.

Even before Heriberto, Garzón's popularity had grown through his characters and with them expanded the reach of his political views. Garzón appealed for education, history knowledge, dialogue, negotiation, and equity. His characters, especially those that represented the common people, resonated among the mass audience, and he started

to realise the advantages of his position. Morales states that while *¡Quac!* was on the air, *Semana* (the most important political magazine in the country) published a note with the character of Nestor Elí with the headline: "Nestor Elí The Head of the Opposition" (Morales qtd in Malaver Gallo 71-71). The magazine took a fictional character and located it on a real-life stage. Nestor Elí did not belong to any political party to own that title; however, the deep thinking performed through humour by Garzón attracted an audience. This same audience could represent voters in the future. According to Morales, it was after this incident that Garzón recognised that "he [was] a political figure".

<u>From the stage of fiction to the stage of real life.</u>

The character of Heriberto acquired a life of his own. He started to be invited to his own interviews, becoming the interviewee and not the interviewer. As the line between fiction and reality started to vanish, Garzón saw a way to build his political project. Arias thinks that: "to him, [Garzón] humour was a tool, not an end". Garzón wanted to take advantage of his celebrity status to do something more than just being a television host (Arias qtd in Malaver Gallo 57). It is here that the situation changed for Garzón, as he started to step into territory that did not, according to the conventions of the status quo, belong to him. Arias and Morales agree that from the moment Garzón began to step out from the stage of fiction to jump on a real television news set *(CM&* and *Caracol)* his presence was taken more seriously, creating a dangerous situation. Even with all the previous mockery, parody and caricature, the stage of the fictionality of the past shows was a protection bubble for him that did not extend to real life in the same way.

In addition to this media exposure with Heriberto's character, Garzón started humanitarian work as a liaison between the family members of kidnapping victims and the guerrilla groups that held them in captivity. He collaborated with the governor of

Cundinamarca and the anti-kidnapping czar to reach a successful and peaceful exchange between families and kidnappers. Garzón's presence inspired confidence to the process as he knew how to talk to people such as the outlaw fighters, a competence he enhanced during his short militancy in the ELN as well as when he was the mayor of Sumapaz. Garzón accepted this responsibility with the condition of keeping a low profile in his role; he did not want the attention of the media, and his involvement could not be public knowledge. Cristancho Ossa explains that this discretion was defeated on Mar 23, 1998, when some civilians and four USA citizens were freed successfully with Garzón's help (22). The media exposed Garzón's involvement with the liberation and in the blink of an eye, hundreds of families in a similar situation went looking him for help (Cristancho Ossa 23).

Garzón was at the pinnacle of his activism and paving the way for his political career. He was helping the common people, making a difference with his work, and offering lessons on how to be a social actor to impact the socio-political situation of the country. In so doing, Garzón became increasingly conscious of the structure of violence and its modus operandi. For him, and for those paying attention to what he was on about, the fictions of his televised performances began to give way to awareness and analysis of the reality of the Colombian conflict. The common understanding has been that Colombia has endured a violent conflict between two factions: the official, which represents the Government and protects the citizens from rebel forces, and the outlaws, who are the guerrilla groups that aim to overturn the state. However, after the failed peace process (proposed by President Belisario Betancur) and the siege of the Justice Palace in 1985, another armed actor grew stronger and started executing and displaying acts of rural and urban violence: the AUC, *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (Colombian United Self-Defence Forces), a paramilitary group commanded by the Castaño brothers: Fidel, Carlos and Vicente. These three different forces (state army,

guerrilla and paramilitary) mixed and mingled as convenient, using civilians as cannon fodder as they thought necessary. Contrary to conventional wisdom that had two opposing forces the dramaturgy of violence in Colombia was, as it is now, far more complex. We cannot describe it in binary terms, as the kind of agon found in Greek tragedy, but rather in terms of diversely oriented actors, actions, interactions and reactions that produce ambivalent scenarios requiring deeper critical thinking than the media generally offers.

In the dramaturgy of Colombian violence, the actions of the paramilitaries made it almost impossible to tell the good guys from the bad guys any longer and as such took away the ability of the common people to feel safe from the abuse of those in power. The paramilitaries operated under the wing of the regional elites to acquire land and natural resources. The elites, who continued to nourish the "us versus them" scenario of war between the state and the guerrillas regardless in order to keep their economic power, supported this private army. Forrest Hylton, author of *Evil Hour in Colombia* states that the "Colombian Government turned a blind eye to the increasing reach of the paramilitaries, focusing instead on eliminating left insurgencies by strengthening the Colombian military and police" (96). The paramilitaries infiltrated every agency and group identified with Colombian democracy: the political parties, the police, the army and the government intelligence services. In this, they were half-visible, half-invisible, and as such, ambivalently both part of the state and another antagonist to the Colombian people.

In this socio-political scenario, Garzón was also ambivalently positioned between the state, the paramilitaries, the guerrillas and the people. He was not only acting as a liaison in kidnapping cases but was also invited to be part of the committee that would work along with the Pastrana's government in the peace dialogues with the guerrilla ELN. The ELN along with the FARC, financed their organisations with the

cocaine business and also by kidnapping tourists, ranchers, politicians, middle-class civilians – anyone who could pay a considerable ransom to be returned to freedom. According to Morales, this was "the darker space and the eye of the hurricane of [Colombian] conflict" and Garzón got in amongst it (Morales qtd in Malaver Gallo 73). Morales keeps explaining that while Garzón did his humanitarian work, he acquired sensitive knowledge about the infrastructure that enables and sustains a culture of kidnapping in Colombia. Morales states that it was an open secret how members of the army worked in alliance with their sworn enemy, guerrillas, to kidnap, transfer and hide the abducted victims. The militaries were afraid that with the growing political status of Garzón, things were getting out of their control. It is possible to assume that Garzón political figure would attract millions of followers and votes as he represented a true alternative to the overuse stage between liberals and conservatives as happened in 2019 in the Ukraine.[60] Despite his career as a comedian, Garzón understood the performance of politics better than anyone and this is when the militaries with the help of the paramilitaries, started to plot ways to eliminate him from the public eye.

The killing

The strategy of the ultra-right to discredit Garzón was to claim that he, in effecting a peaceful return of the hostages, was actually an ally of the guerrillas and was profiting from his intervention. The names of the people involved in plotting against Garzón include colonels and generals from the national army, prosecutors, state agencies directors and others; the operation was massive, as was the celebrity status of the victim. The army's Colonel Jorge Eliecer Plazas Acevedo from the 13th Brigade and General Rito Alejo del Rio from the 20th Brigade coordinated the daily following to

[60] The television comedian, Volodymyr Zelensky was running for president in the Ukraine at the time of writing and the polls were in his favour.
See: www.nytimes.com/2019/03/31/world/europe/ukraine-election-comedian.html?action=click&module=Latest&pgtype=Homepage&fbclid=IwAR3tw_opcWLMU3Bq53WkbVEpogfVtiTIOdlWvyxx3_SWd_QpDJPoA6OQJQE

Garzón (Rincón). José Miguel Narvaez was an academic at the military school at that time; he performed the role of *sapo* (using Uribe Alarcón's words) and delivered Garzón's dossier with all his movements to the paramilitary commander Carlos Castaño (Coronell). Narvaez was well known for his lecture to members of the army and paramilitary: "Why it is acceptable to kill communists". He would later become the vice-director of the former DAS (Administrative Department of Security). Castaño gave the order for Garzón's execution to a band of hitmen called "*La Terraza*".

Knowing that he was targeted by the AUC, Garzón arranged a face-to-face meeting with Castaño to discuss his critical situation but was killed the day before. The news of his death spread quickly; his colleagues condemned the murder while mourning their loss. That same day Castaño issued a communication denying being the mastermind of the crime. Once the assassination was enacted, the real hitmen disappeared (presumably killed) and a false witness made a deposition with serious inconsistencies, which the prosecutor took to construct his case. In a matter of days, two other hitmen were wrongly captured to show an effective response from the state agencies. Later Narvaez with his position in the DAS and with the collaboration of colleagues, did everything he could to divert the investigation. In 2000, Castaño was accused formally of being responsible but was an absent defendant. In 2004, he was assassinated by his brother and silenced before he could implicate others.

Garzón's case shows how the performance of violence takes on theatrical elements: the build-up of tensions, the looming sense of crisis, the explosion of guns and the aftermath; the good guys and bad guys, the victims and perpetrators, the fallen hero, the sorrowing public, the chorus of state actors and media; the descriptions of the setting and the image of the murdered man inside his car covered with a white sheet. All of these fit readily into Turner's social drama, the movement toward crisis and (temporary) restoration of the status quo ante. However, it also can be read through

Taylor's idea of the scenario, which more directly allows us to understand how the drama enacted around the event moves not toward resolution but towards concealment of our society's murderous mechanisms. First, there is the preparation of the act, when Garzón was followed and attacked. A story is constructed around his actions to position him both physically for the murder and also narratologically as its target. Roles are cast: a woman to act as a witness, two young men to act as the shooters, the prosecutor and everyone who took a speaking role, as well as those who controlled the platforms on which declarations were made. In the cyclical enactment of violence in the country, the drama is enacted by one group while another maintains its distance as if they were behind a curtain deciding who deserves a bullet and how the outcome is to be represented to those watching.

Mediatisation

The murder took place on a Friday. This timing, at the start of the weekend, seems to have been designed to leave enough time for an uproar to die down, for the shock to be first expressed and then re-absorbed into the lives of ordinary citizens – or at least for the fear of reprisals for speaking out against the actions of the ultra-right to take hold and repress any public expressions of grief. The people overcame their fear, temporarily, to demonstrate their disavowal of the violence as they said goodbye to Garzón. His farewell filled the streets and main plaza of the capital city. His journalist colleagues decried the event demanding that the investigation was effective. Or at least, that was at the beginning. According to the academic James Cortés-Tique, after Castaño's announcement denying his responsibility in the assassination, the media took a gentler approach against him and looked for other motives for the crime (112). In Cortés-Tique's view, the media constructed "a journalistic thriller with the effects of a black novel" (105). He explains that the devices and tropes in a thriller do not "denounce" the status quo; on the contrary, they "legitimise" it (119). Before, it was

public knowledge that members of the Army and DAS were involved in Garzón's killing, the sensation of impunity was in the air and even now the question of who was above Narvaez, Plazas and del Rio remains unresolved. Cortes-Tique states that the thriller takes this "deception of not knowing the identity of the culprit" and transforms it into the notion of "the victim being responsible for his own crime" (113). In this case, the media constructed a narrative that in effect portrayed Garzón as a victim of his own parodies and, in making him a tragic clown, denied him his humanity.

"*El humor asesinado*" (humour was killed) was the editorial in Colombia's biggest newspaper, *El Tiempo*.[61] It was a recurring theme in the coverage of Garzón's death: the loss of laughter, the abrupt turn from comedy to tragedy. *El Tiempo's* cover page was "*Mataron la risa. ¿Qué sigue*?" (Laughter was killed: What is next?).[62] Similarly, the *Espectator* published "*Asesinaron la risa*" (Laughter was assassinated).[63] Tributes highlighted Garzón's work and contributions to the peace of the country, but what is striking is the way his personality was dramatised in retrospect as a hero who was felled by his own tragic flaw, as Cortes-Tique also points out. For example, the editorial in *El Tiempo* wrote that Garzón's colleagues were aware of the danger of his activism and advised him to step out from those endeavours, but "Garzón ignored them, and his devotion to the cause of peace, together with his indomitable freethinking spirit, cost him his life". For the media, Garzón was thus a fallen hero, his laughter futile, his destiny inevitable in the face of dark forces beyond our understanding or power to resist as *El Tiempo* reports in one of the newspaper's sections, "*El crimen anunciado de Garzón*" (The announced crime of Garzón).[64] Such tragic narratives call attention to the

[61] "El Humor Asesinado." *El Tiempo*, 14, Aug. 1999, www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-899124.
[62] "Mataron la risa. ¿Qué sigue?" *El Tiempo*, 14, Aug. 1999, www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-898605.
[63] "Asesinaron la risa" *El Espectador*, 14, Aug. 1999.
[64] "El crimen anunciado de Jaime Garzón" *El Tiempo*, 14, Aug. 1999.

dramatic aspects of the event in ways that preclude recognition of its human realities, prevent critical thinking and forestall restorative action.

During the two decades since his murder, Garzón's character has been at the centre of controversies that divert the discussion away from the act of violence; the constant mention of details about his personal and romantic life as well as about his use of humour as if it were a fearless armour, create a myth that dilutes the facts and enlarges the distance between justice and the culprits. Garzón attempted to make visible the structure and operational system of violence in the country. He understood that terror has been created so that the people live in an everyday state of repression. He found humour to state the obvious, what everyone knows and cannot say. In this, he acceded to the eyes of those in power his role as a popular actor and entered into a political drama that did not belong to him. In response, the state cast him as a stranger in Sara Ahmed's terms. Ahmed explains that "the recognisability of strangers is determinate in the social demarcation of spaces of belonging: the stranger is 'known again' as that which has already contaminated such spaces as a threat to both property and person" (*Strange Encounters*, 22). Estranged from his society, Garzón's persona became a caricature, set into dramas no longer of his own making. In 2018, the television channel RCN produced a biopic of him in a soap-opera format. I did not watch the show, but followed the reviews about it. The production focused Garzón's story with clear melodramatic devices. The public did not buy the revisionist history, but over time this restaging of his life seems likely to take hold and suppress any further effort to discover the truth. In a country with ongoing conflict, the performance of violence can be encased in a tragic or melodramatic dramaturgy to reassure the public that this is simply the nature of the system, making acceptance and resignation almost inevitable. How, then, might the theatre invert the dramaturgical tropes exploited by the

state and its enablers, the media and experts, to break the normalisation of violence and create a space for social action?

