

RE-MEANING THE INDIGENOUS MUISCA CEMETERY OF USME, COLOMBIA: ETHNOGRAPHY OF COLLABORATIVE PROJECT AND PATRIMONIAL DEBATE

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ABSTRACT

The paper exposes an ethnographic view of a collaborative field work, made in Hacienda El Carmen in Usme, Colombia, a terrain where an indigenous muisca cemetery was found. The analysis focuses on the struggles between the named “authorized patrimonial discourse” and the “cultural process of patrimony”.

In the first part, I want to expose the processes that led us to purpose a current collaborative research project implemented by the Universidad Santo Tomás’ Group of Memory and the Indigenous Muisca Community of Bosa. Based on a situational analysis methodology, this part is the result of an ethnographic field work of some spaces of dialogue and encounter among different logics to understand the patrimony and the heritage. In middle of struggles with the public institutions, the academy and other social groups, the muisca people build and negotiate their ethnic identity as part of their cultural and political project. In the second part, the situational analysis will be applied in scenarios where the muisca people began to interpret the archaeological territory of Hacienda El Carmen. In this part, I will try to expose some epistemological reflections about alternative and inclusive ways of knowledge and remembering. The new senses and narratives, produced as a result of this exercise, let us thinking about the symbolic strategies used by the muisca people to occupy an important place in the present and the possibility of understanding and purposing current citizen visions from creative and original ways of incorporate ancestral memories.

Key words: Patrimony, Memory, Muisca People, Re-meaning, Collaborative Methodologies

1. Introduction: The Muisca cemetery of Usme

It is Sunday, September 30th of 2012. Early, in the morning, a group of indigenous muisca leaders are meeting next to a group of antique graves, located in a rural property of a Bogota’s locality of Usme. Some academics and members of public institutions are presented too. The bones and pieces of pottery were taken out from the holes by a National University’s archaeological team and brought to a laboratory. Gualcala, a muisca medicine man, put a leaves of *coca* in his mouth and begins chewing (*mambear*). Then, he introduces the meeting with a speech:

“We want that the institutions and the government of the city listen to the muisca people for they can have the opportunity of taking part in the implementation and the management of this place. One of the reasons for this meeting is that the knowledge produced from this site is the one that the archaeology has transmitted us. But I believe the territory is beginning to claim us that we can star to read, to understand, to decipher, and to share the book present into it. This book must be firstly read by the muisca people” (Taken from field diary).

In 2007 the locality of Usme became an important focus for the news due to one discover of one of largest indigenous cemeteries in Latin America. The fact was produced when, accidentally, a bulldozer removed a portion of soil to build houses. That work was part of a governmental social housing project in a property named Hacienda el Carmen, directed by the public corporation Metrovivienda. Many peasants and local leaders claim that Metrovivienda wanted to maintain the finding in secret. For this reason, the communities of Usme denounced the act to the public authorities and mass media.

As a result, the Anthropology and History National Institute (ICANH) stopped the Metrovivienda’s building processes and authorized to National University’s Anthropological Department to begin a project of preventive archaeology to determine the importance of the discovery and obtaining first scientific results. The archaeological place has an area of 80.000 square meters and, in a first stage of excavation, 135 human skeletons and 300.000 pottery fragments were found. During the scientific processes, neither muisca people nor peasant

communities were consulted by the archaeologists. Furthermore, the main concern of those social groups was that the Bogota's government had decided approving a partial plan which wants to protect only 8 acres of a total of 35, where the National University's team had estimated that more remains could be found. This plan, designed in 2008, did not offer a guarantee of stopping social housing projects near to the archaeological site. For the muisca spiritual leaders, this was an act of profanity. For the rest of activist organizations, the plan sentenced southern rural territory of the city to the disappearance. In sum, these conflicts were framed in a complex net of historical and problematic conditions that have characterized the territory of Usme: struggles for the conservation of ways of inhabiting resulted of long periods occupying the territory, the preoccupation for the care and preservation of natural resources, the search of shelter for a increasingly dense population, and the recognition of muisca's knowledge and ancestral ritual practices in the middle of modern urban dynamics.

However, in October of 2011 the history of struggles related with the archeological finding of Hacienda El Carmen had a break point: the new elected mayor of Bogota, Gustavo Petro, announced publicly his government plan, in which the urban expansion to the south of the city might be stopped. This meant that the property Hacienda El Carmen, among others, shall be protected and that the new government's perspective should avoid the use of its soil for building projects. Then, although Metrovivienda is currently the owner of Hacienda El Carmen, the new plan prospects that the Institute of Patrimony, ascribed to Secretary of Culture, was the manager of the archaeological site. In this framework, the muisca people, as Gualcala pronounced in his speech, would have the opportunity to participate in dialogic and communicative planning spaces with the public institutions, the academy and other social communities to decide the future of Hacienda El Carmen.

