



Unit 6 Memory is a Verb Introduction

Amazingly, almost 40 years after the military junta began the National Reorganization Process (*El Proceso*), stories abound of people struggling with the past, trying to heal from a grave national trauma. The grandmothers continue to march on the Plaza de Mayo every Thursday and, thanks to unrelenting search and DNA testing, there are reports of grandchildren being reunited with their biological families. The expression “dirty war,” coined by Jorge Videla to describe the unconventional techniques used by his government to eliminate subversives, is now a global expression. *Nunca Más* is an international call to halt human rights abuses. Newly released government documents shed light on the impact of Operation Condor in the Southern Cone and abroad.

In *Unit 6 Memory is a Verb*, students will explore how to put the trauma of the National Reorganization Process in perspective. Some questions that arise are:

- Does the country move on by forgiving and forgetting, or by tenaciously demanding that justice be served?
- How do we make the invisible, visible?
- What are the politics of commemoration?
- How much time is needed before we decide how to commemorate?
- Who decides what form the commemoration will take?
- How do artists help heal society?

Essential Questions

In *Death and the Maiden*, Ariel Dorfman poses the essential questions of this unit on healing from the trauma of *El Proceso* by asking:

- “How can the repressors and the repressed live in the same land, share the same table?”
- “How to heal a country that has been traumatized by fear if that same fear continues to do its silent work.”
- “Can we keep the past alive without becoming its prisoners?”

- “Can we forget that past without risking its future replication”?

Objectives

Students will:

- analyze a political cartoon of Pope Francis in the shadow of the Dirty War
- discuss examples of local, national, and global tragedies and the effort to heal from the trauma
- listen to León Gieco sing homage to Claudio Lepratti (Pocho), assassinated social worker
- read the poem *Disappeared (Unmarked Graves) and Open Letter to My Grandchild* by Juan Gelman
- read a quotation about an encounter with Aldo Rico, the former military leader and politician who agitated against the prosecution of the 1976-1983 juntas – research Aldo Rico and the *carapintadas* (painted faces)
- role play a conversation about “moving on”
- read about activism art, commemorative art, social justice art, and art for remembering
- study and analyze examples of commemorative art
- write a creative essay using street art or commemorative art as a writing prompt

Lesson I “Time to Move On...”

A. Materials

- a. Quotation from Luis Arata, Professor of Modern Languages, Quinnipiac University. Reflection on an encounter with a former military man, a carapintada, who revolted in protest of President Raúl Alfonsín’s policy to prosecute top military leaders during the Dirty War.

B. Activity Sheets

- a. Unit 6 Lesson IA “Time to Move On...”
- b. Unit 6 Lesson IB Memory is a Verb

C. Suggested Reading and Movie Trailer

- a. Read Andrew S. Vargas’ article about historic memory “Tiempo Suspendido One Woman’s Quest to Move On from Argentina’s Dirty War.” 21 May 2015. *Remezcla: The New Latin Wave*.
<https://remezcla.com/film/trailer-tiempo-suspendido-one-womans-quest-to-move-on-from-argentinas-dirty-war/>
- b. Watch the movie trailer <https://youtu.be/mCEwFQukAOU>

D. Assessments

- a. Activity sheet responses
- b. Discussion
- c. Essay
- d. Group participation
- e. Role-play

E. Extension Activities

- a. Listen to:
 - i. "Desapariciones" by Rubén Blades. Song from *Buscando América* with slide show dedicated to the events that occurred during military dictatorships. Video (6:30)
<https://youtu.be/wGI-fQxMY9E>
 - ii. Maná’s interpretation of *Desapariciones*. Video <https://youtu.be/yNVyBONh0dE>
- b. Watch the TRAILER: “Tiempo Suspendido (1:45) <https://youtu.be/mCEwFQukAOU> and discuss the quotation “...looking back would imply living in the past as if it were the present.. and I can’t wrap my head around that. What’s done is done, the rest is up to you.”
- c. Watch the movie *The Official Story*

Instructions for Lesson I “Time to Move On...”

Step 1

Read aloud and discuss a quotation by Quinnipiac University Professor Luis Arata about an encounter with a former Dirty War repressor in 2000. Consider two options: moving on by forgiving and forgetting or moving on by tenaciously demanding that justice be served.