Figure 4. Corruptour's flight attendants in front Garzón's mural

Theatrical response – *Corruptour ¡País de mierda! Caso Jaime Garzón*

Each year, on the anniversary of Garzón's assassination, the media starts a new cycle of commemoration, reviews and dramatisation of the event. The media analysis only rarely extends beneath the surface details of what they treat as a singular event to attempt to come to terms with the scenario of violence in Colombia. It is exceptional, that is, when the media recognises that each case of political violence cannot be seen as something isolated, but on the contrary, that such acts of violence are connected: from the unnoticed and anonymous victim to the murder of a major personality. The everyday life of Colombians overshadows the connections between cases, as surviving the day becomes the main goal for most citizens. There is no time to think properly or be critical about the relationship between violence and the government. The theatrical response to Garzón's assassination in *Corruptour* gave the audience an opportunity to be part of a space where an analysis of the facts of Garzón's life and death can be enacted.

Written in 2014 by Verónica Ochoa and directed by her and Felipe Vergara, *Corruptour ¡País de mierda! Caso Jaime Garzón* was a play that carried its audience in a *chiva* (bus) to different sites in the city of Bogotá at night. It had an opening season in Nov. 2015 for three weeks, and then participated in the XV *Festival Iberoamericano de Bogotá*. Seventeen actors performed inside and outside the bus, taking the streets of the city as natural settings. The main characters were four flight attendants played by women who guided the tour and narrated the story. As can be seen from the play's text, *Corruptour* inquires about the motivations for assassinating Jaime Garzón and the culprits of the crime. The audience attending this performance could obtain a better understanding of why someone like him was a threat to the status quo and not just a jester suffering a tragic destiny, as the media persistently portrayed. My analysis of the *Corruptour* script and its performance strongly supports my argument that the theatre can resist and even challenge the dramaturgy that otherwise normalises violence, as in the media. Through performances like *Corruptour*, the audience can acquire enriched tools for analysis and critical thinking.

Corruptour – a tour of corruption – is a play that invites its audience to see Colombian reality as something constructed by and for those who hold power. To achieve this aim in production, Ochoa incorporated theatrical strategies that forced the audience to be out of their comfort zone, out of the normativity of daily life and even of their more ordinary ideas of the theatre experience. The first strategy was to take the performance away from a conventional stage. In *Corruptour*, the actors performed on a bus or more accurately a *chiva*: a bus painted colourfully with a ladder on the rack that gives way to the roof where merchandise and livestock, as well as people, are

transported. Ochoa took this idea from the Czech Republican Petr Šourek who created a tour around Prague to visit sites that represented the ongoing corruption of the city.[65]

Chivas are the common public transport in the countryside. They have become a symbol of the country's distinctive culture, and it is easy to see them represented in arts and crafts at souvenir stores. Ochoa's choice to use this idiosyncratic vehicle as the main stage for her production fits perfectly with the different layers of meaning of the play. As she clarifies at the beginning of her script, a *chiva* represents "distinctive concepts" depending on "the social status from where it is seen" (7). That is, peasants and poor people use a *chiva* as essential transport, but when the same bus is transformed for the middle class into a place for recreation and parties, it is called "*la chiva rumbera*" (party bus). Here, instead of benches to sit on, the inside of the vehicle is a dance floor where the people enjoy loud music while they travel around the city.[66] For the upper class, in contrast, this form of entertainment is seen as an aberration and a shame from which they want to distance themselves. As such, the production's use of the *chiva* as a stage exposed the social climbing that is so embedded in Colombian culture. It theatricalised our wish to belong to a higher social class and tendency to reject anything that may be seen as common and popular. Garzón used to joke about this characteristic of our society, as we have seen in the high-class gathering episode from *ZOOciedad*.

The *chiva* not only represented a place beyond the limits of a conventional stage but also served as an itinerant platform from which the audience could look out, with fresh new eyes, on the *scenarios* of Bogotá. Taylor tells us that "scenarios frame the setup and plotline within which simulation occurs" (*Performance* 134). In *Corruptour*, every time the *chiva* stopped at a landmark where the actors performed their scenes, the

[65] See https://www.radio.cz/en/section/one-on-one/corruption-universal-but-corruption-tourism-unique-to-prague-says-tour-boss-petr-sourek or find on Facebook CorruptTour.com

[66] In New York city this trend operates as well and offers to the nostalgic Colombian immigrants a closer way to celebrate their roots. See www.nytimes.com/2008/03/02/nyregion/02chiva.html

audience also saw real people – passers-by who were not officially part of the play, but whose presence in the performance as part of the everyday life of the city was meaningful none-the-less. In this, the audience, actors and casual participant-witnesses of the performance could experience a different way to see their social reality, coming into what Taylor would call "a privileged way of knowing" (*Performance* 138). In this, I must acknowledge that the production's insights were limited to the audiences that were able to pay for the opportunity to participate in this production. That it was not for everyone, reflects the limitations faced by theatre artists in having their work reach a wider audience. What is the potential effect of a production that might reach as many as five hundred or a thousand spectators against the millions that watch television or download news from the internet? In her *Penultimate Manifesto,* a short essay by Ochoa that summarised the motivations and experiences behind the production of *Corruptour*, she says "we cannot change the reality, we can only change how we look at it [...] and in that change, forge, at least an individual transformation, which is the only possible transformation [...]" (*Corruptour* 58). We want to change the world, but it takes time, persistence, and recognition of our limitations as well as our privileges in these acts.

The audience arrived at the performance in an unusual way, given directions by text to the location where four women dressed like flight attendants would greet them. Three of them wore a distinctive colour of the Colombian flag (yellow, blue and red) and one wore black. The women would take the audience to where the *chiva* was waiting – at the site where Garzón crashed his car after he was killed. To deliver what Ochoa calls the "manifesto of a citizen named Verónica Ochoa",[67] the play script is structured in sixteen scenes designed to run through different sites of the city. Each scene builds up the statement that the Colombians live a "deceitful reality" (Ochoa 58) created to justify the hatred between us. The flight attendants are the presentation of

[67] Ochoa, Verónica. Interview by Natascha Diaz. 29 Jan. 2019.

Ochoa's voice "fragmented in four parts" (Ochoa interview 2019). The flight attendants do not have defined roles in the conventional theatrical sense; their characters are not built on psychology or presented for the audience to identify with. They are there to demonstrate with examples and arguments the mechanisms of repression in a country that is supposed to be ruled by a democracy. This appears to be Brechtian in part, but it is also appearing to be *actans* (the same tool employed in the play *1948: El Fracaso de una Utopia Popular)*. Through the process of rehearsal, the actresses that performed as flight attendants added some human characteristics to the *actans* – the voices scripted by Ochoa – to enrich the experience and to find their own common ground within the non-conventional script (Ochoa interview 2019).

From the beginning, Ochoa plays the simulation inside the simulation but this time the audience is part of it. Following a Brechtian strategy, in the script, each scene has a title that identifies a situation or the theme that will be discussed. In scene one, *Advertencias Preliminares* (Preliminary Warnings), the flight attendants welcome the audience in the way they might on a plane and warn them about the behaviour that is expected from them and how to react in case of misfortunes during the trip. Possible misfortunes include kidnapping, a car bomb, or an attack with a grenade or gas pipette; even if an authority figure (police, army, diplomats) tries to interrupt the tour, it is the responsibility of the audience to pretend they are inside a party bus and nothing out of the ordinary is happening. The boundaries between real and pretended are blurred in the same way as Garzón used to perform as Heriberto de la Calle. After the warnings and a second scene in which the flight attendants communicate some facts around the world the day Garzón was born, a character appears on the street to urinate. He is a comedian, and the flight attendants invite him to come inside the *chiva*. There, the comedian has an outburst about his sexual problems. In his confession, the comedian claims that all the violent fanatic gunmen have small penises and lack virility, and that is why they are

drawn to compensate their disproportion through violent enactments. In this way, Ochoa constantly reflects the way Garzón played with his audience and parodied their social realities.

Ochoa's script plays strategically between mundane, everyday life situations and the striking mechanisms that our democracy uses for repression. The flow of the dramaturgy allows the performers to take the audience by surprise with information that may be difficult to digest at first. After the comedian's outburst, the following scenes build tension by going deeper into the understanding of how the Colombian war machine works. Dioselina, Garzón's cook character of the presidential palace, rushes into the *chiva* in a delirious state. Ochoa writes the voice of Dioselina as if Garzón were doing it. Dioselina gives the audience some security advice given to her by the Dotor[68] Jefe Don Patrón (although he is not mentioned by name, the Dotor is clearly the former president Álvaro Uribe Veléz). Her monologue accurately depicts the precautions one needs to take on the street to avoid any misfortune that might cause one not to come home back safe and sound. This cautionary monologue parodies the Uribe Vélez government's banner project *Seguridad Democrática* (Democratic Security) and its claim that as a result, the violent people were under control and the citizens could carry out their peaceful daily lives.

As Garzón did brilliantly, Ochoa's script incorporates humour to address the social ills we are so used to living with. Ochoa inscribes comical moments that unleash a reflection on what we have come to accept as the normativity of our system and ask us to see that this normativity is often perverse. Once Dioselina leaves the bus, Ochoa introduces the spectators to the analysis of Hannah Arendt in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. As Ochoa explained to me in an interview, it was challenging to create a theatrical text

[68] Skipping the letter C in "Doctor" is idiom in some Colombian regions.

from Arendt's reasoning, even though her critical observation was that the trial was an exercise in political theatre complicated by the banality of its central subject. During the transition from the fourth to the fifth scene, the *chiva* arrives at *Cantón Norte*, a military base and infantry academy. When the first soldiers come into view for the spectators and performers, Ochoa's introduction of Arendt makes deep sense. In brief, the flight attendants, following Arendt's ideas, explain to the spectators that what makes this evil banal is not what the perpetrators – in this case, the military – do, but that they are unthinking in their complicity. They follow orders because their shallowness does not ask for reasoning, in Arendt's words: "[…] such remoteness from reality and such thoughtlessness can wreak more havoc than all the evil instincts taken together [. . .]" (480). Putting Arendt in the Colombian framework provides a coherent context for the violence perpetrated in the country and how this has been normalised on the street and in the private spheres of our daily lives. Ochoa's argument is that we are, ourselves, part of the war machine even if we have not realised our role in it. It is so commonplace, our complicity, that it has become banal.

In performance, Ochoa's textual reference to how evil had been allowed to fester elsewhere was actualised and connected to the material history of a place. The *chiva* parked outside the *Cantón Norte*, the place where the M-19 stole a huge cargo of armament from the Colombia Army. The flight attendants spoke of the responsibility of the military intelligence in Garzón's assassination: "*los autores materiales*" (the material authors), the perpetrators. The flight attendants provide a detailed list of facts that support the accusation against members of the military force. First, how Garzón's work as a liaison in the kidnapping cases turned on the alarms of generals and the higher ranks of the army due to the knowledge Garzón acquired about the rottenness of the system. That is, army and guerrilla groups worked hand in hand in the interchanges and commerce of kidnap victims and weapons. According to Ochoa: "The big theatre of

the war could collapse" if Garzón had said this publicly (Ochoa interview 2019). This is why he was killed, she told me, and why the performance needed to be set directly against the backdrop of the military. This bold statement by Ochoa and the way she theatricalised her argument could only happen in the theatre, and not in any mass media. It needed to be embodied by actors in ways that could transmit it into the social imaginary of the spectators. Could such performance actually change the way people, at least the few who were on the *chiva*, think about their society? My fellow practitioners and I, along with Ochoa and her company, would very much like to think so. Such projects are, if nothing else, a way of researching, analysing, constructing arguments and engaging each other in critical discussions. What we can control is to create recognition of the way violence in our society is represented, and more importantly, the ways it is covered up and, even when in plain sight, effectively ignored. As one of the flight attendants ironically says: "Back then, with didn't know but now we know and it's exactly the same when we didn't know" (*Corruptour* 21).

As the fifth scene progresses, Ochoa expansively reveals the big hole of corruption operating in Colombia, drawing on the comprehensive research underlying her script and far surpassing the information that has been given all these years by the media. For example, *Corruptour* tells us that President Pastrana banned the German priest Benjamin Estela, from helping or intervening in any case of kidnapping and makes a connection to the work Garzón was doing. Two months after the ban, two close friends who worked with Garzón and Estela were assassinated – a fact I learnt only from reading Ochoa's play. The ongoing isolation and distance promoted by the media and the government alike arise from the disconnected and fragmented representation of events – as abstract statistics. During the scene, the flight attendants name the perpetrators and their deeds without masking their identities through rhetorical figurations. In this, Ochoa and her group of performers were taking a huge risk, but as

she said to me in the interview, “this was a play that has to be performed by activists. [These] activists must be real, who had a desire of doing political gestures and standing up in a clear space of reality”. *Corruptour* goes beyond artistic expression to be a political act that connects the dots between what has been given to us to see and what has been veiled to us for the observation of the performance of violence.

In the scenes that follow, Ochoa describes how the structure of violence in magnicides operates, demonstrating the political distance that separates ordinary people from each other in ways that support the ongoing violence, terror and repression in Colombian society. Her project is to get to the real mischief-makers, those who set the ideology that in making the violence banal, make it impossible to see clearly enough to confront.[69] The former lawyer of the Garzón’s family, Alirio Uribe, explained to Ochoa that there are so many people involved; guilt is dispersed and rationalised away, guaranteeing the perpetrators tacit impunity. There is no way to reach the real culprit due to the number of people implicated from government agencies to groups outside the law (Ochoa in *Pacifista* interview). In the script, Ochoa writes “there are so many responsible that no one is responsible” (*Corruptour* 26).