In this paper I will expose an advance of a collaborative research project conducted by the Universidad Santo Tomás' Group of Memory, which includes the active participation of indigenous muisca community of Bosa, one of the two muisca communities in Bogota, officially recognized by the Colombian state, and spiritual authorities of other ethnic groups. I propose, along the paper, an ethnographic view of a collaborative field work. In this sense, the analysis focuses on two points. Firstly, the actual debates on heritage, mainly framed in the struggles between the named "authorized patrimonial discourse" and a dissident memories that propose a critical view to the heritage which is understood as a "cultural process" and not as a simple "thing" (Smith, 2011: 42). Secondly, the disputes about indigenous point of view in the interpretation and management of the archaeological register reflect the possibility of talking about of an "ethnic citizenship" which implies the reconfiguration of ethnic subjects themselves in the context of their relationship with the state (de la Peña, 2002: 129).

In the first part of the article, I want to expose the processes that led us to purpose the current collaborative research project implemented by the Universidad Santo Tomás' Group of Memory and the Indigenous Muisca Community of Bosa. Based on a situational analysis methodology, this part is the result of an ethnographic field work of some spaces of dialogue and encounter among different logics to understand the patrimony and the heritage. It is a good instance of the conflicts between authorized and alternatives visions of the cultural memory. Furthermore, in middle of struggles with the public institutions, the academy and other social groups, the muisca people build and negotiate their ethnic identity as part of their cultural and political project. In the second part, the situational analysis will be applied in scenarios where the muisca people began to interpret the archaeological territory of Hacienda El Carmen. In this part, I will try to expose some epistemological reflections about alternative and inclusive ways of knowledge and remembering.

2. The Born of a Collaborative Project: Connecting Everyday Life Encounters to Wide Structures

The word "collaborative" seems to mean an ideal state of comprehension, understanding and common actions as a result of intentions of collaboration and acceptance of otherness. However, its communicative component could involve conflict and confrontation. That is the case of a space of relations in which actors as indigenous, archaeologists, communal leaders, and public authorities fight or try to reach an agreement with respect to the management of a territory or objects considered as patrimony. The situational analysis focuses on a particular sequence of interaction and confrontation in a defined scenario, which seeks understand the motivations of the actors with particular reference to power relations and social and cultural conditions in a specific time and space (Garbett, 1970; de la Peña, 2002). For instance, in the next ethnographic fragment we can find a particular conflictive situation with respect to the patrimony.

On Monday, November 14th of 2011, Professor Virgilio Becerra, archaeologist of Hacienda El Carmen, was exposing some empirical details of his scientific work: the stratigraphic layers to determine the age of the founded objects –which had been identified as belonging to *muisca tardío* (since fifth century to sixteenth century A.C.), the materials of potsherds, and information about diseases and dietary habits of the muisca people based on the studies of the bones. However, an environmentalist young of Usme named Morris, seemed to be uncomfortable. When I took a tobacco from mi *mochila* (indigenous bag) and lit it, he smiled me. He approached me and I shared him a tobacco. Whispering while Virgilio was talking, he said me that he disagreed with the way that the National University had been managing the information about Hacienda el Carmen. Also, he was reiterative with respect to the fact of that the archaeological team had never taken in account the opinions of peasant and inhabitants of Usme about the history and meanings of the archaeological record. But the most disrespectful act made by the professor, according to Morris, was that “he never asked permission to land spirits to join to the sacred territory”. In this moment, the scientific practice in the site was disrupted when Morris took a *sonajero* (rattle) from his *mochila* and conducted a canticle in greeting to the spirits of territory. While Morris performed his sacred act of respect, some indigenous of muisca community of Sesquilé (municipality near to Bogota) arrived. Once the short ritual finished, all group of visitors went in front of the graves. Enrique, muisca of Sesquilé, performed a medicine ritual in which he used *jozca* (powdered snuff) to be blown through the participants’ nostrils. Of course, only few of us received the medicine; the rest of the people continued hearing the professor’s academic presentation. As a result, the scenario was divided into two: in one side, the positivist and scientific discourse; at the other side, an expression of an alternative social use of the patrimony.

Our research project’s analytical vision is framed, firstly, in the perspective of the Studies Committee on Violence, Subjectivity and Culture, leaded by Alejandro Castillejo. For this Colombian anthropologist of war, within the studies of violence –or, in our case, space of conflicts, it is necessary “the return of everyday life” (Castillejo, 2000; 2009). Instead of understanding everyday life as the world of the routine and the usual, Castillejo relates it with the face to face encounters. From a phenomenological view, the world of daily relationship is structured by historic and social tensions and, in consequence, when one conflictive situation among different actors occur in a specific time and space, objective macro-structures are constantly affecting such subjective interactions. The everyday acts, as structured practices, have been studied by an important academic tradition of symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1959) and the theorists of “worldmaking” (Goodman, 1964) and the “symbolic power” in the construction of social space (Bourdieu, 1989).