I was with a group of friends at a hotel’s restaurant in a small town up in the northern mountains in Argentina. My friends noticed someone at a nearby table and kept looking in that direction. It was a man about 10 years older than us, and a woman. The two seemed affected by the attention, got up, and left the restaurant without a word. My friends told me that the man was Aldo Rico, a “carapintada,” the leader of a military group that revolted against the democratic government that was trying to bring to justice those involved in crimes during the Dirty War.

The next morning we came for breakfast at the restaurant. Rico and the woman were already there. He promptly got up and left. She approached our table alone. She said we had to forget the past. It was time to move on. And she left. ~ Luis Arata, Professor, Quinnipiac University

Step 2

Organize a role-play activity of the above scene at the hotel in mountains of northern Argentina. Imagine an encounter between a group of friends, all of whom have friends or relatives who disappeared during El Proceso, and a former repressor of that period, Aldo Rico, and his wife. The encounter has sparked emotions for all the players.

Create a conversation between:

- the group of friends
- Sr. and Sra. Aldo Rico
- Sra. Rico and the group of friends
- Sr. Rico and the group of friends

Students should prepare for the role-play activity by researching about Aldo Rico, his role during the Falklands War and about the *carapintadas*. Student should record notes on *Unit 6 Activity Sheet Lesson I A “Time to Move On...”*

Step 3

After watching the role-play activity, ask students how they felt about their role. Did students feel their part in the activity was contrary to their personal beliefs about forgiving and forgetting or seeking justice? Or, was their role in keeping with personal beliefs? How does Sr. Aldo Rico defend his past actions? Where does the wife of a repressor fit into this history? Was she aware or unaware of her husband’s actions?

Step 4

Assign Activity Sheet *Unit 6 Lesson IB Memory is a Verb* for homework. Students will read a 2012 interview with Krzysztof Wodiczko and Julian Bonder for *Architecture Boston*, “Memory is a Verb,” in which Julian Bonder discusses memorials as places that are “alive to the possibilities of activism.”

Step 5

Review responses to homework assignment: *Unit 6 Activity Sheet Lesson IB Memory is a Verb*.

Lesson II Our Tragedies

A. Materials

- a. Notes from *Unit 1 Lesson II Introduction to Human Rights*
- b. Meier, Allison. "The Activism of Buenos Aires Street Art" 14 Feb 2013
<http://hyperallergic.com/65223/the-activism-of-buenos-aires-street-art/> White Walls Say Nothing/*Paredes blancas no dicen nada*.
- c. Video trailer *White Walls Say Nothing*. Graffitimundo (2:23) <http://youtu.be/FL0OXgwZw38> (English subtitles)
- d. Quotation for discussion:
"In response to the Dirty War, the environment of fear, and lack of free speech, street art, became a public voice, and in the decades that followed, it has continued to be part of an activist culture of art." -Allison Mier 14 Feb 2013.

B. Activity Sheets

- a. Unit 6 Lesson II Our Tragedies

C. Suggested Reading

- a. Cotter, Holland. "The 9/11 Story Told at Bedrock, Powerful as a Punch to the Gut: Memorial Museum at Ground Zero Prepares for Opening." *New York Times*. 14 May 2014.
<http://nyti.ms/1gmcj5k>
- b. Hite, K. "Empathic Unsettlement and the Outsider within Argentine Spaces of Memory." *Memory Studies* 8.1 (2014): 38-48. Web.
- c. Murray, Rheana. "What Life Is Like in Newtown 2 Years After Sandy Hook Shooting." *ABC News* 14 Dec 2014
<https://abcnews.go.com/US/life-newtown-years-sandy-hook-shooting/story?id=27533698>

D. Assessments

- a. Activity sheet responses
- b. Discussion
- c. Notes

E. Extension Activities

- a. Use the internet to search for news updates related to the Dirty War, Operation Condor, and children of "desaparecidos" reunited with relatives.
- b. Watch video *Sólo le pido a Dios - Mercedes Sosa with León Gieco*, filmed live at the Teatro Opera Buenos Aires. "I only ask of God" - Music and lyrics by León Gieco – an anti-war song with scenes from the Luis Mandoki movie *Innocent Voices* about the 1980's civil war in El Salvador. 16 Nov 2013. Video (4:31) <https://youtu.be/WwscYHlJobs> (English subtitles)

Instructions for Lesson II Our Tragedies

Recall historic examples of human rights abuses or tragic events that are familiar to students. Explore the ways in which people heal from those tragedies.