In the performance, the *chiva* moved south away from the *Cantón Norte* and stopped some blocks further at the statue of Américo Vespucio (the Italian cartographer, who demonstrated that Columbus did not arrive in eastern Asia, but to a new continent). There the spectators saw two men kissing, a soldier and a male from the paramilitary. The men went inside the *chiva* and kept demonstrating affection to each other while a well-known bolero played in the background: *Sin ti* (Without you). In the script, Ochoa indicates that after “the obscenity has normalised” and the spectators are no longer scandalised, the performers go down from the *chiva* to meet a real soldier. Ochoa

[69] Ochoa explains it in an interview on the website Pacifista. Juan Jose Toro, https://pacifista.tv/notas/un-paseo-por-la-corrupcion-detras-del-asesinato-de-jaime-garzon/

proposes a game that might or might not be accomplished during the performance, as she is involving a participant-witness – a real soldier, a bystander, someone entirely outside the play – whose presence and reaction cannot be predicted. Nevertheless, the effect she pursues is clear; the junction between these two forces moves the war machine giving high profits and benefits to both. The participant-witness would be challenged by seeing two men kissing and acting queer, which violates a code between men of arms. The provocation made by Ochoa would be both risky and disturbing. Only the spectators and performers would be aware of the setting; the latter would take time to understand what is happening, and his response would not be predictable or necessarily controllable.[70]

It may seem that in *Corruptour,* Ochoa has taken a critical position against the military apparatus and its members for being unthinking in their actions, but in fact, the critique involves all of us. Our passivity and banality make us accomplices in the violent system. We take only limited actions to counter the normalisation of the daily terror and repression in the country. Ochoa comes back to Arendt and draws from her philosophic work in *Responsibility and Judgment*, *The Origins Totalitarianism* and *The Human Condition* on the differentiation between a nihilistic, a dogmatic and a normal person to explain to the spectators how we are complicit in the violence. For example, one of the flight attendants tests another (Flight Attendant C) to find out which category she belongs to. After a round of binary questions in which Flight Attendant C repeatedly chooses the popular option – the one fed by the media – she is labelled a normal person. In performance, the *chiva* arrived at *Parque de la 93* (Park 93), a wealthy, upper-class zone with upmarket restaurants and pubs. The flight attendants explain that the normal person category is the most numerous of all. In Colombia, they are called "*la gente de*

[70] Jimmy Rangel, one of the performers of *Corruptour* said in an interview on *El Tiempo* that every night after that scene, he and the other performer encountered some soldiers. The moment was always awkward, and the soldiers avoided any unnecessary contact with them. See https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16541987.

bien" (the good people) - those who defend good manners and the dominant institutions, as the line in the play makes clear: "they do it without using one single neuron" (*Corruptor* 32).

Returning to Taylor, Ochoa's staging of the performance in Park 93 can be seen as a scenario to highlight the behaviours and customs from a sector of Colombian society, which we all have learnt to wish to be included in. We want to be *la gente de bien,* drinking and talking in Park 93's restaurants, bars and cafes. A common assumption in Colombian society is that one must be doing well in life to afford to be part of this scene. The performance was staged in Park 93 to reveal how our judgment crystalises in terms of money and the acquisition of commodities. *La gente de bien* are people with means and money, or at least with the appearance of having more than the rest. However, "*la gente de bien"* is not synonymous with a consideration to others' needs or working for a common goal that benefits the majority. Viewed as a social scenario in Taylor's terms, we see how Ochoa's argument is constructed theatrically to show how we have become a mass of people that have traded critical thinking for the ideology of the good life, or at least, the wish that someday we can have something close to it. The spectators of *Corruptour* were put in a position to meditate about their personal ambitions and maybe see them as a deliberate construction in service of continued oppression. Ochoa offers a framework where "thinking takes place" (Taylor, *Performance* 140), in her own way accomplishing one of the things Garzón also wanted from his audience.

In scene eight, Ochoa introduces the spectators to the notion of the *Autores Ideológicos* (Ideological authors) – perhaps better translated and understood here as the mischief-makers. Ochoa explains that they are among *la gente de bien* with a difference; normal people do the things they do without knowing why. The mischief-makers, on the other hand, know what they are doing and keep doing it. They are governed by a

"cynical ideology" (*Corruptour* 35). Ochoa took the mischief-makers concept from Garzón's former collaborator, Antonio Morales.[71] He explained to her that in assassination events, the narrative always goes around the perpetrators and the *Autores Intelectuales* (Intellectual authors), or more properly, the instigators. However, it never questions those who benefit from the acts of violence, who issue the commands for its execution. In contrast to the instigators, the mischief-makers are professional simulators, according to Ochoa, as they pretend all the time to look for common well-being while underneath they want to have it all: "[They] are cynical, potential criminals and they always have a little private dream" (*Corruptor* 35). Ochoa found other ways to make this point in the performance, as when a *persona notable* (remarkable person) imitated Charles Chaplin's performance as Hitler dancing with the globe in *The Great Dictator*. When one of the flight attendants burst the globe, the *persona notable* chased her into the *chiva*. There he took off his clothes and cleaned his body with an antibacterial gel. In the background, a voiceover declaimed the steps for instituting an ideology and its perpetuation in power. In this sequence, we can see how Ochoa's play and its performance not only presents the simulated democracy we live in Colombia for critical recognition and analysis by the spectators.

Garzón and his murder are continually referenced in the play's text. The flight attendants lay out another theory of what happened: Garzón spoke about the fraudulence of the rotten system of war to people in charge but they were same people who were directly implicated in the corrupt system. It was not only that he became an inconvenience to the military, Ochoa's play insists. Garzón wanted us to question "who lives and benefit from the war" – Garzón last words in the interview with a Peruvian reporter the day before he was killed (*Esta si es la ultima entrevista)*. In the play, Ochoa reinforces the flight attendants' theory by adding a voiceover of one of the former

[71] Ochoa in *El Tiempo* interview https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16430719

paramilitary commanders, Hebert Veloza, aka HH.[72] This commander was recorded giving testimony about his participation inside the paramilitary forces: "They [politicians and businessmen] took advantage of their legal status to use that money to finance a war in ways that benefited their economic enterprises" (*Corruptour* 37). Ochoa's play keeps connecting the dots with such performance strategies: the truth from testimonies and interviews delivered as voiceovers to remind the spectators that between the cracks the information is coming out, even though although we prefer not to hear it.

As scene eight was concluding, the *chiva* arrived at the Nogal Club, one of the most luxurious clubs in the country where the crème de la crème of the Colombian elite do their meetings and business. The flight attendants got out the *chiva* and stood in front of the club making a pistol with their hands pointing out the mischief-makers, those who would not come out to the light. To start scene nine, another of Garzón's characters entered the *chiva*: Quemado Central, Garzón's parody of a military commander. As was common in Garzón's caricatures, Quemado Central stood out because, through him, Garzón could expose the true intentions of the military in their attack and defence strategies. In this, Quemado Central's declarations were always in opposition to what the real-life military members said to the press, their prevarications. In her script, Ochoa adds a trait to the character's representation: Quemado Central suffers from Tourette's syndrome. Quemado Central declares indignation for the assassination of Garzón and regrets this terrible act of violence (masking his discourse as the army forces did), but his syndrome forces him to use insults and swearing against Garzón and his memory. The flight attendants question him and then introduce the meaning of a dogmatic person identifying Quemado Central as an example: individuals who adopted rigid principles to

[72] Hebert Veloza is an AUC ex-paramilitary responsible of different massacres and selective assassinations. He accepted the benefits of the Justice and Peace law promoted by the government of Alvaro Uribe Vélez to coordinate the demobilisation process of the paramilitary forces. This testimony is part of Veloza's collaboration to Colombian authorities.

feel secure and put them in action obsessively eradicating any capacity to think critically about them.

Scene ten begins with the intervention of a musician, Edson Velandia, playing his song *La muerte de Jaime Garzón* (The death of Jaime Garzón). Velandia is a musician whose artistic work has roots in Colombian folklore. His participation in *Corruptour* strengthened the meaning of the play by inviting its audience to look past the façade of daily life to the truth of the violence. Velandia's song is a crude statement against the brutality of the perpetrators and instigators of Garzón's murder. Using *rasqa*, a musical style he created, Velandia played the guitar and sang lyrics that recreated a fictional conversation between Garzón (who is stopped at the traffic lights) and his assassin, minutes before he shot at the comedian five times. In the song, Garzón explains that he tried to speak with the assassin's bosses, the ones who ordered his murder. Ironically, it is Garzón who knows whose orders the assassin is obeying, but the assassin ignores the warning. The attempt to enlighten the murderers is in vain since such men lack culture, the song says. Just as the traffic light changes to green, Garzón asserts that none of them "have the balls to shoot straight at me" to which the assassin replies "they don't need the balls, they have me".

Velandia's song earned life took on a life of its own after it debuted in *Corruptour*, as Ochoa told me in the interview. She invited him to participate in the performance because, she believes, he is maybe one of the few able to fill the gap left by Garzón. With creativity and sagacity, Velandia critiques and exposes through music what Garzón did through his impressions and fictional characters: the big fallacies of Colombian democratic system. To Ochoa, Velandia's participation in the production was meaningful beyond his performance. With his support, she could recognise her fear in making the show and understand that the fear itself is an essential part of the system. Velandia helped her to see how a democratic regime like Colombia disguises certain

dictatorial approaches and policies in ways that include appearing to accept artistic responses to its actions. By letting come into light this kind of theatrical responses such as *Corruptour*, the government acquires plausible deniability. Velandia reassured Ochoa that we as artists and theatre-makers are part of their calculated risk, and for this reason, nothing evil would happen to them (Ochoa interview 2019).

This idea contradicts what happened with Garzón. Ochoa's apprehension had validated reasons to assume that her play would disturb the egos of mischief-makers and instigators who disapproved spaces for critical thinking. By killing Garzón, the war machine left a devastating message: everyone can become a target – no-one is immune. If that happened to Garzón, what can happen to an ordinary person? It was the same question asked after Gaitán's assassination, but Garzón was neither a presidential candidate nor a common person. His out-of-ordinary-status is what adds horror to the situation of violence, since he easily jumped back and forward from the realm of fiction, when he performed his characters, to the realm of social everyday life, doing humanitarian work and demonstrating more explicitly his political aspirations. Does his death mean a kind of protection to those who stay in the fictional realm? Once Garzón was dead, the warning made effect and there was no necessity to do it again. This bizarre kind of freedom depicts the atmosphere for creating artistic responses to the violence in Colombia where the minimal space for exploration demands strong actions. Ochoa turns the cynicism of the socio-political structure and plays it to her favour. By writing *Corruptour* she contributes to keeping Garzón's memory alive; "memory is an expression of rebellion against violence and impunity" (GMH 13).

The *chiva* moved south and stopped in front of a graffitied wall. There, Velandia got out of the *chiva* and joined two actors playing agents from the DAS (former Administration Department of Security) who were beating up a clown who kept laughing while receiving punches, until his body lay in the street. In this, Ochoa was

again playing with the reactions of bystanders who might not have known if what was happening was real or fictional. This seems to have been a literalisation of the media's headline: "Humour was killed". In the performance, the *chiva* arrived at the site when the lynching was already happening. Did Ochoa perhaps hope that bystanders or the spectators would intervene? Alternatively, was the purpose to show how fearful and repressed we feel about intervening in a situation when someone clearly needs help? She exposes our reflexive thought processes. First, our preservation sense stops us from doing something that might hurt us. Second, we become conscious of our prejudices, our inclination to disbelieve the victim as we think first, "the clown must have done something wrong". This theatrical moment works like a Schechnerian film strip, reproducing the dramaturgy of violence just as it has been repeated many times in the media and elsewhere. We disavow the victim when the statements of the repressors and perpetrators have more resonance than the victim's testimonies. It is, in Schechnerian terms, one of the "repeated behaviours" we embody even unconsciously in Colombian society, fortifying the naturalisation of daily violence.

In the script, scene twelve begins with two participants of a beauty pageant. The description says that they walk over the body of the dead clown, ignoring it completely and get inside the *chiva*. This is a wink from the author to a large number of beauty contests existing in the country that reflect the social triviality by which the system keeps us distracted. But in Ochoa's play, these two participants are different from the standard of women who are typical of Colombian beauty pageants. They speak truth to power. Participant A delivers a large monologue about time, future and the abhorrence of coming to live in this world. She advises Colombia's unborn babies to abstain from any desire to live. Here, Ochoa draws from Walter Benjamin and Passolini to create her text. Participant B, on the other hand, represents the voice of the real-life journalist Claudia Julieta Duque. Duque worked with the lawyer Alirio Uribe in Garzón's case.

She was threatened, kidnapped, tortured and discredited by the people who wanted to bury the case (presumably the same DAS agents). She had to go into exile with her daughter who was also a victim of threats. Ochoa does not use her name at this time, but refers to Duque directly two scenes later and invites the spectator to make the connection. Participant B's monologue is a testimony of the journalist's agony on finding out that even though she survived the torture "there was no one to tell the truth [because] no one wanted to really hear it" (*Corruptour* 45). The scene finishes with the beauty pageants and the flight attendants inviting the spectators to dance but before the dance begins, they cover the spectators' heads with bags on which Garzón's face has been printed.

There is no doubt that what made the spectators' experience in *Corruptour* unique was their continuous participation in the performance. Making the spectators move into and through the dramatic action has the potential to produce a stronger impression in their social imaginary; to make them actively present during the performance is to invite them to become more active also as participants in daily life. After all, the way Colombian citizens are made to enter into and internalise their social understandings of the ongoing violence is its own kind of immersive theatre. In this, theatre artists like Ochoa can be seen to intervene by exposing the theatricality of our everyday life. *Corruptour* created a liminoid experience for spectators, in the way Victor Turner identifies as a leisure activity selected by choice where the participants might suffer, even momentarily, a transformation in their personal paradigms (*Ritual to Theatre*, 42-45). Ochoa's play not only exposes the corruption in the political-social context of the country but also while it does, it proposes activities that construct unity and erase power hierarchies in the audience. They are on the *chiva* of *Corruptour* as "equal individuals" (Turner, *Ritual Process* 96) to abide the interactions with the flight attendants and other characters. This is for Turner the experience of "communitas"

which (contrary to the social structures that govern and categorise the daily life of people) "[…] does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general norms [. . .]" (Turner, *Dramas* 274). The dramaturgy of violence encourages division and polarisation which prevents having the necessary conversation about the ongoing conflict. The repression that Colombians experience on a daily basis isolate us from one to another; the *chiva's* journey, on the contrary, offers proximity and comradery - something that we need to re-learn to do. It may be by singing, dancing or laughing together that we can find the way.