In sum, the struggles expressed by the social practices of interpreting, appropriating and using the archaeological patrimony in Hacienda El Carmen are performed by subjects whose everydayness is figured by wider structures. Those structures, in the current case of study, correspond to three relevant issues related to the politics of memory and identity in national and global contexts: patrimony, multiculturalism, and the new ethnicities.

2.1. Toward a Dynamic and Communicative Approach of Patrimony

The idea of patrimony as one of the most important social movements of our age proposes an approach for understanding it as a process. That means that “the patrimony does not exist, it is created” (Bendix, 2009: 255), and that it is a “communicative act” (Dicks, 2000). Recent works, as the made by Laurajane Smith, argue that the patrimony is a process that takes into account the negotiation of memory, the identity and the sense of place, in which remembering, forgetting and commemorating are part of social and cultural changes (Smith, 2011: 42). In contrast with this perspective, the classic approach of the authorized patrimonial discourse has understood the patrimony and the heritage as “things”. In this sense, three features could be highlighted.

Firstly, the patrimony has an “essence”, then its means about the past and the culture that it represents cannot be changed (Smith, 2011: 43). This seems to be a result of a large tradition of studies of social memory founded by Maurice Halbwachs, in which the memory is an exercise performed in social frameworks of the present according to each era and in harmony with society’s dominant thoughts (Halbwachs, 2004: 10). However, these forms of memory are taken as coming from formed and self-contained collective identities. In Bárbara Mitzval’s words, from the Halbwachs’ approach “the collective identity precedes the memory; therefore, the social identity determinates the content of collective memory” (Mitzval, 2003: 52). As a result, the memory is a passive reception of meanings and senses transmitted by objects, discourses or figures that crystallize the collective identity (Assman, 1995). Therefore, the identity becomes an immutable assumption that is inherently embedded within patrimonial places and objects (Smith, 2011: 44).

Secondly, the administrative functions related with the patrimonial goods and events are carried out by experts. They have the responsibility of protecting and communicating the patrimonial values of the nation's past. At same time, the authorized patrimonial discourse recognizes and validates certain body of knowledge and let them to have privileged access to the patrimonial resources, which are both material and symbolic (Smith, 2011: 45). Again, these statements are linked to a classic approach of understanding memory. This is represented by the most famous work edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger "The Invention of Tradition" ([1983] 2008). Their main statement about such traditions, which appear or claim to be old when they were created or invented quite recent, is nearly related with the political fields of struggles that sustain the processes of construction of the state-nation. Then, we can infer that behind the monopoly of the patrimony's interpretation and management, an institutional dispositive seems to be unfolding, whose function is establishing an official version of the past, inculcating certain values and norms of behavior by repetition and establishing continuity with a suitable historic past (Hobsbawm and Ranger, ([1983] 2008: 1). For this reason, other authors defined the problem of patrimony as an "ideological apparatus" (Candau, 2002) and as one element used by the state to crystallize the national values and the heritage that support the collective identity.¹

Thirdly, under the logic of the authorized patrimonial discourse, the different conflicts regarding to interpretation and preservation of patrimony are taken as isolated events, instead of be seen as a fundamental routine or aspect of the patrimony's nature (Smith, 2011: 44). The vision of patrimony as a thing obscures the debate about the cultural processes occurred in the management and conservation of this. We can suspect, from a conflictive dimension of patrimony, that subaltern memories emerge to confront official interpretations of the past. Then, our research share the Mitzval's propose of studying the memory from a "dynamic approach" (2003). This perspective wants to understand how societies remember trough creative ways of collecting, selecting and organizing their remains and objects of memory. In sum, and according with Smith (2001), the patrimony is not the thing, but the processes of creation of sense and representation that occur when the patrimonial places and events are identified, defined, managed, exhibited and visited. In this sense, a dynamic approach of memory is close to what Assman (1995) defined as "communicative memory". This is formed from a set of particular views of the past, according with shared interpretations of the remains and objects and it is characterized by a high level of non-specialization, by the reciprocity of roles, and by thematic instability and disorganization.

2.2. Multiculturalism and Muisca Ethnicity: Toward Intercultural Fields

A common statement pronounced both some leaders of Usme's communities and muisca authorities involved in the debates about Hacienda El Carmen, is that the professor Virgilio Becerra does not recognize the interests of communities and the existence of muisca people in the present. Even, on October of 2012 the Universidad Santo Tomás' Group of Memory organized a forum in which muisca communities, social organizations of Usme, and the official institutions of Patrimony were invited to participate in a dialogic space to draw future possibilities of management of archaeological record and territory. The date and time of forum was set according with Virgilio's personal schedule. However, although many confirmation phone calls, he never got. This was understood as an act of avoiding the debate and as displays of arrogance. This face to face encounter –or non encounter- backing to our situational analysis, is linked to a chain of historic incidences framed in the relationship between assimilation-integration ideologies of building the state nation in middle of cultural diversity, and the role of ethnicities in the debates about national cultures.