Step 1

Review notes from *Unit 1 Lesson II Introduction to Human Rights*.

Make a list of memorials you know that were created in honor of the disappeared or deceased. Note the form of the memorialization, for example fountains, landmarks, sculptures, statues, and street art.

Discuss the emotions that memorials evoke. Are some memorials more effective than others? Do the memorials reach all socioeconomic groups? Are there examples of controversy or conflict over the creation of memorials?

Are they effective even if a person doesn't have a direct connection to the traumatic event?

Raise a question about the politics of creating commemorative space or objects and situations that might cause controversy.

Step 2

Discuss Ariel Dorfman's essential questions.

- "How can the repressors and the repressed live in the same land, share the same table"?
- "How to heal a country that has been traumatized by fear if that same fear continues to do its silent work"?
- "Can we keep the past alive without becoming its prisoners"?
- "Can we forget that past without risking its future replication"?

Step 3

In preparation for *Lesson III The Art of Healing*, watch video trailer *White Walls Say Nothing*. Graffitimundo.

Video (2:23) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FL0OXgwZw38&feature=youtu.be> (Spanish/English subtitles)

Discuss the following quotation about activist art:

In response to the Dirty War, the environment of fear and lack of free speech, street art "became a public voice, and in the decades that followed, it has continued to be part of an activist culture of art." ~Allison Mier for *hyperallergetic.com* 14 Feb 2013

Lesson III The Art of Healing

A. Materials

a. Introduction

- i. Video. EL SILUETAZO de Rodolfo Aguerreberry, Julio Flores y Guillermo Kexel. Estudio Soma. Video(2:28) <https://youtu.be/jxl4YjLHyuk>
- ii. History of El Siluetazo, the 1983 collaboration between artists Aguerreberry, Flores, and Kexel, the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, and thousands of students and activists. They created life-sized human silhouettes to protest crimes against humanity. Video shows making silhouettes and includes historic footage and present day examples of intervention in public space. (Spanish)

iii. Vocabulary

activist art	public space
closure	reconciliation
collective memory	remorse
<i>escrache</i> (to bring justice)	spaces of memory
empathy	street art
Impunity	truth commission
justice	trauma tourism
memory art	
perpetrators	

b. Lesson III Activity A

- i. *00350 Documentación y Producción artística*. Photographs of *bicis/bicycles and cartas/ letters*. To see photographs of bicycles/ *bicis* go to <http://www.escala.org.uk/collection/artists/fernando-traverso/AUTH378/350-intervencion-urbana-rosario/O706>
- ii. Video. León, Gieco. *El Ángel de la Bicicleta Homenaje a Claudio Lepratti (Pocho)*. You Tube <https://youtu.be/E7nT8Ftkeq8>
<https://youtu.be/joqRVaGhpbY> , <https://youtu.be/pR2rrVMW2KI>

c. Lesson III Activity B

- i. *Gelman, Juan*. "An Open Letter to My Grandson or Granddaughter (1995)." *The Legacy Project*.
<http://www.lettersofnote.com/2015/10/i-would-like-to-give-you-your-own.html>
- ii. See Special projects

d. Lesson III Activity C

- i. Fontes, Claudia. Reconstruction of the portrait of Pablo Míguez
<http://claudiafontes.com/project/reconstruction-of-the-portrait-of-pablo-miguez/>
<http://claudiafontes.com/project/process-of-reconstruction/>
<http://claudiafontes.com/project/placement/>
Photograph of Pablo Míguez sculpture by Claudia Fontes
- ii. Poem -*Disappeared (Unmarked Graves)* by Juan Gelman
<http://www.communitypublishing.org/guest-poet-juan-gelman/>
"Juan Gelman, Argentine poet who fought against a military junta, dies at 83." PBS.14 Jan 2014. Ilan Stavans reflects on the life and poetry of Juan Gelman.
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/art-blog-remembering-argentine-poet-juan-gelman>