The dance leads everyone into scene thirteen, which begins with the introduction of a public servant, a government worker, standing in the street. In the script, the flight attendants describe him as a phlegmatic person. His way to express emotion from love to guilt is equally the same, a long dull face. If he gets drunk, his frantic support of the paramilitary's ideal becomes known. A public servant is the perfect example of a nihilistic person, says a flight attendant. They do not have a defined value system because it changes depending on the gain such a nihilistic person is looking for. The spectators of *Corruptour* can recognise this version of the public servant as the kind of character as every citizen must encounter at least once a month: as at the public notaries, or when reporting a failure in the water, power, or transport system, or when trying to process a required official form for a job. The bureaucratic procedures are endless and difficult, and the attitudes of public servants are unpleasant. They are passive aggressive antagonists to a sense of community. Most of the time, they are seen to take advantage of their positions of power in ways that routinely sustain our disconnection from others. The play thus reminds us of our assumptions that everyone, perhaps including ourselves, in the system, acts only for their own benefit. The nihilistic person denies the needs of others, as Arendt explains: "[Nihilism's] creed consists of negations of the current, so-called positive values to which it remains bound" (*Responsibility* 177). As

Corruptour demonstrates theatrically, we are constant participants in social dramas that tell us to be happy while working against the possibility that we will know what it actually is to experience happiness.

Two pillars of thought are the foundations of the play. On one hand, there is the division between the banal people – that includes almost all of us – who can be nihilistic, dogmatic or common and on the other, there are the evil actors, the murders and like culprits, such as those who performed Garzón's assassination. Before scene fourteen begins, Ochoa's characters have discussed the common people including the cynical *gente de bien*, the mischief-makers. They have addressed the dogmatic persons who can act easily and unselfconsciously as perpetrators, and finally, the nihilistic person who changes values according to needs. In this category, Ochoa locates the *Autores Intelectuales*: The Intellectual Authors, or perhaps more properly, the Instigators. The Instigators in the play refers to members of the now-defunct Administration Department of Security (DAS). This state agency was dissolved in 2011 due to the scandal of corruption when it was revealed that they spied on members of the opposition, human rights defenders, and judges of the supreme court during the presidency of Alvaro Uribe Veléz (2002-2010). As Ochoa points out in her play, this dissolution was not a repudiation of such tactics, but rather it was a strategy to bury all the criminal activity practised by the agency for years (even before Uribe Vélez) and to keep the truth of their actions in the dark.

In the performance, the *chiva* parked in front of the former DAS building while scene fourteen was enacted. The flight attendants worry that their judgment about the DAS and his members might not play well with all the spectators. They asked the spectators who did not agree with their thinking to leave the *chiva*. Here Ochoa is playing on the spectators' fear, because the location of that building is on a dangerous site where it is not recommended to walk in evening hours. No one in his or her right

mind would exit the *chiva* to wait there until a taxi or any kind of transport arrives. Ochoa writes this common knowledge into the script as a clear note to the performers. She anticipates the spectators' not so well repressed reluctance to leave the *chiva*. Even having spent the night watching a performance that contradicts their assumptions about the way things work, for spectators to imagine leaving the *chiva* and hanging around in a dangerous neighbourhood that carries the residue of historical violence and oppression would be an unreasonable option. To this point, *Corruptour* has been clear and coherent in demonstrating, factually, that it is the ongoing stage of violence that allows crimes like Garzón's murder. Only now does the play turn directly on the spectators to challenge them to find a safe place: in the *chiva* with the uncomfortable truth or outside where danger lurks. As it is predicted in the script, in performance no one exits the *chiva*, leading the flight attendants to dedicate a song to the dissolved agency – essentially saying "farewell and I hope you die" – and invites the spectators to sing along with them.[73]

In the next scene, Ochoa puts together two of Garzón's diametrically opposed characters: Inti de la Hoz and John Lennin. While Inti de la Hoz is an upper-class reporter, John Lennin is the phenotype of the intellectual student from a public university who is involved in activism. Both characters explain to the spectators their disillusionment with the socio-political system and recognise that their activism was based on ideologies that do not work. Inti de la Hoz is an odd character to think of as an activist; her efforts may sound shallow or just for upper-class people, *la gente de bien* like her, but this is when Ochoa challenges her own vision of the common people through Garzón's character. Inti de la Hoz as performed by Garzón was a parody of beautiful women who become reporters after participating in beauty pageants. In *Corruptour*, the character of Inti de la Hoz rebels against her privilege even if it is in a

[73] The song is "La Estaca" (1995) written by Andrea Echeverry from the band Los Aterciopelados.

naïve way, when she says, "If there is so much conflict because of the land, then why are the golf courses not appropriated? [. . .] The golf players occupy too much space in this country" (*Corruptour* 51). The same happens with the character of John Lennin; like the former Beatle, just because he is an idealistic leftist does not mean that his thinking and actions contribute to a peaceful improvement in society. In the performance, at the end of their speeches Inti de la Hoz and John Lennin give a pillow to each spectator and flight attendant and begin a pillow fight with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as the soundtrack.

More pillow fights to unleash our anger and disillusion seems to be Ochoa's invitation. After a shot of adrenalin from playing the game, performers begin the last scene of the play. In the text, the final scene begins with short sentences that mirror those of the first scene, thus bringing us full circle. There are some facts: the day Garzón was born. Here are some facts: the day Garzón was killed. Ochoa includes testimonies from different people about when they found out about Garzón's death: the words of the cleaner from Garzón's favourite restaurant, or the sensation of a deep emptiness from fellow theatre practitioners. Ochoa invites us to remember what happened the day each of us found out that Garzón was assassinated. In performance, the *chiva* stopped in front of some graffiti in tribute to Garzón, that had the legend: "*Hasta aquí las sonrisas pais de mierda*" (The smiles were up to this point shithole country).[74] The flight attendants and all the performers who had participated in the performance join to sing a last song, *Te Busco* (something like I look for you).

To share memories of the day Garzón was assassinated connects the people who are old enough to remember him. This connection transcends the polarisation now so ingrained in Colombian society and asks that we look together at how we live as a result

[74] Cesar Augusto Londoño is a sports anchor and was Garzón's colleague in the set of *CM&* TV news. The day Garzón was killed, Londoño finished the live presentation of his section with "hasta aqui los deportes, ¡país de mierda!" (That's all for the sports, shithole country!). Londoño's phrase became viral and a coined expression about the discomfort produced by the socio-political situation of the country.

of the ongoing performance of violence. On Aug 13, 1999, I was nineteen years old. When I heard the news about Garzón I felt dejected, but I was not surprised; in fact, I thought it had only been a matter of time – an inevitability rather than anything out of the ordinary. Growing up in Colombia during the '80s and '90s taught me to be stolid to this kind of situation. What surprised me was not the fact of his death, but the outpouring of grief and rage in response, whereas before I had only experienced a collective shrug. Witnessing the protests forced me to recognise the cynicism behind my initial response, in keeping with the expectations of the system that made this violent and repressive event possible. Garzón's death made me understand how wrong we were as a society and how easily we submit to this kind of performance.

Of the plays analysed in this thesis, *Corruptour*, is the only one performed outside a theatre. The use of a movable platform allowed Ochoa to play with all the possibilities that emerge from a moving, liminal space. Ileana Diéguez in her book *Escenarios Liminales: Teatralidades, Performatividades, Políticas* focuses on the concept of liminality in Latin American theatre. Diéguez's interest in Turner's concept is based on seeing liminal experiences as "anti-structure(s) that puts in crisis the status and hierarchies [. . .] (these experiences) never make community with the institutions' therefore their political nature provokes reflection, critical thinking and a space to live and create art in moments of crisis (26-38). Diéguez analyses the new Latin American theatrical expressions as "architectural" in which the artist "implies an existential posture" which means the study of relationships, responsibilities, and daily practice are more important than the understanding of the poetics and the play aesthetics (65). These experiences give rise to *communitas*, which for Diéguez are "extraordinary" moments to experience directly with the other, and with the social aspects that emerged from them (66). The audience's active participation opens the conversation to the daily life social aspects that otherwise are disregarded and therefore, come to be part of the social

imaginary as the unchangeable fate everyone has to accept. But, as Diéguez observes, art addresses a "warning" by "making visible the annihilation process that deteriorates communities"; the artist "bet(s) for the transformation of life" even when her conditions and limitations do not allow her to spread widely her protest, as does Ochoa with *Corruptour* (139). If in Colombia we live in an ongoing stage of crisis, there are at least an active production of artistic and theatrical responses that constantly evolve the discussion and portraying of the violence, terror and repression of the country.

Corruptour was born first of Ochoa's personal crisis, not simply limited to Garzón's murder, but more directly by seeing the conformism of Colombian society producing passive responses to acts that should cause indignation. Here is the "existential posture" suggested by Diéguez. Ochoa's play represents the ongoing crisis of living in a country where acts of violence and corruption are everyday news. Garzón's assassination was the ideal example for Ochoa to depict how the mechanisms of terror and repression operate daily under our noses. To intervene real spaces in the city with the *chiva* and the group of performers produces what Diéguez describes as a "cross-linking between the social and the artistic, accentuating the ethical involvement of the artist" (51). This personal commitment becomes resistance not only to a system that slowly suffocates the theatre practice (low budget and funding to the arts, more bureaucratic procedures and high taxes to the independent worker) but it is also resistance against the indifference of the common citizen.

Ochoa had a concern with the spectators' position in the theatrical productions. They seem comfortable and pleased to be seated on the chairs of a conventional theatre where nothing shakes them, where they are always safe (Ochoa interview 2019). Wanting to transcend that complacency by breaking the accustomed theatre experience, she invited the spectators to be not only viewers but also accomplices on her tour. In this combination of performers, spectators, and the real people on the street -bystanders

and witnesses- the worldview proposed by Ochoa transitioned back and forth between theatrical and social scenarios. The performance and spectators interacted much as rehearsed and directed by Ochoa, while the actions performed, and the consciousness provoked, moved between the play world and the real world, the night time reality of the city and its citizens who remained unpredictable in their behaviours and reactions. The performance never fully settled into one place or mode of action. Its liminality made it "an object for use and communication" and not only an "object for contemplation" (Diéguez 51). In destabilising the spectators' relationship with the theatrical convention, it also disrupted their relationship to social convention and thus mirrored Garzón's efforts to raise awareness of the constructed scenario of violence in Colombia. The few spectators that had the opportunity of participating in the performance, and even those like me who have read the script, have found the opportunity to reflect on our agency and our role as social actors.

Garzón's murder was staged for effect. It fulfilled the expectations of Colombian citizens that a social actor, such as he was, would not be allowed to survive. The method of murder was calculated as a warning to anyone who might wish to carry on where Garzón left off. The instigators anticipated a tame response. Their theatrical imaginations did not envision the outcry that ensued. They were, for once, left without a script and had to improvise beyond their conventional dramaturgical strategies to reinstate the status quo ante. The people's response to Garzón's assassination – the breach – was dramatic and the crisis that ensued did, for a moment, have potential to create a lasting schism, but twenty years on the cycle of violence continues. So too does Ochoa's play, which gave spectators one way to see what had happened more clearly. The play, in carrying the effects of Garzón's murder forward into the present, offers a way to challenge the cynicism inculcated in the violent system. It offers us the opportunity to tell, reproduce, expand and listen to stories that differ from the

dramatisation of the media by using other tropes and aesthetics. A *chiva* may not be what is required, but we need more such interventions to produce a snap or as Ochoa likes to call it "a hack to reality"[75] in the daily life of ourselves as Colombian citizens.

This chapter has analysed the assassination of Jaime Garzón in the ongoing performance of violence in Colombia. The act pushes the official dramaturgy one step forward as the humanity of the victim is downgraded in a subtle but effective way. The victims are now responsible for their own crimes. Theatrical elements used in Gaitán's case are restored here, like discrediting the target and redirecting the audience's points of attention to prevent critical thinking as in the making of a soap-opera about Garzón's life. The repression generated with an act like this conceals any attempt for reflection about the social and political contradictions of the country. To the establishment, activism is not allowed, especially the one that comes from humour and parody. The play that responds to this event challenged that repression. *Corruptour* offered to his audience humour, parody and critical thinking. In intervening the city, the play made visible the spaces where scenarios of violence are constructed daily. By acknowledging them, the audience paid tribute to Garzón's legacy to start seeing the things by what they are.

[75] Ochoa, Verónica. Interview. By Natascha Diaz. 29 Jan. 2019.

Conclusion Falsos Positivos 2008

> For in war it is necessary to win the minds and hearts of the citizenry: persuade citizens of the existence of an internal enemy and the goodness
> of eliminating it. The masses never know what is happening and they do not even notice it. They only know what has been told to them, which is something else, another story, a falsification, a lie.
>
> Carlos Satizábal (*Conflicto y Arte* 35-36)

In early 2008, nineteen young men, who were between sixteen and twenty-six years old and from different families, but all inhabitants of the same small town of Soacha, left their houses to take up a recruiter's promise of a job. Eight months later their bodies were identified by the authorities. Most of the young men were found buried inside common pits that were more than 700 km from their homes. Their bodies were dressed in combat uniforms and posed holding rifles. The Army's *Brigada Móvil 15* accused them of being guerrilla or paramilitary members killed in combat and claimed a financial reward for each dead body. Their mothers and relatives denied the Army's characterisation of their sons as armed subversives. Calling themselves the Mothers of Soacha, they insisted on their sons' innocence in spite of being subjected to acts of repression. Their courageous stance brought the Army's deception into the public eye and in so doing revealed a new scenario of the performance of violence in Colombia, which the media titled: *Falsos Positivos* – False Positives.

This thesis concludes with an analysis of *Falsos Positivos* – the euphemism that, in being used continuously by mass media, had the effect of minimising the public's response to news of civilians killed by state forces. The case of *Falsos Positivos* serves as a powerful example of how the theatrical imagination of agents with power, in this case the army, has evolved since Gaitán's murder. The army's actions were deliberately

staged to create an alternative reality: a theatrical production. They lured innocent young men away from their homes, costumed them as subversives, killed them, and buried them so that their bodies could then be exposed for profit as well as carry forward the narrative of heroic soldiers facing armed combatants. It is difficult to comprehend how this hideous act could have been committed by a group of soldiers whose reason for existence should be the protection of the innocent population. It is troubling to think of how *Falsos Positivos* was staged in theatrical terms, and perhaps more so to see how such a performance contributed to the naturalisation of violence in the country. This case prepares the ground for my conclusions on how the cycle of violence, terror, and repression performed in Colombia seem to be continuing to evolve so that the line between reality and pretence is increasingly blurred. As the army's actions, and those of the government, become increasingly theatrical, their construction is obscured for a public that can no longer see anything else. I will provide a summary of the plot to inform the reader about the circumstances that contributed to the execution of this social degradation. Then, I look to the official dramaturgy of the event and position this case as a culmination of Colombia's progression toward an entirely theatrically violent society. This chapter also looks at the performance of redress by the Mothers of Soacha, before turning to look at how this drama was re-presented in the theatre. Finally, to conclude my research I challenge the notion of happiness in Colombia by countering it with the main characteristics that I have identified in the performance of violence.