Today, five indigenous muisca communities are officially recognized by the Colombian state, two in old colonial towns currently integrated to Capital District of Bogota (*Bosa* and *Suba*) and three in municipalities of the department (region) of Cundinamarca (*Cota*, *Chía* y *Sesquilé*). However, they have faced a set of struggles for their acceptance in the present by the majority society and the state's institutions. According to Eduardo Restrepo, the muisca are included in the official educational programs, but as cultures of the past in relation with an origin of the national culture (Restrepo, 2005). Since the Colonial age, the indigenous muisca were positively represented as civilized. This image was strengthened after Independence when the *criollos*, the white and *mestizo* people, began to think in the symbolic and historic basis of the national identity (Langebaek, 2009). During the first stage of Republicanism, the collection of pre-Columbian objects and the formation of first museums contributed with the searching of moral values embodiment into the ancient cultures of the center of Colombia (Botero, 2006). This romantic philosophy highlighted muisca's positive attributes, while their descendants were considered *mestizos* and without any trace of their ancestors. Once the colonial *resguardos*

¹ A complete review of the main authors and studies with respect to the relation state-nation and the social embodiment of political ideologies can be found in Alonso (1994).

(reserves or collective lands for indigenous groups) were dissolved in Cundinamarca since 1834, the liberalist government defined muisca as a peasant and particular owner of private terrains (Curry, 1981). In sum, muisca, as all indigenous group in Colombia, were interpreted as a sign of backward against the progress and modern development. During practically all twentieth century, Colombia and Latin American countries were defined as homogeneous national cultures by their political constitutions.

While this occurred, a reality was become undeniable an evident. The transitional political processes in African and Asiatic colonies during the post war period putted the ethnicity in the debate about the construction of new state-nations. The term ethnicity had begun to be used in the anthropology instead of race. Then, the relationship between ethnicity, nation and state became a conceptual framework to study the formation of new republics in postcolonial contexts (Fenton, 2003; Chirot and Seligman, 2002; Alonso, 1994, Hutchinson and Smith, 1996; Smith, 1996). The “ethnonational differences” occupied the main issue of study to understand the strategies used by the states to control and giving a solution to the problem of ethopolitical warfare. The integration-assimilation had become in one of the main political methods for the goal of ethnonational homogenization (O’Leary, 2002). But the postcolonial and post-conflict contexts were featured by a wide migratory wave from old colonies to the metropolitan centers. As a result, the most important cities of the developed, democratic and capitalistic countries were converted in spaces for cultural diversity.

Based on this undeniable situation, the concept of multiculturalism appeared to think an ideal model to integrate the cultural and ethnic difference without jeopardize the Democracy (Rex, 1997; Kuper, 1997; Kymlicka, 1997). This ideal was defined as the ideological system that “envisages a unitary society in the public domain but which encourages diversity in private or communal matters” (Rex, 1997: 208). Although it began to be accepted the diversity in microstructures, the state continued defined the public domain as homogeneous. For this reason, since the second half of twentieth century, as a result of some agrarian reforms, political revolutions based on peasant-indigenous claims, and the strengthening of human rights movements, Latin America became a scenario for the plural legalism and a new jurisprudence. In 1989, the ILO convention was promulgated as a declaration of indigenous human rights that called on the “self-determination” as a relevant criterion for the official ethnic recognition and the indigenous people’s right of self government and justice (Sieder, 2002a). This new jurisprudence framework was ratified by the majority of Latin American countries through their constitutional reforms (Stavenhagen, 2002; Van Cott, 2002; Albó, 2002; Yrigoyen, 2002, Sieder, 2002b).

Since the political Constitution of 1991, Colombia was defined as a multicultural and pluriethnic nation. This allowed the organization of indigenous movements and groups considered as nonexistent, which is part of a phenomenon called by Anthony Smith “reactivation of ethnic identities” (Smith, 1996). The organizational dynamics of kankuamo (Morales, 2002), pastos (Rappaport, 2005a), yanaconas (Zambrano, 1992) and muisca (Martínez, 2009) are examples of such reactivations.