- e. Lesson III Activity D
 - i. Cartoon of Pope Francis by Milt Priggee
 - ii. Anderson, Jon Lee. "Pope Francis and the Dirty War." *The New Yorker*. 14 Mar 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/pope-francis-and-the-dirty-war> . Discussion about Pope's complicity in the Dirty War.
 - iii. Kirchgaessner, Stephanie and Uki Goñi. "Pope's South American tour recalls a divided church – and a dirty war." *The Guardian*. 8 July 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/08/pope-francis-south-america-argentina-dirty-war-dictatorship>
 - iv. Goñi, Uki. "Pope Francis orders Vatican to open files on Argentina dictatorship." *The Guardian*. 29 April 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/29/pope-francis-argentina-orders-vatican-open-files-dictatorship>
 - v. Goñi, Uki. "Pope Francis: What did he really do in Argentina in the 1970s?" *The Guardian*. 19 Mar 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/19/pope-francis-argentina-1970s>
 - vi. Romero, Simon and William Neuman. "Starting a Papacy, Amid Echoes of a 'Dirty War.'" 17 Mar 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/18/world/americas/francis-begins-reign-as-pope-amid-echoes-of-argentinas-dirty-war.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- B. Activity Sheets
 - a. Unit 6 Lesson III The Art of Healing
 - Lesson III A *Bicis* Memory of Disappeared Comrade
 - Lesson III B Cartas/letters to the Repressor
 - Lesson III C Pablo Míguez sculpture
 - Lesson III D Pope Francis in the Shadow of the Dirty War
- C. Suggested Readings
 - a. Hite, K. "Empathic Unsettlement and the Outsider within Argentine Spaces of Memory." *Memory Studies* 8.1 (2014): 38-48.
 - b. Hite, Katherine. *Politics and the Art of Commemoration: Memorials to Struggle in Latin America and Spain*, London; New York: Rutledge, 2012. See Chapter 5, The Globality of Art and Memory Making: The Bicis of Fernando Traverso.
 - c. Turner, Charlotte, "If there's no justice, there's *escrache!*" *The Argentina Independent*. 28 July 2007 <https://web.archive.org/web/20180928201009/http://www.argentinaindependent.com/socialissues/humanrights/if-theres-no-justice-theres-escrache/>
Escraches are public demonstrations of humiliation. Activist hope to influence the government to take action on cases like human rights abuse that may have gone unpunished.
- D. Assessments
 - a. Activity sheet responses
 - b. Discussion
 - c. Essays
 - d. Personal political cartoon
- E. Extension Activities
 - a. Music video -León Gieco-"La Memoria" –León Gieco, Mercedes Sosa, Victor Heredia Album: *Bandidos rurales*, 2002. Video (5:36) www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Q2GJQDHXEQ
 - b. Music video- El Blog de Charly Garcia. La música, el salvavidas en la dictadura. 22 Mar 2014. Spanish; includes protest music videos. <http://www.charlygarcia.com.ar/2014/03/la-musica-el-salvavidas-en-la-dictadura.html> SERU GIRAN - Canción de Alicia en el país. [elblogdecharlygarcia https://youtu.be/TMmS07p0bkg](https://youtu.be/TMmS07p0bkg)

- c. Research commemorative spaces in Argentina, Chile, Guatemala and Peru.
- d. View Photographs of Memory Park
 - i. Flickr
<https://www.flickr.com/search/?sort=relevance&text=parque%20de%20la%20memoria%20argentina>
 - ii. *Parque de la Memoria- Memory Park, a Memorial to the Victims of Argentina's "Dirty War"* Altas Obscura. <http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/parque-de-la-memoria>

Instructions for Lesson III the Art of Healing

In 1983, three artists, Rodolfo Aguereberry, Julio Flores, and Guillermo Kexel, proposed the creation of faceless life-size figures to be placed on trees, walls and monuments as a way to protest against the dictatorship. They submitted the idea to the Madres de Plaza de Mayo who required that the images not have names, dates or pictures on them in order to represent all the disappeared, not individuals. Thousands of people participated in the creation of silhouettes during the *Marcha de la Resistencia*. The *Siluetazo* was intended to make people aware of those who were missing and was a call for justice.

Katherine Hite, professor of Political Science at Vassar College, explores the complicated and highly politicized attitudes towards memorials in *Politics and the Art of Commemoration: Memorials to Struggle in Latin America and Spain*. She talks about the politics of memory, commemorative conflicts and of collaborations towards global connections. Much of the memory art in Rosario, Argentina is street art and Hite toured Rosario with Rubén Chababo, director of Rosario's Museum of Memory. Chababo believes that, "memory institutions should always seek to provoke questions, to confront and defy the 'great ghost of museumification' " (94). Hite also interviewed Fernando Traverso who is famous for stenciled bicycle silhouettes that appear throughout the city. He calls his *bicis* "counter-monuments" from his belief that "Monuments meant to remember people just end up killing them all over again" (90).