Falsos Positivos

The False Positives case demonstrates how extreme an event has to be and how fiercely a group of citizens (the Mothers of Soacha) have to fight for the truth to be visible. Whereas the Gaitán and Garzón assassinations can be read retrospectively as events that severely impacted on the masses, in part because of their dramaturgical and theatrical

structures, and the siege can be seen to have been staged for effect even more, the *Falsos Positivos* case must be viewed as a critical new stage in the Colombian performance of violence. For a start, it marks the culmination of the transition from high socio-political antagonists to "socially marginalised" people (Mellizo Rojas 42). The case exposes how political violence manifests in everyday scenarios where common people, those without any social connections or monetary means, are a part of the shadows of the armed conflict and how, as a result, their stories are diminished by the mass media. After analysing the key dramatic devices employed by the army to execute and then mediatise the extrajudicial killings of the youngsters of Soacha, I look at the theatrical response of the theatre-maker Carlos Satizábal and his collective *Tramaluna Teatro* in the play *Antígona Tribunal de Mujeres*. In this performance, Satizábal worked with professional actors alongside two Mothers of Soacha and a number of other female victims of the armed conflict and the abuse of power by the state. Satizábal's script symbolises how the performance space can also become a political space to denounce state violence and make visible the stories of the marginalised.

Given circumstances: Democratic security and the war against terrorists

In Colombia, the transition to the new millennium came with the failure of the peace negotiations with the guerrilla group FARC during Pastrana's presidency, the assassination of the journalist and comedian Jaime Garzón (as discussed in Chapter three), and an increased military presence and political influence of paramilitary force. As the previous case studies have signalled, the construction of the official dramaturgy strongly depends on the process of casting the other as villains, followed by repressive actions by those holding power. The objective of the drama is, always, to protect and maintain the appearance of democracy as it is, albeit underscored by the *scenario* of violence. These measures are staged in the public eye so that they are perceived as necessary in order to sustain the routines of daily life. Ironically, Colombian routines

include daily violence by default, which makes it difficult to observe violent acts as such with any critical perception.

In 2002, Alvaro Uribe Veléz came to power and commanded the dominant discourse of the country during two presidential periods.[76] According to Hylton, "the historical cycle initiated in 1982" with Betancur and the following presidents (who looked for a negotiated solution to the armed conflict) came to an end, "since Uribe did not plan to negotiate with guerrillas without first inflicting decisive military defeat" (110). In other words, the strategy against all those who represented any kind of subversion was openly modified, and Colombian society accepted it. After the 9/11 attacks in New York city, the discourse about violence changed strategically towards terrorism, a word whose definition has no consensus and its meaning covers a wide range of actions (Schmid 39). This shift was vital for Uribe's pretensions, as in 2005 he "announced to his diplomatic corps that neither war nor armed conflict existed in Colombia" (Hylton 121). Changing the historical narrative of the country implied that "an embattled state and civil society was fighting […] 'terrorism'" which means that any subversive group had no political status and therefore there was no need for a negotiated solution with such groups (Hylton 121).

To defeat terrorism and the "appalling security situation" (Mason 392), Uribe implemented his policy of Democratic Security, a project with a "strong counterinsurgency tendency" and "authoritarian elements" (Ríos Sierra and Zapata García 132-33) enhancing military and police action. Once the guerrilla groups were recast as terrorists instead of insurgents, their status as political enemies was removed. This socio-political backdrop was the one against which the army came to enact the *Falsos Positivos*. In order to motivate the soldiers in their pursuit of terrorists, the army launched a plan of benefits that included extra payments, promotions and time-off. How

[76] Uribe Vélez was the first president who changed the Constitution to allow his re-election.

they came to decide that killing civilians would be the best strategy to earn those benefits it is hard to tell. However, what they produced was a series of dramatic actions that made use of theatrical devices and resulted in a scene that was staged to achieve their objectives.

The staging of the bodies

How did the fact that the bodies displayed were staged as terrorists, come to light? I will focus on the story of one of the Mothers of Soacha, Luz Marina Bernal, whose 26-year-old son, Fair Leonardo Porras Bernal, was found in one of the common pits.[77] What makes Bernal's case stand out from the others is that Fair Leonardo had a mental disability that made him behave like an eight year old boy; he did not know how to write or read, and the right side of his body was paralysed. Despite this, Fair Leonardo was accused of commanding a guerrilla unit and shooting a 9mm gun with his right hand. Bernal recognised her son through photos showed to her by the forensics personnel. Originally, the Army did not allow her to see him directly; she only viewed a sealed coffin. Then, a year and half later, when the investigation about the irregularities started and the coffin was opened, Bernal only found "one human torso with six vertebrae and a skull filled with a t-shirt instead of the brain" (Izagirre). In identifying her son, Bernal could also begin to challenge the story that was told about his actions, widening the gap between the official version of the drama and the performance of violence that had actually occurred.

Even with the exposure of the army's deception, it is difficult to decipher the full story. It is known that they selected the young men for their vulnerability as lower-class villagers; without much other hope of social improvement, the recruiter's enticements would have quickly succeeded. It is known that the young men were almost

[77] Luz Marina Bernal's testimony was drawn from the interviews in el País by Ander Izagirre, see elpais.com/elpais/2014/03/06/planeta_futuro/1394130939_118854.html and www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/madres-soacha-recordaron-cuatro-anos-falsos-positivos/265282-3

immediately murdered, but we do not know how they came to be costumed. Were they convinced to put on the uniforms and pose with the weapons before being shot, or were their bodies staged post-mortem? If there are photographs of the bodies before they were buried, they have yet to come to light. However, in order to profit from the deaths, photos would have been essential evidence. It is not fully clear how the grave site came to be discovered, but the army certainly took advantage of the incident to reinforce its narrative and its claim to have successfully pushed back a group of insurgents. The bodies of the children of the Mothers of Soacha have been identified. However, it is not known how many other such graves have yet to be uncovered, how many other children are dead and buried under false pretences, how many mothers are still looking to find their loved ones.[78] Is the drama here in the *Falsos Positivos*, or is it in the unfinished search for the truth?

Resistance performed by Mothers of Soacha

An unstoppable search for truth, recognition, and accountability, drove the Mothers of Soacha to disrupt the army's theatricality by creating and superimposing their own. In 2008, they gathered and founded the organisation MAFAPO (*Madres de Falsos Positivos de Soacha y Bogotá*) to denounce the Army's impunity in the extrajudicial executions of their children. Their audacity was seen, of course, as a threat to the status quo. The Army and the Government turned to intimidation methods in their efforts to force the mothers to drop their pursuit of justice. These methods included warning letters, telephone calls and, even more terrifying, the assassination of family members, as happened with the brother of one of the victims who was killed by a hitman (Izagirre). The use of terror during a violent conflict aims to provoke silence, which

[78] According to Omar Rojas Bolaños, a former police colonel, the number of systematic killings by the Army against civilians might reach 10,000 people and not 3,700 as it was estimated. See more on www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/08/colombia-false-positives-scandal-casualties-higher-thought-study and www.hrw.org/report/2015/06/24/their-watch/evidence-senior-army-officers-responsibility-false-positive-killings

causes the victims to be tortured by the memories of those whose lives were lost. Taussig explains "the point about silencing and the fear behind silencing is not to erase memory […] The point is to drive the memory deep within the fastness of the individual so as to create more fear and uncertainty in which dream and reality commingle" (27). The Mothers of Soacha overcame the silence and fear by coming out into the public light. In doing so, they pushed the media to pay attention to their stories, displacing the previous narrative with their own.

The Army did not anticipate this response. As in Garzón's case where his executioners did not expect the outcry of the masses, here the Army's theatrical imagination did not envision that the mothers of its victims would have the courage to retaliate. The Army aimed to stage a tragedy as in ancient Greek theatre where the killing or death was never performed in front of the audience, but rather, the violence was reported, generally by a messenger, and the bloody acts themselves were left to the audience's imagination. The soldiers and army generals, like tragic actors, painted the scene of the death of Soacha's young men in order to provoke fear and recognition of the danger of crossing powerful forces (as described by Aristotle). This theatrical construct should have persuaded the boys' mothers and relatives to walk away from the horror and pain caused by that tragic action. However, the Mothers of Soacha did not accept the violent outcome as inevitable, nor did they follow the script they were given as passive onlookers in a violent country where it is customary to to see people losing their lives and do nothing about it. They defied the "normality of the abnormal" (Taussig 18) by looking at the bodies and photos of their children and de-mystifying the tragedy that had been staged by the Army. For example, the photos revealed the victim's fingers "were artificially placed on the trigger" or the victim was "wearing the right boot on the left foot, and vice versa"(Acemoglu et al. 37). Some bodies had multiple shots but were wearing combat uniforms with not a single hole (Izagirre). The

mothers looked past the constructed drama to the evidence of the bodies, and saw this as a starting point for action rather than its conclusion.

The state agencies, the Army, and the President himself, rejected the story told by the evidence. Uribe Velez dared to suggest that the killing of Soacha young men by the Army in the town of Ocaña corresponds to a confrontation that is part of the armed conflict: "*no fueron a coger café sino con propósitos delicuenciales"* (they did not go to pick coffee [beans] but with criminal intent) were the President's words.[79] Uribe Velez's declaration reflects the social stigmatisation of humble people as identified with illegal and dubious endeavours, in the same way that in 1985, the Army cast the cafeteria workers of the Palace of Justice as insurgents during the siege. For Bernal, the mother of one of the victims and leader of the Mothers of Soacha, the President's efforts to keep the official dramaturgy dominant was enough to motivate her in the pursuit of justice, even if her life could be in danger (Padilla and Sampietro 10). The pressure from international agencies and public opinion forced Uribe Velez to purge the Army's upper-most hierarchy by removing several officers from their posts (CNMH, 236). However, he kept denying the fact that these cases were part of a system that values violence, instead referring to them as isolated situations performed by a "few rotten apples" in the army (Godfrey 1). The perpetrators that killed Bernal's son received a sentence of between fifty-one and fifty-four years in prison, but there are still many other mothers of victims from extrajudicial executions waiting for a resolution to their cases.

With such high stakes in play, one cannot avoid asking why the Army was so careless in staging their murder scenes. For generations no one had stopped them. They had picked their targets according to the same fundamental social understandings that

[79] See www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/articulo-uribe-dice-desaparecidos-de-soacha-murieron-combates

others had before them. The young men of Soacha were cast as enemies of the state and turned into cannon fodder, because of their social disadvantage. Colombian socio-economic structure is systematically stratified in ways that can be seen, for example, printed on the utility bills, which are rated between one and six levels, according to one's neighbourhood, where levels one, two, and three are identified as low income areas.[80] This social pyramid is central to how Colombians see each other. Levels one and two account for 90% of the population in Soacha (Lozada 5), by default the lowest level of the pyramid, the son and daughters of nobodies. No wonder the army's victims come mostly from the outskirts of the main cities in the country. The army assumes that the families of their victims will have too much work navigating the social ladder to make their stories heard. So many decades of impunity have passed in Colombia; the murders of high-profile personalities like Gaitán and Garzón have not been resolved; the families of the Palace of Justice missing people are still waiting for answers. How then could anyone not imagine that it would be the same in Soacha? It may be problematic to say that this is a kind of perverse "restored behaviour" yet this is the *scenario* of violence in Colombia.

Not everyone wanted to be part of the army's enterprise. The media reports that people inside the army's ranks informed their superiors what was happening, but they were dismissed from their posts (Izagirre). Some soldiers who denied committing the executions became victims of their own battalions, as can be seen in a *YouTube* video where the father of one of the victims complains fiercely to President Alvaro Uribe Velez.[81] The father wears a banner on his chest with the photo of his son and with visible rage tells how the state agencies have interfered in the search for justice in his son's case. The President was, of course, untouchable in this drama. As the army's

[80] For more about this see www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2014/09/140919_colombia_fooc_estratos_aw
[81] See colombianoindignado.com/papa-de-un-joven-victima-se-atrevio-a-decirle-la-verdad-en-la-cara-a-uribe/

original story unravelled, those higher up distanced themselves from the actions of those beneath them. It is this distance that Mothers of Soacha tried to shorten by identifying first the perpetrators and instigators and then turning toward the ideological authors. Here I recall the term used by Veronica Ochoa in her play *Corruptor*. However, in spite of the mothers' counter-dramaturgy, the media and dominant social order continued to shift attention away from attempts to interrogate and break down the system that sustains the *scenario* of violence in Colombia. In the social drama of Colombian violence, the status quo has again reasserted itself. In May 2019 the *New York Times* reported that the army had reactivated its practice of killing civilians and disguising them as insurgents – eleven years after the *Falsos Positives* of Soacha came to light (Casey).

How is it possible to keep repeating the same dramaturgy after all the outcry and exposure? Moreover, how can Colombian society come so close to recognising what is happening and then reverse itself back to the status quo ante? What kind of action – dramatic, social – might it take to hold the spotlight on the violence long enough for a genuine debate about strategies for redress? The Mothers of Soacha have engaged in different artistic activities that allow them to keep their sons' stories alive. For example, in July 2017, Bernal trained and prepared her body for months to do a commemorative act in the Plaza Bolívar where she and other victims of the social conflict, including the families of the missing people from the Palace of Justice, covered their bodies with soil and "planted" themselves there for hours (Zamudio). This act states what Taylor explains in her article "Presidential Address 2018! Presente!" in which the presence of the victims and the performers "can be understood as a war cry in the face of nullification; an act of solidarity or standing with: a commitment to witnessing" (483). This intervention happened in the Plaza Bolívar, the historical place for rallies which was ravaged during *el Bogotazo*. This plaza contains the Palace of

Justice, and was the farewell site for Garzón. It is also in this Plaza that the façade of democracy is maintained. To take a stand in this place is to demand of bystanders and of the general public a recognition of how flimsy that façade is. The bodies of the people performing the act "signal(s) the now, again and seemingly always, of political violence" (Taylor 489). This performance, and those like it, insist to Colombian society that we must refuse the legitimisation of "acts of brutality" (489).