In the case of the muisca people, two processes have constituted the basis of their ethnopolitical project. Firstly, the constitution of five *cabildos* (indigenous government), which permitted new ways for muisca people to dialogue with the state, and the possibility of managing their own resources and justice. Secondly, the reinvention of a spirituality, medicine practices, and a renewed body of rituals and ceremonies whose new cosmological discourses have become creative tools and methodologies for the work of interpreting different patrimonial places as archaeological museums and parks (Gómez-Montañez, 2009, 2010, 2011). Such processes have allowed that today some muisca leaders are thinking and interpreting their new ethnicity as an awakening. From the spirituality and its new counter-historic versions, the muisca people, as other Andean groups, have constituted a resistance against their representation as indigenous of the past and have created “moral continuity” with muisca ancestors. In contrast with official versions, this form of cultural memory understands the past not as “what happened”, but as “what could have happened” (Rappaport, 1990: 38-39). The ancestral, mystic and romantic atmosphere of remembering is evidence that memory, in contrast to history, is affected by the “disorder of passions” (Candau, 2000). Then, memory is emotive, it is charged with more repertoires than archives (Taylor, 2005), it lives in the body (Connerton, 2006), and it is transmitted by repetition and mimetic performances (Schechner, 2002). The next fragment is a good prove of this.

The *pagamento* is a spiritual practice taught by *mamos* (spiritual authorities of some indigenous people of Sierra Nevada de Santamarta, north of Colombia) to new muisca medicine men. It consists in paying to the Mother Earth with spiritual goods to maintain the equilibrium among all nature’s elements and avoid sickness and

conflicts. It is necessary to clarify that the link between humans and Mother Earth is interpreted as a "tissue" (Gomez-Montañez, 2010). For that reason, one element that some *mamas* and muisca medicine men loaded in his *mochilas* is cotton and/or hairy plant fibers. That fiber is the thread that unites the person with the spiritual grandparents. The person who realizes the *pagamento* divides into two the cotton or vegetable fiber; one piece is handled by the left hand and the other by the right one. The *mamo* rotates the left hand, close his eyes and, while is thinking about everything that he wants cleaning of himself, rolled up the cotton-fiber with the tips of his fingers forming a thread. The same routine is repeated with the thread of the right hand, but the *mamo* offers the cotton-fiber while imagines some golden gifts to the spirits to be consumed: golden houses, golden food, golden spears, golden seeds, etc. When the ritual finished, the cotton-fibers are separated into two groups. In the first group, the *mamo* collects the cleaner cottons-fibers of left hands and in the second the offered by right hands. Both groups are buried in a holy place (sacred stone, tree, lake) of the territory, completing the *pagamento*.

According to muisca medicine men, the *pagamento* is the more pertinent way to interpret and to understand the real mean of the territory of Hacienda El Carmen. Would be possible to put in dialogue the archaeological and spiritual perspectives? What epistemology would be taking in account by the public and technical institutions to decide the future of this patrimony? Probably, the archaeologist Virgilio Becerra accepts the existence of current muisca. But his acts of avoiding the dialogue with them and their participation in the production of knowledge about Hacienda El Carmen's indigenous cemetery is prove of the difference between muticultural and intercultural. Joanne Rappaport defines the first as existence and acceptance of cultural differences and the second as the possibility of dialogue and relations among different cultures. To the path from the first field to the second she has called "intercultural utopia" (Rappaport, 2005b). According to this anthropologist, collaborative methodologies are the intercultural expression of researching and they are featured by three elements: they allow connecting different networks of activists and indigenous movements; they have the goal of generating interethnic dialogues based on relations of equivalence and on the idea of building indigenous citizenship within a plural nation; and they suggest a transformation in ethnographic methodologies, changing the classic dense description for a committed conversation and a collaborative attitude (Rappaport, 2005b).

Our project are framed, then, in the called "other anthropologies" (Restrepo and Escobar, 2005), Latin American approach which wants to collect the wide reflection that, since decade of 1960, have been implemented as project of decolonizing methodologies and have struggled for the inclusion of subaltern actors in the processes of production and management of knowledge (Krotz, 1993; Scheper-Hughes, 1995; Peels, 1999; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2004; Lins Ribeiro y Escobar, 2006). According to Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995), we are trying to apply a "womanly" and "barefoot" anthropology whose function is being witness, being partner, an active voice, reflective and morally committed.

3. A Net of Collaborative and Alternative Voices: Other Ways of Remembering

The day before Gualcala's speech, some social organizations of Usme convened a meeting in which Metrovivienda, public institutions of Bogota, environmentalist groups, inhabitants of the territory and the muisca people were preset around an *olla comunitaria* (communal pot). It consists in a familiar and collaborative meeting where the participants share a soup whose ingredients have been collected by neighbors and guests. The topic of conversation was the future of Hacienda El Carmen and the archaeological finding, taking in account that the new Bogota's government decided stopping the urban expansion to the south rural territories of Capital District. The situational analyses allowed us noting that behind the polite and diplomatic speeches, the participants manage, negotiate, express and transform their identities and socio-political roles.