Traverso's *bicis* are reminders of the 350 people who disappeared from the streets of Rosario during the dictatorship of the 1970's. Many of the disappeared were activists; some, friends of Traverso, abandoned their bicycles along the side of the road. Traverso himself averted being disappeared when his friend Cachilo high-signed him of danger. Cachilo disappeared and his bike was found against a tree. Originally, Traverso stenciled, numbered, and photographed 350 *bicis* around Rosario. According to Hite, "...the *bicis* that dot the city evoke solidarity with their riders. Rosarinos speak appreciatively of the *bicis* as a positive dimension of their urban landscape." The legacy of Traverso's stencils is the *bici* as a global symbol with examples in Europe, the United States, and Latin America. They also are representative of injustice beyond the 20th century into the 21st. Musician León Gieco even immortalized the assassinated social activist, Pocho Lepratti, in 2001 with the song, "The Angel of the *Bicis*."

Traverso also stencils *sobres/cartas* (envelopes/letters) on the doorsteps of people who have committed crimes against humanity. *00350 Documentación y Producción artística* has a gallery of *cartas* many of which have been stenciled during *escraches*, or public shamings. *Escraches*, social condemnations of crimes that have gone without state condemnation, were begun by H.I.J.O.S (Hijos por la identidad y la Justicia contra la Olvido e el Silencio/Children for Identity and Justice and Against the Forgotten and the Silence), children of the families of the disappeared during El Proceso.

In addition to the silhouettes and stencils, there are commemorative *baldosas* or tiles. Other reminders of the disappeared in Argentina are at the Navy School of Mechanics (ESMA) in Buenos Aires (see photograph above)

and Memory Park.

In this lesson, students will study stenciled *bicis*, *cartas*, and the sculpture of 14-year-old Pablo Míguez by Claudia Fontes. The sculpture, standing in the river, is a haunting image of the disappeared who were tortured, stripped of their identification and clothing, then thrown into the water on “death flights.”

Step 1

Introduce students to activist art. Watch *EL SILUETAZO de Rodolfo Aguerreberry, Julio Flores, y Guillermo Kexel*. Estudio Soma. Video (2:28) <https://youtu.be/jxI4YjLHyuk>. This brief video explains the history of El Siluetazo, the 1983 collaboration between artists Aguerreberry, Flores, and Kexel, the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, and thousands of students and activists. They created life-sized human silhouettes to protest crimes against humanity. The video shows making silhouettes and includes historic footage as well as present-day examples of intervention in public space. (See Extension Activities D (i, ii) for links to photographs of Memory Park.)

Step 2

Distribute *Unit 6 Activity Sheet Lesson III Memory is a Verb*. Students will choose one of the three examples of commemorative art to analyze. After several minutes of observing and noting details about the photographs, students will write a creative essay about the piece in which they demonstrate what they learned during this study of human rights in Argentina.

Step 3

Initiate a whole class discussion about student essays or read essays aloud. Draw conclusions about:

- how to remember and forget
- how to make visible the invisible
- the politics of commemoration
- the process of healing

Step 4

Conclude the unit with a political cartoon study and discussions about the long shadow of the Dirty War that even follows Pope Francis into the 21st century. The Dirty War continues to make headlines in the news and, as recently as July 8, 2015, Pope Francis continues to declare that he was not sympathetic to the military regime. Although the church apologized for its silence during the military regime, activists want help learning about the fate of the disappeared.

Suggested talking points about the legacy of the Dirty War:

- The Dirty War impacted all segments of society.
- The Mothers/Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, H.I.J.O.S. human rights activists are still active 40 years later.
- Forensic activity continues, DNA testing has helped connect children of the disappeared with biological families.
- Commemorative art, literature and music remind us not to forget.
- Declassified documents are becoming available for the public to read
- Terms coined during the 1970's and 1980's have become adopted globally. Examples are:
 - “Dirty War”
 - *Nunca Más*
 - Truth commission
 - Estrachés (demands for justice by public humiliation)

- Stenciled bicycles and letters at intervenciones urbanos/urban interventions are global events.