Figure 5 Tramaluna Teatro

Theatrical Response: *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres*

In 2014, the director and academic Carlos Satizábal and his theatre group, *Tramaluna Teatro*, premiered his play *Antigona Tribunal de Mujeres* which continues to be performed, touring internationally. The cast includes three mothers whose sons were killed extrajudicially by the army (Luz Marina Bernal is one of them), two survivors of the genocide against the political party, *Unión Patriótica*[82], and one student leader who

[82] The Union Patriótica was the political movement founded by FARC and the Communist Party in 1985 during the peace negotiations with Betancur's government. The negotiations failed and FARC returned to

was unjustly imprisoned. Alongside these women, four professional actresses complete the cast. Through fourteen scenes the women offer their testimonies to the audience while they build upon Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*. The story of *Antigone* is a topic profoundly discussed by theatre-makers inside the violent Colombian conflict because the idea of the bodies lying on the ground or hidden in common pits without proper burial rites is part of daily Colombian dramaturgy. Sandro Romero describes the story of theatre-maker Patricia Ariza (who is also Satizábal's partner) when she found out about a group of women whose husbands were killed by the paramilitary. The insurgents did not allow the wives to bury their loved ones, so they sneaked out at night, took the bodies back and gave them a proper burial (415). The similarities with the character of Antigone and her determination to bury her brother Polynices despite Creon's prohibition, reflects Turner's and Schechner's loop between representation and reality.

Nevertheless, the testimonies of the victims in *Antigona Tribunal de Mujeres* are far from reaffirming their cases as a tragedy. Instead they drawn upon Antigone's vital force to stage a claim for justice and show how violent Colombian democracy is. This might be why Satizábal chose *Antigone* as a medium to embody the stories of these women while avoiding falling into the trap of political propaganda. Music and dance play an important role in the transitions between scenes, building a ritual that prepares the performers, the audience and the space for the dialogue. According to Satizábal, in an interview for this thesis, the work of the choreographer Wilson Pico was of vital importance to create the tone of the piece and also to offer the non-professional performers, who perform as themselves, an experience in which training and healing were integral and could, in effect, strengthen their testimony. The four professional

---

the armed fighting, but the UP Party continued suffering several attacks against its members. It is estimated that between 1985 and 1995 at least 6,000 representatives of the party were assassinated. For more information see Andrei Gómez-Suarez DOI: 10.1080/14623520701644440

actresses take on diverse characters in the script as Antigone, Ismene, the shadow of Tiresias and others.

The first scene in the script begins with the cast entering the stage choreographically and declaring the performance space as a female court where they demand justice. Each performer identifies her case: the *Falsos Positivos*, the crimes against the *Unión Patriótica*, the abuse of power from the state. The professional actresses talk as Antigone or activists. Next there is a brief intervention of Antigone and Ismene recreating the moment when Antigone asks her sister to help her to bury their brother. Ismene fears for the life of her sister. The actresses hand over the space to Lucero who introduces herself to the audience and tells her case: when and where the Army took the life of her son, Leonardo. Lucero shows a shirt which used to belong to him. The shirt embodies Leonardo while Lucero shares a story about a cake he prepared. The shirt still has his smell, she says. She sings a song she composed. The group joins her and together they become a chorus. It was Satizábal who suggested that the women present the personal items of the victims as a medium for remembering, for searching for the right words in telling the story, and as a kind of comfort, creating a situation in which the women could open themselves to talk. This work with the objects became pivotal in the making of the play (Satizábal interview 2019).

In scene four, Tiresias enters the stage. The script does not, however, use Sophocles' text directly. Instead, it recreates a version of the characters and adapts them to the Colombian situation. Tiresias is a seer who envisions the dead bodies of many compatriots and the anonymous burial sites. She asks the audience to join her in condemning the violence. Then it is Maria's turn. Her sixteen-year-old son Jaime Steven was one of the youngsters from Soacha. María describes Jaime Steven, what he liked, what he did. She shows several items, each of them with a little story, and shows

the audience that she has a photo of Alvaro Uribe Velez and Juan Manuel Santos[83] taped on each shoe sole, as she accuses them of the barbarism committed against her son. Maria says that the establishment brands her as crazy. No one believes her. The audience sees a photo of Jaime Steven wearing a Mexican hat and a microphone; he loved to sing. The group sings in chorus and leaves the stage.

Mayra, the student leader, enters the scene with two actresses who perform as the sisters of one of the missing people. The sisters narrate a raid by the paramilitary who razed the town. The sisters are looking for their brother. They only have a boot and a shirt; they want to bury him. Mayra sings. The lyrics are about the location of the body. This happened in "*la Guajira, en el Putumayo, en Arauca, en Atrato y en el Catatumbo"* says one of the sisters. All of them are regions in Colombia. A dance follows. In the script, the dances' descriptions are thoughtful, detailed. They are not just choreography. Satizábal looks through the dance to depict a ritual, perhaps aiming to initiate a healing process for these women as the audience bears witness. Schechner defines ritual as an "ordinary behaviour transformed by means of condensation, exaggeration, repetition and rhythm into specialised sequences of behaviour serving specific functions […]" (*The Future of Ritual* 228). One finds those characteristics in theatre too, as Schechner explains it as if "rituals are also bridges – reliable doings carrying people across dangerous waters" (230), one can assume that the composition of performing and healing on stage creates a proper platform where these women can find the sense of their experience. Turner suggests it as well; "through the performance process itself, what is normally sealed up, inaccessible to everyday observation and reasoning, in the depth of socio-cultural life, is drawn forth […]" (*From* Ritual 13).

In scene seven, Fanny takes a turn, to tell the story of how the army assassinated her family (father, a brother, two sisters, and a brother-in-law) for being

[83] Juan Manuel Santos was the Minister of National Defence during Alvaro Uribe Velez's presidency.

militants of the party *Union Patriótica.* She enters the stage with a full body-size portrait of her father while the background shows a projected photo of her family. Two actresses support Fanny's tale. The army came to town, faked a battle and justified the deaths as defeated guerrilla fighters. They name the colonel that carried out the action. They sued the state with the help of the lawyer Eduardo Umaña Mendoza (the same lawyer who was helping the families of those who disappeared from the Palace of Justice and who was killed by hitmen in 1998). The colonel was convicted and sentenced to thirty-four years in prison, but he was declared insane and never served the sentence. Then Orceny, another militant of the UP party reveals her case. Her partner, along with four more members of the party, were killed in 1986 by members of the secret police service. Twenty-six years have passed, but the Colombian justice system has done nothing to clarify what happened to Orceny's friends. The scene recreates an investigation in which a prosecutor suggests that the militants of UP combined both combat strategies: the political and the armed one. This was a widespread notion in Colombian society to justify the systematic killing of UP followers, re-enacting what happened to liberals in Gaitán's time. The actresses and Orceny explain the origins and aim of *Unión Patriótica,* refreshing historical facts that, as I argued earlier, are consistently overlooked in the official dramaturgy. The female court makes a claim for justice, finishing the scene with staggering numbers: 6,300 assassinations and 515 disappearances of UP militants.

Scene nine begins with Luz Marina Bernal entering the stage with different items belonging to her son. She spreads them along the stage and introduces herself. Bernal tells a story about each of the items. The cast enters and performs another dance. While doing it, photos of victims are projected on to the stage curtains. At the end of the dance, Mayra the student leader sings, and then a video with her testimony is projected. In May 2006, Mayra was returning at night from university with four friends, when four

men got out of a Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV), sat the women inside the car and took them to a DAS office (Administrative Department of Security – the agency involved in Garzón's assassination). The agents told them that they were accused of rebellion and terrorism. The agents transported Mayra and her friends to the district prison. She spent six months there. She met many other students from public universities in the same situation. One of them was Adela, who after leaving prison, disappeared. Mayra sings a song dedicated to her.

The play touches sensitive nerves by putting the audience in an uncomfortable position; this is the reality, not a fictional situation. Romero states that "when you know the one on stage is not 'pretending' but is retelling a pain that comes from much deeper inside than that of the limits of the scene, many questions arise and the way of reflecting about the theatre profession shakes" (qtd. in Satizábal 260). In saying this, Romero makes a case for what theatre can do for a society in need of redressing the violent cycle that has predominated for seven decades. The stories are not there to entertain but to confront. Plays like *Antigona Tribunal de Mujeres,* and the others analysed in this thesis, show how theatre-makers and artists are approaching the performance of violence in Colombia by resisting the official theatrical tropes: the use of heroes and villains, invisible forces that control the fatal destiny of the people and the display of redressive strategies by the state. The plays show us that the schism is acute and ongoing, and expose the false closures offered by the official dramaturgy. For true reconciliation, these theatre artists insist, the schism must first be seen for what it is.

In scene eleven Lucero returns and explains how her son disappeared in 2007; she did not hear anything about him until 2011 when a judge asked her if she knew that her son was a drug and gun dealer. He was not. She composed a song for him, which she sings. The use of songs and lyrics composed by the victims is in this way an essential device in the play. The songs are another way to tell the story and pass it along

through the generations of Colombians who continue to live within the violent conflict. For those lucky enough to not suffer such acts directly, it is a call to empathy and to action. The reconstruction of these events gives the audience the opportunity of identifying "the atrocious practices inherent in the exercise of violence in Colombia" (Garavito 17). The songs also allow for the expression of grief and grievances in a way that brings back dignity and honour to the victims and the dead.

An actress performing as Antigone enters the stage and talks to the gods as she is about to bury her brother. The brother is represented by an outfit belonging to Bernal's son that she carries as Michelangelo's Pietà. Lucero and María join Bernal while she delivers her speech. Bernal denounces Alvaro Uribe Velez's ignominy when he said "they did not go to pick coffee, but with criminal intent" without even checking the family history of those boys. She tells the court that there have been 5,700 extrajudicial executions. Who is accountable? Scene thirteen depicts the horrific threat sent to the lawyer Soraya Gutiérrez. The actresses are in charge of telling this story. Soraya has received a doll inside a box with its joints stained red, beheaded (the head next to it) and the body without one leg and arm. The image of the doll is projected and then the note that was with it "you have a beautiful family; take care of it. Do not sacrifice it". The actresses explain that Soraya was the director of an organisation in defence of human rights. She was a victim of the DAS during Uribe Velez's presidency. She was followed, spied on, her telephone calls intercepted, and her habits recorded. "What else did they want to know about Soraya?" the actresses ask.

Antigone enters with flowers. It is the last ritual to farewell the dead. She forms a grave with the flowers on the floor. She dances and sings, observing that her rebel spirit is what masters and empires hate the most. Antigone lists massacres that have happened in the country. The list is long. The cast enters, each of them carrying an object. They do the final dance and offer their objects to the audience. From the

beginning, the performance has allocated the role of the court to the audience, who are now required to find those who disappeared and recognise those responsible (perpetrators, instigators and intellectual authors) for the violence and deaths.

Pulecio Mariño states that Colombian playwrights have become like judges that, thanks to their ethics and artistic systems, can reflect and talk about the violent conflict without ignoring the complex social and human condition of the situation (1:51). This theatrical work emerges in opposition to the daily news, which is "wrapped in an impersonality and a generality that sterilises and trivialises them, and thus neutralises and numbs" the sensibility of the citizens (Pulecio Mariño; 1:51). *Antígona Tribunal de Mujeres* invites the spectators to reject the prevalent denial of the state's abuse of power and to recognise that the *scenario* of violence has more than one face that needs to be addressed. The spectators need to come to understand that they must be more than bystanders; they must determine themselves to become social actors.

Satizábal, as the director of the play, asserts that the work with the victims of state crimes was of vital importance because they have been revictimised continuously by the media, the society and the state; Colombians have in their social imagery that if something evil happens to anyone it is because she/he has deserved it (253). Redressing this thinking is mandatory if society wants to consider healing from the brutal consequences of many decades of violence, terror, and repression. Otherwise, Colombian society will endure a stage of constant denial that is attached to the idea that things will get better and violence will diminish naturally without effective action. Lauren Berlant defines this attachment as cruel optimism in which "[…] the object/scene that ignites a sense of possibility actually makes it impossible to attain the expansive transformation for which a person or a people risks striving […]" (2). This is Colombian society seeing violence as an unstoppable force not worth trying to change; it does not matter either if the voices of the victims are heard. Berlant continues on the

cruel nature of this connection explaining that "[…] the very pleasures of being inside a relation[ship] have become sustaining regardless of the content of the relation[ship], such that a person or a world finds itself bound to a situation of profound threat that is, at the same time, profoundly confirming" (2). There is cruel optimism in the way Colombians find comfort in everyday acts of violence, in imagining such acts as singular, as disruptions of an otherwise happy status quo, rather than repeated micro social dramas. The False Positives case is the result of a long history of denial in which Colombians find reassurance in the *scenario* of happiness, which at the end, it is more pleasant to see.

Falsos Positivos depicts the progression in the use of theatrical devices for the staging of violent acts. The acts are designed to mislead the general audience regarding the innocence of the victims and to reaffirm that strategies like these are necessary to control and possibly even win the armed conflict with the insurgents who are now being cast as terrorists. The army's theatricality in this case has been disrupted by the courage of the mothers who lost their sons, whose counter-performance was then taken up by Carlos Satizábal and his company in the theatre.

The denied happiness

"If happiness is what we wish for, it does not mean we know what we wish for in wishing for happiness. Happiness might even conjure its own wish. Or happiness might keep its place as a wish by failure to be given"; this is the introductory sentence in Sarah Ahmed's book, *The Promise of Happiness* (1). During the years of researching and writing this thesis, I came to these lines over and over to reflect on my own notion of happiness and what it implies in my reasoning my identity as Colombian. According to the Happy Planet Index, Colombia ranked in 2012 and 2016 as the third happiest country in the world. After a detailed analysis of four major events in Colombia history, it is difficult for me to understand how this ranking can so disregard the performance of

violence in my country. The scenario of happiness the Happy Planet Index presents seems to supersede the daily experience of most Colombians in service of a dominant dramaturgy that casts violent acts as accidental disruptions of the status quo rather than the status quo itself. The past and present history of violence in Colombia is in opposition to the charisma and optimism shown in the stories the citizens tell themselves about the happiness of the country. The contradiction may seem obvious; however, James Barget from the *Washington Post* observes that even though "trauma and grief are stitched into the collective consciousness" the people in Colombia cope and navigate the social drama by showing "warmth, openness and humor" and more important, "Colombians continue finding joy in family, friends and life's small pleasures".