A Metrovivienda's functionary took the microphone and made it clear the importance of the struggles and claims of social organizations and inhabitants of Usme in the new institutional perspective of Hacienda El Carmen's administrative managing:

"It has been begun a process of recognition of social, and touristic development in the territory, but also of the inherent importance of the archaeological finding. But it has been powered by the work of the organizations, which have directed their efforts to Hacienda El Carmen. This allowed us to direct our vision taking into account other elements which, sometimes, are not evident for the public administration. The *dolientes* (mourners) are the ones who must suffer in their everyday life the consequences taken from a desk. They open the public administration's eyes. But that is not the ending of the process, it is the

beginning (...) Today, the main character has been the word" (Taken from diary fieldwork, Sept. 29th of 2012).

María Muñoz, owner of the terrain in front of Hacienda El Carmen, where the meeting was been performed, was invited to speak.

"The building is harmful for us, because we are lost the drop of milk, the food for animals and our crops (...) my husband dead fourteen years ago and I'm householder. Currently, my children cannot continue their study (Taken from diary fieldwork, Sept. 29th of 2012).

The evident connection between her familiar and private situation of poverty and the wider state's actions let us detecting a contradictory claim few words later.

"It is unfair that you have a small house, but the government could not allow build. I arrived here twenty years ago, I bought this land. I've fought for my children and the government don't let me managing what is mine, what has been supported with the sweat of my forehead" (Taken from diary fieldwork, Sept. 29th of 2012).

Some people interpret their heritage as an object of protection, while others as an economic investment. The poverty, the environment, the necessity of housing projects and the claim for remembering and understanding the territory's memory from indigenous point of view form a net of incidences where every subject gets in a symbolic field of struggles to occupy a position to impose the own categories and self concepts. What must be mainly taking into account with respect to the future use of Hacienda El Carmen's soil? Would be the ecosystem, the tourism, the possibilities of agriculture and productive projects, the urbanization, the scientific studies or the indigenous memory? What mourners are more emotionally, politically and legitimately connected with Hacienda El Carmen? What mourners feeling this territory as their patrimony? Backing to our analyses, whether some mourners of patrimony appeal to poverty, to the academic authority, to their social fights, or to the public power of institutions, the muisca people sustain their legitimate patrimonial pain by their idea of being the original people of the territory, or include, of the all humanity. The words of Alfonso Fonseca Balsero, indigenous authority of muisca community of Cota, presented in the meeting, are a good example of that discursive strategy.

"A beautiful age is coming soon. It is the awakening of *Mhu*. All humanity comes from *Mhu*, the super continent which was between Asia. A: what goes out, Sia: from water. and the misnamed America (its name is *Mhuykita*). And *Bacatá* (Bogotá in muisca language) means "lord of four cycles", *Ba*, radiance, *Ca*, of Earth, and *Ta*, from the tillage. Then, *Mhuyska* is the original man, the Earth's man, responsible for all this" (Taken from diary fieldwork, Sept. 29th of 2012).

Alfonso's words are part of a current tendency in some networks of the muisca ethnicity, in which Gnostic methods of spiritual knowledge have permeated the processes of cultural reinvention. Other guest told their speeches. Gualcala invited all people to form a circle. While some young men played drums and rattles, he intoned canticles in muisca language. When he finished, yelled joyfully and gave greetings to territory's spirits for the meeting.

"Thanks to the Father and Mother, who gave the life, thinkers of the universe's origin, for having related and invited. Thanks to the territory's grandparents, who care this great book of wisdom and memory, thanks for give us the opportunity of reading and remembering the memory that the grandparents let us for the new awakening, the new remembering, this word of life that remains that all we are natives. I must say you that this place's name is *Muyca Sunapa*. *Muyca* is gate, *Suna* is path, *Pa*, of the Father. Then, it is the *gate-path to the Father*, where our grandparents came to offer the work of the physic life to find the work for the eternity" (Taken from diary fieldwork, Sept. 29th of 2012).

Next, Gualcala challenged the scientific method and knowledge to say something that is not an object of testing by the Virgilio's archaeology.

"Here, in the consultation with the grandparents, we have found the presence of elders who came from Amazonas, from the Sierra, from Mexico, from Aymara's territory. This is a spiritual center, as a Mother's navel, it is a bridge for our elders can find the path to the Father" (Taken from diary fieldwork, Sept. 29th of 2012).

Understanding the creative methods to interpret the archaeological register by muisca medicine men implies reviewing two ways of interpreting the past, taking into account the religious frameworks from the Hallbawchs' perspective (2004). Into the early Christianity, Hallbawchs identified the "dogmatic" and "mystic" currents. The first wants to possess and to preserve the sense and the knowledge of Christian doctrine, through the

management and comprehension of textual, symbolic and terminological concepts. The second, in contrast, want by inner strength finding the meanings of texts and ceremonies. The dogmatic activates the memory by the consensus and the agreements with respect to the past, and the mystic by direct and intimate communion with the divine principle. While the first seem to be related to the authorized discourses of memory, the second seem to confront the official versions. The dogmatism's knowledge object is the thing, the place, the text. The mysticism's object is the spiritual connection. Maybe this could be a form to differentiate the archaeological dogma and the muisca interpretation of past and territory. The *pagamento* and spiritual consultation, therefore, are forms of mystic memory.²

Despite that the inclusion of this mystic form could mean a positive collaborative attitude, other elements shall be though. Maybe, those alternative and counter hegemonic ways were truly attempts to achieve the symmetry between two forms of knowledge. But, they could be interpreted as strategies of becoming relative the authority, based on ambiguous and complex methods that avoid any possibility of accessing to the sense of memory. Because it is true that, similar to the expert knowledge, just special persons, as medicine men, can access to the secrets of cosmos. In sum, understanding and managing the patrimony will be ever a power issue. However, and finally, we can review a situation where the roles collide and negotiate among them to seem a collaborative work space, formed by muisca leaders, spiritual authorities and academics.

On March 7th of 2013, a group of visitors, formed by *mamos*, an Amazon indigenous leader, members of the muisca community of Bosa, and Universidad Santo Tomás' research team got in to Hacienda El Carmen to begin "re meaning" the site. "Re meaning" is an *emic* concept which refers to give significations to the territories based on the revitalization of indigenous ancestry memory (Gómez-Montañez, 2009). For the muisca people, knowing the means of territory will permit them to propose models and plans of good management of the archaeological remains. Due to into the muisca communities do not exist elders that know completely and deeply the spiritual secrets of the territory, because the spiritual practices appeared recently (ten year ago) among muisca, authorities of other indigenous communities are considered vital for an ancestry re meaning. For this reason, an *ade* (mamo of indigenous wiwa communities) named Antonio Pinto, silent, concentrated and using *poporo* (sacred tool that connect the *ade* with Mother Earth) started to consult the territory's meanings.³

After walking by the graves, we got next to a stone. This had a wide hole, similar to a mouth in a face. After consulting spiritually, Antonio asked for the place where "the thunder appears". The watchman who accompanied the group pointed to a mountain at the west. Then, Antonio said that "in the other mountain, at the northeast, should have a cave" and that into it lived "the owner of rain and water". He explained that in the cave this spirit born and that he had the capacity of becoming in lightning and thunder. Furthermore, Antonio told us that in those times the spirits fought among them and that in one occasion, a great sage was transformed into the stone located next to us. For that reason, according to Antonio, the stone had the form of a face with a scream expression. "The spirits are awakening for people not desecrate the forces of territory", Antonio emphatically pronounced. But the *ade* said too that the spirits had struggles among them and they wanted to destroy themselves. As a result, Antonio perceived that we were into a "territory of candle" and that this needed to be purified.

Five days later we backed to Hacienda El Carmen. To continue with re meaning, *ade* Antonio had to use a sacred methodology called *yatukua*. It consists in a form to consult the spirits through a *calabazo* (type of gourd) full of water and quartz stones. For this ritual, we went to a small hill in front of the mountain where the spirit of thunder had born. At the beginning of consultation, only the medicine men and authorities could be present. As a professor and researcher, we did not the authorization of being a witness of this sacred practice. However, twenty minutes later, I was called by the group of authorities to explain some historic details of the muisca people. Then, thanks to this, the *ade* could understand the presence of a feeling of pain and suffering in the place.

I could said to Antonio that when the Spanish conquers arrived to muisca territory, some struggles had been performed by the chiefs of Bacata and Tunja. The first, the *Zipa*, and the second, the *Zaque*, leaded a war which

² Other experience in which was applied the dogmatic-mystic model can be found in an ethnographic paper about the muisca interpretation of the sacred stones in the Archaeological Park Las Piedras del Tunjo (Gómez-Montañez, 2013b).

³ The information presented in this part is not complete, due to it is considered as sacred by the indigenous authorities which are participating in the research project. I wrote the data authorized for publishing.

reinforced the political division of the muisca people based on military processes. Furthermore, I exposed that, when Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, the conqueror of the muisca territory, knew of those fights in the muisca history, he regretted not being able to use these fights in favor of his military objectives. I was very reiterative in saying that the social and political order of ancient muisca was a result not only of spiritual principles, but of imposing military loyalties and gaining territorial power. With these clarifications, I suggested the relevance of not excluding the historical events in the production of knowledge about the muisca territory. For instance, although Gualcala asserted the presence of Amazon elders dated of 4.000 years in the muisca cemetery, the archaeological studies have given information just of funeral rites dated from sixteenth century, that is to say, from colonial encounter.