I might sound as if I am throwing a wet blanket over the Colombian scenario of happiness, but as Ahmed claims, "to kill joy […] is to open a life, to make room for life, to make room for possibility, for chance" (20). I believe that by accepting the current status quo, Colombians are denying any other way of knowing happiness. Somehow it is important to feel that the sort of happiness already claimed in the Happy Planet Index is enough. If there is nothing broken, there is no need to fix it. I am not assuming that this thesis will fix that problem, but I want to think, following Ahmed, that by making room for a theatrical way of reflection there is a chance to start the work of changing the current state of affairs. Ahmed explains that in the process of building the idea of happiness there are three stages involved: affect, intentionality and evaluation. The first stage means "to be happy is to be affected by something". In intentionality one thinks that "to be happy is to be happy about something". Finally, one concludes that "to be happy about something makes something good" (21).

The Colombian scenario of happiness can be analysed according to Ahmed's logic. If Colombians feel affected by something and that something is what makes them

feel happy, what is the nominal value of that *something*? Could it be family and friends, as Barget reports? Perhaps it is true that such happiness can be found in the same country in which daily experience is shaped by an ongoing scenario of violence. In other words, it may not be possible to separate the things that make Colombians feel happy from the fact that they live their lives in a place where killing – as the "extreme expression" of violence (Blair XVII) - is the norm to resolve conflicts. How then can it be that the things that make Colombians happy are not diminished by the daily performance of violence? I argue that denial is Colombians' coping strategy; it makes room for the construction and maintenance of the Colombian scenario of happiness. By denying acts of violence, terror and repression, there is no urgency to understand how one's passive social attitude is complicit in such acts, and serves to endorse protestations to the contrary, the dominant dramaturgy.

What if Colombians acknowledge the *scenario* of violence, but also claim to be happy for having the basics of home, work, and family connections. Then, following Ahmed, those things are good. I cannot argue that home, work, and family connections are not important for being happy, and if I have these basic comforts in Colombia, then it is true that Colombia is a good place for me to be. I may even be nostalgic, living in New Zealand, for the happiness I had in Colombia, at home with my own people and traditions, regardless of the violence, terror, and repression against which my experience is cast. To equate personal happiness with the illusion that one's society is good makes a certain sense, but it is, in fact, a denial of reality, and the illusory and utopian thinking that reinforces a Manichaean way of thinking: the good is in us, the bad is everyone else. What if we actually see the unhappy parts of our nation for what they are? We might no longer be officially so happy, but we also might have a chance to do the work that is necessary to transform our society for the better. My society may not be denying the violence, terror, and repression enacted in everyday life in Colombia, but it is

denying the opportunity of being happy differently, of knowing happiness as a united nation.

The first example I used in this thesis to demonstrate how theatricality is part of everyday performances of violence was the assassination in 2016 of Klaus Zapata, the young activist from Soacha. Between January and June same year, the violence against activists and human rights leaders escalated to a shocking number of thirty-five murders, Zapata among them.[84] After a slight majority of the population – just 50.22% – voted against the peace agreement with FARC in a plebiscite in Oct. 2016, the government of Juan Manuel Santos and the congress ratified the peace accords making them effective from 1 Dec. This meant that FARC would stop existing as an insurgent group and its members would return to society as civilians. The expectations were that the country was reaching a new stage in which peace would allow redressing decades of violence were high. The commanders of FARC demobilised indeed;[85] they received some seats in Congress, and the soldiers started to prepare themselves to return to the civil life. However, peace never came – or at least not for the hundreds of social leaders killed since the implementation of the peace accords. According to the website *Pacifista!,* 241 leaders have been killed since 1 Dec. 2016.[86] Zapata's assassination and all the other murders prior to that date are not even taken into account. I cannot stop feeling discouraged but even so, I do not want to fall into the trap that this is inevitable; that this is a tragedy.

Throughout the thesis I have stated that tragedy is a dramaturgical device used mainly in the mass media to perpetuate the official scenario: violence is inevitable and

[84] See the bulletin ¿Este es el fin? from the NGO -Programa Somos Defensores- somosdefensores.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/INFORME-SOMOS-DEFENSORES-Enero_Junio-2016_ESPAN%CC%83OL.pdf
[85] In August 2019 former commanders announced they would return to the armed fight. See www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/farc-leaders-return-arms-brings-memories-bloodshed-190830175538010.html
[86] See pacifista.tv/notas/lideres-sociales-asesinados-inicio-implementacion/

dark forces control people's destiny, no matter what. Planting the seed in people minds that rebelling against those forces brings catastrophic consequences is a strategy to not see the theatricality in the *scenarios* of violence in Colombia. The Government could investigate and prosecute the killings of social leaders, but they do not; in fact, they their performances are aimed at a demonstration of the impossibility of controlling the violence. They stage themselves as if the violence were tragically fated by forces more powerful than their own. I have drawn from Boal's vision, my stance over tragedy. For Boal, Aristotle's poetic system aims to "diminish, placate, satisfy, eliminate, all that can break the balance - all, including the revolutionary, transforming impetus" (41). In Boal's reasoning, the tragic hero "fails in his actions" when he disobeys the laws but through catharsis the "undesirable element", the rebellion impulse, is repressed, and the deaths are the price to pay to maintain a virtuous society (29). I do not want to demonise Greek tragedy and its representation in modern stages which for many theatre-makers is the ideal vessel to represent "[…] metaphors of certain human condition" and the concept of death (Romero 36). However, to say that what happened at the Palace of Justice was a tragedy, or that the assassinations of public figures that offered us hope for a better future were tragic disruptions of an otherwise happy status quo, is too easy, an invitation to complacence.

The masses have been pacified by the tragic and the melodramatic. Their acceptance of the inevitability of violence has been constructed over time by repeating the dramaturgical tropes that limited desires for effective change. People's complicity is most of the time unconscious. Brad Evans and Henry A. Giroux consider in their book *Disposable Futures:The Seduction of Violence in the Age of Spectacle:*

> The spectacle of violence takes on a kind of doubling, both in the production of subjects willing to serve the political and economic power represented by the spectacle and increasingly in the

> production of political and economic power willing to serve the spectacle itself. (13)

For a society like Colombia, and probably elsewhere, this implies that people will expect that any action toward redress will simply produce more violence. At some point, the cycle of violence creates a closed loop of consciousness in which the truth of the situation no longer registers for those that are looking at the event. In the *Falsos Positivos*, as with Zapata's murder, any initial breakthrough of shock both at what has happened and the corruption that is revealed as a result, is quickly realigned with the dominant dramaturgy. The only real evolution in our social consciousness, it seems, is how accepting we have become of whatever drama the powerful present in support of the status quo. The violent world they have made for Colombians has become more theatrical than the theatre. But perhaps, as can be seen in the productions I have analysed, it is the theatre that can create enough space for Colombians to imagine a future happiness that is more real than the present reality.

References

Acemoglu, Daron, et al. “The Perils of High-Powered Incentives: Evidence from Colombia's False Positives.” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, Sept. 2016, http://www.nber.org/papers/w22617.

Ahmed, Sara. *Strange Encounters: Embodied others in post-coloniality*. Routledge, 2013. Print.

---. *The promise of Happiness*. Duke UP, 2010. Print.

Alape, Arturo. "El 9 de abril: Muerte y Desesperanza." *Versiones del Bogotazo*, edited by Antonio García Ángel., Idartes, 2018, pp.13-34.

---. *El Bogotazo: Memorias Del Olvido*. Planeta Colombiana, 2000.

Alarcón, Daniel, narrator. "La Noche Mas Larga, Parte 1." *Radio Ambulante*, season 3, episode 9, NPR, 6 Nov. 2018. *NPR*, www.npr.org/2018/11/05/664336448/la-noche-m-s-larga-parte-1].

---."La Noche Mas Larga, Parte 2." *Radio Ambulante*, season 3, episode 10, NPR, 13 Nov. 2018. *NPR*, www.npr.org/2018/11/09/666285337/la-noche-m-s-larga-parte-2].

Aldana Cedeño, Janeth. “Desarrollo del teatro moderno en Colombia: los grupos experimentales entre 1940 y 1960.” *Aisthesis*, no.53, 2013, pp. 185-202.

Apuleyo Mendoza, Plinio. “El detective detrás de la mano asesina de Gaitán.” *El Tiempo*, 8 April. 2013, www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12732142

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. e-book., Penguin, 2006.

---. *Responsibility and Judgment*. e-book., Schocken Books, 2003.

Arocha, R, et al. *Colombia. Violencia y Democracia: Informe Presentado Al Ministerio De Gobierno*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1987.

Barros, Laura “Toma del Palacio de Justicia, el principio del fin de la guerrilla del M-19.” *El Espectador*, 2 Nov 2015, www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/toma-del-palacio-de-justicia-el-principio-del-fin-de-gu-articulo-596597

Behar, Olga. *Noches de humo*: *cómo se planeó y ejecutó la toma del Palacio de Justicia*. Bogotá, Planeta, 1988.

Bell, John. “Performance Studies in an Age of Terror.” *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol.47, no.2, 2013, pp. 6-8. *The MIT Press* doi.org/10.1162/105420403321921210.

Berlant, Lauren, *Cruel Optimism*. North Carolina, Duke UP, 2011.

Bharucha, Rustom. *Terror and Performance*. e-book., Routledge, 2014.

Blair Trujillo, Elsa. “Aproximación Teórica Al Concepto De Violencia: Avatares De Una Definición.” *Política y Cultura*, no. 32, 2009, pp. 9-33. Print.

---. "La Violencia Frente a los Nuevos Lugares y/o los" Otros" de la Cultura." *Nueva Antropología*, vol. 20, no. 65, 2005, pp.13-28. Print.

---. *Muertes Violentas: La Teatralización Del Exceso*. Universidad de Antioquia, 2005. Print.

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London, Pluto Press, 2008. Print.

Braun, Herbert. "El cuerpo de Gaitán." *Versiones del Bogotazo*, edited by Antonio García Ángel., Idartes, 2018, pp.35-49. Print

---. "Gaitán corporal" *Versiones del Bogotazo*, edited by Antonio García Ángel., Idartes, 2018, pp.58-66. Print

---. "Los mundos del 9 de abril, o la historia vista desde la culata." *Pasado y Presente de la Violencia en Colombia*, edited by Ricardo Peñaranda and Gonzalo Sánchez., Fondo Editorial CEREC, 1986, pp. 225-261. Print.

Brecht, Bertolt, and Eric Bentley. "A Model for Epic Theater." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 57, no.3, 1949, pp. 425-36. Print.

Butcher, Samuel Henry. *The Poetics of Aristotle*. Macmillan, 1907. Print.

Caballero, Antonio. *Historia de Colombia y sus Oligarquías*. Ministerio de Cultura, Colombia, 2016. 13 vols. www.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/es-co/proyectos-digitales/historia-de-colombia/libro/index.html#chapters-list.

Carrigan, Ana. *The Palace of Justice: A Colombian Tragedy*. Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993. Print.

Casey, Nicholas. "Colombia Army's New Kills Orders Send Chill Down Ranks." *New York Times*, 18 May. 2019, nytimes.com/2019/05/18/world/americas/colombian-army-killings.html

Coronell, Daniel. "Los verdugos de Jaime Garzón". *Semana*, 21 Dec. 2013, www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/columna-de-coronell-sobre-los-autores-del-asesinato-de-jaime-garzon/369083-3.

Corral, Hernando. "La broma de Jaime Garzón a Gabo." *Soho*, n.d. www.soho.co/historias/articulo/jaime-garzon-hizo-broma-a-gabriel-garcia-marquez/33308.

Cortés-Tique, James. "El Thriller Mediático Del Asesinato De Jaime Garzón." *Revista Nexus Comunicación*, 2011, pp. 104-121. Print.

Cristancho Ossa, Fabián. "Memorias de risa y tragedia." *Expresión Periodismo Universitario*, 2009, pp. 20-25. *Universidad Católica de Pereira*, repositorio.ucp.edu.co/bitstream/10785/278/1/memoria.pdf

Critchley Simon, and Brad Evans. "The Theater of Violence." *The New York Times*, 14 Mar. 2016, https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/03/14/the-theater-of-violence/?searchResultPosition=1

"Cuando Jaime Garzón entrevistó a Néstor Humberto Martínez." *YouTube*, uploaded by L&R Política, 14 Nov. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkLvQuZ7j1w.

De Marinis, Marco, and Paul Dwyer. "Dramaturgy of the Spectator." *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol.31, no.2, 1987, pp.100-14. Print.

Diéguez, Ileana. *Escenários liminales: teatralidades, performatividades, políticas*. Toma, Ediciones y Producciones Escénicas y Cinematográficas, 2014. Print.

Doménici, Mauricio and Genny Cuervo. *1948 El Fracaso de una Utopía Popular*. Universidad del Valle, 2015. Print.

Durán Ayala, Raúl Orlando. *La siempreviva o el lenguaje del sufrimiento*. 2016. Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

"El acceso a la tierra ha sido el eje del conflicto armando." *Semana*, 25 Nov. 2010, www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-acceso-tierra-ha-sido-eje-del-conflicto-armado/125048-3.

Esquivel, Catalina. *Teatro La Candelaria: Memoria y Presente Del Teatro Colombiano*. 2014, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. Print

"Esta sí es la última entrevista a Jaime Garzón un día antes de su muerte." *Youtube*, uploaded by Joanpa Aguachica, 20 Sep. 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDkpV8_aAuo&index=4&list=PLPCXoneerPXc3S34csLco6b6w6eVn0u7&t=0s.

Gallagher, Kent. "Emotion in Tragedy and Melodrama." *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol.17, no.3, Oct. 1965, pp. 215-219. Print.

Garavito, Lucia. "Trauma cultural y memoria histórica en *El deber de Fenster* de Humberto Dorado y Matías Maldonado." *Latin American Theatre Review*, vol.49, no.2, 2016, pp. 11-33. Print.