We will not stop to debate whether, based on the later situational analysis, there is or not a formation of an imagined ethnic memory. I have tried to show how reading and re meaning the territory as a book, by the methodologies of spiritual authorities, can be understood as an alternative way to give new senses to the past. From *mamos*, *ades* and muisca leaders, the achievement of an agreement with the spirits who keep the territorial memory requires the realization of *pagamentos*. From this conception, the Mother Earth has the ancestral memory of every indigenous people, and it must be activated by the person who wishes wake it. From this perspective, it is relevant asking what “remember” means and how “reminders” are activated. Therefore, it is necessary to bring up the relationship that, from a phenomenology of memory, Paul Ricoeur made regarding to the transition from a question centered to “the subject that remember” to one that asks “what is remembered”. The dilemma invites us to think about the double dimension of memory from Greek conceptions of *mneme* and *anamnesis*. The first is the reminder that appears as something passive and sudden, with some overtones of *pathos* -that appeal to the disease, the emotions and passion, and gives us reflective elements to understand the relationship between memory and the body as its receptor. The second is an actively sought memory, related to the dynamics of introducing versions of the past (Ricoeur, 2000:19-20). These spiritual practices, then, activate the “ancestral memory” based on both kinds of reminder. The use of *yatukua*, shown few lines above, is prove of that. The *ade* actively wanted remembering and, as a result, the memory kept on spiritual dimension of the territory got to him as a revelation. From this perspective, backing to Ricoeur’s reflection, it could be said that the “muisca awakening” is a collective exercise of activating the imagination.

4. Final Reflections

Our role as academic researchers in a collaborative project is ensuring the dialogue among different versions of reading, understanding and management the patrimony. From a barefoot and committed anthropology, we have proposed to accompany the muisca people in their struggles for including their perspectives in the decisions about the future of a cemetery, considered by them as their patrimony and heritage. Also, the field of discussions about the ways to giving means to the archaeological finding permits that the muisca people integrate the patrimony as a relevant topic in their political claims as an existent ethnic group which are awakening and activating their identity and memory.

The analytical route implemented in this paper let us to note the connections between some everyday life events framed in the process of discussion among different social actors and the historic and political forces that could be considered as affecting structures. The first force is the field of debate about the academic and political ideologies which understand the patrimony as an authorized discourse and such current visions that take it as dynamic and communicative process. The primacy of the first ever gave to indigenous voices the role of alternatives discourses of resistance against republican ways to impose a homogeneous national culture, due to historical colonial processes of assimilating and integrating the ethnic differences in the Colombian nation.

A second force is related to the acceptance of a multicultural condition in practically all the postcolonial and post-conflict world, which encouraged changes in the global jurisprudence of indigenous human rights. The self-determination and the indigenous rights to self government and management of justice were included in many Latin American political constitutions which ratified the principles of ILO169 of 1989 Convention. In Colombia, since the Political Constitution of 1991, this allowed the reactivation of some ethnic groups, considered as mestizos and peasants by the state and the society in general. Today, the aftermath of those representations are affecting the muisca people in the acceptance of their valid and legitimate participation as ethnic group in the decision making about the future of their patrimony. In the specific case on the muisca cemetery of Hacienda El Carmen, the muisca people believe that they are its main mourner. But the important issue is not the passive

acceptance of other voices but the will to dialogue, to negotiate, to collaborate with them. Therefore, our project is based on the path from multicultural spaces to intercultural spaces, applying an anthropology politically committed.

The possibility of participating in the debate about Hacienda El Carmen has been an opportunity for the muisca people to occupy a symbolic place as the original people of Colombia and even of the humanity. Also, this strategy has permitted their inclusion in the patrimonial debates as valid and authorized knowledge. But the main feature of the creative and dynamic memory processes, proposed by them about reading and understanding the territory, has been the implementation of new senses. In this case, the word "senses" has three meanings: feelings, meanings and direction. The first and second have been evident in the analysis. The *pagamento* and *yatukua* are means of feeling the spiritual energy of the territory. The information is received in connection with the emotions and the place's atmosphere. To *ade* Antonio, remembering is feeling the energy of the thunder, the rain and spirit warfare. And, consequently, remembering is to give other meanings to the territory. Remembering represents both a suddenly received reminder (*mneme*) and an actively wanted memory (*anamnesis*).

The third meaning is the one that opens new horizons. The "sense" is the direction, the trajectory, the projection in the frame work of dynamic movement.⁴ Therefore, when the muisca people give senses to the memory and heritage contained in patrimonial objects and processes, they give senses to their ethnopolitical project. As we could review in the text, the present horizons of the muisca people is linked to incidences and itineraries from the past and also project future horizons in the struggles to be included as indigenous citizens, worried for the management of urban space. Finally, I want conclude this paper, with the main recommendation made by *ade* Antonio: "In this place anything can be built; it is best not to dig and let grandparents to rest".

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⁴ It is relevant to clarify that these meanings are been taken from Spanish language.

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