Garzón Forero, Alfredo. "Jaime", *Jaime Garzon Forero*, 6 Sep. 2014, www.jaimegarzonforero.com/single-post/2014/09/05/Jaime

Garzón Forero, Jorge Alberto. "El niño Jaime", *Jaime Garzon Forero*, 12 Aug. 2014, www.jaimegarzonforero.com/single-post/2014/08/12/El-niño-Jaime

Garzón Forero, Marisol. "Sus ideales", *Jaime Garzon Forero*, 14 Aug. 2014, www.jaimegarzonforero.com/single-post/2013/08/14/Sus-ideales

"Garzón vive capítulo 1." *YouTube*, uploaded by Personajes Importantes de Colombia, 19, Jan. 2018. youtu.be/7-YxV6PsMOg.

Giroux, Henry A, and Brad Evans. *Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in the Age of Spectacle*. City Lights Publishers, 2015. Print.

Godfrey Wood, Rachel. "Understanding Colombia's False Positives." *Oxford Transitional Justice Research Working Paper Series*, 2009, pp.1-4. Print.

"Godofredo cínico caspa (Jaime Garzón) hablando sobre Uribe." *YouTube*, uploaded by Juan Sebastian García Blanco, 7 Aug. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgnpj8LlUe0.

Gökdağ, Ebru. "Bertolt Brecht in Latin America." *International Journal of Human Sciences* vol.12, no.1, 2015, pp. 527-538. Print.

Gómez, Diana Marcela. *Mataron la Risa. Un acercamiento desde la antropología al asesinato de Jaime Garzón*. 2003, Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Print.

Gómez Gallego, Jorge Aníbal, José Roberto Herrera Vergara, and Nilson Pinilla Pinilla. *Informe final: comisión de la verdad sobre los hechos del Palacio de Justicia*. Universidad del Rosario, 2010. Print.

Grupo de Memoria Histórica, GMH. *¡Basta ya! Colombia: Memorias de guerra y dignidad.* Bogotá: Presidencia de la República, 2013. Print.

Gutiérrez, Alberto Valencia. "Memoria y Violencia. A los cincuenta años de "La Violencia en Colombia" de Monseñor Guzmán Et Al." *Sociedad y Economía*, vol.23, 2013, pp. 59-84. Print.

"Historia del M-19." *YouTube*, uploaded by Jules Parrmur, 5 Nov. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0NOCOWXCfk&t=1428s.

Hylton, Forrest. *Evil Hour in Colombia*. Verso, 2006. Print.

Izagirre, Ander. "Así se fabrican guerrilleros muertos: El escándalo de las ejecuciones extrajudiciales en Colombia y un negocio siniestro dentro del Ejército: los falsos positivos." *El País*, 26 Mar. 2014, https://elpais.com/elpais/2014/03/06/planeta_futuro/1394130939_118854.html.

"Jaime Garzón - Zoociedad 2 de 2." *YouTube*, uploaded by ColomVideos, 6 Feb. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeESM072dUI

Jaramillo Marín, Jefferson. "Las comisiones de Estudio sobre la violencia en Colombia. La "voz crítica" de uno de sus protagonistas. Entrevista con el historiador Gonzalo Sánchez." *Análisis Político*, no.73, Sep – Dic, 2011, pp.159-68. Print.

---. *Pasados y presentes de la violencia en Colombia: Estudio sobre las comisiones de investigación (1958-2011)*. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2014. Print.

Jimeno, Ramón. *Noche de lobos*. Siglo Ventiuno Editores, 1989.

"La misteriosa muerte del activista de la JUCO en Soacha." *Kienyke*, 7 Mar. 2016, http://www.kienyke.com/krimen/la-misteriosa-muerte-del-activista-la-juco-soacha/

"La reparación de víctimas en Colombia, una promesa parcialmente cumplida." *ICTJ*, 6 April. 2015, ictj.org/es/news/estudio-reparacion-individual-victimas-colombia

"La Siempreviva: Entrevista a Miguel Torres (Parte I)." *YouTube*, uploaded by Revista La Caída, 28 Oct. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2eOK3CyymE&t=5s.

"La Siempreviva: Entrevista a Miguel Torres (Parte II)." *YouTube,* uploaded by Revista La Caída, 28 Oct. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=N82MFb43JB4

LeGrand, Catherine. "Labor Acquisition and Social Conflict on the Colombian Frontier, 1850-1936." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol.16, no.1, 1984, pp. 27-49. Print.

Malaver Gallo, Laura Patricia. *Tras Las Máscaras De Jaime Garzón*. 2014, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Print.

Mason, Ann. "Colombia's Democratic Security Agenda: Public Order in the Security Tripod." *Security Dialogue*, vol.34, no. 4, 2003, pp. 391-409. Print.

Meertens, Donny, and Margarita Zambrano. "Citizenship Deferred: The Politics of Victimhood, Land Restitution and Gender Justice in the Colombian (Post?) Conflict." *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, vol.4, no. 2, 2010, pp.189-206. Print.

Mellizo Rojas, Wilson Herney. *"Desaparecieron y asesinaron nuestros muchachos" El caso de Soacha: fronteras del sufrimiento, deber de reparación.* Universidad de la Salle, 2012. Print.

Morales, Antonio. "Un Adiós De Carnaval." *Revista Número*, no.38, 2003, pp.19-23. Print.

Narváez Jaimes, Ginneth Esmeralda. *La Guerra Revolucionaria Del M-19 (1974-1989)*. 2012, Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Print.

Ortiz Sarmiento, Carlos Miguel. "Los Estudios Sobre La Violencia En Las Tres Últimas Décadas." *Boletín Socioeconómico*, no. 24/25, 1992, pp. 45-76. Print.

Ospina, William. *Pa' que se acabe la vaina*. Grupo Planeta, 2013. Print.

Paolucci, Paul, and Margaret Richardson. "Sociology of Humor and a Critical Dramaturgy." *Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2006, pp. 331-348. Print.

Parejo González, Enrique. *La tragedia del Palacio de Justicia: cúmulo de errores y abusos*. Bogotá, Oveja Negra, 2010. Print.

Pavis, Patrice. *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*. University of Toronto Press, 1998. Print.

Pécaut, Daniel. *Violencia y política en Colombia: Elementos de reflexión*. Hombre Nuevo Editores, 2003. Print.

"Quac El Noticero capítulo 01." *YouTube*, uploaded by Quac El Noticiero Jaime Garzón, 6 April, 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Y3PoelHoWY

"Quac El Noticero capítulo 52." *YouTube*, uploaded by Quac El Noticiero Jaime Garzón, 17 Apr. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8TNFziOmGE

Reyes, Carlos José. "La voz en la tribuna: El verbo apasionado de Jorge Eliécer Gaitán." *Desde el jardín de Freud: revista de psicoanálisis*, no.8, 2008, pp. 113-125. Print.

---. *Teatro y violencia en dos siglos de historia de Colombia*. Ministerio de Cultura, Colombia, 2015. 3 vols. Print.

Ríos Sierra Jerónimo and Jaime Zapata García. "Democratic Security Policy in Colombia: Approaches to an enemy-centric counterinsurgency model." *Revista de Humanidades*, no. 36, 2019, pp. 129-154. Print.

Rincón, María Camila. "Lo que tiene que saber sobre el crimen de Jaime Garzón: los 5 datos claves". *Pacifista!*, 13, Aug. 2013, pacifista.tv/notas/lo-que-tiene-que-saber-sobre-el-crimen-de-jaime-garzon-los-5-datos-claves/.

"Rioters Sack Bogota." *British Pathé*, uploaded by British Pathé, 22 Apr. 1948, www.britishpathe.com/video/rioters-sack-bogota/query/rioters+sack.

Romero Rey, Sandro. *Género y destino. La tragedia griega en Colombia*. 2014, Universidad de Barcelona. Print.

Rosenmeyer, Thomas G. "Metatheater': An Essay on Overload." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, vol.10, no. 2, 2002, pp. 87-119. Print.

Salazar Isaza, Jorge. "Colombia: ¿Un país donde se muere en vano? Una interpretación antropológica de la vida y obra del humorista Jaime Garzón (1960-1999)." *Análisis Político*, no. 72, 2011, pp.101-14. Print.

Salazar Rodríguez, Paula Andrea. *Gaitán: Entre la sacralización y la satanización de su muerte. Usos políticos de la muerte de Jorge Eliécer Gaitán entre los años 1948 a 1953*. 2017, Universidad Nacional de La Plata. www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/tesis/te.1454/te.1454.pdf

Samaniego, Dayana Carolina Moreno. *Los Muertos en Colombia pasan como los créditos de una película y Jaime Garzón ¿es un crédito más?: Crítica política a través del humor*. 2010, Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Print.

Sánchez, Gonzalo. "Los estudios sobre la violencia." *Pasado y Presente de la Violencia en Colombia*. Fondo editorial CEREC, 1986, pp. 19-38. Print.

Sánchez, Gonzalo, and Donny Meertens. *Bandoleros, gamonales y campesinos: el caso de la violencia en Colombia*. El Ancora, 1985. Print

Sánchez-Blake, Elvira, and Yenifer Luna Gómez. "Camino a La Paz: Repertorios Simbólicos Testimoniales De Una Nación En Transición." *Kamchatka*, no.6, 2015, pp.941-957. Print.

Sanders, James E. Review of Bandits, Peasants, and Politics: The Case of "La Violencia" in Colombia. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 82 no. 2, 2002, pp. 390-391. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/article/12728.

Santos Molano, Enrique. "El día que mataron a Gaitán." *Revista Credencial Historia*, no.195, 2006, www.banrepcultural.org/biblioteca-virtual/credencial-historia/numero-195/el-dia-en-que-mataron-gaitan.

Satizábal, Carlos. "Conflicto y arte en Colombia: entre la ficción engañosa y la poesía." *Huellas: revista de la Universidad del Norte*, no.101, 2017, pp. 34-46. Print

---. "Memoria Poética y Conflicto En Colombia –a Propósito de Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres, de Tramaluna Teatro–." *Revista Colombiana de las Artes Escénicas*, no.9, 2015, pp. 250-268. Print.

Schechner, Richard. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. Print

---. "Occupy Solidarity." *TDR/The Drama Review*, vol.56, no.1, 2012, pp. 7-9. Print.

---. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. Routledge, 2013. Print.

---. "Performers and Spectators Transported and Transformed". *The Kenyon Review*, vol 3, no.4, 1981, pp. 83-113. Print

---. *Performance Theory*. Routledge, 2004. Print.

Schmid, Alex P. *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*. Taylor & Francis, 2011. Print.

Schuster, Sven. "Colombia: ¿País Sin Memoria?: Pasado Y Presente De Una Guerra Sin Nombre." *Revista de Estudios Colombianos*, no.36, 2010, pp. 30-38. Print.

Segura, Camila. "Violencia y Melodrama en la Novela Colombiana Contemporánea." *América Latina Hoy*, no.47, 2007, pp. 55-76. Print.

Sharpless, Richard E. *Gaitán of Colombia: A Political Biography*. e-book., University of Pittsburgh Press,1978.

"Siembra vida, siembra paz" *Unidad víctimas*, 9 April. 2016, unidadvictimas.gov.co/especiales/dia-nacional-victimas/comunicado.html

Sierra, Jerónimo Ríos, and Jaime Zapata García. "Democratic Security Policy in Colombia: Approaches to an Enemy-Centric Counterinsurgency Model." *Revista de Humanidades*, no.36, 2019, pp.129-154. Print.

Tahar Chaouch, Malik, "La presencia de una ausencia: Jorge Eliécer Gaitán y las desventuras del populismo en Colombia." *Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades*, vol. 11, no. 22, 2009, pp.251-262. www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=28211598011

Taussig, Michael. *The Nervous System*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Taylor, Diana. *Performance*. Durham: Duke UP, 2016.

---."Presidential Address 2018 ¡Presente!" *PMLA* 133.3 (2018): 482-90.

---. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Duke UP, 2003.

Toro, Juan José. “Un paseo por la corrupción detrás del asesinato de Jaime Garzón.” *Pacifista!*, 28 Mar. 2016, https://pacifista.tv/notas/un-paseo-por-la-corrupcion-detras-del-asesinato-de-jaime-garzon/

Turner, Victor. *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Cornell UP, 1974.

---. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982. Print.

---. *The Ritual Process Structure and Anti-Structure*. Cornell UP, 1987.

Uribe Alarcón, María Victoria. *Antropología De La Inhumanidad Un ensayo interpretativo sobre el terror en Colombia*. Bogotá, Grupo Editorial Norma, 2004.

---."Dismembering and Expelling: Semantics of Political Terror in Colombia." Public Culture 16.1 (2004): 79-95.

Villanueva, Salvador Padilla, and Laura Sampietro. ““Yo No Parí Hijos Para Una Guerra”: Entrevista a Luz Marina Bernal, lideresa de las Madres de Soacha.” *Iberoamérica Social: Revista-red de estudios sociales*, vol.2, no.2, 2014, pp.8-12. Print.

Viviescas, Víctor. "Modalidades de la representación en la escritura dramática colombiana moderna." *Literatura: teoría, historia, crítica*, no.8, 2006, pp.17-51. Print.

Waldmann, Peter. "Is There a Culture of Violence in Colombia?" *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol.19, no.4, 2007, pp. 593-609. Print.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. "Belonging and the Politics of Belonging." *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol 40, no.3, 2006, pp.197-214. Print.

Zamudio Palma, Mario. “La historia de cómo la líder de las madres de Soacha se sembró en la Plaza de Bolívar.” *Pacifista!*, 31 Jul. 2017, pacifista.tv/notas/la-historia-de-como-la-lider-de-las-madres-de-soacha-se-sembro-en-la-plaza-de-bolivar/

Zarzosa, Agustin. "Melodrama and the Modes of the World." *Discourse*, vol.32, no.2, 2010, pp. 236-255. Print.

“Zoociedad (Programa Jaime Garzón) cadena uno + cinevisión”, *YouTube*, uploaded by TV y Cine Colombia, 26 May 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=2387Fa9vi_k.

Zuleta, Mónica. “La violencia en Colombia: Avatares de la construcción de un objeto de estudio.” *Nómadas*, no.25, Oct. 2006, pp. 56-69. Print.